

Delicate Body

by

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Richard Raskin is a brilliant actor near the end of his life who hopes to play Lear one more time before shuffling off the mortal coil. Jordan Heston offers him the opportunity. Madness on the heath ensues.

CHARACTERS

- CARL SANDERS, Managing Director of the New Hope Theatre
- JORDAN HESTON, Artistic Director of the New Hope Theatre
- RICHARD RASKIN, actor
- ALYSON LOCKE, SANDER's executive assistant
- HANNAH LEWIS, minister (Unitarian)

Delicate Body

Scene 1

A gala night at the New Hope Theatre as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. Single microphone on stage. Musical intro leads into VOICEOVER.

VOICEOVER

And now, please welcome Carl Sanders, Managing Director of the New Hope Theatre Festival!

Bump up in music as SANDER walks to the microphone.

SANDERS

Thank you, thank you, thank you all so much for coming out to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of New Hope Theatre! A half-century of superb, incredible performances, and with your support, we'll do another half century, and another after that! When I started here ten years ago – well, I don't have to tell about the challenges we faced. But an obstacle is just an opportunity, right?, and together we have changed so many lemons into delicious and refreshing lemonade. I have to admit, I've been jealous at times – I may be a number counter and a bean cruncher, but in my soul is a love for this - gift that we call theater, and I can't tell you how many times I have wanted to "dress the stage" and share in the love and admiration that comes to a cast at the end of a performance. But someone has to make sure that when the switch is flipped, the lights go on, and so I've been proud to make it possible for the magic to fly - and for the actors to get paid! But enough of my longing and yearning for "the theater" – let me introduce you to someone who will tell you all about the exciting season we have in store for you: New Hope's artistic director, Jordan Heston!

Bump in music as SANDERS steps away from the microphone to make way for HESTON – except that he does not appear right away but only after a few seconds, and even then, HESTON sidles up to the microphone as if it were a cobra.

HESTON stares into the audience, at SANDERS, back out.

SANDERS

(hissing whisper)

Jordan? Jordan!

The silence extends. HESTON crumples into tears, turns, leaves the stage. SANDERS starts clapping as he walks back to the microphone.

Well. Um – SANDERS

* * * * *

Scene 2

HESTON joins RICHARD RASKIN, who is sitting in a wicker chair on a porch. They sit for a moment in contemplation.

Well. RASKIN

Um - HESTON

Here we sit. RASKIN

Here we sit. HESTON

Silence

HESTON
Your Peaseblossom – she’s 70 thousand years old, Richard.

RASKIN
On her outside.

HESTON
And your Titania -

RASKIN
We do what we can with the time we have.

HESTON
Yes.

RASKIN
And - we have fun.

HESTON
Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Silence.

HESTON
You probably want to know –

RASKIN

I'll let you assume that.

HESTON

- what makes me come chase you down at the old actors' home? I went to your apartment – your super told me where you were.

RASKIN

I come here for the waters. And we have fun reading plays.

HESTON

You've noted that.

RASKIN

It's always good to see you, whatever the reason.

HESTON

New season at New Hope.

RASKIN

It's been in the news. As have you.

Silence.

HESTON

Why? Why. Why. Why. Why – do you keep – I mean, she's 70,000, Richard.

RASKIN

78.

HESTON

Peaseblossom!

RASKIN

You don't know the answer, question mark.

Indefinite gesture.

RASKIN

You should.

HESTON

You see – that – not so true. Knowing.

RASKIN

New season at New Hope.

HESTON

Last night – the gala. You remember the galas. Though now, with Sanders – it's like chewing on rhinestones –

RASKIN

Poor boy.

HESTON

Carl is up there, announcing announcing announcing, blathering on about his love of “the theater,” and then he trots me out to, you know, announce the season. And I can't. I just crack into tears –

RASKIN

I read. Peaseblossom read

HESTON

I'm sobbing –

RASKIN

She was concerned.

HESTON

I have to leave. Just, bam, whoosh. Sobbing.

RASKIN

Any clue?

HESTON

None.

RASKIN

Me neither.

HESTON

Not why I'm here. I think. To figure that out. Though. Honestly, I don't know. If I could have gotten the words out – the annunciation - I would have said that I am going to do Lear this season.

Silence.

RASKIN

I heard you say “Lear.”

HESTON

I say Lear. Richard –

RASKIN

The messenger arrives onstage.

HESTON
I got into this game because of you.

RASKIN
Jordan –

JORDAN
I'm doling out blame –

RASKIN
Your father, yes. We've -

HESTON
I can still see him watching you.

RASKIN
This man who didn't love.

HESTON
But he watched you. He loved you. And so I watched you. And so here I am. I want to do this Lear with you.

RASKIN
Sanders will never agree because I've got no name that will sell any tickets.

HESTON
What does he know?

RASKIN
Making the festival make money.

HESTON
The Macbeth mugs, the Hamlet headband.

RASKIN
Stop it. He does best what he does best. We were in tents not that long ago. The green room was a folding table with a broken leg.

HESTON
I want to do Lear with you.

RASKIN
Even if Sanders said yes – you're fifty years too young to direct Lear.

HESTON
He can't say no. And I'm not.

RASKIN

Of course he can. And you are. Even if – there's me, Jordan.
You're hauling up a bucket of trouble if you take me on.

HESTON

Such as.

RASKIN

I'm old.

HESTON

Lear's old.

RASKIN

Cantankerous – just ask Peaseblossom out there.

HESTON

Ditto Lear. Richard – sobbing, I don't know why, but when I
thought about you and Lear – us and Lear – you are brilliant, the
language lives in you, leaps out of you. You touched my father's
heart –

RASKIN

Daddy issues.

HESTON

Daddy gets blamed for daddy issues. Consider it, at least.

RASKIN

Consider it, he says. Consider it. As I visit this place emerging
from the cave of my apartment? My ancient Peaseblossom, all the
ancient Peaseblossoms here? Me, an ancient Peaseblossom
among them. Consider it, he says. So, I am considering it. Are you
ready?

HESTON

Yes. No. Obligated. To what, I don't know, but still this, you know,
moving forward, urge to just - move. Ready. Ready-ish. You?

RASKIN

Not even "-ish," so you better be ready, you better mean this.

HESTON

Readiness is all, right?

RASKIN

Do you promise, Jordan? Lear is not for faint hearts or delicate
bodies.

By my father. HESTON

I'll take that as a yes. RASKIN

It is exactly a yes. HESTON

* * * * *

Scene 3

SANDERS, HESTON and LOCKE. LOCKE hands SANDERS papers to sign, which he does and hands them back.

Absolutely not. SANDERS

You don't have final say. HESTON

SANDERS
Richard Raskin is old – old! – and I'll get the final say if I have to get it – don't force me. I am going to drag something new into this place –

The musical. HESTON

SANDERS
Yes, the musical. Something new, something with energy – something for young people. Something that I like!

You don't like Shakespeare? HESTON

SANDERS
I like young people! With money. A young idea. With a young director, young actors – what am I signing here?

My reimbursements. LOCKE

Why are you getting reimbursements? SANDERS

Because you don't let me keep petty cash. LOCKE

SANDERS

Young, Jordan – young.

HESTON

Lear is about being old.

SANDERS

Young and old, young and old – I could like that.

HESTON

Richard is Lear, Carl –

LOCKE

Just check the “okay.”

SANDERS

Richard Raskin - who is Richard Raskin? Eh? Does anyone young know Richard Raskin?

LOCKE

I know Richard Raskin. Just initial at the Xs.

SANDERS

Of course, you would know him, and you're not even young. You know, you could be having me sign my life over to you.

LOCKE

Not to worry.

HESTON

Richard was here when not much else was here, and people came to see him – they came to see him, not because they liked sitting in wobbly chairs under a tent balancing plastic cups of wine but because of him.

SANDERS

I see the pictures every day I walk in. Up and down the hallway. Up and down the stairways. I'm done?

LOCKE

Yep.

SANDERS

But he's nobody now, Jordan, isn't he? Not to us, of course, you know –

LOCKE

Not to me.

SANDERS

- but what we needed then and what we need now – I want a name actor on the main stage.

HESTON

To most of the people who have kept coming back –

SANDERS

Yes, our loyal old subscriber base – who ain't getting younger or healthier –

HESTON

But –

SANDERS

And there ain't any young butts coming in to warm their seats.

HESTON

Carl - to the old –

LOCKE

And me -

HESTON

- Richard is a name – a good name, a comforting name. You can push this young/old thing really hard if you want to Carl. The new musical – bright, glittery, amped-up – you get your young people in – tight little butts warming those seats - plus the return of a trusted friend. All generations served, no one offended, the service of art and the art of service.

SANDERS

Why couldn't you talk like this the other night? Leaving me out there –

HESTON

Carl?

SANDERS thinks.

SANDERS

You think he can? He's old.

HESTON

Richard is old, which is lucky because Lear is old. And yes. The past and the future, continuity and change, old hope and New Hope – eh? - it's all right there, Carl. It's a campaign.

SANDERS

Let me think about it.

LOCKE

You have your meeting at two. You can wear the blue blazer for that one – no tie - annual backstage visit from the high school drama department.

SANDERS

Really?

LOCKE

Heavy is the head that wears the crown, Carl. Be chipper. Leave them with hope for a future in the arts.

SANDERS leaves.

LOCKE

Off into battle he goes. I remember seeing Richard – as Benedick. I fell in love with him.

HESTON

That leather shirt they had him wear.

LOCKE

I was thinking of the leather pants.

HESTON

There was that.

LOCKE

I couldn't ever act my way out of a paper bag, but I liked being around people who could, can, and so –

HESTON

And so.

LOCKE

The free tickets get me through my day of blue blazers.

HESTON

Yeah. Me, too.

LOCKE playfully punches him in the arm.

LOCKE

Good fight.

HESTON

I wish I looked good in leather pants.

LOCKE

That's what dream are for. He'll say yes about Richard.

HESTON

I hope so because I already have.

LOCKE

You wouldn't look so bad in the pants.

HESTON

It'd be a shame to have the cows die for the leather. But thanks.

LOCKE

Have to go make sure he gets the right blue.

LOCKE leaves. HESTON muses.

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Scene 4

Table read. HESTON and RASKIN seated, with scripts. Rest of cast is implied.

HESTON

I want to thank you all for being here. This is the part I really love, I've always really loved – right at the beginning. First step, fresh page. Now, Lear was –

RASKIN puts his hand on HESTON's arm to stop him.

RASKIN

Let me tell the story.

HESTON

Okay. Sure.

RASKIN

Welcome to you all, too, and thank you for doing this. Lear - Lear is a story about an old and foolish man hungering for affection – he hungers so hard that he is willing to divide his kingdom just to claw back from his daughters even a show of love and respect – it doesn't have to be real, just the show of it will do - he does not know that Regan and Goneril mock him, use him, eventually will discard him to satisfy their appetites. When he finally understands this, when the betrayal finally hits him, the agony of it does drive him mad. Lear is not out in the storm, he is the storm, the storm is in him, his mind and heart unwinding in a cataract of pain and treachery, barely held together by the other mad derelicts ejected into the storm with him. It is not the loss that guts him but the knowledge that he has caused the loss, that he is at fault, and there is no chance he can repair the world he has broken. But the universe doesn't allow him even a small comfort in his self-knowing – Cordelia's murder, because what else is it?, shows Lear that when you lose it all, you lose all of it, right down through the marrow of your bones, and there is no reprieve, no sentimentality lingering in the bosom of the Lord. We humans are harsh creatures, and we never learn our lessons and so never stop being harsh with each other. No one ever said being a human being was going to be easy, eh? It isn't – but it ain't all that bad when we can sit here together and read this story of the foolish old man. Yes, Jordan?

HESTON

Like I said, fresh page. Kent and Gloucester, start us off. Act I, scene i.

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Scene 5

RASKIN takes out a leather kit bag and unpacks the paraphernalia for shooting up with heroin, which he proceeds to do.

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Scene 6

SANDERS and HESTON seated in SANDERS' office. SANDERS is working an exercise grip for his hands.

SANDERS

I hear it's not going – I'll use "well" – not "well" - what word would you use?

HESTON

Who did you hear that from?

SANDERS

I hear things, Jordan – I'm the managing director – I'm paid to hear things, and I've heard it's not going –

Gesture for HESTON to finish the phrase.

HESTON

Have you been talking to the cast?

SANDERS

Not my place.

HESTON

Have they been talking to you? The Equity captains?

SANDERS

I have just been hearing things as I am paid to do.

HESTON

He's old, Carl, out of practice – he'll be fine.

SANDERS

Be straight with me.

HESTON

He's just – out of practice, Carl, that's all.

SANDERS

And you have that under control.

HESTON

I get paid to have things under control.

SANDERS

You do, but do you?

HESTON

Is there anything else?

SANDERS

The musical is coming along great.

HESTON

That's nice.

SANDERS

You hate 'em, but I love 'em. I've been sitting in on rehearsals – the director's even taken a few of my suggestions.

HESTON

You're making suggestions to the director?

SANDER

Why not? Just because I count beans doesn't make me incapable. Beats the heart of an artist! Besides, you can't banish the one who signs the paychecks. I think we have a winner on our hands. I think this is going to be great – young, edgy –

HESTON

I hate "edgy" –

SANDERS

Energized – you know, with energy and in your face –

HESTON

Carl, it's about Hildegard of Bingen –

SANDERS

Ah, ah, that's what you think, but it's not – it's about mystical power and music and –

HESTON

Hildegard and punk –

SANDERS

It works, Jordan – the two really mesh –

HESTON

I'm happy for the birth-child, Carl.

SANDERS

It's going to shake things up around here, bring in some new blood. New blood, new money – new money, more new blood – all my new beans to count.

HESTON

I have to go.

SANDERS

I'm going to continue to hear things, Jordan – part of my paycheck.

HESTON

It will all be "fine" – that's my word.

SANDERS

Fine.

HESTON goes to leave, comes back.

HESTON

There are moments that stretch when Richard is just – sublime. Perfect. This is his Lear. This is him. It's not edgy. It's not – a frantic selfie. What he does will stick. Right here.

SANDERS

I hear he yells at the cast.

HESTON

Lear is an angry man.

SANDERS

Richard is an angry man. He insults them about how to speak the verse.

HESTON

We can all benefit from his experience.

SANDERS

I don't want to hear from the captains.

HESTON

Got it.

SANDERS

Jordan, he's an old man. He's not Lear. It's just a play, and he's just a character in it. Make it "fine." It's the mainstage production, and there are reputations on the line. It is a business. This is my domain, and I will not let it be broken into parts by a misplaced love. How's that for applying art to real life? And you think Hildegard and punk won't work? Stretch it enough, and anything will fit with anything – art for the new age.

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Scene 7

HESTON and RASKIN.

HESTON

Richard, you have got to be straight with me. What is going on?

RASKIN

Do you read me now my litany of sins?

HESTON

Richard -

RASKIN

The cast has been talking against me.

HESTON

Richard, you yell at them. You scold them about the verse, about missing their blocking.

RASKIN

I wouldn't have to do that if you were doing –

HESTON

Richard, sometimes - sometimes you just go – away. You're somewhere else. Someone else. What. Is. Going. On.

RASKIN

You say you want to know. You really want to know?

HESTON

What are you going to tell me that I'm not going to like?

RASKIN

I'm dying, Jordan.

HESTON

We're all dying, Richard.

RASKIN

I am actually dying, Jordan. In actual time. I have cancer. It's carving out my bowels.

Silence.

HESTON

Richard.

RASKIN

Don't do that.

HESTON

What do you expect me to do?

RASKIN

I don't expect anything of you.

HESTON

You should have told me. Right at the beginning.

RASKIN

And you would have never asked me.

HESTON

This is – not right. You’ve made this not right. I can’t have a dying man –

RASKIN

You said we’re all dying.

HESTON

Don’t be snide.

RASKIN

I know what it means if you don’t let me finish this.

HESTON

If Sanders finds out –

RASKIN

He’ll nail you to the wall.

HESTON

And not you. With a great deal of satisfaction of out the hammering.

RASKIN

The man who sobs at galas is worried about his career.

HESTON

I am worried about killing a man I really, really admire who’s not bothered by the fact that he lied to me!

RASKIN

I withheld –

HESTON

You lied.

RASKIN

So shoot me. Beat me, bore me, but don’t ignore me. You know what my Peaseblossom said to me the other day?

HESTON

Richard, don’t.

RASKIN

Of course, I'm going to say this. She was so happy for me because I was working again. At my age, working! On the stage. And I said –

HESTON

Richard –

RASKIN

- it made me feel young again.

HESTON

A vintage bastard, you are.

RASKIN

I said that for her because I love my Peaseblossom. But that's not it. "Young" in this – cage? This meat bag. What I feel? Purpose. Sad but true. Not at this moment a wasted old man wasting away – direct, of consequence.

HESTON

But Richard –

RASKIN

Peaseblossom runs lines with me.

HESTON

Richard! Sometimes there is a man of consequence in my rehearsal, and sometimes there is not. What do you want me to do?

RASKIN

You promised.

HESTON

Tricked!

RASKIN

Promise is a promise.

HESTON

How much – time?

RASKIN

I'm not going to keel over on stage, if that's what –

HESTON

How do I know that?

RASKIN

My doctors are divided – doctors – I like second, and third, opinions. It's not clear what my "used by" date is - but -

HESTON

Colon?

RASKIN

Colon.

HESTON

And the behavior in rehearsal.

RASKIN

The medications. I don't always get the mix right – it's very complicated.

HESTON

Couldn't your Peaseblossom give you a hand?

RASKIN

You should see what she has to take!

HESTON

I should smack you. I won't, but I should.

RASKIN

The pain is complicated – I can't ask her. I can't ask anyone.

Silence.

HESTON

I don't know –

RASKIN

I will not make this easy for you.

HESTON

Couldn't you?

RASKIN
(laughing)

We must live with our divided kingdoms! I appreciate the dilemma. Sobbing at the gala, you said. Have you sobbed recently? Felt like?

HESTON

No.

RASKIN

Something must be worming its way out.

HESTON

You have to do better. If not me, at least you owe the cast.

RASKIN

I'll do my best. I can promise you that. And you thought directing Lear was going to be easy!

HESTON

It is, compared to directing a vintage bastard.

RASKIN

Otherwise known as genuine. I want what I want. I want what I need. And so do you.

HESTON

Am I your fool or your Kent?

RASKIN

Time – as short as it is – will tell us both.

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Scene 8

HESTON walking, pauses outside the Unitarian church. Hesitates, then goes in and finds HANNAH LEWIS, who is standing among chairs built for children, toys on the floor, and so on – it's the day care room.

HESTON

Hello?

LEWIS

Hello.

HESTON

Oh. Sorry.

LEWIS

How can I help you?

HESTON

Actually, no. I shouldn't have bothered you.

LEWIS

You don't have to go. I'm just cleaning up a little.

HESTON

I should –

LEWIS

Besides, I know who you are.

HESTON

Probably another good reason to leave.

LEWIS

Can't escape now. My family's been a multi-generational subscriber – a bloodline subscriber family.

HESTON

My boss will be pleased.

LEWIS

Come in, please.

HESTON

I should –

LEWIS

You should come in is the right "should." Come on.

HESTON enters fully.

LEWIS

This is where I say, There are no accidents. Seems you made a choice. Seems a choice made you. So, let's take advantage of it.

HESTON

I've walked by a hundred times – not sure that -

LEWIS

And what makes this night different from all other nights?

HESTON

You're Unitarian.

LEWIS

Still a great question. I mean, if you need to go, then – but all are always welcome at the UU church.

LEWIS picks up a notebook and sits in a child-sized chair.

LEWIS

Take a seat.

HESTON sits in a small chair, the awkward child.

HESTON

Do you do this often?

LEWIS

I'm a licensed therapist in pastoral counseling –a licensed shepherd, I suppose. Sheep. Herd.

HESTON

Sheepish.

LEWIS

Not the worst "ish" of "ishes." Your coat -

HESTON

I'm fine.

LEWIS

Do you mind if I take notes?

HESTON

For what?

LEWIS

A log of sorts. Of the day. I don't have to.

HESTON

It's fine. It looks like we're going to talk.

LEWIS

We don't have to. We could do Quaker-meeting style.

HESTON

That would be awkward.

LEWIS

Fully trained in awkward.

HESTON

You're very at-ease about this.

LEWIS

Fluent shepherdese.

HESTON

Makes it harder. To leave. Feels -

Silence.

HESTON

I have a friend. Who is dying. On my stage.

LEWIS
This is not a metaphor.

HESTON
No. It is not.

LEWIS
I heard you are doing Lear.

HESTON
I've been thinking I'm not ready to direct this play.

LEWIS
Because of your friend. This "friend" isn't a proxy for you, is it? "I have a friend" sometimes is –

HESTON
No, no. Not yet.

LEWIS
Just wanted us to be clear.

HESTON
What is your name?

LEWIS
Hannah Lewis.

HESTON
Ms. Lewis – Pastor Lewis?

LEWIS
"Ms." works.

HESTON
Ms. Lewis - it is Richard Raskin who is dying, and I have promised him that we will go through this play together, though he didn't tell me everything –

LEWIS
Benedick. Not me. My mother. The leather outfit against that skin of his – she saw the play more than once - used her subscriber privileges, let's say, vigorously.

HESTON
So, yes. Richard.

LEWIS
Of what?

HESTON

The outside reason is colon cancer. The inside reason –

LEWIS

That's fine – take your time.

HESTON

Time. Is it the right thing to let this dying man be on the stage? I have a responsibility to protect the cast. His – condition – if the meds are right, he's wonderful but when not – he's surly, forgetful, frightened – it breaks my heart and terrifies me and makes me angry – and then there's the theater –

LEWIS

Stay on you. For the moment.

HESTON

Least interesting.

LEWIS

Humor me.

Silence.

HESTON

I should probably go.

LEWIS

Try something else – just a suggestion. Is that okay? Yes? You've pointed out reasons – they're good reasons - but most are outside reasons, right? Your phrase. But not all of them. Which ones in that list of yours? I heard breaks, I heard angry – what did you hear?

HESTON

Have you lost any of your sheep, ever?

LEWIS

We UUs are very practical about lost sheep because that's how most get here.

HESTON

Lost and found.

LEWIS

Across all the borders. I mean, some stay lost. It doesn't mean we've lost them – there's a bell-curve of "lost" and sometimes "lost" is a good enough sacred space. Some people don't want to be "found" in that old-time way anyway. But swinging it back around to you, Mr. Heston – bringing it back around - you asked about lost.

HESTON

I really should go – rehearsal tomorrow.

LEWIS

Continuing on, then.

HESTON

It's the only road I have at this point in time.

LEWIS

When would you like to come back?

HESTON

Really?

LEWIS

This is what I do for a living. Lifelong subscriber, love my sheep.

HESTON

I don't even believe.

LEWIS

We won't hold it against you.

HESTON

Let me think about it.

LEWIS

I'm sure you will. I'll think of the man my mother had - thoughts about.

They stand.

HESTON

My knees hurt.

LEWIS laughs.

Scene 9

HESTON and LOCKE are in the audience for the preview. It is not going well. RASKIN is befuddled and cross at the same time.

RASKIN

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! - Line!

VOICE FROM INTERCOM

“Rage! Blow!”

RASKIN

Rage! blow!

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout

Till you have drench’d – drench’d – drench’d – shit!

VOICE FROM INTERCOM

- our steeples -

RASKIN

Our steeples, drown’d the cocks!

Suddenly, RASKIN stops, looks confused.

RASKIN

You – you –

VOICE FROM INTERCOM

Sulphurous –

RASKIN

Wait till I call for the goddamn line. I know it! Sulphurous and thought-executing -

But RASKIN’s focus goes away again, and this time he simply wanders from the stage, mumbling.

RASKIN

Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,

Singe my white head!

HESTON

Shit.

RASKIN disappears. HESTON follows, LOCKE following HESTON. They find RASKIN at his dressing-room table mumbling, brushing his hair, lopsided in all ways.

On the table are many medicine bottles. LOCKE looks at the labels, looks at HESTON.

You – LOCKE

What? HESTON

He's got colon cancer. LOCKE

Yes. How – HESTON

It runs through my family. I know all about this way too hard. LOCKE

What's – HESTON

He got his medicines wrong. LOCKE

Suddenly, a pain wracks RASKIN, and he flails around the table until he finds his heroin case. He looks at LOCKE and hands it to her.

What's that? HESTON

His heroin. Same as my grandfather. LOCKE

LOCKE opens the case, takes out the paraphernalia and prepares the injection, gives it to RASKIN, who immediately relaxes and becomes calm, lucid.

I have to end this. HESTON

You should have said something. LOCKE

To? HESTON

This can be managed. LOCKE

VOICE OVER INTERCOM
Jordan, are we continuing?

Shit. HESTON

HESTON leaves. LOCKE takes RASKIN's hands, smooths his hair. LOCKE puts his injection things away.

LOCKE

You are such a beautiful idiot.

RASKIN

Perfect for the part. Who are you?

LOCKE

A good friend you don't know you need. When were you going to tell him?

RASKIN

Wasn't.

LOCKE

Tough guy. And the medications? Because you really screwed those up, tough guy.

RASKIN

Always this charming?

LOCKE

I remember the leather outfit.

RASKIN

I get tired of taking them. Like a goddamned vulture on your shoulder all the time, digging in its claws.

LOCKE looks at RASKIN with tenderness.

LOCKE

You need to know how I can handle people like you.

RASKIN

You?

LOCKE

You've got two choices, Mr. Raskin. You either let me help you - get you off the junk, like with my grandfather, and my father, set up your medicine schedule, like I did with them, make sure you eat good shit rather than the shit you're probably eating - or Jordan is going to have to cut you loose so that you can go back to your single apartment and turn into a piss-head grump who lost the best chance he ever had to be the great actor that he really, really is. You don't scare me, Mr. Raskin, because you're just full of being afraid, and that makes you mean which makes you stupid. You want to do this so bad, so don't fuck it up more than you already have. That's more swearing that I do in a year, Mr. Raskin, so you better be worth it.

RASKIN

The leather, eh?

LOCKE

Yeah.

RASKIN

That leather brought me a lot of good things.

HESTON returns.

HESTON

Richard, we've sent everyone home.

Silence in the room.

HESTON

What?

RASKIN begins placing the medicine bottles in front of LOCKE, who arrays them. She holds up the heroin kit.

LOCKE

I'm going to hold onto this. Jordan, Mr. Raskin here now has himself a home health aide, like it or not. Right?

RASKIN

Thy will be done.

LOCKE

Such a cheeky bastard.

HESTON

I called him a vintage bastard.

LOCKE
That, too.

* * * * *

Scene 10

SANDERS
I think I'll gouge your eyes out. He's a drunk, right? Am I right?

HESTON throws up his hands in a mock "Who would have thought it?" gesture.

SANDERS
A drunk. And you didn't know this? Amazing. Anyone could see –

HESTON
It can be managed.

SANDERS
We canceled a preview, Jordan. We've never canceled a preview. And the press – ahhh! You should have known! You should have told me!

HESTON
You would have canceled the production.

SANDERS
I don't know what I would have done then. But I know what I'm going to do now.

SANDERS looks at HESTON.

HESTON
What?

SANDERS
You're not going to like this.

HESTON
I already don't like it.

SANDERS
I'm moving *Lear* to the small theater.

HESTON
Carl –

SANDERS

I'm bumping the musical up to the main theater. Don't give me that look! I've got a waiting list for the musical as long as my two arms and a leg because it's something that people want to see! And I can merchandise it ten times over what I can get for a mad man on the heath coffee mug or "I'm a Fool for Lear" tee-shirt. You wanted to do your *Lear*, so I'm giving you your *Lear* – and if he's a drunk, then fine, great theater tradition, but you make it work - I won't gouge your eyes out, but it will hurt you just as much. Did you see the Hildegard tees in the gift shop? I've got one under my shirt. Great cotton. Doesn't scratch the nipples. And the prayer flags and the leggings and the ceramic garden plugs and the felt softie and the jewelry and the botanicals – try getting that ROI with *Lear*.

HESTON

Even though it's aesthetically stupid.

SANDERS

Like you're a good judge of things these days? People want to see this – they want to be here. I take that as good enough art – and goddamn it, I am enjoying the hell out of it. This director listens to me. I even reworked his Act I for him and the writers. Made a chart, made a graph, mapped it all out for them – the bean counter approach. *Lear*? They ain't knockin' the box office over, and you tell me nothing. Which is why as of this afternoon you're in the small theater. Say you agree.

HESTON

Yes.

SANDERS

Is he worth it? Whatever you're doing, is he worth it? I don't think he's worth it, but you better damn well think he's worth whatever it is you think you're doing. Goddamn it! Do you know where Alyson is? I need a new shirt, I'm sweating so much. Maybe as extra punishment I should make you come to a rehearsal because I know how much you love musicals.

HESTON

I have a play to re-stage.

SANDERS

I mean it, Jordan.

HESTON

Which it?

SANDERS

You make this work. This is not about you. Even if it is, I really don't want it to be about you because it's already halfway to shit, and when it goes all the way to shit, which it will because you can't even stand in front of an audience without sniveling, I'll have to take this to the board, and I do not like having to talk to them unless something spears a knife into my right or left kidney and pushes me into the room, like a goddamn drunk on stage and canceled previews. I know you heard me. Say yes.

HESTON

Yes.

SANDERS

Lear out of the dressing rooms by 2 pm.

HESTON

Ticking clock.

SANDERS

Backwards and forwards. Go. Alyson!

* * * * *

Scene 11

HESTON and RASKIN sit with LEWIS on the children's chairs. LEWIS has her notebook.

LEWIS

We can use the grown-up chairs in my office –

RASKIN

Yes, let's.

HESTON

I want us to stay right here.

LEWIS

Okay.

Silence.

HESTON

Go on.

RASKIN remains silent. HESTON jabs him with an elbow. RASKIN sighs.

I concealed – RASKIN

He lied. HESTON

Lied. More or less. To him. RASKIN

Not about the cancer. You already knew. LEWIS

Well, he lied to me about that, too, but, right, he finally got around to telling me that. HESTON

Then - LEWIS

A little more silence.

I use heroin. For the pain. It makes the pain light and portable. RASKIN

Stop it. We've been exiled to the small theater – HESTON

I heard about the preview – LEWIS

It screws up his meds – screws up his brain – screws - HESTON

Screws you over. LEWIS

HESTON clams up.

Where do you get it? LEWIS

I'm not the only user at the home. We pool our money, and the nephew of my Peaseblossom supplies our supply. RASKIN

Peaseblossom? LEWIS

Midsummer's. A fairy. RASKIN

Then what? LEWIS

What do you think? RASKIN

I'm not asking about the mechanics. LEWIS

All through this, HESTON fidgets.

None of us likes having it in our hands. RASKIN

Not, I imagine, altogether steady hands. LEWIS

We help each other. We feel ashamed about it – well, most do, not all, but I think even those who say they don't, do. But when the pain comes – the great rage – it's not killed off in us except by the needle in the vein. RASKIN

Eloquent. LEWIS

Eloquent. HESTON

And soothing. LEWIS

And soothing. RASKIN

Soothing. So - you lied to your friend. LEWIS

Silence.

I did. RASKIN

Twice. LEWIS

In the end, it comes to twice. RASKIN

And he's your friend? LEWIS

Yes. RASKIN

Why? LEWIS

Why a friend? RASKIN

Why lie? LEWIS

Selfish. RASKIN

That's it? HESTON

RASKIN
Alternate choice is being a forgotten ghost, in pain – he threw me a rope. You threw me a rope.

By which we will - HESTON

RASKIN
I threw you a rope as well. Did he tell about his weeping? At the gala? And what was that about? And his father. Ask him about his father.

Do not ask – HESTON

RASKIN
And have you felt the urge to weep lately?

Silence.

LEWIS
And so, where from here? Ropes in hand. Hanging ropes. Binding ropes. Two caged lightnings.

Silence.

LEWIS

I'm not leading you to a solution, horses to water, sheep to the gate.

HESTON

We have someone helping us with the medications. And the heroin. Weaning him.

LEWIS

Who is that?

HESTON

Alyson. The ED's assistant. This runs in her family.

LEWIS

That's good – well - keeps the two of you from having to face what you've got to face, yes? Jordan, what's the end-game for you? I think I know what it is for you. But for you? The risk – it's real risk. Maybe losing what you say you love to do.

HESTON

It's –

Silence.

HESTON

Stuck in my throat.

LEWIS

Upchuck it.

HESTON

Clinical term?

LEWIS

UU theology.

HESTON

I hate throwing up.

LEWIS

Just a thought. Are you going to continue?

HESTON

Yes.

LEWIS

With him?

Yes. HESTON

If he lies again? LEWIS

I think he's – you're - just afraid. Fear makes us stupid. Makes me stupid. Is making me stupid. HESTON

Thank you. Making me stupid, too – that's what Alyson told me. RASKIN

And you? Going to lie to him again? LEWIS

Not sure. Just kidding. RASKIN

You've never made it through the whole play. Once. HESTON

Something to look forward to, then. RASKIN

I think this is good. Is it good? LEWIS

Joined at the hip? HESTON

UU theology. LEWIS

We'll see. HESTON

RASKIN stands, swivels his hips.

Speaking of hips – RASKIN

Stop it. HESTON

RASKIN dances a little bit.

Too much for you? RASKIN

HESTON
Save it for the heath.

HESTON stands. LEWIS stands.

LEWIS
A little bit of the leather suit.

RASKIN
Oh, I did love those britches.

LEWIS
They loved you back.

HESTON
Sanders thinks you're a drunk. I let him think that – it's easier for him to think that.

RASKIN
A venerable tradition of the theater.

HESTON
Sanders doesn't know anything about that. It's what he can wrap his little musical mind around.

HESTON looks as if he might weep, but he doesn't.

HESTON
The truth is.

He leaves the sentence unfinished.

HESTON
We have rehearsal early.

LEWIS
Well, all right.

RASKIN
I have medications to take.

HESTON
I'll meet you outside.

HESTON leaves.

RASKIN
Thank you. For both of us. He can be impolite.

LEWIS seems about to say something but doesn't.

LEWIS

Treat each other well.

RASKIN

It is very hard to want something with great gusto and still be compassionate to others. Desire is a monster.

LEWIS

And gratitude can be a tyranny. Who loves being in debt to another? All the more reason if you two are going to travel this road to –

RASKIN

I know. This poor unaccommodated man will accommodate him.

LEWIS

At least get through the play once!

RASKIN shuffles out. LEWIS write in her note book.

* * * * *

Scene 12

HESTON and LOCKE backstage. HESTON paces.

VOICE OVER INTERCOM

Jordan, we've held for 10 minutes already.

HESTON

(hissing)

It's the fucking opening. The fucking opening.

LOCKE

I called – no answer. Several times. There's Henry, as understudy

–

HESTON

No.

LOCKE

Or you. We've never canceled an opening.

SANDERS appears backstage, seething.

HESTON

I don't know where he is. We're going to have to –

SANDERS

We've never –

LOCKE
Already said that.

SANDERS
If you're going to do this, then you go out there and tell them.

HESTON looks stricken.

SANDERS
You do it.

HESTON
I can't.

SANDERS
If you don't –

HESTON
They'll live.

SANDERS
You won't.

HESTON
Out of my hands. I've got to find Richard.

HESTON leaves. LOCKE follows him.

VOICE OVER THE INTERCOM
Jordan?

SANDERS tells the audience that the opening has had to be cancelled.

* * * * *

Scene 13

RASKIN's apartment. He is naked in a bathtub, having fallen there, but he's grabbed a towel to cover himself. HESTON and LOCKE enter.

RASKIN
I tried to get up. I heard the phone, I heard you calling.

HESTON
Oh Christ.

LOCKE grabs a bathrobe.

LOCKE
Are you all right?

HESTON and LOCKE help him get up, wrap the bathrobe around him.

RASKIN

Thank you – I ain't got much, but no need to flaunt it –

HESTON

Are you okay?

Said louder and more angrily than intended. LOCKE and RASKIN pause.

RASKIN

Back of my head is sore, tailbone dinged – I more slipped down than fell – I just couldn't get myself upright.

HESTON

Do we need to take you to the hospital?

LOCKE

Not sure he should be doing the diagnosing.

RASKIN

I'm fine.

Silence.

RASKIN

I'm sorry.

HESTON

It's fine. You're fine. It's all fine.

Silence.

RASKIN

You had to cancel. You've never –

LOCKE

He knows.

RASKIN

I will go down in history.

HESTON

Yes we will go down.

Silence. SANDERS enters.

SANDERS

Door was unlocked.

Silence.

Are you all right? SANDERS

Fell in the tub. A little bruised, nothing more. Embarrassed. RASKIN

That's good. SANDERS

I appreciate your asking. RASKIN

Well. SANDERS

Especially since – RASKIN

I need to make a decision here. How long have you had your drinking problem? SANDERS

Silence.

By the way, why are you here with him? SANDERS
(to LOCKE)

SANDERS muses.

The two of you are not – SANDERS

No. LOCKE

Carl, Richard is not a drunk. HESTON

I'm not a drunk. RASKIN

Of course, you're a drunk. You said – SANDERS

I didn't say. You said. HESTON

SANDERS

But you let me say it.

HESTON

You seemed satisfied with saying it.

SANDERS

So, you're not a drunk.

RASKIN

Never have been. Not yet.

SANDERS

So –

LOCKE

He's got colon cancer, Carl – that's why I'm here.

SANDERS

You've got –

LOCKE

It runs in my family – I know how to wrangle it.

SANDERS

Cancer. Colon cancer.

Silence.

SANDERS

You put a dying man on my stage.

RASKIN

We're all dying, Carl.

SANDERS

Not like you. Not quite as - as you. Not with a hidden insurance liability. Your posse of liars. A drunk I could - pass off – but –

SANDERS looks at HESTON.

SANDERS

Why? Why for him? Why do it for him? I don't care because whatever it is isn't going to change what I have to do. You all know what I have to do, and you are going to write the press release tomorrow and call the papers, and you are going to tell the cast to pack their miserable belongings and clear out –

HESTON

They have contracts.

SANDERS

I know that! I know my job, not like the two of you.

RASKIN

Three.

SANDERS

How would I know? You've never made it through the play! I will honor the contracts, but I want them out until I'm ready to talk to them.

HESTON

They knew nothing about this –

SANDERS

I don't care –

HESTON

- and they shouldn't be punished.

SANDERS

On your head.

HESTON

I will get them out of the theater. I will tell them I screwed up their lives –

SANDERS

That's not the only thing –

HESTON

- but that for now they can stay in the company housing until you've decided what's next.

SANDERS

Have them stay at your house. Or in this palatial apartment.

Silence.

SANDERS

I am so –

SANDERS cannot find the words.

SANDERS

Once you've talked to the cast – I want your letter of resignation.
Make it simple.

HESTON

You have to get the Board's approval.

SANDERS

Did I say I know my job? I know my job. You can give it to her.
And you –

LOCKE

They needed help.

SANDERS

You all know what this is going to cost. Me. The theater. Me! You know, maybe I should take over the production – what is it that you do anyway? What is it that you do that's so special? I've been to your rehearsals. "Move there." "Try the line this way." "Let's do it again, and this time let's..." I could do that. I could give long speeches about – whatever. How hard could it be? Though maybe I should try my hand at something that has an actual chance of succeeding.

SANDERS goes to say something to RASKIN but instead leaves.

HESTON gets to RASKIN's eye level, and they look at each other eye to eye.

HESTON leaves. LOCKE towel-dries RASKIN's hair, sits next to him.

* * * * *

Scene 14

HESTON in a chair, facing the cast. One other chair onstage.

HESTON

And you can still stay in the company housing while it all gets sorted out. I think that's about it. I'm sorry for all the –

RASKIN enters. HESTON is not pleased.

HESTON

You weren't –

RASKIN

I just want to say I'm sorry as well. Sorry as hell. It's -

HESTON shoots out of his chair, takes the other chair, faces it toward RASKIN, and sits in it.

HESTON

Tell us all how sorry you are. Please.

HESTON gestures over his shoulder to the cast.

HESTON

You can stay for this. Go on.

RASKIN

It's just that –

HESTON

Tell us. Please.

Silence.

VOICE OVER INTERCOM

Jordan? Can the cast leave?

HESTON pivots around in his chair as he looks at the cast. He nods "yes." HESTON and RASKIN watch the cast leave. Then they face each other. Still silence.

HESTON

I asked you not to be here while I was apologizing for you. And yet you still show up.

RASKIN

You weren't apologizing for me anyway, right, so why not show up? Yes? Come on, Jordan – 'fess up to the dying old man.

Silence.

RASKIN

So why not show up? Because for you there's only one sorry mess here, and all self-pity belongs to you.

Silence.

RASKIN

That feeling good at the moment?

Silence.

HESTON

You are such a –

RASKIN

Hup – say it about me, have to say it about yourself. I didn't come to you, Jordan – you came to me.

HESTON

You were just as hungry –

RASKIN

Am – am still – but you brought the bait. That makes you answerable. Can't escape that. Anyway. You should just upchuck the self-pity, just spit it out. It will make you ugly – and at your age you can't afford more of that.

HESTON

Says Mr. Leatherpants.

RASKIN

I speak from truth. So all is now officially ended.

HESTON

All except for the letter and the exile. And yet, Mr. Raskin. And yet.

RASKIN

What?

HESTON

The two of us sitting here. I look at you and. I. Still. Want. This. With. You. Why?

RASKIN

Did you weep when you had to speak to them?

HESTON

I did not weep.

RASKIN

Why? They're a crowd.

HESTON

They're not a crowd.

RASKIN

Like the gala, the opening –

HESTON

They're not a "crowd" crowd.

RASKIN

They're a crowd, and you didn't sob a sob. Say it, Jordan. Look at me.

HESTON

Why can't I just enjoy for a little moment being the shat-upon -

Not one gulp or tear. Say it. RASKIN

Because. They are – HESTON

Your subjects. RASKIN

Friends. HESTON

Subjects. Say it. This - your realm. Say it. Out loud. RASKIN

Realm of mine. Realm. HESTON

Jordan's realm. Where now coffee mugs and tee-shirts bloom. A 12th-century nun hip-hops into the main theater – right? VIP galas smoothing VIP reputations. And JH, the artistic director – RASKIN

Weeps. HESTON

Got a reputation for it. RASKIN

Silence. HESTON points at RASKIN.

Fool? Or Kent? HESTON

You have a cancered heroin addict ass-crashing in his bathtub – you tell me which. RASKIN

No, you tell me. I have a letter to write. HESTON

It's your realm – RASKIN

Not here. HESTON

RASKIN

How much of this was ever yours? Make your own. Mend it, mar it however you want. Be young and stupid again.

HESTON

Our play doesn't end well for anyone.

RASKIN

Our play?

HESTON

Stuck with it. Sticking with it. You.

RASKIN

Lear's get his discharge papers from a foolish world, sad Kent's made wiser. Pluses for me. Sometimes you just want to give the subjects some peace at the end, however ragged. Not uplift, just – respect.

HESTON

No tee-shirts and coffee mugs.

RASKIN

Rope.

LOCKE enters.

LOCKE

You're still here.

RASKIN

Don't sound so enthused.

LOCKE

Carl is looking for the letter.

HESTON

Time for the blade-drop. May I use your desk?

LOCKE

Of course.

HESTON

You have to get off the premises, too.

RASKIN

My kingdom is of another world.

RASKIN rises stiffly, refuses any help.

LOCKE

He's asked me to resign as well. Well, not "asked" but, you know, the usual Carl way – pfft! don't let the door slam your ass.

RASKIN

I think we should go bowling. I know a great duck-pins alley, and we can drink beer.

HESTON

Bowling.

RASKIN

I can do that, right?

LOCKE

Sure.

RASKIN

Smashing inanimate objects always soothes my soul. Deal?

HESTON

Alyson?

LOCKE

I suck at bowling.

RASKIN

So do I. But the beer is pretty good.

LOCKE

I'll think of his face on the headpin.

RASKIN

Won't we all.

Exit.

* * * * *

Scene 15

HESTON and LEWIS in the community room.

LEWIS

We've never done a play in the community room.

HESTON

I think we can make it work.

LEWIS
AA meetings, a flea market –

HESTON
Entrance/exit, simple lighting –

LEWIS
– but never a play.

HESTON
Backstage there -

LEWIS
Are you listening?

HESTON
Flea market. Never a play.

LEWIS
Okay.

HESTON
What?

LEWIS
You asked to look at the space.

HESTON
Yes.

LEWIS
But you're already setting up shop.

Silence.

HESTON
I should ask for permission.

LEWIS
You haven't yet.

HESTON
A barge.

LEWIS
Ish.

HESTON
When I –

LEWIS

Sorry about your resignation.

HESTON

Should have never let me go – a pox on their houses! I am resigned to my resignation.

LEWIS

No you're not.

HESTON

I'm rehearsing it.

LEWIS

Next you'll be saying that maybe it was time.

HESTON

Maybe it was, you know, just time. So I could be here.

LEWIS

Don't flatter. Never believed in that – you know, this, like, detailed arc, for any of us – a "time" arrives and a program runs –

HESTON

Isn't that your business model?

LEWIS

I don't think it works like that. I don't think the universe "speaks" to us – everything happens for a "reason," that sort of thing.

HESTON

A divinity that underlies everything -

LEWIS

There was a cartoon – *New Yorker*, maybe? – shows a road with a bunch of Unitarians on it – the road forks, and one signpost points to Heaven and the other sign says, I think, "Discussion about Heaven," and, of course, the whole UU troupe goes off in the second direction.

HESTON

Sounds like my tribe.

LEWIS

But the *New Yorker* got it wrong, if it was the *New Yorker* – it's not talk for just talk's sake –

HESTON

All gab and blather.

LEWIS

It's the companionship of the sound, I think.

HESTON

Hmm –

LEWIS

No need for friendship in paradise because all is perfect, nothing to work out in committee. Probably very very quiet in paradise.

HESTON

That's a great Elmer Fudd!

LEWIS

UUs prefer the company of themselves to the company of angels. Maybe that's why "theater people" call themselves a company, eh? Right? All that talk.

HESTON

We do act as well.

LEWIS

I'm not saying talk isn't an action. But tongue against palate and the back of the teeth – only thing that makes humans human. Heaven would be inhuman – so, take the other fork. And yes, once I discuss it with my deacons - talk about it - you can use the space. Backstage there, seats here -

HESTON

Why would they let me use it?

LEWIS

We accept all sinners. Which is true. They'll want to know from me why you're asking, though – "Wasn't he just fired?" That sort of thing. So, why did you come to ask?

HESTON

Desperate. King in search of a realm. Maybe.

LEWIS

You could do a reading in a bookstore to keep the promise, and Richard's spirit would be soothed.

HESTON

No – no, his wouldn't, not mine, either. The doing right needs doing by a company, in time, in space – theater is space, moving things around in space – gravity and bodies –

LEWIS

All going down together, in the best of company.

HESTON

It can't be virtual. Actual. Undivided.

LEWIS

You know, I'm not going to talk to my deacons. You are.

HESTON

How many?

LEWIS

Half-dozen if they all show – but I'll make sure they all show up because we have a quest. Meeting's tonight. 6 pm.

HESTON

Lovely.

LEWIS

Walk them through it – take 'em down the road past the fork. It's gotta come from you to them because, remember, I'm the shepherd, not the owner. I can get it from them, sure – but you've got to own it with them.

HESTON

Okay.

LEWIS

Bring Richard, too – a suggestion. Show them bodies in space.

HESTON

Dying bodies.

LEWIS

They will very much understand that.

HESTON

6 pm.

LEWIS

Promise you won't break into tears?

HESTON

Seems I'll be in good company.

LEWIS

The best. Rehearse, walk me through it.

They walk through the space.

* * * * *

Scene 16

This scene is a speed-through of lines between RASKIN and HESTON – I will leave it to the director to select the scene. The point of the scene is to show-off RASKIN's ability and power.

LEWIS and LOCKE watch the scene.

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Scene 17

LOCKE, as stagehand, brings in a rack of costumes, sets it upstage. LEWIS, as stage hand, sets up a row of five chairs, puts out programs. Shifts in light create the stage. Soundscape of people entering, sitting, chatting, etc. HESTON in costume as KENT, off to the side, pacing.

Room goes to silence. Lights shift. RASKIN enter, a long cloth draped over his arms, wailing. LOCKE, now in costume, eases into the scene.

[Act V, scene iii, amended]

KING LEAR

Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth.

KENT

[Kneeling] O my good master!

KING LEAR

Prithee, away.
A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.
Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight....Are you not
Kent?

KENT

The same,
Your servant Kent: I am the very man,
That, from your first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps.

KING LEAR

You are welcome hither.

KENT

Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

KING LEAR

Ay, so I think.
And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there!

Dies

KENT

Break, heart; I prithee, break!

[LOCKE kneels to brush away RASKIN's hair or caress his face.]

KENT

Let him pass! he hates him much
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

LOCKE

He is gone, indeed.

KENT

The wonder is, he hath endured so long:
He but usurp'd his life.

LOCKE
Our present business is general woe.
The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

ACTORS freeze for several seconds, then relax. LOCKE kisses RASKIN's cheek. LEWIS comes on, smiling. They get out of their costumes and move to the next scene.

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Scene 18

Scene shift to bowling alley – table, chairs, beers, duck pin in the middle, bowling sounds in the background. Drawn on the duck pin is a face – SANDERS.

RASKIN
Well?

HESTON
You did get all the way through.

RASKIN
Told you. I'm exhausted.

They all toast.

RASKIN
To getting all the way through.

Silence.

RASKIN plays with the duck pin, mock-punches the face, everyone smiles, sips.

RASKIN's face goes slack, and he slides out of his chair onto the floor. LOCKE and HESTON kneel by him; LEWIS pulls out a cell phone and moves upstage as she calls 911.

No one speaks, no one moves. The three gather around RASKIN, who looks at them.

LEWIS
They're on the way.

RASKIN
Me, too.

Then he passes out – still breathing but unconscious.

No one speaks. Sound of someone getting a strike and a cheer.

Lights to black.

Scene 19

Single microphone in a downlight. SANDERS comes to the microphone, pauses, speaks.

SANDERS

Before we begin tonight, I have some news I'd like to share with
all of you.

Lights to black.