

A bare stage.

(A door slams. JACOB storms on stage, carrying a tall stool. He is wearing a black whole body leotard which is much too small for him. He slams the stool down somewhere.)

(Immediately, he is unsatisfied with its position and slams it down somewhere else. Again, he is unsatisfied and moves it. And again, and again, etc., until he slams into place downstage right.)

(Now, he focuses his attention on the stool and his anger disappears in the intensity of his concentration. He makes a careful and minute adjustment of the stool's position. He turns to storm away but catches sight of the stool out of the corner of his eye. Again, all anger is gone as he concentrates on the stool, approaches it, and makes a careful but minute adjustment. Then, he storms off, and surrenders himself to some intense, angry, self-occupied, and wordless pacing.)

(Then, his eyes fall upon the stool, his anger is gone, replaced by his intense examination of the stool. He approaches the stool slowly, his eyes darting over the whole structure of the stool. When he is crouching close to it, he suddenly looks over his left shoulder, up, and then around, considering the stool in

relation to the space for the first time. He then carefully prepares himself to make another adjustment. The preparation is agonising. As soon as the adjustment is made, he pulls his hand away quickly. He freezes and watches the stool for a moment. He relaxes slightly and withdraws carefully. Once he recognizes the stool is safely in place, his body crumples slightly. At first, he is a little confused, then his anger begins to boil up. He is perfectly still but for the occasional sharp short movement of his head and his eyes.)

(Abruptly, in a burst of movement, Jacob adopts the clichéd pose of an Elizabethan actor the moment before a powerful soliloquy: left hand raised, right hand at heart, chin high. His package is bulging and ready to burst out of the leotard. He inhales to speak, he holds his breath, as he tries to speak but he can't think of anything. He releases a little air. Then, he inhales to try again; he still can't think of anything to say. It is like something is stuck in his throat. His hands drop and his body crumples much as it had before. Again, he is perfectly still but for his eyes and head.)

(Suddenly, he starts limbering up, moving his shoulders, jumping up and down in place, stretching, cracking his neck.

He also starts doing any and all vocal and mouth exercises that involve only sounds -- no words or anything remotely intelligible. He is very loud.)

(When he is finally ready, he centres himself, takes a deep breath and then abruptly adopts the clichéd pose of a method actor. His shoulders slouch, his head falls forward, and he stares at the floor. He plays with his nose, he rubs the back of his neck, scratches, etc. There are a lot of small twitchy movements, his feet shuffle in place, his hands are expressive. Again, he tries to speak again, but he can't. He sighs a lot, smacks his lips, and takes noisy breathes.)

(Suddenly, he bursts out of the cliché with a frustrated flurry of limbs and he sets to storming about the stage again. Eventually, his eye catches the stool, he stops, focuses. He becomes perfectly still, preparing to make an adjustment. Then, he crumples again. His eyes and head dart for a moment. He takes a very big breathe and then storms off-stage.)

(JENNA enters. She carries a large military cargo bag. She takes a moment to decide this is exactly where she would like to be. Then, she removes, unfolds, and then snaps open a fairly large old-fashioned red and white table cloth and lets it drift to the floor. She

takes her time to adjust the table cloth but is not too concerned Then, she removes a smaller stool, a large stainless steel bowl, and a small paring knife. She sits for a moment with the knife in her lap. She drinks in the space with her whole body and is pleased with where she finds herself. She gives a light and gentle sigh, reaches into her bag and removes a potato. She peels it carefully, slices it into French fries, and tosses the fries into the silver bowl. She peels and slices potatoes through out the play. She's in no rush but she should have a good mound of fries in the bowl by the time she explains why she is peeling the potatoes.)

(As JENNA is peeling and cutting her first potato, JACOB storms back into the space, holding a large glass of soy milk in a clear glass. He is not entirely surprised by JENNA's presence but he is not happy about it either.)

JACOB

No.

JENNA

Hello.

JACOB

No, no, no.

JENNA

Don't mind me.

JACOB

Yes. Yes, I mind you.

JENNA

No, no. Don't mind me at all.

JACOB

Oh, but I do.

JENNA

I've only come to keep you company.

JACOB

I don't want company. That's why I come here.

JENNA

(She talks over JACOB.)

Oh, don't be silly. Who doesn't want company?

JACOB

I do. Don't? Do?

JENNA

There you go. I'm glad I came.

JACOB

No! I don't want company. That's why I came here. To be alone. Go. Leave me alone. Now.

JENNA

I can't.

JACOB

Why not?

JENNA

I've settled.

JACOB

So?

JENNA

I've started.

JACOB

And?

JENNA
Once I've settled, once I've started, I always finish.

JACOB
No!

JENNA
I'm very disciplined.

JACOB
No! My space. My place. My time.

JENNA
Not anymore.

JACOB
My space!

JENNA
I've settled and I've started.

JACOB
My place!

JENNA
I'm here until I've finished.

JACOB
My time!

JENNA
It can't be undone.

JACOB
Anything. Everything. Can be undone.

JENNA
Perhaps, if you had said something before I settled and started --

JACOB
You settled and started when I wasn't here.

JENNA
That was no concern of mine.

JACOB

Of course, it was. Is?

JENNA

It was no concern of mine. You weren't here to be a concern of mine. So, it follows, you continue not to have been a concern of mine.

JACOB

(He bursts in a frustrated
flurry of limbs.)

Oh! My space. My place. My time.

JENNA

Not any more.

JACOB

I've booked it.

JENNA

No, you haven't.

JACOB

Yes. Yes I have. I've booked it. With the manager.

JENNA

You haven't booked it and there is no manager.

JACOB

I have booked it and there is a manager. We have rules. Systems. Procedures. For this. Very sort of conflict. This. Conflict of interest.

JENNA

There are no rules, no systems, no procedures, and there is certainly no conflict of interest.

JACOB

You won't leave me alone. I want to be left alone. That's a conflict. Of interest. My interest in being left alone and your interest in not leaving me alone.

JENNA

I don't think that's what's meant by the expression.

JACOB

We have rules, systems, procedures. A manager! So I can book the space. So, I can be alone when I want to be alone. My space. My place. My time. Out. Now. Me. Alone. You. Gone. Now.

JENNA

(She talks over JACOB.)

Moreover, if it were an actual conflict of interest, we wouldn't need a manager. We'd need an ombudsman. Ombudsman. Ombudsman. Now, Jacob, you know perfectly well, there is no manager and the space cannot be booked.

JACOB

I know perfectly well there is and I know perfectly well I can! I'll prove it. Watch!

(He vividly demonstrates that he is remembering.)

There is a piece of paper. On the door. Provided by the manager. A person writes her name on the paper. With a pencil. A little knobbly pencil. With chew marks on it. And it's attached to a string. The little knobbly chew marked pencil is attached to a string and the string is attached to the door. With a tack. The very same tack that holds the paper to the door. So. A person needs to be careful. When she writes her name. On the paper. Because when she writes her name on the paper provided by the manager to book the space, she needs to be careful because if she isn't careful, when she writes her name on the paper provided by the manager to book the space, she can pull out the tack and, then. The whole thing falls apart. Everything. Falls apart. And down. Falls down. Down. I know. Because its happened to me. Several times. To me. Personally. Before I figured it out. To be careful. It happened to me. In front of attractive women. Very many attractive women. More attractive than you, I might add.

JENNA

You know perfectly well there is no such paper, no such pencil, no such string, and no such tack. Although, I concede, there may be such a door.

JACOB

Aha! See that's the key. That's the crucial step. That's the crucial concession. I have you now. Because. You see. There is such a door! And on that door there is a paper, a pencil, a string, and a tack. To resolve conflicts. Of interest. In this space. You see. When a person puts her name on the paper, she does much more than put her name on a piece of paper. She turns the paper into a list. Maybe not at first. Maybe not right away. Sure. Maybe. The paper needs more than one name to become a list. But. It doesn't matter. You see. With one name, the paper has the potential of becoming a list. And with that potential it has all it needs to resolve conflicts. Of interest. In this space. Because! Once a person puts her name on the actual or potential list. She books the space. This space. Booked. With the little knobbly chew marked pencil on the string. With the paper. Put there. By the manager. With a tack. First come, first served.

JENNA

Jacob, I wonder, do you realize you always provide far too much detail when you are lying?

JACOB

I'm not lying! I am telling the truth. I provide too much detail because I've seen it all. With my own two eyes. And I'm remembering it.

JENNA

No. You provide too much detail because you want to give the impression you are remembering it. Whereas, if you were actually remembering, you would have forgotten the details. The creative mind is precise and determinate; whereas the recollecting mind is vague and indeterminate.

JACOB

That's not true! My memory is very precise and determinate! I can prove it!

JENNA

Alright.

JACOB

"Alright," what?

JENNA

Alright, prove it. Please do. I'd like that very much.

(Their eyes lock in a stare-off. JACOB blinks first and then storms about for a moment. He suddenly gets an idea. He starts to storm off and then remembers the glass of soy milk in his hand. He stops and looks for somewhere to place the glass. JENNA motions towards the opposite end of her tablecloth. JACOB refuses petulantly. His eye falls on the stool. All anger disappears. He approaches the stool carefully. He carefully and painstakingly prepares to place the glass delicately, exactly where it should go. Once the glass is on the stool, his fingers burst off the glass, and he freezes for a moment, and then slowly draws his hand away, and straightens up. He looks for a moment at his work, looks disgusted, and storms off again.)

JENNA

(She carries on peeling potatoes, smiling to herself.)

It has nothing to do with the wrist. It's all in the thumb and the forefinger.

(In the program, a small sheet or paper should be inserted asking whomever reads it to laugh as loudly and as naturally as possible when this line is said. In all likelihood, only some portion of the audience will read the

note and only some of them will follow it.)

(SAM suddenly falls from a great height and lands in a heap on the floor. JENNA takes no notice of SAM's arrival. After SAM lies for a moment in a heap, a large sack of apples is unceremoniously thrown after her. SAM lies in a heap for a moment more, leaps up, brushes herself off, and inspects the situation. She is dirty, her hair is a messy knot. After a moment's reflection, she pulls out of the sack a tiny little stool and sits on it. When she is satisfied all is as it should be, SAM reaches into the sack, takes out a very red apple, and takes a massive crunching bite. She chews loudly and speaks with her mouth full. Her apple biting should be a kind of punctuation and coincide with moments of reflection. Chomping should happen throughout. Apple cores should be tossed anywhere and everywhere. By the time she explains why she is eating apples, she should have eaten a lot of apples.)

SAM

Jenna! Hello. How are you?

JENNA

Oh, I'm fine Sam. Just fine. How are you?

SAM

Can't complain. Can't complain.

JENNA

I'm sure you could if you tried.

SAM

Its true! I'm sure I could. Thought I'd drop by to say hello.

JENNA

Oh, Sam. You use the same line every time.

SAM

Do I? Has it got any funnier? You know, because of the repetition. Has my constant repetition of the same joke made it funnier because I and you -- we -- are both aware it isn't funny. So it becomes funny because of the fact that both of us know it's not funny.

JENNA

No.

SAM

Not all.

JENNA

Not at all.

SAM

Really? Seems to work for other people.

JENNA

Not you, I'm afraid.

SAM

Strange that.

JENNA

Maybe they prep the audience.

SAM

Maybe, I'm not funny.

JENNA

I suppose that's possible too.

SAM

I'd rather you hadn't agreed so quickly.

JENNA

To be honest, the line wasn't funny to start. I'm not sure how repeating it would make it funnier. Zero multiplied by zero remains zero.

SAM

What if I wore something silly? You know, like a costume.

JENNA

Something sillier than you're wearing now.

SAM

Yes. No. Yes and no. I mean, "ha-ha" silly as opposed to "kind-of-crazy" silly.

JENNA

It could work. A peculiar costume is often an easy source of humour. What did you have in mind?

SAM

A clown suit, maybe. Clowns are funny, right?

JENNA

Depends on the clown. Some are tragic. Some are scary even.

SAM

What? Clowns: tragic?! Scary?! How?

JENNA

The clown's humour and frivolity is so rooted in a façade of convention and cliché that the tragic or the terrifying may all too easily lurk behind it.

SAM

Behind a big wig, a red nose, and raggedy old clothing?

JENNA

When so much energy is devoted to the appearance of frivolity, it is plausible to think it's meant to hide something.

SAM

Ooo. The big shoes. The falling and the tumbling. The little car. All of them in there. Squeezed together. Its fun! How could a clown possibly be tragic or terrifying. They act like clowns for Pete's sake.

JENNA

The incongruity of appearance and reality creates a space in which lurks the unknown, the unseen, the unbearable.

SAM

Oh, boo. Any clown who is tragically sad is not going to be any fun and no clown at all. It will be obvious and someone will give him a big hug until he feels better. And what's so frightening about a bit of make-up. I suppose if the clown were polishing a gun it might be frightening but that's true of anyone polishing a gun.

JENNA

Do you know what I love about you, Sam.

SAM

What?

JENNA

The intelligence of your sincerity.

SAM

(She runs to and gives JENNA a big hug and a kiss on the cheek.)

Thanks, Jenna. Oh, I see he's got his talking stool out already.

JENNA

He does.

SAM

Has he got anywhere. Any further? I haven't missed anything have I?

JENNA

I didn't arrive in time to see him place the stool.

SAM

Ooo. I still like watching it. I wish I had been here earlier.

JENNA

Sam, you've never seen him do it. You always arrive late.

SAM

I know. But, you've told me about it so many times, and you tell it so well, it's almost like I've seen it. I can't wait to see it again.

JENNA

I didn't see it this time, Sam. So, I can't tell you.

SAM

Ooo, it's my favourite part! Couldn't you pretend you saw it and tell me anyway.

JENNA

I won't lie, Sam. You know I won't.

SAM

Don't lie. Pretend. It's not a lie if we both know you're pretending.

JENNA

Maybe.

SAM

Oh, please! If something new happens, I'd hate for something new to finally happen and for me to not know what happened all the way from the start.

JENNA

Ok. If it turns out to be new, I will pretend. For you.

SAM

Yea!

(JACOB returns with a piece of cardboard roughly torn from a box. A crayon tied to a piece of ribbon is attached to the cardboard with a clothespin. There is a piece of chewing gum stuck to the back of the cardboard. He has scrawled his name somewhere in the vicinity of the top of the cardboard.)

SAM

Double Yea! It's Jacob!

JACOB

Not you, too.

SAM

(She runs to him and gives him
a hug. He receives it
grudgingly.)

I'm so happy!

JACOB

The feeling is not mutual.

JENNA

Oh, Jacob.

SAM

It doesn't matter what he says. I can feel he's happy. It
oozes out of him when I squeeze.

(She squeezes him again.)

JACOB

(He ignores Sam, talking over
her.)

Here in my hand, I possess the resolution to our little
conflict. Of interest. In this space. And. Once the
conflict is resolved in my favour. Neither of you will
remain.

JENNA

So, you've found your proof then?

JACOB

That's right.

(He brandishes his cardboard.)

JENNA

Bring it here and let's have a look.

(JACOB makes a big show of showing it to JENNA. She makes a big show of inspecting it carefully.)

Jacob, I am very surprised you have brought this to me as your proof.

JACOB

It is. I believe. Self-explanatory.

JENNA

It is self-explanatory, but it hardly supports your case.

JACOB

Of course, it does. Look. Jacob. On the top. Of the list. To book the space. First come, first served.

JENNA

The potential list.

JACOB

Well, yes. The potential list. Nevertheless. I. Booked. Space. Straightforward. First come, first served.

JENNA

Yes and no.

JACOB

No, "yes and no". No, "yes and no". There is only yes. I. Booked. Space. Straightforward. First come, first served.

JENNA

Yes, "yes and no". Yes, it is straightforward; No, you have not booked the space.

JACOB

Yes, it is straightforward. Yes, I have booked it. Yes, it is self-explanatory.

JENNA

Yes, it is straightforward. No, you have not booked it. Yes, it is self-explanatory, however, my self does not explain the evidence the same way your self does.

JACOB

How could your self not.

JENNA

You misunderstand what is written here.

JACOB

What's to misunderstand. J. A. C. O. B. Jacob. Me. Jacob.
Me. At the top of the list.

JENNA

Potential list.

JACOB

Yes. Potential list. With me at the top!

JENNA

No. With me at the top.

JACOB

What? Who? No. Me. Jacob. J. A. C. O. B. Me. Jacob.

JENNA

No. Me. Jenna.

JACOB

(Hesitates, he looks at the
list to be sure, then he makes
a sound of pure unmitigated
frustration.)

JENNA

Jacob is short for Jenna.

JACOB

What!?

JENNA

Yes. J, A, C, O, B. Jenna.

JACOB

Huh?

JENNA

Don't worry, I don't mind if you stay.

JACOB

You're irrational. Irrational. Irrational. Irrational.

(He counts on his fingers.)

JENNA

I am no more or less rational than a person who claims that this lump of cardboard and this scrawl of crayon provides any kind of definitive direction on how we should proceed.

JACOB

It's the same number of letters. It's not even shorter. Jenna is the same number of letters as Jacob. It doesn't even make sense to say it's short for Jenna.

JENNA

Pish posh. It's all a matter of how you define your terms.

JACOB

No. This isn't a quibble over some definition. I mean. Even if I am prepared to overlook the fact that Jacob and Jenna have no semantic or symbolic relation or correspondence whatsoever --

SAM

They both start with J!

JACOB

Fine. They both start with J. But! They are the exact same number of letters. How can Jacob be short for Jenna?

JENNA

The Russians are a peculiar people.

JACOB

The Russians?

JENNA

They have all kinds of different versions of the same name which bare no resemblance to each other.

SAM

I couldn't finish *War and Peace* because of all the names.

JENNA

Indeed, given the fact that names are relatively interchangeable, how can you even be sure Jacob is your real name.

JACOB

Of course, it's my real name!

JENNA

Why "of course"? Sam and I call you Jacob but that doesn't prove anything.

JACOB

It seems familiar to me. Right, even.

JENNA

What does that mean? Nothing. It only means you've been habituated to a false name.

SAM

Once, for a year, I thought my name was pooper.

JENNA

For all you know, your name might even be Jenna.

JACOB

Your name is Jenna!

JENNA

Why because you think so? Because you call me Jenna. That proves nothing. For all you know, my name is Jacob and I call you Jacob because I like the sound of my own name.

JACOB

She calls you Jenna!

SAM

I'm easily bought.

JENNA

She's very amiable.

JACOB

Ok. Wait. If my name is Jenna, and Jacob is short for Jenna, that means I have the room booked. Right?

JENNA

No, it means your evidence doesn't count as proof of anything unless a whole range of background assumptions are already taken for granted.

JACOB

Didn't we agree my name was Jenna?

JENNA

No, but we did demonstrate how easily your evidence can be shown to mean anything at all.

SAM

Honestly, I thought it would be a bit harder.

JENNA

However, above all else, the main point is this: as evidence, you brought back a hunk of cardboard, a length of ribbon, a crayon, and, what looks to be -- and I hope to be -- a piece of old chewing gum. I see no paper, no string, no knobbly pencil, and I see no tack.

JACOB

So?

JENNA

You couldn't even remember the details of your own lie long enough to forge the evidence properly.

JACOB

Ah. Yes. Well. I can see how you might see it that way. Yes. I can see how it might seem that way. But. Appearances can be deceiving. Because! You've got it backwards. I remembered the details incorrectly when I recounted them to you. It was only when I went to retrieve the list I realized I was mistaken.

JENNA

No. You initially offered a very specific set of details because you were making them up and when you tried to remember what you had made up to fabricate your evidence you could only recall the spirit of what you had invented.

JACOB

Well, the spirit is right! That's all that matters. In the end. For the conflict. Of interest. Here is the list. The

potential list. Here is my name. Booked. First come, first served.

JENNA

If that is your name?

JACOB

Of course, it is my name!

SAM

I thought your name was Jenna.

JACOB

(He rushes over to JENNA and his bursting package is close by her face.)

That's her name!

JENNA

You know, its very hard to take you seriously when you are wearing that.

JACOB

Wearing what?

(He looks down at himself and sees what he is wearing and how he is bursting out of it.)

Ah jeez.

(He is embarrassed and makes an effort to cover himself as he leaves.)

I'll be right back. Hold on. Yeah. Just a second. Ah jeez.

SAM

(She laughs.)

Why are you being so cruel?

JENNA

I don't know. Something feels different this time. Maybe it will happen, if I push him a little.

SAM

I hope so. We've waited a long time.

(JACOB storms back on wearing a pair of short-shorts, a Hawaiian shirt, a life jacket, and a pith helmet.)

JACOB

Ok, where were we?

JENNA

Were we somewhere?

JACOB

Of course, we were. We were here.

SAM

At least.

JENNA

How can you be so sure?

JACOB

Oh. I hate when you say that. Well, I came back didn't I. It must be to finish something.

JENNA

Maybe, you came back to start something.

SAM

That seems plausible.

JACOB

No. I am sure we were in the middle of something.

JENNA

For any given moment, there is always at least once perspective from which it can be seen as a middle rather than a beginning or an end.

SAM

(She makes a frames with her arms.)

It's a question of framing.

JACOB

No. I can feel it. Even if I can't quite put my finger on it.

JENNA

Your memory seems quite porous.

JACOB

You're no help!

SAM

Has it always been like this?

JACOB

I can't recall.

SAM

Figures.

JENNA

What do you think might help? To help you figure out where we were?

SAM

Or, where we are even.

JACOB

I don't know.

SAM

Hey, Jenna. Have you ever had something on the tip of your tongue? You know, something you wanted to say, something you knew you wanted to say but, for some reason, you couldn't seem to say.

JENNA

Why yes, Sam, who hasn't?

SAM

Well, apparently, Jenna, the best thing way to go about remembering that which you can't seem to recall is not to think of it at all.

JENNA

Oh really.

SAM and JENNA

Well, then --

(They strike a pose as if to start singing a song, music from nowhere swells.)

JACOB

(Talks over the music, cutting it off.)

That seems counter-intuitive.

SAM

(She walks away from Jenna, the song forgotten.)

I know. It always works for me, though. Maybe it will work for you.

JENNA

Go ahead, Jacob. You start. Try to say something new, something different from what we were talking about before. It will get us started and maybe you can remember why you're here.

JACOB

Ok.

(JACOB tries to speak but he can't. He tries and the harder he tries the more it becomes like he is gagging. Eventually he stops.)

SAM

What's wrong? Can't you say anything?

JACOB

I don't know. Well, look there you go. Obviously I can speak. I mean, I seem speak to you two all the time.

JENNA

That's very strange. Why do you think you weren't able to speak Jacob?

JACOB

I don't know.

JENNA

What were you thinking about?

JACOB

I don't know. Nothing. Maybe. Something. New. I guess.

JENNA

Good. That was the point. Remember, you were trying to say something new. To get us on a different conversation. A different course. And by doing that, maybe you will remember why it was you came back here.

SAM

So, what was it you were trying to say but couldn't? Remember, it's not important what you say. It only has to be other than what we were talking about.

JACOB

Oh!

(He explodes in a flurry of limbs.)

I am tired of answering questions! It's my turn. To ask some questions. My turn. Questions.

JENNA

For instance.

SAM

(She talks over Jenna.)

Yea! Something new!

JACOB

Well. Ahhh.

(He looks around for a moment.)

Aha! Why in fuck's name are you peeling potatoes and cutting them up into strips.

SAM

Hey, don't use the fuck's name in vain!

JENNA

It keeps my hands busy. Occupies time. Makes movement through space. A manner of keeping-making or making-keeping.

JACOB

Keeping?

JENNA

Making.

JACOB

Making?

JENNA

Keeping.

JACOB

Making? Keeping?

JENNA

Both. Making-keeping. Keeping-making. It's hyphenated.

SAM

Naturally.

JACOB

What does this have to do with potato-peeling. Or, peeling-potato.

JENNA

When I was a child, for the last few days of every month my mother would make home-made French fries for dinner and sometimes for lunch. She'd peel the potatoes, cut them into strips, and toss them into a stainless steel bowl. Once she had enough slices, she would fry them in a deep iron pan on our big black gas stove. The smell of oil would hang over everything. I'd eat as many French fries as I could, with all the ketchup and salt I could ever want.

SAM

Lucky!

JENNA

Yes. I thought I was one of the luckiest kid in the whole world

SAM

I love French fries.

JENNA

It was only much later, when I was older, living on my own, and planning my own meals, I realized my mother made home-made French fries at the end of each month because we had no money for anything else. Potatoes were cheap and filling.

SAM

Ooo. From sunny to partly cloudy.

JENNA

Yes, that's about right. And for a long time, it seemed to me that I ate a lot of home-made French Fries a lot of the time. Maybe, even for weeks at a time.

JACOB

Were you that poor?

JENNA

I don't know. I don't think so. Only recently, it occurred to me that maybe we didn't have French fries as often as I remember. Maybe, it seems like it happened so often only because I enjoyed the memory of it and remembered it as much as I could. Or, maybe, it seems like it happened so often only because I want to remember myself coming from humble beginnings.

JACOB

Which do you think it is?

JENNA

I'm not sure it matters.

JACOB

Why not?

JENNA

Every time I remember it, I think of something new. Every time I think of it, I remember something different. Even now, in answering your question, it occurred to me how different my memory would have been had my mother made boiled potatoes.

SAM

Ick!

JENNA

So, Jacob, in keeping my hands busy, by occupying time, by making movement in space, I am keeping memory. In keeping my hands busy, by occupying my time, by making movement in space, I am making memory. Keeping-making; making-keeping.

SAM

I always thought you did it because you're hungry and want some French fries later.

JENNA

Yes. There is that too. I still like French fries.

SAM

Who doesn't! Fatty salt! Yum!

JENNA

Any more questions, Jacob?

JACOB

Um. Well. Hey, yeah! Why in God's name are you eating those apples all the time?

SAM

I like them.

JACOB

Do you like them that much?

SAM

Sort of.

JACOB

Either you do or you don't. It's not a trick question.

SAM

I do and I don't. One time, me and the family went to an orchard to pick cherries. We had a good day together. We all had a really good time. Laughing and playing. Picking and eating cherries. On the way home, I'm not even sure how, but, you know, like it happened so many times before, we ended up in this huge screaming fight. It got so intense that Dad had to pull over to the side of the road. And after we screamed at each other for a little while more, eventually we all got tired and stopped saying anything. It may have been my little brother who took his bag out first and started eating. I am not sure who did. But, all of a sudden, we were all eating away at our cherries. Eventually -- again, I'm not even sure who -- someone said, "the only time any of us are really happy is when we are all eating." We all started laughing. Loud and really hard. Because it was true. Together, we were happiest when we were eating. With our mouths full, it was hard to talk, and with no talking, it was hard to fight. It was us happy. Together.

JACOB

I don't understand.

SAM

You don't have to.

JACOB

Wait. In the story you eat cherries. What's with the apples then?

SAM

Apples are red and round, they are much cheaper than cherries, and they are available year-round.

JENNA

That's very thoughtful of you.

SAM

I try to help when I can.

(SAM and JENNA watch JACOB as he stares blankly at them.)

JACOB

Ok. Fine. Right. So. This is the kicker question then isn't it? Why are you peeling potatoes and eating apples now? Here. In this space. In this place. At this time.

JENNA

Oh, well that's the simplest question of all.

SAM

We're waiting for you to say something.

JENNA

Something new. Something different. Something to put us on a different course. Something to help you remember why you came back here. Something to help you remember why you always come back here.

SAM

Why else would we be here?

JACOB

Oh. I see. I hadn't realized.

JENNA

It's all right.

JACOB

You've been waiting for me. All this time. To say something.

JENNA

Once I start, I always finish. I am very disciplined.

SAM

I'm not disciplined but sometimes I'm patient!

JACOB

Ok. Well, maybe I should say something then. Could? Should? Different. New, maybe. Seems simple enough.

SAM

Can't hurt to try.

JENNA

It could if he fell over and pulled his groin.

SAM

It's true! Be careful. Don't hurt yourself!

(JACOB tries to speak again, he
can't, eventually starts

gagging again. When he pauses to catch his breathe, he catches sight of the stool again and goes to adjust it.)

JENNA and SAM

No!

(They shock JACOB out of his concentration and he looks back towards the women.)

SAM

The stool's fine. The stool's fine. Back away from the stool. Back away from the stool. Breathe. Everything's going to be OK. Just back away from the stool.

(He does. He regroups.)

JENNA

Ok. good. Try again. Only this time, don't worry if it's new or different or anything. Say anything. Anything at all.

JACOB

(Frowning, he thinks for a moment or two.)

I've never skipped a class in my entire life. Not once. And yet, I always have a dream where I have to attend a French exam the next day and I haven't been to class for months. Normally, for some unexplained reason, it is crucial I pass the exam, only I know it's impossible because I haven't been to class. I never actually take the exam but I know it's there to be taken and I can't stop worrying about it. When I finally wake up, I am overwhelmed with dread at the thought of the French exam I will fail that day. Sometimes, it can take as long as five or ten minutes before I realize it was a dream and there is no exam to fail.

JENNA

Very good! Well done!

SAM

How did that feel?

JACOB
Weird.

JENNA
Why weird?

JACOB
I don't know. Something didn't seem right about it.

JENNA
Like what?

JACOB
I don't know. It didn't seem important. You know. Sufficiently so. It was. Mundane.

JENNA
Why mundane?

JACOB
It's so typical really.

SAM
It is a very common dream to have.

JACOB
I know.

JENNA
But it was something. And different. From what we were talking about.

SAM
Yea for Jacob!

JENNA
Try again.

JACOB
Ok. Sure. Ok. *Cats*. Ok, yeah. *Cats*. You know, the musical. *Cats*, the musical. Have you ever seen it? It starts with a little song about a cat. You know, to introduce the cat. A song. And then. There is another song. Introducing another cat. And so on. Oh, and there is some dancing. You know, song after song, cat after cat, dance after dance, we get introduced to a bunch of these little different dancing

cats. So, the audience trundles off to intermission. And, I'm like. Ok. We now know a whole bunch of cats. Neat cats even. Cool cats. You know. I am curious to see what happens to these cats. What do they do? Who do they become? Where do they go? I am so totally geared up for the second half. And what happens? The second half starts and we get another song. Introducing another fucking cat. Again, song after song, cat after cat, dance after dance. Then, one of them dies, and we get another fucking song. Nothing happens. One of the most successful Broadway musicals in the history of time and nothing ever happens. I hate that fucking show. I hate that fucking show with all my heart. I hate that fucking show with all my fucking heart.

SAM

Woh!

JENNA

Well done Jacob. How do you feel?

JACOB

Wow. Oh, wow. I feel good. Real good. Oh yeah. Wow.

SAM

Well, it definitely sounded like you got something off your chest.

JACOB

Well, yeah. Wow. You know, I've wanted to say that for like ten years. Maybe more.

JENNA

Why didn't you.

JACOB

I don't know. I wanted to. But, it seemed kind of silly. You know, almost not worth saying. You know, like, maybe, it wasn't something worth being angry over.

JENNA

Well, it is a bit silly.

SAM

Yeah, a little.

(She snorts.)

JACOB

Well, yeah, I guess.

SAM and JENNA

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't have said it.

JENNA

Silly things need to be said too. Sometimes you won't even know it's silly or not that big of a deal until you say it.

SAM

Sometimes it might only seem silly because people don't get it too. If it's too different for them to understand. It doesn't prove it's silly of course.

JACOB

Yeah?

SAM

Not in this case, though.

JACOB

No?

JENNA

No. In this case, it is a little silly.

JACOB

Well, yeah, I guess it is. You know. Having said it. It doesn't really seem all that important. Anymore. But, it sure seemed important before. Real important. Real fucking important. Wow. I've been pissed off about it for so long. Wow. I don't know why I didn't talk about it before. You know, cleared the air. Got it out of my system.

JENNA

It doesn't matter now. Be glad its finally out.

JACOB

Yeah. I feel almost light somehow. It's almost like my throat has become unclogged. Almost cleared.

(He does a little jig.)

I am as giddy as a school girl!

JENNA

Sometimes, when a person has something to say but refuses to say it, sometimes it can get in the way of saying anything at all.

JACOB

Well, yeah. Exactly. I feel as if I could say anything now. Anything at all. Wow. I feel so free!

(He realises something and becomes thoughtful but the women don't notice.)

SAM

Do you know, Jacob, it's almost as if you could say, *Cats* got your tongue. Ha! Do you get it? Jacob? Do you get it? *Cats* got your tongue.

JENNA

Oh, Sam, no. That's awful. Truly awful.

(They realize JACOB has gone quiet, still, and reflective. They wait for him to speak.)

JACOB

I remember now. Why I came back here. Why I always come back here.

JENNA

Really?

SAM

Do you really remember?

JACOB

I do. Sometime ago, I decided I wanted to create something. Maybe find it. I'm not sure which. Create-discover. Discover-create. Anyways. Something. Not anything. Something. Beautiful. Unique. Beautiful, unique and entirely mine. It was all that mattered. I fasted for weeks, I experimented with drugs, I climbed mountains and spoke to sages, I read ancient wisdom and unlocked esoteric codes, I hung from hooks in the sun and I even performed acts of unspeakable cruelty on innocents. Finally, after

sixty-eight hours in a sensory deprivation tank, I managed to draw it forth. From some inside untapped abyss. What I had been seeking-making or making-seeking. It was a word. One word. One perfect beautiful and unique word.

SAM

What was the word?

JACOB

Tangelico.

SAM

Tangelico.

JENNA

Tangelico. Sounds kind of nice.

SAM

Sort of rolls off the tongue doesn't it.

JENNA

It's certainly a nice word to say. Well done, Jacob.

SAM

I would have thought after all that effort you might have come up with a bit more than one word --

JENNA

It's still quite a lovely word. Really.

JACOB

I liked it. Still kind of like it. Really.

SAM

So what happened?

JACOB

I Googled it.

JENNA

Oh no.

JACOB

I Googled it and some guy in Nebraska has an on-line roll-playing game he created for his friends and the name of his fantasy world is Tangelico. Same spelling even.

SAM

Ouch.

JACOB

That's right. The very essence of my being, the still centre of my absolute uniqueness, the shiny starlight of my personhood, and someone had already thought of it and used it as the name for his on-line fantasy role playing game.

SAM

Shitty buzz, bro.

JACOB

Yes. Yes indeed. Shitty buzz indeed.

SAM

At least it wasn't a porn site.

JENNA

Sam, shush.

JACOB

After that, I started coming here. Starting coming here to be alone. To be alone and to try and say something new, something unique, something different. And every time I come here. Nothing comes out. I try and I try and nothing come out. I try and I try and the only thing I ever manage to do is to move this fucking stool all over this place.

(He kicks the stool and it falls over, spilling the milk.)

This place. This time.

(He stares at the milk.)

Fuck.

SAM

Jacob, there's no sense crying over --

JENNA

Oh Sam, not now.

JACOB

No. Jenna. It's alright. She's right really. There's no sense crying. It's pointless.

SAM

Jacob I was referring to the --

JENNA

Why did you always get a glass of milk Jacob? Every time. You always leave and get a glass of milk.

JACOB

I was thirsty. Am thirsty?

SAM

Really? That's all.

JACOB

Yes. I was thirsty -- am thirsty -- and I want a drink.

SAM

I always thought it meant something. You know, big and symbolic.

JENNA

(Quietly, as SAM speaks.)

Nice.

JACOB

No. I was -- am thirsty. That's all. It's soy milk actually. It's more refreshing than dairy. Less fat too.

SAM

I wonder if it's alright to cry over spilt soy milk.

JACOB

Why did you guys start turning up? To wait. To listen. Why didn't you leave me alone? Like I asked.

SAM

You've done it for both of us at one time or another. And I am sure you will do it again.

JACOB

Really? I have? I will? Well, good, then. It's a deal.
Thanks.

JENNA & SAM

You're welcome.

JACOB

(He stands by JENNA's table
cloth.)

I wish your mom had made home made bread when you were a
kid. Symbolically, it would make way more sense for us to
sit down and break bread together. Maybe have some wine.

SAM

There are plenty of apples.

JACOB

Wonderful. If we wait long enough maybe we'll get cider.

JENNA

Beggars can't be choosy.

JACOB

You're right.

(He sits down on the table
cloth across from JENNA.)

You guys have any other stories to tell?

JENNA

Of course, Jacob.

SAM

We've got plenty of stories to tell.

JACOB

Good. I think I'm finally ready to listen.

(BLACK OUT)