

The Man in the Mirror

A One-Act Play

By Zachariah Ezer

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Characters:

MAN: He has a mirror for a face. He should be tall, thin and look utterly defeated. He is wearing a purple smoking jacket, think Hugh Heffner, plaid pajama pants and fuzzy slippers. He should be very Ferris Bueller-esque in his audience address (read: a little too cocky and smarmy for his own good) and unaware of the difference between memory and reality.

WOMAN: She should have a face. She should be exactly 5'3" tall and have a shaved head, though she sometimes wears a wig. Mercurial is litotes in describing her attitude.

OLDER MAN: Has a face, a balding one, and is in amazing shape for his age, and a barrel chest. He should wear a wife beater and jeans with a speedo underneath. He should inspire déjà vu in the audience upon his first entrance.

OLDER WOMAN: She has a block of wood for a face. She is also tall and thin, though in a more world-weary than defeated way. She hears no evil, sees no evil, and speaks no evil.

Setting:

An average American family bathroom. Center stage there is a sink and in place of a mirror is a wooden frame, similar to that of a portrait. Another mirror is at the back of the stage behind him extending the length of the stage. There are usual bathroom furnishings, claw foot tub, toilet, cabinets, etc. The stage lighting should have a slight blue to them unless otherwise indicated.

Lighting Note: Spotlight is on Man only during monologues and when otherwise specified, otherwise use stage lighting as specified in the setting portion.

Staging Note: Older Man and Woman will always enter/exit stage right and Older Woman will always enter/exit stage left.

At Rise:

MAN stands center stage looking at the audience through the mirror frame lit by a normally colored spotlight. He begins lecturing, at once alone in the world and surrounded by acolytes.

MAN:

"The wounds from spirits heal and leave no scars behind." Georg Wilhelm Fredric Hegel. What I like to think that Hegel means by this is that your third grade teacher was right all along. Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me. But he meant more than words; every lie, misunderstanding, rejection will fade and leave you whole again. I think Hegel's full of shit, but it's a nice thought. *(Beat)* I've been trapped in my bathroom for a while now. Not in the sense that I can't find a thing to wear or I have a huge zit or anything like that, I just can't leave. It's not all bad though, I have plenty of company.

(Enter OLDER MAN and WOMAN stage right and OLDER WOMAN stage left, all screaming hysterically. The crescendo of Masolov's "Iron Foundry" should be playing loudly to obscure their voices. After a few seconds all but Man should exit and music should abruptly stop when they do so.)

See what I mean? I'm never bored. *(Beat)* That's a lie, I'm always bored. It's not enough to wish I was never born, but I have my moments. I tried to learn some new skills, like Phil Connors in "Groundhog Day," but there's not much one can learn in a bathroom, I can already gargle the "Star Spangled Banner," and I've already shaved a lightning bolt into my hair, so I've begun to train myself in the lost art of public speaking. I started by just saying everything I had ever memorized, then I started writing speeches, now I just talk. It keeps the doldrums at bay.

Blackout for six seconds

Spotlight Returns

MAN:

I know a way to humanize anyone. From fascist dictators to that hot little number who lives down the hall, this trick cannot fail. You see, all you have to do is imagine them getting ready for a date. See it in your mind's eye, they're getting ready in front of the mirror. They've got on their best outfit, and maybe Hitler's straightening his hair, maybe Marilyn Monroe is brushing her teeth, and maybe President Obama himself is flexing to remind himself he's still got it. Did you try it? See what I mean. The trick to it is knowing that everyone out there wants someone else out there to think they're cool, everybody has got somebody to impress, and I...

Enter Woman. She will wear a wig for this entrance. All is right on Planet Earth

MAN:

I always had somebody to impress. Hello darling.

(Man pantomimes kissing woman but they do not touch)

As I was saying, I always had somebody to impress. I was in love with this woman once. (Beat) It's okay, she can't hear you, she's just a figment of my hyperactive mind. An untouchable afterimage.

Man and Woman begin a slow waltz to "The Blue Danube" by Strauss for a few seconds, also without touching. Man then places hands above woman as she spins offstage. Man returns to center.

A reflection.

Woman reenters bald and furious

WOMAN:

Fuck you! I told you I have issues, how can you fool around with that slut! We know her! We know her!

Woman attempts to hit man but cannot, Man does not react

MAN:

We were broken up for over a year honey, and I don't remember freaking out when you blew half of Arkansas. I was hurt, but I never resorted to violence.

WOMAN:

But I never fucked any of them! That was for you!

MAN:

I told you I'd wait, all you had to do was ask.

Woman exits

MAN:

(Softly)

All you had to do was ask... Fuck, she can't hear me. Some couples say they have the same fights over and over again, well we do, literally. She just shows up and yells her half of the arguments, and I can say what I always wish I did. I've got them down to a science.

(Growing Louder)

Where was I? Oh yeah, humanizing people. As humans we have this inexorable desire to be loved. I don't know if we're vain or stupid or lonely, probably all three, but we have this desire to please. And damned if we don't do everything in our power to satisfy. Like McDonalds had this huge strip search scandal where people claiming to be cops were forcibly stripping employees and no one said anything because...

Enter Older Man. He should be balding, but in amazing shape. He should have a face.

OLDER MAN:

Hey, are we going to go for a swim or are you going to look at yourself in the mirror all day? Because I promise, that's about the best you're ever going to look.

MAN:

Thanks. I think I'm going to stay here for a while. I don't really feel like swimming right now.

OLDER MAN:

How are you going to get in shape if you never go swimming? You're already getting fat. When was the last time you went? Boy, when I was your age, I already had a world record under my belt, and I was training for the Olympics.

MAN:

(Wearily)

Yeah, yeah, and you were walking to school uphill both ways, and if you gave the butcher a nickel, he'd give you a ham and four cents back.

OLDER MAN:

Don't sass me boy, I'll kick your ass.

Older Man Exits

MAN:

Damn, he's always been intense. I know he's not there, but I can never help myself around him. It's like the high school reunion phenomenon, people transform back into the people they were when they first met, no matter the experiences and changes they've gone through. The nerd may have hit it big in the tech industry, but when he sees the prom queen, even though she's hiding her third pregnancy by drinking nonalcoholic beer and pretending she isn't using grocery store makeup, he can't help but see himself in that same pocket protector and ill-fitting pair of chinos. It's enough to get existential about.

Enter Older Woman, she kisses
Man on the cheek

OLDER WOMAN:

You always had your father's eyes. *(Beat)* Where have you been lately? I haven't seen you in weeks. You just stand in your apartment looking in the mirror. Are you a narcissist? Are you gay? Are you a gay narcissist? I don't get it. You should come home for a night. I'll make dinner. I know you're not happy right now, but neither am I. It hasn't

been easy these last few months. (Beat) Fine, don't talk to me. I'm going home, maybe I'll see you there sometime!

Older Woman Exits

MAN:

I don't like to think about what my life was like before, but it kind of bleeds in here sometimes. There was this saying my mother used to tell me. You never marry the guy you go into therapy with, you marry the guy you meet while you're in therapy. That always struck me, because it shows the flipside of the desire to please. Contempt for those who try to please us.

Enter Woman with no hair

WOMAN:

(Seething)

What part of I can't don't you understand?

MAN:

(Desperate)

The part where you won't let me help you. All I ever wanted was to help you, it's worked every single time before. Do you remember when you met me? You couldn't even kiss me, you couldn't even let yourself be held by me. We got through that, and look at you now, you're as at home as anyone.

WOMAN:

But I'm not normal.

MAN:

How many times do I have to tell you, there's no such thing! You're normal to me, and that's all that matters.

WOMAN:

(Nervous)

I know, it's just I don't think I'm ready to try this yet. I still think about it, and I don't want to associate you with the worst memory of my life.

MAN:

I get it, but what was done to you had nothing to do with me. I've been nothing but kind to you for the three years we've known each other, and I'm just saying we should give it a try. If you don't like it, we can stop. *(Beat)* It's just, haven't I been patient enough?

WOMAN:

Patience is a virtue.

MAN:

So is mercy.

WOMAN:

I don't think so. I just think that things will be better in a few months.

MAN:

You mean after the wedding? Why? What's going to change?

WOMAN:

I don't know. I'll just feel better.

Woman exits and then reenters
with hair

WOMAN:

I love you.

Man turns toward her

MAN:

I love you more than life itself.

WOMAN:

I love you so much it tears me apart.

MAN:

I think I'd like to do that.

WOMAN:

Not tonight, maybe someday when I know you better.

Woman Exits

Are you coming to bed?

MAN:

I'll be right there.

Enter Older Woman

OLDER WOMAN:

You're still here? You look so thin, I really think that you should eat something. *(Beat)* I promise you they don't come back. Trust me on this one, when they go, they don't come back.

Man moves toward bathtub.

MAN:

I think I'll go for a swim, thanks.

Man begins to fill the bathtub

OLDER WOMAN:

I don't care how small you've gotten, you can't go swimming in that bathtub.

She turns off the water and drains the tub

MAN:

Okay, no swimming for now.

OLDER WOMAN:

Good, good. I'll be back in a few hours with some food, okay?

Man nods. Older Woman exits.
Older Man enters.

OLDER MAN:

Hey, are we going to go for a swim or are you going to look at yourself in the mirror all day? Because I promise, that's about the best you're ever going to look.

MAN:

You're an asshole.

OLDER MAN:

How are you going to get in shape if you never go swimming? You're already getting fat. When was the last time you went? Boy, when I was your age, I already had a world record under my belt, and I was training for the Olympics.

Man:

(Wearily)

Go fuck yourself, you ended up as an accountant in Jersey.

OLDER MAN:

Don't sass me boy, I'll kick your ass.

Older Man Exits

MAN:

He was an Iron Man. He did triathlons into his 60s. His dad was an All-American for Rutgers. All he ever wanted was a son who would continue the tradition of perfect specimens of the human species. I never liked to go swimming with him, because of when we would finish. He would sit with me beside the pool with our feet in the water. We would look down into the pool and see two different things. I always saw two of us, but I have a suspicion he never saw me, just him then, and him in the future.

Woman reenters with hair

WOMAN:

I heard your dad died.

MAN:

Yeah, so? Why do you care?

WOMAN:

He was like a father to me too. Just because we broke up doesn't mean I stopped caring about you.

MAN:

I thought that was exactly what it meant. How's Phillip?

Woman throws wig offstage

WOMAN:

It's Jeremy now. He has a huge dick, and he eats amazing pussy.

MAN:

Congratulations.

WOMAN:

You're better though. Are you seeing anyone?

MAN:

No, just doing some soul searching.

WOMAN:

That's good. You have some shit you need to get straight.

Woman Exits. Older Woman
Enters

OLDER WOMAN:

It's time to leave the bathroom. You've been here far too long.

MAN:

I know, but I can't leave.

OLDER WOMAN:

What do you even do in here?

MAN:

I remember.

OLDER WOMAN:

One of us should, I try to forget. (*Beat*) I started seeing someone.

MAN:

Already?

OLDER WOMAN:

It's been long enough. Come down and meet him.

Older Woman Exits, Man tries to follow but is blocked by invisible force on edge of stage, he turns back to the frame and "Bonjour Tristesse" begins to play.

MAN:

Did you know that 90% of all house hold accidents happen in the bathroom? I have no idea if that's true or not, but you start to have some interesting thoughts when you've been trapped here as long as I have. It's not difficult to imagine electrocuting yourself plugging something into an electrical socket,

(Pantomimes plugging in a hair dryer and electrocuting himself)

Taking a few too many of the wrong pills,

(Pantomimes taking pills and seizing up)

Or just taking too long a dip in the tub

(Walks over to the tub and sits on the edge. He begins to fill the tub).

On your marks, get set, GO!

Man splashes his hand on the water

Enter Woman, with hair

MAN:

(Affecting the voice of a bored tour guide)

And this my dear, is the bathroom. We can shower here after we retire to the bedroom.

Woman becomes anxious upon hearing the word 'bedroom'

WOMAN:

I don't want you to be disappointed with me.

MAN:

I already love you to the ends of the Earth and back, how could I be disappointed?

WOMAN:

I don't know if I can ever give you what you really want. Things are closed down there, and without serious therapy, I don't know if I can ever be open for business.

MAN:

Do you love me?

WOMAN:

Of course I do. More than anything.

MAN:

Then our love will be enough. Haven't you ever heard the saying, love conquers all.

WOMAN:

I'm not sure how well that's going to work in this case.

MAN:

Well, we never know until we try.

WOMAN:

I'm not ready.

MAN:

Then we can wait.

(To the audience)

But not forever

WOMAN:

Thank you, so much. I promise that when we do try it will be perfect.

Woman exits

Lights are red in the bathroom and Strauss' "Thus Spake Zarathustra begins". The world is not right.

MAN:
(Obviously shaken)

Not this one! I hate this one! I don't want to remember this one. I learned what I'm supposed to learn from this one! Fuck you God, Fuck You Clarence Odbody, and Fuck You Bill Murray. I don't need to see this for the thousandth time, I know why she left me.

The Memory is undeterred and the screaming begins. It is a ghostly wail that would wake the dead. Nails on the chalkboard of the mind. Woman enters, without hair or clothes, hurt, upset and bleeding.

WOMAN:
You pushed it too far okay? You made your fucking point. You tried to be clever and out think the problem, but some things can't be solved by your big fucking brain okay? We tried therapy, we tried hypnosis, we tried fucking marriage, but nothing works. I am physically unable to have sex. I'm sorry. I can never be what you want me to be. Hell, I can never be what I want me to be. You've wanted this all your life, and you waited for me, but I can't deliver, I'm sorry.

(Long pause)
I think I need to take some time. I think I need to go away for a while, I'm sorry.

The song abruptly stops, possibly with a record scratch. Man has stood motionless for this entire speech, as woman exits, he finds himself able to lift a single hand as if to stop her, but it is too late. Man drags himself to sink and leans upon it as if to throw up.

MAN:

I can never move during that one. I wasn't in here when it happened like I was with all the rest. I was in there, lying in a mixture of satisfaction that I had finally made love to her, and guilt that she had hated it. I couldn't leave my own little world long enough to ask her to stay. I guess I knew things were better that way. I wish she had just left me then, things would have been so much easier.

Enter Older Woman

OLDER WOMAN:

You didn't come down to meet Rob. He left; he was very offended.

MAN:

You know I can't leave here.

OLDER WOMAN:

And why is that exactly? I drove him all the way up here and brought him into your apartment just so you could meet him. I don't understand why you're being so rude.

MAN:

I just can't leave. I'm not done remembering yet. Maybe if I remember enough, then I can figure out what to do next. What if the past holds the key to the future?

OLDER WOMAN:

That one is not your best work. I'm not one of your little girlfriends who you can impress when you wax philosophical. I was a Western Civ. Major in college and I know you've got a moleskin notebook full of lines like that ready to be used on a co-ed faster than a prophylactic. Now come down and eat. You're eating something at least, aren't you? You're wasting away.

MAN:

How long did it take you to meet Rob?

OLDER WOMAN:

(Cagey)

A little while. I don't like what you're getting at.

MAN:

And is he fat?

OLDER WOMAN:

Meet him and you'll see.

MAN:

I know he's fat. I know he's fat, and a yuppie, and caught up in all of that bourgeois bullshit you used to make fun of.

OLDER WOMAN:

(Strident)

I'm 57 years old and I am not putting up with your bullshit anymore. If you want to stay in this bathroom for the rest of your life, I don't give a shit anymore, but don't expect me or anyone else to continue to give a shit. She's gone. You fucked up your marriage and she isn't coming back. Some of us move on when we get bad news, but you just want to keep stewing in your on misery and self-pity. You're never going to move forward until you let it go. Let It Go!

MAN:

And then what? Forget I even had a wife? I'll always remember her, just like I'll always remember the spouse you lost. It's like you said, one of us should.

Older Woman Exits. Older Man enters.

OLDER MAN:

Hey, are we going to go for a swim or are you going to look at yourself in the mirror all day? Because I promise, that's about the best you're ever going to look.

MAN:

... Dad.

OLDER MAN:

How are you going to get in shape if you never go swimming? You're already getting fat. When was the last time you went? Boy, when I was your age, I already had a world record under my belt, and I was training for the Olympics.

MAN:
(Desperately)

Dad, please don't go swimming today. I know it's not going to be easy for you to hear, but you are going to have a heart attack. I won't be there with you, and you're going to drown in that swimming pool. Please don't leave.

OLDER MAN:
Don't sass me boy, I'll kick your ass.

Older Man Exits

MAN:
(On the verge of tears)
Dad... Fuck.

Enter Woman, with hair

WOMAN:
I'm glad you're doing better; you had a lot of us worried. That depressing poetry, being holed up in your room all the time, and those long conversations you had about suicide with Ashley. (Beat) She's my best friend, you think she wouldn't have told me about those. I didn't want to say anything, but it was getting sad. I'm glad you finally moved on. You held on way too tightly to that 'try again if we're both 40 and single' thing. What did it, can I at least ask that?

Woman freezes in place

MAN:
I realized you weren't coming back anytime soon, and I could feel sorry for myself or I could pick myself up and move on.

(Woman does not react)
How the fuck was I supposed to know you didn't sleep with them. You couldn't wait to call me and brag about your latest conquests. It's fucking easy when a sexy girl walks into a bar and goes home with anyone with enough game to buy her a drink!

(Woman still does not react)

Just GO!

Woman exits.

MAN:

Sorry about that, I kind of lost my cool there. It's never over with her. You want to know the funny thing, I like the times where she has the upper hand because then she's hurting me and not the other way around, I never could hurt her. *(Beat)* Back to humanity, I think it was Pancho Villa that said "It is better to die standing than to live on your knees,"

Woman reenters without hair

WOMAN:

It was Emilio Zapata.

MAN:

How did you do that?

WOMAN:

Emilio Zapata said your stupid quote, you're not as smart as you think you are.

MAN:

(Resigned)

Oh right, it's this speech.

WOMAN:

I don't know why we can't be together.

(Waits as if for a response)

I don't not want to have sex with you, I can't. Like physically cannot.

(Waits again)

No, I don't think that marriage will make me magically able to, I just, I just don't know okay?

(Waits again)

I know that's not the only issue, it's just I thought we love each other and that's enough.

(Waits again)

How the fuck dare you say I'm not trying! Fuck you and fuck this!

Woman Exits

MAN:

The last day we were together, that's she and I in case you were wondering, was in November, the 15th to be exact. We had broken up twice and the second time she gave me back my ring. She had begged me to meet her, just to talk. I took her to a sex shop. We laughed at all of the people buying butt plugs and joked about getting nipple clamps we would never use. We went to the mall and there was a thunderstorm. We kissed in the rain and in the car did everything but make love, we never did that. Then she dropped me at home, she drove, and that was it. Now we just torture each other every once in a while, at least we did. Now she doesn't call, I heard she's happy. The last thing she said to me was that I was like a mirror, I showed her exactly what she showed me, nothing more, nothing less, and finally when I showed her what was underneath the mirror, she couldn't stand it. She couldn't stand what was really inside me.

Man takes off mirror face to reveal a black mask.

Blackout for 6 seconds

Spotlight returns

Man replaces mirror face

MAN:

The desire to please brings about the absolute worst in humanity. There was once a Harvard experiment where the subjects were split into two groups, teachers and students, and the students were hooked up to electrodes. The teachers would ask the students math questions and shock them for every wrong answer. The catch; there weren't any students, they were all actors, and every single teacher turned the shocks up to full volume just to please the Harvard researchers, to make sure they were seen as complying. All the while, the actors screamed and writhed in pain.

Enter Woman with hair, though
the wig is askew

WOMAN:

I don't care about what my uncle did to me when I was 7. I care about what you did to me when I was 23. You could not help yourself, and I saw in you what I never hoped to see in anyone else ever again, least of all the man I loved. I don't know how we're going to get past this, but we are married, so we can stick it out. Can you do that?

MAN:

No. You know I can't.

WOMAN:

Good, then let's give this another try. I did a lot of soul searching, and it took a lot to discover you still love me, but I'm there with it now. I'm trying to see things from your point of view, it's just hard sometimes.

MAN:

Talk to me again in two months. See how you feel then.

WOMAN:

I love you.

MAN:

I miss you.

Woman Exits, and reenters
with Older Woman but no hair.

Woman turns on the sink, and
Man goes downstage to sit on
the rim of the bathtub. He
hears every word they say.

WOMAN:

I don't know what to do. I love him, but I know divorce was the right choice.

OLDER WOMAN:

Why are you telling me this?

WOMAN:

I don't know. Maybe you can help him. Ever since his father died, he's been a mess. When we stopped seeing each other, he was bad, but this is an entirely new level. He hasn't left the bathroom in weeks, and he pretends he can't hear us and hides in the bathtub.

Man flinches very hard at this revelation and climbs in the bathtub

OLDER WOMAN:

Well I don't know what more we can really expect from him. The only news he ever hears from the outside world is your latest sexual conquest or someone else's condolences about his father. Honey, you could stop telling him about every guy you're with.

WOMAN:

(Very Defensive)

He started it! He fucked Ashley not three months after the divorce was finalized! I didn't have sex with anyone else, just blowjobs, and he fucked my best friend!

OLDER WOMAN:

(Very Strident)

Can you stop blaming just him for that? Ashley was just as involved, if not more so. She seduced him, she's the one who helped him talk out the divorce, she's the one who showed up to the funeral, and she's the one who got him to continue writing and going to work, at least for a short time anyway. If he can upset you this much by being with someone else, doesn't that tell you anything at all?

WOMAN:

When I was with him, all I ever wanted to do was please him. I gave him all I could, and then I gave him more. Sometimes you can't please everyone, and the only reasonable thing you can do is make sure you have enough left inside you to please yourself.

OLDER WOMAN:

That's bullshit. He gave you his life. He took you to a thousand doctors and psychologists and he waited for you. He would have still waited for you if you hadn't talked about the new boyfriend you got the week after the divorce. What was his name, Jeremy?

WOMAN:

Phillip, actually. And you don't know anything about it. You're moving on pretty fast yourself.

OLDER WOMAN:

I opened a match.com profile. So sue me.

WOMAN:

He's only been dead a couple of months-

OLDER WOMAN:

(Crying)

Don't you think I know that? I still see him every time I close my eyes. I wake up every morning crying because he's not next to me. I haven't fired the pool guy yet because when I hear the splashes, I can believe it's him for the five seconds it takes me to walk to the window! I will never forget him, but god knows I'm trying. I can't even talk to my son about it because he feels like his life is ruined because you left him, and his last words to his father were "Fuck Off"

Woman does not reply

OLDER WOMAN:

Just leave him alone okay? Get out of here and don't come back. I'm sorry about the divorce, I'm sorry about your childhood, and fuck it, I'm even sorry about Ashley, but unless you can be here for him, you need to not be here at all.

WOMAN:

Fine. I guess you really can't please everyone.

OLDER WOMAN:

(Dryly)

God knows you tried.

Woman exits in a huff,
pulling at her hair

Older Woman Exits, Man
returns to sink, and Older
Woman Reenters

OLDER WOMAN:

You were right. I'm sorry about Rob.

MAN:

What do you mean?

OLDER WOMAN:

We have been dating a couple of months, but it was too soon
to force you to meet him. You weren't ready.

She hugs him

MAN:

Thanks.

OLDER WOMAN:

Do you think you'll come out any time soon?

MAN:

I'd really like to.

OLDER WOMAN:

I think I understand now. Come out when you're ready.

(Long Pause)

I miss him too.

MAN:

Good bye mom, I'll see you later.

She Exits, stopping to look
back at him

MAN:

The wounds from spirits... Wait, I already did that one.
Hold on.

(Puts hands on head, and thinks)

I've got one. I have a solid trick for remembering everything. It's called a memory palace. The ancient Greeks used to use it to memorize books, but it's just as useful for speeches too. What you do is, you memorize a place, every nook and cranny, and then you put some symbols for large pieces of information there, and as you explore the space in your mind, you come across visual cues to remember the information, and you do. There are people who can do it with the Empire State Building and the Great Pyramid of Giza, but it's best to start out with somewhere that's familiar to you. Somewhere you know very intimately. Here's how I remember how the world goes.

He walks to stage left

MAN:

You start at the entrance. This is where we met. It was at a coffee shop, how cliché. But, the devil's in the details. We met in the bathroom. It was one of those single service ones, and the lock was broken. I walked in without knocking and there she was. Luckily for both of us, she was doing her make up. She asked me

Enter Woman from other side
of the stage

WOMAN:

(Shocked)

Jesus Christ, weirdo, don't you knock!

MAN:

I was in love at first sight. I convinced her not to call the police, and we had our first date in that coffee shop. She was very clear from the beginning about what had happened to her. She didn't tell many people, but for some reason she trusted me. Maybe because she could already see the nothing I had inside.

Man takes a few steps forward

MAN:

Here was where she slipped and nearly broke her neck. After a few dates, I brought her up here. We didn't do anything

but kiss, but it was still the most beautiful thing I had ever experienced.

The spotlight turns pink

MAN:

Every moment together was divine. I loved her more than I knew I could love anything. The only problem was her past. I couldn't undo something that was done before I had even met her. I tried everything, I took her to the most expensive doctors I could find, I bought every book on the subject, I even tried hypnosis, but to no avail.

Man walks over to woman and pulls pocket watch from his shirt pocket. He swings it in front of her face.

MAN:

You are getting very sleepy. Very sleepy.

Woman shakes herself out of her trance and shakes her head in disappointment

MAN:

But I just knew if I could say the right words or do the right thing, that everything would be okay. I stayed with her for three years, and we even got married, but you can't be deprived forever.

"Something's Gotta Give" by Frank Sinatra begins to play as the spotlight turns red. Man moves to the sink.

MAN:

Here's of course the drain, the one it all went down. We tried and failed, and she left me. We tried again. Dad died after she left again. This time for good.

Woman Exits and the song fades out. Man sits on the toilet

MAN:

Now we're here. It's all gone. She's out with the beautiful men of the world, and I'm trapped here. She doesn't visit, neither does Ashley. That was a one-time thing I guess. I don't know, I miss her so much, I miss living so much, but it all plays in my head, in this bathroom, over and over and over and over again and I know I'm doing this to myself...

Man Stands

Maybe if I can conjure something good, a great memory. Let's try the time after our third date. She slept over, we kissed for hours. It was heaven.

Man thinks hard, hands on his temples trying to conjure the memory but fails.

No, come on. Shit.

Man slumps over. Woman Enters. She is smiling.

MAN:

(Resigned)

Hello Darling.

She pantomimes the kiss, he does not reciprocate. The waltz begins again.

MAN:

No more! I can't do this again. Stop the music, stop the music!

(Turns to Woman)

I'm sorry. I am so sorry. I tried when we weren't ready, I fucked your best friend, I was an absolute ass to you. I am so sorry, can you please forgive me? I don't want to live here anymore. I love you. Not the memory of you, not what you've become, but the you that always was and always is and always will be. I miss the way you tried to please me in other ways because we couldn't do what I really wanted.

You were so smart and creative and sexy. I fucked up, and I'll be sorry about that the rest of my life. Please go. Please just go. If you loved me at all, you'll stop haunting me.

Woman has stopped and is staring at Man. She simply nods and exits, the spotlight leaving the man to follow her out.

MAN:

Thank God. I feel a little better now. I think it's finally time to do a couple of things I've been putting off.

The man walks to the door and turns on the light switch. The lights change from blue to yellow with a static zap sound. He then makes sure the bathtub is drained and puts the plug on the counter after he walks back to it.

MAN:

Do you know why we hate people that only want to please us? We recognize their weakness. We see in them too much of that moment in front of the mirror. We see their vulnerability. They are now perpetually asking us if they look good in this dress, if their hair is in place, or if they've gained any weight since the baby. We can't constantly reassure someone that they're doing everything right. At some point we need to take responsibility for our actions and realize that there are more important things than pleasing people. So fuck a boss expecting expense reports, and the teacher upset about your grades can suck it. And..

Enter Older Woman

OLDER WOMAN:

Listen. I don't know if you're ready, but Rob and I are going to dinner, and he'd really love to meet you. I made

him promise not to play any Dave Matthews in the car, I know how much you hate them. So, what do you say?

She tenses expecting the worst, but the world is righting itself

MAN:

Okay, just give me a second.

Older Woman is visibly happy.

MAN:

Mom, hold on, you've got something on your face.

Man removes wood from Older Woman's face

Older Woman:

Thank you. And don't worry, no one expects you to call him dad.

Older Woman exits

MAN:

I know this one actually was Pancho Villa. His last words were "Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something." That's what we need when we're alone isn't it, to feel like we've said something? I think I've said enough for a lifetime. Thanks for listening, I needed someone to talk this out with, but now I think it's time to go.

MAN exits the bathroom. On his way out, he shuts the light switch which shuts the stage lights as well. He hears the voice of Older Woman and another male voice that is the same as Older Man's. If he listens hard enough, maybe he hears Woman's voice. He tosses of

his mirror face and the black mask as he leaves. An instrumental of "Man in the Mirror" by Michael Jackson underscores his departure.

CURTAIN