

ARTS OR CRAFTS

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ARTS or CRAFTS - Order of Scenes

Act 1

1. **MONA or MOAN**
2. **GREEK or GEEK**
3. **PAST or PASSED**
4. **PARTICIPATION or PERSPIRATION**
5. **EXPOSED or EXPOSÉ**
6. **MERIT or MAR IT**
7. **EMORY or MEMORY**
8. **SEW or SO**
9. **ARIA or AREA**
10. **PIETA or PIETY**
11. **PLUM or PLUMB**
12. **PLAY or PLIÉ**
13. **FOLK or FINE**
14. **SCRAPS or SCRAPES**
15. **CRITIQUE or CRITICAL**
16. **FAIR or FARE**
17. **DESTRY or DESTROY**

INTERMISSION- Audience members create their own art from a number of tables located in the lobby

Act 2

1. **OPENING OF ACT TWO**
2. **HYPERBOLE or HYPER- BALL**
3. **LESSON or LESSEN**
4. **FAN or FEIGN**
5. **YOURS or OURS**
6. **PATCHES or PATCHY**
7. **WITCH or WHICH**
8. **HISTORY or HIS STORY**
9. **FABLE or FEEBLE**
10. **SALE or SAIL**
11. **ARTS or CRAFTS**

The show can be performed with as many or as few actors as you see fit. Feel free to cut, adjust or add any elements to make your production work.

A movie is shown.

The movie is a collection of interviews of real customers outside of stores like Michael's Crafts, Hobby Lobby and Joanne Fabrics. The real customers answer questions like:

What did you buy today?

What are you going to make?

Why do you like making things?

Would you consider yourself an artist or a craftsman? Why?

When the movie is finished, frames fly down.

On one side of the stage an ornate decorative art frame appears. On stage left a frame made of popsicle sticks glides into view. These elements will showcase the projections and titles for each scene. Between these two elements descends a lighted word, "OR."

MONA or MOAN

MONA LISA comes forward. She is rather soft spoken and remote.

Mona: People stare at me constantly. The patrons line up for hours and stare. Looking for some hidden meaning. Some secret that I won't reveal. I see their disappointment when I won't tell. They walk away scratching their heads. I understand their confusion. I am considered one of the greatest pieces of art in the world. But why?

(She steps a little closer.)

I sit there politely. With a blank expression. They theorize. They create scenarios. They look in my eyes for reflections. Searching for the secret. There is none. It is just me. Politely sitting while someone paints a portrait of me. A portrait of me painted over some very ordinary days in my life. I wasn't even smiling.

(She steps a little closer.)

I am surrounded by great works of art in this museum. Pieces that display the torture of the artist's soul, the euphoria of love, their deep and abiding faith. I am really just a collection of excellent brushstrokes. I am surely full of superior craftsmanship. The work is done well. But it costs me nothing. While I am borne of good technique, I am certainly not art.

I guess I do have a secret...

(The lights slowly fade.)

GREEK or GEEK

Several Greeks in togas sit around shooting the breeze.

Greek 1: What do you think the difference is between craft and art? I mean, is that temple over there art or merely a nice looking bunch of marble?

Greek 2: Oh that temple over there? That is definitely craft.

Greek 3: How can you be so sure? Take a closer look. Has the designer of that temple...what's his name?

Greek 2: Arkitektos?

Greek 1: No, I think he means Hank.

Greek 2: Oh yeah, sure Hank.

Greek 3: Does the fact that Hank knows how to craft a bunch of stones well, make it art? Hank does have a way with stones.

Greek 1: No doubt. I mean his altar at the Temple of Athena is to die for.

Greek 2: See, I find it primitive.

Greek 3: But hasn't Hank created something special here?

Greek 2: Puh-lease. That temple....definitely craft.

Greek 1: Can it really be that easy? Isn't Hank's excellent craftsmanship artistic?

They are lost in thought staring at the temple.

Greek 3: Isn't that temple merely functional?

Greek 1: So then craft is function and art is decorative.

Greek 2: Sure. So that temple is then definitely craft.

Greek 3: That temple contains the function—worship, and the decoration—those friezes. Has not Hank co-mingled art and craft?

They stare looking at the temple. A pause.

Greek 1: Hmm...that's a thinker.

Greek 3: Can not beauty be found in the simplicity of the lines?

Greek 1: So, then art is beautiful?

Greek 2: Oh dear Gods, enough with the philosophy! If it is pretty it is art and if it is ugly it is craft. Why do you have to make everything so complex, Oedipus?

Greek 1: Perhaps, I am over thinking this but I imagine there is no definitive answer. The difference between art and craft shall be forever nebulous.

They stare lost in thought.

Fade out.

PAST or PASSED

A group of actors mill around the stage.

The child actors shout out their hobby or craft.

Paint by Numbers

Magic Tricks

Legos

Malibu Barbie

GI Joe

Hot Wheels

Polly Pockets

Baton Twirling

Puppets

The adult actors shout out their profession.

Accountant

Oncologist

Architect

Homemaker

Activist

Bus Driver

Day Care

Prison Guard

President of the United States

Each is seeking their mate.

They finally pair up and announce their past and present---

Child #1: I used to Paint by numbers
Adult #1 And now I am an Accountant.

Child #2 I used to play with Legos
Adult #2 and now I am an Architect.

Child #3 I used to play with Malibu Barbie...
Adult # 3 and now I am a Homemaker.

Child #4 GI Joe.
Adult #4 Activist.

Child #5 I used to play with Hot Wheels...
Adult #5 and now I am a Bus Driver.

Child #6 I used to play with Puppets...
Adult #6 and now I am a President of the United States.

Child #7 I used to play with Polly Pockets...
Adult #7 and now I own my own Day Care.

Child #8 Baton Twirler.
Adult #8 Prison Guard.

Child #9 Magic Tricks.
Adult #9 Oncologist.

The Child and Adult versions of themselves talk to each other as the lights fade.

EXPOSED or EXPOSÉ

The lights reveal a woman who is nude or in a robe (depending on your audience.)

Robe: Sure I pose nude for extra money. I am telling you it is great. I really love it. Sure for the money. But really for the thrill. Not the thrill of being nude. Who cares about that? But the thrill that I am now... art. I like having these fifty different versions of me out there after each class. A guy goes home and shows his girlfriend "Look what I did today!"

A guy enters with his girlfriend. The girl in the robe is not heard or referred to as she walks through their scene and talks to us.

Guy: Look what I did today! *(He unfurls a nudes sketch.)*

Robe: That's me, you see.

Girl: Wow. *(She is uneasy.)*

Guy: This was my first nude sketch. (*Girl stands staring at the picture.*)

Robe: You can tell he has some potential – that is part of the thrill. You can see them get better over the semester.

Guy: What do you think?

Girl: I liked it better when you were drawing fruit.

Robe: Looking closer, you can see some really interesting things here. Like look at how he did my hair. It looks so free.

Guy: Yeah, we moved past fruit. Now we're on nudes.

Girl: Can you stop saying nudes? Why are you even taking this class? You don't want to be an artist. This is just an elective.

Robe: He has some really nice work here with shadows and highlights.

Guy: I know I'm not an artist, but this is really fun and the teacher said I was good.

Girl: Well, good for you. What are you changing majors?

Guy: No, it is just a hobby.

Robe: The breasts are done perfectly.

Girl: Exactly!

Guy: I really like it.

Girl: Who is the nude—naked girl in the picture?

Guy: That is just some girl that comes into class.

Robe: He caught me. He knows me. I love this piece.

Girl: What is her name? The pretty nude girl?

Guy: I don't know. She just came in—

Girl: And took off her robe. And got naked. And sat there in a provocative manner for you to draw her. For how long?

Guy: An hour.

Girl: Great, you stared at a nude girl for an hour.

Guy: I was trying to capture her.

Girl: What are you talking like that for? Capture! What are you a democrat now?!

Robe: Part of me wants this one. This is one of the best.

Guy: Come on Babe.

Girl: This is sick.

Robe (*overlapping*): There is this sick part of me that just wants the good ones---

Guy: What is the big deal? It's just a sketch. A pretty good sketch.

(*Girl is silent.*)

Robe (*overlapping*): And then paper my apartment with them. I am just fascinated that he was able to...capture me.

Guy: Come on. Let me sketch you.

Robe: (*Her dialogue happens underneath the following action.*) I know it is wrong of me to want it. But the thrill is-- I know that this great version of the best of me will be out there. On display. Captured.

(*Girl is uncomfortable. She finally relents and half allows herself to be sketched. Guy goes to unbutton her blouse.*)

Girl (*screaming*): I want you to drop that class!

(*The following dialogue builds and overlaps to the final action.*)

Guy: RELAX!

Girl: I want this pornographic thing out of our apartment!

Guy: Come on. I created this.

Girl: This! What about ME!

Robe: ME! Perfect! Forever!

Girl: I want this gone!

Guy: It is mine!

Robe: It is ours!

Girl: It is disgusting!

Guy/Robe: I love it.

Girl: I hate it!

Guy/Robe: This is me!

Girl: Not me!

Girl/Robe: I want this!

Guy/Robe: Don't ruin this!

Girl/Robe: Give it to me!

Guy/Robe: NO!

Girl/Robe: Choose!

A moment of silence.

The girl grabs the sketch and rips it.

Blackout.

MERIT or MAR IT

A big gay boy scout enters the stage.

Boy Scout: Hi. I would like to show you my Boy Scout merit badges. The boy scouts offer many varied merit badges for many different crafty things:

Wood working merit badge

Wood carving merit badge

Forestry merit badge

Paper and pulp merit badge

Leatherwork merit badge

Model building merit badge

Coin collecting merit badge....

Ho hum.

Recently though I found my crafts weren't exactly what the Boy Scouts were into, if you know what I mean? OK? So, I decided to start my own Scouting Troop with my own merit badges for different crafts. I have one here for starting your own Bed and Breakfast. One here for creating a new martini—I created the prune-tini! Really clears you out. One here for bonsai bush trimming. We did keep the leatherwork merit badge from the old scouts. And, O.M.G.! Here is my favorite new merit badge—(*He gets quite serious*) --one for scouting out organizations that have homophobic policies. Now, that is more than a craft: that is an art. Be prepared.

EMORY or MEMORY

Valerie sits under the dryer.

Janice is sweeping up hair.

Babs is painting her own nails.

Suddenly Mariana runs on screaming and crying. Her hair is teased and her nails are of an outrageous length and painted with an almost mural quality.

She runs into the shop. A bell rings on her entrance.

Mariana: He wants me to CUT 'EM

Babs: (*confused*) Huh?

Mariana: He wants me to cut 'em.

Babs: (*understanding*) NO!

Mariana: (*on floor in tears*) He wants me to cut 'em.

Babs: (*slowly goes over to her*) Not yer nails.

Mariana: My nails!

Babs: That bastard!

Mariana: He says that he is tired of me scratching him. He's mad that I can't drive no more...cuz I ain't turning the wheel with these. And he's mad that now he has to buckle my bra.

Babs: But they're your....creative expression. They're what makes you, YOU!

Mariana: Tell me about it.

Valerie (*from under the dryer*): I can't hear anything. What is the girl with the big nails upset about?

Babs: Her husband is trying to stifle her creative expression.

Valerie: That is awful!

Babs: He wants her to cut her nails.

Valerie: (*loudly*) Well, thank GOD! They're grotesque.

Babs: But I painted this one with HIS face on it. And I painted this one to look like your son swimming with a dolphin. You can't cut 'em.

Mariana: I know I told him each nail is a canvas and both hands is a gallery.

Babs: I'd cut HIM. I'd take big red there (*Jaclyn holds up her third finger painted deep red*) and I'd slice him through the jugular. He ain't messing with my art.

Valerie: (*yelling over the dryer*) Are you talking about killing someone?

Angela enters. The bell rings. She is one of those red hat ladies. She is nosy.

Angela: What is happening in here? What is the buzz? Why so distraught?

Valerie: (*yelling*) Her husband wants her to cut her nails but she doesn't want to because she thinks her nails make her an individual. The tall one painted the nails and is now talking about murder. You're caught up.

Angela: So, he doesn't want you to express yourself? Just like a man-- so typical. Won't let you be an individual. Been there; done that. Listen, you need to join our club where you can really be yourself. We all wear the same colors to show our uniqueness. We dress alike to be different. We don't need any men. Just a red hat and a purple dress...

Mariana: I have that!

Angela: Oh....wait. Been through menopause?

Mariana: Uh uh.

Angela: Sorry. You're on your own.

Mariana: What am I gonna do?

Babs: If you ain't gonna kill him, I'm out of options.

There is silence.

Janice (*comes up with her broom*): Do you love him?

Mariana: Yeah.

Janice: Do you scratch him?

Mariana: Yeah.

Janice: Then you gotta cut 'em. What is more important-- your personal expression or the man you love?

(Silence)

Janice: If you really love him like you say, do you really NEED those big nails? They may show that you're an individual but that makes you singular. It keeps him away. If you love him, you have to make the sacrifice. Love is more important than art...right?

Mariana: (*She is changed*) I am going to pick up some clippers on my way home. I'm tired of scratching him.

Angela and Valerie: Yeah!

Mariana: I'm tired of not driving.

Angela and Valerie: Yeah.

Mariana: Is it ok that I don't mind him buckling my bra?

Angela: That does sound kind of good.

Valerie: I wouldn't mind that.

Mariana: Who needs these stupid nails? Thanks, Janis!

Mariana runs out. Valerie and Angela clap. They see Babs fuming. Babs stares at Janice.

Babs: I thought I told you to keep your trap shut and keep sweeping.

Janice goes back to sweeping as the lights fade.

Babs: (*mumbling*) Love more important than art!?! (*She begins to paint her own nails again.*)

Angela: Hey Babs, you got a date tonight?

Babs: No, you old hag.

Lights are out.

SEW or SO

(A large bolt of fabric is brought on. The clerk unrolls it for each customer. Different fabrics are sewn together and as the new fabric starts a new customer begins his or her story.)

The first fabric is large black and white stripes.

Clerk: Pirate shirt?

Customer 1: No, Beetlejuice costume.

Clerk: Oh that's perfect.

Customer 1: I hope he like it. It's a surprise.

The fabric changes as does the customer.

Customer 2: I'm going to make café curtains for my friend as a gift.

Clerk: No pattern?

Customer 2: I can do it.

Clerk: Good thinking. Us fabric-holics know what's going on!

Fabric and customer change.

Customer 3: Do you cut vinyl here?

Clerk: Sure enough do.

Customer 3: We are going to redo our banquette. I'm tired of the old look.

Clerk: This cleans up nice.

Fabric and customer change. It is a harried mother. She is in between one of the shift of her many jobs.

Clerk: So, what are you making?

Customer 5: I'm going to make some clothes for my kids.

Clerk: FUN! Special occasion?

Customer 5: No.

Clerk: Well, good for you. When do you find the free time?

Customer 5: I just do.

Clerk continues pulling fabric.

Customer 5: I have this coupon.

Clerk: Oh, not on this fabric.

Customer 5: But—

Clerk: Yeah, that only works for the stuff in those rows.

Customer 5: Oh.

Clerk: Is that a problem?

Customer 5. Um...no.

Clerk: Sure?

Customer 5: Just a minute. *(She checks her purse and wallet. She desperately needs this fabric but can not afford it. She tries to remain calm. She is proud. Customers behind her get impatient.)*

Clerk: Ma'am, do you want this fabric?

Customer 5: I do... um. I'm sorry. I guess I don't. Do you want me to put it back?

Clerk: Forget it. Next.

(Customer 5 shrinks away as the next customer comes forward and a new material appears.)

Customer 6: Won't this make the cutest dog bed?

BLACK OUT.

ARIA or AREA

Christina Aguilera strides across the stage looking every bit the skank. She is attached to a rather trendy looking dude dressed in ripped jeans, rings in many places and an attitude. They seem to be on a date.

Simultaneously, Valkyrie enters in breast plate and horns. She walks arm in arm with a very posh and sophisticated gentleman in a tuxedo.

As the two women pass each other, Valkeyrie rolls her eyes and Christina lets the tiniest riff escape. The two women stop and face off.

What follows is an exchange between the two women of high notes. As Valkyrie goes higher and higher with her aria Christina matches her note for note with surprising dexterity.

This continues as long as it is funny.

The two women grapple. Their dates rescue them. The women recover.

As the women begin to head off, their respective dates have had a change of heart. The man in the tuxedo is transfixed by Christina and the Dude worships Valkyrie.

The two men switch partners as the new couples head off.

PIETA or PIETY

A museum. A guard stands upstage.

Patron 1: Oh, wow! This is art.

Patron 2: There it is!

Patron 1: Pictures don't do it justice.

Patron 2: Look at the pain in their faces.

Patron 1: So real.

Lazlo Toth attacked Michelangelo's Pieta with a hammer on May 21, 1972. As he was subdued and dragged away by security guards, he shouted, "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like!"

Pieta. A mysterious man enters the stage. He carries a hammer. A security guard stands facing upstage. A few patrons cross and look at the Pieta. (It is imagined downstage) They kneel at it and a few cross themselves. (The statue is also projected up on a screen.) He walks up behind the

patrons and holds the hammer over the unknowing patrons' heads. They turn to go as he hides the hammer. He surveys the statue. His monologue slowly builds in intensity.

Toth: This is not my mother. This is not me. This is not truth. This is not art. This is not how it happened. This is not her face. This is not how she held me. This is not how it happened. This is not truth. This is not art.

(He bends down and "touches" the face of the statue.)

This is not me. This is not how I cried. This is not how I begged. This is not me. This is not art.

(He composes himself. We think he is calm. He stands and holds out his hammer.)

I am the real Jesus Christ. I am the real Jesus Christ.

(He repeats this as he begins to smash away hitting the statue 15 times. The projection has the headline "LUNATIC ATTACKS MICHELANGELO'S PIETA." The security guard sees this and the patrons come back in as he screams the phrase and continues hammering. Finally the guard and crowd subdue him. He begins softly again as they start to pull him out of the room. As he leaves his scream is bloodcurdling.)

This is not me. I am the real Jesus Christ. This is not my mother. I am the real Jesus Christ. This is not art. This is not me. I AM THE REAL JESUS CHRIST! This is not me. I am not like this. This is not art. I do not like this. This is not true. This is not art. This is not me.

The patrons rush to the statue and pray and cross themselves. Slow fade.

PLUMB or PLUM

A plumber and his apprentice sit eating sandwiches. There is a long pause.

Plumber: Frigging bologna again.

Apprentice: You say that everyday.

Plumber: And I mean it everyday. Frigging bologna.

Pause. Chewing.

Apprentice: Why don't you tell her not to pack it everyday?

Plumber: Then I'd have to talk to her.

They laugh. They chew.

Plumber: We got enough fittings to finish this up?

Apprentice: I think so.

Plumber: How many?

Apprentice: Five.

Plumber: Need two more half inch nineties. Run out after lunch and get them. Hardware store five lights over. Left. Two blocks on the right.

Chewing. A pause.

Apprentice: Do you like doing this?

Plumber: Eating?

Apprentice: No...plumbing. This job.

A pause. The plumber stares at him.

Plumber: Yeah, I do.

Apprentice: OK, just asking.

Plumber: Why does everyone ask me that? Why can't I love doing this? Why is it impossible to love this? Is it really that crazy that I love doing my job?

Apprentice: Jesus, don't blow a gasket.

Plumber: No, why do people find it so amazing that I actually love doing this? That I know I am good at it. That it is a challenge. Each house is different. Each day is different.

Apprentice: Got it.

Plumber: Do you? Do you?? Look, give me a day in an old house and watch me fix other plumber's sloppy mistakes. Makes me feel like frigging Michael Angelo. Give me a new house and I get to map out a whole new... *(He can't find the words so maps it out with his hands)* ...path, diagram whatever. Makes me feel like friggin' Amerigo Vespucci... Frig it. Who else goes home feeling like that?

Silence. Chewing.

Apprentice: So....what did you really want to be?

Plumber *(with a mouthful of food)*: What the frig are you talking about?

Apprentice: You know. Nobody WANTS to be a plumber.

Plumber: I did. I do.

Apprentice: OK. Fine.

Plumber: I want to be a plumber. Do you get it?

Apprentice: Got it.

Plumber: Good.

Apprentice: I just don't see how you could like it.

Plumber: Maybe I am just not your regular kind of plumber, you know? Maybe that's what makes me different than the rest.

Apprentice: Maybe.

The plumber gets up. He is a cliché of butt crack exposure as he packs up his lunch. The apprentice notices the crack and laughs to himself as the lights fade.

PLAY or PLIÉ

Two opposing football teams take the stage. They prepare for battle. They take positions in the most violent of ways. As the play begins, classical music plays. Their actions change from gruff to lyrical. They turn from football players into ballet dancers as the music underscores their very intricate choreography. A touchdown is scored. When the play is over the music ends and the players return to their rough attitudes as they celebrate in mundane football dances.

The extra point is prepared for as the two lines line up. When the ball is hiked, the classical music returns as the players arch back like swans. As the ball is kicked the lights fade out.

FOLK or FINE

A hillbilly enters the stage with a jug. The jug has three X's on it. He sits on a stump.

A sommelier enters with an expensive bottle of wine. He sits at a table.

They do all of the following actions together, but in very different ways. Together they unscrew/uncork their respective bottles. Both smell their bottles. Both pour their brew into a mug/wineglass. They swirl their brew. They both sniff their brew. They both drink their brew.

Both quickly become unbelievably drunk.

They look at each other.

BOTH: I love you, man.

BLACK OUT

SCRAPS or SCRAPES

Sally is at a scrapbook table. She is very mid-western and wears a polyester monstrosity. She has a thick accent and talks to the audience like a daughter.

Sally: Oh, no, I'm not an artist. I am a scrapbooker. I don't even know why I am here. I mean I work with pre-made stickers and I buy those little corner tab things for my photos. I don't even take most of the photos I put in. I just arrange them. I shouldn't be here....

(She looks back down and begins to work.)

I just scrapbook. I mean I use my glitter pens to write funny captions like "I can't believe I ate the whole thing!" under Marty's picture when we ate Sizzler. I didn't even make that caption up. It's a jingle or something.

(She looks down and begins to work. Again.)

I just scrapbook. I am not an artist. I mean, I do draw smiley faces next to happy pictures. I do draw a rainbow if it was an extra-specially lucky day. Like this one of me and Marty at the casino. We had just won \$1500 at the nickels. I wrote "One arm bandit... (whispers) my ass..." But that's not special.

(She scrapbooks)

Marty died about a year ago.

(She scrapbooks)

This is 'bout the only thing that keeps me sane.

(She scrapbooks)

Marty hated that I scrapbooked.

(She scrapbooks. Laughs to herself.)

That was Marty.

(She turns the book to show the audience.)

This was Marty.

SLOW FADE.

CRITIQUE or CRITICAL

Three critics take the stage

Ben: Hello, I am Ben Brantley.

John: I'm John Simon

Matthew: Matthew Murray, here.

ALL: We are theatre critics.

Ben: We work for some of the nation's most renowned and trusted sources for theatrical arbitration.

John: We define what is cutting edge.

Matthew: We define the new directions theatre is taking.

Ben: Ultimately we decide what is art and what is not. I am the leading drama critic for the New York Times-- the paper that intimidates you to agree with us.

John: I am a critic formerly of New York Magazine. People delight in the swipes and low blows I take at all theatrical (*does quotation gestures*) "artists."

Matthew: (*Meekly*) I write for "Talkin' Broadway .com."

(John and Ben roll their eyes.)

John: Is your wish in dropping the final letter of "talking" supposed to humanize Broadway for the little people? "We are talkin' Broadway."

Matthew: I don't know. I get paid in phone cards.

Ben: Calm down. We are not here to attack each other. We are here to attack shows! We are here to attack actors, directors and designers.

John: (*Begrudgingly*) Sorry.

Ben: Let's talk about something we can agree on-- how awful Denzel Washington was in *Julius Caesar* a few seasons back.

John: Oh, god, yes.

Matthew: Oh, sure, we can hate him.

(PROJECTION: ACTUAL REVIEWS FROM THE CRITICS)

John: A long-standing debate about whether Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is a history play or a tragedy has been resolved by Daniel Sullivan's production starring Denzel Washington: It is neither; it is a farce.

(After each jibe the critics congratulate each other for their cleverness.)

Ben: Dripping blood and breathing smoke, these specters of martial havoc are chewing up and spitting out everything in their path: friends, Romans, countrymen, blank verse, emotional credibility, a man who would be king and even the noblest movie star of them all, he whom the masses call Denzel.

Matthew: Washington might as well be walking and talking his way through a February Sweeps episode of an NBC hour-long drama.

(The critics try to one up each other.)

Ben: Neither mimetically nor vocally appropriate, he gives line readings that tend to be over-the-top or below par.

John: Brutus seems plagued less by moral and philosophical uncertainty than by actorly insecurity.

Matthew: Most serious theatregoers, however, are unlikely to find Washington worth writing home about

John: Mr. Washington looks more apologetic than anything else.

Ben: Washington, a gifted actor in suitable parts, should never have crossed the Rubicon into *Julius Caesar*.

Matthew: He becomes every bit the bland, invisible presence.

John: *(Getting the final word.)* Catching it on March 31, I felt myself the victim of a premature April Fool's joke.

DENZEL WASHINGTON enters through the audience in a toga and sunglasses. He stands silently until the critics finally notice him. They are silenced. He comes slowly forward. The critics try to make the best of this.

DENZEL: What you do is craft.

The critics ashamedly turn to leave. One looks over his shoulder to say:

Matthew: At least he didn't say 'crap.'

Now on the stage, a stoic Denzel begins to speak:

DENZEL: Friends, Romans, Countrymen ...Line!? Line?!? Line!?

The lights fade on a confused Denzel.

FAIR or FARE

A town crier enters with a bell.

CRIER: (*LOUDLY*) Hear Ye. Hear Ye. Welcome to the ARTS and CRAFTS FAIR!

A couple enters.

Woman: Oh isn't that cute. A little bell guy walking around the fair.

(Husband mumbles something).

Woman: Bell guy, come here. This is our first time at the Arts and Crafts Fair so tell me what to do-- Where to go--What to buy. *(to her husband)* Only kidding, honey.

(Husband mumbles something).

CRIER: (*STILL LOUD*) Well, here at the ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR. Artists sell their craft.

Woman: Only makes sense with the name and all. *(She laughs and hits her husband who half-chuckles.)*

CRIER: (*LOUD*) What sets our fair apart is we have all arts represented. Not just the usual pottery or stained glass.

Woman: Oh gosh, a stained glass would look great in our one and a half season room, wouldn't it honey?

(Her husband mumbles something.)

Woman: What do you sell here?

CRIER: (*LOUDLY*) Funny you should ask. I am selling my art even as I speak. I was paid to inhabit the role of the town crier at the ARTS and CRAFTS FAIR. I have trained for years as an actor and make my living selling it in roles as humiliating as this!

Woman: Well, you should be on the Broadway. Shouldn't he?

(Man mumbles something).

Woman: You should do commercials or soap operas. Have you thought of that?

CRIER: (*Quietly*) Completely slipped my mind. (*LOUD*) Well take a look around at the booths. And enjoy your day at the ARTS and CRAFTS FAIR. (*He exits ringing his bell. The couple goes up to a booth with a man with a tic.*)

Woman: What can I buy here?

Poet: Poetry.

Woman: Oh now, you don't see that every day at an Arts and Crafts Fair. Let me hear a little poetry.

The Poet starts to speak but she interrupts.

Woman: Slow down there Nipsey Russell. Let me think of a word for you to rhyme.

Poet: You mean you want your poetry to rhyme?

Woman: Doesn't everyone?

Poet: Yes. (*He sighs.*) What word do you want me to rhyme?

Woman (*very proud of herself*): Purple. (*She laughs.*)

Poet: Why does everyone want me to rhyme "purple"?

The Poet slinks off half crazy and ticking as a sad looking woman enters shaking a tin cup.

Woman: What do you sell here?

Showgal: Showtunes.

Woman: Oh, I don't like showtunes.

Showgal: Who does?

She slinks off shaking the cup.

Woman: Look at this booth. What are you selling here honey?

(She goes up to a hard looking woman in a tutu with a lit cigarette dangling from her lips.)

Dancer: I dance for money.

Woman: Like a pole dancer?

(Husband takes notice for the first time.)

Dancer: I wish. I choreograph dances for special occasions. I can do a dance for fund raisers, retirement dinners or bat mitzvahs.

Woman: Oh, that must be fun.

(The dancer stares at her.)

Woman: Oh, here is a dollar. Can I see a little dance or something?

Dancer: For a dollar, you expect me to create something on the spur of the moment? After years of training and honing my craft to become an artist, you want me to dance for you? For a dollar?

Woman: Sure if it's not too much trouble.

Dancer: No trouble. *(She goes to a beat up boom box. Out blares a stupid Celine Dion pop song.)*

Woman: I love this song!

Dancer: I knew you would. They all do. What do you want the dance to be about?

Woman: About? I am not sure. Dances are about something?

Dancer: Mine are.

Woman: Oh, something happy. Something peppy. Oh, I don't know. Honey, what do you want it to be about? *(A pause.)*

Man: Suffocation.

Dancer begins to dance quite well interpreting a true version of suffocation. You can tell she is a great artist.

She finishes and sticks her hand out for the dollar.

Woman: I didn't like that at all. At all. I don't think it was worth a dollar, quite honestly. I am just glad no children were around to see it. Come on honey. Let's find some good old-fashioned stained glass that nobody thought about when they made it!

She exits.

The husband goes up to the dancer and empties his wallet in her hands.

BLACKOUT

DESTROY or DESTROY

All of the cast are on the stage.

OTHERS: I was told--

Disco Duck: By my on air producers to burn all of the station's disco albums. We thought it was funny. I mean we all knew disco was crap-- a cheap easy TERRIBLE way to make music. So they said to meet at the stadium to burn them all. Abba through "Xanadu." We were sort of forced to bring our own albums as well. We invited our listeners to come down to the stadium too. It was a really big deal.

OTHERS: I was told---

Librarian: By the Superintendent to take certain books off the shelves. The Board agreed that all of these books were offensive. They had inappropriate passages that dealt with death, slavery and profanity. And I thought, "Quit reading my diary!" (*She laughs at herself.*) No, as the head librarian, I was given a list of books that were not approved. Not acceptable. Mark Twain. Not worthy. I had to take them all off of the shelf.

OTHERS: I was told--

Aide: By Vice President Nixon in 1953 to investigate objectionable art in governmental buildings with the view to obtaining removal of all that is found to be inconsistent with American ideals and principles. That was my assignment at 0700 hours on a Monday morning.

Voter: To vote for Sanjaya. It was this whole conspiracy to vote to keep the worst one on. Wasn't that funny? We would show America how stupid they were to keep the worst one on "American Idol." That would show how dumb and ridiculous the population was. (*She laughs*) I voted like 95,000 times at ninety-nine cents a call.

Aide 2: By the Governor that there would be a moratorium on funding for the arts. She wondered how in the midst of these budget issues could the arts receive so much support?

Alma Powell: U.N. officials hung a blue curtain over a tapestry reproduction of Picasso's *Guernica* at the entrance of the Security Council. The spot is where diplomats and others make statements to the press, and basically officials thought it would be inappropriate for my husband, Colin Powell, to speak about the war in Iraq with the 20th century's most iconic protest against the inhumanity of war as his backdrop.

OTHERS: I was told—

Clorox Bottle: By my mother that I could make a little bird house for Blue Jays out of a Clorox bottle.

Aide 3: By John Ashcroft to cover the partially nude statue at the Justice Department Building, the Spirit of Justice which was erected in 1934. He refused to give a press conference in front of this disgusting nude statue. I was told to buy some fabric so that it would be covered with a blue drape “for aesthetic reasons” so the press conference could go on as planned.

Rapper: (*Rapping*)

That my rap lyrics was offensive to the masses

All I talked about was bitches with fat asses

Air play was gone

Moms kicked me out m’home

Now I’m back to flippin’ burgers less I switch up m’tone

Karen Hazelwood and Jeffrey Spinello: By Thomas Kinkade that he was the greatest-selling living painter in the world. He told me his galleries would make me rich and spoke of his deep Christian faith. He told me I had to buy two or three copies of each new edition of Kinkade's canvas reproductions, but they proved to be slow sellers. He told me I was not allowed to discount the pieces, which sometimes cost thousands of dollars. He told me I could return them only if I bought two or three new prints for each one sent back.

OTHERS: I was told—

Kid: That my model race car building was a waste of time. I would be locked in my room for hours working on my models. My Mom and Dad would be pounding on the door.

NEA FOUR: By the NEA that our performance art was lewd. Our funding was taken away. Because we are gay. (Karen Finley:) Because I am a feminist. ALL: Because we made controversy. Because we questioned the government. Our funding was taken away.

Nazi: By my Gestapo to take the paintings down off the wall and put them in the truck. They were now our property. I was told not to look at them. I did not look at them. I just put them in the truck.

Movie Star: After all of my work in the movies that my move to television was career suicide. No one in their right mind would trade the big screen for the boob tube.

OTHERS: I was told---

Mohammad Yousof Asefi: By the Taliban to destroy any painting that contained a living image in it. Any human or animal must be destroyed. To them, drawing or sculpting a living thing was an affront to Allah. They wanted to threaten art. I knew that all of these masterpieces contained

in the Royal Gallery would be gone forever and I realized—a country that has no culture has no history.

OTHERS: What they didn't know was---

Disco Duck: I recorded all of my disco albums that I was supposed to burn onto eight-track tapes. Now, who's laughing?

OTHERS: What they didn't know was---

Librarian: I hadn't even read any of the library books I was supposed to take off the shelves. I hate reading.

OTHERS: What they didn't know was---

AIDE: When Nixon told me seek out that objectionable artwork, I didn't even know what "American Principles" meant!

Idol: Each time I called, I didn't vote for Sanjaya....I voted for Blake!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Aide 2: When the Governor put a moratorium on funding for the arts, I agreed. Things are way too bad in this state to spend money on the arts.

Alma Powell: Although he kept quiet about it all, we all know what Colin really thinks about this war, don't we? He would have been FINE with the Guernica behind him.

OTHERS: What they didn't know was—

Clorox Bottle: I didn't realize that you were supposed to rinse out the Clorox bottles. I had a yard full of dead Blue Jays.

OTHERS: What they didn't know was---

Aide 3: I bought the fabric for the statue behind Ashcroft. But it was a sheer fabric. With the TV lights on you could see right through it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Rapper: I don't like to swear. But is sure is a lot easier finding rhymes like truck and bigger, than rhymes for intercourse and African American.

Karen Hazelwood and Jeffrey Spinello: Thomas Kinkade had met his match. We sued him for fraud and won \$860,000.

OTHERS: What they didn't know was—

Kid: I never finished one model in my life. I was just huffing the glue.

The NEA FOUR: We received compensation surpassing our original NEA grant amount in 1993 when courts ruled in support.

Nazi: I followed their orders. I took them off the wall without looking at one painting. I do not know where they ended up. I swear, I have no idea. I have been asked many times where I put the art. I do not know. I do not know. I did what I was told.

Movie Star: My movie career was dead long before I got this TV show. So, my supposed slumming was actually a blessing.

OTHERS: What they didn't know was---

(The lights dim to only Mohammad Yousof Asefi)

Mohammad Yousof Asefi: I was too moved by the artwork to destroy these paintings. I worked with state guards at the museum. We created a room where I would rescue the artwork, before the Taliban destroyed it. The guards would bring me a painting in my room at the museum and I would cover over the living things in the painting. A busy marketplace became a marketplace with empty stalls. A few brushstrokes and it became acceptable. A piece of art without one living thing in it.

(A pause)

What they didn't know was---

I spent hours covering these beautiful oil paintings with a million brushstrokes ofwatercolors. I made these paintings look like their version of art but I did not destroy the paintings!

(A pause)

What they didn't know was---

When the Taliban fell, I wiped clean these pieces of art. I removed these bits of my craft covering this art. I wiped them with a sponge. My craft disappeared and the art was revealed.

(A pause)

I was told---

My craft was a work of art.

Blackout.

This ends the act.

As intermission begins the House Lights come up but before the audience can leave an actor (the same who hosts the final scene) springs onto the stage.

Host: Sorry to interrupt your little potty break. But just some quick instructions pour vous. In the lobby are several tables at which you can create your own art. All the tables are supplied with craft products and qualified instructors. So use this intermezzo to go Picasso.

The host waves and exits.

-INTERMISSION-

ENTR'ACTE

An actor comes onstage and plays “chopsticks” and scales which then develops them into a great amazing virtuosic Chico Marx thing.

OPENING of Act Two

Rob: Hi I am an actor portraying Rob Roznowski who wrote and directed tonight's show. I started writing this play because I wanted to explore who has the right to decide what is ART and what is CRAFT. I wanted to start some debate or spark some discussion, really. That is all I have to say.

Justin: Hi I am an actor portraying Justin Miller the set designer for the show you are seeing tonight. I designed this set with like a whole origami kind of feel and thought it was really kind of cool and worked with the show. What do you think?

Jodi: Hi I am an actor portraying Jodi Ozimek AND Amber Cook. We are co-costume designers. We get along pretty well. Yes we do Jodi. We used a base costume for the actors and then layered on other pieces. That's right. We wanted it to be about the structure of the outfit. We bought a lot of stuff at Marshall's. Jodi, don't tell them that. Why Amber? Because that makes it seem less artsy. Oh, Amber. We think we did a pretty good job, yes we do! Do you?

Samantha: Hi I am an actor portraying Samantha Bostwick the lighting designer for the show you are seeing tonight. This is my first show at graduate school. I want to make a good impression. I hope I am doing well. Am I?

#1: Justin, Your set is really....so cliche. Folding boxes? How novel! You stole that idea from hundreds of other better designers. You're just a parasite.

#2: Jodi AND Amber, you just bought clothing at a discount store. You didn't even design them. And it took TWO of you?

#3: Samantha, this is your first show here? What was your undergrad like? *(She is in the dark)* Seriously .

#4: You stole my work! I originally created this *(He points to the fancy frame)* exact frame for a client of mine. This is an exact cheaper sloppily constructed replica—not painted in the back I might add- of my design that I built in 1929 in Lima, Ohio.

#5: Speaking of parasitic. I just saw a costume made from a Butterick pattern walk across this stage. Where is the artistry in that? That's “connect the dots.” What is worse is that pattern was created as a knock off from my original design back in 1952.

#6: I just saw a gobo that I first made by hand in 1973. That lighting effect that looked like leaves—me. I made it with a piece of tin and a few punches later—MY creation. You can get it in a catalog.

#7: You didn't invent frames. Your so called original is just a refinement of my earlier work. You even quoted me as an inspiration in your autobiography one time, so don't get so territorial when you are actually referencing my work in yours.

#8: (*British dialect*) My dear. Your "creation" is simply a knock off of my original. The natural waist, the silhouette- a tip of the hat to my Victorian innovations.

#9: I coined the name "gobos." I first invented the "go between" to create texture with light. So your tacky little square image really owes everything to me.

#10: So, YOU invented frames? You invented geometry? Is that what you claim here? You created the rectangle? It is just a frame! Sure you put some frills on it but it is nothing more than a functional frame!

#11: (*A French accent*) Your dresses Madame, echoes a little too closely to the gowns I created for the court at Versailles. Your work here is a sadder replica of mine.

#12: Shadows with light! YOU invented shadows with light. Who are you? God? Mother Nature? How dare you make so remarkable a claim?

#13: Look, I'm Mother Nature and you're all a bunch of copycats!

All onstage get into a heated battle for superiority and originality. There is some pushing and lots of yelling. Perhaps a few blows are thrown. The fight grows in intensity. Rob comes forward rather sheepishly.

Rob: Hi. Actor playing Rob here again. Hope you enjoy Act Two.

BLACKOUT.

HYPERBOLE OR HYPER-BALL

Three men enter the stage. They are proud.

String: Howdy.

Foil: Hello.

Rubber: Hi.

Together: I am the owner of the world's biggest ball of ---

String: String.

Foil: Foil.

Rubber: Rubber bands.

Together: I have spent years collecting---

String: String.

Foil: Foil.

Rubber: Rubber Bands.

Together: You may ask me why I collect—

String: String.

Foil: Foil.

Rubber: Rubber bands.

Together: My answer is simple—

They each go into a lengthy monologue of why this is important to them.

They each end their monologues.

Together: As owner of the world's biggest ball of

String: String.

Foil: Foil.

Rubber: Rubber bands.

Together: One thing is for certain.... My wife hates me.

LESSON or LESSEN

A teacher and student sit in a classroom. Silence.

Teacher: What are you going to do with your life?

Student: Wow, could you ask a harder question? I really don't know.

Teacher: You have lots of options, you know?

Student: Options are good. I just don't know what to do. My parents keep pushing me to one place and my friends want me to go here and my....

Teacher: What?

Student: Here comes the sappy part, my heart tells me to go another place.

Teacher: That makes sense. Doesn't it? It's cliché sure, but these clichés are clichés for a reason.....Just like my last sentence.

(They smile.)

Student: What do you think I should do? Can I make a living at it?

Teacher: You can't ask me that.

Student: I see the statistics. I hear the warnings. I see you....Sorry.

Teacher: That's ok. I am so happy to be part of it in any way that I can. It is that important. To me. It doesn't have to be for you. That is the decision.

Student: But I don't know if that is enough. Or what I want. Or if I have talent... Am I good?

Teacher: Good is relative. Nobody can say whether you are good. I can respond to your work, but that is only my opinion. I like it. I love it. I am only one person. Who knows?

Student: But will that pay the rent? Will that be enough? Will that....

Teacher: I don't know.

Student: Me either.

A silence. The teacher grades papers.

Student: I mean I will always do this.

Teacher: You have to.

Student: In some way. In some way.

Teacher: In some way.

Student: Sure.

Teacher: Sure.

A silence. The teacher grades papers.

Teacher: Did you decide?

Student: No.

Teacher: Oh.

A silence. Teacher grades papers.

Student: I really want to do this.

Teacher: Great!

BOTH: In some way.

They laugh.

Student: I do want to thank you for all you have done for me though.

Teacher: Sure.

Student: No, seriously. You have opened my eyes to all of the amazing possibilities. You have...

Teacher: Someone did it for me....

Student: So...thanks.

Teacher: I sure will miss you. I really wish you the best of luck.

Student: Thank you. And I will do it!

Student leaves. The teacher is alone.

Teacher: No you won't. But you could.

Teacher grades papers.

Slow fade.

FAN or FEIGN

Stacey stands center in a faux fur jacket with an autograph book and pen clutched tightly in her hands. She has headgear for braces on. She shivers. She practices a few lines.

Stacey: "I really enjoyed your performance tonight." No. Um..." I really thought you were awesome." Dumb! "You are so hot!" God, Stacey what are you, twelve? Jeesh!....Calm down. He's only a man.... A gorgeous man....only a man... an actor. I hope he can act like he loves me. Stacey, stop it. (*She shivers*) Jeesh, how long does it take him to get out of costume?...I bet

he is naked right now. Stop it Stacey!... “I really love your work.” That’s good. “I really love your work.” That’s good. “Excuse me, but I love your work.” Good job, Stacey. That’s good.

A dumpy man enters in a baseball jacket and earmuffs. Stacey is awestruck.

Stacey: Excuse me sir, but I love your work.

He does not hear her and continues walking.

Stacey: Good one, Stacey.

She runs past him and lies on the ground to block his exit. He stops and stares. He removes his earmuffs.

STAR: Are you ok?

Stacey (*Still on the ground, lets it all out in one huge gush.*): I just wanted to tell you that I love your work and thought you were awesome tonight and loved each moment. I think you are the greatest actor of our generation with a maturity and complexity that Leo Dicaprio, Matt Damon or Ryan Phillipe --although all fine and cute actors-- could never hope to achieve. Your performance tonight was perhaps the single greatest life-altering event of this world’s long and varied history..... And I love you.

STAR: Um....thanks. Do you need some help getting up?

Stacey: If you would simply place one hand on my prone body, I would perhaps melt into this frigid asphalt. But thank you, I will accept your offer if only out of a chance to spend more time in your presence.

(He offers her a hand. She gingerly takes it—shuddering at his touch.)

STAR: Are you ok?

Stacey: I am more than ok. I am changed. Your work tonight transported me to a different era.

STAR: Really? I felt off tonight.

Stacey: If by “off” you mean transplendent.

STAR: Well, thanks.

Stacey: If you will sign my breasts I would appreciate it, but if that is too forward, I will ask you to sign my book.

She turns upstage and opens her jacket. Star is shocked.

STAR: Um, I'll sign the book I guess. (*He takes the book and begins signing it.*) How old are you anyway?

Stacey: I am forty-two. (*Pause.*) Do not let the head gear fool you as my "invisaligns" did not take.

STAR: Um, I gotta get going.

Stacey: Quick question, where did you train? How did you perfect this difficult craft called "show"?

STAR: Um, I just auditioned.

Stacey: A natural! Took to it like a baby to a mother's teat.

STAR: Um...sure.

Stacey: Can we expect to see you in something else this season?

STAR: No, my wife would kill me.

Stacey: Correct me if I heard wrong, did you say your *wife* would kill you?

STAR: Yeah, this show is really cutting into my time with her and the kids.

Stacey: Ignore that shattering sound, it is only my heart.

(Stacey stands stunned)

STAR: Well, I gotta run. I am working late shift tonight at the mill.

(He exits.)

Stacey: (*Quietly*) I will not soon forget your performance at the Charlotte Community Theatre Mister... (*She must check the program.*) Melvin Gutmaker. Your turn as ... (*checks program*) ... Juniper J. Juniper in the masterpiece(*checks program*) *Natalie Needs a Nightie*....was ART!

She sighs. She looks around. She shivers. She looks at her watch.

Stacey: I think I missed my bus.

Slow fade.

YOURS or OURS

Three couples are discovered onstage. One couple is comprised of a woman (A1) and a man (B1), one is comprised of two women (A2 and B2), and one is comprised of two men (A3 and B3). All of the couples are in the midst of a terrible breakup. This scene is very fluid, sometimes we hear all of the couples at once, sometimes lines overlap, and sometimes they all speak together.

A1: So, I guess we should start.

A2: So, I guess we should start.

A3: So, I guess we should start.

All Bs are silent.

A2: Look we're going to have to do this.

All Bs are silent.

A3: We are going to have to divide this stuff up.

All Bs are silent.

A1 and A2: Look I don't want to do this (A2 finishes) anymore than you do.

Bs remain silent.

All As together: Let's start with the CDs, (A3 finishes) that should make you happy.

The Bs remain staring straight front. As pull out a CD.

All As: Who gets the (A2) Bjork (A1) Seal (A3) Little Shop of Horrors Revival?

All BS: Who cares?

All As shrug and put the CD back. They pull out another. All As notice the CD and sigh.

All As: Who gets the (A1) Eydie Gorme? (A2) Eydie Gorme? (A3) Eydie Gorme?

For the first time the Bs notice.

A3: Who gets it?

All BS: Nobody (B1 and B3) GETS it.

As sigh. Knowing a fight is coming.

A3: Look (ALL As join in) don't make this a bigger deal (A2) than it has to be. (All As) Do you get it (A3) or do I?

B2: Look (All Bs join) NOBODY gets it.

A2: Fine.

A3: If you're going to be like this....

A1: Why was it easier to divide our finances?

B1: Because that was easy. (B2 joins) Yours. Mine. (B3 joins in) This was OURS.

As start to walk away.

B2: Wait.

B1: Don't avoid me..

B3: STOP!

All Bs: Eydie Gorme was OURS. (B3) That was our song. (B1) We felt like she was singing that for us! (B3) Remember when I brought that home and we freaked over it?

All Bs: She is OURS! (B2) So, nobody gets it. (B1) You can't seriously expect to listen to this (B2 joins) You can't listen to this ever again. (B2) Without thinking of me?

All As laugh.

A2: Is that a curse?

B2: NO! (ALL Bs) It's the truth. That was our song! (B1) She may have recorded it like fifty years ago... (B2) We found that stupid remastered CD in the bargain bin (B3) We always pretended to be Steve and Eydie...but I was the one with talent. Eydie!

All BS: That's our song. (B1) Don't you get that? (B2) Everything that we shared makes it ours. (B3) We can't divide that up. All Bs: It was OURS.

A1 B2 A3 and B3: Only there is no US.

All As and Bs: Do you really

B3: Think that?

A1: OWN this CD?

A2: Decide what is MINE?

B2: Want this now?

A3: Think I believe that?

B1: Want to end this?

B2: Look, I know it's stupid to say that someone else's song could sum up our relationship. I mean, she may have been signing about something else, but we turned it into ours. We took this recording of her singing someone else's song—she didn't even write it-- and we made it into ours.

All Bs: Listen.

Magically the music plays. Eydie Gorme's "Fly Me to the Moon" starts quietly. The couples stand listening to it:

Eydie: Poets often use many words to say a simple thing.

A1: You could never just SAY it!

A2: SShhh!

Eydie: It takes thought and time and rhyme to make a poem sing.

B1: She's like Patsy Cline.

B2: Only cleaner.

Eydie: With music and words I've been playing. For you, I have written--

A3: Listen how she strains.

Eydie: --a song.

A3: Like Doris Day after a bender.

B3: SShhh!

Eydie: To be sure you know what I'm saying

Eydie and All As and Bs sing (*some reluctantly*): I'll translate as I go along

(The lights have begun to fade and a mirror ball spins as the song begins. The couples react physically and emotionally to this. Occasionally they will look at each other. Sometimes a hand may be brushed. As the song progresses all will surrender to the mood and memories.)

Eydie: Fly me to the moon
And let me play among the stars
Let me see what spring is like
On Jupiter and Mars
In other words hold my hand

(One or two of the couples hold hands)

Eydie: In other words darling kiss me

(Some may look, but none kiss. In the quick musical interlude a few more physical movements are expressed—representing what is going on inside.)

Eydie: Fill my heart with song
And let me sing forevermore
You are all *(A1 and A2 sing along)* I long for
(B1 and B2 sing along) All I worship and *(A3 and B3 sing along here)* adore
In other words please be true
In other words I love you

(In the instrumental break all three couples waltz around the stage as the mirror ball gleams. Their moves are elegant and complicated. We should think they belong together.)

Eydie: In other words please be true.

In other words I love you.

(The lights restore back to original during the musical fade. The couples are left in varying degrees—conciliatory, more angered or resolved to end this. There is no doubt, that someone else's work is THEIRS.)

Slow fade.

PATCHES or PATCHY

Goody Proctor whispers to Goody Twoshoes.

Goody Proctor: Goody Standish has had relations with me husband. I just knoweth it. My patch shall reflect it.

Goody Twoshoes: Oh, no. I am sure thou art mistaken.

Goody Standish: Did that harlot Goody Proctor just intimate that I would lie in the cornsilk with her husband? She needs to be brought down a rung or two on the council ladder. My Patch shall reflect that!

Goody Twoshoes: Oh, pshaw, I am sure she meanteth it as a joke.

Goody Proctor: My patch condemns adultery.

Goody Standish: My patch mocks women who wear low cut aprons.

Goody Twoshoes: Goodies, don't fight!

They are quiet. A fat Pilgrim walks across the stage eating candy.

Goody Twoshoes: Goody Gumdrops has put on weight!

Goody Standish: Future generations of my family may discover the code I have left in my patches. If you look at the scraps, you can almost hear them whisper "Goody Proctor is a strumpet!"

Goody Proctor: My future generations will be smart enough to divine my message "Goody Standish is a high faultin' bitch!"

Goody Twoshoes: Hold thy tongues!

Goody Standish: I have never seen you so angry Goody Twoshoes?

Goody Proctor: Yes, don't get thy bonnet in a bunch.

Goody Twoshoes: I have had enough of your fighting. Quilts are not for self-expression or a place to leave messages, they are to put on a damn bed. Get over thyselfes.

The two women are shocked and go back to sewing and mumbling.

Goody Proctor looks at Goody Twoshoes square.

Goody Proctor: What does that square mean?

Goody Standish: Your patch there with two heifers attacking each other.

Goody Proctor: Is that supposed to be us?

Goody Standish: You think we're two warring heifers?

Goody Twoshoes: No, I told you it is just a blanket. No hidden message for future generations.

Goody Proctor: If you say so.

Goody Standish: Fair enough.

They go back to sewing Goody Twoshoes lets out a big smile as the lights fade.

WITCH or WHICH

A priest sits drinking a glass of wine in an arm chair. A doorbell rings. He goes to the door to discover a witch standing there complete with pointy hat.

Priest: Oh is it Halloween already?

Witch: No, I was just driving by and saw your lights on and wanted to talk.

Priest: Surely. Come in, my child. *(She looks at him.)* May I call you “my child”?

Witch: Probably better if you didn’t.

Priest: Won’t you sit down? *(Witch sits in the other armchair.)* Would you like some wine?

Witch: Probably shouldn’t since I’m driving. *(She indicates her broom.)*

Priest: Certainly. You don’t mind if I do? *(He indicates his wine glass.)*

Witch: No, feel free.

Priest: *(Sits)* So, tell me, my....friend, *(She nods)* what did you want to talk about?

Witch: Something has been bothering me for quite some time and I thought you might have some answers.

Priest: I hope that I can help.

Witch: Well, you see I was just wondering why what I do is considered craft and what you do is considered this high sacred art. *(Pause.)* Know what I mean?

Priest: Interesting question that bears examination.

Witch: I don’t know why this is such a problem for me. Is it just a matter of respect? I’m not sure.

Priest: Well, I guess on the base level it is witchCRAFT because it’s something one has to practice.

Witch: So you didn't practice? Isn't that what the seminary is for? You mean you were just born with "it"? No practice involved.

Priest: Well, I guess I do have to practice. But I was called to this position by a higher power.

Witch: Exactly how I got into this.

Priest: *(Mulls this over.)* Well you use potions. *(She looks to his wineglass. He blushes.)* You use incantations.

Witch: I've been to your masses.

Priest: You have superstitions.....You have rituals...*(Realizing what he is saying, he trails off. There is silence.)* You consort with spirits.

Witch: Really? Want to go with that one?

Priest: You make people bend to your every whim through fear....Hmmm. This is harder than I thought.

Witch: I know I have been having these same arguments with myself.

Priest: I understand your frustration.

Witch: I guess it is just a respect issue. I work quite hard at what I do.

Priest: I am sure you do!

Witch: I just want people to not minimize it by calling it craft. What I do is an art.

Priest: Why does craft have to have such a negative connotation?

Witch: I don't know it just does.

Priest: I'll tell you what, how about I start calling what I do, Godcraft.

Witch: Now you're just humoring me. It really doesn't matter. I should go. *(She heads to the door.)*

Priest: Well, I am terribly sorry we couldn't pinpoint the prejudices that define art or craft. I do want you to know that you have given me much to think about.

Witch: Well, good. I guess if I can just get some people thinking....well, who am I kidding? It's never going to change; it's been considered a craft for centuries.

Priest: Some not so good centuries for your kind too. The Inquisition. Salem.

Witch: How about that? Some people were burned for their craft! Now that's something I didn't think about.

Priest: Maybe people are just scared to call it an art.

Witch: I like that. Too scared to call it art. I like that a lot. Thanks Father. *(She seems cheered by this idea.)*

Priest: Get home safely.

Witch: I will *(She indicates her broom)* Thank you.

Lights dim as the Priest returns to his chair and looks at the wine in his glass.

HISTORY or HIS STORY

Narrator: Good evening. My lecture tonight will trace the genesis of hobby from its humble beginning to its modern equivalents. My thesis is simple—hobbies spring from boredom.

Two cavemen enter.

Narrator: Once fire, wheels and cave paintings were commonplace, the cave people grew bored.

One of the caveman pounds the ground with his fist. The other joins notice this and joins in. They then discover the first game of rocks scissors paper.

Narrator: The hobby as past time was begun. In ancient Egypt, hieroglyphics reveal a younger generation restless without hobbies.

A mummy and a child enter.

Egyptian Child: Mummy, I'm bored.

Narrator: Later in the time of Shakespeare wordplay became hobby. To overcome boredom through wordsmithery became de riguer.

Shakespeare 1: Ay me. My humour is one of boredom. *(Shakespeare 2 enters)* Zounds, a visitor. I shall spar with him. *(To other.)* Are'st thou bored?

Shakespeare2: If by bored, thou meanest a log, then good fool, I am not.

Shakespeare 2: Too many knots in thy board.

Shakespeare 1: Sirrah. I am lumbered by your wit.

Shakespeare: No longer bored, our quipery has splintered the doldrums.

Narrator: Hobbies began springing up wherever anyone was bored. During the Victorian era:

Man: Well blast, if we can not partake in any sort of flesh manipulation, what shall we do?

Woman: There's this new invention called Parcheesi.

Narrator: During World Wars.

Soldier 1: Well, we've got some time to kill in these fox holes.

Soldier 2: Do you know how to crochet?

Narrator: During the 1960s:

Stoner: If I wasn't stoned I'd be bored.

Narrator: We see the hobby contains not one ounce of artistic thought. It is simply a way to keep from being bored. Rather than invest the time and effort to truly create, hobbies have become the stuff of children's parties and divorced women. To conclude my lecture, let's look at some bored modern hobbyists to further prove my point. Why do you hobby?

1: For fun

2: To focus me.

3: To bond with my kids.

Narrator: And out of boredom.

5: To express myself.

Narrator: And to keep from being bored.

6: To challenge myself.

Narrator: To not be bored.

7: To experiment.

Narrator: BORING!

8: To give gifts.

Narrator: You are ruining my whole thesis! My lecture is ruined.

9. Because I have to!

Narrator: Well, despite this unscientific poll, I still aver that hobbies stem from boredom.

The hobbyists begin calling out their reasons.

Narrator: NO! It is out of boredom!

10 calls the narrator over.

10: Excuse me, Professor?

Narrator: Yes?

10: You want to know what bores us?

Narrator: Finally, yes, what?

10: Lectures!

BLACK OUT.

FABLE OR FEEBLE

A very old, very feeble man with a walker enters the stage.

Theatre: Hello. I am Theatre. You haven't seen much of me in tonight's show. It only makes sense. I'm not what the kids think about anymore. I'm not cool. I'm not up to date. I'm not... *(He trails off. He sighs. He laughs, he sighs)* When does one become obsolete? When do you realize you're no longer important? I guess it dawns on you slowly. You see someone trying something over there and it's different and people flock. You think "They'll come back. They always do." But they don't. Or not the ones you want to. Now I am surrounded by leftover gum on the seats and plastic beer cups when I used to be surrounded by champagne and tuxedos? Maybe that was the reason I became out of fashion. Too high brow... *(He sighs)* That's why I have not been featured in tonight's entertainment. Notice, I didn't call it a play. It's not a play. It's a bunch of sophomoric skits without a clear beginning, middle and end. There's no form. No...*(He trails off)* Maybe that's why no one needs me. I'm too old fashioned. *(He sighs)* Now, I'm just a hobby--something to occupy someone's time on their way to something really important. *(He turns to go.)* I'll just be waiting back here for my cue, in case you need me.

He goes Upstage Right and sits on his walker. He remains there throughout. Lights fade.

SALE or SAIL

The scene begins with most of the actors onstage. The Artist and Customer are frozen mid-handshake. Then:

Customer: Wow, I really love it. I hear your message. I love the details and the passion. It's a masterpiece.

Artist: Thanks, that's why I do it. Exactly for moments like these.

Sound of a cash register bell. The entire scene which follows is played in fast-motion reverse. We are rewinding this entire scene -- including all blocking and sound effects. We are rewinding to the beginning of the story. We are there.

Sound of a baby crying. Mom and Dad enter holding the Artist as Baby:

Mom: Listen, he is trying to say something.

Dad: What is my baby saying?

Mom: I don't understand you.

Dad: I can't hear you.

Baby cries.

Sound of an ice cream truck. The Artist is now 8.

Artist: Mommy, can I get ice cream?

Mom: No, that's a reward. And you haven't earned it. Keep practicing!

Artist: Do I have to practice? It's boring.

Mom: Actually it is tedious not boring?

Artist: Do I hear you correctly? You don't want to practice?

Mom: Yes.

Artist (at the same time): No.

Dad: Why do you practice? Let me hear it?

Artist (Rote): Practice makes every good artist great.

Dad: Now, do you feel better?

Artist: No.

School bell. The Artist is now 16.

Artist: You wanted to talk to me Mrs. Carter?

Mrs. Carter: I do. Walk with me.

Artist: You aren't going to tell me to practice more are you?

Mrs. Carter: Lord no, that is the problem here. You understand the rules. You've got the technique—the craft. But if you want to make art break the rules a little.

Artist: But—

Mrs. Carter: I have to get to class. You want my advice? Go find inspiration. You hear me?

Rock music plays. A Stoner walks up to the artist and offers him a drag on the joint.

Stoner: Inspiration?

A Girl comes up to him in tears. She slaps him hard.

Girl: Inspiration!

A shy boy comes up to him and awkwardly holds out his hand which the Artist takes for a second.

Shy Boy: Inspiration?

Tea kettle whistles. Two roommates (Lisa and Todd) enter. The artist is now 24.

Artist: I don't understand it?

Lisa: Have some tea.

Artist: I keep putting myself out there and nobody is listening to me.

Lisa: Have some tea. It doesn't matter if nobody buys it.

Todd: Tell that to our landlord.

Artist: I keep finding inspiration---

Todd: Sometimes a little too much.

Lisa: Stop it. No inspiration is great, but you have to get some focus.

Todd: She's right!

Lisa: You have to be able to craft the message.

Todd: Otherwise it's just your feelings!

Both: Ew!

Lisa: And who wants to buy that?

Artist: I hear that.

Traffic noises are heard. This montage is of the Artist in the streets over several days. The Artist hails a cab. A Taxi Customer jumps in front of him taking the cab he has hailed.

Artist: Hey, that was my cab. You just jumped in....

The Taxi Customer gives him the finger and rides off. A Hurried Worker-- another person-- runs directly into him without apology.

Artist: Excuse you! You just ran right

The Hurried Worker continues on without a glance back. Sound of a dog barking. A Rich Woman walks a dog which relieves himself near the Artist. She does not pick up the mess.

Artist: Ma'am your dog. You're just going to leave it.

She turns back and shrugs. Cell phone ring. An Argumentative Cell Phone User stands next to the Artist who is fuming.

Cell Phone: How dare you talk to me like that! I can't believe what I am hearing.

Artist: Sir, can you keep it down?

Cell Phone (to Artist): Can't you hear I am on the phone?

Artist: I hear you. That is all I can hear!

Cell Phone (to phone): You have no respect for anyone's feeling but your own.

Artist: Sir, listen to yourself.

Cell Phone (to Artist): Mind your own business. (To cell phone) And that goes for you too! You are one selfish bastard!

Artist: Listen to yourself!

The Artist takes the cell phone from the User and hurls the cell phone offstage. The User looks frightened and goes to retrieve his phone. There is a moment of silence. An idea comes to the Artist.

The sound of applause. A Critic comes up to the Artist who is now 30.

Critic: I love your work. It is focused and passionate with great technique. My review will reflect that.

Artist: Wow, thanks.

Critic: It's a crafty little message hidden in the art there. Society has become deaf to its own rudeness. Ease and selfishness has replaced common courtesy.

Artist: You heard me. (He hugs her hard)

Critic: I guess I did.

A baby cries. A bleary Wife comes in. The Artist is now 34.

Wife: I beg you, you go into him. I have a meeting in the morning.

Artist: I'm working on something new. Listen to this.

Wife: Do you hear me? Do you hear your child?

Artist: I hear you!

Wife: I wish I believed that.

Artist: Honey, I hear you. You are my muse.

Wife: God, I am so sick of listening to this. You are so focused on everything but reality.

Artist: How can you say that? I'm looking everywhere for inspiration.

Wife: You want some inspiration? We need to make more money! How's that for inspiration from your muse? Not everything has to be a masterpiece.

Sound of a cash register. They are in mid handshake again.

Customer: Wow, I really love it. I hear your message. I love the details and the passion. It's a masterpiece.

Artist: Thanks, that's why I do it. Exactly for moments like these.

BLACK OUT

ARTS or CRAFTS

The host from intermission enters the stage

Host: Don't you hate audience participation? It is the lowest form of theatre. (*He changes mood. He is not the smarmy game show host as before—now he is more of a guide to the final exploration.*) Houselights please! (*The houselights come up as the entire cast enters the stage.*) Will _____ please raise your hand? (*She is not a plant. She is a real audience member.*) (*SLIDES OF TICKETS AND DISCLAIMER GO HERE.*)

Host: Please bring (*let's call her Marge*) Marge down here! (*Whichever cast member is closest to Marge goes and assists her.*) (*Music from PARTICIPATION audience searching music goes here.*)

Host: Now Marge, thank you for being such a good sport. Do you know why you are here? (*Improv section*)

Host: Now, Marge you made something in the lobby at intermission didn't you?

Marge: Yes.

Host: Well, the cast has consulted during act two and has chosen your piece for this segment. Your piece has been deemed to be "most interesting" by our cast.

Host: Please note I did not call it the "best" or the "worst." Or "art" or "craft." Simply interesting.

Host: Let's bring your piece out here (*Participation Audience searching music again. The painting is shown to the audience and placed on the easel. The disclaimer and ticket slide fades to black or a picture of Marge's creation if possible.*)

This section should not necessarily be played for laughs.

Host: Now Marge, have you had any formal training as an artist?

Host: Have you had experience as a craftsperson?

Host: Now Marge, tell us the title of this piece.

Host: Marge, please tell us the message you were trying to express in this creation?

Host: Thank you. Now, audience, it is now your turn to decide whether Marge's creation here is art or craft.

(The creation is shown to the audience again and then placed on the easel.)

Host: Audience, as you note, in nearly thirty scenes of this show tonight we have endeavored to help you come to a personal definition of both art and craft. Through your vote on Marge's work, you will prove that after this debate you have come to a critical delineation of the difference between these two very different terms. Your choice will prove that you are now able to judge and classify what is art and what is craft.

Host: To assist in your decision we have four cast members who have opposing views on the question of Marge's work and its categorization as art or craft.

A few cast members discuss the piece.

These monologues should have valid points and should not be blatantly comedic.

Host: Thank you, cast. As you can see, the line between art and craft can be blurry. But following our work tonight, we hope you are now prepared to prove your knowledge through your vote.

Host: However, prior to casting your vote we must go over some procedural information.

Host: If you think that this is art you will raise your right hand. Please confirm that you understand this concept by demonstrating.

Host: If you believe that this is craft, you will raise your left hand. Please confirm that you understand this concept by demonstrating.

(During this section a cast member whispers to Marge that she there will be a blackout. She will be left onstage alone before curtain call.)

Host: In order that your decision not be influenced by any other person's vote, we would like you to all vote at the precisely the same time.

Host: There are no abstentions. You must vote. Your vote will validate that you have sharpened your critical eye throughout tonight's performance.

Host: In order that your decision not be changed, during the vote we have assigned the cast to specific areas of the audience to tally your responses for art or craft.

Host: Once the votes have been tallied, Marge, the audience's decision will be final. Your work's fate is in their hand. Your work will be judged as either art or craft.

Host: Cast to your positions. Audience prepare. Please make sure to raise your vote high in the air for easier tabulation.

Host: We are now ready to begin the voting. Audience we ask you: Is Marge's work art or craft?

Before the audience can vote the lights blackout.

The cast leaves the stage in the black out.

The OR illuminates.

The lights restore leaving only Marge and her artwork onstage.

The cast slowly come on and applauds for Marge. They eventually grab Marge and include her in their bow.

Only Theatre remains seated on his walker as the audience files out.

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE SOME SCENES THAT WERE CUT DURING REHEARSALS AND READINGS OF THE SHOW AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY AND IN NEW YORK CITY. YOU MAY FIND THEY WORK FOR YOUR PRODUCTION

SKETCH OR SKETCHY

(PROJECTION)

Some Keith Haring drawings appear on the projections screen. They are simple stick figures. 80s gay bar dance music plays.

Two men come out and move in a stick figure kind of way. Actually dancing as Haring's art implies.

Stick Figure #1 Comes up to Stick Figure # 2.

#1: Come here often?

#2: I'm always around.

#1: Me too. Do you like this music?

#2: Sure.

#1: Me too. *(Pause)* Do you think this song has a message?

#2: No, it's just a song. Don't you think?

#1: Yeah, I do.

(They dance a while longer)

#1: I'm happy.

#2: Me too.

(They dance a little while longer)

#1: So, tell me about yourself...

#2: Nothing to tell, really.

#1: Oh, come on, you have to have some big dark secret?

#2: Nope. You??

#1: No, not really....

They dance.

#1: Come on, it can't really be this simple, can it?

#2: Maybe, I mean I'm pretty uncomplicated. What you see is what you get. Nothing hidden.

#1: Wow, I mean, me too! I keep thinking I have to adopt some big façade to prove to people that I am cool or worth it or whatever. Dress different or something. But I am pretty much just what you said. Uncomplicated.

#2: I know. I always wonder if that is enough. But, then I think NAH! That's not me....

#1: I know. Awesome. Seems like we are meant for each other.

#2: Totally.

#1: Want to go grab a drink?

#2: Oh...no....you see I can't stop dancing.

#1: Me too.

(They dance for a little longer. A projection appears "Keith Haring, Artist. May 4, 1958-February 16, 1990. AIDS.")

#1: Why do you think we have to keep dancing?

(Pause)

#2: It's complicated.

They continue to dance as the lights fade.

LIE or LAY

(Augusten Burroughs and James Frey are authors accused of fraud in their best-selling books Running With Scissors and A Million Little Pieces)

A little African-American girl is discovered onstage. She has paper and scissors. She is bored. She discovers a pretend "camera" She pretends she is on TV. She is Oprah Winfrey as a little girl.

LITTLE GIRL: Hello!!! Audience. Have I got a show for yooooooooou! *(She makes cheering sounds)*
Welcome to Oprah Winfrey's Book Club Tree House!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! *(She makes cheering sounds)*

I would like to bring out my first guest. My best friend, Gayle! *(Cheering sounds. She pulls out a black Barbie.)* Hi Gayle! *(In Gayle's voice)* Hi Oprah! I love you. You are so awesome. I love you Oprah! So amazing and awesome! And Pretty! I love you! You are so smart and pretty! I love you! *(Gayle and Oprah kiss for a long time.)*) (Oprah) Thank you, Gayle. Gayle let's talk about a book we are reading. It is called "Hotel for Dogs." *(Gayle's voice)* I love that book. It is awesome. And so good. *(sing song)* It is... It is a awesome book. I love it. I think it is so pretty. Like you Oprah! *(Gayle and Oprah kiss again for a long time.)* (Oprah) Thank you, Gayle. I think this book is good 'cuz it is a bout a hotel that dogs stay at. The dogs stay at the Hotel and sleep there and eat there and have luggage and they have keys to their room and they sleep there and they eat there. It is awesome 'cuz they are dogs and they have a hotel to stay at. *(Gayle's voice)* You are so right Oprah. That book is awesome! It is so funny that the dogs---*(Gayle and Oprah kiss and roll around on the floor.)*

(Suddenly a knock is heard. Oprah and Gayle stop kissing.) Who is it?

BOY: Stedman!

(Oprah is panicked)

OPRAH: *(Whispers to the doll.)* Gayle, don't say anything. *(Loudly.)* Oprah is not here.

STEDMAN: Ok. Thanks.

(Oprah and Gayle kiss again. Another knock is heard. Oprah is panicked.)

OPRAH: Who is it?

TWO BOYS: It is us! James and Augusten! Can we come in?

OPRAH: OK. *(To camera)* Audience we have two very special guests. My friends James and Augusten!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(They enter from the trap door and into the club house. James is nerdy and Augusten is messy. THEY ARE BOTH LIARS.)

OPRAH: Welcome to my Book Club Tree House!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

JAMES and AUGUSTEN: Thanks Oprah!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

JAMES: *(Cautiously)* Is Gayle here?

OPRAH: *(Defensively)* NO! *(She stuffs Gayle down her underwear.)*

OPRAH: Today at book club tree house, we are talking about books. *(Pause)* Talk about books....

JAMES: I don't know how to read.

AUGUSTEN: My mother pours acid on me if I pick up a book.

OPRAH: *(Suspiciously)* Are you guys lying?

JAMES: I don't know how to lie.

AUGUSTEN: My mom sets me on fire if I lie.

OPRAH: OK... Do you want to make paper dolls?

JAMES: *(Lying)* I never made paper dolls before.

AUGUSTEN: My mom gives me root beer enemas if I play with paper dolls, but OK!

(Oprah gives them paper and scissors. They sit cutting paper dolls.)

OPRAH: I am going to make my dolls angels.

JAMES: I have seen angels in real life.

AUGUSTEN: My mom smacks me with a Bible on my privates if I talk about angels. One of those big ones.

(Oprah finishes cutting hers and unfolds several connected angels of paper.)

OPRAH: Look, I made an angel network.

They go back to cutting dolls. Augusten and James get bored and James begins to cut his paper into small pieces. Augusten looks around and gets up and starts to run around.

OPRAH: Augusten. Stop running with scissors! You aren't allowed to do that. It's dangerous.

AUGUSTEN: I wasn't .

OPRAH: Yes, you were. I saw you.

AUGUSTEN: No, I wasn't.

OPRAH: I saw you.

AUGUSTEN: Well obviously you need glasses and contact lenses and lasik surgery and cataract removal and more glasses on top of that, because you couldn't have seen me because I wasn't.

OPRAH: I saw you.

AUGUSTEN: Don't call me a liar! You are a lying whore like my mother.

(Oprah sits back down and notices that James has cut her paper dolls.)

OPRAH: Did you cut my angel network into a million little pieces?

JAMES: No, I most certainly did not.

OPRAH: You are still cutting them up right now.

James: You mean these? *(Holding up her angels.)*

Oprah: Uh huh.

James: *(Still cutting)* No, I didn't cut them.

Oprah: OK! Forget about it. Let's talk about books.

James: I am writing a book right now.

Augusten: Me too!!!!

James: Mine is about how unfair life has been to me. In Chapter One I wake up on a plane with four front teeth missing, my nose is broken and my eyes are nearly swollen shut.

Augusten: My book is about how my self-indulgent mother and alcoholic father left me with a crazy therapist with fecal issues.

Oprah: But that never happened.

BOTH: Who cares??????

Oprah is frustrated.

Oprah: I liked “Hotel for Dogs” better.

James: Oh, you really think there is a hotel for dogs?

Augusten: And they have luggage?

They laugh at her.

Oprah (*timidly*): Yes.

James: Fiction or biography!

Augusten: What’s the difference?

BOTH: As long as people read it!

James: Oprah, you know nothing about books.

Augusten: We don’t want to be part of your Book Club Tree House anymore.

James: Yeah, Oprah where do you get off talking about books. Let’s go!

Augusten: I better get home before my mother burns cigarettes in my back.

James: At least you have a home. And a mother.

Augusten: You do too!

James: I know.

They both laugh as they exit down the trap.

Oprah (*sadly*): I liked “Hotel for Dogs.” (Gayle’s voice) Me too Oprah. It is a awesome book.

Oprah pulls Gayle out of her underwear.

Oprah (*tenderly*): Thank you Gayle. (Gayle’s voice) Oprah, don’t be sad. You DO know about books. (Oprah) Thank you Gayle. (Gayle’s voice) Oprah, I promise from this day forward whenever you talk about books, people will listen.

Oprah kisses Gayle as a true friend.

Oprah: Thank you Gayle.

A pounding on the trap door.

Mother's voice: Oprah! Dinner!

Oprah: Good, I'm starvin'.

Oprah drops Gayle and hurries out of the trap. Gayle remains in a special as the lights fade.

CHILDISH OR CHILDLIKE (Obviously an early version of PAST or PASSED- use on or the other)

Four kids are discovered onstage. They are immersed in their crafts. One child creates a Lego world. One paints meticulously by numbers, One calmly weaves a basket. One daintily threads small braids with "gems" and creates jewelry. We observe this for a while.

An adult walks up to the Lego child.

Lego Adult: Why did I love this so much?

Lego Kid: I don't know. We always did.

Lego Adult: God, how stupid.

Lego Kid (hurt): What?

Lego Adult: I'm sorry.

Pause as kids do crafts.

Another adult walks up to the paint by numbers kid.

PBN Kid: You are blocking my light.

PBN Adult: So sorry.

PBN Kid: Thank you for moving.

PBN Adult: No problem. (Pause) You got out of the lines there.

The child glares.

PBN Adult: You're going to need to be meticulous. You're going to need that skill.

Pause as kids do crafts.

Another adult walks up to the basket weaving kid.

Basket Adult: Awesome...

Basket Kid: Totally.

Pause as kids do crafts.

Another adult walks up to the jewelry making kid. She is overcome with emotion.

Jewelry Adult: You do that so beautifully.

Jewelry Kid: Thanks. This is really hard.

Jewelry Adult: Believe me, I know.

Lego Adult laughs. The kid looks up to him.

Lego Kid: What?

Lego Adult: Nothing...I just did something really close to that today.

Basket Kid: I could do this forever.

Basket Adult: Totally.

A pause.

PBN Kid: Why “meticulous”?

PBN Adult: As someone who cares about the details, you have to paint within the lines and with the right numbers. Can I tell you how much the lower left corner bothers me?

PBN Kid: Where?

PBN Adult: Third quadrant. There. Outside the lines and color of paint—incorrect.

PBN Kid: I didn't think anyone would catch that.

PBN Adult: They will.

A pause.

The Jewelry Kid looks up to the Jewelry Adult.

Jewelry Kid: Any advice?

Jewelry Adult: What you are doing is wonderful.

Basket Kid and Adult (*simultaneously*): Awesome. *They laugh.*

PBN Kid: What do I end up doing?

PBN Adult: We're an accountant.

PBN Kid (*Disappointed*): I knew it.

Adult Lego joins the Lego Kid in building. All watch.

PBN Kid: What do--?

Adult Lego: We're architects.

All look and understand.

Kid and Adult Basket (*Volunteering*): Yoga instructor.

They look to Jewelry Adult. She shrugs.

Adult Jewelry: I never worked.

The other Adult and Kids join together in their craft.

They improv their dialogue as they work together. They laugh. They share. Jewelry Adult remains on the edge.

Jewelry Kid: Just watch. Just remember.

Jewelry Adult smiles.

All look over to Jewelry Adult. She shrinks.

Jewelry Kid: No big deal. We get arthritis early.

Jewelry Adult has had her hands in her sweater pockets the entire time. They all go back to their crafts.

Jewelry Adult (*Whispering to Kid*): Thank you. (*Pause*) This...was...fun.

She heads off.

The lights fade.

MASS or MESS

A Victorian gentleman, John Ruskin, enters in a golf cart. A Bimbo sits in the cart with him drinking martinis. He is very proper and speaks with the best British accent.

Ruskin: Hello, I am John Ruskin. Some call me the father of the “Arts and Crafts” movement. I seek not to over praise my legacy. I merely echo what others have said. I think I may be able to lend a hand in this debate tonight. (*He exits the golf cart.*) To simplify the situation, the arts and crafts movement began during the industrial revolution where new iron monsters could create one thousand....thingamabobs in record time. But they lacked the human touch. They lacked heart.

Ruskin: We decided to rectify this situation by returning humanity to the thingamabobs. We hoped to ride the benefits of the revolution but return some art to craft. When you look at a Frank Lloyd Wright home or Gustav Stickley furniture (*Projections to support this begin and continue until the end of this scene.*) you can see our valiant attempts to combine two diametrically opposed ideas.

Ruskin: Did we succeed? I have my answer. But judgment is up to the individual. You see, I feel that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work.

Ruskin: I look at our attempts and I do see success. You may achieve this too. For when love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece.

Bimbo: Johnny, I'm horny!

(He gets in his cart.)

Ruskin: Cheeri-o.

(He drives off in the cart.)

VENEER or VERMEER

An artist is at a canvas painting meticulously.

A woman applies her make up carefully.

This is done silently. As the painter completes his canvas the woman completes her ritual, both take a second to examine their work.

BOTH: PERFECT!