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Cast of Characters

AMOL, a hack writer

BANYON, a hack writer

ACTOR 1

ACTOR 2

ACTOR 3

(Actors 1-3 may play all of the rest of the parts in the play. If you like, you may divide up those roles amongst many different actors. The different roles include:)

FRYE, a basketball player

MAMA, his mother

TRAINER, his trainer

AMY, a depressed teenager

JOEY, a mean jock

MICHAEL, a teenager at a party

ANOUKA, a native Canadian

NARRATOR

BUK-BUK, a native Canadian

HEDGEHOG, a weird person

GARGOYLE, another weird person

ZOOPY, a third weird person

(Note: The three actors may be of any gender. They may have to cross-dress at various points in the play to play all of the characters. This should be obviously poorly done and might be quite funny.)

Place

A basement apartment where Amol and Banyon live.

Time

The present.

Acknowledgments

!Artistic Inspiration was originally performed at Haltom High School in Haltom City, Texas on May 14th, 2006. It was directed by Breanna Bonilla and the original cast was as follows:

AMOL ..... Bill Tyler
BANYON..... Ryan Spracklin
ACTOR 1 ..... Sarah Dickerson
ACTOR 2 .....Bre Gibson
ACTOR 3 ..... Chloe Gobea
ACTOR 4 .....Kimberly Stubbs
ACTOR 5 .....Adela Escobar
ACTOR 6 .....Erika Glassey

!ARTISTIC INSPIRATION
by Don Zolidis

(The basement apartment of AMOL *and* BANYON*, two hack writers. They sit at opposite sides of the stage, each with their own card table on which rests a small laptop computer. Surrounding their computers are a collection of manuscript pages, mostly crumpled and scrawled upon, some half-chewed, some slightly burnt. There must be a large, vacant playing area in the center of the stage.)*

(At rise, AMOL *is in the mist of a writing surge. He types with abandon, laughing to himself. First he laughs just a bit, then uproariously.* BANYON *is staring at his computer screen, completely blocked. Just as he is about to type,* AMOL *bursts into a particularly loud burst of laughter.* BANYON *eyes him hatefully.)*

AMOL. Oh man.

(He begins to type again, an utter whirlwind of activity. BANYON *continues to stare at his screen—he is about to type something just as* AMOL *laughs again.* BANYON *stops and looks at* AMOL.*)*

AMOL. Man this is funny.

BANYON. You got something good?

*(*AMOL *looks at* BANYON*, turns his computer screen a little away from him, and continues writing in a flurry.)*

BANYON. Fine.

*(*BANYON *looks at his computer screen and is about to start typing using the hunt-and-peck method. Just as he is about to touch the keyboard, however,* AMOL *begins mouthing the words to his writing under his breath, but just audible enough to bother* BANYON*. He quickly grows louder until he is practically screaming lines at the computer, experiencing the full emotions of both characters in his play.)*

AMOL. *(As he types, extremely quickly:)* "'You never loved me, you never wanted to love me, I was just a thing to you, a thing to be used and possessed and—' 'Why did you say that to me? You al-

ways say that to me!' 'No I don't!' 'Liar!' 'Can't you see that I've got something I need to tell you!' 'Say it then! Say it! I'm sick and tired of your mumbling and your stupidity!' 'You disgust me!' 'WHAT!?' 'There I finally SAID it! I'm FREE of YOU!' 'NEVER! I will NEVER RELEASE YOU!' 'I AM FREE! I AM A WOMAN! I AM A WOMAN! NEVER AGAIN WILL I BE CAGED!' 'AAAAAHhhhhh!'" He strangles her.

*(*AMOL *suddenly stops typing and takes a deep, shaking breath. He takes a moment to gather himself, then kicks his chair back from his desk and gets up to pace.* BANYON *watches him with hatred.)*

BANYON. How's your play coming?

AMOL. *(Nonchalant:)* It's coming all right. How are you doing?

(Pause.)

BANYON. I'm doing fine.

AMOL. Yeah?

BANYON. Yeah.

AMOL. Can I see what you wrote?

BANYON. No.

*(*BANYON *turns his laptop away from* AMOL.*)*

AMOL. That's cool.

(Short pause.)

AMOL. Ooh, I got another idea!

*(*AMOL *dashes to his computer and begins to type again.)*

BANYON. Amol, Amol!

AMOL. *(Already typing furiously:)* What?

BANYON. How do you do it?

AMOL. *(Still typing:)* What?

BANYON. Can you just stop typing for a second?

AMOL. Hold on.

(He produces an especially quick burst of typing, playing the keyboard like a drum set. Once again, he becomes the characters as he writes their dialogue.)

AMOL. "'There are moments like these, when the moon whirls above us, when the brief, chittering whirr of the crickets reverberates in our souls, when I realize what a woman you are,' 'And I know that you are a man' 'Yes I am a man' 'What kind of man are you?' 'I'm the kind of man who's going to lay you down in this field,' 'Really?' 'Yes' 'Oh yes, that sounds nice' 'It will be nice' 'Please, please, it's been so long' 'For me too' 'Then let us find ourselves in this field beneath the gorgeous pale god of the moon' 'I love you' 'I love you more than anyone I've ever seen' 'Shhhh! enough talking! Your lips are designed for my kisses' 'and you are the architect of my design' 'and I have the blueprints right here' 'Draft me! Draft me like you've never drafted before!'" Lights down.

*(*AMOL *leans back in his chair again, exhaling deeply. He gathers himself again. Pause.* BANYON *stares at him.)*

AMOL. What was it you wanted to know, Banyon?

BANYON. How is it that we come down here every day, and every day I can't seem to write a word, and then I look over at you…and…

AMOL. Intimidating, aren't I?

BANYON. Well, you're just…you're always writing.

AMOL. I know. It's kind of amazing.

BANYON. I guess, but…I can't even seem to start a play.

AMOL. Right.

BANYON. And how many plays have you written this year?

AMOL. Thirty-one.

(He types something very quickly.)

AMOL. Thirty-two.

BANYON. Wow.

AMOL. Let me tell you something, Banyon. It's a curse to be this good. Every moment of the day, plays come to me. They just…materialize out of the streets, out of half-heard conversations, out of my simple musings as I walk the streets. And then when I come down here, I must allow them to flow from me before they tear holes through my skin.

BANYON. Huh. Yeah. That's not what's it like with me. All right, let me ask you this, though—if you're writing all these plays, how come you're still living in the same apartment with me eating Ramen Noodles every night? Shouldn't you be, like, rich?

AMOL. My plays are too good to be produced.

BANYON. Oh.

AMOL. No one wants art these days, they only want commercial garbage.

BANYON. You see, that's what I'm trying to write.

AMOL. Commercial garbage?

BANYON. Yeah. I want to be rich. I mean, I want like the Olympic swimming pools and walk-in closets with flat-screen TVs, and you know, bling. I want bling, Amol. Lots and lots of bling. Just like—just bling, man. I want to swim in cash. And then maybe my parents will love me, and then I can go back to my high school reunion and be like, 'I'm better than all of you! Kneel before me you worms! Because I am *rich! And that is what life is about!* You! You! Garrett Lewis! You stupid football ogre! I have more brains in my toenail clippings than you have in your entire immediate family! *And I want you to kneel before me and worship my gold car that has wheels made out of diamond and runs on hundred dollar bills stuffed into its gigantic gas tank!*' I mean, that's all I want. Is that really such a bad dream? And then afterwards I'm gonna steal Garret's wife.

AMOL. You know what your problem is? I mean, if you really want the masses to do this thing, you gotta write something really…

BANYON. Good?

AMOL. No. That's where you're wrong. Those guys who write for television, are they good--?

BANYON. Well some of them—

AMOL. No they're not. Screenwriters—

BANYON. There are some good movies—

AMOL. All garbage. If you really want everyone to do your play, you need to write something simple and inoffensive that can sneak past censors everywhere. Nothing too controversial, nothing too smart, just a bland, simple pile of lukewarm trash. Think Air Bud meets the Olsen twins.

BANYON. Huh?

AMOL. But it's also gotta have hot chicks in it.

BANYON. The Olsen twins are hot.

AMOL. I weep for you. It comes down to this: You gotta write a bad play.

BANYON. Will you help me?

AMOL. All right.

BANYON. Great, come sit by me.

AMOL. I don't like you that much. I'll stay here and e-mail you my additions to the script. We're on a network.

BANYON. Okay, so, huh? A bad play, huh? *(He types:)* 'It was a dark and stormy night.'

AMOL. Stop.

BANYON. What?

AMOL. That's just a cliché, that's not bad.

BANYON. Darkness. The dark. A dark stage. Two people enter.

*(*ACTOR 1 *and* ACTOR 2 *enter from opposite sides of the stage.)*

BANYON. They are…people. With…things. With secrets.

ACTOR 1. I have a secret.

ACTOR 2. I also have a secret.

ACTOR 1. Do you want to know what my secret is?

ACTOR 2. Yes I do.

ACTOR 1. Too bad, you're dead!

*(*ACTOR 1 *karate chops* ACTOR 2*, who dies instantly with a minimum of fuss.)*

AMOL. What was that?

BANYON. No, I have an idea. Just watch!

*(*ACTOR 3 *enters. He spots* ACTOR 1 *and the dead body of* ACTOR 2*.)*

ACTOR 3. What is going on here?

ACTOR 1. I have no idea!

ACTOR 3. Really?

ACTOR 1. Hey what's that over there?

*(*ACTOR 3 *looks.)*

ACTOR 1. Die!

*(*ACTOR 1 *karate chops* ACTOR 3*, who dies instantly with a minimum of fuss. Perhaps* ACTOR 3 *lands on* ACTOR 2*.)*

BANYON. Lights down.

*(*ACTORS 1-3 *get up and exit.)*

AMOL. That's not bad, that's just stupid.

BANYON. You think?

AMOL. Are you retarded? You need a play they can actually do.

BANYON. They can do that one.

AMOL. Do you want me to help you or not?

BANYON. Well if you're gonna be mean about it…

AMOL. Yeah I am gonna be mean about it, you got a problem?

BANYON. No.

AMOL. You smell bad.

BANYON. Sorry.

AMOL. And you're a loser.

BANYON. I'll try better next time.

AMOL. You won't be any better next time. Okay, that's enough being mean for the moment—but you need a play that is actually performable, right? Otherwise no one is going to buy it.

BANYON. Has anyone ever bought one of your plays?

*(*AMOL *stares unhappily at* BANYON.*)*

AMOL. As I stated, my work is too important to be bought. So…you need a theme, right? Something topical. Like what's in the news?

*(*BANYON *looks in the paper.)*

BANYON. "After 40 years, Separatists in Spain Declare Cease-Fire."

AMOL. What?

BANYON. That's what it says here.

AMOL. There are separatists in Spain?

BANYON. Apparently.

AMOL. That's so obscure you could only write a good play about that. Turn to sports or something.

BANYON. "Knicks' Frye Done for the Season."

AMOL. All right, there we go.

BANYON. Really?

AMOL. Sure.

*(*AMOL *types.* ACTOR 1 *[playing* FRYE*] enters, clutching his thigh.)*

FRYE. Aaaaaah!!!!

(He collapses center stage.)

FRYE. Oh my season! Oh my season! I'm done.

*(*ACTOR 2, *playing* MAMA, *enters.)*

FRYE. Mama?

MAMA. It's me Frye. It's your Mama.

FRYE. Mama?

MAMA. My baby boy. *OH LORD!!!!!! WHY HAVE YOU TAKEN MY SON!?!!?! MY ONLY SON?!!*

FRYE. I'm still here, Mama.

MAMA. Hush your mouth.

*(*ACTOR 3, *playing the* TRAINER *enters.)*

FRYE. How bad is it Doc?

TRAINER. Well, this here is an x-ray of your thigh.

(He takes out an x-ray.)

TRAINER. And this is what happened to it.

(He rips it in half.)

FRYE. No…I'm so young.

AMOL. How old is he?

*(*BANYON *checks the paper.)*

BANYON. Thirty-four.

FRYE. I'm only…thirty-four.

MAMA. My baby! I love my baby!

TRAINER. Now, I don't need to tell you, you'll never walk again.

FRYE. What?

MAMA. Never?

TRAINER. That's what I said. You'll never walk again.

FRYE. What?

MAMA. Never?

TRAINER. Are you people deaf?

FRYE. What?

MAMA. My baby boy! *OH LORD!!!! LORD?!!! ARE YOU LISTENING UP THERE LORD?!!*

TRAINER. What I can do for you is lower your expectations for the rest of your life so that you won't miss running and jumping any more—

FRYE. I love running and jumping—

TRAINER. Yeah, well that's pretty much done for you. And walking too. You won't be walking any more.

FRYE. Walking was okay.

TRAINER. And you won't be able to pee standing up.

FRYE. WHAT?!!!!

TRAINER. Yep, that's pretty much it. Let me go through my checklist again.

(He takes out a checklist.)

TRAINER. Never play again. Never run. Jumping out. No more walking. Pee sitting down like a little girl. There we go. Oh yeah, and your insurance is out and the Knicks have cut you. Have a nice day.

(He is about to leave, then stops and looks at MAMA.*)*

TRAINER. Say, you are a fine older woman.

MAMA. Really?

TRAINER. Mmm Mmm Mmm. How do you keep yourself looking so nice?

MAMA. I do some Pilates.

FRYE. *(Whimpering:)* Never run, never jump—

TRAINER. How bout you and me go out to the club tonight?

MAMA. Let's do it.

TRAINER. Rock on. My name's Rock.

MAMA. Lola.

(They exit hand-in-hand. FRYE *lies there on the ground.)*

FRYE. Mama? Mama? I'll never run or jump again! I loved running and jumping! Jumping, running. Jumping, then running. Running then jumping. I was good at it, Mama. I was so good…

BANYON. Wait a minute—

AMOL. Just wait, it's getting worse. *(He switches to a movie voice-over sound:)* They said he would never play again.

(The TRAINER *comes back on.)*

TRAINER. You'll never play again.

AMOL. But they didn't count on—

FRYE. My spirit. They didn't count on my spirit.

TRAINER. You'll never play again.

FRYE. You didn't count on my spirit.

TRAINER. Yeah, I did, it's right here. See this. It's your spirit.

(He takes out a sheet of paper. He tears it in half.)

TRAINER. Whoops.

*(*MAMA *enters, dancing.)*

MAMA. Unh! Unh! Let's rock this thing!

*(*TRAINER *goes up to* MAMA *and they begin dancing.)*

FRYE. Mama?

(They dance off. The TRAINER *runs back on.)*

TRAINER. Did I mention you'll never play again and that I don't believe in you, and no one believes in you, and you're going to have

to do this on your own to make some kind of wildly improbable yet completely inspirational story?

(He exits.)

FRYE. I'm gonna show them. I'm gonna train like no one's ever trained before. I'm gonna show them the power of the human spirit.

*(*FRYE *struggles to get to his feet, but can't. He tries again.)*

FRYE. Aarrgghgh…I need some kind of montage where lots of time passes.

(An inspirational song, perhaps from Rocky, plays.)

*(*FRYE *struggles again, and again, and finally, in slow motion, makes it to his feet.)*

(The TRAINER *and* MAMA *return in slow motion.)*

TRAINER. *(In slow motion:)* You'll never do it.

FRYE. Don't ever tell me…never. Never isn't in my vocabulary.

MAMA. He never completed high school.

FRYE. Don't ever tell me…never.

(The music gets louder again as he continues to train. First stumbling, then slowly walking, then slowly standing up to pee. Finally, he begins to run in slow motion.)

TRAINER. *(In slow motion:)* You'll never succeed.

FRYE. Succeed isn't in my vocabulary. Wait, no. What?

MAMA. The trainer and I are getting married!

FRYE. Noooooooooooo!

*(*FRYE *sinks to his knees.* MAMA *and the* TRAINER *line up as if they are going to get married.)*

AMOL. Does anyone here have any objection to this union?

FRYE. I…do.

*(*FRYE *stands up. He walks between them.)*

TRAINER. I don't believe it. He's standing.

FRYE. You don't need him, Mama. Because I can stand, and I can run…and I can JUMP.

(He hops in the air.)

FRYE. And I am returning to the NBA where I will earn 4.6 million dollars this season, and I can get you that plastic surgery you've always wanted so you can lure a younger, richer husband.

MAMA. My baby boy!

FRYE. Let's go, Mama!

*(*FRYE *jumps in the air. Then jumps again. Then jumps off-stage.* MAMA *exits with him.)*

TRAINER. Noooooooo!

(The TRAINER *sinks to his knees.)*

AMOL. Lights down.

(The TRAINER *exits.)*

BANYON. That was pretty bad.

AMOL. Yeah.

BANYON. But it had its moments.

AMOL. It did not.

BANYON. I can write a worse play than that. See, cause your play didn't have a message.

AMOL. Sure it did. Ignore all the doctors.

BANYON. You need to have an important message—like something that teens shouldn't do.

AMOL. And you can write a play about that?

BANYON. Are you kidding me? You don't even need to be able to form a coherent sentence to write a message play. Watch.

*(*ACTOR 2 *enters as* AMY.*)*

AMY. I'm so depressed. Life isn't worth living. I'm a teenage girl. I'm going to wear some black clothing to signify that I'm depressed. That way people will know.

*(*ACTOR 3 *runs on as* JOEY.*)*

JOEY. Hey Amy, I'm a cool jock guy, you want to come to a party?

AMY. Me? A party? But I'm unpopular and I have no reason to talk to you whatsoever.

JOEY. Yes, but you're still quite attractive.

AMY. I never thought of myself as…attractive before.

JOEY. That's because you aren't.

AMY. Really?

JOEY. I was going to tell you later cause I didn't want to spoil the surprise. Here, sit down and I'll explain it to you.

AMY. I feel bad.

JOEY. You should. You see, Amy, I'm only inviting you to this party because I'm an evil predator guy—you can tell cause I'm wearing a letter jacket—and I'm in fact so mean and so evil that I just want you to come to this party so I can humiliate you.

AMY. Why would you do that?

JOEY. I really don't have anything better to do with my time. So are you gonna come?

AMY. Is this a…beer party? I've heard about those. They're supposed to be dangerous.

JOEY. Look, if beer were actually dangerous, wouldn't it be illegal for adults too?

AMY. Hmm…you make a good point.

JOEY. Besides, haven't you ever watched a beer commercial on television?

AMY. Now that you mention it, I have seen one or two.

JOEY. And don't the people on beer commercials seem to be having a good time?

AMY. I think they *were* having a good time on those commercials. And everyone seemed very young and attractive.

JOEY. That's because everyone who drinks beer is young and attractive. And television never lies.

AMY. Wow. You make some interesting points.

JOEY. So are you gonna come?

AMY. You betcha.

JOEY. Cool.

*(*JOEY *snaps his fingers and exits.)*

AMY. Wow. Now I'm not so depressed now that that guy who I would never associate with in any way talked to me. And now I'm going to go to a party where I won't have any friends; that will probably cheer me up. I still don't know how I feel about beer though. Luckily, I have very low self-esteem and am easily swayed by peer pressure applied in group situations. Perhaps I'll go put myself in one of those and I'll see what happens. Maybe I'll learn a lesson of some kind.

(She exits.)

AMOL. I think I know where this one is going.

BANYON. No no, it's a surprise ending play.

AMOL. First off, you can't actually show drinking on stage.

BANYON. I'm not going to.

AMOL. How are they going to go to a beer party with no beer?

BANYON. Get this, it's a huffing party.

AMOL. A what?

BANYON. Huffing. It's where kids take like aerosol cans and eat them. It's a huge problem among today's youth.

AMOL. It is not.

BANYON. And cool whip cans, anything that like spreads out. They eat that stuff. And then they feel sort of a "high," right? But what they're actually experiencing is widespread brain cell death. I guess that's fun or something.

AMOL. No one cares about huffing!

BANYON. That's where you're wrong! You just don't understand today's teens, man! They need to be warned about this stuff! And my play is just the play to do it!

*(*AMY *enters.)*

AMY. Wow, look at the party where I don't know anyone. How will I fit in?

*(*JOEY *enters with a can of Reddi-Whip.)*

JOEY. Here Amy. Try some of this.

AMY. I don't think that's a good idea.

JOEY. That's because you're square!

AMOL. That's slang from forty years ago!

AMY. I am not square. I'll show you.

(She squirts some Reddi-Whip into her mouth.)

AMY. Ah! My brain cells are dying! Oh no!

(She sinks to the ground.)

AMY. I'm beginning to like Adam Sandler movies! Except that arty one he did a while back called *Punch-Drunk Love* which was actually a pretty good film. I don't like reading any more, it confuses me and makes me angry!

JOEY. I've got something for you.

(He takes out a copy of a Star Magazine [or a similar magazine].)

JOEY. Read this.

AMY. No that's stupid.

JOEY. Try some more. Everyone's doing it.

AMY. Well if everyone's doing it then okay.

*(*AMY *squirts more Reddi-Whip into her mouth.)*

AMY. Wow! Everyone in Hollywood is pregnant! I wonder what they'll name their babies? I'm going to use my cell phone to text message my friends, but I'm not going to use punctuation or correct grammar. In fact, I think I'll substitute the number 2 for the word to, because it's so much less effort.

(Enter MICHAEL.*)*

MICHAEL. 'Sup.

AMY. College is for dorks!

MICHAEL. Who's the hot chick?

AMY. I'm hot?

MICHAEL. Now that you're not very smart, yeah.

JOEY. Real men don't like smart girls.

AMY. That's cool, whatever. Feminism is dumb.

MICHAEL. Hey, I'm going to drive home recklessly. Who wants to ride in my truck?

AMY. Um…

(She squirts more Reddi-Whip into her mouth.)

MICHAEL. Who wants a ride home?

AMY. Well…

(More Reddi-Whip.)

MICHAEL. I'm leaving…

AMY. I don't know…

(More Reddi-Whip.)

AMY. Ooh, me!

*(*AMY *and* MICHAEL *leave together.)*

JOEY. No!

(Immediately after they leave a huge screech and a crash is heard. Perhaps a hubcap rolls onto the stage.)

JOEY. They were so young! Noooooo!

(He sinks to his knees.)

JOEY. Hey look, Reddi-Whip.

(He grabs some.)

JOEY. Noooooooo!

(He squirts some in his mouth.)

JOEY. I'm going to go rent *Jackass*, the movie.

BANYON. Lights down.

*(*JOEY *exits.)*

BANYON. Well?

AMOL. You think every school in America is going to want to do that play?

BANYON. It teaches a great message. If you're stupid, you're going to die.

AMOL. That's way too depressing. You need something inspirational, the masses love inspirational things—it gives them false hope. And it's gotta be about America. Everybody loves America.

BANYON. Except the other people.

AMOL. Well they don't buy plays.

BANYON. Well, yeah they do. Check out all the French adaptations.

AMOL. Fine, I'll set my play in Canada. That's kind of like America, except it's kind of got some French thrown in, and no one cares enough about them to hate them.

BANYON. Except Canadians.

AMOL. Are you going to listen to my play or not?

BANYON. Fine.

AMOL. Okay, so this is an environmental warning play—set way up north in Canada, and it's got ethnic stuff in it, cause people love to watch ethnic plays cause it makes them feel like they're not just a bunch of racists.

BANYON. But you're not ethnic.

AMOL. It doesn't matter, we'll make it an Asian play. Asian plays are cool right now.

BANYON. Really?

AMOL. I don't know, I'm just guessing. Besides, no one gets mad if you make fun of Asians. I mean think about the stereotype—ooh, you Asians, you're so smart…and hardworking.

BANYON. Jerks. But what if there's some Asians out there who're resisting stereotyping by being lazy and dumb, just like the rest of us? Won't they be offended?

AMOL. Fine. I'll pick something weirder then. What about Native Canadians?

BANYON. Ooh, good idea.

AMOL. And it rhymes. Listen.

*(*ACTOR 1 *[as the narrator] enters.)*

NARRATOR. There once was a place all covered in ice.

*(*ACTOR 2, *[as* ANOUKA*] enters wearing a parka.)*

ANOUKA. Boy I like Canada, the snow sure is nice!

*(*ACTOR 3, BUK-BUK*, enters, carrying a spear.)*

BUK-BUK. Say that again, my Canadian friend

ANOUKA. When I look around I see ice without end!

NARRATOR. They were a people of peace, all calm and serene.

ANOUKA. Boy I like water all clear and all clean!

BUK-BUK. The one thing I know is that Canada's great, eh?

ANOUKA. You sure are right, there is no debate, eh?

NARRATOR. So they made igloos and figloos and homes out of snow.

ANOUKA. This sure is nice.

BUK-BUK. It's a bit cold, though—

NARRATOR. And they hunted the seal with spears made of bone.

ANOUKA. Hey look a seal!

BUK-BUK. Kill it oh kill it! Drive that spear home!

NARRATOR. And they loved the land and the land loved them back.

ANOUKA. It's a casual relationship.

BUK-BUK. Mother nature's got a nice rack—

ANOUKA. Of ribs, which we use to dine on and feed.

BUK-BUK. You see we only use things that we truly do need.

NARRATOR. But up from the south came a big cloud of smog.

ANOUKA. Is it warmer in here?

BUK-BUK. I for one am agog!

NARRATOR. And slowly but surely the snow seemed to melt.

ANOUKA. I think it's warmer in here.

BUK-BUK. Was that your fart that I smelt?

ANOUKA. If it was a fart that you smelt, it is you who has dealt.

NARRATOR. But it wasn't either, it was pollution they felt.

ANOUKA. It's getting warmer and warmer, something's all wrong!

BUK-BUK. In just one moment, the snow will be gone!

NARRATOR. So they looked at the land, all brown and all bare.

ANOUKA. What the heck is that?

BUK-BUK. It's a big polar bear!
I couldn't see him before when the land was all white,

But now that it's brown, he fills me with fright.

ANOUKA. Wait just one second, there's something disturbing.
You see he looks skinny, not fat and refurbing.

BANYON. What?

AMOL. It's a word.

BANYON. What does it mean?

AMOL. Having more fur…and fat.

NARRATOR. If I may continue, the earth's heating up—

ANOUKA. It's not my fault.

BUK-BUK. It's not mine, please!

NARRATOR. It's the Americans fault, they drive SUVs!

ANOUKA. And they drink Starbucks coffee—

BUK-BUK. And they hate the trees!

ANOUKA. We need to teach those Yankees a lesson!

BUK-BUK. They have to know, it's the whole world that they're stressing!

ANOUKA. Let's go to America and talk to the President!

BUK-BUK. He seems like he's smart, regardless of precedent!

NARRATOR. So they packed up their seals and mukluks and started to walk.

ANOUKA. America's a long way—

BUK-BUK. My feet sure do squawk!

ANOUKA. Hey what's that over thar!

BUK-BUK. Boy it looks neat, it's a new hybrid car!

NARRATOR. So they bought a car by trading in fish.

ANOUKA. This car sure is nice!

BUK-BUK. I am a bit squished.

NARRATOR. So they thought and they thought and then thought some more.

ANOUKA. Maybe a bigger car would have more room to store.

BUK-BUK. That makes some sense, let's trade this car in!

ANOUKA. For something much larger, with more room within!

BUK-BUK. So they bought a new Hummer and they started cruising.

ANOUKA. I love going fast!

BUK-BUK. Who cares how much gas that it's using!?

NARRATOR. So they drove on down through, and they started to think.

ANOUKA. It's nice down here—

BUK-BUK. I don't mind the stink—

NARRATOR. So they bought a nice house, right out in the suburbs.

ANOUKA. The life here is sweet, let's grill out some bugburbs!

BANYON. What?

AMOL. It's an alternate spelling of burgers. Shut up.

BUK-BUK. Now that we see it, warmer isn't so bad—

ANOUKA. I mean just think of all the nice things that we'll have!

BUK-BUK. I need a big car—

ANOUKA. And I need one too—

BUK-BUK. And heck let's buy a third just for fun, just for you!

ANOUKA. We'll buy them on credit, I just got this letter.

BUK-BUK. They're offering us cards, what could be better?

NARRATOR. So down they have settled, all cozy and warm.
Not a thought in their heads, but all full of charm.

ANOUKA. You know there is just one thing that I'd like to change.

BUK-BUK. I've noticed it too, it seems a bit strange.

ANOUKA. There are people moving in, from far away.

BUK-BUK. And tomorrow there'll be one more than today.

ANOUKA. They're not like us, they're a little too brown.

BUK-BUK. I don't want anyone like that hanging around.

ANOUKA. The root of the problem is illegal immigration.

BUK-BUK. We need to take steps to protect this great nation!

ANOUKA. You're right, it's our country, and the doors should be closed.

BUK-BUK. We open the door just a bit, and in they will nose.

ANOUKA. Let's build a big wall to keep us apart.

BUK-BUK. That's one great idea, I take it to heart—

NARRATOR. So that was the end, they lived happily ever after. Of course, until the ice caps melted and everyone drowned. The end.

AMOL. Lights down.

BANYON. So you think that is going to be the most popular play in the world?

(Pause.)

AMOL. Yeah. You're rubbing off on me, I'm starting to suck. It's like some kind of infectious disease.

BANYON. I think we're going down the wrong road with this whole dumbed-down thing. I mean, in order to really get something out there, we gotta make it so confusing that no one knows what in the heck is going on.

AMOL. What?

BANYON. I mean really high-brow, you know? I mean, I'm just thinking of this really popular play where no one knows what it's about, but they just *pretend* to know cause they don't want to look stupid, and so sooner or later everyone walks around *pretending* to be smart, even though the play makes no sense whatsoever. We

need a play where people can *discuss* it afterwards to try to figure out the symbolism.

AMOL. Are you making a veiled Beckett reference? No one's going to get a Beckett reference! This is high school!

BANYON. No. I was talking about Cats. It doesn't matter. Weirdness is in. It doesn't matter what's in the play, if it's weird, people will like it and do it and then try to think about it afterwards and somehow link it to something important, so you just throw a bunch of random stuff on stage and then it's supposed to be symbolic. It doesn't really take any skill. Look at Modern Art.

AMOL. Everyone knows that sucks.

BANYON. Of course. But you have to *pretend* to like it so you don't look stupid. A play can work the same way. Watch.

(Weird music. ACTOR 1 *[playing a* GARGOYLE*] skitters on to the stage, moving in a deliberately odd fashion.)*

GARGOYLE. Ah ca! Ah ca!

*(*ACTOR 2, HEDGEHOG, *enters, carrying an enormous pole. He waves it about.)*

HEDGEHOG. Behold!

GARGOYLE. Yabba!

*(*GARGOYLE *jumps up and down.)*

HEDGEHOG. Indeed. Behold my symbolic post.

GARGOYLE. Only the flies have eyes. Only the flies have eyes.

HEDGEHOG. Only the flies have eyes.

GARGOYLE. Let's sit.

HEDGEHOG. Yes, let's sit.

(They do not move. Pause.)

GARGOYLE. Yabba!

HEDGEHOG. Do you think he's coming?

GARGOYLE. Who?

HEDGEHOG. The person we're waiting for that has immense symbolic importance.

GARGOYLE. I'm going to go bury myself in a gigantic pile of horse manure.

HEDGEHOG. You do that.

*(*GARGOYLE *lies on the ground and pantomimes scooping horse manure onto himself.)*

GARGOYLE. Oop! Oop!

HEDGEHOG. Look the sun has a face! It has the face of a clown, a clown with the heart of a soldier, bringing bread to the knees of an old beggar woman, who in turn is kicking at a snake in the gutter, which is biting its own tail, which is being eaten by a very large moth. The moth's name is Jeffery.

GARGOYLE. Jeffery!

HEDGEHOG. Jeffery!

GARGOYLE. Jeffery the moth!

HEDGEHOG. Only the eyes have flies!

*(*GARGOYLE *leaps into the air again.)*

GARGOYLE. Yabba!

(Enter ACTOR 3, ZOOPY, *riding a stick horse.)*

ZOOPY. Giddy up, giddy up, giddy up!

GARGOYLE. Zoopy!

HEDGEHOG. Zoopy!

GARGOYLE. Our dearest friend!

HEDGEHOG. Our oldest enemy!

GARGOYLE. It's great to meet you!

HEDGEHOG. I despise you!

ZOOPY. I have no idea what I'm doing in this play!

GARGOYLE. Neither do I!

HEDGEHOG. I have no clue!

(They stop and look at BANYON*, who has begun to slump over at his keyboard.)*

AMOL. Banyon, are you all right?

BANYON. I'm sorry, I haven't been taking my medication, I'm starting to hallucinate. It's great for this though.

(He continues to type.)

ZOOPY. Oh no, the great madman of the mountain has decreed that we must act like refrigerators!

HEDGEHOG. Yes to freeze and thaw, to freeze and thaw!

GARGOYLE. Symbolism, symbolism, symbolism!

HEDGEHOG. Friends, and enemy, and friends, let us all sit!

GARGOYLE. An excellent idea!

ZOOPY. The best idea you've had yet! Let's sit.

GARGOYLE. Let's!

(Again, they do not sit.)

GARGOYLE. Symbolism, symbolism, symbolism!

HEDGEHOG. Have you ever thought, man, that maybe we are only pieces of one person's consciousness? Like, each of us represents some facet of the deeply ingrained subconscious of the modern man?

ZOOPY. Dude.

GARGOYLE. Far out, man.

HEDGEHOG. Like, each of us, dude, we don't have our identity—we exist only to comment on the ongoing madness of modern society?

ZOOPY. Dude.

HEDGEHOG. And think about this, what if all time was like compressed into one moment, like we were all one frozen globe of time, and this life is like never-ending?

GARGOYLE. You just blew my mind with that.

HEDGEHOG. Me too.

ZOOPY. Well I'm out of here!

(He goes to leave just as BANYON *passes out at his computer. All the actors freeze instantly. Pause.)*

AMOL. Banyon?

(Pause. No reaction from anyone on stage.)

AMOL. Hey Banyon.

*(*AMOL *looks around, picks something up, and throws it at* BANYON. *It strikes him and* BANYON *wakes up instantly, breaking into a typing frenzy. All three actors begin moving again simultaneously.)*

HEDGEHOG. What say you?

ZOOPY. Nay, then, I have an eye of you. —If you love me, hold not off.

GARGOYLE. My lord, we were sent for.

ZOOPY. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and it indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition—

AMOL. Wait a minute.

ZOOPY. What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty—

*(*AMOL *tosses something else at* BANYON. *It hits him, and the play changes instantly.)*

GARGOYLE. Yabba!

HEDGEHOG. The sun breathes upon us!

ZOOPY. We must be swift!

GARGOYLE. Let us go!

ZOOPY. Yes! Let's go!

(They do not move.)

HEDGEHOG. Symbolism, symbolism, symbolism!

BANYON. Lights down.

(Pause. HEDGEHOG, GARGOYLE, *and* ZOOPY *exit.)*

AMOL. Um…I gotta tell ya. I didn't really like it.

BANYON. That's only because you aren't smart enough to understand its deep philosophical underpinnings. If you were smart, you'd like it.

(He laughs.)

BANYON. No I'm just kidding, it doesn't mean anything at all. It is about the Holocaust, though.

AMOL. Really?

BANYON. Nah, I'm kidding!

AMOL. Still, I have to say, I don't think that's going to be the most produced play in the world.

BANYON. That's because you're scared of it. And also dumb.

AMOL. No, it's dumb.

BANYON. No you're dumb.

AMOL. No it's dumb.

BANYON. You are.

AMOL. Just shut up.

BANYON. Your Mom's dumb.

AMOL. Are you gonna listen to my new idea or not?

BANYON. No cause you're dumb.

AMOL. Fine, you know what, do it yourself then.

BANYON. Good, cause I have another idea anyway. Do you wanna hear it?

AMOL. No.

BANYON. Do you wanna hear it?

AMOL. Fine.

(Short pause.)

BANYON. Gays.

(Short pause.)

BANYON. Think about it, any new successful play has to have something gay in it to be a hit.

AMOL. We're talking about high school theatre, not professional theatre! We can't even say the word in high school theatre! You can't even acknowledge that gay people exist in high school theatre!

BANYON. Sure you can, just look at—

(The lights go down suddenly.)

(They come back again in an instant.)

AMOL. Well I'm glad that provocative and possibly offensive conversation is settled.

BANYON. Yes. Me too.

AMOL. And another thing: We need to title the play something that begins with the letter A.

BANYON. Why?

AMOL. Because that way it's first in the catalogue. And all the lazy people will read it first.

BANYON. But aren't plays with numbers in titles first? Shouldn't we have a number first?

AMOL. Yeah, but sometimes they spell out the number, so you could still end up in the middle.

BANYON. I know! Let's put a punctuation mark first, like a dash or a—

AMOL. Exclamation point?

BANYON. Ooh, good idea. But do you really think that'll work?

AMOL. Can't hurt. But can we get back to our previous discussion?

BANYON. Do we have to? I'm a modern person and my attention span is really short due to the fact that I've watched music videos on MTV.

AMOL. That's it, Banyon!

BANYON. What are we talking about again?

AMOL. You finally got a good idea for something bad! We need to write plays for all those under-medicated ADD and ADHD kids out there!

BANYON. What?

AMOL. The ones that can't sit still! The ones that are squirming in their seats because there haven't been any commercials in the last fifteen minutes! These kids are extreme! They like extreme things like Mountain Dew and other energy drinks with little or no nutritional value! We need to pander to them!

BANYON. How?

AMOL. Watch!

(Energetic rock music plays as ACTOR 1 *enters on a skateboard.)*

ACTOR 1. Dude I'm totally frosting this zone!

AMOL. I don't even know the lingo, I'm just making this stuff up.

ACTOR 2. I just got back from hang-gliding! It was so extreme!

ACTOR 1. Yes! Awesome! Rock on!

ACTOR 2. Yeah, dude!

ACTOR 3. Who's up for base jumping!?

BANYON. I'm bored. Do something else.

ACTOR 1. So like…snowboarding is cool, right?

ACTOR 2. I'm going to catch major air I think if that's the right term.

BANYON. I can't focus on this. Here.

(He starts typing. ACTOR 3 *immediately shifts to a different personality and adopts a British accent.)*

(Note: If your production is using separate actors to play different parts, you may wish to have new actors enter for each mini-scene. In that case, the actors should sprint on and off the stage in order to switch as quickly as humanly possible.)

ACTOR 3. One of you is the murderer, and I intend to find out which one of you it is. First, we'll begin with Captain Billingsley

ACTOR 1. I say! You shall not thrust your predatorial claws into me! I'll have at you!

ACTOR 2. What's all this, then?

ACTOR 3. No need, Admiral Kensington.

ACTOR 2. I say! How did you deduce my true name?

AMOL. Sucks! Watch this!

(He starts typing. All three actors shift again.)

ACTOR 1. Man, why you be comin' on my turf?

ACTOR 2. Fool, don't you know this block belongs to me?

ACTOR 3. Aw snap!

ACTOR 1. Shut yo face, fool.

ACTOR 3. Aw no you di'in! You think you can handle this? Unh-unh—sucker!

*(*BANYON *begins typing. The characters change again.)*

ACTOR 2. I'm afraid there isn't hope. She's dying of cancer.

*(*ACTOR 1 *is immediately stricken with cancer.)*

ACTOR 1. Ah! The cancer! It's got me!

ACTOR 3. Perhaps if you had some kind of highly evolved literary habit, you could use that now to create meaning in your short-lived life.

ACTOR 1. I always liked poetry.

*(*ACTOR 1 *dies.)*

ACTOR 2. Well, we're finally alone.

ACTOR 3. I always loved you.

ACTOR 2. Let's make out.

AMOL. Can't have romance! Weirds kids out!

(He starts typing.)

ACTOR 3. I never liked you.

ACTOR 2. I was always indifferent to you.

ACTOR 3. Just like your father.

ACTOR 2. Don't you talk about my father. He was a better woman than you'll ever be.

*(*BANYON *begins typing again.)*

ACTOR 3. Although I am strangely attracted to you now. Suddenly. As if by chance.

ACTOR 2. What are the odds we would meet each other?

ACTOR 3. I love you. I've always loved you.

*(*AMOL *types.)*

ACTOR 2. Leave me alone. I don't like your face.

ACTOR 3. I don't like your face.

ACTOR 2. Your dog doesn't like my face.

*(*BANYON *types.)*

ACTOR 3. And yet I love you too.

*(*AMOL *types.)*

ACTOR 2. And yet I continue to be completely indifferent to you.

*(*BANYON *types.)*

ACTOR 3. Kiss me!

*(*AMOL *types.)*

ACTOR 2. Never!

*(*BANYON *types.)*

ACTOR 3. Kiss me now as if your whole life depended on it!

*(*AMOL *types.)*

*(*ACTOR 1 *rises from the dead.)*

ACTOR 1. I'm still alive! It's a miracle!

*(*BANYON *types.)*

ACTOR 2. Die!!!

(He stabs ACTOR 1*, who dies.* AMOL *types.)*

ACTOR 1. No I'm still—

*(*BANYON *types.)*

ACTOR 2. Die! Again!

*(*ACTOR 2 *stabs* ACTOR 1 *again, who dies once more.* AMOL *types.)*

ACTOR 1. Missed me!

*(*BANYON *types.* ACTOR 2 *and* ACTOR 3 *act simultaneously.)*

ACTOR 2. Die!

ACTOR 3. Die!

(They both stab ACTOR 1*, who dies horribly.)*

ACTOR 1. Ah! I am dying in such a way that I can never live again!

*(*AMOL *and* BANYON *begin typing at the same time. The following happens very quickly.)*

*(*ACTOR 1 *rises up again.)*

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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