

WRITING SAMPLE

DOVES IN CEMENT

A Play in Two Acts

by

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## CHARACTERS

PETER

Forties to sixties.

BELINDA

Forties to sixties.

## TIME

Now.

## SCENE

The play takes place in what appears to be Peter and Belinda's home and inner minds, as well as and other locations that are represented using a bare stage, simple costumes, props and lighting effects.

## THE SET

The space surrounding the set should be pitch black, as if stretching into eternity. No sense of location or identifying with any area should exist. There is a large pile of old baggage, items of a life spent together, as well as personal items, up stage center. It consists mostly of large memorabilia about 4 feet high that they throw offstage later. Around the baggage pile of junk, are areas that can represent any location such as a living room in a home. All suggestive. Two black boxes can be used as seats, a sofa, suitcase, platform, etc. A kitchen area for example would be represented by the two black boxes down stage left which can be quickly moved offstage by pushing the two black boxes off. If eating or drinking, the characters mime it with invisible objects. Upstage and other areas represent doors to their bedroom, bathroom, and main entryway to their home.

The set must be situated so that any area, preferably downstage of the garbage pile and set pieces, can be lit and the set pieces and garbage pile disappear leaving the actors in a pool of light surrounded by an abyss of blackness. The space is part of their mind, memory, present, past and future as well as physical and identifiable locations. It is a world of memories, dreams, past experiences, and the present, clashing. The minimalist set, and the dialogue as it progresses from comic to serious introspections, needs to be controlled. I'm purposefully removing any noise, so that we see these two human beings, dressed to fully naked, both physically, emotionally and psychologically on stage. space surrounding the set should be pitch black, as if stretching into eternity. No sense of location or identifying with any area. There is a large pile of old baggage, items of a life spent together, as well as personal items, up center stage. It consists mostly of large memorabilia about 4 feet high that they throw offstage later. Around the baggage pile of junk, are areas that can represent any location such as their living room in a home.

(MORE)

THE SET (CONT'D)

All suggestive. Two black boxes can be used as seats, a count, suitcase, platform, etc. A kitchen area is represented by two black boxes down stage left which can be quickly moved offstage by pushing the two black boxes off. If eating or drinking, they can mime it with invisible objects. A sofa right of of the Garbage Pile can be pushed down from upstage where they sit or lay down or if possible the kitchen boxes just pushed into place quickly to become the couch. Upstage and other areas represent doors to their bedroom, bathroom, and main entryway to their home. Might work to have bare white outlines of these areas, that only appear if lit - but keep it minimal, yet effective, so the abyss and twilight lighting does not give witness to these areas. When it is supposed to be an abyss, nothing else should be seen behind or next to them (like the outline of a door.)

The set must be situated so that any area, preferably downstage of the garbage pile and set pieces, can be lit and the set pieces and garbage pile disappear leaving the actors in a pool of light surrounded by an abyss of blackness. In this empty space, lighting can accentuate the mood without reflection onto the set pieces behind it so that they can step out of and into the apartment from other places, and in and out of the twilight areas, where we seen a bare ghost of them, between the abyss and reality, including their inner minds, and locations like a bus stop.

# EXCERPT 1

PETER

(pause)

How can you not agree that it is our personal childhood dramas which we developed in our formative years now clashing like two locomotives on a mountain cliff. All the Freudian, Jungian, Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, theories of psychoanalytical bullshit, the intellectualization, the on-going rambling attempting to understand the seemingly deep, complex underlying causes of the unconscious mind...

BELINDA

...PETER SHUT UP, PLEASE... GO BACK OUT AND SHOP. I NEED SPACE...

PETER

...Including the influences that ultimately created the universe is really confined to the fact that what we're doing is trying to suck each others energy because human beings need energy and all of our manipulative, neurotic, paranoid behavior is just a unique way of sucking energy from the other because that's what human beings do... suck.

(pause. She looks away)

What do you think of that?

*Belinda drops to the floor in a fetal position, puts her thumb in her mouth and covers her head with an empty grocery bag. Peter stands directly over her looking down and trying to control himself.*

*Pause.*

PETER

My childhood drama is being stimulated by that childish demonstration of revolt and/or withdrawal. Unless you get up I don't know... actually... what I'm going to do because I have this incredible urge to... KILLLLLLL YOU...

(he stops himself)

Okay. I'm in control. I'm not panicking. I am not going to respond to this in my usually typical male Peter way. I'm not going to react to what you just did, which is really idiotic. Almost comic. Very sad, worrisome, and in the end, the kind of behavior that has made me HATE YOU FROM MY CORE! I'm sorry I didn't mean to overreact, even though I did. I'm OK now. If you're concerned that is. Let's put some perspective on this shall we?

(looking down at Belinda)

I'm an individual IN a RE-LATION-SHIP.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

(pause. Looking down.)

This, is my relationship.

(pause. Looking down.)

I don't own Belinda. Calm down Peter. You're a trained graduate of a top level twelve step program to overcome being male. Breathe.

(breathes in deeply)

Oh that feels better. There. Reason Peter. Don't let your animal surface, and enact irrational violence on HER FUCKING FACE! I didn't mean that, it's just a feeling, expressed badly, and I apologize. I don't think that what's going on here is "completely" insane. It's contemporary, modern behavior. Belinda, my bride, is expressing herself, physically, through physicalization rather than verbalization. Listen to her Peter. Listen. Breathe in what Belinda is trying to tell you.

*Belinda screams with her head in the bag.*

PETER

Instead of comparing this weird, almost unfathomable behavior, this shocking, other-worldly behavior to normal behavior, from your lengthy past, focus on what is actually occurring right now, even if it appears weird, strange, completely abnormal in every logical way and terrifying. We're of a higher consciousness than our parents and we're sensitive and need to express ourselves in an overtly symbolic way occasionally. This is an allegorical experience. A metaphorical transition. A symbolic expression of a deeper dream-like state manifesting itself physically that's all. It's an image Peter, read into the image. What does it mean?

*He is completely baffled. Long pause as he looks down at his feet where Belinda lies.*

## EXCERPT 2

*They sit on boxes facing one another, miming sitting at a table eating together.*

BELINDA

So you won't cut my head off anymore when I tell you how I feel or what's going on with me?

PETER

Absolutely not.

BELINDA

We're beginning to have a conversation. Get the Dolly.

*Peter gets a pink bunny rabbit off the baggage pile. Then sits holding it as he talks.*

PETER

I've evolved beyond defensive behavior. Nothing threatens me because I have learned that I live in this body, not this house. I'm a beautiful person that doesn't deserve to be punished, who values his life and is past would haves, could haves and should haves. I'm open to life and want to be present. I'm into pure, unbiased, uncensored truth. And slogans.

*He takes a spoonful of soup and hands the bunny rabbit to Belinda.*

BELINDA

I'm having an affair.

*PETER spits his soup out all over the table. They look at one another. Belinda hands Peter the Bunny Rabbit doll. Peter tries to speak but cannot and hands it back to her.*

BELINDA

For two years. It's soooo hot! We fuck on the kitchen floor. We fuck on the bathroom floor. On my back. On my knees. Hanging from the ceiling fan. He has a dungeon.

*She hands him the bunny rabbit doll. Peter just looks at her soup dribbling out of his mouth. Hands it back.*

BELINDA

And I love it. I can't get enough. I want him right now as I look at you. I want him to tie me in chains and suspend me from the

(MORE)

BELINDA (CONT'D)

basement and... Peter snaps the Bunny Rabbit doll from Belinda who abruptly shuts up. He tries to speak but can't. He takes a deep breath and hands the doll back. ...fuck me in a sex swing hung by support beams in his basement dudgeon, leather spikes on the wrist cuffs and devour me. As I scream and beg for more. I like it rough. I like him to enter every hole with his huge dick. It fills me up. It makes me shiver with passion and lust. I like to be whipped. Chained. Hot wax drip on my... Peter grabs the doll.

PETER

(rising)

...I'm gonna puke.

*Peter exists and pukes offstage - we hear it clearly.*

*Belinda eats, smiling.*

**BLACKOUT.**

## EXCERPT 3

AT RISE:

*Peter is hanging over the imaginary toilet bowl.*

PETER

I'LL TIE HIM TO HIS FUCKING DUNGEON "BEAM" AND FEED HIM LITTLE AMOUNTS OF POISON THAT EATS AWAY AT HIS STOMACH AND INTESTINES WHILE I PULL OUT HIS FINGERNAILS ONE BY ONE AND POKE NEEDLES IN HIS EYES... I was in a delusion. Hypnotized by hope. Fucking hope. Pretending I could understand all the mysteries of life, tried to be open to dualities, depth, unresolvable human tensions. I WANT HIM DEEEEEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAD. I don't want to feel this way. BUT I FUCKING FEEL THIS FUCKING WAY.

*Belinda is outside the bathroom door.*

BELINDA

Put it into perspective. It was just a wild fling. That's still going on.

PETER

DON'T YOU TORTURE ME!

BELINDA

You said you wanted the truth. It has only been a few years of complete ecstasy. Every sexual fantasy lived out. I still want more. From him and not you. Why does that upset you? It's the truth. Should open us up to greater realization and individuality - isn't that the FUCKING GIST! You're attached to me in some ridiculous dependent childish way. You were the one who wanted an OPEN relationship so we could see other people? Why should it bother you that I think about him when I masturbate, while I'm in the shower, water dripping down my sleek, naked body and in my mind is fixated on him, not you. WE DON'T HAVE SEX ANYMORE. Don't let that bother you. Ignore it. Mr. Open fucking mindedness. Let the images float over your head like clouds on a Spring day. It's nothing. OM it away. Ride that wave. Read a Hallmark card over and over until the bullshit seeps into that pea brain of yours you fucking Mormon.

(almost sincerely)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean any of that. It just... slipped out.

PETER

I NEVER DID THAT. I NEVER FULFILLED MY SEXUAL FANTASIES. You wouldn't participate.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

(disgusted)

It was all loving, gentle, meaningful sex. But now, I'd burn up this room. I want to let it all hang out. I want to have sex with two women at once. I want three. Four at a time - New York City - an orgy and I'm the only male and I can handle all of them. I want whips and huge squash. Yes. I will swing from chandeliers, and do what no man has done before. OH GOD I'M HORNY. I'M SO FUCKING HORNY I COULD CHASE TAIL PIPES DOWN FIFTH AVENUE AND GOD FORBID I SHOULD CATCH ONE! GOD FOR FUCKING BID!!!

BELINDA

I know you're having an affair. I know you've been having an affair. I know you are continuing the affair. It's not your first. So fuck off with the drama. Okay, my love? Should I make breakfast or do you want to puke for a little while longer?

*Peter looks at her kneeling over the bowl.*

## EXCERPT 4

*BELINDA stands on stage in a pool of light, representing a Bus Stop in NYC at night.*

BELINDA

(short pause)

The most fucking confusing experiences happen when you begin to relate to anything.

(short pause)

If only we didn't have to react we could feel stable. For a second.

(short pause)

If we could just walk around, not relating, reacting, or feeling anything we'd be all right. I look at my breasts and I know I'm female. There's a start. I look female. I act female. I have estrogen. I have a clitoris here. A little penis they say - need to mesoginate my vagina. Few years back if a different gene had dominated I might be walking around with a full sized baloney right here. And if I was gay I never would have met him. And you take a penis and invert it what do you have? A vagina. That's right. That's how they do it in sex-change operations. Push it right in. Or... pull it right...

(funny "pushing in" sound)

Who am I talking to? Why am I thinking about my clit?

*She steps back into the twilight area, so light shines directly down on her, as if in another world watching Peter.*

*Lights rise on Peter on all fours in his living room, drunk, talking to Belinda's panties that sit on the floor in front of him on the garbage pile - he's in a deeply emotional mess. We only see him, in the pool of light, the set disappears behind him into darkness. He on all fours, and she watching from the edge of the abyss.*

PETER

I miss you. I miss you more than you can know. I feel like you're trying to exit my body. Like you're inside of me trying to get out. Pushing at my heart. Pushing at my mind. The memories are part of who you are. You can't begin again. You can't stop them. You can't get over your life. You can't forget. That's a lie. WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU - YOU BELONG WITH ME IN THIS HOUSE ON THIS PLANET IN THIS UNIVERSE. COME BACK.

(short pause)

Please come back.

*They are connected somehow while being physically in two different places. Belinda takes one step forward into the street light, looking out over the audience, alone, afraid, wanting comfort - almost as if she heard Peter's cry. She sits on a box, representing her suitcase.*

BELINDA

It will be so easy. I'll just get on that bus and everything will be different. The outside will be moving. The inside will not. Stability. I'll sit in that little stuffed seat and watch the world pass me by, me moving away from where I was. The image of it will begin to shrink. That's what will happen. And I'll begin a new life with all this knowledge behind me, moving into the distance growing smaller and smaller fading away from him. I won't make the same mistake again. Everything will be different. That's what's going to happen. I'm going to feel Spring in the middle of dead Winter.

(pause)

Face it, you ran away. You're here, he's there. Both of you have separated from a 14 year relationship and if you want it to end then you are going to have to deal with ALL of it. You can't escape your skin, Belinda. Right? How the fuck would I know why are you asking me I'm the worst... Look at yourself without a mirror and begin with that. Sleep on the floor tonight. Feel the cold, hard reality of your life. Stop the excuses. Make a change.

(pause)

I'M NOT MAKING AN EXCUSE FUCK YOU!

(short pause. screams)

I WANT MY MOMMY. WHERE IS THAT GODDAMNED BUS? HOW'D THIS HAPPEN TO ME?

(short pause. speaks)

Why am I screaming?

*She looks off in the direction of Peter, but not directly at him, and he does the same, still on all fours.*

*Lights slowly fade to black.*