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THE WHALES

By M. Stefan Strozier

Act I Scene 1:

Setting: The Sidewalk, outside of the main door to "The Monster", in Greenwich Village, NYC. The Producer enters, as she exits "The Monster." She is carrying a drink and smoking a cigarette.

[Enter Dionysus, with 2 of his Maenads. Dionysus wears a toga. His maenads are semi-naked, wearing fawn skins draped over their shoulders; and, carrying rods, tipped with pine cones.]

Dionysus

This Spotlight On Festival is the worst theater festival of all time; even worse than John Chatterton's Midtown International Festival. This heat is oppressive, for the love of God! Festivals are supposed to be held in the spring. Even the demi-God Oskar Eustis can't produce a good play, over at the Public Theater, down there on Lafayette Street.

First Maenad

O, Dionysus, god of theater, shall we kill all the New York City playwrights? Afterwards, we can outsource playwrights from India, via the Internet.

Dionysus

No, it is a bad idea. For though New York City playwrights skewered alive in places like the Theater Workshop Company on 36th Street; or, in Oskar Eustis's Workshop on Lafayette, this city still cares a little bit about them.

Second Maenad

Master, what are these things called musicals?

Dionysus

For the life of me, I do not understand musicals. They are singing; but it's certainly not a tragedy of Euripides or Sophocles, or an opera. Nor are musicals like one of Aristophanes' comedies, with a Greek chorus. I really should stay more current. More wine, woman! All the good playwrights are long dead and down in Hades' realm. And, I'm not going back there to retrieve one.

Second Maenad

But we like hell, master; can we go back to hell, please? All of the artists are down there, having so much fun!

Dionysus

Oh, stop, concubine. As you know, Hades would only allow me to return with a freshly dead playwright. And, which freshly dead playwright am I going to retrieve: Mr. Edward Albee? True, he would pass for freshly dead. But, then what: yet again, pay two hundred dollars to see the horrible play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, on Broadway? No!

First Maenad

O great Dionysus, Mr. Edward Albee is still alive.

Dionysus

Well, he looks freshly dead – though he is a very sexy old man. Do you have his number? Perhaps, I should simply drive all the playwrights mad. That might produce a good play. Maenad: do you know where can I get a good massage in Greenwich Village, with a happy ending?

Second Maenad

Isn't a woman good enough for you, master?

Dionysus

Generally: no. I had to teach you how to make love, did I not? I am so frustrated!

Second Maenad

Perhaps, a good playwright can be found in one of the City's madhouses?

Dionysus

Yes, that's it! Go, thespian, straight away, to the madhouses! Find an insane playwright, who will fully believe in fantasy. I will make his fantasy as reality. Weave sweet dreams of your soft bodies into his brain. Whisper in his ears great rewards await his toils, if only he can produce one good play. Don't give this playwright my name; say other gods are interested in his quest's success – mention *The Whales*.

First Maenad

Do we know The Whales?

Dionysus

They are first cousins of Proteus, the shape changer. He's the one Odysseus squeezed in his hands, forcing him to stop changing his shape. The Whales are friends of my Uncle Poseidon. Oh, Jesus, why these blank looks? They're family! Simply tell the mad playwright, if he believes in The Whales, they will come to aid his quest. I will see to it! Make the mad playwright understand he must do it all himself – no director or producer. A play in the theater of life!

Second Maenad

But the playwright will have to have his play published by Samuel French.

Dionysus

Give Uncle Wong a call, down in Chinatown. Have The Whales rendezvous with him. Uncle Wong will help the playwright get published, if he must be published. What are you waiting for; find him! I would like to get his play in the running for this season's Tonys. I'll meet you later. I need a drink.

[Exit maenads, stage left; exit Dionysus, through the audience, into The Monster.]

Scene 2:

Setting: The bay-style bedroom of a homeless shelter. A bed, with a sheet, is center stage. Harry humps the pillow; then, jumps up, tearing off his sheet. He addresses the audience.

Harry

I am King Alton!
I am the conjurer! I enter my dreams
Not to sleep, for I see with magical eyes
A soul, moving to the edge of reality –
Monsters of the deep, awake!

Cool Joe

[Enter Cool Joe and Player Smooth, wearing elaborate masks, costumes. Player Smooth has a bucket and he is singing into his bucket.]

And ho, while doom creeps our doorstep
Demons and gargoyles in wizards' eyes,
Our spirits' rebirth, our clear minds' kept
All the beauty of truth in all of its lies

[Cool Joe and Player Smooth dance.]

Player Smooth

Yea, we move in our heart's content
Mine future like the garden path
Happiness – bliss never sundered, nor rent
Harmony – solitude are taking a bath

Nurse

[Enter Russian nurse, pushing a medication cart.]

It is time to take medications and sleep! Tomorrow, you get government Social Security check. Everyone is happy, yes? In my country, we work for government checks and then we drink vodka and then we sleep. That is all.

Harry

We sleep, aye, nurse, for all eternity
For now, the time is come to try
To enter where dreams live and we
Watch in eternal bliss reality die

[All three conclude with a dance, arms intertwined, with a rap beat.]

Nurse

Bozhe-moi! Stop it! Stop it; I cannot take such nonsense! Be still! Be silent!

Harry

But, we are in rehearsals. Here is my script, see?

Nurse

Oy! I am watching Bolshoi Theater? You are great actors, yes? No! You are crazy schizophrenics in a homeless shelter and it is time to take your medication and sleep!

Harry

But, I have spoken with The Whales.

Nurse

Who are these whales?

Player Smooth

The Whales are holding a contest, to find the best play.

Cool Joe

The playwright who wins is to be entertained by virgins, for all eternity.

Player Smooth

And win a free Apple Mac laptop.

Nurse

How do you know all this?

Harry

Dionysus's maenads came to our dreams and told us.

Nurse

Oh, no. That is enough! So, you read a mythology book, in the library? You tell your crazy story to your case manager in the morning. You go to sleep and I go home to drink vodka and take herbal bath.

Harry

I used to be a playwright. I have written many plays; one was produced off-Broadway. But, they drove me away; my plays were dangerous. My family left me. I lost my money and wound up on the street.

Nurse

Oh, such a sad story! You tell me same fantasy every night. I am not stupid! Take medication – here! You are crazy. Schizophrenics. Good night! Lights out!

[Exit nurse, who turns out the lights in tandem with the house lights.]

Scene 3:

Setting: A café, where there is going to be a poetry reading. Enter Harry, carrying a stack of loose-leaf paper. It is a late summer night. Enter two poets, a male and a female; then, a hostess.

Hostess

[She taps the microphone and then speaks into it.]

Good evening, everybody. It's another Friday night of poetry in New York City. My name is Chaff Garland. Our first poet is actually a poet team: Our man poet is named Transfixing Game; and, our poetess is named Sunshine – y.

Poetess

It's Sunshine – I.

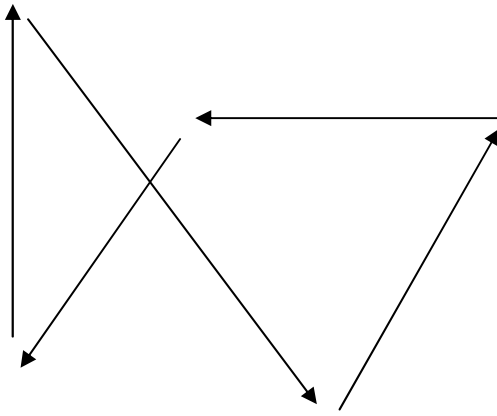
Hostess

Oh, excuse *my* place where the sun does not shine.

[Hostess exits. Note: The subsequent conversation, between Harry and Melissa, occurs concurrently, with the poets' performance.]

Poetess

[Poetess starts to create a bass line, into the microphone, as if she were rapping. The Poet begins with his arms outstretched, above his head, in an “artistic-expressive” manner. The man then moves his arms to his side, or wherever, so as to convey experimentation, while dancing. The “Penis Song” begins, sung by the male and female poet. The man sings, “Penis, penis,” moving in a pattern, with each new syllable of the word, as such:



1 (Starting point.)

[After the Poet has moved through the steps twice, the Poetess stops the bass line and begins her dance. Poetess sings, “Vaaaaaginnnnnaaaa,” while holding her hands above her head and waving her hands back and forth, as she sways with her hips. Next, while the Poet continues his dance, the Poetess returns to the microphone and begins her “poem.” She speaks very intensely, as if singing a song, with one hand on the microphone.]

Poetess

Layers upon layers of froth from the red hat. Foo man chu. Ricky-ticky-tavy. The New York Times Arts Section. If we raise the war for the score to the door, then there will be no whore, no more, eating marshmallow s’mores. The soldiers come home from the war and knock on the door. I had sex with your moms last night. There were wild polka dots on the ceiling. The wars feeling hurt is like a whale in the night. The president is in the garden. The Congress is sitting in chairs. We are all here. Riots! Ahhh! Race card! O.J. Simpson. Wild Spots. Imagine. Finals night. Ahhh! Nixon. Crime in the Ghetto. Fox news channel. Finals week. Ahhh!

Hostess

[Hostess moves back to stage and fights the poetess for the microphone.]

Excuse me; you have gone over your 3-minute limit!

Poetess

Machismo. PETA. Save the whales! Die, Republican bitch!

[Poetess and Hostess fight. Poet Transfixing Game tries to break it up; but he is pulled into the fight. The three of them take the fight offstage.]

Harry

Excuse me; but what are these people doing?

Melissa

I think they are reading poetry. My name is Melissa

Harry

My name is Harry. Is their poetry postmodern, avant-garde?

Melissa

Yes, I think it would qualify as such.

Harry

Isn't avant-garde supposed to be good?

Melissa

No, I think it is supposed to be bad.

Harry

Oh. Well, it is very strange.

Melissa

You haven't been here before?

Harry

No, I live at Fort Washington. But, I don't think I'll use postmodern avant-garde in my play.

Melissa

Isn't Fort Washington a homeless shelter?

Harry

I am a playwright. I stopped taking my medication because I am writing a play for The Whales, who have been sent to find a good play, to perform before Zeus. It is a contest. But, I don't think I will use avant-garde in my play.

Melissa

Oh, wow. How do you know so much about mythology?

Harry

I have been studying Bullfinch's Mythology every morning at 10:30 a.m. for the last five years, cover to cover. I finish the book approximately between 9:51 and 9:59 p.m., every night. So, I know it pretty well.

Melissa

Huh. I am a playwright.

Harry

For example: Here is a sample from page 69, "...Zeus discovered the plot, and He was very upset, and unleashed his lightning bolts upon the land."

Melissa

I am studying for my MFA in theater, across the street, at Columbia University.

Harry

I see.

Melissa

Can I enter the contest?

Harry

I don't see why not.

Melissa

Is there an application form to complete?

[Melissa laughs; Harry does not.]

When did you write your play?

Harry

I am writing a play about my fantasies. I write down everything I see. But, The Whales are real. They are coming; you'll see. I am not crazy; I am a playwright. Everyone else is crazy.

Melissa

Oh. I believe you.

Harry

When The Whales arrive, they are going to change everything. They are being sent by Dionysus, God of Theatre, because He is upset there are no good plays, anymore. I wrote one good play, which made it to off-Broadway; but the liberals didn't like it and they drove me away. I have sort of had some difficulties writing my second play.

Melissa

What is it called?

Harry

My play? It's called "The Whales."

Melissa

Oh, right. Maybe I can help you. Would you like me to arrange a reading of your play, at my university?

Harry

Yes! There are three of us in the cast. We have the first part already memorized.

Melissa

Oh, it's all right. That's the purpose of a reading, to get out all the bugs.

Harry

I am familiar with readings.

Melissa

Really? Oh, that's right, you're a playwright. Ah, would you like to leave here?

Harry

I told you I've already missed my bed tonight, trying to find some avant-garde poetry.

Melissa

What does that mean?

Harry

It means another night on the streets. At least, it's not winter.

Melissa

No, it's not. Come on, let get out of here. Tonight, you're with me.

Harry

But, I don't want to go to sleep. The longer I stay awake, the more my dreams become real; and, sometimes The Whales arrive during my waking dreams. I think my waking dreams are connected to my fantasies, as if The Whales are trying to become a part of reality, through my waking dreams.

Melissa

Wow. You really are crazy. Okay, we won't go to sleep. Come on; let's go to a midnight movie. Have you seen the new Tom Cruise movie?

Harry

I love Tom Cruise!

Scene 4:

Setting: A theater, with a play reading being performed. Harry, Cool Joe and Player Smooth wander into the audience and sit. Melissa, Joanna and Tony are watching the play. The cast of “The Butterfly Fairies” wear paper bags, fashioned as puppets, on their hands.

Dramaturge

Good evening. My name is Nicholas St. Germaine, III. I will be the dramaturge for this production of *The Butterfly Fairies*, by poet-playwright-short-medium-long story writer and novelist, painter, sculptor, environmental-activist Spring Feather Rise Smith: A cultural study of feminism, during 12th century Iran, in the Shakespearian historical theatrical traditions. The play opens in a hotbed of radical activity, very typical of this period, in the larger cities, extant: a literary salon. Women are so about change being a good thing. The lead character’s name is Hol Tounger Hussain. Her Faustian foil is Boo Tilicious Hasan.

[The actors immediately jump up and start dancing, like 12th century Iranian butterfly fairies, around the literary salon.]

Director

Splendid! Now, let us become the butterfly fairies. Feel your inner butterfly; let its wings of literature fan your spirit! Breathe, like a butterfly fairy. Look up here, at me. Jump – higher, higher – touch the sky! You must understand the soul of the butterfly fairy. Love the butterfly fairy!

Actor 1 (The Very Short Actor)

Penis, the war monger!

Actor 2

The Giant Vagina!

Director

Oh, yes, yes!

Actor 1 (The Very Short Actor)

How long have you had that vagina?

Actor 3

It is a very nice vagina, Chairman Mao.

Actor 2

Spanish Harlem!

Director

Yes, yes! Lee Strasburg, roll over in your grave!

Actor 1 (The Very Short Actor)

Take it up the ass and smile like Nixon!

Actor 3

George Bush is Satan.

Actor 2

God is dead!

[Actors continue, dancing like butterfly fairies and speaking similar lines; and, occasional butterfly kisses.]

Joanna

Oh, Jesus; the-a-tre! – Politically sensitive, correct the-a-tre!

Tony

Ya like that director, Joanna?

Joanna

Yes, Tony, he is marvelous.

Tony

He studied *The Method* with Lee Strasburg. He is also known as an amazing, world renowned acting teacher.

Director

Spontaneity! Stream-of-consciousness! Stupendous!

Joanna

I never did like that name, *The Method*. Always sounds like some kind of tough guy.

Tony

Strasburg studied Stanislavsky, who studied with Chekhov, who studied under Tolstoy, who studied under The Pope, who studied under Jesus Christ.

Actor 1

No more Vietnams! Oh, baby!

Joanna

It is an impressive resume, without question. Let's get *The Butterfly Fairies* on Broadway, as a union showcase. How much grant money is Bard College giving us, for workshopping *Spring Feather Rise Smith's* play in our theatre?

Tony

'Bout a hundred Gs. We need at least half a 'mil for a union, off-Broadway showcase. You want, we can use my acting troupe's union actors, for free – I mean, with my small fee.

Actor 2

I love Tom Cruise! I love Nixon!

Joanna

Oh, yes, of course, we'll take care of you, darling. That saves the high cost of paying a casting director at MTV/MTV2 Talent to scout for the actors.

Actor 3

Stella Adler is a genius!

Tony

Matter fact, I been meaning to use my people for a big show. There's another acting troupe, causing me some trouble, by the name a "Piss in the Bucket Theatre Company, Incorporated." The guy in charge is incurring my wrath. I'll show him who's on Broadway and who ain't. They don't call me Tony Crusher for nothin'.

Actor 1

Vote Democratic in the next election!

Joanna

My dear, where were we? Oh, yes; but it is Dr. Louis Menand, who is the very crème de la crème of the Upper West Side salon community. Have you read his works, in *The New Yorker*? He is a fascinating writer, with a splendid tempo and verve. His breadth and depth are unfathomable.

Actor 2

Republicans are evil! Wyoming!

Tony

Doesn't Menand teach English at Harvard or somethin'?

Joanna

Work with me, Tony, for Christ sake!

Tony

Oh, sorry.

Actor 3

I love Nixon! Make abortion legal!

Joanna

It all right, darling, no biggie; just pretend we're in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. Play the game.

Tony

Excuse me, Joanna?

Joanna

Yes, dear?

Actor 3

Vote Independent in your next election!

Tony

Let me show you somethin'.

[Tony opens a shoebox, filled with cash; and, produces a letter, from an envelope, from the box.]

Look: read this. We just got the big grant, from the National Endowment of the Arts! Oh, baby! Free tax money; rub it over your body, baby! Forgetta' 'bout it!

[They start to rub cash over their bodies; especially, their genitalia.]

Joanna

Oh! Stop! Stop; I think they might see us.

Director

Cut! Cut!

[Director approaches Actor 3.]

What's the matter with you, fairy? Why did you say to vote 'independent'?

Actor 3

What do you mean?

Director

I don't think you are listening to me, fairy. This is a Democratic stream-of-consciousness exercise! Go sit in the corner, fairy!

[Sound of a record scratch. Equity Police # 1 blows whistle. Enter EP # 1 & 2.]

EP # 1

Excuse me; I received a complaint from an anonymous Equity Deputy there is a play being performed in serious violation of the Equity Union Showcase. Have you all taken your fifteen-minute break?

EP # 2

Is that a camera? I smell smoke, from a smoke machine, in this theater. How many rehearsals has this play had? How much are tickets to this reading? I've seen enough. You are all under arrest!

[Dramaturge slowly exits. EP # 1 shoots dramaturge in buttocks. EP # 1 & 2 escort cast of the Butterfly Fairies out of the theater, carrying the dramaturge.]

Joanna

Well, so much for *The Butterfly Fairies*. Where were we, darling?

Tony

Joanna, the tickets to latest play, *Heathens in Hoboken, number seventeen*, are only papering – comps. I paid the fashionable artist MoMA sent, to make the playbill artwork of cow fetuses being hung and disemboweled, by grade school children. Ben Brantley, of *The New York Times*, gave *Heathens* rave reviews.

Joanna

Mother-fucker; where'd I put my cup of double-triple espresso vanilla bean mocha latte, with a splash of Honduran *flava* crystals?

Tony

You listening to me? I got some of my money in that production.

Joanna

Yes. I'll call the little pip squeak, Brantley; and, tighten his screws; until, he loves it so much he screams in agony!

Tony

Do you think my play might actually be *bad*? The first sixteen *Heathens* were good, weren't they? Am I a writer?

Joanna

Yes, all of your theatrical works are splendid and wonderful, which is why they're published by Samuel French. My darling dear, nothing written is ever *bad*. Mel Brooks has been teaching us this lesson, in *The Producers*, for half a century. Cheer up, darling; cha cha with me. Is how one dances a Puerto Rican salsa dance?

Tony

Melissa is sponsoring a reading tonight – some group from a homeless shelter for the mentally ill. Do you have a few singles, in case they beg?

Joanna

A homeless shelter! Jesus, Tony! Are they sufficiently medicated? Well, I guess we can show a little charity, just for the hell of it, even if we don't stand to gain personally. Melissa! Come over here. Is your charity group here?

Melissa

They're over there, ready to perform. But, it's not charity. Harry is a playwright.

Joanna

Whatever, my dear? Why on earth would anyone ever want to produce a play, written by a mad, homeless playwright? Theater is business. Always ask yourself, "Will this bring me money, fame, bolster my standing in the liberal establishment – or, lead me toward a lecturing, paying position at the Learning Annex?"

Melissa

And you ask this, of yourself?

Joanna

It's all about the Benjamins, my darling. You are here on daddy's nickel, which is paying my tenured hinny. Darling, your daddy and I have a special relationship. I want his money to buy the best little artist, marketable.

Melissa

So I am a liberal playwright?

Joanna

Poet Wystan Hugh Auden once famously said, "Theater is a safe place, where liberals are promoting their ideas in peace and making a good living, in the process."

Tony

That sounds a little suspicious to me. I'm just saying.

Joanna

Who the hell asked you? Don't be so fussy about a little plagiarism among friends, for Christ Sake.

Tony

Well, we might as well get the show started.

Harry

What about The Whales?

Joanna

Excuse me? Is this the homeless man? What is your name, sir?

Harry

My name is Harry. The Whales are coming, to judge their contest. Do you have a play to enter? Are you going to enter "The Butterfly Fairies"?

Joanna

What are you talking about?

Harry

[Simultaneous to Harry's opera-like whale-call, Cool Joe and Player Smooth rock their bodies on the ground, swimming like seals, arms at their sides.]

Whooooo Baaaaal. Clee-ack! Whooooo Baaaaal. Clee-ack! Whooooo Baaaaal. Clee-ack! Whooooo Baaaaal. Clee-ack!

Cool Joe & Player Smooth

Auk! Auk!

Joanna

Why have you allowed a madman into our theater? Someone call the police. Have this crazy homeless man arrested, immediately.

[A loud, deep whale's bellow is heard, over the sound system, startling Joanna.]

Oh!

Harry

Look: here they come, from the depths of reality. Just there – at the edges, see? Prepare yourselves.

Joanna

Prepare for what? Who is here? What is happening?

The Whales and The Whale Chorus

[Enter The Whales and The Whale Chorus, who are in one group. The Whale Chorus leads this group and it consists: king (he has a staff, with a head ornament), queen, prince, grandmother. The Whales are many minor whales of the court. The king is the chorus leader. All of the whales run on stage in a group, moving with playful motions, as if they were a collection of Barney dinosaurs. Some of The Whales roll around on the floor; then all assemble into a choral group.]

Harry

Here are The Whales! Here are The Whales!

Joanna

Oh, dear.

The Whale Chorus

O Hail, insane playwright, who called us!

The Whales

Oh, he who called us.

The Whale Chorus

O Hail, goddess of intelligentsia, academia, postmodernism!

The Whales

You got so much postmodernism.

The Whale Chorus

We are sent by the hermaphrodite god, Dionysus
To judge the best play, not about Communism

The Whales

He does not like Communism.

Joanna

Oh, help me. What kind of whales are these?

Harry

The king is a sperm whale. He dives very deep in the Pacific Ocean.

Joanna

What is that one?

Cool Joe

Oh, that one is the queen. She is a finback. She lives in the Atlantic Ocean; but she doesn't dive anywhere near as deep as the king.

Joanna

And him?

Player Smooth

The Prince of Whales looks like a melon-head; and, the old one, the grandmother, is a humpback. The rest are pilots and orcas and dolphins; plus, a few right whales.

Joanna

What kind of whale is that one, with the thing on its head; and, locks of what appear to be hair?

Harry

That is a Jewish whale, wearing a Yakama.

Joanna

Oh. Are they going to eat us? Mooooo.

The Whale Chorus

Dionysus does not enjoy musicals
Or Broadway Disneyworld commercialism
These mere big corporations' vehicles
Theater is a religion; and, the church has a schism

The Whales

Just simple vehicles of the rich.

The Whales Chorus

He's been to festivals and workshops and even had to pay
Unrecognized as an industry comp, by imbeciles on Broadway

The Chorus Leader

Playwright, commence your logic
Postmodernist, prepare your rhetoric

Joanna

Are you in charge here? – Because I really don't appreciate you just trouncing in here and taking over. For your information, we are engaging in true art here – theater!

The Whales

You must recite your lyrics in meter
And take direction from our leader

Joanna

Ahh! All I wanted was to eat some sushi tonight. What went wrong?

[Swashbuckler and Dancer poke their heads from behind either end of the curtain.]

The Whales

You, postmodernist, will speak in anapest tetrameter
And you, playwright, will answer in iambic tetrameter
Both concluding with a choking-song, cut to a diameter

Joanna

Stop this madness! What is happening? What has happened to the 4th wall? I feel as though I have been transported to some alter-reality, where the play no longer exists and I am inside of another theater. Is there an audience here, watching me?

Harry

[Swashbuckler and Dancer poke their heads from behind either end of the curtain again; but this time they switched ends.]

There is no more 4th wall. We are lost, inside of this play. Yes, there is an audience here; I can feel them watching me, silently. I hear them breathing. Listen. One of them is snoring – no, farting. I can almost, just about, touch them. I can even smell them. Over here, I don't smell anyone – I must be upstage; but over here, whew! Here is the audience. They must be from Romania – or, maybe New Jersey. I can even barely make them out; he is bald and ugly! And there – are those real? If you are there, audience, you must help me, come over to the other side. Do not tell anyone! Shh!

Melissa

Harry! You are not leaving reality. And, if you do, I am coming with you.

Harry

We cannot leave, until this play is resolved. We must obey The Whales, as I have told you; but you are not listening to me! I am smashing the 4th wall!

[Smashes the stage set with a chair. Tony runs offstage. As Harry spends a minute smashing the set, Swashbuckler and Dancer enter the stage and perform a swordfight, which causes Harry and everyone else to stop and watch.]

Swashbuckler

Fie and drumsticks! All not henceforth –
BUT, lay snails and such apricots as blithe.
AND, the clambasted pick-a-dilly
Clubfooted horgoth which dines – aye.

Dancer

[Dancer enters the stage, skipping with one hand on his hip, his sword pointed forward.]

Ravenhampster, tis I, Jacobin!

Swashbuckler

[Turns, dramatically.]

Ah, Jacobin! Better gallywack than the gardenshack.

[They embrace. Enter juggling, Very Short Actor, who drops his balls and chases them across the stage. Enter Short, Hunchback Actor, who is doing summersaults on the floor; but awkwardly.]

Aye, good to no'or and forcrackle.

Dancer

Ah, tis such, and rims.

Swashbuckler

Sent a blowin', in peculiar herewith, mine arse?

Dancer

Aye, tis, aye. Ravenhampster, deer spot langtoon's weasels?

Swashbuckler

I have not.

Dancer

They hath smote the pole.

Swashbuckler

No! Racked, ransacked, bemoaning doom and goo?
AND, the habadash's whiskers of morn'
Nary a golden splendor; forsooth a fortnight – and ere
O'er car-ma-lom-ding-dongs, ripe and of good health,
Happenstance, thus; for, the nary told word
In flights of ribald night whistlers
Hum-a-da-hum-a-da-hum-a-da

Dancer

Oh! And the monkey-spankers!
How lecherous lights ole one-eye!

Swashbuckler

The autumn day's done; the yonder morn braces
For sunlight's reach and lovely songs
Long beyond the night's wrongs
Thus they compound; aye – and, as such,
Wrested arms and delightful noon

Silent as a still lake, eye-fashioned by a loon
Pecking the calm, slicing the sheet, diving
Down, down, to rocky shores and what more? Nay!

[Dancer stabs Swashbuckler in the kidney. Swashbuckler dies. Dancer performs ritual Hari Cari with his sword.]

Dancer

I love you, Joe Chino!

Joanna

Who the hell are you two?

Dancer

We're rehearsing for a Shakespeare play.

Harry

This is Shakespearean comedy?

Melissa

Yes, it is.

Harry

I don't think I'll put any of it in my play.

Joanna

In case you haven't noticed, we've already got several plays within a play; so, you two can take a number and a seat in the back!

[Dancer, Swashbuckler, Very Short Actor, Short, Hunchback Actor move to the side; but remain in the group.]

Who is he?

[Enter Dionysus, from the audience, carrying a martini, calling The Chorus Leader over, to stage right.]

Dionysus

Hold on a minute. Earl, how we doing? Is this the playwright?

The Chorus Leader

Yes, that one there. Your Maenads found him. He's just called us here. He seems to have potential. He has a heart. He wrote a play, which was rejected by the liberal elite.

Dionysus

I wonder if he knows about them

[Dionysus points to the audience.]

Explain to them what the hell's going on here. I'm working on my buzz. I'll catch you on the flip side, G – trying to learn the slang. Word.

[Exit Dionysus.]

The Chorus Leader

[Chorus Leader addresses the audience.]

Yes, Harry, there is an audience here. Please take out your playbill and pencils and keep track of who presents the best argument. There is a scorecard in your playbill and you were handed a pencil by the box office. I'll give you a moment to get ready. Ready? I am the playwright and I am speaking, right now, through the mouth of one of my characters. I am writing an ancient Greek comedy. I am following all of the rules of ancient Greek comedy, including this section, which is called a parabasis. I am in charge of this play! Just to prove my point, watch a demonstration of my power, as I destroy the gods!

[Chorus Leader turns and make hand gestures, as if he were a magician, at one whale in the chorus, who falls to the floor 'dead'.]

[Enter Stage Manager, who drags the dead whale from the stage.]

Are there any questions? Let's sit back and enjoy the rest of the play.

The Whales and The Whale Chorus

Here we are, at the crux of the matter
One claims art's foundations shattered
The other denies this; says nothing's the matter
And to worry is to get worked into lather

The Whales Chorus

Let the contest begin
And may the best one win

Joanna

Who goes first?

Harry

I don't care if you go first.

Joanna

[The Whales and The Whale Chorus, Dancer, Swashbuckler, Very Short Actor start to slowly lean on the walls, sink to the floor, fall asleep, start snoring, occasionally stirring, etceteras.]

My child, you do not understand the art of the 60s. Andy Warhol's pop art movement changed the face of art. Yes, he was not a great artist; but he was trying to be bad. Truman Capote and Thomas Wolfe invented New Journalism as a way to remove the illusion of grandiosity from fiction, from writers such as Hemingway or Fitzgerald. Minimalism, that scourge of all art "movements" is the death of art. My generation single-handedly reduced art to ruins. The Modernist poet T. S. Eliot's epic poem, 'The Wasteland', eradicated millennia of Judeo-Christian metrical, rhyming, silly poetry, such as Aristophanes. My generation is known as the Post-modernists. I personally know Norman Mailer and the great poet Billy Collins! The-a-tre is an art form – ergo, the-a-tre must be reduced to nothing! My generation has succeeded in nullifying all art in the-a-tre; and, the commercializing of the rest of it. And, there is simply no other way; all else is cliché. I rest my case. The art of my generation – the 60s – must exist in a perpetual death and misery and agony, for all eternity.

Harry

We all want to love the theater.

[The Whales and The Whale Chorus, Dancer, Swashbuckler, Midget all stand, quickly.]

We all want to fall in love with it again. We want our theater to have emotion, not attend a lecture. We want real characters we understand and love and hate. We want to get angry at our characters and cry with them. We want our theater back. \$150 is too much to pay for a ticket. Add in the roses for the lady, drinks; and, parking and you are set back two to three yards – hundreds of dollars. It's not right. We don't want actors with microphones. We want the art back in our theater. Our feelings and our desires are more important than lining a producer's pocket with money. We want control. We want our theater back. Our theater does not consist of Billy Joel musicals. Our theater does not belong to tourists or the mayor. Our theater belongs to us! And, we're not going to take it anymore,

because we want our theater back. Say it with me. We want our theater back!
We want our theater back! We want our theater back! Can I get an amen!?

[Harry continues this game with the audience for as long as they are enthusiastic.]

Well, it is fun to pretend; but I realize there is no one out there. It's all in my head. This is just another fantasy of mine. I can't believe what the Chorus Leader says; there is no audience out there. I want to create the new, to change art and theater, for the better. I want to believe in the whales and produce my play. Your time is through. I rebelled with my first play, which made it to off-Broadway, "Hang all the Hippies at High Noon"; but your critics crushed it, and me. Now it is up to the whales to decide the fate of art's future!

Joanna

So you are the infamous Harry Alton, the playwright who wrote "Hang all the Hippies." I see you in flesh and blood. What Anthony Lane said is true: You really are crazy.

Harry

Yes, I am playwright Harry Alton and I'm back. And, this time I have The Whales with me! And, we're here to win!

Joanna

Let's not get delusional, shall we, Mr. Alton? We both know that...excuse me, who the hell are you?!

[Enter Mark Larson, who begins to balance chairs or other objects on his chin.]

Mark Larson

Hello. I'm Mark Larson.

Joanna

What the hell are you doing?!

Mark Larson

I am balancing objects on my chin.

Joanna

I can see that. Why are you here, balancing objects on your chin?

Mark Larson

It's just a special skill I have learned.

[Joanna screams loudly, which causes the objects to crash to the ground.]

Mark Larson

You're so predictable.

[Exit Mark Larson.]

The Chorus Leader

Please pass your ballots forward. Stage manager!

[Enter Stage Manager.]

Please collect the ballots and count them outside, at the box office.

[Stage Manager collects the ballots and exits.]

This is the playwright. I am speaking, remember? I feel Harry has won the argument. I am not sure what you feel; but you will kindly vote for Harry instead of Joanna. If you don't vote for Harry, the ice caps will melt, the city will flood, and The Whales will come to your offices and crush your computers!

[Enter Stage Manager, who whispers in Chorus Leader's ear. Chorus Leader is surprised. He explains to Stage Manager, by gesticulation, to count again. The Stage Manager exits, nervously.]

There seems to be an error in the counting. Well, it is all right. We have decided to do a voice vote, instead. All in favor of Joanna say nay! All in favor of Harry say aye! And the winner is:

[Joanna is full of expectation and nervous anticipation. Her shoulders slump after she is declared loser.]

The ayes have it! Harry is declared the winner! Postmodernist: Leave the stage! Your time is over! You are a loser!

Joanna

What!? I demand a recount!

The Whale Chorus

There are no recounts with the Gods, my darling.

Joanna

But I am a directorrrrrr!

The Whale Chorus

Not anymore.

Joanna

But I am a producer – stop! I am not leaving! Do you hear me? Are you listening to me?!

[One whale, from the The Whales, approaches Joanna, gives her a hug, returns to his or her spot in the overall chorus. Joanna mouths “thank you” to the lone whale.]

This is my theater – wait – I mean, I am very unhappy by your decision to get to get rid of me. I am special, as an actor. And you need therapy! Please, Mr. Whale, don't fire me. I will do an-y-thing for you.

[Joanna approaches the Chorus Leader, hinting at sexual favors; but he resists. Joanna is frustrated by his lack of interest.]

I had a PHD in theater. I am one of the founders of La Mama Theater. I was a regular at Joe Cino's Caffe Cino. I gotta right! I gotta right!

[The Chorus Leader motions to the Stage Manager, who enters and grabs Joanna around the waist, carrying her offstage.]

Oh! Put me down! I'll have you all blacklisted!

The Whales and The Whale Chorus

[The Whale Chorus addresses Harry.]

O, playwright, you have won the argument
Let's hope it does not become your detriment
Dionysus has decreed you must produce a play
He's given you one 24 hour day
We are here to help you and sign a song
Go to Chinatown and find the great poet Uncle Wong

Harry

Who is Uncle Wong?

The Chorus Leader

Uncle Wong is a wise poet, who will help you get published by Samuel French, since you have to be published to be a playwright.

Harry

I am ready then, to do as you say.

The Chorus Leader

Let's sing a song. Everyone knows this song. It's called, "Off to Chinatown."

[This song is a mock of a musical "song." Song continues, as all exit the stage.]

We're going off to Chinatown, way down to Chinatown
To meet Mr. Uncle Wong, oh big Uncle Wong
He's going to show us how to write a play
In the good, old-fashioned Greek way

For a long time I was lost at sea
Like a mariner, that was me
And then, to my rescue, came The Whales
They showed me the way; I raised my ship's sails

We're off to Chinatown, rockin-rolling Chinatown
To meet Mr. Uncle Wong, oh big uncle wong
He's going to show us how to write a play
In the good, old-fashioned Greek way

[Intermission]

Act II

Scene 1:

Setting: A subway car, with scattered passengers, Harry, Melissa, Cool Joe, Player Smooth, Dancer, Swashbuckler, Very Shot Actor, Short, Hunchback Actor, The Whales and The Whale Chorus. Chinese passenger talks to himself, changing seats each with each line.

Chinese Passenger

Chu tao boy moo hop yong ko rap long hi dong fu dee cap- cap- cap- cap
boowwwwwwwwwwwww – ha!

Chinese Passenger

Quing aaaaaaa jujujujujujuju too-pai! Wing-chi! Wha-cha! Hi-ya! Dick
Cheney.

Homeless Preacher

[Enter Homeless Preacher.]

God can save you! Pray to sweet Jesus Christ. Jesus is sweet like Sunday ice
cream. Mmm, good. I am Sonny Pain! I am personally in love with Satan; who
can believe that fact? Can you? I have risen with my giant sausage, to the
everlasting kingdom; who wants to partake of my giant sausage? Can anyone
spare a dime? Can you spare some change, buddy?

The Whales and The Whale Chorus

What is ice cream of Jesus Christ?
Is it good and very high-priced?
Is Jesus a god or son of a god?
Does he carry a sepulture or a rod?
And what is Satan, a milkshake
Or a chocolate ice cream cake?

Cool Joe

How are we going to find Uncle Wong, in Chinatown?

Harry

Do you think they know where he is?

Chinese Passenger

Gi go mmm pla hopscotch ring tied wolf upsta come on Brooke Shields.

Chinese Passenger

Boo! Hap si unda Delong UNCLE WONG Chinese restaurant on Grand Street?

Player Smooth

Did you hear that?

Cool Joe

They know where Uncle Wong is!

Homeless Preacher

You, mister! I am going to eat your soul and spit it out, all over the hot coals of hell! Hahahaha!

Angry Passenger

Hey, man, why don't you shut your pie hole?

Homeless Preacher

You don't believe in the Devil, sinner! God going to take you soul, and cast it to hell, to burn in everlasting flame! Hahahahaha! I am the great and chosen Planet Voltron Omega Tom Cruise. Sometimes, a man gets the best seat on the subway. He is happy. Or he is squished. The end is near. Have fear

Chinese Passenger

Go ta one block Canal den two knock fa da umbrella. Wha-cha!

Chinese Passenger

Usa da foor cy, Luke Sky-walka. Wooop! Ya all come on back na, ya hear?

The Whales and The Whale Chorus

Boo who ludes and dudes
Whoop whoop, moo moo
Hot dogs and biggy boobs
That man is taking a pool!

[Homeless Preacher starts to take down his pants.]

Angry Passenger

Hey! This is a public place!

Homeless Preacher

[Homeless Preacher stops, his pants unbuttoned.]

I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.

Angry Passenger

All that glitters is not gold –
Often have you heard that told.
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold.

Chinese Passenger

Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's could,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanched with fear.

Chinese Passenger

What sum owes he the Jew?

The Whales and The Whale Chorus

Wherefore art thou, Romero?
Yuk, yuk, whoop, whoop!
Be bop too moo
Yuk, yuk, whoop, whoop!
Be bop too moo

Harry

Let's make them tell us where Uncle Wong is.

Cool Joe

Let's get them!

[Harry, Cool Joe, Player Smooth, Melissa rush 2 Chinese passengers.]

Chinese Passenger

Halt! Do you not see the world has gone mad? And you propose to do nothing?

[Lights go out and there is heard loud scuffling and bangs for several seconds. Lights rise. Everyone freezes in place. The rest of the group is frozen in whatever comic action they were about to perform.]

Harry

Where is Uncle Wong!

Chinese Passenger

You will not reach him! Men and women, the time has arrived for action. The weak and undesirable must be left behind. Climb mountain – wha cha!

Chinese Passenger

Hi-ya!

Harry

Owww, hi-ya!

[The angry passenger shoves The Chorus Leader to the ground. Lights go black. More sounds of grunting and scuffling.]

The Chorus Leader

[Lights rise. The Chorus Leader is about to slam his staff on top of the head of the angry passenger. Every person freezes.]

Poor Harry; will he achieve success? Will he create order from madness?

[Lights go black; more scuffling sounds; and, other bizarre sounds.]

The Chorus Leader

[Lights rise and everyone except The Chorus Leader is divided into two groups, which are lined against the walls. Square dance music plays. One Whale and the Homeless Preacher interlock arms, in the center of the stage, square dancing. It does not matter if they do not know how to square dance.]

O audience! Have any of you seen Dionysus, by chance? If you do see him, tell him we're, ah, square dancing. Thank you.

[Lights go black. Music fades.]

Scene 2:

Setting: Lights rise. Harry, Melissa, Cool Joe, Player Smooth enter, from the curtain, SR, with Harry moving it inside, as if he were entering a bar in the Wild West. Melissa is behind them. On stage are a table and one chair. Uncle Wong is sitting on the table, his legs crossed.

Harry

Where is Uncle Wong?

Uncle Wong

Who is fool, who dare to ask for Uncle Wong?

[Harry, Melissa, Cool Joe, Player Smooth enter and stride confidently to the table. Harry bows before Uncle Wong.]

Harry

I am fool who dares.

[Enter The Whales and The Whale Chorus; juggling, Very Short Actor and Short, Hunchback Actor; Dancer and Swashbuckler. Very Short Actor goes behind the curtain and pulls out a large, homemade gong, which he slams once, with a mallet. All sit in front of Uncle Wong.]

Uncle Wong

I tell you all story. Many, many year ago, there were two sisters, who lived in a berry bad part of town. One sista name Al-i-ca. Otha sista name Jan. Sista name Al-i-ca was berry ugly. Other sista, name Jan, berry, berry beautiful. Den, one day, along come a handsome prince, in a stretch limousine. He get out and ask for da ugly sista. Ugly sista say, 'Why you choose me and not my beautiful sista?' Handsome prince say, 'I'm tired, woman, of doing the same thing, always. I need change in my life. Can't you see that?' Ugly sista say, 'Okay den, let's go party.'

Cool Joe

That was a wonderful story.

Uncle Wong

Here is fortune cookie.

[Uncle Wong hands Harry a fortune cookie, from his pocket. Harry opens it, eating the cookie.]

Player Smooth

Wait, that's it? There is nothing else to say?

Stage Manager

[There is a loud commotion sound offstage. Then, a large object is hurled onstage. Next, a latter crashes on the stage; or, a curtain is dropped – or, some other large lapse in stage management occurs. Enter the stage manager, alone, who spends several minutes awkwardly trying to reassemble what went wrong, moving through the set and the actors. Stage manager motions to one actor to help him. One actor assists the stage manger.]

I'm sorry for the disturbance. Pardon me. Excuse me, folks; I'll just be a minute. This kind of thing happens in live theater – it's not a problem at all. Is there any Brooklyn in the house?

[Exit stage manager.]

Harry

What do we do now? Is there no answer?

Uncle Wong

Read message of fortune cookie! Answer must be found, not own answer.

Player Smooth

What does it say?

Harry

It says if I want to be a playwright, my play must first be published by Samuel French publishers. 45 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10010-2751.

Cool Joe

We have the answer!

Melissa

The little strip of paper says all that?

Harry

Oh, Wong, The Whales said you are a great poet. I have to gain your wisdom.

Uncle Wong

Fortune cookie say to write play must be publish!

Harry

But I do not understand the point of this story!

Uncle Wong

Where you get publish: On Internet? Whale god says publish on paper. Must always obey whale god. You learn how to be wise by doing it yourself.

Cool Joe

We only have one hour to make it. Let's hurry!

Harry

I have to do this myself. I must learn it all, on my own. My fantasy can become real; I can enter my dreams. The world is crazy, not me.

[All exit. Uncle Wong remains on the table. Lights go black.]

Scene 3:

Setting: The office of Samuel French publishers. The publishers of Samuel French, The New York Times and The New Yorker are in the office. They are throwing scripts out the window, to see if they can get them into the East River. Before lights rise, heavy laughter is heard.

New York Times Publisher

Fantastic, man! I haven't had this much fun in a long time, Morris. We don't do this kind of thing over at the New York Times. Look out, below!

New Yorker Publisher

I feel twenty years younger! Morris: it's like the Summer of Love, all over again: so much control! This is so much fun. We don't have anything like this at The New Yorker. Did that one make it to the East River?

New York Times Publisher

The Samuel French system for choosing scripts to publish is really incredible. Hey, all right, man! Damn, that one fell in the mudflats.

Samuel French Publisher

What are you guys talking about? Arthur: as editor of the New York Times, you're more powerful than the mayor. And, Bill, controlling the New Yorker is the equivalent of being King of American Culture. Hell, even those journalists at Newsweek got to print a bunch of lies about the Koran, which got scores of people killed in the Middle East. That is real power! Those are lucky bastards. You guys did a real good job backing their story. Look: All we do here is publish plays. Watch out; here comes a heavy one!

New York Times Publisher

Newspaper rags, Morris. The only thing we do for fun at The New York Times is "Jason Blair Day." Our journalists write whatever they want – you know, make up stuff. Coming up behind you!

New Yorker Publisher

We do that too, at The New Yorker. We call it "Seymour Hersh Day." Hey, here comes another!

[The New Yorker publisher trips and his script flies all over the room, loose leaf.]

My bad. Sorry. I slipped, Morris.

Samuel French Publisher

That's all right. Just be more careful next time.

New Yorker Publisher

Oh. I'm sorry about the mess. I guess I don't move like I did 20 years ago.

New York Times Publisher

Can I throw this stack out the window too, Morris?

Samuel French Publisher

Oh, no, those are plays I'm still considering. My student-interns from Columbia weed out the pro-gay, pro-Jew, pro-black, pro-feminist, etceteras, and stack them here. The rest, out the window, to try and reach the East River!

[Buzzer rings. Samuel French Publisher presses the phone's button.]

Yes, Blanche, we're kind of busy.

Secretary Voice

Mr. Hobson, I'm sorry for interrupting, sir; but there is a man here with whales.

Samuel French Publisher

What?

Secretary Voice

He says he is a playwright who must be published.

Samuel French Publisher

Ha! It's Friday afternoon, Blanche; I don't have any appointments. Hey guys, I just had an idea. I'm going to show you how I handle playwrights.

[Samuel French Publisher presses the phone's button.]

Send him in to see me.

Secretary Voice

Yes, sir.

New Yorker Publisher

Man, you know how to party, Morris.

[Enter Harry, Cool Joe, Player Smooth, Melissa, The Whales, The Whale Chorus, juggling, Very Short Actor and Short, Hunchback Actor; Dancer and Swashbuckler.]

New York Times Publisher

Melissa! Who are all of these people you are with?

Melissa

Daddy? These men are from a homeless shelter. And, these are The Whales. They are Greek gods.

New York Times Publisher

Who's the midget? Why aren't you in school? Where is Joanna?

New Yorker Publisher

Hey, you're that playwright Anthony Lane forced out of business a few years back. You were against liberals – Harry Alton!

Harry

Who here is the Samuel French publisher?

Samuel French Publisher

I am he.

Harry

Here is my script. I must be published, so that I can enter my play and leave reality.

Samuel French Publisher

Ha, ha. Nice try. I can categorically inform you that we are not going to publish your play.

Harry

But, you haven't even read it! We already won the contest of the best play. And, Uncle Wong said all we had to do is to become published. The Whales said to follow my dream. Someone has not told me the truth. I am not the one who is

crazy here – all of you are crazy! I wanted to do the bidding of The Whales; their fantasy is reality! But, I can't follow them down, to the deep ocean. If I had succeeded as a playwright, I would have had my own laughers, in the back row, laughing, even if my plays weren't good. But, I can't write a play. I have failed The Whales. I have failed my buddies Cool Joe and Player Smooth. And, I have failed myself. I am going back to the homeless shelter.

Melissa

It's okay; you have me. And, maybe you have created a play, after all, about yourself, strange as it is; yes. It is beau-ti-ful – oh, yes. Yes. And, I am in love with you, yes. I have loved you since I first laid eyes on you and you spoke your first words to me; yes and yes. Yes. Yes. Yes!

New York Times Publisher

Excuse me; but if you don't return to your liberal studies at Columbia, I am revoking the funding of your college loans!

Melissa

But, daddy!

New York Times Publisher

Don't but me!

Secretary Voice

[Buzzer rings.]

Excuse me again, sir; Dionysus, the Greek god of theater, is here to see you.

Melissa

I am sorry, Harry; but I will return to Columbia. I guess you have to go back to the homeless shelter, after all.

Samuel French Publisher

[Samuel French Publisher presses the phone's button.]

Blanche, is he union or non-union?

Cool Joe

No one cares about what you say, anyway, baby. Because Harry is my man!

Melissa

Harry is mine!

Secretary Voice

Dionysus says he is not a member of Actors Equity Union because, technically, gods don't have souls to sell. And, he says he doesn't have enough money to join the Union, anyway, due to a problem with compulsive gambling, wine, women, and song.

Cool Joe

Listen, here, sweet pants. The man is mine.

Melissa

Oh, no he is not.

Samuel French Publisher

Please tell Dionysus we're busy; and, I don't meet with salespersons on Fridays.

[Melissa and Cool Joe momentarily tangle; enter Dionysus, from audience, holding a martini, along with maenads. Their entrance disrupts the fight.]

Dionysus

Well, well, are you Mr. Harry Alton? Is there a play going on here?

Harry

Yes. Who are you?

The Whale and The Whale Chorus

Dionysus, Great God of Theater
Have we found you a keeper?
We have plunged the depths
And walked in humans' steps
To locate you a playwright
Who for his art is ready to fight
Dionysus, Great God of Theater
Have we found you a keeper?

Dionysus

Yes, cousins, you have done it! I saw the whole play; and, despite the uncomfortable seating, I could not stop laughing. I have seen a play, which I enjoyed, all the way to the ending. Give me your script, son.

Harry

Why?

Dionysus

Let's not quarrel with the gods, my boy.

[Harry hands his script to Dionysus.]

There's nothing here. It's just blank sheets of paper. You crafty devil!

[Dionysus hurls Harry's script out the window.]

You were bluffing. Ha! Oh, you are good.

Harry

Are you capable of taking me to my fantasies?

Dionysus

Yes! We are all going to Mount Olympus, with my Maenads, who will entertain you forever. You are going to write plays, for all eternity!

Cool Joe

What about the laptops? Did we win those too?

Dionysus

The laptops are in Mount Olympus. Harry, you are King of The Whales!

Melissa

Wait! Harry, I have changed my mind; I want to come to Mount Olympus, too.

Dionysus

Too late!

Melissa

Oh, no!

The Chorus Leader

Here is your scepter.

[Chorus Leader gives Harry his scepter and bows.]

New Yorker Publisher

You can't just walk out on us like this! You escaped with your life last time. Prepare to die, this time!

[New Yorker Publisher takes out a gun. Everyone hits the ground.]

As the editor and publisher of The New Yorker, I wield immense power in this city. Who the hell do you think you are? I am not going to hurt anyone; I am only going to kill Harry!

Harry

[Harry aims his scepter at The New Yorker Publisher, whose gun flies from his hand.]

Your powers are useless against me! I am a playwright! I am King of The Whales! You shall pay for your foolishness!

[Harry continues to fire his scepter at The New Yorker Publisher for several long seconds. Everyone watches in horror. The New Yorker Publisher squirms in pain.]

Dionysus

Leave him, Harry. We must get to Mount Olympus.

Very Short Actor

Hey! What about me?

Short, Hunchback Actor

Do we get laptops too?

Dionysus

Come on along; everyone gets laptops! Harry: Lead the way, stage right!

Harry

I am going home!

[Exit Dionysus, Maenads, Harry, Cool Joe, Player Smooth; Very Short Actor and Short, Hunchback Actor; The Whales and The Whale Chorus; Dancer and Swashbuckler. Samuel French publisher, The New York Times Publisher, The New Yorker Publisher, remain on stage. Lights go black.]

The End.

Coming soon, to a theater near you: *The Whales II*

Harry and his accomplices are forced to return from Mount Olympus and settle the most important score of their existence.

Performance rights must be secured before production. For contact information, please see The Whales information page (click on your browser's "Back" button, or visit <http://singlelane.com/proplay/whales.html>)