

DODGE falls into deep sleep. TILDEN just sits staring at him for a while. Slowly he leans toward the sofa, checking to see if DODGE is well asleep. He reaches slowly under the cushion and pulls out the bottle of booze. DODGE sleeps soundly. TILDEN stands quietly, staring at DODGE as he uncaps the bottle and takes a long drink. He caps the bottle and sticks it in his hip pocket. He looks around at the husks on the floor and then back to DODGE. He moves center stage and gathers an armload of corn husks then crosses back to the sofa. He stands holding the husks over DODGE and looking down at him. He gently spreads the corn husks over the whole length of DODGE's body. He stands back and looks at DODGE. Pulls out bottle, takes another drink, returns bottle to his hip pocket. He gathers more husks and repeats the procedure until the floor is clean of corn husks and DODGE is completely covered in them except for his head. TILDEN takes another long drink, stares at DODGE sleeping then quietly exits stage left. Long pause as the sound of rain continues. DODGE sleeps on. The figure of BRADLEY appears up left, outside the screen porch door. He holds a wet newspaper over his head as a protection from the rain. He seems to be struggling with the door then slips and almost falls to the ground. DODGE sleeps on, undisturbed.

BRADLEY: *Sonuvabitch! Sonuvagoddammbitch!*

BRADLEY recovers his footing and makes it through the screen door onto the porch. He throws the newspaper down, shakes the water out of his hair, and brushes the rain off of his shoulders. He is a big man dressed in a grey sweat shirt, black suspenders, baggy dark blue pants and black janitor's shoes. His left leg is wooden, having been amputated above the knee. He moves with an exaggerated, almost mechanical limp. The squeaking sounds of leather and metal accompany his walk coming from the harness and hinges of the false leg. His arms and shoulders are extremely powerful and muscular due to a lifetime dependency on the upper torso doing all the work for the legs. He is about five years younger than TILDEN. He moves laboriously to the stage right door and enters, closing the door behind him. He doesn't notice DODGE at first. He moves toward the staircase.

BRADLEY: *(calling to upstairs) Mom!*

He stops and listens. Turns upstage and sees DODGE sleeping. Notices corn husks. He moves slowly toward sofa. Stops next to pail and looks into it. Looks at husks. DODGE stays asleep. Talks to himself.

BRADLEY: What in the hell is this?

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VINCE Side #1

He looks at DODGE's sleeping face and shakes his head in disgust. He pulls out a pair of black electric hair clippers from his pocket. Unwinds the cord and crosses to the lamp. He jabs his wooden leg behind the knee, causing it to bend at the joint and awkwardly kneels to plug the cord into a floor outlet. He pulls himself to his feet again by using the sofa as leverage. He moves to DODGE's head and again jabs his false leg. Goes down on one knee. He violently knocks away some of the corn husks then jerks off DODGE's baseball cap and throws it down center stage. DODGE stays asleep. BRADLEY switches on the clippers. Lights start dimming. BRADLEY cuts DODGE's hair while he sleeps. Lights dim slowly to black with the sound of clippers and rain.

ACT 2

SCENE:

Some set as act 1. Night. Sound of rain. DODGE still asleep on sofa. His hair is cut extremely short and in places the scalp is cut and bleeding. His cap is still center stage. All the corn and husks, pail and milking stool have been cleared away. The lights come up to the sound of a young girl laughing off stage left. DODGE remains asleep. SHELLY and VINCE appear up left outside the screen porch door sharing the shelter of VINCE's overcoat above their heads. SHELLY is about nineteen, black hair, very beautiful. She wears tight jeans, high heels, purple T-shirt and a short rabbit fur coat. Her makeup is exaggerated and her hair has been curled. VINCE is TILDEN's son, about twenty-two, wears a plaid shirt, jeans, dark glasses, cowboy boots and carries a black saxophone case. They shake the rain off themselves as they enter the porch through the screen door.

SHELLY: *(laughing, gesturing to house)* This is it? I don't believe this is it!

VINCE: This is it.

SHELLY: This is the house?

VINCE: This is the house.

SHELLY: I don't believe it!

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VINCE: How come?
 SHELLY: It's like a Norman Rockwell cover or something.
 VINCE: What's a' matter with that? It's American.
 SHELLY: Where's the milkman and the little dog? What's the little dog's name? Spot. Spot and Jane. Dick and Jane and Spot.
 VINCE: Knock it off.
 SHELLY: Dick and Jane and Spot and Mom and Dad and Junior and Sissy!
She laughs. Slaps her knee.
 VINCE: Come on! It's my heritage. What dya' expect?
She laughs more hysterically, out of control.
 SHELLY: "And Tuffy and Toto and Dooda and Bonzo all went down one day to the corner grocery store to buy a big bag of licorice for Mr. Marshall's pussy cat!"
She laughs so hard she falls to her knees holding her stomach. VINCE stands there looking at her.
 VINCE: Shelly will you get up!
She keeps laughing. Staggers to her feet. Turning in circles holding her stomach.
 SHELLY: (continuing her story in kid's voice) "Mr. Marshall was on vacation. He had no idea that the four little boys had taken such a liking to his little kitty cat."
 VINCE: Have some respect would ya'!
 SHELLY: (trying to control herself) I'm sorry.
 VINCE: Pull yourself together.
 SHELLY: (salutes him) Yes sir.
She giggles.
 VINCE: Jesus Christ, Shelly.
 SHELLY: (pause, smiling) And Mr. Marshall—
 VINCE: Cut it out.
She stops. Stands there staring at him. Stiffes a giggle.
 VINCE: (after pause) Are you finished?
 SHELLY: Oh brother!
 VINCE: I don't wanna go in there with you acting like an idiot.
 SHELLY: Thanks.
 VINCE: Well, I don't.
 SHELLY: I won't embarrass you. Don't worry.
 VINCE: I'm not worried.
 SHELLY: You are too.

VINCE: Shelly look, I just don't wanna go in there with you giggling your head off. They might think something's wrong with you.
 SHELLY: There is.
 VINCE: There is not!
 SHELLY: Something's definitely wrong with me.
 VINCE: There is not!
 SHELLY: There's something wrong with you too.
 VINCE: There's nothing wrong with me either!
 SHELLY: You wanna know what's wrong with you?
 VINCE: What?
 SHELLY laughs.
 VINCE: (crosses back left toward screen door) I'm leaving!
 SHELLY: (stops laughing) Wait! Stop. Stop! (VINCE stops) What's wrong with you is that you take the situation too seriously.
 VINCE: I just don't want to have them think that I've suddenly arrived out of the middle of nowhere completely deranged.
 SHELLY: What do you want them to think then?
 VINCE: (pause) Nothing. Let's go in.
He crosses porch toward stage right interior door. SHELLY follows him. The stage right door opens slowly. VINCE sticks his head in, doesn't notice DODGE sleeping. Calls out toward staircase.
 VINCE: Grandmal
 SHELLY breaks into laughter, unseen behind VINCE. VINCE pulls his head back outside and pulls door shut. We hear their voices again without seeing them.
 SHELLY'S VOICE: (stops laughing) I'm sorry. I'm sorry Vince. I really am. I really am sorry. I won't do it again. I couldn't help it.
 VINCE'S VOICE: It's not all that funny.
 SHELLY'S VOICE: I know it's not. I'm sorry.
 VINCE'S VOICE: I mean this is a tense situation for me! I haven't seen them for over six years. I don't know what to expect.
 SHELLY'S VOICE: I know. I won't do it again.
 VINCE'S VOICE: Can't you bite your tongue or something?
 SHELLY'S VOICE: Just don't say "Grandma," okay? (she giggles, stops) I mean if you say "Grandma" I don't know if I can stop myself.
 VINCE'S VOICE: Well try!
 SHELLY'S VOICE: Okay. Sorry.
and
 Door opens again. VINCE sticks his head in then enters. SHELLY