

THE TIGHT FIT

By SUSAN MOSAKOWSKI

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All inquiries concerning performance rights
for this text should be made to the author.

Susan Mosakowski
127 Greene Street
New York, NY 10012
mosakowski@creationproduction.org

Representation: Clinton Fisher
Hanly Conroy Bierstein &
Sheridan LLP
112 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016-7416
cfisher@hanlyconroy.com

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By Susan Mosakowski

Characters

Simon: *A short order cook and a shrink on the side.*

His Customers:

Sibyl: *An actress afflicted with Tourette's syndrome.*

Willy: *A historian without a memory.*

Lucy: *A mystery writer with autistic tendencies.*

The Scene

The Orbit Diner. *An elliptical white counter top orbits the entire stage, floating like a ring in space. The counter features three seats on the upstage side. SIMON works in the center of the ellipse at a free standing stove. The backside of the stove has an elevated shelf area which doubles as a podium. A pedestal cake dish sits on the downstage curve of the counter, featuring one slice of chocolate cake with a candle. The downstage portion of the counter puts the audience in the fourth seat.*

Scene 1
SIMON'S Story

SIBYL

LIGHTS!

Lights up. WILLY, LUCY, and SIBYL sit absolutely still around the counter. SIMON is at the stove.

SIBYL

(Breaking the tableau she turns to the audience and announces) "Simon's Story."

SIMON grabs the coffee pot and passing from one to another, refills their coffee cups. WILLY begins reading from SIMON'S journal.

WILLY

(Reading) When I first met them, they were filthy--absolutely filthy. All of their money couldn't buy them someone to take care of them the way that I could. I could give them what they needed.

SIMON

Give me that! *(Grabs the book and places it on the podium)*

WILLY

(Continues by rote) They needed everything; they had to be told what to do and when to do it.

SIMON

(Cuts him off) PUT A LID ON IT!

WILLY

You were writing about me.

SIMON

I was writing about my experience.

WILLY

You were writing about your experience of me. Half of it belongs to me.

SIMON

(At the chopping block) Half is nothing.

WILLY

I'm hungry, so hungry that I don't mind eating leftovers. Chew up those words and spit'm out. I want to eat those little time bombs and watch my memory explode. Give me another taste Simon. MORE.

SIMON

Willy, I'd rather you take a bite out of my arm because then we'd have something real to talk about.

WILLY

HEAT IT UP!

SIMON

(To Sibyl) What'll it be? I've got a pork chop special today with mashed potatoes and baby peas.

SIBYL

Don't rush me.

SIMON returns to his chopping. WILLY advances toward SIMON, SIBYL prods him on.

SIBYL

Go ahead Willy. Don't let him pull the curtain on you. You gotta act or die. Acting is the most important thing in my life and I've been doing it all my life that's worth talking about. You can see that I've had excellent training, but where I've really had it, is right here. *(Points to her heart)*

SIMON

I'm doing a liver special too. "The Prometheus," \$5.95.

SIBYL

Go Willy, cause he's out to get ya. You can tell. He never talks about himself. Never puts up his half. He knows about moving scenery.
(To Simon) I bet you're not even a doctor. QUACK! The only liver you can fix is in the frying pan. *Quack, quack.*

WILLY continues to advance.

SIMON

(Chopping away) Cooking's my calling.

SIBYL

Do you do baptisms or bar mitzvahs?

SIMON

Pork chops or liver?

SIBYL

You're a control freak! Isn't that right Lucy? Tap one for yes, two for no.

LUCY

(Taps one for yes)

SIBYL

Damn right.

WILLY leaps from behind the counter, grabs SIMON'S arm and struggles to bring it to his open jaws. SIMON reels around and yanks his arm from WILLY'S grip and faces WILLY.

SIMON

Another cup of coffee, Willy?

WILLY

(Disoriented) Yes, I will.

WILLY hops over the counter into his seat. SIMON pours him a coffee.

SIMON

Stay out of the kitchen, its too hot.

SIBYL

Don't worry Willy, you have plenty of time, the arm'll still be there the next time.

WILLY hurls the contents of his coffee cup over his shoulder. The liquid splatters behind him. He presents the empty cup to SIMON.

WILLY

How about a cup a java?

SIMON pours him a coffee.

SIMON

(To Lucy) What about you, Miss Marple?

LUCY glares at him.

Only kidding. A mystery writer needs a sense of humor in the midst of all that death.

SIBYL

(Interjects) She needs an agent that's what she needs. Fuck the humor. Give her a cup of coffee.

LUCY

(Taps one for yes)

SIBYL

TAKE MY ORDER!

SIMON

I'm coming.

WILLY

How about a cup of java?

SIMON

It's in the cup.

SIMON grabs his dupe pad.

SIBYL

(Dictating to Simon) There's a bunch of dildo-heads out there. Smooth fucks crapping up the sidewalks. Prick dicks trailing the ground with their wick dicks, igniting the earth. Scorched balls telling their son of a bitch'n, witching, cocksucking lies. Felicitous mouths, cunningly they lie--big wicks lick the bigger wick--Go pogo stick go, dish out the shtick! Tic Tic Tic--

SIMON

Is that all?

SIBYL

That's all. Get out of my sight and eat the nearest dog turd you can find--puckhole, bumcrawler, fuckersucker pogo pucker found a chicken and tried to pluck her; when she was plucked, without any hair, she grabbed her merkin and placed it right there.

SIBYL, LUCY and WILLY break out into loud laughter. SIMON raises the meat cleaver in the air, they abruptly stop. WILLY hurls the coffee over his shoulder. The liquid splatters.

WILLY

I'll have another cup of java.

SIBYL

(To Simon) Give him the damn pot. *(To Willy)* You've got a short circuit buddy.

(To Simon) Gimme a Haldol, water back. Hit me.

SIBYL takes aim and pitches pills into her mouth. WILLY returns to the podium and reads SIMON'S journal aloud.

WILLY

In 1969, I gave my first Tourette patient Haldol. Driven to frenzy by an excess of dopamine in the brain, Tourettic patients must have their dopamine lowered by the drug, halo halo . . .

SIBYL passes out and slips off the stool, disappearing behind the counter.

SIMON

Haloperidol! Stay out of my kitchen!

WILLY

I need memory. I already know a great deal about you. I'll have you down soon.

SIMON

Willy! Get yourself down! Name?

WILLY jumps on top of the counter and comes to attention.

WILLY

WILLY!

SIMON

Profession?

WILLY

Historian.

SIMON

Address?

WILLY

Willy's.

SIMON

Goodnight, Willy.

WILLY abruptly turns on his heel and steps off the counter--plunging from sight--followed by LUCY dropping from sight. SIMON steps to the

podium and edits SIBYL'S recent Tourettic tirade into more fluid passages.

SIMON

(Transcribing from memory) There's a bunch of dildo heads out there. Smooth fucks (smooth fucks is alright) crapping up the sidewalks, prick dicks (cut prick dicks, insert slick dicks) trailing the ground with their wick dicks, igniting the earth, (this works) scorched balls . . .

WILLY pops up from behind the counter.

WILLY

(Interrupting) Simon? Simon? I'd like to talk to you about your arm.

SIMON

Lie down.

WILLY lies on the downstage curve of the ellipse, clutching a briefcase. LUCY surfaces and inches her way toward him.

SIMON

When were you born?

WILLY

January 1st, 2005.
(Note: update to current year.)

SIMON

That was yesterday.

WILLY

That's close enough.

SIMON

Don't waste my time.

WILLY

This is all about time. Yesterday is yesterday is forty years ago; it's all the same pot.

SIMON

Do you remember anything before yesterday?

WILLY

No.

SIMON

How do you know you're a Historian?

WILLY

It's in the bag. *(Displays his briefcase)* My lectures are in here. My name's on every page. I describe people and places, cultures and ancient worlds. I travel through time on these pages. I'm going to give these lectures again, and I'm going to write new ones.

SIMON grabs the briefcase from WILLY and is about to hack it open with a meat cleaver but is intercepted by LUCY. LUCY grabs the case and gives it back to WILLY.

SIMON

(To Lucy) What's up?

LUCY takes SIMON'S dupe pad and writes her response.

WILLY

(Still lying on the counter) Last time she talked was January 4th, 2004.

SIBYL pops up from behind the counter.

SIBYL

Don't give him the other half Lucy; he'll eat it up. He'll lick the bowl clean then you'll be a goner.

LUCY stops writing and tosses the pad--SIBYL swings her legs over the side of the counter.

SIBYL

There was an old buck who did it with shoes, who especially liked spats, and high-heeled shoes. One day while diddling a wing tip or two, he found a lass who wanted to screw and get screwed. He went out to buy some fuck-me pumps for the occasion and wore out his sole while shopping. *(Pause)* Oh fuck fuck fuck that's not the way it goes--oh fuck shit fuck fuck--he wore out his soles while pounding the pavement. *(Pause)* I'm hungry.

SIMON gives her a Haldol and water.

SIMON

(To Lucy) Point to something on the menu and I'll make it for you.

She points beyond the menu to the lying figure of WILLY.

SIMON

Are you sure you want the meatloaf?

LUCY

(Taps one for yes)

SIMON

I once tasted an unusual and hidden Japanese delicacy. The Japanese call it *Saru No No Miso* which translates as live monkey brains. Young monkeys are prepared for this dish while they are still alive. A special vice is brought to table, there, the skull is cracked and the brains are scooped right out of the living skull. The monkey often remains alive in the vice lingering for moments after the meal is finished. When I had my first taste, it produced a myriad of sensations, transporting me in virtual space through my taste organs. I ate and ate, and I ran and ran, through open grasslands until I vomited. My mouth was on fire and I roamed the caves. I went back for more, but the head chef had disappeared and his recipe had vanished with him. His sous-chef told me he was lying with the gibbons. I'd do anything to duplicate that taste.

WILLY rises from the counter.

WILLY

Do you have anything in your notes about me being baptized?

SIMON

No.

WILLY

Nothing?

SIMON

Nothing.

WILLY

You have nothing?

SIMON

I have nothing.

WILLY

(Looking back over his shoulder at the audience) It's a terrible thing to look back, over your shoulder, and not see a single person or place behind you. *(Beat)* Could I have a glass of water?

SIMON gets one and offers it to him.

No! Pour it over my forehead.

SIMON

OH FOR CHRISSAKES!

WILLY

Those words could work. Use'm.

SIMON

I can't do this.

WILLY

You're right. You don't have IT!

SIBYL

(Pipes up) You need an actress. You need someone with presence. I'll do it Willy.

SIMON

Tomorrow, Willy.

WILLY

Tomorrow never comes.

SIMON

Then yesterday never was.

WILLY

Yesterday was my birthday or have you forgotten?

SIMON

Tomorrow then.

SIBYL

(To Willy) Let's find a cab and we can watch the meter run.

LUCY, SIBYL, and WILLY jump on the counter and assume the static representation of running--as in an Eadweard Muybridge study.

SIMON steps up to the podium to make his entries in his journal.

SIMON

(Writing his thoughts) I compressed their experiences into words. I composed cogent, thoughtful sentences. I created paragraphs, architectonic brain transmissions exceeding all time and space. I have given them order. They know

what to expect when they come here. I smooth out the bumps. I make them fit. I make them bacon and eggs.

SIMON makes a phone call and places his meat order.

Hi, this is Simon at THE ORBIT. Fifteen pounds of ground beef, twenty double-cut pork chops, ten prime ribs, how's the porterhouse? Okay, fifteen twelve-ouncers, and a shoulder of veal. *(Pause)* Do you have any monkey?

WILLY, SIBYL and LUCY break their Muybridge tableau and leap from the counter, dropping from sight. SIMON returns to his chopping.

WILLY reappears at his seat.

WILLY

(Reciting the menu) "The Greenwich Village!" Grilled American cheese with crisp bacon, tomato, sauteed onions on a toasted roll--served with our famous french fires: \$5.65.

Wipes his mouth with a napkin as if he had completed a meal and then continues:

"The Rhode Island!" Fresh tunafish salad, melted Swiss, sauteed onions, tomato on rye: \$5.95.

Wipes his mouth again and continues to savor the menu with gusto:

"The Indiana!" Broiled sausages, melted American cheese, tomato, sautéed--

SIMON

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WILLY

Just a check.

SIMON

Willy?

WILLY

No really, I'm stuffed. Nothing else. Just a check.

SIMON rips off a check and flings it at him--WILLY drops from sight. SIMON starts to clear WILLY'S spot--suddenly he starts sniffing around. He grabs WILLY'S napkin with his teeth and shakes his head violently, growling like an animal with wild prey in his mouth. He finally wrenches

the napkin from his mouth, wipes his lips as if he had finished a meal, and exits.

WILLY pops up from behind the counter.

WILLY

(Lecturing) Today we're focusing on the collective experience. In other words we are examining the idea of History. The question we must ask ourselves is: Who prints up the big calendar? The collective experience recorded over time is a compilation by those who are at the top, whose eyes gaze upon the human battlement in search of the big picture. I have forgotten the names and dates. *(Beat)* It doesn't matter, they have all been changed by the editors, nobody cares about precision. All that anyone agrees upon is that there is a calendar. This is critical. *(Tries to unlock his briefcase)* The question we must ask ourselves is: WHERE is this calendar? Who has got the big watch? *(Slams his briefcase against the counter trying to bust it open)* ALL RIGHT CLASS! My name is Willy. I have an idea of who Willy is. The idea of Willy IS! *(Beat)* Other people call me Willy. I must be Willy. Willy? Willy? *(Screams)* WILLY! *(Pause, calls out)* Simon? SIMON?

SIMON appears from behind the counter.

SIMON

Willy?

WILLY

(Getting his bearings) Historian. January 1st, 2005. That was yesterday.

SIMON

(Writing in his dupe pad) And the day before yesterday?

WILLY

The day before eternity doesn't exist. Is that when you were born? *(Beat)* I'll take a check.

SIMON rips off a check and throws it at WILLY. WILLY drops behind the counter.

SIMON

(Writes his thoughts in his journal) What does he mean? Is that when you were born? Don't cast me out. I fit into all of this. I'M IN! I know everything that goes on. It's very clear that you are never going to get past zero at this rate. I'm trying to get your numbers moving, but Willy, you are locked. Your mind is corroded by bad thinking and bad attitudes. You were filthy when I met you and I'm scraping off that filth from your grey matter. Willy Boy you are a scab. I'm

trying to give you the time of day and you act like I don't exist. Well I've got news for you Willy, SIMON IS!

SIMON walks to the edge of the orbit. Facing upstage, he hears the calls of monkeys and becomes agitated and excited. Unable to control himself, he imitates their calls--screeching and grunting--in answer to them. WILLY, SIBYL, and LUCY suddenly pop up, catching SIMON making monkey sounds.

SIBYL

You need a vacation. TAKE IT!

SIMON

I can cook anywhere. You want the place? TAKE IT! Dish it out. Let someone else take the orders.

SIBYL

Who?

SIMON

Whoever can.

SIBYL

Willy, you do it.

WILLY hops over the counter and takes over SIMON'S spot as short-order cook. He snaps his fingers, LUCY hands him a dupe pad.

WILLY

I'll take'm, I'll make'm, I'll dish'm out and put'm in the book.
(To Lucy) How about a Sominex special? Ha.Ha.

LUCY

(Taps one for yes)

SIMON

Cup of Java.

WILLY gives him the pot.

SIBYL

TAKE MY ORDER! (Willy runs over) I HATE THEM! I hate those cocksuckers. They want me to eat the shit they serve up the crap tube and call it leadership. Those colon-head generals and president's sons--they want me to believe that they are on the side of right. Fucking A, they are on the side of desperation, the

sucking crooks, bleeding the poor; vampires eating up the air and earth and sucking up humanity with their corporate leeches. What do we live in, the Dark Ages? Who's running things? Who's got a script? Nobody that I know. The Congress doesn't have it. The newspapers don't have it. Why isn't anyone talking? I want a part. I WANT TO SEE A SCRIPT!

WILLY

This is filth, it's just plain fucking filth and I'm not going to write it.

SIBYL

The truth is dirty! Write it!

WILLY

I need time.

SIMON

You need a story! Take it down.

WILLY

Again.

SIMON

From the top.

SIBYL

I HATE THEM! I hate those cocksuckers. They want me to eat the shit they serve up the crap tube and--

SIMON

Willy! What's wrong?

WILLY is fixated on the dupe-pad, turning page after page in horror.

WILLY

There are monkeys on every page!

He slams the pad on the counter. SIBYL picks it up.

SIBYL

Monkeys! They even look like you. *(Pointing to Simon)*

SIBYL and LUCY break into hysterical laughter.

SIMON

(To Sibyl) RIGHTBRAIN! Would you like some meatloaf?

SIBYL

Sure. I'll have a slice.

SIMON

Willy? *(No response)* Willy?

WILLY

(Taps two for no)

SIMON puts on his jacket and safari hat and jumps on the upstage side of the counter. Back to the audience, he looks out into the distance as if he has left The Orbit behind him.

LUCY combs WILLY'S hair.

SIBYL

If you part his hair down the middle he will appear indecisive. If you part his hair down the side, the question will be, which side? If his hair is combed back, straight over his forehead, is that a retreat or an attack? If his hair is not combed at all, is it a sign of resignation? Does he have enough hair to produce an outcome? Willy--just a yes or no--do you want me to do your nails?

WILLY

(Taps two for no)

LUCY and SIBYL slowly sink from view. SIMON approaches WILLY walking along the top of the counter.

SIMON

Now Willy. You were born January 1st. One for yes; two for no.

WILLY

(One tap)

SIMON

That was yesterday.

WILLY

(One tap)

SIMON

Yes. It seems like an eternity ago. *(Pause)* And the day before yesterday?

WILLY

(One tap)

SIMON

The day before eternity doesn't exist.

WILLY

(Two taps)

WILLY slowly sinks from his chair.

SIMON walks to the downstage edge of the counter. He slowly sinks down. His body vanishes inch by inch as if he were being sucked into a dark hole. His fingertips grip the edge of the counter, then as the final gesture, his fingertips release and they disappear from view.

Blackout.

*

Scene 2
LUCY'S Story

SIBYL

LIGHTS!

Lights up. WILLY, LUCY, SIMON, and SIBYL seated around the counter.

SIBYL

(Announces) "Lucy's Story."

WILLY

He can't remember anything that happened 48 hours ago. His memory is shot.

SIBYL

He blew a fuse, too much monkey brain on the brain, too much crap in the cage.

WILLY

(To Lucy) Would you mind getting me a cup of java?

LUCY hesitates, then with a new found sense of power, climbs into the center of The Orbit. She gets the pot and pours WILLY a cup.

LUCY

(Picks up the phone) Hi, Lucy at The Orbit. Twenty free-range chickens, four racks of baby lambs, ten twelve-ounce New York strips, twenty pounds of burger, half n' half, and a loin of pork.

WILLY and SIBYL drop out. SIMON surfaces.

LUCY

Coffee?

SIMON

(Taps one for yes)

LUCY pours him a cup.

LUCY

Nice night. *(No response)* We've got a meatloaf special tonight. Would you like to try it?

SIMON

(Taps two for no)

LUCY

(Lifting the cover of the cake dish) This must be Willy's birthday cake, leftover from yesterday. You make a beautiful cake Simon. Would you like a slice?

SIMON

(Taps one for yes)

SIBYL surfaces and takes a seat.

SIBYL

Willy wasn't born yesterday! Come on. If ya believe that one, listen to this: I've got land in Florida.

(No response from Lucy)

Whatsa matter? Can't take a joke? *(Turning to Simon)* I say fuck'em fuck'em if they can't take a joke.

WILLY surfaces.

WILLY

Cup a java.

SIBYL

Like I said, I've got a nice marsh for swimming and some pet snakes.

SIBYL and WILLY burst into hysterical laughter. LUCY is silent and pours coffee for WILLY and SIBYL.

SIBYL

(To Lucy) I'm not the villain Lassie, so get down.

LUCY places a slice of cake in front of SIMON.

LUCY

It's chocolate.

SIMON

(Taps one for yes)

WILLY

THAT'S MY CAKE! *(Pause)* That cake is not a leftover. THAT'S MY CAKE! I'd like a slice.

LUCY

That's the last one.

WILLY

(To Simon) Why aren't you eating it?

SIBYL

He's saving it.

WILLY

You're not eating it because it's mine! MINE!

WILLY lunges for SIMON. They tumble behind the counter.

SIMON

MY THROAT!

Growling and barking sounds.

WILLY

(Screaming) MY ARM! MY ARM!

WILLY and SIMON pop up from behind the counter—WILLY'S arm is about to be clamped by SIMON'S jaws.

LUCY

GET OUT! GET OUT!

They drop out. WILLY emerges in his seat.

SIBYL

You can't just come in here and take every piece of cake you see. I used to take every part that came along. But not anymore. I'm waiting for the part that fits me like a skin. No more public humiliation for me. *(Beat)* What kind of cake was it?

Chocolate. WILLY

That's too bad. Would you like a Haldol? SIBYL

Why not. WILLY

Helps me get over the bumps. SIBYL

Will it help the drops? WILLY

What are the drops? SIBYL

WILLY
If I try to take one step, just one step outside of the present moment, a trap door suddenly springs; my feet drop, my brain hits the top of my skull and I'm plunging thirty-two feet per second per second with no ground in sight. Now that's a drop. A person with vision doesn't have to worry about the drops. *(Pause)* Do you have visions?

Yes. SIBYL

WILLY slides along the counter until he is lying right under SIBYL'S nose.

WILLY
I thought so. I'll get to the point. I'm looking for someone, someone who has a presence--who knows how to seize the moment. *(Pause)* Have you ever baptized anyone?

I'll get my robes. SIBYL

*WILLY follows SIBYL and they drop from sight.
SIMON emerges at the stove and positions an egg between the jaws of a vice. LUCY records his actions in the journal.*

LUCY
(Writing) His sense of time is so affected, that events, instead of appearing in an orderly sequence of past, present, and future, occur simultaneously. He

sometimes spends long periods of time positioning eggs within the jaws of his vice. Gauging the amount of pressure to bear on the surface of the egg occupies him in deep and total fascination for hours. The result of all the eggs eventually is found within the omelette. That's all he could make anymore, so he stopped cooking, but he can't stay out of the diner.

WILLY emerges.

WILLY

That's all he could make anymore, so he stopped cooking, but he can't stay out of the diner.

LUCY

OUT!

WILLY drops from sight. SIBYL'S clawing hands appear over the top of the counter, she pulls herself up and takes her seat.

SIBYL

How's Simon?

LUCY

Not here.

SIBYL

TAKE MY ORDER! AND GET IT RIGHT! I'm sick of being misquoted. Ready?

LUCY

SIMON!

SIMON emerges with a bottle of Haldol and pours out the entire bottle before SIBYL. Hundreds of Haldol tablets hit the counter.

LUCY

(Noting the event) Haldol, coffee back.

SIBYL'S head falls to the counter.

LUCY helps SIMON into his jacket.

SIMON leaps to the counter and assumes a static running position.

LUCY

(Recording her actions) The night was picking up speed. The boulevard was glistening with lights, the cars were cruising by and the stars were flickering like a hundred eyes in the sky. When I walked into the diner I saw Sibyl slumped over the counter. *(Runs over to her)* I looked around, nothing. I ran to her side, I

turned her over--she was still breathing. I could smell the coffee and spot the symptoms of a Haldol overdose. She was not a victim yet. A pattern was beginning to emerge. Someone was out to get her. Simon had been seen running from the diner earlier. It had to be SIMON.

LUCY pushes the unconscious SIBYL back in the chair and carefully leans her over the counter, propping her chin with her hands. WILLY comes in as the D.A.

WILLY

(To Lucy) Java.

LUCY

The D.A. had arrived.

WILLY

(Turning to Sibyl) Hi. You look tired. *(Beat)* Where were you on the night of January 1st? If you need more time, OK, but don't sit on the fence on this. *(No response from Sibyl)* OK sister, but if I don't get some answers I'll have to pull you in for questioning. You're a nice kid--I wouldn't want to do that. Just remember what I said. I won't say another word about it. *(Drops behind the counter)*

LUCY

(Placing a phone order) Hi--Lucy, from The Orbit. I want game. Yah. Any venison? How about rabbit? Okay, twenty. No, I'll skin them.

SIMON breaks his running stance and leaps from the counter. SIBYL returns to consciousness. WILLY and SIMON surface and play cards. LUCY hangs up the phone.

SIBYL

(To Lucy) Cup a Java. *(Lucy pours her a cup)* Your story's not bad and my character is coming along, but you need more--more locations. So who's gonna get it in the end?

LUCY

You.

SIBYL

Me! That's a bad idea.

LUCY

Somebody has to die.

SIBYL

I don't play corpses. Besides, you need someone to tell your readers what really happened. I'm the one to do it. It's OK that everyone thinks that he's gonna get me, but I need to come out on top. If someone's gotta go, make it Willy. If someone has to be sacrificed for a good story, make it him. *(Beat)* I don't want to be in your story.

LUCY

It's too late for that now. *(Lucy steps to the podium and records her story)*
I came back later--the D.A. had been there.

WILLY

Java.

LUCY

She was stretched out on the counter. They wanted me for questioning.

SIBYL

I'll have the Breakfast Special.

LUCY

They knew I had information about Simon and about Sibyl.

SIMON

LUCY!

LUCY

He was into strange experiments. Used a lot of monkeys.

WILLY

What is the breakfast special?

LUCY

In 1969 he gave his first Tourette patient Haldol.

SIMON

Meatloaf and coffee.

LUCY

Tourettic patients must have their dopamine lowered.

SIBYL

Who do you have to fuck around here to get a cup of coffee!

LUCY! SIMON

LUCY
He found out the real properties of Haldol--how it could silence.

WILLY
You have a filthy mind.

LUCY
It could be the next mass tranquilizer next to the media.

SIBYL
Lucy.

LUCY
Sibyl was dangerous to them.

SIMON-SIBYL
Lucy.

LUCY
She talked raw stuff.

WILLY-SIMON-SIBYL
Lucy.

LUCY
Deadly silence, he was.

ALL
Lucy?

LUCY
I had to find out.

ALL
LUCY!

LUCY
If there was anybody behind him.

ALL
LUCY!

LUCY

The science of silence was thriving!

ALL

(Screaming) LUCY!

LUCY

This is going to be the perfect mystery and I'm going to the core!

ALL

(Screaming in silence) LUCY! LUCY! LUCY!

Blackout.

*

Scene 3
SIBYL'S Story

SIBYL

LIGHTS!

Lights up. LUCY, WILLY and SIMON are seated at the counter. SIBYL stands in the center of The Orbit.

SIBYL

(Announces) "Sibyl's Story." *(Beat)* I have never seen so many people in one place without any money, or any prospects of money. Anybody can sit at this counter. WHAT A DUMP! No process, no selection, no choice, just come as you are, have a cup of coffee, dump your brains, shit, and goodbye. Get out. No show today.

She slaps down a check in front of each one, and one by one they reel backwards, falling from sight. SIBYL picks up a large knife and begins chopping vegetables.

SIBYL

They've gotta play it straight with me--I'm not gonna be around forever. I'm auditioning all the time. Never know where I'll end up and I never know the words I'll be saying. I don't have time for the programmed response--for the wordlocks, mind-sets, subjokes, and non sequiturs. I am on a mission. And the mission is getting the part in *thee* play. I'm ready to move, and they better be ready to move. Gotta know when to press and when to tuck. I may even take this

place with me. Doesn't hurt to have a little something on the side. (*Hacking the vegetables furiously*)

LUCY enters panting.

LUCY

Take my order.

SIBYL

(*Checks her out*) Why are you so dirty?

LUCY

I've been underground.

SIBYL

The subways are a good thing. Tearing through the urban belly the third rail sizzles going down, and overhead, the giant metro brain hangs from the strap-- rush hour--human hemispheres knock from side to side. All contact is taboo. Everybody knows the threshold, how far to press, where to put your hand, how far to tuck, where to place your eyes, and it is perfect. Everything fits. And then the doors open and I'm swept down the street and everybody forgets. What goes wrong? Where's the press and tuck?

LUCY

LISTEN! There's an all points bulletin out on me.

SIBYL

What for?

LUCY

Questioning. The police think that I have inside information, but I'm nowhere near the core. Simon is a suspect.

SIBYL

I see.

LUCY

I want to wrap this case up, but I need a witness.

SIBYL

Like who?

LUCY

Like a doorman.

SIBYL

Don't bring in a new character now.

LUCY

A doorman would know who goes in, who goes out, and at what time.

SIBYL

Where ya going to find someone like that?

LUCY

You just have to keep looking, eventually a body turns up.

SIBYL

Talk to Willy.

LUCY

Willy!

SIBYL

He could be your man.

LUCY

He's crazy. He comes in here and stares at me all the time and makes these funny tapping sounds. If you were a little more selective you'd get a better clientele coming in and they'd spend more.

SIBYL

Talk to Willy.

WILLY pops up from behind the counter.

WILLY

Cup of Java.

SIBYL pours.

WILLY

(To Lucy) Any luck?

LUCY

What do you mean?

WILLY

You know, about finding someone.

LUCY

About finding someone?

WILLY

I get it. I know how you writers are. Zipped lips until the end--don't like to let anything out of the bag until its ready. *(Pause)* I'm looking for him too.

LUCY

You mean you're looking for him too?

WILLY

Yes.

LUCY

Let me get this again. You mean you are looking for the *doorman*, too?

WILLY

Yeah. I guess you could call him that.

LUCY

Are you a religious fanatic?

WILLY

No.

LUCY

Who are you working for?

WILLY

NO ONE!

LUCY

(Shouting) TELL ME!

WILLY

I'm not working for anyone.

LUCY

(Shouting) HOW COME YOU KNOW SO MUCH?

SIBYL

(Shouting) STOP SHOUTING! YOU TRYING RUIN MY BUSINESS?

LUCY

(Loud whisper) Who's your source?

She lunges for WILLY knocking him off his feet. They fall behind the counter in a struggle.

WILLY

(Offstage screaming) HELP ME! I don't know this woman. HELP ME!

They both surface for a moment, LUCY gripping him by the throat.

LUCY

WHO?

They fall behind the counter. Growling, panting, and squealing sounds are heard.

WILLY

DON'T BITE!

They surface.

SIBYL

You two are bad for business. GET OUT!

They drop from sight.

SIBYL

(Placing a phone order) Hi, Sibyl at The Orbit. Give me a rack. Lean. Not like last time. Yeah, and I'll take a shoulder, and a loin. *(Hangs up)* I know the right play is out there and its gonna find me and I'm going to be ready for it when it comes. I'm not going to get fat while I wait for it. *(Picks up a menu and reads it as if it were a script)* Okay. From the top--I can make anything play. My memory is as sharp as a razor: *(In a Southern accent)* "The Rhode Island": fresh tuna salad, melted swiss, sauteed onions, and tomato on grilled rye. "The Indiana": broiled sausages, melted American cheese, tomato, sauteed onions on a toasted roll. "The Montana": grilled ham, what a ham! Wheew! I'm stuffed.

SIMON appears from behind the counter wearing his safari hat and holding a bloody bag. He lies on the downstage edge of the counter.

SIBYL

Why are you so dirty?

SIMON

I don't know.

SIBYL pulls herself up on the counter, alongside him, and closely inspects him.

SIBYL

You have mud on your shoes and you smell like grass.

SIMON

I don't know.

SIBYL

You have blood under your fingernails! Where were you?

SIMON

Out.

SIBYL

What's in the bag? *(Tries to grab the bag)*

SIMON

My vice. How's Willy?

WILLY and LUCY jump on top of the counter and move into apelike stances.

SIBYL

The same. Nothing sticks. He doesn't have anything to come back to except his briefcase or what he gets from other people. I suggested that Lucy write him in as doorman in her mystery, but she doesn't see him that way.

She grabs the bag again. SIMON grabs her.

SIMON

How's Lucy?

SIBYL

Fine.

SIMON

Is she writing me in?

SIBYL

She's writing you out. Right now you're missing.

SIMON

Help me.

SIBYL

How?

SIMON

(Grabs her jaw) I have to find the gibbon man. I need a disguise. I need a living mask.

SIBYL

(Struggles in his grip) That's tricky because you have to know who to come back to. There has to be someone waiting inside. I don't know if your man exists.

SIMON rises to a bipedal stance, recalling images of the stages of man from ape to Neanderthal man.

SIMON

He is. He is.

LUCY and WILLY rush for the bag and viciously struggle for possession. SIBYL gets the bag and jumps into the center of The Orbit.

SIBYL

GET DOWN! GET DOWN!

SIMON, LUCY, and WILLY stop fighting and return to their seats, all the time making bestial sounds while randomly calling out for "Java," "The Meatloaf Special," etc. SIBYL speaks over their undercurrent.

SIBYL

I'm getting out of here. You customers are crazy. When I took the part--I mean job--I thought it would be good to get out of town, but I don't like it here. Things are sliding around. I wanted a part, a job, that I could really sink my teeth into. If only there were rewrites on this one, so that everything works perfectly, even when things appear to go wrong. *(Beat)* I'll be all right. I need a new agent, someone to book me in the right plays at the right time with the right people with the right words. I can do any part they dish up because I know who to come back to. You have to know who to come back to and I know, *(Beats her chest)* I know, *(Beats her chest)* I know, *(Beats her chest)* I know.

Blackout.

*

Scene 4
WILLY'S Story

SIBYL

LIGHTS!

Lights up. SIBYL, SIMON, and LUCY sit at the counter. Willy stands in the center of The Orbit holding up a machete.

SIBYL

(Announces) "Willy's Story."

WILLY

My thoughts seem to bob up to the surface as if they were propelled by a random impulse. The Mayans were suddenly right there. Right in my forehead.

LUCY

You mean you suddenly had an impression of them.

WILLY

Yes. Slashing and burning their fields. The brush had to be cut and dried before the rains. Miscalculation of a few days could lose a year's crop. Exact timing was critical. This led them to create a very precise agricultural calendar. A ceremonial calendar followed, and then, there was a third and secret calendar, one which marked a hidden order below the level of conscious awareness. It controlled what the populace did and thought and felt on a given day. The ancient Mayans possessed one of the most precise hermetic calendars ever created on this planet. *(Pause)* Real history *is* this third calendar.

SIMON

Willy, can I borrow a large kitchen knife.

WILLY

How about my machete?

*SIMON reaches with outstretched arms to receive the machete.
WILLY returns to the podium.*

WILLY

(Tries to notate his memories) When I first met them, they were, they were—*how the hell did that go?* Who cares? I'll cut that. I'm taking it from the top. From now on I'm looking at a new calendar beginning with January 1st. HELLO! This is Willy number two speaking. If I'm going to keep records I've got to step free of self-imposed restrictions and see all life as fact. The world as a direct gaze. Hello. Hello. Willy number two bringing it to you.

SIMON-LUCY-SIBYL

A new calendar. That's a wonderful idea. It'll get us all in step.

WILLY

I'll get a large piece of blank paper. *(Drops from sight)*

SIMON

Willy's our boy.

SIBYL

I don't know if he's up to the part.

SIMON

What part is he playing?

SIBYL

The victim.

SIMON

The victim?

WILLY

(Offstage yell) I'm coming.

SIMON

And what do I play?

SIBYL

Are you sure you want to play?

SIMON

I'm in.

SIBYL

OK. You're the hunter.

LUCY

IT'S PERFECT! PERFECT! IT'S A FIT!

SIMON

He's got nothing to lose.

SIBYL

Never had a story.

What a lamb!

LUCY

He won't feel a thing.

SIMON

The head's already gone.

SIBYL

Finish him off.

LUCY

SIBYL assumes an iconic pose. LUCY and SIMON line up behind her creating the image of a high priestess with six undulating arms.

As the Mayan high priestess, I search for the consecrated ground where the pursued and pursuer become one--where the dialectic rests upon the altar for all to see. The truth will sear the senses and wash the veil from our eyes. I will prepare the sacrifice and exhume the cosmic plot.

SIBYL

(Screams) MURDER!

LUCY

MONOLOGUES!

SIBYL

PLACES!

SIMON

(Emerges) Hello hello. Willy number two.

WILLY

Willy? (Beckoning him closer)

SIMON

Yes.

WILLY

We're gonna have a celebration for all the people who were not born yesterday--sort of a season wrap-up--end of the year thing. We'd like the celebration to coincide with your new calendar. We would like you to host the event, say a couple of words, and to be a bridge between the old and new. In many ways you really embody the event.

SIMON

WILLY

I'll place an order. *(On the phone)* Hi, this is Willy at The Orbit. I'd like a side of veal for--of course we have an account with you. Are you new? I've never given you an account number. No I don't have one branded on my loin! Don't use that tone of voice with me! HELLO! HELLO!

SIBYL and SIMON dropout. LUCY removes the phone from WILLY'S hands and hangs it up.

LUCY

I have been plagued by strange occurrences that lead me to doubt my own mind.

WILLY

Lie down.

LUCY lies on the counter. WILLY plays the shrink.

LUCY

In the night I wake up and find snakes crawling around the bed, then the toilet begins flushing again and again like a high-speed public latrine. I have to get out. I move toward the door. It LOCKS! What the fuck is happening? Enough of this weird crap! I want to wake up but I'm not sleeping because I catch a glimpse of myself in the bedroom mirror and my eyes are open. Am I dead or what? What do I do next? So I think, I better go back to sleep, nothing could be worse than this, and I jump into my bed and the toilets are flushing and flushing and the floor is covered with dark S's and I shut my eyes and I wait and I wait. Its gotta be better, gotta cross over I think, and bingo! Suddenly the door springs open and I made it. Whataya think of this Willy? This is new calendar material. What's wrong Willy?

WILLY is back at the phone, listening.

WILLY

Nothing.

SIMON

Nobody home, Willy?

WILLY

(Hangs up the phone) No.

SIMON

It's a busy time.

WILLY

Yes.

SIMON

The coming of the New Year makes me want to cook again. Open the doors and feed all the people.

WILLY

I'm afraid.

SIMON

Fear is a biological necessity, like sleep and dreams. And we all have fear, all of the time, because death is tucked away, inside, waiting to be let out. Danger keeps the blood moving.

WILLY

If you leave your old calendar behind, you will be like me.

SIMON

Time to slash and burn.

SIBYL surfaces.

SIBYL

Get the new crop in. Lie down.

WILLY lies on the DS edge of the counter. LUCY grabs a bottle of Mazzola Oil from the stove and gives him a rub-down, then anoints him with the oil.

WILLY

Ummmm, ummmm, that feels ummmm, delicious.

SIBYL

You have a clear forehead.

WILLY

Ummmmmmm.

LUCY

Clear.

WILLY

Ummmmmmm.

SIBYL
Swept.

LUCY
Smooth.

SIMON
Nothing.

LUCY
Pure.

SIMON
Innocent.

LUCY
No riddles.

SIMON
No once upon a time.

SIBYL
No play.

LUCY
No end.

SIMON
Our man.

LUCY
(To Simon) Give me his hand.

SIMON passes WILLY'S hand to LUCY. LUCY holds his arm upright from his lying body. SIBYL clasps her hand around the arm, then SIMON, as if all three were united around this outstretched limb--forming a pact.

SIBYL
Thirty-two feet per second per second. That's the law of the falling body. That's a fact Willy.

WILLY
Ummmmmm.

WILLY rises to a sitting position, his arm remains raised in the air.

WILLY

Are you sure there isn't anything I can get for you?

They all nod no and back away from him.

WILLY lies back down, then rises again, his arm remains raised.

WILLY

Cup a hot chocolate?

They all nod "no" again. He lies down again and rises again, his arm remains raised.

WILLY

How about a coffee?

SIBYL

We're dieting.

WILLY lies back down.

WILLY

(Pause) It seems like days.

SIMON

We're ready when you are.

WILLY'S arm drops and he lurches forward to stand on top of the counter. SIBYL, LUCY, and SIMON remain clustered in the center of the ellipse. WILLY walks around them, peering over the top of their heads.

WILLY

I'm not the right person for this. You should find somebody else. I can't get this calendar started; I don't know where the day begins. I can't find that precise moment. I'm not a Mayan. If I stuck around long enough, maybe I could work my way up to that position where I could look around and see what was happening, but I don't think I have that kind of time. I have to make my pieces fit first. I've got to take care of myself. Gotta put my man together. Gotta put Willy back together first. Maybe I should start with my auto-biography. THAT'S IT!
(Picks up the phone) Hello, this is Willy from The Orbit—FUCK OFF!

Blackout.

*

Scene 5
The Send-off

Lights up. SIMON, LUCY, and SIBYL seated at the counter watching WILLY at the podium. He is trying to write, literally pressing his writing hand to the page with his other hand.

SIMON

Get out there, Willy.

SIBYL

We're ready for you.

WILLY

I'm busy!

LUCY

Maybe he's not the one.

SIBYL

(Chants) Willy Willy--take our order.

WILLY

(Indicating to Lucy) Let her write' em up.

SIBYL

She only does fiction. *You* understand the importance of facts, dates, and times.

SIMON

Take our orders.

WILLY

I'm taking Willy's order first. I'm doing an autobiography. Names, dates, places--got to put my man together.

SIBYL

WILLY! You'll never find him.

SIMON

WILLY! Where's your briefcase?

LUCY

WILLY! Death must be like forgetting. You simply cannot remember life.

SIMON

Life trades for more life. That's a fact. No life. No more life.

LUCY

Write *us* up. (*Whispers*) Later you can write yourself in, no one will ever know.

SIMON

It's yours Willy boy, all yours. You are the living end. NOW WRITE!

WILLY begins writing.

SIMON

(*Dictating*) Chapter one: I was always interested in the big blend--how people came together--how they mixed. WRITE! I watched living portraits emerge--I conjured up the tastes buried deep in the mind. WRITE! The more I tasted, the hungrier I became. WRITE!

SIBYL

WRITE! I began my career as an actress, perfecting my command of languages--all languages.

LUCY

WRITE! I have always tried to come face to face with the characters in my stories.

ALL

WRITE! WRITE!

SIMON

WRITE! Which is why I became a psychiatrist, until I discovered cooking. WRITE!

SIBYL

WRITE! I studied Ancient Greek, Latin, and Egyptian--I searched for hidden words. WRITE!

LUCY

WRITE! Sometimes they would make me forget that it was me who was writing the story. They are very clever that way. WRITE!

ALL

WRITE! WRITE!

ALL
(Speaking Simultaneously)

SIMON: WRITE! My hunger was insatiable. WRITE! I ate everything and found myself meeting my clients in restaurants, fish markets, and butchers. WRITE! I knew I had to do something! My hunger was insatiable. EAT! EAT! EAT!

SIBYL: WRITE! The language of the subways fascinated me. WRITE! Words are spoken through the skin and eyes. WRITE! I have considered tattooing as an alternative pursuit to acting. WRITE!

LUCY: WRITE! Sometimes I'd be real quiet, just to lure them out. WRITE! Then I'd start writing like a jackhammer. WRITE! They would feel the ground shift and I'd run to open spaces and I knew that I had them. WRITE!

Note: In the previous round, Simon's part takes slightly longer which makes this round end with Simon's EAT! EAT! EAT! Simon should immediately launch into the next round in which speaker follows speaker, underscored with EAT! EAT! in sotto voce by the others.

SIMON
Opening The Orbit seemed a way of combining my patients with my desire to cook. EAT!

SIBYL
I wanted to find those words that lie deep, beneath the surface of the body. EAT!

LUCY
They couldn't stop once they were released, their words erupted and their sounds rang in my ears. EAT!

ALL
EAT! EAT! EAT!

ALL
(Speaking simultaneously--brandishing machetes, sabres, and scythes)

SIMON: It's important to know who you're cooking for--if they are biters, chewers, or swallowers. EAT! EAT! EAT!

SIBYL: I have in the past found some very good playwrights in tattoo parlors. EAT! EAT! EAT!

LUCY: The earth was moving. I was dizzy following their words--irrepressible vertigo. Then it's thirty-two feet per second per second. EAT! EAT! EAT!

WILLY

I'M STUFFED! I'M HOT!

ALL

HERE IT COMES WILLY!

WILLY takes the offensive and attacks SIMON, grabbing his arm as if he were trying to rip it off.

SIMON

(Screams)

Blackout.

*

Scene 6 ***The Birthday***

The sound of military taps.

Low blue light comes up revealing WILLY playing taps with knives on the downstage edge of the counter. Lying before him is a bloody arm wrapped in a sheet, a pencil remains in the fingers. SIBYL and LUCY sit at their places holding black umbrellas.

SIMON slowly walks around the downstage perimeter of counter. One arm of his coat is empty. He passes by WILLY and continues. He disappears. Taps stop.

Full light.

WILLY

So what'll it be? I got some chops tonight, mashed potatoes, baby peas?

SIBYL

I'm stuffed.

WILLY

(To Lucy) What about you?

LUCY

Cup a java.

Pours her a cup and returns to the arm.

WILLY

I don't know anything about cooking. But I know that first, you have to put something in the pot. Sometimes you gotta trim off the fat and more. Gotta leave a few things behind. It's a tight fit any way ya slice it. *(He removes the the pen from the fingers.)* I'll take this now.

SIBYL

Willy, put that away.

WILLY puts the arm under the counter. He takes his place at the podium, opens the journal and with pencil in hand begins writing.

LUCY

It was about eleven twenty. The night was closing in; somehow he slipped through our fingers.

Lights slowly fade on LUCY and SIBYL as one hand suddenly appears on the inside downstage edge of the counter.

SIMON slowly rises.

He slides the pedestal cake dish in front of him. He removes the top, revealing the piece of Birthday cake. He lights the candle.

SIMON

Goodbye, Willy.

He blows out the candle.

Blackout.

The End