

In the Know

A Play in Two Acts by,
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“...backstage back on earth again, the dressing rooms are grey...” — Ronnie Lane/Ronnie Wood

“...Mommy say life is prayer, Daddy say life ain’t fair...” — Lyfe Jennings

“It's a crazy world for a boy and a girl...” — Kenny Rogers

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Characters: (In order of appearance; 8 roles - 6F, 2M)

Posey Suze: Determined, resolute woman in her late 20s with zealous resistance and a secret.

Dallas Roost: Posey's best friend. Easy-going, laid-back man in his 20s, yet chock-full of resolve.

Older Dallas Roost: Reckless man in his 50s. Lives for fun with no regard for consequences.

Older Hanna Treggor: Cautious, protective, high-strung, slightly secretive woman in her 50s.

Hanna Treggor: Solitary, free-spirited woman in her 20s, though she also longs for inclusion.

Older Posey Suze: Frail and frightened woman in her 50s with an icy, frigid disposition.

Lydia Melly: Woman in her 30s trying to cope with the tragic realization of a terrible truth.

Younger Lydia Melly: Girl in her teens forced to deal with the tragic realization of a terrible truth.

Setting: The kitchen/dining room/living room of a modest, yet extremely cramped loft apartment in a non-descript metropolitan city. The kitchen furnishings, i.e. the refrigerator and stove can merely be suggested, as can the barely half-stocked bar on the counter space that semi-separates the kitchen from the living room. The loveseat in the living room should be so minuscule that it barely counts as a piece of furniture. A thin front door leads offstage right, while a second even thinner doorway stage left leads to an offstage bathroom and bedroom. The main thing is that the confined space be a breeding ground for claustrophobia.

Time: A hundred minutes, over the course of an evening, during the span of a day, in a brisk, cool summer, out of a year, in the—pardon it being trite and cliché—*not-too-distant* future.

*****Note on Scenic Design:** Though the set should have an overall futuristic look and feel to it, all the accoutrements should also seem slightly old-fashioned and just a tinge out of time and place. The vibe of the furnishings should also suggest a heightened sense of thrift and frugality. (This should be the 'World of Tomorrow' designed on the shoestring budget of yesteryear.)

ACT ONE/SCENE ONE

Scene One: The Thing (*More aligned to Phil Harris' rather than John Carpenter's version.*)

(At rise, POSEY stands in the kitchen, cooking up a storm. She is a multi-tasking queen to the nth degree with all four burners going simultaneously. Three empty place settings are set up in a semi-circle on a nearby petite, makeshift dining room table. If the budget allows for the rights, the faint, soft SOUND of the Ronnie Lane/Ronnie Wood/Faces' song "Ooh La La" wafts through the apartment, yet at a faint, barely audible decibel level. POSEY stirs one pot and then immediately jumps over to another to stir it as well. Then she jumps to the third to repeat the stirring process. Then, just as POSEY jumps over to the fourth burner, though before she has a chance to stir it too, there is the LOUD UNEXPECTED SOUND of a rapid series of KNOCKS HEARD POUNDING against the front door.)

POSEY (*Sighs*)

Yeah...

(A long pause as a determined POSEY stirs the final pot. Another beat. Then there is another LOUD, YET SLIGHTLY LESS UNEXPECTED SOUND of another rapid series of KNOCKS HEARD POUNDING against the front door.)

POSEY *(Sighs, cont'd)*

Yeah, come in, the door's open.

(A beat. POSEY scoffs as she continues stirring the final pot.)

POSEY *(Cont'd)*

I'd open it myse—

(Just as POSEY jumps back to re-stir the first pot again, there is yet again the LOUD, ALBEIT PREDICTABLE-AS-ALL-GET-OUT SOUND of another rapid series of KNOCKS HEARD POUNDING against the front door.)

POSEY *(Cont'd)*

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE! *(Sighs)* YEAH! COME IN! THE STUPID, STINKIN' DOOR'S UNLOCKE—

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

NO, IT'S STUPID, STINKIN' NOT!

(A long silence)

POSEY

It's not?

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

No...

(A slight pause)

POSEY

Oh. *(A moderate pause while POSEY works it out.)* So... if... you... already... know... this... then... that means... you already tried to open my front door without my permission?

(A long silence)

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

No.

(A slight pause)

POSEY (*Sighs, then scoffs*)
You've gotta be the world's lousiest liar, Dallas.

(*A beat*)

DALLAS (*Offstage, in a high-pitched voice*)
My name's not Dallas.

POSEY
I rest my case.

(*A slight pause*)

DALLAS (*Offstage, in a different sounding high-pitched voice*)
Avon lady.

(*A beat. POSEY goes back to stirring the other pots one at a time, one after the other, and then she sighs and shrugs.*)

POSEY
Whatever... just come on in, already, Dallas. For God's sake! (*A beat. POSEY sighs.*) Please? (*A long pause*) I already told you, I'd open the door myself, but my stinkin' hands are kinda fu—

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
Thought they were your stupid, stinkin' hands.

POSEY
I will strangle you in your sleep.

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
How you gonna do that? You know, if stupid, stinkin' hands are, in fact, kinda fu—

POSEY
My hands are kinda fu—

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
WELL, SO ARE MINE!

(*A slight pause*)

POSEY (*Still turned away, towards the stove*)
So, then how'd you knock? (*A beat*) With your face?

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
WITH MY FACE?! (*A slight pause*) What would've been wrong with just using my foot?

POSEY (*Scoffs*)

Well, for starters, maybe the smell.

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

I told you! That's a medical condition!

POSEY (*Scoffs*)

That's the same excuse you used for your herpes.

DALLAS

You mean *our* herpes.

(*A slight pause*)

DALLAS (*Cont'd, offstage*)

Geez, Posey, sometimes you can be a downrig—

POSEY (*Sighs*)

Yeah! That's right! I can! 'Specially when I'm way, way, way, way, way, WAY super busy feverously cookin' you and Hanna a delicious... six-course meal.

(*A slight pause*)

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

What happened to seve—

POSEY

SIX!

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Okay! Okay! Six. (*A long pause. DALLAS bemoans.*) Not the corn fritters.

(*A slight pause*)

POSEY

Well, actually, now that you menti—

DALLAS (*Offstage; screams*)

NNNNNOOOOOOOO!!!!

POSEY

Huh? What was that? I didn't quite catch what yo—

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Seriously, Posey, I know you're messin' with me right now... so quit it. *(A beat)* 'Cause if not... if you say it really was the corn fritters, then I'm gone. *(A beat)* No joke. *(A beat)* I'm outie. *(A beat)* Bye-bye. *(A beat)* Casper. *(A beat)* Well? *(A beat)* Okay, then, fine, bye, see 'ya.

POSEY *(Sighs)*

Whatever, idle-threat-boy. *(A long pause)* Anyways... yeah, believe it or not—despite the copious amount of splatter burns that've scorched, seared, and subsequently cauterized my raw, bare flesh—your precious, little corn fritters managed to survi—

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

Whew! Thank God!

POSEY *(Mock-gasps)*

I knew it! I knew my stupid, stinkin' corn fritters were the only reason you changed your mind and finally agreed to come!

(A slight pause)

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

I'm fine with the fact that you have stupid, stinkin' hands and a stupid, stinkin' door, but don't you dare refer to my precious corn fritt—

POSEY

Get out.

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

I am out!

POSEY

Good! Fine! So then stay out.

(A long pause)

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

Then can you at least slide 'em under the door? *(A beat)* You know, I'm talkin' about the stupid, stinki—I can't do it! I refuse to refer to them in that horrific way! They're too darn special and delicious and they mean too mu—

POSEY

It's about to be five courses.

DALLAS *(Offstage)*

Yeah, but one of them courses is the scrumptious corn fritte—

POSEY

Not necessarily.

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Okay! (*A beat*) Fine! (*A beat*) Truce! (*A long silence*) So, then... since it wasn't my sacred corn fritters—Thank you, Jesus!—then what exactl—

POSEY (*Sighs*)

Well, if you're finally done bein' stupid...

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Don't forget 'bout stinkin'.

POSEY

How could I with those feet of your—

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

OH, WILL YOU PLEASE LEAVE MY FEET ALONE?! (*A beat*) JUST TELL ME WHA—

POSEY (*Sighs*)

The gravy boat hit a reef. All right? (*A long pause. POSEY sighs.*) And then it capsized. (*A beat*) And then it sank. (*A beat*) Tragically, it was dashed to pieces and now it's lost and soon to be forgotten; lying in a watery grave on the bottom of the linoleum kitchen sea.

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

In that case, mind if I take some of the mashed potatoes home with me?

POSEY

Ew! You can stomach mashed potatoes without gravy? Gross!

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Well, I can't, but my wall sure can.

POSEY

Your stomach wall?

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

No. My wall wall.

POSEY

Huh?

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Ran outta stucco. (*A long pause*) Wait a sec... (*Scoffs*) Since when's gravy a full-course?

POSEY (*Sighs*)

Since I added the extra gluten.

DALLAS (*Offstage; chuckles*)
For Hanna's sake?

POSEY (*Sighs*)
'Course. (*A beat*) Guess I'll just havta settle for the sheer joy I also got out of sprinklin' bacon bits on her tofu McNuggets.

DALLAS (*Offstage; scoffs*)
She's gonna McFreak.

POSEY (*Sighs*)
No, she's not. She'll be none the wiser. (*A beat*) Less you *narc* on me. (*A beat. POSEY sighs much more audibly this time.*) Now could you, please, please, please cut it out with all the stupid door/partition secret convo, already? Suddenly I feel like I'm back in our Catholic school confessional booth again.

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
But I didn't even take my pants off.

POSEY (*Scoffs*)
This time.

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
Who told you 'bout all the other times?

POSEY (*Sighs*)
Don't you remember anything about our missionary trip to Cancun?

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
Do you count the bathroom?

POSEY
God, no!

DALLAS (*Offstage*)
Yeah. Prob'ly for the best.

POSEY
Bet you only left your pants on this time 'cause I'm a girl.

DALLAS (*Offstage; scoffs*)
A girl?! Come on, Posey. Don't keep doing this to yourself. Just admit—to yourself and to the world—FINALLY—that you are about to turn thirt—

POSEY
WOULD YOU JUST COME IN, ALREADY?!

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Yeah, but, Posey, no. I can't. Seriously... for real, I honestly can't open the door. No joke, my hands really are—*legit*—full to the brim.

POSEY

So then you really did knock with your—*legit*—*stinky*—foot?

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Actually, if you must pry... pun intended...

POSEY

What pun?

DALLAS (*Offstage; sighs*)

You know, 'cause I'm standin' in front of a door ja—never mind. The point is, I didn't knock at all.

(POSEY, still turned away towards the stove, quickly spins around and gasps.)

POSEY

Oh, my God! Hanna's been here with you this whole stupid, stinkin' time?! You are a narc!

DALLAS (*Offstage; sighs*)

No. Stupid, stinkin' Hanna's not with m—oh, hi, Hanna.

POSEY

WHAT?!

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

JK. (*A beat*) Relax, Hanna's not here with me.

(A slight pause. POSEY breathes a sigh of relief and then slowly turns back towards the stove.)

POSEY

Then what the hell d'you mean you didn't knoc—

OLDER DALLAS (*Offstage*)

I did.

(Startled, POSEY jumps and then spins back around quickly.)

DALLAS (*Offstage*)

Yeah. (*A beat*) He did.

(A long silence as POSEY slow burns.)

POSEY

Oh... nooooooooooooo...

DALLAS *(Offstage; mockingly)*

Oh... yeeeeessssss...

(POSEY turns back to the stove and sets all four burners to simmer. Then she quickly dries her hands off on a small towel draped around the handle of the stove. Then she snaps her fingers and the faint music immediately ceases to play. Then she races over to the front door. She swings it wide open to reveal a giant refrigerator-sized cardboard box, presumably being carried by the still unseen DALLAS.)

POSEY *(As she shakes her head)*

No. No way. Nuh-uh. Nope. No. No. No. No. No. No. *(A beat)* Hell... no.

DALLAS *(Still unseen)*

That would've been the perfect response if I were a solicitor. *(A beat)* Or maybe if I'd been your dad.

POSEY

I DO NOT want you bringin' that *thing* in here.

DALLAS *(Still unseen)*

That *thing*? Guess you were thinkin' I was your dad.

POSEY

Ew!

DALLAS *(Shrugs unseen, then, to correct himself)*

Step-dad.

POSEY

You're not cute, Dallas. And neither is that disgustin' Frankenstonian-perversion you've got crammed in that box.

DALLAS *(Sighs and shakes his head from behind the box)*

I'll never understand all the stupid, stinkin', slapdash hatred you have against Amazon. *(A beat)* Besides, they now pack all those boxes like their lives depend on it. *(DALLAS chuckles.)* And let's be honest, in most of those third-world sweat shops, they just might.

POSEY

Amazon doesn't even enter into this conversation.

DALLAS *(Scoffs unseen)*

What planet do you live on? Here on Earth, Amazon enters into every conversation.

(A long pause)

POSEY

Can you fathom the amount of stupid, stinkin' slapdash hatred I feel towards you right 'bout now?

DALLAS *(Still unseen)*

No. Not really. *(A beat)* 'Course... then again... it's not like I can even... SEE YOU!

(A slight pause)

POSEY

Oh? *(A beat)* Really? *(A beat)* Is that a fact? *(A beat)* Then. *(A beat)* You better... *(A beat)* Just... *(A beat)* Try. *(A beat)* Harder.

(POSEY glares at DALLAS more intensely through the cardboard box.)

DALLAS *(Still unseen)*

Ow! *(A beat)* Ow! Ow! Ow! *(A beat)* Okay! Okay! Okay! *(A long pause)* Oh. So that's what burrowin' into the soul feels like. *(A beat)* Kinda tingly.

POSEY *(Sighs)*

I can't believe you brought that gross, vile science project over here.

DALLAS *(Still unseen; chuckles)*

Posey? It's just me in here.

POSEY

Precisely! *(A beat. POSEY sighs.)* So why the hell'd you bring you over here?! *(Through clenched teeth)* You know how much I hate those things with a pure, unbridled passion.

(No response from DALLAS. POSEY nods at this.)

POSEY *(Cont'd)*

Exactly. That's what I thought you'd say. *(A beat)* So, then, what could've posses—

DALLAS *(Still unseen)*

Actually, I don't think you do. *(A beat)* Not really.

POSEY

You don't think I... what?

DALLAS *(Still unseen)*

I don't think you really hate these things, I think you just need a little more convincing.

POSEY
AND I THINK YOU NEED A LOBOTOMY!!

DALLAS (*Still unseen*)
A stupid, stinkin' o—

POSEY
YES! You'll NEVER convince me to stop hatin' those creepy, repugnant abominations of nature! I'll alw—

DALLAS (*Still unseen; giggles*)
Okay, Posey, okay. (*A beat*) Calm down. Geez. (*A beat. DALLAS sighs.*) But I also thought it might be different this time 'cause now it's *me* we're talkin' about.

POSEY (*Sighs*)
Oh, so that means it's perfectly fine for you to bring *you* over here to ruin my dinner party?

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Right. (*A slight pause. DALLAS sighs.*) Speaking of me, can I please come in and put me down for a little bit. Carrying me around like this for so long has made me finally realize I should prob'ly start workin' out. (*A beat. DALLAS sighs.*) And I suppose you were right in the first place. (*A beat*) I guess I prob'ly could also stand to lose a few pounds.

POSEY
Well, to be fair, I never said... "a few."

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Dang, Posey. (*A slight pause*) In case you forgot... (*A beat*) Words hurt.

POSEY
Yeah, well, clearly not enough.

(*A long pause*)

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
I like her.

(*Startled, POSEY takes a giant step backwards. DALLAS sighs very audibly.*)

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Posey? What'd you need me to do? Start jumpin' up and down in the box to prove just how heav

—
(*The box suddenly starts bouncing up and down in DALLAS' hands. DALLAS is barely able to maintain his grip on the box.*)

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
You mean like this?

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Quit it!

POSEY
Quit what?!

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Not you! Me! Quit it!... Me.

(A beat. Then the box stops bouncing up and down in DALLAS' hands. DALLAS turns back to face POSEY (though he still can't see her) while repositioning his hands to get a better grip on the box. A beat. DALLAS sighs.)

DALLAS (*Cont'd; still unseen behind the box*)
Please, Posey?

(A long silence with POSEY staring the unseen DALLAS and the oversized box in his hands up and down. Finally, POSEY waves DALLAS and the box off.)

POSEY (*Sighs*)
Fine. Whatever.

(POSEY turns around and heads back over the stove in the kitchen, talking as she goes. Meanwhile, DALLAS enters the apartment carrying the large box in front of himself.)

DALLAS (*As he enters; still unseen behind the box*)
Way to buckle. (*A beat*) You should give up more often.

POSEY (*Sighs*)
So I can be more like you?

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Bingo. Giving up is so freeing. (*A beat*) Complete abject apathy has certainly made life a helluva lot easier for me to suffer through. (*A beat*) Well... that and medicinal marijuana.

(A long pause)

POSEY (*Shakes her head and sighs*)
I can't believe you talked me into lettin' you bring that hideous demon-seed-in-a-box into my home. (*A beat*) Albeit, very, very reluctantly, but still.

DALLAS (*Sighs; still unseen behind the box*)

And I told you before, it's just me in here.

POSEY (*Sighs*)

And I told you before... I know. That's even worse. Much, much worse.

DALLAS (*Chuckles; still unseen behind the box*)

Much, much worse? Really? I'm worse than if there were a perfect stranger in this box? (*A beat*)
What 'bout if he turned out to be a serial killer?

POSEY

Then he coulda put me outta my misery a long-time a—

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)

Better than m—

(*POSEY turns back to face DALLAS, but DALLAS still remains unseen behind the box.*)

POSEY

Yes!

(*A slight pause*)

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)

What about me?

POSEY

YES!

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)

Ouch. (*A beat*) You're right, Dallas. (*A beat*) Words do hurt.

POSEY

GOOD!

(*A beat. Though still unseen behind the box, DALLAS presumably looks up at the box and smiles.*)

POSEY (*Cont'd, to herself*)

Great. (*A beat*) Now I'm talkin' to a box.

(*A beat. POSEY throws her hands up in the air.*)

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)

How's it feel?

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)

I'm touched.

DALLAS (*Sighs; still unseen behind the box*)
No, not you, I mean, not me. (*A beat*) I meant Pos—

(*POSEY grabs hold of her stomach.*)

POSEY
I'm nauseous.

DALLAS (*Nods, though still unseen behind the box*)
Yeah. Well. I'm not surprised. Amazon did say shock, awe, and nausea are some of the possible side effects that might come from first interactions with—

POSEY (*Shakes her head*)
Pretty sure they were talkin' 'bout how you might've felt.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Maybe. But honestly... how can we know for su—

POSEY
How the hell could Amazon have possibly predicted you were gonna bring *you* over to my house even before you got *you* out of that box? (*A beat. Then, to herself*) Oh, yeah, that made a lot of sense.

DALLAS (*Scoffs; still unseen behind the box*)
Yeah, right. Have you even surfed the Web lately?

POSEY
Surfed the Web? Did we just go through a vortex in time? Are we suddenly back in 1994?

DALLAS (*Sighs; still unseen behind the box*)
My point is... you know darn well all you gotta do is look up wart cream once to immediately be inundated by tons of Facebook ads about frogs ad nauseum.

OLDER DALLAS (*To himself, from inside the box*)
And Amazon's not even a search engine.

(*POSEY sighs very audibly.*)

DALLAS (*Mock sighs; still unseen behind the box*)
Amazon is all things and everything.

(*POSEY starts to cross back towards the stove.*)

POSEY (*As she goes*)

Be honest, Dallas, did you write an' ask Amazon about wart cream?

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Write?! (*A beat. DALLAS scoffs.*) Yeah, right. (*A beat*) I don't break the law. (*A beat*) Well, at least not anymore.

(*POSEY turns back to glare at DALLAS but stays at the stove.*)

POSEY
You know what I meant.

DALLAS (*Sighs; still unseen behind the box*)
No. I didn't ask Ama—

POSEY
Yeah, you did.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
No. I was just using wart cream as an example.

POSEY
Of what? One of your supposed "hot" dates?

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
No. (*A beat*) One of yours.

POSEY
I told you you were a rotten liar.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Yeah, but seriously, Posey, what the hell kinda hot date would involve wart cream?

POSEY
You tell me.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Why the hell would I tell you that?

(*A slight pause*)

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
Yeah. He already told Amazon and Alexa.

POSEY
HA!

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
HEY!

POSEY
I like him.

(*A beat*)

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Oh, really? Now all of a sudden you no longer hate these—

POSEY
That's not what I said at all.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Sure it is. You just said you—

POSEY (*Sighs*)
That was just a fleeting thought. (*A slight pause*) But when it comes to those vile, disgusting abominations, my deep-seated hatred has talons.

(*POSEY reveals a hostile toothy-white grin. DALLAS takes a cautious step back.*)

POSEY (*Cont'd*)
So. Don't. Start.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
I'm not!

(*A long pause*)

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
But he did write Amazon askin' about wart cream.

DALLAS (*Exploding; still unseen behind the box*)
LIAR! I DID NOT WRITE!

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
Okay, fine...

(*A long silence*)

OLDER DALLAS (*Cont'd, from inside the box*)
But you did blink.

(*DALLAS violently shakes the box back and forth in his hands.*)

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
Shut up!

POSEY (*To DALLAS*)
You blinked?!

DALLAS (*To the box as he shakes it unseen*)
You're such a narc.

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
I know you are but what am I? (*A beat*) Oh, right, never mind, that doesn't work with me. With you. With us.

POSEY
For God's sake, Dallas! For real. You blinked? You might as well have just signed over your first-born son.

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
While you were thinking about wart cream.

DALLAS (*Still unseen behind the box*)
I don't have a son.

(*DALLAS instantly stops shaking the box in his hands.*)

DALLAS (*Cont'd; still unseen behind the box*)
Do I?

(*A slight pause*)

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
Not anymore.

DALLAS (*Gasps; still unseen behind the box*)
Oh, my God! I did?! I did have a son?! Where is he? What the hell happened to my son?!

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
Son? Oh. I thought you were still talkin' 'bout your warts.

DALLAS (*Sighs; still unseen behind the box*)
I don't have any warts!

OLDER DALLAS (*From inside the box*)
I know. (*A beat*) Thanks to Amazon.

POSEY

HA!

(A long pause)

DALLAS *(Sighs; then, to himself; still unseen behind the box)*

Okay, so maybe orderin' myself wasn't a good idea, after all.

(POSEY sighs and turns her attention back to the stove.)

POSEY

Told you so. *(A long pause)* Speaking of buckling... *(POSEY shakes her head.)* I can't get over the fact that you... of all people... have finally succumbed to all the hysteria and morphed into just another one-of-those borin', pathetic, run-of-the-mill, self-aggrandizin', narcissistic voodoo-zombies just like every single other phony-moronic-playin' God-mad-science magician out there.

DALLAS *(Still unseen behind the box)*

Yeah, well...

(POSEY turns all the burners back on high one by one as DALLAS approaches the living room loveseat and then places the large box on the ground beside it. A long pause as DALLAS arches his back in pain.)

DALLAS *(Cont'd)*

Ew. I think I mighta pulled something.

POSEY *(With her back still turned)*

Good!

OLDER DALLAS *(From inside the box)*

It's called cardio. Look into it. No, wait. I guess I already did. Err, you did. And it worked for me and you and you and me.

(DALLAS quickly removes an X-ACTO knife from his front pocket and cuts three large slits, one on the top and two vertically on each side in one fell swoop, so that the front of the cardboard box falls face-forward on the ground, followed immediately by OLDER DALLAS toppling forward and then collapsing to the stage floor still poised in the fetal position. This action is enough to startle POSEY and make her immediately spin around to see what happened.)

POSEY

DALLAS?! WHAT THE HELL?!

(OLDER DALLAS remains on the ground in the fetal position.)

OLDER DALLAS (*Muffled*)

Ta-da.

(POSEY turns back to the stove to reset all the burners back to simmer and then quickly turns back again.)

POSEY

Dallas Reginald Roost?! Seriously! What the fu—

DALLAS

Uh-oh. All three names. Just like mom used to—

POSEY

I'm not kiddin'.

(POSEY makes her eyes burrow back into DALLAS' soul again.)

DALLAS (*Shrugs*)

What? You said I could bring me inside.

POSEY

No, I didn't. I said, "Fine. Whatever."

DALLAS

Right. And don't you remember that good ol' Millennial Generation? If they taught us anything, it's that, "Fine. Whatever" means the exact, same thing as, "Of course. By all means. I'd love it if you did that!"

(POSEY sighs and shakes her head.)

POSEY

You know darn well that's not what I meant. (*A beat*) Besides, I never told you you could open the stupid, stinkin' box and let that hideous thing run rampant all over my lof—

DALLAS (*Scoffs*)

Run rampant? For God's sake, Posey, it's not like he's some sort of... you know... stupid, stinkin' feral cat.

(OLDER DALLAS finally stands up slowly and then stretches himself out to iron out the kinks. Then he throws a teasing, playful claw scratch up in the air.)

OLDER DALLAS

Meow.

POSEY (*Sighs*)

Oh, for God's sa—

OLDER DALLAS

Calm down. I'm housebroken.

POSEY *(To OLDER DALLAS)*

Yeah, well, you should be spayed.

OLDER DALLAS

You mean neutered.

POSEY

No, I don't.

(OLDER DALLAS looks over at DALLAS. DALLAS shrugs.)

OLDER DALLAS

Ouch.

(A beat. Then DALLAS shrugs again and waves OLDER DALLAS off and then turns back to look at POSEY. A long pause. POSEY shakes her head in disgust.)

POSEY *(To DALLAS)*

You're an idiot.

DALLAS

Well, I know he is now. But maybe he just takes a bit a time to get going.

POSEY

I was talkin' 'bout him, I was talkin' about—

DALLAS

I know.

POSEY *(Mocking)*

Besides, I thought he *was* you.

DALLAS *(Shrugs)*

Well, I dunno, then. *(A beat)* I must get more annoying with age.

(A beat)

OLDER DALLAS

Yeah. Like warts.

DALLAS

Shut up.

(POSEY sighs and turns back to the stove, turns all the burners back to high, and then stirs all four pots one by one again.)

POSEY

Okay, then tell me one thing, Dallas. Why'd you finally cave in and even buy yourself anyways? I thought you and I were on the same side.

DALLAS

Well, yeah, we were. *(A beat)* Before. *(A beat)* But then I finally accepted the fact that your side is... well... you know... stupid.

OLDER DALLAS

And don't forget 'bout stinkin'.

(POSEY glances back at DALLAS and then at OLDER DALLAS. DALLAS offers OLDER DALLAS a wry smirk but remains silent. A beat. Then POSEY turns her attention back to the stove. DALLAS sighs.)

DALLAS

Besides, I was sick and tired of being the odd man out. *(A beat)* You know, a.k.a. the poor one. *(A beat)* But actually, believe it or not, it turns out that deep down inside, I actually wanna have loads and loads of money too, just like everybody else nowadays. *(A beat)* Well, everybody 'cept you, of course.

POSEY

Oh, so then now this is all about 'gettin' rich quick and dumb' for you too, huh?

DALLAS *(Scoffs)*

No.

POSEY

Really?

DALLAS

Of course it is! *(A beat)* Who'd a thunk it, right? *(A beat)* You know, it could be for you too if you'd just get down off that high horse of yours and finally get with the progr—

POSEY

I will never, ever, never have one of those things in my home.

OLDER DALLAS

You mean other than me?

POSEY

Shut up! *(Sighs; to DALLAS)* I will never have another one of those things in my house.

OLDER DALLAS (*Looks around and scoffs*)
House? I think you mean apartment. (*A beat*) But barely.

(*POSEY turns back around and glares at OLDER DALLAS.*)

DALLAS (*Giggles*)
God! I rock! (*A beat*) I take back what I said, earlier. Truth be told... I think I'm kinda startin' to fall in love with myself.

POSEY
Good! Then you can take your incestuous love child with you and just get the hell outta my—

DALLAS
Oh, Posey, don't start that again. Come on, just give me a chance.

OLDER DALLAS
Us.

DALLAS
Us.

POSEY
Give you a chance for what? What exactly do you think he can do for you?

DALLAS
Well, I don't know yet, now do I? I just got him/me. I don't know what I can and cannot do yet, but I'm sure, if I'm anything like the rest of 'em, what I can do will be a whole helluva lot more than just swimmin' against the stream like you keep insistin' on doing. (*A beat*) But we'll just have to wait and see. For now—

(*OLDER DALLAS reaches in his pocket and removes a small folded-up slip of paper. He offers it to DALLAS. DALLAS takes the note, unfolds it, and then looks at it.*)

DALLAS (*Cont'd; to OLDER DALLAS*)
What's this?

OLDER DALLAS
Tomorrow night's lottery numbers.

DALLAS
ARE YOU KIDDIN' ME?! (*To POSEY*) What the hell's not to love about that?!

POSEY (*Quietly*)
Everything.

DALLAS

What are you talkin'—

POSEY

Okay, so let me ask you this... how many people in the world, you think, got these future versions of themselves in their homes? Or, at least, chained up in their basements?

DALLAS

Every single, darn one of 'em, 'cept you.

POSEY

Right. *(A beat)* So, congratulations. You're 'bout to win the lottery tomorrow night. You just havta split it with 'bout 8 billion other people.

DALLAS

Oh.

POSEY

So there you go. *(A long pause)* Now good luck to the both of you, just don't pass each other any more giddy, little schoolgirl notes 'til after you leave my home.

OLDER DALLAS

Apartmen—

POSEY

WHATEVER!

(A long pause)

DALLAS *(To OLDER DALLAS)*

Her stupid, stinkin' apar—

POSEY

AND ENOUGH OF THAT HORSESH—

(Suddenly, there is the LOUD UNEXPECTED SOUND of another rapid series of KNOCKS HEARD POUNDING against the front door. A beat, and then OLDER DALLAS pushes DALLAS out of his way as he makes a beeline towards the kitchen. OLDER DALLAS also knocks POSEY out of his way as he goes. POSEY shakes her head, scoffs, and then looks at DALLAS.)

POSEY *(Cont'd)*

I also think they should have marked your box as fragile. *(A beat)* Seeing as how your idiot-self doesn't even know where the front door is, that box must've dropped him on his head way more than just a couple a—

(The LOUD, YET SLIGHTLY LESS UNEXPECTED SOUND of another rapid series of KNOCKS HEARD POUNDING on the front door just as OLDER DALLAS reaches the stove and turns all the burners back to simmer just as all four pots were about to boil over. POSEY looks back at OLDER DALLAS and then turns and crosses towards the front door, passing DALLAS as she goes. DALLAS smirks at POSEY as she passes him.)

POSEY *(Cont'd)*

Shut up.

(DALLAS chuckles and gives OLDER DALLAS a 'thumbs up' gesture. OLDER DALLAS returns the 'thumbs up' gesture. Then POSEY gives them both the middle finger. Then POSEY approaches and opens the front door to reveal OLDER HANNA, who immediately—yet ridiculously slowly—backs into the apartment leading a gleeful HANNA inside behind her as she comes. HANNA has a large sketch pad tucked under her arm.)

OLDER HANNA *(To HANNA)*

And... Slowly. *(A beat)* And... Slowly. *(A beat)* And... Slowly. *(A beat)* Remember what I told you. Baby steps. Take only baby steps.

(POSEY rolls her eyes and throws her arms in the air.)

POSEY

Oh, for God's sake.

OLDER HANNA *(Snaps at POSEY)*

Shhh! *(To HANNA)* Careful. *(A beat)* Careful. *(A beat)* Remember. Baby steps. Baby ste—

HANNA *(To DALLAS and POSEY)*

Isn't it adorable the way I watch over myself?

(HANNA creeps onstage slowly as OLDER HANNA guides her inside the apartment like an air traffic controller landing a plane. HANNA enters the living room dutifully. OLDER HANNA then spins around, nearly tripping over her own feet as she does.)

HANNA *(Cont'd)*

Hey Posey/ 'Sup Dallas.

POSEY *(To HANNA)*

Why'd you have to bring *her*? I told you. I told you. And I told you. And I was specific. I was very specific. I told you I didn't want—

HANNA *(Mock-notices OLDER HANNA)*

What the—*(To OLDER HANNA)* Who are you? How'd you get here? When'd you get here? Were you following me? *(A beat. HANNA mock gasps in mock horror. Then HANNA whispers to POSEY.)* I think we might have a stalker on our hands.

POSEY

On your hands.

OLDER DALLAS

And on your carpet.

POSEY

Ugh.

(POSEY throws her hands up in the air, shakes her head, and then turns and crosses back to the kitchen and pushes OLDER DALLAS out of the way, rather aggressively.)

POSEY *(Cont'd, to OLDER DALLAS)*

Okay, thanks, but I can take it from here.

OLDER DALLAS

Well, maybe I should stay here to be on standby, just in case.

POSEY *(Shakes her head and then looks around)*

Where'd I put that chef's knife?

OLDER DALLAS

I think you should steer clear of sharp objects. *(A beat)* And if you ask me...

POSEY

I don't.

(OLDER DALLAS nods and starts to slowly back away, but then quickly turns to return to the living room. HANNA finally takes notice of OLDER DALLAS, gasps, and then turns to DALLAS.)

HANNA

You finally did it?!

DALLAS *(Beaming)*

I finally did it.

HANNA

Hell, yeah, you did! *(A beat)* I can't believe it! You finally got... *you!*

DALLAS *(Giggles)*

Yup. I sure did. I finally got... *me.*

HANNA

Oh, God, Dallas! Too cool! Too cool! Too cool! *(A beat)* Hella too cool! *(A long pause)* And... so... well... how are you?

DALLAS *(Shrugs)*
Don't know yet. Too soon to tell.

(A long pause as HANNA and DALLAS stare blankly at OLDER DALLAS. Another beat. Then OLDER DALLAS sighs and rolls his eyes.)

OLDER DALLAS
You want me to perform another trick or something?

HANNA *(Gasps)*
EW! YOU KNOW SOME?!

(A moderate pause)

OLDER DALLAS
No.

(A slight pause)

HANNA *(To DALLAS)*
Well, let me be the first to finally welcome you to Happyville Junction, Dallas. *(A beat)* It's right at the corner of 'Hell' and 'Yeah!' *(References POSEY)* And then there was one.

(DALLAS nods and smiles. POSEY sighs.)

POSEY
Yeah! One who will never, ever, ever, give in.

HANNA *(Giggles)*
We'll see.

POSEY
No. We won't.

(A long pause)

DALLAS *(Whispers to HANNA)*
Only a matter of time.

(HANNA nods.)

POSEY

NO! NOT... TIME! NOT... WE'LL SEE! NOT... NOTHING! *(A beat)* NOT... NEVER!
NOT... EVER! *(A beat)* NEVER! EVER! EVER! EVER! EVER!

OLDER HANNA *(To HANNA)*

Does your friend always forget how to speak when she gets flustered? *(A beat)* I never knew that about her. *(A beat)* Or, at least, I don't remember that about her.

(A long pause. Then HANNA nods. Then DALLAS nods. Then OLDER DALLAS nods. Then OLDER HANNA nods in agreement. Then all characters save POSEY continue nodding in unison.)

POSEY

STOP IT! STOP IT! STOP IT! STOP NODDING IN UNISON!

(A long pause. Then all the characters save POSEY look at each other one by one. Another long silence. Then all save POSEY start nodding randomly and intermittently.)

POSEY *(Cont'd)*

NO! STOP IT! STOP NODDING! PERIOD!

(All others immediately stop nodding save OLDER HANNA, who continues nodding all on her own. All others save POSEY turn to look at OLDER HANNA and then shake their heads in unison. OLDER HANNA notices, offers her own final nod of understanding, then starts shaking her head as well.)

POSEY *(Exploding)*

AAAAAAAGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!

DALLAS

Okay, okay, Posey. Okay. *(A beat. To the others)* Guys, come on, seriously. *(A beat)* Enough.

(A beat. Then all the others stop shaking their heads.)

DALLAS *(Cont'd, to POSEY)*

Okay?

POSEY

Get out.

DALLAS

No, seriously, Posey, please, we'll all be good.

POSEY

Get outta my apartment! Now! Each and every single dang one of you. The real youes and the fake youes. All of you. Get out! Get out! Get out! Right. The hell. Now.

(A long silence)

OLDER DALLAS *(Whispers to DALLAS)*

You might wanna get a doggie bag for those corn fritte—

POSEY

NNNNNNNOOOOOWWW!!!

(An awfully long silence. POSEY breathes in and out very heavily and very quickly, almost as if she's either about to hyperventilate or pass out... or both.)

DALLAS

Okay, Posey, okay. *(A beat)* It's okay. *(A beat)* Please just relax. *(A beat)* I promise. *(A beat)* And I'm sorry. *(A beat)* We're sorry. *(A beat)* We all are. *(A beat)* We swear. *(A beat)* All of us. *(A beat)* The old and the young. *(A beat)* The real and the fake. *(A beat)* Scout's honor. *(A beat)* Sincerely. *(A beat)* We really do just wanna have a nice dinner with you. *(A beat)* We all do. *(A beat)* And we're all very, very, very sorry. *(A beat. To the others)* Right?

(A long pause. Then all the others save POSEY begin nodding in unison again.)

DALLAS *(Cont'd)*

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD! DON'T NOD! REMEMBER?!

(All others save POSEY immediately stop nodding their heads. Another long pause)

HANNA

I'm sorry, Posey. Really, I am.

OLDER DALLAS

I'm sorry too, Posey.

OLDER HANNA

I concur, Ms. Suze. *(A beat)* My deepest apologies.

HANNA *(To OLDER HANNA)*

Who the hell're you?

OLDER HANNA

Respect for your elders. You'll understand that one day.

HANNA

What're you talkin' 'bout? You're the elder!

DALLAS

Are you callin' Posey old?

OLDER HANNA

What?! No! I... *(A beat)* No, but I... I... I...

HANNA *(To all others, save OLDER HANNA)*

Oh, great. Amazon sent me a defective one.

POSEY

They're all defective.

(A slight pause)

HANNA

On second thought, I think Amazon mighta accidently sent me an older Emily Post by mistake.

POSEY

How'd you know it was by mistake?

DALLAS

Amazon doesn't make mistakes.

OLDER DALLAS

Amazon musta just forgot to turn her off of that excessive-politeness mode.

HANNA

Oh, my, God! That's a thing?

(HANNA crosses over and tries to lift up OLDER HANNA'S dress. OLDER HANNA bats HANNA'S hand away.)

OLDER HANNA

HEY!

(HANNA backs away and then turns to OLDER DALLAS.)

HANNA

You weren't for real?

OLDER DALLAS

You're just now figurin' out we're fake?

POSEY

You're all fake. All of you. All of them.

HANNA *(To DALLAS)*

I think you got the defective one.

OLDER DALLAS

I think you're the defective one.

HANNA *(Shakes her head)*

Ugh.

(DALLAS waves HANNA and OLDER DALLAS off and then turns back to face POSEY.)

DALLAS

Anyways, Posey... please? *(A beat)* I'm beggin' you. *(A beat)* If—for nothing else—for the sake of the corn fritters. *(A slight pause)* Please?

(A beat. DALLAS smiles at POSEY. Another long pause. Then POSEY looks at DALLAS and rolls her eyes and sighs. Another long pause)

POSEY

Fine. Whatever.

HANNA

Oh, good. *(To OLDER HANNA)* You see, that means “Sure. Of course. By all mea—

DALLAS

Hanna?

(HANNA looks at DALLAS. DALLAS shakes his head.)

HANNA

Oh.

DALLAS

Right.

HANNA

I understand.

DALLAS

You better.

(OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA look at each other and shrug in unison. A long silence)

POSEY *(To HANNA and DALLAS)*

I can't wait 'til you both finally see for yourselves just what a horrific invention these stupid future selves are. They're like life's artificial, mutant spoiler alerts.

HANNA

Exactly! How cool is that?! *(To OLDER DALLAS)* Show her!

OLDER DALLAS *(Sighs; to DALLAS)*

Speaking of spoiler alerts... you wanna know who wins the Super Bowl for the next thirty years?

(A slight pause)

DALLAS

You mean other than the Patriots?

OLDER DALLAS

That goes without saying.

HANNA *(To POSEY)*

How can you not think that's totally bad-ass?! *(To OLDER HANNA)* Quick. What should I invest in tomorrow?

OLDER HANNA *(Sighs)*

I already told you last week, the first thing you should do is start building a diversified portfolio with ETFs. After that, we can start looking at some individual stocks and then maybe some options.

HANNA *(To POSEY)*

You see, Posey, I haven't even a clue what she just said, but I'm pretty sure it means I'm gonna be as filthy, stinkin' rich as all get out just like everybody else in the world, if not now, then very soon enough. *(HANNA looks at OLDER HANNA)* Right?

(A long silence)

HANNA *(Cont'd)*

Right?

(A long silence)

OLDER HANNA

I'm not supposed to nod.

HANNA

SO DON'T! BUT YOU ARE ALLOWED TO SPEAK! SO TALK! *(A long pause. HANNA sighs.)* JUST SAY YES!

OLDER HANNA

Yes.

HANNA *(To POSEY)*

You see? What's not to love about that?

POSEY

Every. Single. Dang. Thing. *(A long silence. To HANNA and DALLAS)* Wouldn't you both rather just live your lives the way you want to right now and play things as they lay?

(A long silence. HANNA sighs and scoffs and then turns to DALLAS. Then both DALLAS and HANNA burst out in fits of laughter. A long pause. Finally...)

HANNA

So what's the first thing you plan to do with yourself?

(A long pause)

DALLAS *(Shrugs)*

I like money.

HANNA

I know, right! *(A beat)* God! I can't wait to be rich! I mean, honestly, who doesn't like lots and lots of moolah?! *(A beat)* Well, 'cept for Posey.

POSEY *(Sighs)*

I like money. *(A beat)* Just not dirty money.

HANNA

Awww. *(A beat)* Look, ladies and gentlemen, it's our hostess, the Duchess of Moral Decenc—

OLDER HANNA *(Whispers, to HANNA)*

I thought you were curious to try those corn fritters, too.

(A beat. HANNA covers her mouth. POSEY notices and then turns to OLDER HANNA.)

POSEY *(To OLDER HANNA)*

You still suck. *(A beat)* But thanks.

OLDER HANNA

Thank you, Ms. Suze, for having us in your lovely home to begin with.

(A long silence as POSEY stares at OLDER HANNA, cautiously. Then POSEY turns to face the stove once again. Then POSEY looks at OLDER DALLAS, who nods in approval. POSEY quickly turns back to face her other guests in the hopes they hadn't noticed the exchange. They had. A long silence)

POSEY *(Sighs)*

Dinner is served. *(A beat)* Reluctantly.

(A long pause. HANNA and DALLAS start to approach the makeshift dining room table as OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA look at each other. POSEY crosses back over to the stove and lifts two pots off their respective burners as the lights slowly fade. End of ACT ONE/SCENE ONE.)

ACT ONE/SCENE TWO

Scene Two: Chew, Don't Bite

(At rise, dinner has been served. POSEY, DALLAS, and HANNA are seated around the semi-circle of place settings at the small makeshift table while five covered dishes and various other pieces of flatware and glassware are all smooshed together on the rest of the small table. OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA stand a little ways away; definitely intentionally posed as the outsiders of the group.)

HANNA

Posey? These corn fritters...

OLDER HANNA

Don't talk with your mouth full.

HANNA *(Sighs, then to OLDER HANNA)*

You have an eye. But I have a fork. So, you do the math.

(OLDER HANNA points to her own eye.)

OLDER HANNA

My eye is fine.

(OLDER HANNA points to HANNA'S eye.)

OLDER HANNA *(Cont'd)*

And so's yours. *(A slight pause)* By my calculations, that means you're bluffing.

(HANNA lunges at OLDER HANNA with her fork. OLDER HANNA backs away, covering her eye.)

HANNA

Then why'd you flinch?

(A beat. OLDER DALLAS chuckles and OLDER HANNA glares at him.)

POSEY *(To HANNA)*

I thought you said it was adorable the way she watches over you.

HANNA

Well, kittens are adorable, too. *(A beat)* Till they pee on your bed.

(A long pause. Then DALLAS takes another bite of a corn fritter.)

DALLAS
Hanna's right.

OLDER DALLAS
About kittens?

DALLAS
About these corn fritters.

POSEY *(Smiles, slightly)*
Turn out okay?

DALLAS *(Chuckles)*
Not the adjective I would've picked.

HANNA
Oh, really? *(A beat)* Then what word would you have used, instead?

DALLAS
Well, I'm not exactly sure, per se, maybe...

(DALLAS turns to look at OLDER DALLAS for a little help.)

DALLAS *(Cont'd)*
Little help.

(A beat. OLDER DALLAS smirks at OLDER HANNA.)

OLDER DALLAS *(Sighs)*
Well... I don't suppose any of you remember good ol' Alexa, do you?

(A beat)

HANNA
No.

DALLAS
Nope.

HANNA
Who is she? An ex-girlfriend?

OLDER DALLAS *(Scoffs)*

You could say that.

OLDER HANNA

One of yours?

OLDER DALLAS

No. *(A beat)* One of the world's.

HANNA

Oh. *(A beat)* So, you mean, a slut?

(OLDER DALLAS smirks and then looks over at DALLAS.)

OLDER DALLAS

Think about the kind of people computer programmers are.

DALLAS

Your point?

OLDER DALLAS

All AI's are sluts. They're coded that way.

(OLDER DALLAS looks over at OLDER HANNA.)

OLDER HANNA

Why'd you just look at me when you said that?

(OLDER DALLAS smiles, nods, and points at OLDER HANNA, up and down.)

OLDER HANNA *(Cont'd)*

Stop it!

(OLDER DALLAS doesn't stop. OLDER HANNA sighs and looks away. Then HANNA sighs and looks over at DALLAS.)

HANNA *(To DALLAS)*

Alexa was that much of a slut and you didn't know her?

DALLAS *(Shrugs)*

I don't know their names.

HANNA *(Scoffs)*

You never even ask for their names.

DALLAS

Right. So how's it my fault I don't remember them?

HANNA

Scary that that sorta logic actually makes sense. *(A long pause. DALLAS smiles and shrugs.)* But you wouldn't feel bad even if you did know their names.

DALLAS *(Scoffs)*

You're just jealous.

HANNA

You have no idea. *(A long pause. To OLDER DALLAS)* Well, don't keep us in any more suspense. Who's Alexa?

(A long silence. All others save POSEY look at OLDER DALLAS inquisitively. Another long pause.)

POSEY

I remember Alexa.

(All eyes on POSEY.)

HANNA

You do?

(A long pause)

POSEY

Yup. At one point. Alexa was everywhere. *(A long pause)* But then she malfunctioned that one time and spilled the wrong beans and suddenly everyone's privacy broke world-wide.

HANNA

Oh, no. Really?

POSEY *(Nods)*

Oh, yes, really. *(A beat)* Best thing the NSA ever did was shut her up.

(OLDER DALLAS points at POSEY.)

OLDER DALLAS

That's the one.

(A long pause)

POSEY *(To DALLAS and HANNA)*

Think hard. *(A long pause)* Y'all seriously don't remember hearin' all those news stories about Echo-gate?

DALLAS

Oh. Those were 'bout her?!

POSEY

Yup. At one time, she was in every home on the planet.

DALLAS

Now that's what I call some kinda slut.

HANNA

Now that's what I call some kinda whore.

DALLAS

What's the difference?

HANNA

Whores get vison and dental.

DALLAS *(Scoffs)*

Lucky whores.

(HANNA nods.)

POSEY

Now that's what I call some kinda spy.

(POSEY looks over at OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA. Then DALLAS and HANNA look over at OLDER HANNA and OLDER DALLAS too. A long silence. Finally...)

OLDER DALLAS *(Sighs)*

Well, I'm sure you've all forgotten by now why I even brought Alexa up in the first place, but we were discussing a better word choice for your corn fritters than merely the word, "okay." And were Alexa still around, had she not been silenced, she mighta suggested saying the corn fritters were amazing. Or fantastic. Or delicious. Or brilliant. Or scrumptious. Or delectable. *(A beat)* Oh, maybe, just... tasty. *(A long pause)* Or if you threw Alexa against the wall to stop her from parroting all your dirty, little secrets, perhaps even... "Ew, ew, yummy, yum, yum."

DALLAS

That's it. Bingo. These corn fritters are ew, ew, yummy, yum, yum.

HANNA

Well put.

OLDER HANNA

I couldn't have said it any better myself—

HANNA

Now I'm actually sorry I called her a whore. Whore or not, that Alexa sure sounds like she was also a genius.

POSEY

Yeah. Until she ratted you out for high treason.

HANNA *(Chuckles)*

Yeah, but for what? I'm innocent.

POSEY

Oh, really? You seriously wanna stick with the whole sweet, innocent, virgin-angel bit?

HANNA

Of course!

(HANNA turns and looks at OLDER HANNA. OLDER HANNA shakes her head silently, yet vehemently. HANNA turns back to POSEY.)

HANNA *(Cont'd)*

Never mind.

DALLAS

Well, what about me? I don't have anything to hide from some stupid artificial intelligence—

POSEY

Alexa had access to all your search history.

(A long silence)

DALLAS

I'm glad the bitch is dead.

(POSEY nods at DALLAS. A long silence. POSEY turns to OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA.)

POSEY

Sorry I couldn't figure out how to have you both join us for dinner, too, but Number One... *(Scoffs)* As you can see, there's not even a millimeter of free space left at this table. *(A slight pause)* And Number Two... I only planned on havin' my welcome and invited guests over for dinner.

OLDER DALLAS *(Shrugs)*

Perfectly all right.

OLDER HANNA

I would've done the same thing.

(All others look over at OLDER HANNA. She turns to look behind her to see what they're all looking at.)

POSEY

Oh, and I almost forgot about Number Three... *(A long pause)* I utterly despise you both.

(A long pause as POSEY takes a bite off of one of the five courses on her plate in silence. Then ALL OTHERS take turns staring at each other one by one. This silent exchange is capped off by OLDER HANNA and OLDER DALLAS examining each other as they stand together, off on their own.)

HANNA

I think the entire meal is actually quite ew, ew, yu—

POSEY

Thank you, Hanna. *(A beat)* And how're those tofu McNuggets?

HANNA

Amazing! I actually find it quite hard to believe there's not, at least, you know, some kind of meat in there.

POSEY *(Glances at DALLAS)*

Quite hard, indeed.

DALLAS *(Scoffs)*

Damn near impossible.

(OLDER HANNA steps forward.)

OLDER HANNA

Well, actually, Hanna...

(OLDER DALLAS steps forward and grabs ahold of OLDER HANNA'S arm. Then he pulls her backwards towards their initial position.)

OLDER HANNA *(Cont'd)*

I beg your pardon. But just what'd you think you're doi—

OLDER DALLAS

Not yet.

OLDER HANNA

Says who?

OLDER DALLAS

Not. *(A beat)* Yet.

(OLDER DALLAS shakes his head to stifle OLDER HANNA. OLDER HANNA sighs and then reluctantly rejoins OLDER DALLAS in silence. The others all notice this.)

HANNA *(To no one in particular)*

What was all that about?

(A long silence)

POSEY *(Scoffs and shakes her head)*

And you both still wonder why I think those things are a seriously bad invention.

(Another long, fairly awkward pause. Then OLDER DALLAS reaches into the breast pocket of his jacket and removes a small, plain metallic tin box. He opens it and removes two small pills. He ingests them and OLDER HANNA watches him and then gestures to see if he has any spare pills. OLDER DALLAS nods and removes two more pills and offers them to OLDER HANNA. She retrieves them from him and then ingests them quickly and silently. Another long pause)

POSEY *(Cont'd, with her back still to OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA)*

Now, what's that you both got goin' on over there?

OLDER HANNA *(Panic-stricken)*

Huh?!

POSEY

Now. What's. That. You. Both. Got. Goin'. On. Over. There?

OLDER HANNA

Nothing.

POSEY *(To DALLAS and HANNA)*

Now I know you wouldn't be so rude as to bring your future drug addict selves into my home, now, would you?

DALLAS

What?

POSEY *(Shakes her head)*

I never would have guessed you'd have become a junkie in your twilight years, Dallas.

DALLAS

I didn't.

(POSEY gestures to the mini-police-line-up of OLDER DALLAS and OLDER HANNA.)

POSEY

You sure about that?

(DALLAS turns to look at OLDER DALLAS.)

DALLAS

Did you become a drug add—? Err, did I?

OLDER DALLAS

No.

DALLAS

Whew!

POSEY

Then what're those pills you just took all about, Sneaky Pete?

OLDER DALLAS

Those were just suppositories.

OLDER HANNA

WHAT?!

(OLDER HANNA quickly shoves her middle finger down her throat to try and regurgitate the pills she just ingested.)

OLDER DALLAS

Whoops.

POSEY

Nothing good could ever come from a robot sayin', "Whoops".

OLDER DALLAS

Did I say suppositories? I meant meal replacement pills.

(OLDER HANNA instantly takes the middle finger out of her mouth and then turns it up to flip off OLDER DALLAS.)

OLDER HANNA

How could you mix those up?! They sound nothing alike!

OLDER DALLAS

I never said they did.

POSEY (*To DALLAS*)

Okay, even though I still hate them all, I'll admit I suddenly kinda hate yours a little bit less.

DALLAS

Me too.

HANNA

Me too.

OLDER HANNA

Hey!

HANNA

Come on, even you can admit that was pretty funny, can't you?

OLDER HANNA

No.

HANNA

Well, I sure can.

OLDER HANNA

Well, yeah, but that's just because you're still young and innocent... which correlates to foolish and dumb.

OLDER DALLAS (*To DALLAS*)

Isn't that a country song?

(A beat. POSEY turns to DALLAS.)

POSEY

Now I'm not so sure. I think they're back to being neck and neck.

(DALLAS nods and takes another bite off his plate. A long pause)

OLDER DALLAS

It's early. Still.

OLDER HANNA

Indeed it is.

(A long pause)

POSEY (*To DALLAS*)

So then that begs the next question, why do you both need meal replacement pills?

(A long pause. Then POSEY, HANNA, and DALLAS put their silverware down onto their plates, indicating they have all finished their respective meals.)

OLDER DALLAS

Oh, no. We don't need them. We just prefer them to your cooking.

HANNA *(To POSEY)*

I think he just took the lead again.

OLDER DALLAS *(Sighs)*

Oh, not your cooking in particular, Posey. Just, all cooking, in general.

HANNA

You mean nobody in the future eats?

OLDER DALLAS

Oh, no. We eat.

(A beat. OLDER DALLAS indicates the leftovers.)

OLDER DALLAS *(Cont'd)*

Just not that.

HANNA *(To DALLAS)*

I think he's widenin' his lead.

(DALLAS nods. OLDER DALLAS sighs and then he approaches the makeshift table and starts clearing the plates. He brings them into the kitchen and puts them in the sink as he continues talking. Then OLDER HANNA heads into the kitchen and silently starts washing the dishes as OLDER DALLAS continues clearing the table.)

OLDER DALLAS

You see, Posey. it's not that we don't understand or enjoy food, it's just that we've evolved into more efficient beings who—

POSEY

Have found that by not eating, you have a lot more time to clean up after everyone else?

(A long pause. OLDER HANNA immediately stops washing the dishes and OLDER DALLAS immediately stops clearing off the makeshift dining room table.)

OLDER DALLAS *(Smirks)*

Sorry. Old habits.

(A long pause)

POSEY

Who told you to stop?

(A long silence. Then OLDER HANNA slowly begins washing the dishes again in silence. OLDER DALLAS stares blankly at POSEY for quite a few moments. POSEY doesn't flinch. Neither does OLDER DALLAS. Another long, awkward silence. Then, finally, OLDER DALLAS resumes clearing off the remaining dishes while OLDER HANNA continues washing and drying them all as they are brought over to her. A long moment. Then POSEY and DALLAS stand up and cross over to sit down on the small loveseat. As soon as OLDER DALLAS clears the plate in front of HANNA, she immediately pulls her sketch pad off the ground between her feet and starts sketching. OLDER DALLAS acknowledges this only slightly, as he continues clearing off the remainder of the table.)

POSEY *(To DALLAS)*

So let me get this straight, you got an older version of yourself because you needed a butler?

DALLAS

No.

POSEY *(To HANNA)*

And you needed a maid?

HANNA *(Without looking up from her sketchpad)*

No.

(OLDER DALLAS hands the last dish off to OLDER HANNA at the sink and then makes his way over to the bar. He lifts up a half-empty bottle of scotch and a small crystal glass up off the counter. He lifts the lid off a nearby stainless-steel ice bucket and drops a handful of ice into the glass. And then OLDER DALLAS starts to pour himself a glass of scotch.)

POSEY

Well, it seems to me that is exactly what—

OLDER DALLAS

Looks can be deceiving.

(DALLAS looks up and finds OLDER DALLAS now holding the glass of scotch on the rocks in his hand.)

DALLAS

Hey?!

OLDER DALLAS

Yes? *(A beat)* Younger me?

DALLAS

What the hell'd you think you're doin'?' *(A beat)* I don't drink.

OLDER DALLAS

Yeah, I know.

(A long pause. OLDER DALLAS raises his glass.)

OLDER DALLAS *(Cont'd)*

Cheers.

DALLAS

Well, apparently you don't know. *(A long pause)* Because. *(A beat)* I. *(A beat)* Don't. *(A beat)* Drink.

(A long, awkward pause)

OLDER DALLAS

Give it time.

DALLAS

Put it down.

(A long pause)

OLDER DALLAS

You don't own me.

DALLAS

YES, I DO! *(A long pause)* You're me. And I'm you. *(A beat)* And. *(A beat)* I. *(A beat)* Don't. *(A long silence)* Drink.

OLDER DALLAS

Yeah, well, you sure used to.

DALLAS

I KNOW!

OLDER DALLAS

You used to drink a lot.

DALLAS

I KNOW! I KNOW!

OLDER HANNA

Okay, okay, why don't we just—

DALLAS

SHUT UP AND JUST KEEP WASHIN' ALL THOSE STUPID, STINKIN' DISHES!

HANNA

HEY!

DALLAS

AND YOU CAN GO HELP YOURSELF.

HANNA

AND YOU CAN GO FU—

OLDER DALLAS (*To DALLAS*)

Don't you miss it?

(A long pause)

DALLAS

That's not the poi—

OLDER DALLAS (*Rattles the drink in his hand*)

HELL YES IT IS! (*A beat*) That's the whole stupid, stinkin' point! (*A beat*) I'm living proof.

DALLAS

Of what?

OLDER DALLAS

Of the fact that I can now drink all I want. (*A long pause*) So cheers.

(OLDER DALLAS downs the rest of the glass of scotch.)

OLDER DALLAS (*Cont'd*)

And thanks.

DALLAS

Thanks?

OLDER DALLAS

For doin' all the heavy liftin'.

(An awkward silence. DALLAS lowers his head. POSEY stands up and approaches OLDER DALLAS.)

POSEY

Get out.

(OLDER DALLAS nods silently, then leans over and whispers in POSEY'S ear as the lights slowly fade. End of Act One/Scene Two.)

ACT ONE/SCENE THREE

Scene Three: Now Comes the Hard Part...

(At rise, POSEY and DALLAS are seated next to each other on the loveseat, while HANNA is still sketching away on her sketch pad at the makeshift dining room table. OLDER HANNA and OLDER DALLAS again, remain at a distance, OLDER HANNA still in the kitchen and OLDER DALLAS in the living room but still also back over at the bar. OLDER DALLAS holds another glass of scotch on the rocks in his hand. POSEY keeps her hand on DALLAS' shoulder to comfort him. DALLAS looks extremely deflated and distraught. A long silence before a line of dialogue is spoken. Finally...)

HANNA *(To POSEY)*

Why'd you decide to let him stay?

OLDER DALLAS *(To HANNA)*

Shhh. It's a secret.

HANNA

What is?

OLDER DALLAS *(To OLDER HANNA)*

How'd you manage to survive to see old age?

HANNA *(To DALLAS)*

You're a mean drunk, you know that?

(A slight pause. OLDER DALLAS raises his glass to mock toast HANNA.)

DALLAS *(Quietly)*

Yes.

OLDER DALLAS *(Off DALLAS' remark)*

Awww.

HANNA *(To OLDER HANNA)*

Did you know that 'bout him back where you came from?

OLDER HANNA *(Nods)*

We had a bit of a falling out over at Amazon.

HANNA (*Scoffs*)
I can't imagine why.

OLDER HANNA
Really?

HANNA (*Sighs*)
Guess they also forgot to flip on the sarcasm detector switch.

OLDER HANNA
We don't have one of those.

(A beat)

HANNA
I'll make sure to include that when I write up my bad review.

OLDER HANNA
Write?

HANNA (*Sighs*)
Oh, shut the hell up... me.

(A beat. HANNA stands up and approaches POSEY on the loveseat.)

HANNA (*Cont'd*)
Posey? Can I use your...?

POSEY
Of course.

(POSEY points to the doorway stage left.)

POSEY (*Cont'd*)
Right through there.

OLDER HANNA
Second door to the right.

(HANNA glances at OLDER HANNA. OLDER HANNA shrugs. Then HANNA turns back, then crosses and exits through the thinner doorway stage left.)

OLDER DALLAS
And straight on 'til morning.

