

SIDESHOW

By
Coni Koepfinger

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SIDESHOW saw its first NYC performance at The Manhattan Repertory Theatre, 313 42nd Street, NY, NY. The cast included Spencer McIntosh, Sarah Wharton, Pooya Mosheni, Eileen F. Dougherty and Darrell Williams. Paul Navarra, Director. It was first produced at The Upstairs Theatre, Pittsburgh, PA in 1996. David Philip Tenor, Director. Second, in 1997 by M&M Productions, directed by Denny C. Martin.

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FOREWORD

THE UNDISCOVERED SCIENCE IN KOEPFINGER'S SIDESHOW

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Coni Koepfinger's play *Sideshow* is a tale about can happen when we allow ourselves to consider what is possible in a world of “6 dimensions”, which we could inhabit, not by “going there”, but with only a shift in our conceptions – indeed, that's how we got to our current “4-dimensional” world today. With Einstein's inclusion of time as the “4th dimension” in the Theory of General Relativity, and enumeration of additional dimensions to provide Mathematical support for string theory concepts – where “alternate universes” can exist – and physical laws (such as we believe ourselves subject to today) could be circumvented or at least operate differently, so that her character, “VT-901M, Angelic Drone of the eighty-seventh precinct of the seventh division of the third legion of illumination”, can “materialize” and “de-materialize” anywhere in our “limited” 3-dimensional space plus the mysterious 4th dimension of time – thus, time-travel is also available to him. Some SF writers have written of the higher-numbered dimensions as mystical locales from which their powerful characters originated; the naming of our reality as “space-time” cemented the notion that additional dimensions were “external” to our reality and thus realms from where mystical, angelic, or even divine entities could originate, with powers appropriate to these dimensions. The first SF writer to exploit these notions was Abbott in *Flatland*, where 3-dimensional beings appear in a 2-dimensional world – able to appear anywhere in the 2-dimensional planar existence since they can move about “above” and “below” the plane where the 2-dimensional creatures exist. In this story, VT is “one of the primary dispatchers of hope for humanity.” *Sideshow* keeps us in the ballpark of not-yet-discovered science: entities can live in “universes” with additional dimensions that they can exploit to appear as needed, perhaps triggered by our emotional expression of need– This is consistent with

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physicists' notion of dimensions 5, 6, etc being tightly curled up –
INSIDE the gaps in space-time.

ENDORSEMENTS

In 2014 at the Manhattan Repertory Theatre, I played VT, a cosmic being, who enters the story to help Jim, the hero, find his purpose and his voice. What more can I say about a play about redemption, love, friendship, and intergalactic connections? As I'm sure the playwright would agree-- love is everywhere and we're all one, only if we allow ourselves to truly seek and receive it.

*Pooya Mohseni,
Actor, Writer, Filmmaker, Trans Advocate*

Leona is a challenging role – she is dynamic. VT sees her as “a generator,” her son sees her as “a monster, a machine” and Leona sees herself as a strong and powerful woman. She is really a struggling human, affected by the past and looking towards the future. The fact that she has the ability to discover, and change makes the role exciting.

*Eileen F. Dougherty
Comments on playing LEONA DANDY*

Take me to the 6th dimension! *Sideshow* is a great story and especially relevant in these times of media coverage on trans people, mental health disorders and childhood traumas. Koepfinger is the voice of hope and acceptance.

*Sara Halligan
Health Professional, Educator and Mom*

I would like to recommend the work of a very prolific and powerful playwright, and one of my resident playwrights here at Manhattan Repertory Theatre, Coni Koepfinger. In 2014, I came to know her by way of another seasoned colleague who suggested I produce her play *Sideshow* at my theatre on 42nd Street. I found her writing very inspiring as Coni deals with complicated themes like gender identity but takes them to a metaphysical level in a very humanistic way.

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*Ken Wolf, Artistic Director
Manhattan Repertory Theatre*

Dramatis Personae

A. J. Dandy III. known as “Jim” a young executive with a major entertainment corporation, where he is the vice-president of the branch that controls quite a few prominent theatrical agencies. He is handsome, intelligent, vibrant, healthy, caring and utterly magnetic. Born the son of wealthy parents, he is well-bred and sensitive to the arts, athletic, and a local social celebrity. Son of Alexander James Dandy, president and owner of *Dandy Candy Enterprises*, an international firm that has capital assets world-wide and offers a phenomenal variety in its product lines. Ironically, this immense corporation is run by Leona Dandy, Jim’s mother, while his father is out searching for the true meaning of life. Perhaps this why Jim is seeking a career elsewhere at this point in his life.

Gloria Toglini Dandy Jim’s wife. His college sweetheart. Although she became pregnant and never finished her degree, Gloria received critical acclaim for her articles submitted by the university to national competitions for Emerging American Journalists; she refused to return to school in her senior year and went through a severe depression after a very painful miscarriage. She is the daughter of Eugene Toglini, first-generation Italian. Gloria grew up with her two brothers in a small apartment above their father’s tailor shop in the city. Both of her parents spoke broken English, and residuals sometimes are apparent in Gloria’s diction. Gloria’s mother, Maria Katrina Toglini, a very shy, pious women, was considering taking vows with The Little Sisters of the Poor before she met Eugene. Maria is still very active with her work in the church and with Catholic charities. Like her mother, Gloria is a very devoted to serving God and her family.

Andrea Maria Lee Dandy A brand new baby at the outset, who grows along with the timing of the play. Jim and Gloria’s only child, clinically labeled a hermaphrodite.

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Leona Murdoch Dandy Jim's mother, a very prominent figure in the business world, very well-known to New York City as a veritable siren, the Wicked Witch of Wall Street, and a shrew on Park Avenue. In contrast, Leona maintains the image of a generous philanthropist in the public eye. She has achieved her goal as a billionaire but seems never to be sated wanting more and more. She fears that her granddaughter may taint the public image of her empire and is forcing Jim and Gloria to have the child "fixed".

Dr. Paul Ford The Dandy's family doctor and Leona's longtime friend. Even though he is Chief of Staff at the hospital where Andrea is born, he tends to cater to Leona's every whim as if she was controlling his purse strings as well.

Voice Messenger Tony Fondly referred to as VT, a cosmic being from the sixth dimension, his entire title is VT-901M, Angelic Drone of the 87th precinct of the 7th division of the 3rd legion of illumination. His major duty as a drone includes being one of the primary dispatchers of hope for humanity.

Heather Gloria's best friend from college. An award-winning journalist, now heavily involved in non-profits and organizations to help marginalize those populations denied rights due to race, nation and class and especially gender.

A Waiter, Newspaper Reporters, Hospital Staff

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ACT I PROLOGUE

Time: Eternity

Place: The celestial skies.

The stage is still dark with only the slightest hint of violet light fading in. Perhaps it is smoky; something to give the effect of infinite space in a dream. The preshow music fades into a mind barrage of sounds: celestial choirs, primordial groans, babies crying, forest creatures awakening... the pulse of life in its various stages. As the sounds start to fade slightly, two distinct voices, ANDREA, a young child, and her friend, VT, can be heard echoing through the music of the stars in night skies.

VT. It won't be long now. Oh, yes. You will be playing Andrea Marie Leona Dandy. Here's a brief character analysis. Read it on the way. It's time to start the show.

ANDREA. Did you get cast?

VT. Honey, I always get cast.

ANDREA. VT, if you weren't so cute I swear you were ...

VT. Opppps! Fourth dimension... Time's a-wasting!

ANDREA. What's your character's name?

VT. (*Amused*) Ha! Honey, I play myself. When you get to be a star attraction like me... You'll understand. I *am* a character, sweetie. I'm bigger than life and twice as lovable, darlink! I've done my time, I've got few hundred years on you.

ANDREA. Well, I don't know how you do it. But you always look so...

VT. Fresh?

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ANDREA. Yes.

VT. Yes. Well, let's just say destiny has been good to me so far. I know how to use my energy so that I get a hundred percent return. *(The sounds start fading out and the lights start to fade in faster.)* There's my sound cue: Fade out. Light cue. House to half, blackout... No, that's not. Better go, got to get to the dream factory. Need some props for scene two. Faith, hope, and comedy. Hmm. That can't be right.

ANDREA. Will we know each other this time? Will I recognize you?

VT. Honey, I'm hard to miss... It's always easy to recognize the magnificent! *(Blackout.)*

ACT I SCENE 1

Time: Flashback. Twelve years ago.

Place: A cozy little café, New York City.

GLORIA and HEATHER, two old friends, enjoy a break from their holiday shopping trip together. It is Christmas time, mid-afternoon, and they have been shopping all day since early morning.

HEATHER. I don't know how you can go on. I'm done for the day! All I think of is the drudgery that lies ahead! Pick up the kids, make dinner, do dishes, laundry! Gawd! What could be worse?

GLORIA. What are you making for dinner tonight? I think I'll try something new. A new recipe. But I never really use recipes.

HEATHER. I'll do spaghetti. My high carb go-to. It's the easiest. Messy to clean up but... And then John will think I've had such fun shopping all day! Well, I did but, he doesn't realize I've got to buy all the presents for his family! Some fun, huh? I can't stand his family anymore. Especially his mother. They used to be so nice. His mom

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is always telling me how to do everything... His sister constantly admonishes me about how great it is that I can stay home with my kids. How she would love to be a stay home mom! Oh, sure. Do I really look that stupid? She's an executive and says that they'd never make it without her income. Perhaps if they gave up a few necessities like their summer cottage, and their boat, their nanny, and their annual ski trips to the Alps, they could. Who's she trying to kid? She could never stay home with her little angels! She'd go nuts!

GLORIA. Well maybe it's best then. Some people don't have enough patience to be parents, Heather. They're better off in their offices.

HEATHER. Why do they have kids then? I'm staying home with mine! It's just not fair! They get off easy. And then there are fools like me that feel responsible for the next generation!

GLORIA. You're no fool. You made a choice. That's all anyone does. That's what life is all about. Lighten up, Heather. It's Christmas. Time to be a kid again. Unlax! Order some wine.

HEATHER. I'll stick with decaf, thanks. Oh, I JUST don't know. Everything seems to be such a hassle. I don't know what's wrong with me. I'm never happy with anything anymore. John is so patient with me, and all I do is complain and complain. I know it's my silly perception. I just don't know how to change it. I want to be happy, I don't know where to start!

GLORIA. I can sense your anxiety. You've been really tense for quite a while now. If I can ever do anything to help...

HEATHER. Sure... I'll close my eyes, and when I open them, you can make it all go away.

GLORIA. Don't say that! It might happen. Besides, things can't be that bad.

HEATHER. Do you remember when we were in school together. I vowed that I would make the best sellers list by the time I was thirty! Ha! I had one short story published in some off-beat magazine three years ago. Remember?

GLORIA. Come on now, Heather. You just had another baby! A beautiful baby boy! That's ever better than a best seller!

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HEATHER. What? Are you kidding? It's more like cheap science fiction... frustrated writer goes mad when forced to spawn another offspring in grueling conditions. I am kidding. I love my kids. But seriously, I am going nuts!

GLORIA. You're not nuts. You're too crazy to be nuts! You're more normal than most people I know. But you're a writer. You've got to create while you're procreating. You just need a project.

HEATHER. Hey, let's not get into that... I'm already frustrated enough.

GLORIA. You know, I think that I finally found something we can do together.

HEATHER. Okay.

WAITER. Warm up?

GLORIA. Thank you. Decaf right?

HEATHER. You've got a great smile. I bet you're an actor.

WAITER. Matter of fact.

HEATHER. You've got a great... look. Smile, and your eyes are...

GLORIA. Thank you. That will be all for now. (*The waiter warms their coffee and exits.*)

GLORIA. Maybe you should have stayed in the theatre.

HEATHER. You're right. You're right. Go on tell me about your idea for the new project.

GLORIA. Okay but, only if you still want to change the world with me. Remember our "BIG" plans.

HEATHER. More than ever, girlfriend.

GLORIA. Okay now, think about it. We are all human life forms-- we can conform, reform, deform-- but when we perform, we perfect our form and our creative spirit is released.

HEATHER. And... exactly where did you discover this lightning bolt of information? You're not watching that dial-a-preacher on TV again, are you? Wasn't that last year's kick? No, I'm sorry... Last year was *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Or was that Tao? Something about finding your true self by studying Winnie the Pooh! You are the best Glorie... You not only read a book, you become it.

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GLORIA. That's what I'm trying to tell you... If you'll let me finish!

HEATHER. Who's the man of the month this time, Glorie Bee?

GLORIA. Robert Edmond Jones.

HEATHER. Oh, I've heard of him. Somebody in the theatre. I can't recall though... Too many diapers between then and now. I'm sorry, please continue...

GLORIA. He wrote *The Dramatic Imagination*, and he says something about the basic needs of a human being are first food, clothing and shelter...

HEATHER. What a revelation! Sorry, I'll keep quiet.

GLORIA. Never mind. You can't be serious today. Maybe we can talk about it later.

HEATHER. I'm sorry. I'm just so unnerved lately. I've been so negative. Please forgive me. (*Takes her hand.*) I truly enjoy our conversations, honest I do. It's about the one thing in my life I can say that I really look forward to... I mean things aren't exactly rosy at home...

GLORIA. Oh no. How bad?

HEATHER. It's alright for now. But you are right, I do need something creative... Maybe I can open a bakery? Ms. Heather's Feather Weight Cakes.

GLORIA. You are hopeless, "Miss Featherbrain"!

HEATHER. Maybe I can sell flowers on the street? I'm sorry...

GLORIA. You don't need money. You need to be creative.

HEATHER. Alright, yes. I'll be serious now. Please continue. What is the secret?

GLORIA. Art.

HEATHER. Art?

GLORIA. Well, actually, the creative process itself. Wait... Let me read this to you... I've got the book here in my bag, I was going to return it to the library later today. (*Looking in her bag.*) Hang on...

HEATHER. You just happen to have it. Ha, ha, ha.

GLORIA. (*Reading.*) "First: food, clothing and shelter. Second: art. The man who is hungry and cold cannot give much thought to anything else. The immediate necessity of staying alive consumes all

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his energy. But once he is relieved of the primary essentials, he inhabits a sphere of society where only art can give his life meaning. Art mediates between the day's work and eternity: between the prosaic facts of life and the grand truths of the universe, 'the proving of things unseen,' in the language of the Old Testament."

HEATHER. Sounds like I should read that. Is that from *The Dramatic Imagination*?

GLORIA. No, that was Brooks Atkinson reviewing Robert Edmond Jones in an article from 1956 in the New York Times.

HEATHER. Well, what's *that* book?

GLORIA. That is a book called *Creative Dramatics: An Art for Children* by Geraldine Brain Siks. It's funny too... I've been meaning to read the Jones book for a long time now.

HEATHER. Oh. come on now, Glorie. The secret to life's not in a book!

GLORIA. I just said it's within you. That's why you're so frustrated... You've got to let it out... Accept the grand design and go with the flow.

HEATHER. That's easy for you to say... You're still childless and fancy free.

GLORIA. We are all just as free as we want to be. We're all free yet no one is free. We're infinite yet bounded. That's life. There's no continuum of time, it's merely a constant. It's all relative to the moment. Life gives death meaning and death gives life new meaning. That's why I've become so fascinated with babies.

HEATHER. Are you and Jim ever going to have kids?

GLORIA. Yes.

HEATHER. When?

GLORIA. Oh, let's see... (*Looks at her watch.*) in about seven months.

HEATHER. You are *not* pregnant?

GLORIA. Ask the rabbit if you don't believe me.

HEATHER. I'm so excited. I can't believe it!

GLORIA. Yaaaaay!

HEATHER. You're pregnant!!! (*Hugs her.*) I am so happy for you.

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GLORIA. Thank you. Me too.

HEATHER. You just made my day, girlfriend.

GLORIA. Thank you. But about my idea--- This is important. I need you to be in on board with it. I want to start a company with you.

HEATHER. I'm still trying to comprehend that you're pregnant.

GLORIA. Okay, okay. But I have a plan. I can help you to help me to help the children of the world who don't get much exposure to the arts. Remember it takes a village.

HEATHER. You're amazing. But can we back up a minute here.

GLORIA. That's what I'm trying to tell you now. No! We cannot back up! Truth lies only in the moment. There really is no future... There really is no past. Exist in the present moment. Life is the gift of the present.

HEATHER. Let's celebrate! I can't wait. I'm so happy for you both!

GLORIA. (*Stands.*) Excuse me, I need to go to the bathroom. I have a proposal for you. I want to start a company funded by a foundation with you at helm. I'll appoint the board of directors. I know people with money. We'll call it CCN - The Children's Creativity Network. Be right back. (*Exits.*)

HEATHER. (*To herself.*) This is incredibly cool. Sounds like fun. Definitely calls for dessert. (*Calls for the waiter.*) Excuse me, could you please bring the dessert menus. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 2

Time: Months later. Early morning. The baby, Andrea Maria Lee Dandy was born late last night.

Place: A very clean and sterile, room in a major modern hospital.

JIM DANDY sits slumped over in the chair as the sunlight streams in through the window. We hear the sound of a toilet flushing then his wife GLORIA walks slowly in from the bathroom, stage left. Gloria goes over to Jim and gently wakes him.

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GLORIA. Jim, honey, wake up. They are going to bring the baby in a few minutes. Go in and wash your hands, so that you can hold her.

JIM. Hey! Hey, wait! (*Thrashing.*) Hey, you! Stop!

GLORIA. Hey, Jim.

JIM. Hey! Come back with our baby!

GLORIA. Wake up, Jim.

JIM. (*Still dreaming.*) This not our baby! You give us back *our* baby! Oh God! Somebody! Somebody please! Help us! This isn't even a baby!

GLORIA. For God sakes Jim, wake up. You're having a nightmare. Stop it and wake up. It's time!

JIM. (*Suddenly wide awake.*) It's time! What? What's the matter, Glorie? Is it time? Are you in labor?

GLORIA. Jim Dandy, we already had the baby! Remember? Little Andrea Marie Lee Dandy! And the nurse just stopped by; she said that she'll be in for a feeding any moment now, so go into the bathroom and wash your hands and brush your teeth if you want to hold our precious little sweetie pie.

JIM. What? Oh, oh yeah. Isn't that too many names?

GLORIA. We don't want to offend either grandma...

JIM. Ha! My mother was offended when I made her a mother!

GLORIA. Jim, please don't start anything with your mom today. My parents will be here too. My mom's not used to arguing and my dad will walk out. (*Takes his hands.*) It's been a long, hard road for us, honey. I never thought that we'd get back on track.

JIM. My mom still won't admit what she did to you. She knew what that herb tea was for... Don't let her fool you. I wouldn't let her near the baby if I were you. I still don't trust her.

GLORIA. Jim, please. I asked you to stop! (*Changing her tone trying to change the subject.*) Boy, you slept like a baby. And you snored your head off. The nurse came in to see what all the noise was!

JIM. It's Leona's fault I snore. Ask Kevin!

GLORIA. Jim!

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JIM. I mean it, ask Kevin! She wouldn't let us blow our noses when we were little. She said it's a disgusting habit to acquire.

GLORIA. Don't go there. Just try to accept your mother for who she is and try to move on with life.

JIM. I'm serious, Gloria. Ask my dad. He'll tell you what she did to us...

GLORIA. Jim please, this is our life. This is a very joyous occasion. We have been trying to have this child for a very long time now... Please. Don't ruin the moment.

JIM. I know, and I am sorry to be like this b-b-b... But I have to warn you, the woman is driven by some kind of evil spirit.

GLORIA. Jim! That's enough!

JIM. But what if she really is a, a, a witch?

GLORIA. Jim!

JIM. I mean it.

GLORIA. Jim, stop! That is enough.

JIM. She's possessed by some kind of sinister force. I really don't want her near the baby. I really mean it.

GLORIA. Jim, now just stop it... We're God-fearing, church-going Catholics. We're good people. And I really, truly believe that if you say your prayers, nothing can hurt you.

JIM. I remember studying the saints when I was making confirmation. I read all about devils, demons and disembodied spirits... They torture the ones closest to God. They always went after newborn babies. And they go after the good people.

GLORIA. Well, you don't have to worry. You're certainly not a saint! And this was certainly not the immaculate conception.

JIM. I'm serious, Gloria. I think that my mother has actually and literally sold her soul in order to amass her fortune. Really, I do. She was never normal. When my dad wanted to take us out to dinner, she used to give us laxatives, so we'd have diarrhea... Then she'd act so disappointed that we would have to stay home. We didn't even think of telling my dad the truth. She'd threaten us with a look that could stop Big Ben, then she would casually pretend to dial the baby-sitter, who was already on the way.

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GLORIA. Honey, don't do this... I don't respect you for it. It makes you crazy. And I do not want to hear it! Not now. Not ever!

JIM. No, Leona didn't care for motherhood, she used to say. Oh, too bad for Kevin. He knows her only too well. That poor kid now lives with colitis. He's got to deal with a bag attached to his body all because his witch of a mother wanted to have all the attention all the time. She'd make him take two and three doses of the stuff! She said it would clean him out! She may have run my dad's entire life, and she may even run him into an early grave but she's not going to control mine.

GLORIA. She's doing it right now. She still has all the attention.

JIM. No way!

GLORIA. Honey, please. Listen to yourself... So much hate.

JIM. I'm telling you. We're off to L. A. as soon as I approval from the Board to run the West Coast division. You know, I don't even want her to see our little girl. You don't know, what, I mean.... It would spoil everything if I had to share my happiness with her.

GLORIA. Please stop, Jim. No good ever comes of such hate. Let it alone. The past is past. Your mother is who she is. She has to atone for her own life. You just have to love her. Try to see God in her. Why do you get so hung up on the past... Oh my, I'm suddenly sweating like mad. Are you hot?

JIM. No. Not at all.

GLORIA. Man, I'm soaked... I, I, I better sit down... I'm probably dehydrated... getting dizzy.

JIM. Here, be still and drink some cold water. (*Petting her.*) Oh, my Glorie girl. I love you, Glorie.

GLORIA. Better. I'm fine.

JIM. Glorie I'm sorry. I am. I won't talk about anyone like that anymore. It's that nightmare, it made me think about Leona... I can't help it, she makes me nervous, you just never know what to expect.

GLORIA. I understand. It's okay, honey.

JIM. I promise, as soon as I get the West Coast branch, we will move. We will move far, far away. We can even afford to take your parents with us... It will be so good for all of us. No more ghosts. No more

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storms. No more Hurricane Leona. We'll get away from it all... I promise... It will be wonderful. Oh honey, I love you so much.

GLORIA. Jim, you're the only one that has this problem. I really don't let her get to me. I see her as a very lonely soul. Like everyone else, she just needs to be loved.

JIM. I know. I know. You're so wonderful.

GLORIA. I just try to focus on the good things in life. I was taught to count my blessings. Of which you, Jim Dandy, count as number one!

JIM. You're the best, Glorie. You're going to be the best mom on earth!

GLORIA. Just don't give your mom the chance to upset you. You leave yourself wide open, and so she walks right in and steps all over your life. You're a good person, you have a strong will and a very kind spirit. Just look at it this way... Your mom can never beat us at *Monopoly*, if we refuse to play the game. Right?

JIM. Right. Okay! I refuse to play the game! You already are the best! The best!

GLORIA. Oh, Jim, I am so excited right now! I feel like I could absolutely burst with joy! We can't let anything interfere with our happiness now! I can't believe this finally happened! Our dream has become a reality! Go wash, the nurse will be in any second. And don't even think that I'll let you slide! You remember what they were saying in prenatal class... "Wash hands to minimize the germs until she has a chance to build up her immunities."

JIM. You know, you used to go to daily Mass at the chapel. I never could do that. But you know, when we were having troubles at school, I prayed for a miracle to make us happy again. After we got married, and we tried to have a baby, I thought... Oh, I know how happy this would make my girl. I prayed. I asked God to help us, I told Him that I would do anything to make us "us" again. But now, sharing the miracle of birth with you yesterday... I never ever dreamed how happy I could be, too! It didn't hit me till she came out and peeped those little starry eyes open, squeaking, and squirming.... I thought to myself. Where did she come from? Really? All of a sudden there's a new life form in the room. Where exactly is the

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energy that makes her work? When they cut the cord, I thought, she's no longer plugged in. Where exactly is the energy of her little life coming from? Heaven? Outer space? Where?

GLORIA. You are so imaginative. I love you, Jim Dandy. I'll always love you and stand by you wherever you want to go.

JIM. "Hush little baby, don't say a word, Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird. And if that mockingbird don't sing... Mama's going to buy you a diamond ring, and if that..."

DR. FORD. (*Enter DR. FORD.*) Jim? Gloria? I can come back. Would you like me to come back?

JIM. (*Stands to greet him.*) No, no, Dr. Paul. Please come in. (*Shakes his hand.*) Please sit.

GLORIA. Good morning, Dr. Ford. What a surprise!

DR. FORD. Well, congratulations to the new parents!

JIM. I bet my mother called you to come in and check on everything! Then she wants you to report back, huh? Didn't she?

GLORIA. Jim, please...

DR. FORD. No. Actually Jim, your mother doesn't even know that I'm here. The chief of staff called me late last night. He thought that I would be the best to talk to you both in person... with the circumstances... Since I know you.

JIM. What? What circumstances?

GLORIA. Oh, Lord. What? Where's my baby?

DR. FORD. They wanted me to have you sign these papers before you see her again... You two need to be fully informed before you make a decision. Please...

GLORIA. Oh, Lord... Help us.

JIM. What is it, Dr. Paul? What's wrong? Is the baby okay?

DR. FORD. Please, let's all sit down. Gloria, sit please. I heard that you'd lost a lot of blood last night. You should still be pretty weak.

JIM. Okay. Okay. So, what's up? What's going on?

DR. FORD. It seems that your baby is, in medical terms, a, a hermaphrodite. Uh, she was born with both male and female genitalia.

GLORIA. But she's a girl.

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DR. FORD. She appears to be now, at least externally, but many of these children can change... Even with the medical procedure, the psychological pressures can alter, and the now latent physical characteristics may later surface. There is really no way to predict. We are really just playing with fate.

GLORIA. What medical procedure?

DR. FORD. Well, most people choose to have one of the sex organs removed. It's purely for cosmetic reasons. It's just to prevent the family's embarrassment early on, and later for peer pressure. It's really a short operation and it's usually a fairly simple. We use a laconic method of surgery... It runs about an hour and a half.

JIM. It's totally safe, isn't it?

DR. FORD. Well, there's a risk with anything... She'll need an anesthetic, of course.

GLORIA. Jim Dandy, I can't believe that you would even consider this!

JIM. Honey, I...

GLORIA. You should be ashamed of yourself!

JIM. Glorie, I...

GLORIA. Dr. Ford, we wouldn't dream of letting you interfere with God's creation.

JIM. What?

GLORIA. What is meant to be, is meant to be.

DR. FORD. Gloria, please. I mean no harm...

JIM. We need time to think.

GLORIA. No, we don't.

DR. FORD. It's just knowing The Dandy's, I thought that you would want...

GLORIA. Oh, I know...

JIM. Honey, please!

DR. FORD. Most people...

GLORIA. I know what you thought, and we 're not most people.

DR. FORD. I'll come back (*Starts to leave.*) and we can...

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GLORIA. No, we can't. You just stay here a minute, please Dr. Ford. Let's just finish what you started. We are all responsible adults. We can make this decision right here and now!

JIM. Gloria, wait honey...

GLORIA. I'd like to think we're just a little bit above this. *(Sighs heavily, wiping her tears off of her cheeks.)* Look doctor, I don't know what you believe, and I don't even care if you believe in God. I know He's real. And I know that He sent me this baby. I believe that He does everything, every little thing for a reason. And to take a perfectly healthy child, to take that little newly born life form, and think that we have the right to improve God's creation at the risk of losing it! No! That is a sin, doctor. It's the sin of man's inhumanity to man all in the name of vanity! No way, no how, end of discussion. *The door swings open with a boisterous laugh as Jim's mother, (LEONA DANDY. a tall, thin angular well-dressed woman with a brassy voice and a very boisterous manner comes into the room. Leona enters with balloons toys, stuffed animals, and huge packages. She is followed by a small entourage of reporters and people with cameras who help her carry all everything.)*

LEONA. Well, did you really think they could make *me* wait till visiting hours? *(Laughs.)* Ha, I bribed the receptionist with a box of Godiva chocolates! *(Pecks Jim on the cheek.)* Oh my... Who knew? Wow! Is there a crowd following me?

JIM. Mother!

LEONA. Why look! It's The Gazette, The Daily, The New York Times... We should have babies every day. Publicity like this usually costs me a fortune.

JIM. Mother!

LEONA. Hey Jim, when I had you, we called the TV station. They filmed me giving birth! Relax, Dad! Don't you believe it! They promised to mention my new casino complex in Jersey. It's going to have the world's first Kiddie Casino right alongside the adult pool! Talk about perfect timing! Funny how everything ties in, huh? *(Tosses the packages all over the bed, hugs Jim)* Gawd! Dr. Paul! Who invited you, ya ugly old goat! Great to see you, Paul, but don't

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you dare call me Grandma in public! (*Hugs Gloria.*) Hi, honey! You finally did it for us! Good girl! Never thought you could do it. Now, just where is my cute little granddaughter! Oh, I bet she is cute. If she's a Dandy, she has to be cute. (*To the photographer.*) We want a nice big, clear shot for the front page! How's the caption: "Wow! What a Dandy!" Clever? Huh? (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 3

Time: Early summer afternoon, eight and a half years later

Place: Jim's office, New York City

A very futuristic, lush, executive-type suite with a magnificent panoramic view high atop the financial district. As Jim sits at his immense desk, talking on the phone, an annoying buzzer keeps going off periodically. He is trying to end the conversation or stifle the buzzer, or both. He appears to be very frustrated.

JIM. (*On the phone.*) Could you just hold for one second? Uh-huh. I know. But can you just hang on, I've got to get rid of someone in the outer office. Yes, mother is out there again! She's driving Janice nuts and she simply won't leave this time. Just hang on a sec. (*Puts the phone on hold, picks up the other line.*) Did she leave yet Janice? Did you tell her that I was in conference? Okay, I'll come out and deal with her... I'll be right out. (*Goes to the door, opens it, calls out.*) Okay, Mother. I know you're here. I can't see you. I have a career going here. I have a life. Janice is not just fielding for me. I told her that I can't see anyone just now. I am on the phone with someone very important. Good-bye! Please just leave. I'll call you as soon as I get a break. (*Slams the door.*)

LEONA. (*Offstage.*) Oh, you don't want me to say goodbye unless you want say goodbye to your career.

JIM. (*To himself.*) Why can't she just leave me alone!

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LEONA. (*Behind the door.*) Jim, I really don't want to interfere with your life, sweetheart. I just came to tell you that your father is in the hospital.

JIM. (*Opens the door abruptly.*) What? Why? What's the matter with Dad?

LEONA. (*Sauntering into the office.*) They think it's his colitis again. (*Takes off her mink and drapes it over Jim's desk.*) They're not a hundred percent sure though. (*Calling offstage.*) You can come on in now, Dr. Paul. He's not in a conference. He lied. (*Picks up the phone.*) Whoever it is or was-- can call back.

JIM. Mother! Wait! I'm still on that phone.

LEONA. (*Hangs the phone up.*) No, you're not Jim. Not anymore. Now that you're a father, I think we should change your name to James. Maybe it will help you grow up.

JIM. Just who do you think you are?

LEONA. Ha! I know who I am! Why I'm Leona Dandy!

JIM. No kidding!

LEONA. The question is... Child... Do you know who I am?

JIM. Yes, I do. You're the wicked witch of the north, south, east, and west... Soon to take over the whole entire solar system! (*Shouts in her face.*) Watch out for the house Mother!

LEONA. (*Sits on the desk, screams.*) Just who do you think you're dealing with child...

JIM. Stop calling me "child"! You know how I hate that!

LEONA. I am still your mother. (*Goes to light a cigarette, stops.*) Oh Gawd, life is such a bother these days.

DR. FORD. (*Entering.*) Hi Jim. Sorry to intrude like this, your mother asked me to come. Leona don't light that! It's a city ordinance. The smoke alarm is wired to the local precinct. The police will come.

LEONA. So what? I'll pay the fine.

DR. FORD. There are no fines anymore, now it's imprisonment.

LEONA. So, I'll give them a half million for the policeman's ball.

DR. FORD. Policemen don't have balls anymore.

JIM. No, my mother has all the balls in this city.

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LEONA. Jim Dandy! This is my final warning!

JIM. Well, you do! You just came into my office and hung up my phone on my wife. That takes...

LEONA. Ha! You said it was important.

JIM. We just happen to have something very serious going on with our daughter. Thank you... But you wouldn't care about her now, would you? She's not perfect enough for you. (*Shouting right in her face.*) Nobody is perfect enough for you! Are they? You used to make me hide my elbows because I had an "unsightly rash". I had a frigging allergy that drove me nuts it was so itchy, and all you cared about was not letting people see it! You're so full of it!

DR. FORD. Jim, please. (*Steps between them.*) You know your mother's temper.

JIM. Dr. Paul, what's going on with my dad? Is he okay?

DR. FORD. Yes, Jim. He's just in for tests.

JIM. (*To Leona.*) Why, you liar!

LEONA. Watch your tongue, son. I might get offended. I came here to talk about money. If you throw me out now, you're also throwing away five billion. And as a matter of fact, this just happens to be about Andrea. Believe what you want, I do care about her. I care about her very much. And she likes me. Even before she knew that I was rich, she just went for me. Remember in the hospital, Dr. Paul? (*Tosses her unlit cigarette in the trash can and jumps down off of the desk.*) Still want me to leave, Jim Dandy? (*Strolling about.*) I love the view at the top here, Jim. I didn't realize you're so high up too. Only trouble about being at that top... They say it can be a nasty fall down. You'd better watch your step. (*Fakes a shiver.*) It's a long way to that sidewalk.

JIM. What do you want from me, Mother?

LEONA. Dr. Paul thinks that we need to proceed with Andrea's operation, the longer we wait the more serious the complications could be, the psychological setbacks, the scandal. I mean, Jim, she's a Dandy. We're going to have to go to Switzerland as it is, but the longer your wife keeps up this nonsense, the harder it will be on the

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child. Tell your wife to cut the religious crap and let's get on with what we have to do. Stop postponing this operation.

JIM. There isn't going to be an operation, Mother.

LEONA. Godsakes Jim, come to your senses. It's like getting a nose job. It's not serious. Especially now. It will be serious if you listen to your over-zealous, Bible-brainwashed wife! Mark my words Jim, she'll be a disgrace to all of us. You know that sexuality is very important in society. You've got to do this before the kid becomes an adolescent! (*Grabs his arm.*) I'm only thinking of Andrea, Jim. Kids are cruel. She'll be mocked and ridiculed. Believe me, I know.

JIM. No, you're not really thinking of her. What is it? There's something new going on... What's this all about? You haven't acted like this since the miscarriage in college. You're up to something, Mother. It's my life, I think I've got a right to know what you're up to with it. I see right through you mother. You can't fool me. I'm made in your image and likeness. Vicious! So, I can see when your tail is between your legs, and I can sense when you're getting ready to pounce.

LEONA. Gawd! This is utterly hopeless! I need a cig. I'll pay the fine, whatever!

JIM. Mother please. I'm your flesh and blood. Have compassion. Don't try to eat me alive. Oh, please! Please stab me in the back first!

LEONA. You tell him, Paul. I can't stand that silly little child gawking in my face like that!

JIM. Look, I've got to call Gloria back.

LEONA. Oh, I'm sure she's got someone to talk to besides you. Someone named Heather, maybe?

DR. FORD. Jim, do you remember a girl named Heather from college?

JIM. Sure, Heather Carter. She was one of Gloria's roommates. A journalism major. She's married and has a couple of kids now. She's a very nice girl.

LEONA. Ha! What would you know about *nice* girls!

JIM. What would *you* know?

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DR. FORD. Jim, please. Don't antagonize her like that. Her blood pressure has been much too high these days. And she has good reason to be upset. Heather wrote to the corporate office. Supposedly, she started a non-profit with Gloria.

JIM. So?

LEONA. So, at some point in their dialogues, your wonderful little wifey let the "so-called" cat out of the bag, sweetheart. Now mommy dearest, yours truly, is being blackmailed by this "so-called" *nice* girl named Heather.

JIM. Huh? What?

DR. FORD. It's true, Jim. Heather wants money for their foundation. She has followed up with several calls.

JIM. *(To Leona.)* Heather called you?

LEONA. That is correct, son. And she followed up with a registered letter.

JIM. Well, what *exactly* does she want?

LEONA. Well, certainly not to chit-chat! What the hell do you think she wants, Jim Dandy? What does everyone want from the frigging Dandy Corporation! *(Stands up.)* They want our blood, and our sweat, and our tears, my dear! *(Pacing.)* They want every buck they can get, baby, and I'd rather die with it than give it away to those blood-sucking, spineless leeches that pretend to be helping humanity. Foundations ha! What a gawd-damn joke! And people think the AMA is crooked. I mean, I can smell blackmail a mile away. Really. *(Changes her tone.)* Jim please, this is all your fault! You've got to take over like the man of the family and just tell your wife to schedule the operation. We can't let this continue.

JIM. Cut the melodrama, Mother. You're a lousy actor!

LEONA. Gawd! I need a smoke. You explain it to him, Paul. He doesn't believe me! *(Grabs her mink.)* I'm losing it. Real fast! *(Exits.)* I'll be in that oyster bar downstairs.

JIM. I'm sorry, Dr. Paul. My mother, I mean, we just can't seem to communicate. She gets so bent out of shape over what usually turns out to be nothing.

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DR. FORD. Actually, Jim, in this case, it is something. I read the letter. Sounded shaky.

JIM. So, Heather wants money. A lot of people come to my family for money. That's nothing new. And if Gloria is part of it...

DR. FORD. Heather has already applied for a 501C-3 and she's calling it the Andrea Foundation, although she promises to keep your daughter's last name anonymous. *(Pulls a letter from his coat pocket.)* Here, read it for yourself. It's about trans-gendered kids-- sounds really innocent, and quite humanitarian, but... I agree with your mother, I suspect a touch of something underhanded.

JIM. *(Takes the letter.)* They did start a project of some sort. In any event, I find it hard to believe. I totally trust that Gloria knows what she's doing.

DR. FORD. A lot of people are very earnest and sincere in their causes, Jim. They see that other people have a fortune, and in their blindness they look at this as a way to achieve their goals. They no longer see the human that holds possession of that wealth, they no longer see faces or families, or the dreams or aspirations for which these people have worked so hard for all these years! They see no legacy, no future, no generation of family enterprise. They see a bank account. We aren't real people, we are the rich. These people were the ones in college who used to stay up late partying while we were cramming for exams! They were solving the world's problems at their coffee houses while us peons were busy writing term papers.

JIM. I used to hang out in a coffeehouse. I played a twelve string. That's where Gloria and I met. We were peacemakers.

DR. FORD. No, Jim, these guys think they are God's chosen people: the musicians, the poets, the artists. They shouldn't have to work. We work for them! They don't have the ambition to do the real work in this world. Yet they think that they should be paid for their ideas. They see their proposals as grandiose plans for the sanctification of the human race. That is why the whole world is collapsing, the entire framework of human destiny was left in the hands of these idiot liberals! Jim Dandy, stand up for decency! We can't let these fools

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run our lives for us any longer. I'm telling you, there will be nothing left to live for, nothing sacred.

JIM. There are some good causes still left in this world. Not everyone is so corrupt, you know.

DR. FORD. I know that. I know that more than most people. I've been trying to build a special wing in this hospital for a project called rehabilitative aesthetics. For fourteen years now, every year, since I became chief of staff, I've been submitting a proposal to construct a sectional ward. Living quarters, for children and/or adults that have unacceptable physical defects. The truth is... Well, my brother's little boy, Jonathan, was the captain of the football team. He would have graduated second in his class. Jonathan had a full scholarship to Villanova just waiting for him. Out of the blue, he had developed a growth, it was a tumor. He had it removed and the surgery went very well. He went back to school with quite the unsightly scar, they had to go into his jawbone. The masto-facial surgeon said that with a little plastic surgery he would be good as new, but he had to wait three to four months for the internal healing to complete. The kids made fun of him. He tried to cope, people kept staring at him. Then they'd just turn away. Oh, he tried to pretend that it didn't bother him. He tried driving his car off of a cliff. *(Beat.)* Then one, warm, Sunday night in the spring, only three weeks before graduation, Jonathan jumped from the roof of a school building on the Lower East Side. Thirty-six feet in the air. They brought him to me. DOA. Had his whole life ahead...

JIM. I remember him. I met Jonathan at your house a long time ago. A couple times, in fact. We played softball. At your summer picnics. I can still see his face.

DR. FORD. Me too. Everyday.

JIM. I am very sorry. So, may I keep this letter? I'd like to show it to Gloria. Tell my mother that we will sort it.

DR. FORD. Sure. Thanks.

JIM. Doctor, what are the risks, say, if, we decide to go ahead with an operation now that Andrea is a little older? I mean, wouldn't it be difficult to remove the organs that are not fully developed? I've tried reading about it.

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DR. FORD. Well... you mean the actual risks with the surgical procedures?

JIM. Well, yes. What do you mean?

DR. FORD. Right now, Andrea has the physical appearance of a little girl, yet her estrogen levels are predominantly male. We think she's really meant to be a boy.

JIM. So now what's that mean?

DR. FORD. From a physiological standpoint, the rectified choice would be to remove the female genitalia.

JIM. What?

DR. FORD. Jim, she's only eight and a half years old. With hypnotherapy...

JIM. My God! (*Pacing.*) I can't believe that... (*Furious.*) Tell me... Is the medical profession entirely without scruples?

DR. FORD. Jim, please. I know you are upset...

JIM. Damn right, I'm upset. That's our little girl you're talking about! (*Turns away.*) I can't believe that evil woman has you wrapped around her finger!

DR. FORD. Jim, I think you're mistaken.

JIM. No, Doc! You're mistaken! If you think that for one second, I don't know what this is all about.... My witch of a mother wanted a grandson, she laughed when Andrea was born. She said, "Oh, this is great.... Not everyone gets to choose the gender of their legacy!" She thought it was a joke!

DR. FORD. Jim, I would never want to hurt you or your family-- you are like a son to me. I never want to hurt anyone. But it's hard being a doctor these days. No one wants to take the responsibility for their own lives.

JIM. Ha! That's easy. I can handle my life. But when it comes to your kid, God... That's tough! I'll talk to Gloria again.

DR. FORD. Thanks, Jim. No rush.

JIM. So, tell me... Where's divine intervention when you need it?

DR. FORD. I don't know. I ask for it all the time. Yet, I have children die in my hands day after day. I had better go get your mother

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out of that bar before I find her looking like an oyster somewhere under a barstool.

JIM. Now that's a very pleasant image.

DR. FORD. I've seen it before, it's really quite disgusting. She's been getting more and more out of control. She simply refuses to deal with her problem.

JIM. You think she has a problem?

DR. FORD. A problem isn't a problem until you admit it's a problem. Then there's an answer. She has a slight condition, or weakness, as she likes to call it. Your mother is rapidly coming into the second stage of alcoholism with such grace that she even has herself fooled.

(Exiting) Have a good day, Jim.

JIM. I had no idea. *(Sees Dr. Ford to the door.)* Leona Dandy always looks like she is control of everything.

DR. FORD. *(Offstage.)* Well, look again, Jim. You might see a sick old woman in need of your help.

JIM. See you, Dr. Paul. And thanks. *(At the door.)* Janice, hold my calls for the afternoon please. I need some time to myself. *(Closes the door, goes to his desk, sits, slowly picks up the phone, dials, listens.)* Hi Glorie, it's just me. Sorry I had to hang up before... Let's see it's 11:50. I'm going to leave here early today. See if you can take Andrea over to your mom's house. We need to talk again. Let's have a nice dinner then go listen to some nice jazz. Sound good? I need to relax. Sardis just opened a new backroom. Members Only. Or we can go to Blue Lou's. A little atmosphere can't hurt the spirit once in a while. In fact, I've been thinking, honey, we should do more fun things together. We should go to theatres, clubs, dancing... Like we used to do. We used to be so in touch with each other. Soulmates, you used to say. Heaven help us. See you in a few. I love you.

(As he hangs up, the lights dim slightly as we see a cloud burst transform the surrounding sunny view into a tempest, a sudden thunderstorm. Through the glass walls, we can see lightning create freakish images against the city skyline. With a loud crackle, the lights go out completely. Jim sits alone in the darkness. He sobs.)

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JIM. My God, the darkness seems so comforting these days. Maybe it's because all I want to do is hide. Oh, God. You know I haven't *really* talked to You since grade school. I go to church to make the appearance. I know I'm a fake. And I know that I'm a lousy son. I try to tolerate, I mean, to love my mother... I am a loving husband, and I'm trying to be a good father. I've always been an honest businessman, and a good student. Well, I don't have to tell You. You know all about that Bi Sci exam freshmen year, but ever since then, I, well You know. I am honest. For the most part. *(Pause.)* I do believe in You, Sir. And I believe that You can hear me, Lord. I believe that something started all of this business of life on Earth. I give credence to evolution... But I conclude that some force, some energy started the ball rolling. I believe that is You. God. *(Breaking down.)* You gave us a beautiful baby girl! My God! Why didn't she come with instructions? God, why? I'm not sure what to do. Help me, please. *(Jim's sobbing subsides and after a short pause a loud creaking sound like a door opening is heard in the silence. A faint image, like the aura of human figure enters and sits on the couch opposite Jim at the desk. It starts to sing: "There's no business, like show business!")*

JIM. Hello? Who's there? Did someone come in?

VT. Yes.

JIM. Who said that? Is someone here?

VT. I am.

JIM. Is that you Janice? It doesn't sound like you.

VT. No. Janice went out for a smoke break before the power went out. I planned it that way. She's stuck downstairs. Elevators are out.

JIM. Who are you?

VT. I'm Voice Messenger Tony. But let's keep it informal. My friends call me VT. Yeah sure, just call me VT. You can call me Tony if you like, but I'm kind of fond of the name VT. Actually, my entire title is VT-901M, Drone of the eighty-seventh precinct of the seventh division of the third legion of illumination, well, it's just known to you people here on Earth simply as Hope. But in my neck of the woods... It's a big production number. I'm a founding member of the brotherhood, we started the Legion of Hope. It's an immense

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process. It's kind of like putting together a Broadway Musical. Say, somebody starts with an idea. They put it on paper, then they submit to an agent of light. If the agent likes it, they send it to a theatrical agency. They test it out, kind of like a staged reading... We have some really great actors up there. But of course, we train them well since this is their true destiny in life. Then it gets tested out at the regional theatres. They tried starting a similar program for the arts here with Eugene O'Neill, or are you too young to remember him? Pardon me if I ramble on... Well, anyway, hey, I could go on and on about O'Neill. I'm nuts about O'Neill. But then again, I am partial to him. Eugene O'Neill was the best! I was his guardian for a while, during his dark period, when he needed hope. Actually, I had quite a few actors, composers, and playwrights in my charge. Gable, Monroe, Williams, Mozart, Wagner! Oh, Richard Wagner! The man was a virtual genius. But wild! Oh, baby, I've got stories that... Now there was a dandy. Oh, sorry. No offense, Jim Dandy. But you know, you're my first producer, well, I know, I know. You're not really a producer, you're the vice president of this massive theatrical agency. You're also very blessed because you're a very focused individual! You know just who you are! Straight from the heart! No deception here! Sheer honesty! Now, that's just dandy, Jim Dandy! We appreciate that! Your sincerity makes all the difference in the world. *(Laughs)* Yeah, I've got stories that would.... Well, but that's not what I was called here to do. My mission this time is to help you... I'm here to help you make the right decision. So, Mr. Jim Dandy... I bring you hope. You made a call to the heavens, and ta-da... here I am.

JIM. Is this you Denny? I am not in the mood for a prank, man. Okay, okay. Shall I call security now? Denny Martin! Don't do this to me!

VT. My name is VT.

JIM. I can't see anyone, anywhere. What is going on? Who is doing this? Is this some kind of virtual breakthrough? *(Pounding on the desk.)* Right now, show your face or I'm calling the police.

VT. That's not necessary Jim Dandy. You called for me. Actually, you ask God and He put me on the assignment and...

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JIM. I'll play along, I mean, will I be able to see you when the lights come back on?

VT. Oh, sure. I can preselect the same manifestation type as you have. In fact, my body seems to be telling me that it needs food right about now! Have you had your midday meal yet? Oh, please say no! I can't wait. I've just been dying to do lunch at Sardis again! I haven't been there in so long.

JIM. Well, I was going to take my wife out...

VT. Oh, come on... My treat. Call her and tell her to meet us there! Oh, please, please, please! Oh, I wonder if any of the old crowd is still there. Now, just who am I kidding... Most of my friends are nothing but memories, with their faces plastered up on the walls by now! This concept of time, it's such a strange dimension of life... past, present, future... It really distorts reality. I wish you people would transcend it already, you know, you're the only ones left in the whole dang galaxy, no, correction, the whole universe that still live in the silly bondage of time. I can't wait till you guys and dolls expand this place. It will really make travel so much easier down here.

JIM. Did you say expand?

VT. Yes. Why?

JIM. Is our planet going to explode?

VT. My heavens, no! I mean when you and your fellow human beings begin to expand awareness and raise your consciousness.

JIM. So, you think that we can eliminate time?

VT. I *know* that we can *transcend* time. Time is fourth-dimensional. Time doesn't exist beyond the fourth. There's no time in the fifth, or the sixth or the seventh dimension.

JIM. Why not?

VT. Why not? Why would it be? There's really no need for it at those levels... Let's just take for example, where I live... the sixth dimension. Well, that's where I'm at usually, when I don't have to travel. I know that we're not supposed to complain, and believe me, I love my job. But... Let me tell you, this travel is hell... ur... Well, when you're accustomed to a stable home life. As soon as I get

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comfortable with things, there they are again, sitting in my mailbox. I can smell airline tickets a mile away.

JIM. You need airplane tickets?

VT. Well, honey, I'm cute but I can't get around on good looks alone. Not with the prices these days.

JIM. Airlines running to the sixth dimension, eh? I can't believe I've sat here this long listening to a lunatic! Is this a joke? Who sent you here? Listen, pal... you had better get out of this frigging office before I call security. I've had more than my share today! I don't know who you are or where you came from, why or how you got in here.... But I do know one thing... I know where you're going! Get out of my office right now!

VT. Oh, heavens, no! I'm sorry. I ramble on too much. I'm used to life in the fast lane with the old theatre crowd... You know the types. If I do it again just stop me. I'm sorry. I come on much too strong. I'm way too dramatic. I'm so flamboyant. Sometimes it's a problem! Not often though. It usually works to my advantage. Adds to the charisma and increases the magnetism. And I simply take it for granted that everyone will be attracted to me at first sight... Oh, I forgot. Ha! We're still in the dark. Oh, that explains the rejection. I'm sorry. I wasn't exactly thinking. It's me. I get so distracted down here. It's so dense. Visual overload. Too much auditory stimuli. And that subway always zaps my energy. I always assume an empathetic personality here. It's similar to being telepathic, except it's with emotions. I pick up everyone's vibes and carry them around with me. So it's hard for me to stay focused. It's not you. I need to calm myself. Ever do the 7/4 breathing- it's great... Inhale for 7 seconds, exhale for 4. Very relaxing. But I digress. Sorry. I know why you folks have trouble here in the fourth. Sometimes it's really gets hard to breathe. That's why I start and stop, it's all the discord.... But I am sorry. I'll begin again. Oh, if my acting teacher could just here me now! He used to say: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression! Focus within, and let your soul lead you the dance of life!" Listen to me, I leave gaps, and I don't explain things. I'm sorry. I'm doing it again, aren't I? Wow. I'll try to stay on track.

SIDESHOW

Now where was I? Great. Allow me to begin again. I beg you. Let's start from scratch. I'm sorry. Oh, one more thing... Please don't shout anymore. It's useless and it really rattles my fibers, then I have trouble picking up your auditory vibrations. Anger is useless. It's wasted energy. You have a free will. And you will do what you want in the end anyway. You can send me away, Jim, but you can't harm me. As a cosmic being, I am divinely protected. You really can't do anything to me. You see, I haven't totally materialized yet. I will if you decide to accept me. If you can rise above the ordinary patterns of your negative thinking in the circumstances that you are facing... You see, you called for help. You made a call to the heavens for hope. And I am the dispatcher. As I started to mention earlier, hope is manufactured in the sixth dimension, that's the realm of rhythm and balance. Right now, most human beings are sort of stuck between four and five. Some more enlightened beings, like yourself, along with a lot of other creative artists, have already transcended the fifth. You're now moving into the sixth.

JIM. What dimension are we in now.

VT. Literally, the fourth.

JIM. I thought you said that most people are in the fifth.

VT. Human evolution is moving through the fifth.

JIM. But I'm in the sixth?

VT. Not yet. You're struggling to get through the fifth.

JIM. Why?

VT. Because you've outgrown your need for the patterns. Just like the cave man lost his tail and started to stand straight and tall. Nice image, huh?

JIM. So, what is this fifth dimension?

VT. It's a consciousness reality of blueprints and patterns. You know how people use the expression "out of the blue"?

JIM. Where is it?

VT. The fifth dimension is where all the trouble begins. You people get yourself stuck into those ugly life patterns. It disrupts the natural flow of creativity, and life's energy ends up being all bottled up there. People think they are supposed to be like other people. They want to

SIDESHOW

be the same as everyone else. That's the problem in a nutshell. Everyone is different. We're all one energy, but we need to express our allotted energy in our own aesthetic way. If you don't release that energy creatively, then you end up being destructive. Whether it be self-abuse, overeating, drugs, alcohol, violent crime... whatever. It comes out eventually. As I'd mentioned before... I live in the sixth dimension. We can only access this dimensional reality via the fourteen etheric cities in your stratosphere. Once I enter, I need to travel like everyone else.

JIM. Really.

VT. Well... Oh, I have powers... but why waste them. I like to keep a full tank in reserve. *(Pause)* Am I making sense at all?

JIM. No. I mean, yes.

VT. Well, it doesn't matter. Okay, Jim Dandy... This is the decision you have to make alone. I can't help you on this one. Can you arise to the occasion, or do you still want me to leave? Well, sweetheart, are we gonna do lunch at Sardis or not? I'm starving to death!

JIM. Okay, I guess.

VT. Well, which is it? Sardis or bust?

JIM. Are you sure you're not a stand-up comic?

VT. Do I look like a comic?

JIM. No, but...

VT. Don't answer that.

JIM. I just...

VT. Come on, call Gloria and ask her to take Andrea to her mother's house. I can't wait a minute longer! I'm starving!

JIM. Okay. Hey, wait a minute. How do you know all that us?

VT. We're on the same wavelength. I tuned into you in as soon as I got your request for help. Call her, call her, call her! Please!

JIM. Okay, I'll call. *(Picks up the phone, shaking his head.)* A cosmic being... *(Stops)* This is really too much. I must be dreaming.

VT. Correction, Jim Dandy. You're not dreaming. You're finally waking up! *(Blackout.)*

SIDESHOW

SCENE 4

Time: Early evening, later that day

Place: Sardis, New York City

It appears that Jim is sitting alone in a large booth talking to himself, although we can hear the voice of VT, who has not taken on a visible, physical form yet.

JIM. Well, if you ask me, I think that it would be a lot easier to introduce you to Gloria if you would be physically present.

VT. I tell you, I've tried it both ways, I'm more experienced at this sort of thing, embrace me. You tell her who I am, then I'll come into form. There's no sense of wasting all the energy it takes to materialize if she's not going to believe in me.

JIM. Seeing is believing.

VT. In the human sense, yes. Not in the spiritual.

JIM. Well, we are only human.

VT. No, you're not. And that's exactly the point I'm trying to make... I'm here to help you rise above, to raise your vibratory rate so that you can raise your consciousness. To harmonize your sensory perception... You humans do it every time you fall in love. I see it all the time. Was there anything to see when you proposed to Gloria that night in the Old Main Diner on campus? She said that she believed in true love. You can't see love, yet you believe. Give her a chance. I'll talk through you, I'll guide you on what to say. Just wait. You'll see. She's pretty deep. I think she's ready for expansion, also. That's why Andrea chose you two to be her parents.

JIM. Whooooaa! Wait just a darn minute! Are you saying you're not even going to talk directly to her?

VT. I need to talk through you, at first. Trust me!

JIM. She'll think I'm nuts!

VT. She already knows that.

SIDESHOW

JIM. *(Recognizing someone.)* Oh, hi Joe. *(Lifts his glass.)* Hi, Mauria! *(Gives a polite wave of recognition.)*

VT. Wowie! Who's the babe slung on his arm?

JIM. She's an actress. It's his wife. Joe and Mauria Maxwell.

VT. So why is she giving you the look?

JIM. I don't know.

VT. Yes, you do.

JIM. She probably thinks I'm sitting here talking to myself.

VT. Oh, I wouldn't worry about that... Looks to me like she's fantasizing, and I don't think it's polite dinner conversation.

JIM. Hey, knock it off. I thought you were a more advanced species.

VT. I can look, I just can't touch. Fantasy runs free in every dimension. That's why they call it unbridled imagination. Wow! She's gorgeous! Look at those eyes, they just about climb into the back seat of your soul. What do you think she's thinking?

JIM. I know what she's thinking.

VT. What?

JIM. That we are both happily married adults, and we can't afford to play games.

VT. What! You really are nuts! Aren't you?

JIM. I used to be hung up on her. I used to daydream about her. It wasn't a conscious thing, and I tried to stop it. I could work with her for months then all of a sudden! Bang! It would start happening again. I couldn't stop fantasizing about us being together. I could visualize being with her in the most intimate ways. I would think about nothing but her for six, seven days straight... Even after Andrea was born, God, I felt like a creep. I would lie in bed at night next to Gloria having this intense discourse with Mauria. It would suddenly begin, out of the blue, like it was really happening. Just like another moment of real life. I wouldn't have the slightest notion of what she was going to say... We would be carrying on this marvelous dialogue together, playfully touching one another, then it would always end in this wondrous, warm, passionate embrace that seemed to last for an eternity. I used to feel so guilty. It would come and go like the tide. I tell you, I still have no control over it. I felt as though I was betraying

SIDESHOW

my wife. I thought sure that I was truly sick and perverted and just as I was on the verge of seeking professional help. A strange thing happened. I was asked to attend a taping of one of her television shows to look at some of the new talent, and during the break she looked at me and said, "You know, I was thinking. You're so right about nature, about the majesty of the forests! I really do need to get away for a while."

VT. You went away with her for a lost weekend?

JIM. No! I'd never do that! That conversation she was referring to about the nature, about the forests... I thought that it was all in my mind the night before... But now, I know, she must have been consciously aware of it, too! It must have really happened!

VT. Oh, so what.

JIM. What do you mean. So what?

VT. We do that all the time in the sixth dimension. It's called safe sex! No really. I'm sorry. I was only kidding, Jimbo. It was really happening. And it is a common practice in the sixth. It's called a psycho-sexual-spiritual connection. P.S.S. It usually only happens to the creative types down here. They need that additional aesthetic stimulation, so they seek it on higher levels. Again, it's just another device for interchanging, mixing, and blending the energy of life.

JIM. Wow.

VT. Doesn't he notice her flirting with you?

JIM. He's blind.

VT. Born that way or recent accident?

JIM. Born blind.

VT. Wow!

JIM. That was mean!

VT. What'd I say?

JIM. You didn't say anything. But you were thinking, "Wow! What a waste!"

VT. Like you never thought that?

JIM. Well, uh... Hey, you spoke directly to me right away. Why can't you speak to Gloria?

SIDESHOW

VT. The conditions were right. We were alone. The power was out. It just seemed appropriate to go for the direct approach.

JIM. I think you should speak directly to Gloria. She's very spiritual. I really think that she'll be able to relate to you right away.

VT. Sure. And what if she freaks out? We're in public, Jimbo. Not to mention a place where a voice as distinct as mine, well, it just may be recognized! I don't want to take any chances. I don't get a good feeling. My gut tells me to keep a low profile until she hears the whole story.

JIM. Aw, come on. You're cosmic. Can't you just change your voice?

VT. What do you think I am? A sideshow. I said I am keeping a low pro till she responds positively. She's got a free will too, you know. Gloria has to decide if she wants to tune into to me or not. I'm not into the sensationalism like the nightly news. I don't need ratings, there will always be another job for me somewhere in the universe.

JIM. Well, then, why'd you come on so strong with me?

VT. You made the call, baby. I just happen to be up next for a new assignment. You called me! You made the first move. You initiated the call. I just picked up the phone. If you want to hang up right now. Hey, it's fine by me. I get to go home again.

JIM. So, you really heard me talking to God?

VT. I did.

JIM. A supreme being, eh?

VT. The term, is, *cosmic* being. I am a *cosmic* being. *Cosmic, cosmic, cosmic!*

JIM. What *do* you look like?

VT. Oh, you guys... So hung up on physical appearance. But, honestly--I'm really cute! At least that's what everyone tells me.

JIM. I can't wait to see what you look like.

VT. Why?

JIM. You have such an intriguing voice.

VT. You should hear me sing... (*Singing.*) "*My Funny Valentine...*"

JIM. Wait, that sounded like a woman, I thought you were.... Are you male or female?

SIDESHOW

VT. Both.

JIM. That's not funny at all.

VT. Oh, my. Oh. I forgot. I'm sorry, Jim. But it is the truth. In fact, that's why I received your call about Andrea. We are all androgynous. In fact, that's part of my proposal, I want to take the three of you out to the sixth dimension, introduce you to a wonderful foster family for Andrea and let her live in peace and harmony with people like her. In exchange for this, we need you to do us a favor...

JIM. Who are "we" and "us"?

VT. Oh, I'm sorry, there I go again, speaking collectively. Sorry, I...
(Gloria appears at the booth escorted by the waiter.)

GLORIA. Hi, honey. *(Kisses Jim.)* Sorry but you know my mom...
(The waiter hands her a menu as she sits.) Thank you. *(Taking off her sweater.)* Holy man, the traffic was intense... I think the subway is still down. There was this huge power surge a while ago - No one knows what caused it. The whole city. Trains have been out for over an hour.

WAITER. Excuse me, sir. You did say three?

GLORIA. Three? Who else is coming, Jim?

JIM. Uh, er, yes. Yes. A few moments more please...

WAITER. Another brandy, sir?

JIM. Yes, please. And bring something for my wife.

WAITER. Madam?

GLORIA. Oh, I never really drink anymore... I don't know, I...

JIM. Have something, something strong. Trust me, honey, you'll need it. It's going to be a wild night.

GLORIA. Well, if you say so, Jim. So are you going to make me guess who's coming to dinner? Hmmm. I don't usually drink. Okay. Let's see, I'll have white wine on the rocks, please. Thanks.

WAITER. *(Exits.)* Yes, madam.

GLORIA. So, what's up Jim Dandy? Who is coming?

JIM. They're already here.

GLORIA. Who?

JIM. Who?

GLORIA. That's what I ask! Who?

JIM. That *is* what you just asked.

SIDESHOW

GLORIA. Jim please. I'm not in the mood for a riddle. Your mother had me on the phone for almost an hour. I don't think I could stand to play any more word games today.

JIM. My mother?

GLORIA. Yes! Your mother! Now will you please tell me who is coming!

JIM. What did my mother want? Why do you talk with her? You always manage to get around it... You don't have to talk with her. You know how I feel about it.

GLORIA. Enough, Jim... Now please tell me who is coming.

JIM. He's, they are already here.

GLORIA. Jim! Just how long have you been drinking that brandy?

JIM. I'm fine.

GLORIA. Now would you just knock off the riddles. We do have something serious to discuss tonight. I think we are going to have to look into private tutoring for Andrea. That new principal insists that Andrea see the school counselor, but then I spoke with her, and you can just tell, she's really bothered by the whole thing. I'm not about to let Andee talk to someone who is more uncomfortable about her situation than she is. The principal said that we *have* to do something before springtime. Swim class, and afterwards they shower together.

JIM. What? Talk about narrow minded. We can fight this you know.

GLORIA. At what cost though? Andrea will be the one paying for it. *(The waiter returns and serves the drinks to Jim and Gloria.)*

GLORIA. Thank you.

WAITER. You think the third party is still coming, sir?

JIM. Er, uh, no. Give us a minute or two to look at the menu. We'll just order.

WAITER. Yes, sir. I'll be back. *(Exits.)*

GLORIA. But you said that they were already here!

JIM. They are. But it's up to you if they are staying... I mean, okay, I... *(To VT.)* You said you'll help me, I don't know what to say to her. I'm making a real mess here. Glorie, you're never going to believe this...

GLORIA. Try me, Jim. Just try me.

SIDESHOW

JIM. *(To VT.)* Okay, now you said you'd help, now come on, you've got to talk too! You act like this is all my idea!

GLORIA. *(Rolling her eyes.)* Just let me know when you're talking to me. Okay? I don't want to interrupt. *(Starts looking around.)* Hey, there's that TV actress you know. What's her name?

JIM. I forget.

GLORIA. They look like an interesting couple. Introduce me. We should have them over for dinner.

JIM. Glorie, please. Don't get off track. This is really hard enough. *(To VT.)* Okay, alright already. Go ahead, you have the floor. *(To Gloria.)* I'm sorry. This isn't easy. There's this cosmic being trying to speak through me and...

GLORIA. What? Oh, great! Now on top of everything else, you sound like you're ready for Eastern Psych. Oh, your mother will just love this! She's so afraid of scandal, but you know, Jim Dandy... all that money and all that power and she's so afraid of everything. She's afraid to breathe for fear that someone might think she's human. She's really a sweet old woman, deep down, Jim...

JIM. She's an alcoholic.

GLORIA. Jim!

JIM. She is. Dr. Paul told me today. She's really going downhill fast, too, he said. Second stage.

GLORIA. How could she run a billion-dollar industry like she does if she was an alcoholic! Why don't you just try to love the poor woman once in a while, we've got other things to think about now, not your lifelong hang-ups!

JIM. That *poor* woman doesn't do much of anything anymore, except make personal appearances all over the city. She's afraid because she is hiding the fact that she is an alcoholic from the whole world. She's been keeping up an appearance for so long, I'm not sure she even knows who she really is. You have to stay balanced up there. It's a long way down. You have to stay pretty stable. That's not an easy task for her. It's tough at the top, Gloria. And she's been up there ever since I was little. That's probably why she drinks, she can't stay centered because there's really nothing inside of her. She's hollow.

SIDESHOW

The fire in her soul went out long ago... When I was a kid, well, I was twelve... we went to the Holy Land. It was part of the parish renewal program. They offer this tour group package. My mother was one of the public sponsors, so Kevin and I went with her. God, I could tell that half the people despised her, and the other half felt sorry for her. There we were at the sight of the legendary Burning Bush, where Moses stood, holy men and women knelt in reverence of this Great, Great Silence. It was truly awesome. The melodic tone of Gregorian chant drifted in from a nearby monastery. It was so peaceful.

Everyone willfully observed the silence. Except my mother. She was cackling, carrying on, mocking everything. It reminded me of the story of the unclean spirit. It is a pity. But I think that she's beyond hope. She thinks that she has to be on at all times. She thinks that if they get a glimpse of a real person they may stop buying her candies and her cookies and her fudgie bars and her new cereal and her toaster cakes and her fruit pies and her ice cream novelties... Oh, Glorie, it was awful. That was a day to remember. It was as if she was making fun of God Himself. It's like she's ruled by a very sinister force.

(There is an awkward pause and then there is a high-pitched humming sound that seems to be coming from Gloria's wine glass.)

GLORIA. Oh, wow! What is that weird noise? *(Holds her glass to his ear.)* Listen. There's something funky happening with the ice cubes in my wine. It's wild.

JIM. It's not your wine. It's VT.

GLORIA. TV? They don't even have a TV on in here, Jim. Listen, the sound is coming from my glass. Here, listen.

JIM. I didn't say TV, I said VT.

GLORIA. *(Cautiously sipping her wine.)* That's what I thought you had said. Think this is okay to drink?

JIM. Oh, sure. He's cosmic. I doubt that he has any germs.

GLORIA. Who?

JIM. VT. He's here with us now.

GLORIA. VT is here with us now?

JIM. Yes.

GLORIA. In my glass?

SIDESHOW

JIM. No. He's just doing that to get your attention.

GLORIA. I thought maybe he was microscopic.

JIM. I don't think so.

GLORIA. Well, then, what exactly is he?

JIM. It's not he or she.

GLORIA. But you can hear it?

JIM. Right.

GLORIA. It talks to you.

JIM. Yes.

GLORIA. Is it talking to you right now?

JIM. Yes.

GLORIA. VT.

JIM. That's short for Voice Messenger Tony.

GLORIA. Okay.

JIM. My unmitigated title is VT-901M, Drone of the eighty-seventh precinct of the seventh division of the third legion of illumination. It's commonly known to us people here on Earth simply as Hope. *(Pause)* That was VT talking. VT has come to bring us hope.

GLORIA. Okay. That's good. We could sure use it. *(To the waiter.)* Could we get some black coffee here please?

WAITER. No problem. *(Exits)*

JIM. You think I'm nuts.

GLORIA. That's beside the point. I think you had a tad too much brandy. That's what I think, Jim Dandy.

JIM. Okay. Okay. *(To Gloria)* VT says to look in your glass.

GLORIA. Look in my glass? Okay. I'll look in my glass.

JIM. It's white wine, isn't it?

GLORIA. Yes. Yes, it is white wine.

JIM. Well, look again, Glorie. This time it will be red.

GLORIA. Oh, Mother Mary in heaven. It turned red.

JIM. Now it's white again.

GLORIA. It is white again. By golly, Jim, you should join the circus with this trick! How on earth did you do that?

JIM. I didn't do it. VT did. Now you think of another color. Then I'll name it as it just changes in your glass.

SIDESHOW

GLORIA. Okay.

JIM. Pick a color.

GLORIA. Alright.

JIM. Blueberry?

GLORIA. Well, I always wanted to taste blueberry wine.

JIM. Go on then.

GLORIA. It's great. Want to taste it?

JIM. Sure.

GLORIA. My grandfather used to make wine from blueberries.

JIM. Back on Harbinger Street. You and your cousin, Chris, used to sneak sips of it down in the basement. You've tasted it before.

GLORIA. Hey, how'd you know that?

JIM. I didn't. VT said it.

GLORIA. So, what other tricks can VT do?

JIM. *(VT speaks through Jim but in a different voice)* I am a cosmic being, not a side show! I came here to help you, to help Jim, and to offer a happy, peaceful life for Andrea.

GLORIA. *(Blesses herself.)* Oh, Blessed Jesus! I don't like this, Jim. It is too weird. *(Squirming in her seat.)* It's like you're possessed.

JIM. VT is a cosmic being, there's nothing to be afraid of, really. He's not a disembodied spirit. This is not at all evil.

GLORIA. How do you know?

JIM. I feel it in my gut. I was praying aloud today, during the thunderstorm, I was sitting at my desk. I asked God for help, for hope. For us, for Andrea. I just started talking aloud to God. *(Sighs.)* Then when that storm hit, and the power went out... VT just appeared. Well, I haven't seen him yet. He says he's waiting for you to hear his proposed plan, and if you'll go along with it, he'll put himself into flesh again. But if you're not ready to deal with all this sixth-dimensional stuff, then he'll quietly disappear from the planet and never return. It's up to us.

GLORIA. Up to me?

JIM. Yes.

GLORIA. Why?

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JIM. Well, he says that it takes a trinity to physically transcend time and space.

GLORIA. And you believe him?

JIM. Yes, I believe him, he says that I'm the one that made the call. And I did ask for help. And Andrea, well, he said that she was born six-dimensional. Gloria, I think we should at least hear what VT has to say. I know he wants us to go to the sixth dimension with him.

GLORIA. I need the restroom. Be back. (*Exits.*)

JIM. Gloria, we can't just ignore this. (*To VT.*) Well?

VT. Just wait till she sees me!

JIM. You think?

GLORIA. (*Pretending to be calm, sits back down.*) Jim, please. Let's just get the check and go. Now, honey, now.

VT. Meet me in the rest room, Gloria!

GLORIA. Hey, I can hear you now.

VT. Yes.

JIM. Why'd you decide to let her hear you now?

VT. She's ready to give up. I had to do something.

GLORIA. Are you really a being from the sixth dimension?

VT. Yes.

GLORIA. Where exactly is it?

VT. Well, it's beyond time and space as we know it. Time is fourth dimensional. Most human beings are beginning to expand their consciousness and transcend time in the fourth, but they are getting bewildered in the fifth. The fifth dimension is blueprints and patterns, like when ideas come out of the blue. But there's a slight problem with the patterns that we've developed over the years. All beings are made from divine creative energy. When we try to force ours into someone else's pattern-- It simply doesn't fit. Therefore, if we aren't allowed to be creative, we end up being destructive. You have to admit the problem you guys have with violence. It's because the energy gets all bottled up there and eventually the comes out in a negative form, like bad habits, self-abuse, anger. Therefore, as a cultured species, we must work through this fifth dimension and move onto the sixth. The sixth dimension, being rhythm and balance, has its

SIDESHOW

sole purpose to restore the harmonization of life. All of the beings in the sixth dimension are like Andrea. Everyone is androgynous, it's to avoid any male-female tension.

GLORIA. Really. So, you want to help us. No strings attached.

VT. Gloria, I have a new gadget that will change the world. I need Jim to help me market it here. It's called an Emiton. You breathe into it and when you see the light of your own breath, it catapults you deep within yourself, and then straight into the harmonization of the sixth dimension. Eventually, it will help people calm down so that they can raise their consciousness. It's a last chance for the people in this dimension. It's the opposite of a clock, the emiton - no time. It allows people to be peaceful-- to go into that great silence, to still the outer and touch base with their heart. Just imagine world peace. I've even got a slogan for it already.

GLORIA. Wow! He should be working for his mother!

JIM. What about it, Glorie? Are you in or out?

GLORIA. Sure! As long as we can all stay together Hey, world peace. I used to have big dreams in college. (*Warning.*) But I'm not leaving Andrea there, or anywhere.

VT. We can leave that part totally up to you.

GLORIA. Well then, to tell you the truth... I totally love the idea. It must be the humanitarian in me. I guess that fire never dies!

JIM. (*Hugs her.*) Thank God! (*Blackout.*)

(Intermission.)

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