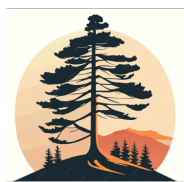


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Mystery Spot

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Revision 04/29/2024

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THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST APPEAR ON ALL PAPER AND DIGITAL PROGRAMS, PRINTING, AND ADVERTISING:

1. The full title: Mystery Spot
2. Writing credit: By Steve Lyons
3. In addition to the above, the program must include: "Produced by special arrangement with Evergreen Plays, Bellingham, WA"

Characters:

Dingo:	19 - 21 male
Liz:	20 - 23 female
Shirley:	50s female
Sylvia:	30s female
Mr. Williams:	50s male.
Angel Celestine:	30s – 60s male or female
Ensemble:	Two actors, one male, one female.

Set:

Geometric lines produce optical illusions, similar to those at the Santa Cruz Mystery Spot. The Ponzo Illusion in particular can be utilized. These geometric patterns may change throughout the play, depending on the scene.

Set includes a special portal for Angel Celestine and Sylvia to enter and exit.

The set and lighting designer should read *The Mystery Spot Illusion and Its Relation to Other Visual Illusions* by Shimamura and Prinzmetal, *Psychological Science*, vol. 10, no. 6, November 1999. American Psychological Society. Available here:

https://shimamurapubs.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/1999_shim-prinz_mystspot.pdf

The "Sylvia Plath" poem in the second act written by Bonnie Antonini, who originated the role of Sylvia Plath in the California Stage Company premier.

ON RISE: All cast on stage. Music plays, appropriate for leaning. After a few bars of music, cast slowly leans. Lights down, then back up (or not, up to the director). Cast in new formation. Cast slowly leans. Perhaps lights down, then back up. Cast in new formation, facing audience head on. Cast slowly leans.

Cast exits except for Dingo. Music off.

SCENE 2:

SETTING: UC Santa Cruz campus.

DINGO: I was born and raised in Oroville, California.

I don't live there no more.

Me and all my homies went to Oroville High School. We....

Well look, they weren't really my homies. We would talk like that but we knew to be homies you need to live in a neighborhood with sidewalks. We don't have sidewalks in Oroville. Deep down, we knew we were just posers.

In high school, I wanted girls so bad I felt like I was gonna explode. It's bad to want. Makes you vulnerable. Makes you act stupid.

By the time I graduated, I was in full flower and ready to pollinate. Mr. Anderson, my history teacher, encouraged me to go to college. Chico State was close by and my jive-ass high school tricks would probably work on the college girls in Chico. But, I wanted a challenge. That's what Mr. Anderson said. Don't go for the easy. You'll never grow. Mr. Anderson is, like, the best teacher of all

time. He encouraged me to apply to the University of California at Santa Cruz. So I did. And I got in.

My parents were real proud of me.

Santa Cruz. Saint Cruz. Saint Cruisin'. A place where if you get really good at cruisin', they canonize you.

You meet girls in the dorms. But my room mate warned me that that could get, you know, awkward.

Excuse me, not girls, "women." Boy that took some getting used to. Here they're, like, my age, but I have to call them women. But they don't call males my age "men." We're "guys." It's okay. I'm cruisin'.

So, I try different methods to meet these Santa Cruz women. I quickly hit upon a system that works beautifully, involving a cappuccino, Sylvia Plath and the Ikea catalogue.

I get myself a table out on the quad, see. I have my cappuccino and a bottle of water. I don't like cappuccinos. Maybe I don't totally understand cappuccinos. Anyway, I drink the water and have the cappuccino there as a table ornament.

So, I set the Ikea catalogue out on the table, away from me, so it is clear that I'm not using it. But still close enough so it is understood that it is mine. Then I open up this Sylvia Plath book.

This combination is so deadly, it's not even fair.

Now, I'd never heard of Sylvia Plath before. She's apparently a local author? She's like this chick who felt sad and managed to turn it into a career.

So, the Ikea catalogue is like blood in the water. It gets 'em circling. Then one of them wants to know if they can look at it. Sure, I say. Then my bait, Sylvia Plath. "Oh, is that Sylvia Plath?" they invariably ask. I reply, "Yeah, it's really intense."

Now, I've learned to never ask "Have you read it?" because no one has, including me. It just gets things off on the wrong foot.

So now they're nibblin' the bait. I just gotta set the hook, which is me.

I'm still working on the hook.

(Enter LIZ. She pauses at table. DINGO watches her. LIZ picks up the Ikea catalogue.)

Excuse me. I gotta customer.

(DINGO takes his place at a table. Picks up Sylvia Plath book. Looks at it intently.)

Moment.

LIZ: Hi.

DINGO: Oh. Hi. Didn't see you there. I must have been totally absorbed in—

LIZ: Oh my God. You're reading *Ariel*?

DINGO: (to audience) Like shootin' fish in a barrel.

(to Liz)

Yeah. It's really—

LIZ: Intense. Yeah. I must have read it five times.

DINGO: (to audience) Oh shit.

LIZ: Do you have a favorite?

DINGO: Favorite?

(looks to audience, "help me
out here" look)

Ah. Just, ah, the whole thing really.

LIZ: The whole thing?

DINGO: Yeah. You know. The whole story.

LIZ: Story? Really?

DINGO: Yeah. A favorite part is, you know, hard to say.

LIZ: Wow, so you see it as a story?

DINGO: Yeah... ah... it's a great story.

LIZ: Whoa. I never looked at it that way. You know, I just
read them as individual poems.

DINGO: (to audience) Poems?! I thought they were just
really short chapters.

LIZ: But you see it as telling a story, a complete story.

DINGO: Yeah.

LIZ: Wow. Yeah. I should revisit it with that in mind.

Thanks.

DINGO: Yeah. Sure.

LIZ: *Ariel* is on the reading list for one of my classes.

DINGO: Really?

LIZ: Yeah.

DINGO: Huh.

LIZ: Well, see you around.

DINGO: Sure. See you.

(LIZ begins to walk away.)

What class?

LIZ: What?

DINGO: Sylvia Plath. What class is she on the reading list for?

LIZ: Oh. Introduction to Feminisms.

DINGO: Feminisms?

LIZ: You think it should be "Introduction to Feminism," right?

DINGO: Um...

LIZ: Like there is only one Feminism, right?

DINGO: Well, I –

LIZ: That is like, so... imperialist.

DINGO: No, you're absolutely–

LIZ: (shakes head) Men.

Well, bye.

DINGO: Bye.

Exit LIZ

SCENE 3

UC Santa Cruz campus

DINGO holds UC Santa Cruz course catalogue. Or is looking at an iPad.

DINGO: I decided to find out where this "Introduction to Feminisms" is held and just happen by when class gets out. Maybe I can try again with her. I don't even know her name.

Let's see. Introduction to art ... to calculus ... to electronic circuits ... to ... here we go.

Introduction to Feminisms in the department of ...

You're shittin' me.

Women's Studies. You can study 'em?

I just never made it this far back in the catalogue before. I usually lost interest somewhere around "H." Look at this.

YOU CAN MAJOR IN 'EM!

I can't believe this. A class in "Women's culture."

Advanced Topics in Chicana Feminism. Man oh man. Look. Women in Modern China. Psychoanalysis and Women. You gotta know this stuff. African Women. Baby.

No.

No, come on.

"Independent Field Studies of Women."

I mean, I practically got a degree in this shit already.

UNDECLARED NO MORE!

I'm a Women's Studies Major!

(pause)

And everyone said college was gonna be hard.

Black out

SCENE 4

UC Santa Cruz campus.

Lights come back up. DINGO is in a different position. He is carrying some textbooks.

DINGO: Man oh man. So I go to my first Introduction to Feminisms class. I expect the class to be full of guys like me. No. The class is like, all women. And they're sorta checkin' me out. I smile and wave.

Have I hit a gold mine or what?

(LIZ comes dashing onto stage from opposite direction, also carrying books.

She pauses when she sees Dingo. Perhaps they circle each other)

LIZ: I saw you in class.

DINGO: Yeah.

LIZ: Why didn't you tell me you were taking Introduction to Feminisms?

DINGO: I wasn't. After talking to you I decided to check it out.

LIZ: They say you're a Women's Studies major.

DINGO: Just declared.

LIZ: I just declared too.

DINGO: Well. What do you know?

LIZ: What kind of feminist are you?

DINGO: Uh...

LIZ: You into Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem?

DINGO: Oh yeah, they're great!

LIZ: Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem are liberal feminists who don't know shit.

DINGO: Well...

LIZ: You wanna be in the Women's Studies Department, I got some advice for you.

DINGO: Okay.

LIZ and DINGO stop circling.

LIZ: First, this Woman's Studies Department exists within the context of a capitalist and patriarchal educational system. Indeed, many of us are here because of male privilege and you must understand that dichotomy.

Second, everything you have read in Betty Friedan you must forget. Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* is the most man-junkie crap ever written. Liberal feminists like Friedan have always focused on men, and how the women's movement would free men, paying no attention to what they have done to women. What bullshit.

DINGO: (to audience) I think she likes me.

LIZ: Most of the women in the Women's Studies Department are not liberal feminists, but rather radical feminists. We know that reforms and legal changes, while ameliorating the condition of women and an essential part of the process of emancipating them, will not basically change patriarchy. Such reforms need to be integrated within a vast cultural revolution in order to transform patriarchy and thus abolish it.

DINGO: (to audience) And she's real easy to talk to.

LIZ: Oh, and Gloria Steinem may be your hero and everything. Don't even mention her around here, you'll be totally trashed.

Well, see you in class. Bye Dingo.

Exit LIZ

DINGO: (to audience) Okay, it's clear.

If I'm going to get anywhere with these gals I gotta have money. I need to find a job.

SCENE 5

The office at the Santa Cruz Mystery Spot

Lights up on Shirley

(DINGO enters)

DINGO: Excuse me.

SHIRLEY: Yes.

DINGO: I am looking for Mrs. Armstrong.

SHIRLEY: I am Mrs. Armstrong.

DINGO: Really? I was expecting someone much ...

(SHIRLEY waits for the adjective)

older.

(SHIRLEY smiles)

SHIRLEY: You are here for the interview?

DINGO: Yes ma'am.

SHIRLEY: Such a polite boy.

Let's see if I can find your application. Your name?

DINGO: Dingo McGraw.

SHIRLEY: Ah yes. Here we are. Catchy name. Dingo McGraw.

DINGO: Thank you, ma'am.

SHIRLEY: Ah. You just started at the university. My daughter goes there.

DINGO: Your daughter made an excellent choice in schools.

SHIRLEY: I suggested it.

DINGO: Your daughter made an excellent choice in mothers.

SHIRLEY: (a moment. She is taken.)

Have you ever dealt with the public?

DINGO: Well. I did go to public high school.

SHIRLEY: Yes. Yes, good point.

I don't suppose you have chosen a major? Not that you need to. You have time.

DINGO: I just declared. I'm a women's studies major.

SHIRLEY: Really.

DINGO: Yes.

SHIRLEY: I didn't know you could major in 'em.

DINGO: I was surprised too.

SHIRLEY: So. Working your way through college are you?

DINGO: Yes ma'am.

SHIRLEY: Your parents helping out at all?

DINGO: My parents live in Oroville.

SHIRLEY: Oh. I... I see.

What do your parents do for a living?

DINGO: My father's a minister.

SHIRLEY: A spiritual man.

DINGO: I bet the Mystery Spot is a very spiritual place.

SHIRLEY: Yes. Yes, it is. You'll feel right at home.

(pause)

Well. The hours here are flexible. Can you work weekends?

DINGO: Wow. Ah, sure! I'll do whatever is most beneficial to you.

SHIRLEY: (thoughtful pause) Do you believe in UFOs Dingo?

DINGO: I... I think that... well, it's interesting... I was just about to ask you the same question.

SHIRLEY: Really? So, you must have done your research.

DINGO: Ah... absolutely.

SHIRLEY: So, you know then that some people believe that the source of all the strange phenomenon of this plot of land comes from cones of metal, secretly brought here by aliens and buried deep within the earth as a guidance system for alien spacecraft.

DINGO: Yes.

(SHIRLEY waits, apparently expecting more. DINGO is a little panicked.)

Buuuut, this explanation is...

SHIRLEY: Exactly.

DINGO: A bit too...

SHIRLEY: Precisely my point. It's all a bit too easy.

(DINGO nearly collapses with relief that he got through that one.)

People invent these... these physical explanations for anything they don't understand. Science has made us so enamored of the physical that it leaves little room for the metaphysical. Do you know what I mean, Dingo?

DINGO: Yes. I believe so.

SHIRLEY: You know, throughout the world there are locations with mysterious properties similar to the Mystery Spot. What are these places? Are they portals to a parallel universe? We just don't know.

DINGO: No, we don't.

SHIRLEY: Many people consider The Mystery Spot to be a hokey tourist attraction. I used to think that as well, before I began spending time here. Sure, some of the Mystery is simply optical illusion. But... not all of it. There is something to this place. Some magic. Yes, magic. I believe in it.

DINGO: Yes, I got goose-bumps the moment I stepped foot into the Mystery Spot.

SHIRLEY: So, you agree?

DINGO: I agree with everything you have ever said.

SHIRLEY: But some people just don't believe in the magic. They insist on other explanations.

DINGO: In high school, my history teacher, Mr. Anderson, used to say "There is a distinction between 'belief' in a set of propositions, and 'faith,' which allows us to put our trust in them."

SHIRLEY: Yes. Yes, that is very wise.

(taps pencil, thinking.)

I think you should be a tour guide.

DINGO: Really?

SHIRLEY: You can take the training now and start this weekend if you like. That pays the best and you sometimes make a lot in tips. How does that sound?

DINGO: Sounds great!

SHIRLEY: (Extending hand) Welcome to the Mystery Spot family.

DINGO: I am honored to be part of the team.

(exit SHIRLEY)

SCENE 6

Inside the Mystery Spot cabin.

Enter tourists and Mr. Williams

DINGO: (leading tour) Mr. Prather, the original owner and the person who discovered the Mystery Spot, was as perplexed as you and I are today by the odd forces at work in and around this cabin. It seems that inside this 150 foot diameter circle of force, the laws of gravity have gone haywire.

Animals are particularly sensitive to the Mystery Spot force. Stop and listen a moment.

(the crowd stops and
listens)

Do you hear the birds chirping in the distance? They all stay outside that 150-foot diameter circle of force. Those that do venture near the vortex of the force become disoriented. Inside the circle of the Mystery Spot, I've personally witnessed squirrels jumping from tree to tree, and miss.

This steel ball on a pendulum dramatically demonstrates the forces at work here at the Mystery Spot. Notice the influence of the force, causing the ball to hang at this peculiar angle.

Scientists have found the force vector to be pointed that way.

Please madam, if you would assist me. Your name?

BARBARA: Barbara.

DINGO: Barbara, if you would simply push the ball, yes that's right, first toward the vector of force. Good. And now away from the vector of force. Yes.

BARBARA: Oh that's weird!

DINGO: Can you describe for the group what you felt?

BARBARA: It's much harder to push the ball away from the force.

(awed sounds from tourists)

MR. WILLIAMS: But this can be explained, can it not, in terms of visual-proprioceptive interaction?

DINGO: (to audience) I've seen this coming. This guy showed up for the tour with his own plumb bob and compass. Throughout the tour, he's been smiling knowingly to himself and whispering snide comments to anyone unfortunate enough to be standing within earshot.

MR. WILLIAMS: The steel ball is resting in the gravitational field, correct?

DINGO: (to audience) We tour guides refer to people who have no faith in the magical power of the Mystery Spot as "critics."

MR. WILLIAMS: Because this cabin is tilted, the brain expects it to be easy to push the ball toward visual vertical. Since you are actually pushing the ball against gravity, we process it as being hard.

DINGO: (to audience) This guy obviously hasn't gotten laid in months.

MR. WILLIAMS: When you push the ball the opposite direction, away from visual vertical, the brain expects that to be hard, and indeed it is. But because it is the expected result, the brain processes it as being easier than pushing the ball toward visual vertical.

DINGO: (to audience) I typically find critics, such as this fellow, hard to follow.

MR. WILLIAMS: What the ball dramatically demonstrates is not the power of the Mystery Spot, but rather the Power of Expectation.

DINGO: (to audience) I always give the same response.

(to Mr. Williams) In high school, my history teacher, Mr. Anderson, used to say "There is a distinction between 'belief' in a set of propositions, and 'faith,' which allows us to put our trust in them."

(crowd murmurs approval,
Mr. Williams is rebuffed.)

(to audience) Frankly, I find what Mr. Anderson said also hard to follow. But it always shuts 'em up.

(to tourists) Folks, I've enjoyed having you on my tour today. Please be sure to visit the gift shop and pick up a free bumper sticker on your way out. And tips are welcome but not required!

(as tourists shuffle out,
some stopping to give a tip
and say a word of thanks to
Dingo, a pat on the shoulder
perhaps...)

(to audience) At the end of the tour, critics always lurk in the background, waiting to take one final swing at you. When everyone else has gone, they strike.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, son, that was the best demonstration of the Power of Expectation I have ever witnessed.

DINGO: (to audience) Then they...

(MR. WILLIAMS winks at Dingo. DINGO cringes)

yuck, they wink, knowingly. It's so gross. And then slip you...

(MR. WILLIAMS gives Dingo tip)

a tip. Which is always a...

(DINGO looks at tip)

yup, a dollar.

(MR. WILLIAMS exits, as DINGO watches him leave.)

The Power of Expectation. What an asshole.

(Light off Dingo)

SCENE 7

A parallel universe, the Afterlife, bathed in white light.

ANGEL CELESTINE on stage. **SYLVIA PLATH** kneels before Angel Celestine, head bowed.

SYLVIA: Angel Celestine.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Rise, Spirit.

(SYLVIA rises.)

Sylvia Plath. How are you today?

SYLVIA: Oh. The same.

ANGEL CELESTINE: The same. Yes. Spirit Plath, we have been most troubled about you.

SYLVIA: About me, Angel Celestine?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Your soul has never found peace here. Your earthly life ended before your spirit was ready. Your spirit is troubled, it worries me. I must do something about you.

SYLVIA: What?

ANGEL CELESTINE: You have something to learn before you can stay here with us.

SYLVIA: What must I learn?

ANGEL CELESTINE: You must discover that for yourself.

SYLVIA: Can you give me a clue?

ANGEL CELESTINE: I do not know what you have to learn. But I will try to guide you on your quest to discover that for yourself.

SYLVIA: What quest?

ANGEL CELESTINE: You are to return to earth.

SYLVIA: Earth? Really?!

ANGEL CELESTINE: Your soul will be given a body.

SYLVIA: A human body that can touch and taste and smell?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Yes.

SYLVIA: See with eyes - real eyes?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Yes.

SYLVIA: I can walk upon the earth, feel the wind on my face again.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Absolutely.

SYLVIA: Yes. That. That I desire that above all else.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Yes. You desire that above all else. I believe that is part of your problem.

SYLVIA: When do I leave?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Immediately.

SYLVIA: Oh, this is so exciting. Where are you sending me exactly?

ANGEL CELESTINE: I believe we have an appropriate *spot* for you to begin your quest.

(Lights down)

SCENE 8

Mystery Spot Office

(DINGO walks over to a desk. Waits expectantly.)

DINGO: Ah. Hello?

Anyone back there? I'm here for my check.

(LIZ enters, distracted, sorting through a pile of paycheck envelopes.)

LIZ: Yes. Yes. I'm just finishing up --

(sees Dingo)

Oh.

DINGO: Hi.

LIZ: Hi.

DINGO: So. You're the payroll department?

LIZ: Yes. But I am not "management."

DINGO: Wow. So, your mother is--

LIZ: Management. She controls the means of production.
I don't.

DINGO: She's nice.

LIZ: We just had a huge argument.

DINGO: Oh. Who won?

LIZ: Who won?

You don't ask what the argument was about. You don't ask how the argument made me feel. Who won. Men. Everything is a baseball game.

DINGO: So. What was the argument about?

LIZ: I don't want to talk about it.

(pause) She just said...

(lights up Shirley)

SHIRLEY: Women's studies? That's an ironic name, given that it is so profoundly useless that it will force you to be dependent upon a man for the rest of your life.

(lights off Shirley)

DINGO: Oh.

LIZ: You're a women's studies major. Would she ever say that to you?

DINGO: No. I don't think she did.

LIZ: You told her you're a women's studies major?

DINGO: Yes.

LIZ: What did she say?

DINGO: She said she didn't know you could major in 'em.

LIZ: See. You're male. I'm female. Completely different reaction to the same information.

DINGO: Well. I'm not her daughter.

LIZ: Now you're defending her?

DINGO: No. I'm... understanding her.

(LIZ glares, pause)

(to audience) I sense myself drifting further and further from my goal. I make a desperate move.

(to Liz) Wanna come over to my dorm tonight?

(pause)

To study?

LIZ: I can't. Tonight I have plans to... defrag my hard drive.

DINGO: Oh. Well, another time maybe?

LIZ: Yeah. Maybe.

(DINGO turns to leave)

LIZ: Dingo?

(DINGO turns back expectantly)

(LIZ holds up check. DINGO returns, reaches for it. A moment between them.)

(Exit LIZ)

SCENE 9

Mystery Spot tour. Tour group is listening to Dingo.

DINGO: Now if you will follow me.

(They go over to a pair of blocks sitting on the floor. DINGO rests his level between the two blocks. Appropriate geometric lines are behind the blocks to cause the height illusion.)

As you can see here, the two blocks are level with each other.

I need two volunteers.

(volunteers raise their hands)

Yes, thanks. You and you.

First if you would be so kind as to stand back to back.

(VOLUNTEERS stand back to back)

There. As you can see, they are approximately the same height.

Now you stand here

(VOLUNTEER 1 stands upon block)

and... you... here.

(VOLUNTEER 2 stands upon the other block)

A force running from the southwest to the northeast pushes everything away from the southwest. You can see how even the trees lean to the northeast. The force distorts height.

Please, observe each other's height. What do you see?

VOLUNTEER 1: You shrank.

VOLUNTEER 2: (overlapping) You got bigger.

DINGO: Now switch.

(the two switch places.)

Can you tell us what you experience?

VOLUNTEER 1: Hey. Now you're bigger.

VOLUNTEER 2: (overlapping) He shrank.

(Oo's and ah's from the crowd)

DINGO: (to audience) God, I love this job.

(Tourists leave, except Mr. Williams. Dingo remains. Notices Mr. Williams.)

DINGO: Oh. It's you.

MR. WILLIAMS: I thought more about what you said. Faith versus belief.

DINGO: You mean: "There is a distinction between 'belief' in a set of propositions, and 'faith,' which allows us to put our trust in them."

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. In thinking about it, I realized that neither belief nor faith have anything to do with what you are claiming on this tour.

DINGO: Oh. That's interesting. Well, thank you for taking the tour. Now I really must–

MR. WILLIAMS: You shouldn't attribute the Mystery Spot phenomenon to warped gravity, or force vectors, or alien guidance systems. The Mystery Spot is an optical illusion theme park, caused by all these angles.

You are making false claims on this tour. You really should tell people the truth.

(MR. WILLIAMS exits)

DINGO: I guess he still hasn't gotten laid.

(exit DINGO)

SCENE 10

Through the portal, Sylvia Plath materializes into our world.

Sylvia Plath, eyes closed, takes a deep breath. She wiggles her fingers, tests out her legs. She feels her arms.

SYLVIA: (inhales deeply, smiles) Yesssss.

Ah, the memories come crashing through my head!

(Lifts her arms over her head. Feels her hair)

My hair. So sumptuous.

I wonder if they gave me a...

(she plunges her hand down her pants)

Ah. They did. I don't remember it being so glorious. That horrid husband of mine. He didn't deserve me. No more academic poets for me. This time I'm gonna get me a cowboy.

I was such a fool to kill myself.

(Noticing her clothes.
Notices her scarf).

I don't remember owning a purple scarf. My favorite color is yellow. It looks horrible on me but I do like yellow. Yellow is so vulnerable. Purple. So cocky and sure of itself. Like men. This purple scarf would love to dominate my pretty yellow blouse.

(pause)

God, one day I would love to just have a regular thought. Something useful like "You forgot to do the laundry."

This purple scarf is actually quite lovely. I predict I'll throw it away.

(ANGEL CELESTINE sticks
his head through the portal.)

ANGEL CELESTINE: Spirit Plath!

SYLVIA: Angel Celestine!

(ANGEL CELESTINE enters)

ANGEL CELESTINE: I trust you are acclimating to your new body?

SYLVIA: I forgot all the joys of this world.

(ANGEL CELESTINE gives a
look)

But, of course, there are joys in the other world.

ANGEL CELESTINE: I shall visit from time-to-time to assist in your journey.

SYLVIA: Where should I go from here?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Where you go does not matter. What you do matters.

(ANGEL CELESTINE slips out through the portal)

SYLVIA: That guy is starting to bug me.

(lights down Sylvia)

SCENE 11

Mystery Spot Office.

Shirley on stage, reading textbook - "Women Images and Reality: A Multicultural Anthology."

(Enter LIZ)

SHIRLEY: Oh, hi darlin'.

LIZ: Hi. Mom, are you reading my Introduction to Feminisms text book?

SHIRLEY: It's very interesting. Have you read the part about-

LIZ: I don't like you going through my things.

SHIRLEY: It's not like I'm reading your diary.

LIZ: I don't like you prying into my life like that.

SHIRLEY: It's just a book, for heaven's sake.

LIZ: And feminists don't keep diaries. We keep journals.

SHIRLEY: I think your book is difficult to read.

LIZ: It's a college textbook, Mom. Not Cosmopolitan.

SHIRLEY: I don't read Cosmopolitan.

LIZ: I didn't say you did.

SHIRLEY: Okay. Okay. There.

(SHIRLEY puts book down.)

(Moment between them.)

What are you going to do with a degree in Women's Studies?

LIZ: I don't know. What did you do with your degree in acting?

SHIRLEY: Well, you know. I worked in some films.

LIZ: It was what you wanted to do, right?

SHIRLEY: It was my passion.

LIZ: Women's studies is my passion. I don't know if I will ever make a career of it. But at the moment, I am doing exactly what I want to be doing.

SHIRLEY: Well. Okay. I just worry about your future.

LIZ: I know mom.

I'll tell you one thing, whatever I do, I will never put my career on hold so some man can have his career.

SHIRLEY: What are you referring to?

LIZ: You know what I am referring to. I loved Daddy but you stopped doing what you loved to put him through college. And he let you.

SHIRLEY: It was not exactly like that.

LIZ: Here you were like, getting auditions for Woody Allen movies. Right? And you stopped all that to help yet another husband become more economically secure than the wife.

SHIRLEY: That's not exactly what hap--

LIZ: And then, big surprise, he never returns the favor.

SHIRLEY: Your father would have been happy to return the favor. But circumstances--

LIZ: So, if you worry about me repeating your mistakes, I can assure you it will not happen.

SHIRLEY: Elizabeth....

LIZ: I don't want to hear it. Throughout history women have been making excuses for their own oppression. No more.

SHIRLEY: (sighs) Okay.

LIZ: Okay.

(awkward pause)

SHIRLEY: I think that boy Dingo likes you.

LIZ: Well. I'm the one who hands out the pay checks.

SHIRLEY: He's nice.

LIZ: He calls women "gals." Even in my Intro to Feminisms class. It is so embarrassing. Just, sometimes his English is so... primitive. He's like, from some redneck town. He's just not my type.

SHIRLEY: I think in your textbook they would refer to his background as "working class."

(awkward pause)

LIZ: Well. Yes. I suppose.

SHIRLEY: That bothers you?

LIZ: (flustered) No. No, of course not. It's just. He's not my type.

SHIRLEY: Your type comes from a different background?

LIZ: I don't want to talk about it.

SHIRLEY: I can tell you he is one of the best tour guides we have.

LIZ: Just means he's good at deceiving people.

SHIRLEY: (sighs)

(Lights down Shirley and Liz)

SCENE 12

Next morning.

Mystery Spot Office

Dingo on stage, studying his Intro to Feminisms textbook

(Enter SHIRLEY)

SHIRLEY: Good morning! You're here bright and early.

DINGO: I like it here in the morning before all the tourists.

SHIRLEY: Me too. It's so peaceful.

(pause)

(re textbook) I was reading a bit of that text book last night.

DINGO: It's not an easy read.

SHIRLEY: I agree.

DINGO: I've got to buckle down. Our first paper is due next week and I have no idea what to write about.

SHIRLEY: Well then, don't let me interrupt.

(DINGO concentrates on his book, taking notes on what he is reading. Using his yellow highlighter etc. SHIRLEY watches him.)

Tell me. What will you do with your degree in Women's Studies?

DINGO: (Not looking up.) Well. I hadn't really thought about it. But half of the earth's population is women. So, it should be easy to get a job.

SHIRLEY: But, a job in what? What's it preparing you for?

DINGO: Well. It's a very academic program.

SHIRLEY: Really.

DINGO: Frankly, I was hoping for something a bit more... hands on.

SHIRLEY: I asked Liz last night what she intended to do with her degree.

DINGO: (Looking up) What did she say?

SHIRLEY: She just got mad at me for being so pragmatic. She said that whatever she does, she will not become like me.

DINGO: Like you! But you own the Mystery Spot, you are the boss of all these people, you're the man.

SHIRLEY: She feels I gave up my dreams of being an actress to support Martin, my husband.

DINGO: Yeah. That might be frowned upon in this class.

SHIRLEY: But that's not what happened! It's not!

DINGO: What did happen?

SHIRLEY: Oh. I shouldn't be bothering you.

DINGO: It's no bother.

SHIRLEY: You're very sweet. Do you really want to know?

DINGO: Yeah.

SHIRLEY: Well.

(sighs) Okay. Here goes.

(Lights down Shirley and
Dingo)

SCENE 13

Mystery Spot Office.

Afternoon

Lights up Liz. DINGO enters area where LIZ is busy writing.

DINGO: Knock, knock.

LIZ: Oh. It must be Friday. I have your check right here. Somewhere.

(As Liz searches:)

DINGO: (re writing) Working on your Intro to Feminisms paper?

LIZ: Yeah.

DINGO: What did you choose?

LIZ: Sylvia Plath's psychologically abusive husband.

DINGO: That sounds... Intense.

LIZ: He was a real jerk. Well. Here's your check.

DINGO: Thanks. (pause) Okay, be seeing you.

LIZ: Okay.

(DINGO turns to leave.)

How about you?

DINGO: What?

LIZ: What are you doing your paper on?

DINGO: Oh. I'm still working it out. I'll tell you if I actually finish it.

LIZ: Maybe you should do it on that theory of yours about *Ariel*. You know, that it's not just a book of poems - that it tells a story. I think that's interesting.

DINGO: Yeah.

LIZ: I see you reading that book all the time in the quad. You must have memorized it by now.

DINGO: Yeah.

LIZ: People say that the poem *Ariel* is about her horse.

DINGO: Oh yeah. It's all about hooves and galloping and the horse's mane, like, flying wildly in the wind and stuff.

LIZ: But she never says any of that in the poem.

DINGO: Oh, it's in there all right, but it's just, you know... poetic.

LIZ: Wow. Okay.

DINGO: See ya.

(DINGO walks away, LIZ returns to her essay. Dingo exhales. He squeaked by on that one. Exit DINGO)

SCENE 14

Mystery Spot Office

LIZ at desk. Enter MR. WILLIAMS

LIZ: May I help you?

MR. WILLIAMS: I would like to speak to the owner please.

LIZ: Is there something I can help you with?

MR. WILLIAMS: I think I should speak directly to the owner.

LIZ: She'll be back shortly. She's just up at the cabin. You know, the "center of the vortex."

(THEY laugh cordially.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Are you a tour guide?

LIZ: No. I just do the book keeping.

MR. WILLIAMS: You don't seem to believe in the Mystery Spot.

LIZ: Do you?

MR. WILLIAMS: What's to believe in? It's just a bunch of optical tricks.

LIZ: Some people attribute special powers to the Mystery Spot.

MR. WILLIAMS: The power to attract a bunch of gullible tourists.

LIZ: I agree.

(THEY laugh)

It's just a bunch of optical tricks.

(Enter SHIRLEY and DINGO,
in the middle of a
conversation, very jovial.)

DINGO: (seeing Mr. Williams) Oh shit.

LIZ: Mom, this is mister....

MR. WILLIAMS: Williams. Arnold Williams. And you are?

SHIRLEY: Shirley Armstrong.

MR. WILLIAMS: And I remember this young man. Dungo?

DINGO: Dingo.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, let me get right to the point. I am sure that you are an honest woman. You don't lie or mislead people.

SHIRLEY: What is this about?

MR. WILLIAMS: Your tour guides claim that the Mystery Spot phenomenon is caused by some unseen force, or warped gravity or some such.

SHIRLEY: Go on.

MR. WILLIAMS: But, I am sure everyone in this room knows that the Mystery Spot experience is all optical illusion, just as your daughter says.

SHIRLEY: (to Liz) Did you say that?

MR. WILLIAMS: Your daughter is a reasonable girl. I am concerned that you are making claims on your tours that just cannot be supported by science. Indeed, I have been looking into it and I have found several journal articles that give completely logical explanations of the phenomenon here at the Mystery Spot. And I can assure you that the explanations do not include force vectors, warped gravity, or a hole in the ozone layer above the

Mystery Spot, all of which I have heard from your guides.

SHIRLEY: Where are you going with this?

MR. WILLIAMS: I think your tour guides should tell people the truth.

LIZ: I agree. I mean, the stuff these guides say is embarrassing. The Mystery Spot is such a scam. It's all perception. It's all illusion.

DINGO: It's more than illusion.

LIZ: (dismissive sigh)

DINGO: It is. The trees feel the Mystery Spot force. That's why they grow in weird ways.

LIZ: That's just coincidence.

DINGO: There is some invisible force acting upon the trees, and the billiard ball, and the pendulum. This strange attraction to the center of the vortex. The tourists can feel it.

LIZ: I feel no attraction.

(DINGO steps closer)

DINGO: But you see evidence of the attraction.

LIZ: I see evidence of some unusual force. But it can be explained in scientific terms.

DINGO: Like... chemistry.

LIZ: Like... illusion.

DINGO: Well, illusions are mysterious.

LIZ: Illusions can be explained.

DINGO: Even if it is all illusion, aren't you amazed anyway? Amazed that we can look at something and be tricked into thinking it's something else?

LIZ: No. That's the definition of illusion.

DINGO: For example.

(A Ponzo Illusion is behind Dingo. He walks away from Liz, seemingly becoming larger and larger. DINGO then turns back to Liz.)

Yes, it can be explained. But aren't you astounded anyway? Doesn't it make you wonder?

(LIZ walks over to Dingo, becoming larger, until it is evident that indeed, they are back to their regular heights. It indeed is all illusion.)

LIZ: Not really.

MR. WILLIAMS: Somehow, I think we are off track here.

Madame, I am a retired attorney. My specialty was consumer fraud. I find your entire operation to be a fraud.

I suggest that you instruct your guides to refrain from attributing the Mystery Spot experience to anything other than optical illusion, as describe in countless articles in perception and psychology journals.

If they do not, I can assure you I know how to force this issue more strongly. I hope it does not come to that.

Listen to your daughter. She is very level headed.
Good day.

(Exit MR. WILLIAMS)

(pause)

LIZ: (rising) Well, I'm done for the day. I think I'll just--

SHIRLEY: Sit down.

(LIZ sits)

(pause)

So, Elizabeth, do you suggest we change the name to be The (indicates quotes) "Kinda Mysterious" Spot. Or perhaps The "Interesting Illusions" Spot. Or maybe just cut to the chase and call it The Fraud Spot. Hmmm?

(awkward pause)

DINGO: I think the Interesting Illusions Spot could be--

SHIRLEY: I'm asking Liz.

LIZ: Look, why are you upset with me? I just think this place is kinda dorky.

SHIRLEY: Kinda dorky? Just to remind you, this dorky place is paying for your education, for whatever it's worth. And how long do you think we'll last if we just explain everything in scientific terms? People want mystery. They long for inexplicable powers that are beyond human comprehension. They don't want to have all the answers. They want magic to exist. They want... God to exist.

LIZ: Oh brother.

DINGO: And I really like the bumper stickers.

SHIRLEY: Where are the modern mysteries? What is left of the unknown? I will not have my tour guides depriving our customers of the opportunity to be perplexed. I will not have my tour guides crushing people's opportunity to be filled with wonder.

LIZ: Look. This is all easily solved.

SHIRLEY: Okay.

LIZ: Just have the guides give no explanation.

DINGO: But people ask us.

LIZ: Then tell them the truth. Tell them it is optical illusion.

DINGO: But I don't believe that.

LIZ: Then tell them... Tell them what you believe. Just be sure to present it as your personal belief. Not an absolute.

SHIRLEY: It's not fair. Scientists can speak with authority, because they are scientists. But the rest of us have to meekly apologize for our own pathetic beliefs because they aren't written up in some journal. Well... Well...

WELL FUCK THAT!

(LIZ and DINGO are blown away.)

(sighs) Where is the magic? Where is the magic.

I'm going to see Mr. Chen, my herbalist. Wisest man I know. He may have some thoughts on what to do.

DINGO: Okay. I'll watch the gift shop.

(SHIRLEY heads for door)

Mrs. Armstrong.

(SHIRLEY turns)

It'll be okay.

(Exit SHIRLEY)

LIZ: This will all blow over soon. Don't worry.

DINGO: Yeah. Thanks.

(Exit LIZ)

SCENE 15

Mystery Spot Gift Shop

DINGO goes to the counter of the Mystery Spot gift shop, opens his Intro to Feminisms book.

SYLVIA PLATH enters. Seeing Sylvia, **DINGO** quickly grabs his copy of *Ariel*. Pretends to be absorbed in *Ariel*.

SYLVIA meanders about store a bit, then approaches Dingo.

SYLVIA: Hi.

DINGO: Hi.

SYLVIA: I'm looking for the manager.

DINGO: She'll be back shortly. She had an appointment with her hyperbolist.

SYLVIA: Hyperbolist? Really? I wondered when that would become a career option.

(**SYLVIA** sees her book.)

My gosh, you're reading *Ariel*?

DINGO: Yeah. It's really intense.

SYLVIA: Is it? That's nice of you to say.

DINGO: What do you mean?

SYLVIA: Oh, I really shouldn't say.

DINGO: Go on.

SYLVIA: May I?

(SHE takes book, holds up back cover, peeks around from behind)

DINGO: Oh my gosh!

SYLVIA: Yes.

(Handing book back)

DINGO: You're

(looks at book cover to be sure)

Sylvia Plath? The famous local author?

SYLVIA: Well, I used to be... more local. So, what do you think of it? Be honest.

DINGO: I have found your book to be very... useful.

SYLVIA: (brightening) Really!

DINGO: Absolutely.

SYLVIA: Oh, you have just made my day.

DINGO: Is there anything I can help you with?

SYLVIA: Oh. No. I'm just, on a quest.

DINGO: A quest? Like a scavenger hunt?

SYLVIA: Very much like that.

DINGO: What are you looking for?

SYLVIA: I don't know. They wouldn't tell me. I guess I'm supposed to know it when I find it.

DINGO: Oh, don't you just hate that? I mean, if I'm on a scavenger hunt, just looking is hard enough. At least tell me what I'm looking for, for heaven's sake.

SYLVIA: Yes. Exactly. You are so right.

(awkward pause)

You aren't a cowboy are you?

DINGO: No. I'm afraid of horses.

SYLVIA: I love horses.

DINGO: Oh, right. Ariel.

SYLVIA: How do you know about Ariel?

DINGO: Your poem.

SYLVIA: Ariel was my horse when I was a little girl.

DINGO: Pounding hooves. Mane blowing wildly in the wind.

SYLVIA: But, I never exactly say that in the poem.

DINGO: Oh, it's all in there, it's just... poetic.

SYLVIA: What's your name?

DINGO: (extending hand) Dingo.

SYLVIA: (shaking) Sylvia.

DINGO: Well, good luck on your scavenger hunt.

SYLVIA: Thanks. If you find whatever it is I'm supposed to be looking for, let me know.

DINGO: I'll keep an eye out.

(SYLVIA begins to leave)

Excuse me. Here.

(DINGO digs out a ticket
from the desk)

Have a complimentary ticket. Take a tour of the
Mystery Spot. You might find what you are
searching for.

SYLVIA: Gee. That's awful nice of you. Thanks.

DINGO: (smiles)

(SYLVIA exits. DINGO
watches her go)

What a babe.

(lights down Dingo)

SCENE 16

Sylvia Plath onstage. **ANGEL CELESTINE** sticks head
through portal.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Sylvia.

SYLVIA: (SYLVIA jumps) Angel Celestine! It really startles
me when you do that.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Sorry. I'm just checking in on your
progress.

SYLVIA: Oh. I am completely out of sorts here. I don't
know what I'm doing. From that standpoint, this
visit seems terribly similar to my first visit.

ANGEL CELESTINE: First visit?

SYLVIA: You know, my life.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Oh.

SYLVIA: I was being poetic.

ANGEL CELESTINE: I see.

SYLVIA: But I met a nice fellow and took an interesting tour of... of, well, I'm not exactly sure what it was.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Your journey will include getting to know people here on earth.

SYLVIA: The fellow I met was reading my book! I've never seen someone actually read anything I published.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Good. Good. Did he like your book?

SYLVIA: He said it was useful.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Excellent. Perhaps you should visit him again.

SYLVIA: Okay. But can't you give me any more guidance in my quest?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Perhaps. Tell me, Spirit Plath, you were a tormented soul on earth?

SYLVIA: Yes.

ANGEL CELESTINE: As you lay your head in that oven, did you pray?

SYLVIA: Of course. My entire being was screaming into the vault of heaven. Pleading.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Pleading for what?

SYLVIA: Pleading for what every person pleads for when they have their head in the oven and the gas turned on. Pleading for a reason to take my head out.

ANGEL CELESTINE: I believe that is your quest, Spirit Plath. You must discover a reason to take your head out of the oven. Tell me spirit, why did you take your own life?

SYLVIA: Because my life was meaningless.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Perhaps if you discover that your life on earth indeed had meaning, you will then find peace in the afterlife.

SYLVIA: Perhaps.

ANGEL CELESTINE: I must leave you now.

SYLVIA: Before you go....

ANGEL CELESTINE: Yes?

SYLVIA: Have... have others been sent back to earth like me?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Certainly.

SYLVIA: And have they been successful?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Yes. Every one.

SYLVIA: And then, they returned to the afterlife?

ANGEL CELESTINE: All except one.

SYLVIA: What happened with the one?

ANGEL CELESTINE: The spirit, while in her physical body, became pregnant.

SYLVIA: Oh, that's dreadful. So, she had to live out the rest of her natural life?

ANGEL CELESTINE: Yes. It became very messy. Well, I must return. You have my blessings child.

**(ANGEL CELESTINE
disappears into portal)**

SYLVIA: (pause) YYYYYYES!

INTERMISSION

EVALUATOR ONLY

ACT II**SCENE 17**

Dorm room

Dingo enters his dorm room late at night. A dorm room bunk bed. The lumpy covers on the top bunk must be his roommate.

DINGO: Phil?

(no response from the lump)

Phil you awake?

What a night.

Liz finally invited me to her dorm room. I totally blew it Phil.

I... I didn't exactly ask Liz to have sex. I think I said something like "I'm going to take my clothes off now."

God I am so lame. What an idiot.

I just feel so... awkward around her. Before you ask, the answer is "no," we didn't have sex. Surprisingly. But it got us talking at least. About stuff. So she says:

(Lights up on Liz)

LIZ: Dingo, I am at the point in my life where I'm really looking for a meaningful relationship.

(Lights down on Liz)

DINGO: Phil, do you know what a euphemism is?

I'm not sure I know what a euphemism is or how to define it or whatever but I know one when I hear one and the word ... "relationship" ... Huh? What are they talking about, exactly? It's always brought

up and guys are supposed to know what they mean by relationship and we nod our head and smile.

I wish I could just grab every women in the world and scream:

"Guess what, ladies? When you talk about relationships, we haven't a clue what you're talking about. I mean. We wanna have sex with you. In some dictionary ... somewhere ... isn't that defined as some form of a relationship? "

So Liz says:

(Lights up on Liz)

LIZ: Don't people have relationships where you come from?

(Lights down on Liz)

DINGO: I hate it when she refers to Oroville as "where you come from." That is like so ... condescending. "Don't people have relationships where you come from?" As Liz defines relationship I think I can honestly say that, in Oroville, yes, we do have relationships.

Just... not with each other.

(DINGO collapses onto the lower bunk)

I'm starting to think I'll never feel at home at UC Santa Cruz.

(In the upper bunk, a GIRL pops up from under the covers)

GIRL: (Poking the lump next to her) Phil. Phil. I think your roommate's back.

(DINGO, bolts straight up in bed, wide eyed)

God, he's just like you described him.

(GIRL plops back down. After a moment, DINGO plops back down into his bed.)

SCENE 18

Dingo at the counter of Mystery Spot gift shop, reading *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. On the counter near him sits an apple.

SYLVIA enters.

DINGO: Oh. Hi.

SYLVIA: Hi.

Hey, you're reading *The Bell Jar*.

DINGO: Well, since I met you, I took an interest.

SYLVIA: Gee, this is so exciting.

DINGO: And I'm actually reading it.

SYLVIA: What do you mean, you're "actually" reading it?

(SYLVIA picks up apple. Takes a bite.)

DINGO: I mean I am really, really, really reading it.

SYLVIA: And?

DINGO: I find it interesting.

SYLVIA: Really?

DINGO: Yes.

SYLVIA:

(**SYLVIA** takes another bite
of apple)

I have other things you might find interesting.

DINGO: Really?

SYLVIA: Yes.

LIZ: (OS) Dingo?

SYLVIA: Tonight, your dorm room. 8 o'clock. Be there.

(**SYLVIA** swiftly departs)

DINGO: Whoa.

LIZ: (OS) Dingo?

(**LIZ** enters)

Are you okay?

DINGO: I was just talking to Sylvia Plath. You just missed her. You could have talked to her about your paper.

LIZ: Sylvia Plath? Really? Where did she go?

DINGO: She left.

LIZ: Dingo, Sylvia Plath died in London in 1963.

CHORUS: (OS) (sung as a Gregorian Chant)

Holy, Holy, Holy!

Holy Shit!

DINGO: Holy Shit! But. She was here. We talked. She ate part of my apple. And then she left.

LIZ: This apple?

(LIZ picks up apple. Spins it, exhibiting all sides.)

(There is no bite out of the apple)

DINGO: I... Sylvia Plath was here. She isn't dead.

LIZ: Dingo, she's dead.

DINGO: Well, I thought you might want to talk to her about your paper.

LIZ: I don't want to talk to anyone about my paper.

DINGO: What?

LIZ: I got a "C+". A "C+"!

DINGO: Oh. Sorry.

LIZ: The grader wrote on the paper that I was too vitriolic.

DINGO: Vitriolic?

LIZ: Too acerbic.

DINGO: Oh.

LIZ: How'd you do?

DINGO: I did okay.

LIZ: (indicates "okay tell me")

DINGO: I got an "A."

LIZ: Oh. Well. Congratulations.

DINGO: Thanks. My first grade at college and I got an "A."
I can't believe it.

LIZ: You never told me what your paper was about.

DINGO: I did my paper on a courageous woman who gave up her career for her family.

LIZ: What!! That's not courage! That's another woman being swallowed up by society's expectations. I can't believe you got an "A."

DINGO: Well. She did okay for herself. She owns the Mystery Spot.

LIZ: (pause) You did your paper on my MOTHER?

DINGO: Yes.

LIZ: In a Women's Studies course you wrote a paper about a woman who gave up her career to put her husband through school and they gave you an "A"! This is... this is obscene!

DINGO: She didn't give up her career to put your father through school.

LIZ: She did! She was like getting auditions for Woody Allen movies, and she gave it up to support my father while he got his degree.

DINGO: Audition for Woody Allen. Is that what she told you?

LIZ: (pause) Are you telling me she... she didn't audition for a Woody Allen movie?

DINGO: No. She auditioned all right. It's just. She got the part. She got the lead role. That's what my paper is about.

LIZ: What! My mother was the lead in a Woody Allen movie!

DINGO: No. They began filming and then her newborn daughter became sick.

(pause)

She said you... you still have a scar.

(LIZ's hand goes to her chest)

You were less than a year old and had a life-threatening heart condition. You needed her. She did not want to leave your side. To be with you, she left in the middle of filming. After that, she could never work in the film industry again.

(LIZ is breathing hard)

Didn't the two of you ever talk about this?

(LIZ tries to respond. She can't. She runs out of the room)

Liz?!

(Lights down Dingo.)

(Lights up on Shirley, in a separate area of the stage. LIZ enters Shirley's area.)

(pause)

SHIRLEY: Hi darlin'.

(pause)

Are you okay?

LIZ: (Can barely speak. Holding back tears)

Why? Why does Dingo know this?

SHIRLEY: Know what?

LIZ: His paper. It's about you. It's about what you did.

SHIRLEY: Did he get a good grade?

LIZ: Why does he know this?

SHIRLEY: (long pause) Because he asked.

(LIZ goes slowly to Shirley.
SHIRLEY is perplexed.)

(LIZ embraces Shirley.)

LIZ: I'm sorry.

(SHIRLEY hugs her
daughter)

Mommy, I'm so sorry.

(Lights down slowly)

SCENE 19

Mystery Spot tour.

Dingo is leading a tour. Mr. Williams is on the tour, taking notes.

DINGO: (DINGO holds billiard ball)

Now I bring out the billiard ball of Mystery.

(DINGO brings out a 4 foot long board with a shallow gutter down the center. He places the board so that it bridges two platforms or boxes. The geometric lines make it appear to be sloping.)

Who thinks this board is level? Who thinks it is sloping up? Sloping down? If I put my level down, you see it is actually level. But that is not the strange thing.

(demonstrating with the
billiard ball)

The strange thing is when I roll the billiard ball on the board, the ball comes back.

(ohhs and awws from
crowd)

How can this be? You, sir. (indicating Mr. Williams)
Any ideas?

MR. WILLIAMS: It's very simple. This is an old trick.

DINGO: There is no trick.

MR. WILLIAMS: It has to do with how you roll it.

DINGO: Be my guest.

(DINGO hands MR.
WILLIAMS billiard ball. MR.
WILLIAMS rolls billiard ball.
It comes back.)

Oh. So you also are trying to deceive these fine folks with tricky rolling??

MR. WILLIAMS: There's a logical explanation. I'm just not sure what it is at the moment.

DINGO: The logical explanation is the Mystery Spot Force.

MR. WILLIAMS: Now wait a minute. I thought we agreed that--

DINGO: The same force that causes the trees to grow in spirals, causes people standing on level ground to look different heights--

MR. WILLIAMS: That's completely ridiculo--

DINGO: Causes pendulums to swing at odd angles.

(MR. WILLIAMS glares at Dingo)

The force that caused this cabin to tumble from its foundation and come to rest here, in the very center of the Mystery Spot. A force that is utterly beyond human understanding. A force that is...

(DINGO fixes upon Mr. Williams)

a mystery.

(pause)

MR. WILLIAMS: You will regret this.

SCENE 20

Dingo's dorm room. Dingo is nervous. Sylvia Plath knocks.

DINGO: Ah.

SYLVIA: Hello?

DINGO: Ah.

SYLVIA: (SYLVIA enters room)

There you are.

DINGO: I...

SYLVIA: What's the matter?

DINGO: Ah.

SYLVIA: Jittery? It's okay. I'm a little nervous too.

DINGO: I... I don't have very much time. I... need to defrag my hard drive.

SYLVIA: Really?

(SYLVIA lounges upon
Dingo's bed)

Maybe I can help you with that hard drive.

DINGO: I read your bio.

SYLVIA: Do they say nice things about me?

DINGO: They say you're dead.

SYLVIA: Oh that. Let's not talk about that.

DINGO: Seems like it might be important.

(SYLVIA invitingly pats the
bed beside her. DINGO
doesn't budge.)

You killed yourself.

SYLVIA: I was depressed.

DINGO: My mom says that if a girl is depressed, she usually just needs a different hair style.

SYLVIA: Believe me, I tried that.

DINGO: When I saw you last, you took a bite out of an apple. But later that apple was whole.

SYLVIA: Yes. I seem to have a rather fragile relationship with reality. Always have.

DINGO: Oh.

SYLVIA: Do you write poetry?

DINGO: No.

SYLVIA: Good. Why don't you come sit next to me? Show me what kinda cowboy you are.

DINGO: I... um... I think I'm at the point in my life where I'm looking for a meaningful relationship.

SYLVIA: Do I frighten you?

DINGO: No. Yes.

You're really dead?

SYLVIA: You are becoming tedious. I think I should leave.

DINGO: No. No. Please. It's just... new.

(SYLVIA luxuriously caresses the bed. Eyes Dingo. DINGO awkwardly sits beside Sylvia.)

SYLVIA: There.

(SYLVIA snuggles up to Dingo)

DINGO: So. You're dead. Wow.

(SYLVIA nibbles on his ear)

Oh. My.

A poet too. Boy, oh, boy.

SYLVIA: Are you ever going to shut up, Cisco?

DINGO: Dingo.

SYLVIA: Dingo.

DINGO: It's just, I've never met a poet before.

(SYLVIA pushes DINGO over onto the bed. She straddles him.)

SYLVIA: Poetry is just a way of viewing the world. Taking something common place and viewing it with new eyes. Which is what I am about to do.

(SYLVIA begins to unbuckle Dingo's belt.)

DINGO: I always thought the girls in Oroville were kinda... free range... if you know what I mean. But there was no one like you.

(SYLVIA unzips Dingo's pants)

Why are you doing this?

SYLVIA: To experience having a body. I want to touch. I want to be touched, I want to get smelly and scream and hear you moan like a cat in heat.

I want to get pregnant.

DINGO: WHOA! Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

SYLVIA: Now what?

DINGO: Ahhhh.

SYLVIA: Look. If I'm pregnant, they might not send me back. I would get a second chance. A second chance Cisco.

(snuggling up to him again)

We don't know how long it will take to get pregnant. Let's go somewhere, hmmm? I know a place off the coast of Spain. Hot, languid afternoons. Warm, sultry nights.

DINGO: My. All those... temperatures.

SYLVIA: How many lucky boys get the chance to stare down the loaded double barrels of a woman nearly twice their age? Hmmm? You'll be the envy of your dormitory.

And after I'm pregnant, we can throw a dinner party. Of course, my friends are all dead. Wait, is that the problem? No, I didn't have any friends. That's right.

Okay, we'll invite your friends

Oh dear. It's happening again. My brain, careening out of control around these curvy thoughts. Not good. Not good. Not good.

I'll attend to you momentarily Cisco. I need to be with this right now.

I know! When I find myself choking on hateful thoughts, I will call you. You come over and administer a spiritual Heimlich maneuver. After all my hateful thoughts come spilling out of me along with this morning's breakfast, you can say "hi" to our baby and then leave.

Is that okay?

DINGO: (Can't speak)

SYLVIA: Now I've gone and said too much, haven't I?

It's just that, this time, I so want my muse to be life, not death.

This time, when I open yet another rejection letter from the Atlantic Monthly, I am not going to feel my entire life is worthless. They are rejecting a poem, not me, right?

Cisco, have you ever been published in the Atlantic Monthly?

DINGO: N... No.

SYLVIA: And yet you basically feel okay about yourself?

DINGO: I suppose.

SYLVIA: There. You see. But me, no matter how much I accomplished in life, no matter how much recognition I received, I still felt worthless.

DINGO: Gee. If a magazine published something I wrote, I would be really happy.

SYLVIA: Mmmm. I never let happiness get in the way of my mood.

But you know, most of the time... like, during the day, it's okay. It's when you awaken in the darkness. It's 3 am. Your horrid husband at your side. The soft silence. Broken by the deafening ticking of the clock. The dead of the night is when you discover how you're getting along with yourself.

The blanket pulled up about your head, exposing your toes. You look down at your toes. Why does the Atlantic Monthly hate these toes? Why do these toes have no friends? It's hard for old toes to make new friends. Everyone wants young, new toes.

(to Dingo)

You can jump in here anytime.

(She looks at Dingo. A moment between them.)

DINGO: I would have published you.

SYLVIA: Thank you.

DINGO: You seem so sad.

SYLVIA: Mmmm. You're not sad are you, Cisco?

DINGO: I don't think I am. I mean. Like. At this college I feel... I don't know, like I don't fit in. These students have, like, salad spinners. In Oroville, we don't spin our salads. What's going on? Who are these people?

SYLVIA: You feel ignored?

DINGO: To ignore something, you gotta notice it first.

SYLVIA: Yeah. I understand.

And you feel like you're the only virgin on campus?

DINGO: (pause. Shakes his head "yes")

SYLVIA: (touches his face) You will make some lucky girl very, very happy.

DINGO: Well, tell her that.

SYLVIA: Who?

DINGO: Liz. She's in my Women's Studies program.

SYLVIA: Women's Studies? You can study 'em?

DINGO: Yeah. But she seems so... unreachable.

SYLVIA: And that makes you want her even more, right?

DINGO: I guess.

SYLVIA: The never-ending story.

DINGO: You're a woman. What should I do?

SYLVIA: Well, what have you tried?

DINGO: I invited her up to my dorm room. But she refused.

SYLVIA: Why did you invite her to your dorm room?

DINGO: Um. Well...

SYLVIA: That's what I thought. What else have you tried?

DINGO: She actually invited me to her dorm room.

SYLVIA: Well that's a nice gesture. What did you do?

DINGO: I tried to take off my clothes. It was embarrassing.

SYLVIA: Do you notice a pattern here?

DINGO: A pattern of rejection?

SYLVIA: A pattern of you focusing on your needs.

DINGO: Well. Yeah.

SYLVIA: Do you know what women want?

DINGO: Um. I've never really thought about it.

SYLVIA: You're a Women's Studies major but you've never thought about what women want?

DINGO: It's just, that question has never been on a test.

SYLVIA: Shall I tell you?

DINGO: Please.

SYLVIA: Women want men to hold them in the same regard that they hold themselves. Women want men to be concerned about what they need, what they feel, what they desire. And occasionally, just occasionally, women would like their needs to be placed above the needs of men.

DINGO: Well. Gee. That makes sense, doesn't it? Thanks.

SYLVIA: (Smile - "you're welcome")

DINGO: You're very nice.

(awkward moment)

I'm. I'm doing my next paper on you.

SYLVIA: Really!?!

DINGO: I've started it. Wanna see?

SYLVIA: Sure.

(DINGO gets a spiral binder
in which he's started his
essay)

(SYLVIA reads a bit. Looks
up.)

I know it's hard to watch someone read your
writing.

DINGO: Yes.

SYLVIA: (SYLVIA reads a bit more.) I like it.

(DINGO is relieved)

But a few things.

DINGO: Okay.

SYLVIA: The title of the paper.

DINGO: "Sylvia Plath Jokes."

SYLVIA: Right.

DINGO: Ah. 'Cause people might think it's jokes about
Sylvia Plath?

SYLVIA: Which invariably would be jokes in bad taste, I
feel. But beyond that, they aren't really jokes.

DINGO: Right. It's just how you say stuff.

SYLVIA: How about "The Humor of Sylvia Plath"

DINGO: Okay.

SYLVIA: Now this first sentence.

DINGO: I like the first sentence.

SYLVIA: “The jokes of Sylvia Plath unfold like a tightly wound watch.”

DINGO: Right.

SYLVIA: I mean, I get you, there.

DINGO: Good.

SYLVIA: But your teacher....

DINGO: Good point.

SYLVIA: Your teacher may stumble on that first sentence.
A tightly wound watch doesn't unfold, not in the usual sense.

DINGO: So what should I say?

SYLVIA: Well, what are you trying to say?

DINGO: I'm. I'm trying to say that... that I like you.

SYLVIA: (smiles)

(DINGO takes back spiral
binder. Looks at his essay)

DINGO: I like this part where you try to get a doctor's certificate that you are unfit to study chemistry.

SYLVIA: I thought that was funny too.

DINGO: In reading about you... your husband....

SYLVIA: (Raises eyebrows)

DINGO: I. I would have been nice to you.

SYLVIA: My husband was always chastising me for being too unproductive, too self absorbed, too... I don't know. Then the New Yorker rejections would just confirm his criticisms.

Even after I was dead and he was writing introductions to my books, my husband would still take little swipes at me.

DINGO: If I wrote an introduction to your book, I would just talk about how clever and funny you are.

SYLVIA: You would write a nice introduction?

DINGO: I would say how lucky we all are that Sylvia Plath lived.

(A moment between them)

SYLVIA: (a smile... Then...)

You're nice. Nicer to me than I was to myself. I rejected everything I wrote. It was never good enough. Why did I waste my life writing?

DINGO: Maybe writing was the only thing that, when you did it, you didn't feel like you should be doing something else.

SYLVIA: (pause) I've never thought about it, but I think, you are right. In fact, you are right! Gee, that is a very wise thing to say.

DINGO: I didn't say it. It's something Gloria Steinem once said.

SYLVIA: Who's Gloria Steinem?

DINGO: Some liberal feminist who doesn't know shit.

SYLVIA: Oh.

Ted, my husband, was a good father though.

DINGO: I bet you were a good mother.

SYLVIA: I was not a good mother.

(DINGO begins to protest
but--)

I left them, Cisco. My baby boy and sweet little girl were asleep in the next room as I stared into the cavernous abyss of an oven, an unlit gas valve turned clockwise. Ted never left them.

DINGO: You had a difficult life. But you can't be brave if you've only had wonderful things happen to you. Another quote. Mary Tyler Moore.

SYLVIA: Another feminist?

DINGO: To me she is.

SYLVIA: I wasn't brave. A brave person sticks it out. Me. I left.

(SYLVIA rises to leave)

Which I must do now.

DINGO: You're leaving?

SYLVIA: Yes.

DINGO: Why?

SYLVIA: Because I want to kiss you.

DINGO: Oh.

SYLVIA: Do you want to kiss me?

DINGO: I'm a nineteen-year-old male.

SYLVIA: Well, maybe it would be okay if we just...

DINGO: (DINGO shakes his head “no”)

I guess I always imagined my first time to be with someone who is....

SYLVIA: Alive?

DINGO: Yeah.

SYLVIA: (SYLVIA smiles) I understand.

(SHE turns to leave)

DINGO: Excuse me.

(SYLVIA turns back)

This thing you want to do?

SYLVIA: (confused)

DINGO: Pregnant?

SYLVIA: Ah.

DINGO: I know someone.

SYLVIA: Really!! Who?

DINGO: It's this guy who desperately needs what you are offering. Maybe I can introduce you?

SCENE 21

Mystery Spot Office

Shirley on stage.

(LIZ enters carrying manila envelope.)

LIZ: This just came in the mail for you. It looks important.

(LIZ holds envelope out for Shirley. SHIRLEY looks at return address, does not take it)

SHIRLEY: It's from the county court.

LIZ: It's probably just a jury duty notice.

SHIRLEY: It's that asshole, Arnold Williams. He's suing us.

Open it.

(LIZ does. Looks it over.)

LIZ: He's suing us.

(DINGO enters)

DINGO: Hi.

(pause as DINGO observes the scene)

Something wrong?

LIZ: We're being sued.

SHIRLEY: By the asshole.

DINGO: Oh no.

SHIRLEY: What drives a person to do this?

LIZ: He just wants the guides to tell the truth. What's wrong with that?

SHIRLEY: He wants the guides to tell his truth.

LIZ: He wants the explanation of the Mystery Spot to be based in science. Just like the debate in schools about creationism versus evolution. You can't teach some hokey faith-based explanation of how

humans came to be on the earth if there is a well-founded, science-based explanation. It's the same thing.

DINGO: No, it's not. It's more like the abortion debate.

LIZ: What?!

DINGO: Sure. Those that are against abortion don't have abortions themselves. Right? But for them, that's not enough. They want to force their views on others - preventing others from having abortions because they think it's wrong. It's the same here. Liz, we talk about this stuff all the time in Introduction to Feminisms.

LIZ: Your logic is flawed.

DINGO: How?

LIZ: I don't know. But your logic is flawed.

SHIRLEY: Well. What the tour guides say - it's all in good fun.

DINGO: What?

SHIRLEY: We... who knows what causes the mysteries at the Mystery Spot? Could be that the magma is flowing in the opposite direction under the Mystery Spot which causes gravity to be all cockeyed here.

DINGO: Right.

SHIRLEY: But it could also be... optical illusion.

DINGO: No!

SHIRLEY: We really don't know. So maybe there's no harm in having the tour guides simply--

DINGO: No. No! NO!

SHIRLEY: Even if it is optical illusion, it's still amazing that--

DINGO: NO! NO! NO!

SHIRLEY: (overlapping) DINGO!

(DINGO stops)

(pause)

I cannot afford to be sued Dingo. I cannot afford the time or the money to fight this. I have three more years of putting Liz through college.

LIZ: Mom, if--

SHIRLEY: (SHIRLEY raises her hand - "stop.")

From now on--

LIZ: Mommy please, you've already sacrificed--

SHIRLEY: --the tour guides must explain the Mystery Spot phenomenon in terms of science.

No more...

(SHIRLEY can't bring herself to say it. But then...)

No more magic.

(pause)

I will call Mr. Williams and tell him we will comply. There is no need to sue us. Where's his number?

DINGO: He isn't in.

SHIRLEY: (?)

DINGO: I just talked to him on the phone.

SHIRLEY: You what!

DINGO: Yeah. I'm going to take care of everything.

SHIRLEY: How?

DINGO: I've arranged a meeting. So, I really should be off.

SHIRLEY: Wait. This. Do you really think this will--

LIZ: Who did you arrange for--

DINGO: Sylvia Plath.

SHIRLEY: Sylvia Plath?

LIZ: (overlapping) Oh no.

DINGO: She will get him out of our hair. I think she might take him to Spain or someplace.

LIZ: Dingo.

SHIRLEY: Isn't Sylvia Plath, um...

DINGO: She is, but she's here on a quest. Anyway, I need to get going.

LIZ: Wait, wait waitwaitwaitwait.

DINGO: (?)

LIZ: Did you tell this guy that you were introducing him to Sylvia Plath?

DINGO: It's going to be a surprise.

LIZ: I'm coming with you.

SHIRLEY: So am I.

DINGO: I don't know. It might get awkward.

LIZ: What do you mean, "might"?

SHIRLEY: I'll tell him to his face that he doesn't need to sue us.

LIZ: Oh Dingo. Let's go.

SCENE 22

Lights up on Sylvia. CELESTINE pops through the portal.

ANGEL CELESTINE: How are you doing?

SYLVIA: Angel Celestine! Oh, you startled me!

ANGEL CELESTINE: Sorry.

SYLVIA: I just had a good conversation.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Tell me.

SYLVIA: He said that the world is lucky because I had been in it. Isn't that nice?

ANGEL CELESTINE: And how does he know about you?

SYLVIA: Through my writing.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Your writing.

SYLVIA: Yes.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Well, then, it's a good thing you wrote.

SYLVIA: (a small glimmer of hope)

ANGEL CELESTINE: I wonder if he is the only person who feels lucky that Sylvia Plath had lived. What do you think?

SYLVIA: I... I don't know.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Your journey continues.

(ANGEL CELESTINE exits through portal. SYLVIA experiences a strange feeling. Happiness? SYLVIA leaves)

SCENE 23

Lights up MR. Williams, waiting.

DINGO, LIZ and SHIRLEY walk over to Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Ah, there you are young man. I was beginning to worry.

DINGO: Hello.

MR. WILLIAMS: And I see you have brought company.

DINGO: This is Mrs. Armstrong, and this is her--

SHIRLEY: Dingo. We've met.

MR. WILLIAMS: Is this the woman you were telling me about?

DINGO: Oh no, that was Sylvia P--

SHIRLEY: Yes. Yes, it's me.

LIZ: Mother!

DINGO: But Mrs. Armstrong, what I had in mind for Mr. Williams was--

SHIRLEY: What did Dingo tell you about me?

MR. WILLIAMS: Dingo said he would introduce me to someone who might alter my decision to sue you. I'm open minded. I decided to see what he had in store.

SHIRLEY: Well. What he had in store is me. You don't need to sue me because we will comply with everything you ask.

DINGO: Now wait.

LIZ: Mother, if you are doing this for my college education, I can just--

SHIRLEY: Liz. Let me handle this.

DINGO: I think there are other ways to have Mr. Williams' needs met.

MR. WILLIAMS: And what do you know of my needs?

DINGO: Intuition.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well. Does your intuition tell you I have a need for the truth?

DINGO: My intuition tells me that you are bitter.

SHIRLEY: Dingo.

MR. WILLIAMS: Bitter? Because I prefer the truth over lies?

DINGO: No. Because you want to force others to have the same view of the world as you.

SHIRLEY: Dingo this is not--

MR. WILLIAMS: I will explain my view of the world to you, son, not that I need to.

My wife died last year. My wife died a horrible death. I was deeply religious. I prayed for Estelle everyday. I prayed that her pain be lifted. Estelle did not deserve to be tortured like that. After that... I... I rejected everything. Everything except science and hard truths.

SHIRLEY: I lost my Martin nearly ten years ago.

MR. WILLIAMS: I hope your husband's death was less painful than my wife's death.

SHIRLEY: Martin had pancreatic cancer. His death was excruciating for him and everyone around him.

(pause)

After months of struggling with Martin and his illness, I expected only hurt and sorrow for the rest

of my life. Then I bought the Mystery Spot. All my hurt and sorrow made my happiness upon finding the Mystery Spot all the stronger.

DINGO: Mr. Williams has a theory about that.

MR. WILLIAMS: I don't think I do.

DINGO: Sure you do. The Power of Expectation. Remember? You said that we expect the pendulum to be harder to push in a particular direction. When it is not, our experience of how easy it is, is made stronger by how hard we expected it to be.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I suppose you're right.

SHIRLEY: Gee, you said that? That is very wise.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, Mrs. Armstrong--

SHIRLEY: Please, call me Shirley.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, Shirley, I had never really thought about it but I guess it --

SHIRLEY: It's nature's way of helping us over life's hurts and sorrows.

DINGO: It's funny isn't it. How two people experience the same thing with opposite reactions. Mrs. Armstrong's spouse dies, and she finds inner peace and happiness. Mr. William's spouse dies, and he finds, you know, inner bitterness and hopelessness.

MR. WILLIAMS: I don't think that is exactly what I found.

DINGO: Oh. You have a different name for it?

MR. WILLIAMS: Well.

DINGO: It's true. Same experience. Two entirely different reactions.

SHIRLEY: (to Liz)

It's like your book of optical illusions that that you had as a kid. That Vase/Face optical illusion. You could only see the vase.

LIZ: And you could only see the face.

SHIRLEY: No matter how many times I looked, I could never see the vase. Never see what you saw. It drove me crazy.

LIZ: And I could never see the face. I always wondered if that was somehow... significant.

SHIRLEY: Whatever happened to that book?

LIZ: I threw it away.

DINGO: Just like at the Mystery Spot, where two people watch a billiard ball defy gravity. One sees, like, an optical illusion. The other sees it as a mysterious force.

MR. WILLIAMS: Now wait a minute. It's not the same thing at all.

DINGO: Oh?

MR. WILLIAMS: Prove that it's caused by a Mysterious force.

DINGO: Prove that it isn't.

MR. WILLIAMS:

(MR. WILLIAMS begins to respond, struggles with what to say.)

I. It's. In journals, they show how these Mystery Spot optical illusions work.

DINGO: With the vase/face optical illusion, would you tell Mrs. Armstrong she was wrong?

MR. WILLIAMS: No of course not, but that's not--

DINGO: Then Liz was wrong?

MR. WILLIAMS: No. They are both right. But--

DINGO: Then why can't you and I both be right?

MR. WILLIAMS:

(pause. Smiles.)

You majoring in law, son?

DINGO: No. Women's Studies.

MR. WILLIAMS: You should consider law.

(MR. WILLIAMS looks at Shirley. He's not sure what to do.)

(to Shirley) So.

(sighs)

SHIRLEY: Mr. Williams...

MR. WILLIAMS: You may call me Arnold.

SHIRLEY: Arnold. I'm terribly sorry about your wife.

MR. WILLIAMS: I have to admit, I wish I could be more like you. How do you experience that devastating loss and not feel...

DINGO: Bitter?

MR. WILLIAMS: (pause) Bitter.

(MR. WILLIAMS turns to leave. Begins to walk away.)

SHIRLEY: Arnold?

(MR. WILLIAMS pauses)

Um.

MR. WILLIAMS: (?)

SHIRLEY: Well. I have a fabulous soup simmering in my
crock pot at home. But, it's... very large.

MR. WILLIAMS: Really?

SHIRLEY: And well...

MR. WILLIAMS: Are you afraid that you will never be able
to finish it by yourself?

SHIRLEY: Yes, I'm very afraid of that.

MR. WILLIAMS: Are you... Ah... Inviting me to dinner?

SHIRLEY: That seems to be what I am doing.... In fact, I
am most definitely inviting you to dinner....
apparently.

MR. WILLIAMS: At your house?

SHIRLEY: That is where the soup is, yes.

MR. WILLIAMS: Um... That is very kind of you. You know
what. Yes. Yes, I will. May I bring wine?

SHIRLEY: Red would be good.

(MR. WILLIAMS smiles)

I'm eager to hear more about the Power of
Expectation.

MR. WILLIAMS: I have other theories as well.

SHIRLEY: I'm sure you do.

Let's say in an hour?

MR. WILLIAMS: I'll be there.

(Exit MR. WILLIAMS)

(SHIRLEY gives Liz a look as if to say "that is how it is done." Exit SHIRLEY)

LIZ: Wow.

DINGO: I don't know what happened to Sylvia.

LIZ: Dingo. Sylvia Plath is--

(SYLVIA comes dashing out)

SYLVIA: Dingo, I'm so sorry I'm late.

DINGO: He already left.

SYLVIA: Oh rats.

LIZ: What's going on?

DINGO: Liz - Sylvia Plath. Sylvia - Liz.

LIZ: Sylvia Plath? Where?

DINGO: Liz. She's right there!

LIZ: Dingo. There is no one right there.

(pause)

SYLVIA: She doesn't hear, Dingo. She doesn't see.

DINGO: But why?

SYLVIA: Perhaps, she does not have your gift. Perhaps, it takes a virgin.

LIZ: Is she... saying something to you?

DINGO: Ah. She's saying it's very nice weather.

LIZ: Dingo. This is creeping me out. I... I think you should talk to someone.

DINGO: I'm talking to Sylvia.

LIZ: I mean, a counselor.

SYLVIA: Ah, Dingo. You see a therapist and soon they apply the electrodes to your head, the blue volts bend down and take hold of you and shake you until you are sure your bones will break and the sap fly out of you, as you try to remember the terrible thing you did to deserve this. No therapists Dingo.

DINGO: The person I was going to introduce you to, he kinda has a date with someone else now.

LIZ: Dingo. Let's go.

(ANGEL CELESTINE
emerges from portal)

ANGEL CELESTINE: Spirit Plath!

(DINGO and SYLVIA are
startled)

LIZ: Now what's happening?

DINGO: Who's that?

ANGEL CELESTINE:

(to Sylvia) He can see me?

SYLVIA: Virgin

ANGEL CELESTINE: (studies Dingo) Oh.

SYLVIA: Angel Celestine, Dingo. Dingo, Angel Celestine.

DINGO: Hi.

ANGEL CELESTINE: Well, congratulations, Spirit. The council feels that you are ready to return.

SYLVIA: Return? No, I'm still... I'm still all messed up.

ANGEL CELESTINE: I agree, but the council... Shall we go?

(ANGEL CELESTINE turns
back to Portal)

SYLVIA: WAIT! Um.

ANGEL CELESTINE: (?)

SYLVIA: I... May I have just a few more moments to savor
earth one last time.

ANGEL CELESTINE: I suppose a few more moments won't
hurt.

SYLVIA: I'll catch up with you in a jiffy.

(ANGEL CELESTINE
disappears into portal.)

LIZ: Dingo!!

DINGO: It's okay. Just some Lordly guy from heaven
departing through a cosmic portal thingy.

Well. Sylvia. I enjoyed meeting you and--

SYLVIA: Oh. But I'm not going anywhere.

DINGO: Gee, I thought Angel Celestine said--

SYLVIA: All I need is a body to stay here.

(looking at Liz)

And I think I've found one.

DINGO: Now wait a minute.

LIZ: What's going on?

DINGO: We have a problem.

SYLVIA: What a lovely body it is too, don't you think Dingo?

DINGO: Ah. Sylvia Plath wants to take over your body.

LIZ: What!

SYLVIA: Dingo, I want to live again. Truly live.

DINGO: But, I kinda had plans for Liz's body.

LIZ: What!

SYLVIA: No problem. The times we could have Dingo.

DINGO: This doesn't seem right.

LIZ: I'm outta here.

SYLVIA: Not without me, toots.

(SYLVIA lunges for LIZ)

DINGO: Liz! Jump!

(LIZ dives out of the way.
SYLVIA misses the mark.)

She's charging you like a raging bull.

LIZ: I feel like an idiot. What am I dodging?

DINGO: You gotta trust me. Sylvia Plath is trying to take over your body.

SYLVIA: I thought you were my friend, Dingo. Now I'm thinking I won't let you get past first base.

(SYLVIA rushes Liz again.)

DINGO: Dive!

(LIZ dives)

SYLVIA: There's no escape!

(LIZ is backing away from
Sylvia. DINGO is between
Liz and Sylvia)

LIZ: Is she gone?

DINGO: No.

SYLVIA: She's mine. All mine!

(SYLVIA runs for Liz.)

DINGO: No!

(DINGO blocks SYLVIA. In an explosion of light, SYLVIA disappears into DINGO's body. DINGO and LIZ now on-stage alone. DINGO is breathing hard.)

Whoa.

LIZ: Dingo?

DINGO: Whoa. Really intense.

LIZ: Is she gone?

DINGO: Ah. Kind of.

LIZ: What happened?

DINGO: Ah. Nothing. You okay?

LIZ: Yeah. Thanks.

(DINGO helps Liz to her feet)

You okay?

DINGO:

Feed me your pretzeled words

to sate anguished fears -

I crave the illusion.

Weave me tales

that electrify

so I can soar to the pinnacle of being -

blindly plunging down the cavity of hell.

(pause)

LIZ: What was that?

DINGO: I don't know.

LIZ: Sounded like a Plath poem. But I've never heard it.

DINGO: (anxious) Really?!

LIZ: Did you just make it up?

DINGO: I... I...

(DINGO notices purple scarf
in his pants pocket)

Eye yi yi.

LIZ: It was kinda good.

DINGO: (nervous laugh) Yeah. Yeah, thanks. So. You
never saw....

LIZ: No.

DINGO: Nothing?

(LIZ shakes her head "no")

LIZ: So. Sylvia Plath tried to take over my body?

DINGO: Yeah.

LIZ: And you, like, prevented it?

DINGO: Well. Do you feel all tingly like an alien spirit has
just inhabited you?

LIZ: (laughs) No. Do you?

DINGO: (Laughs also. Yes. He does! But...)

Oh. You know.

(pause)

Do you still want me to visit the counselor?

LIZ: I don't know Dingo. It's like the vase and the face. You just saw Sylvia Plath. I didn't. Just like my mom never saw the vase, but I did.

DINGO: Well. Do you think anyone in our "Introduction to Feminisms" class will believe I met Sylvia Plath?

LIZ: I don't think we have to tell them about Sylvia Plath.

DINGO: But—

(LIZ puts a finger to his lips, stopping him)

LIZ: My computer is acting up again.

DINGO: You gotta go defrag your hard drive?

LIZ: Yeah.

DINGO: I understand.

(LIZ begins to walk away, then...)

LIZ: Wanna help me?

DINGO: Back at your room! Boy, would I!

(then, remembering)

Wait. Is... is that what you want?

LIZ: Yeah. Thank you for asking. Yeah it is.

(DINGO joins Liz, walking)

DINGO: I've never defragged a hard drive before.

LIZ: Actually, neither have I.

DINGO: Maybe we can figure it out.

LIZ: Together.

(Exit LIZ and DINGO)

END OF PLAY