

Below are a few selected scenes with characters indicated. This play has literally no monologues so all of the scenes had multiple characters. I apologize that the text de-formatted when I transferred it from the script. I did the best I could to cobble it back together.

You may use one of these, bring something else prepared, read cold when you come..your choice. I am sure that David will keep folks at the audition for a while to read in groups. If you submit a video audition from this material have a friend read the other parts to prompt you. We want your audition experience to be a good one so please contact us if you have questions or problems.....a theatreoxford@gmail.com

### **FOR WALLIS ETHRIDGE (WITH JAMIE, NUBBIE AND CASSIE)**

(WALLIS ETHRIDGE enters the hotel, a bombastic middle-aged author. With him is his much younger wife, LETTY, beautiful and wild. Wallis pounds the bell at the front desk.)

WALLIS Anybody work here?

CASSIE Hang on. I'll git the manager ...

(shouting loudly) Hey, Jamie! Somebody want a room!!

WALLIS How are you fine people this evening?

(They stare in silence for a beat, then Nubbie says ... )

NUBBIE

Is he talkin' to us?

(Jamie enters.)

JAMIE Can I help you?

WALLIS You're the manager?

JAMIE Yes.

WALLIS You look more like a bellboy.

JAMIE Yeah, well we don't have a bellboy. Just a manager. And that would be me.

WALLIS

You seem like an honest lad. Tell me ... are the rooms habitable?

JAMIE Have a look if you want.

JAMIE (handing him a key)

Room 12. Up the stairs. See for yourself if it's worthy of habitation. Or, in your case, cohabitation.

W ALLIS

I like you, young man. You're a smart ass. And we can always use another smart ass in this world, surrounded as we are by dumb asses. (to Letty)

Wait here, Sugar, while I check out L'chambre de torture. (Wallis exits upstairs)

**FOR LETTY OR JAMIE**

You want to be a writer, huh?

JAMIE

Yes. But I'm not published so ... I guess that leaves me out.

Not necessarily.

LETTY

(patting the sofa for him to sit by her)

Can I ask you something personal?

JAMIE (nervously)

Sure, I guess so. How uh ... how personal?

LETTY

Where's your head at, man? What's happening with you?

JAMIE With regard to ... ?

LETTY This place. Why are you here?

JAMIE

Oh. You mean the hotel? I need the job to pay tuition at Ole Miss. I have to be in school full time. Or I'll lose my college deferment and ... I could be drafted.

(Letty moves close to him, toys with his hair, making him nervous.)

LETTY

Oh, man. Bummer. Are you afraid of going to Vietnam?

JAMIE

Not afraid. No. But I have serious doubts about the morality of the war. I don't think I could participate in good conscience.

(to audience) Hell, yes, I was afraid.  
It's a horrible mistake. We shouldn't be there.

LETTY I agree ...

War is primal. It's tribal. It's an ugly aberration. It's like ... like a blot on the escutcheon of humankind.

JAMIE (to audience)

'Escutcheon'. Wow. That one sent me to the dictionary.

(Letty smooths lotion on her body, exposing more leg. Jamie stares despite himself.)

JAMIE Listen ... Leggy? I mean Letty.

LETTY Hmm?

JAMIE

Do you think maybe you could put on some clothes? I mean ... it's the lobby.

(catching himself)

Damn. I can't believe I said that. Not cool, not cool ...

LETTY

You're so funny. Acting all serious. With your tie.

(moving closer, loosening his tie)

There. You need to loosen up, man. Set your mind free. What's in your head? What are you thinking? Right now. Be honest.

JAMIE Well ...

LETTY Come on ... say it.

JAMIE

Okay. I'm thinking that you seem a lot younger than your husband. Sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

LETTY If you have to know, I'm twenty-six.

JAMIE

Well, you don't look it. I mean you look younger. Not that 26 is ... uh... I'm sorry ... that's not what I meant to say. My mind usually works much ...

uhhh ....

What? What's wrong? Why are you looking at me like that?

LETTY You seem to be having a mild panic attack.

JAMIE Yes. Yes I am. How did you know?

LETTY

Psych major. For some reason most of the people who major in psychology are crazy themselves. Do you think I'm crazy? Come on! Say it!

JAMIE

No. I wouldn't say that. You seem perfectly ... you know ... normal ... I suppose.

(noticing her stare)

(He sits in a club chair. She climbs onto his lap, teasing.)

## **FOR JAMIE OR LETTY**

JAMIE Do you still love him?

LETTY

Yes. In a way. We're more like friends now. If you're dying to know, the sex part of our marriage is over ... has been for a while now.

JAMIE Have you ever thought about leaving him?

LETTY

We've talked about it, and decided we need to stay together. At least for now.

JAMIE So, where is this going then? Us I mean ...

LETTY

Ohhh. Come here.

(putting her arms around him)

I hope you're not having serious feelings about me. Because you shouldn't.

You'll have lots of girls. One day you'll look back and say, "Good for Letty. She taught me how to be a great lover."

JAMIE You think so?

LETTY

Yes. You're a wonderful lover. Why can't you just go with the flow and enjoy the moment? What made you such a tight ass?

JAMIE Please don't call me that.

LETTY Hey. Don't be mad ... Sweet boy.

(he looks away)

JAMIE

Could you at least say ‘man’? It would go a long way toward securing the tenuous grip I have on my masculinity.

LETTY

Sweet man. There’s absolutely nothing wrong with your masculinity.

JAMIE

I just ... I wish we could keep this special. Just us. That’s all I’m saying ...

LETTY

You’re upset. And you don’t understand why I stay with Wallis. I have my reasons. He’s in a precarious place right now.

JAMIE Is he okay? Because he seems ... hostile.

LETTY

He’s always been hostile. But ... last year he was in a car wreck. A bad one.

He suffered head injuries. A concussion ... subdural hematoma ... blood clot on the brain.

JAMIE Oh. That must be why ...

LETTY Why what?

JAMIE I read his new book. Or tried to. It doesn’t make any sense.

LETTY (troubled) I know. He has to keep going. He has to get it back.

JAMIE

Hey ... come on. Lighten up. We’ll always have room twenty-two. And the Lone Wolf.

(They embrace as the LIGHTS FADE.)

**FOR CASSIE and ALVIN and NUBBIE**

CASSIE Everyone in this hotel gettin’ some but me.

(Wallis Ethridge enters.) NUBBIE

Uh-oh. Lookey here.

CASSIE (alarmed)

Hey, Mister Ethridge. Forget somethin'?

W ALLIS

My notebook. Must have left it in the room. Letty will know where it is ...

CASSIE Wait. Was your notebook yella?

WALLIS Yes.

(Cassie goes behind the desk, retrieves the notebook.)

CASSIE

Here you go. Found it on the chair. Must've fell out your pocket.

WALLIS Oh. Thanks.

CASSIE You're welcome.

(Wallis exits. Cassie breathes a sigh of relief.)

CASSIE The young lovers is welcome too.

ALVIN I heard that. You just saved somebody a ass whuppin'.

NUBBIE

Here's what I wanna know. How do oysters grow bigger?

CASSIE

Is this a riddle?

NUBBIE

No. Just a regular question. When oysters are little they grow a little biddy shell ...

CASSIE Uh-huh ...

NUBBIE But what happens when they get bigger?

CASSIE They grow a bigger shell?

NUBBIE Right. But how do they git out of the shell they was already in?

CASSIE

Are you sure your mama didn't drop you on your head?

### **FOR MARY LYNN (WITH JAMIE AND LETTY)**

JAMIE (to Mary Lynn) Did you change your hair? It looks good.

MARY LYNN

Do you like it, really? It's a fall but I think it matches pretty good.

LETTY It's almost like real hair.

MARY LYNN

These bangs are my real hair. Just the fall is a fall. They had a color called

Luscious Strawberry, but it looked too red when you saw it outside so I swapped it for this one -- Autumn Sunshine.

JAMIE I like it.

LETTY It's you.

MARY LYNN

(to Jamie)

Okay, here's the best surprise. I just had to come for your birthday to tell you

Daddy gave me a Corvair convertible for school!

JAMIE That's great.

MARY LYNN

I came out of the house and there was a red Corvair sittin' in the driveway

with a big ol' white ribbon on it. Isn't that just adorable?



LETTY Awww.

WALLIS You should read *Unsafe at Any Speed*.

MARY LYNN What's that?

WALLIS A book by Ralph Nader. It explains how your Corvair could kill you.

LETTY Ooooooh.

MARY LYNN You're so funny.

(to Jamie)

I couldn't wait to take it out. So me and Jackie Sumrall and my sister

Lindsey go riding through town with the top down. And I mean, everybody in Ponotoc is eyeballin' my car. I look around, and Lindsey is waving at people. I said, "Lindsey, stop waving! Daddy gave this car to me, not you!" Anyway, she got the message.

LETTY

Yeah, me too. Excuse me. (Letty exits.)

JAMIE

Mary Lynn, you must be tired from the trip. I'll show you to the apartment.

MARY LYNN

Okay. As long as we're not sleeping in the same room.

(to the others)

I wouldn't want anybody to get the wrong idea.

(sniffing the air) Eww. What is that awful smell?

JAMIE

Witch hazel. An old lady that lives here drinks it.

## **FOR JAMIE AND WALLIS**

JAMIE That was a beautiful thing you did, sir.

W ALLIS

Well ... what else am I gonna do? Enough young men have died in that stupid war.

(Jamie starts to exit. Wallis stops him.)

Wait. I uh ... I want to clear the air about a few things. (offering his flask)

Scotch?

JAMIE No, thanks. It's a little early for me.

WALLIS

You're such a friggin' goody-two-shoes. Don't you have any secret vices?

JAMIE . Well, I ...

WALLIS No. Don't tell me. I don't want to know about it.

JAMIE About what, sir?

WALLIS

You know what. I was mean to you for personal reasons. I'm thinking of a

line by D.H.Lawrence ... "*I have something to expiate. A pettiness.*" I was wrong to dismiss your short stories. They're not bad. In fact, they're pretty good. You use too many adverbs and some of your sentiments are a bit saccharine ... but ... your writing is good. Very promising.

JAMIE Thank you, Mister Ethridge.

WALLIS Wallis.

JAMIE

Thank you, Wallis. That means a great deal, coming from you.

WALLIS

Now it's your turn. You've read my novel ... *The Fires of Incheon?*

JAMIE Yes.

WALLIS And ... ?

JAMIE Well, it's a very exciting account. I take it the young sergeant is you ... or someone very much like you.

W ALLIS

What about the story? Could you follow it? Letty says it hops around. Does it? Come on. I told you the truth. Now ... you tell me. Be brutally honest.

All right. The story is incomprehensible. It jumps around in time... it's hard to tell who's doing what. It seems ... fragmented.

W ALLIS Fragmented?

Well. That was brutal all right.

(Jamie nods) JAMIE I'm sorry ...

W ALLIS

No, no, no. I'm sure you're right. I've tried to read it and, hell, even I can't make much sense of it. When did you write it? Right after an accident. I suffered some brain damage ...

JAMIE Yes, Letty told me.

W ALLIS

I was in a bad place emotionally. Deeply depressed. I felt like I had to write my way out of it. As soon as I could sit up by myself, I went straight to the typewriter and started. I was determined to prove my mental clarity. Obviously I failed.

JAMIE

Maybe you tried too soon. I think you should wait a little longer ... and give it another try.

W ALLIS

Thank you for your candor. You're a bright young man with a great future

ahead of you. So, I hope you'll understand if I hate you. (Wallis exits.)

(Lights fade except for a spotlight on Jamie.)

JAMIE (to audience)

Wallis Ethridge had a heart after all. The more I got to know him, the better I liked him. But I couldn't let that dissuade me. More than anything, I wanted to **take Letty away from him.**

**FOR CHIEF BREWER, OFFICER OGLETHORPE, MARY LYNN, JAMIE**

MARY LYNN

JAMIE

Thanks. If we're going to ... you know ... do it ... tonight would be good because I just finished my lady time which means I prob'ly won't get preggers. But, just to be sure, I brought you this.

(holding up a condom)

You would not believe the trouble I went to to get this rubber. I was at fillin'

station in Tupelo and there was this old colored man outside the men's room, so I gave him some quarters to ...

(They are interrupted by loud POUNDING on the door.)

CHIEF BREWER Police! Open up!

JAMIE (shocked) Just a minute ...

(Police Chief Brewer and Officer Oglethorpe burst into the room. Mary Lynn screams, tries to cover herself.)

CHIEF BREWER James Leigh Pippen?

JAMIE Yes ... ?

(They seize Jamie and handcuff him, face down on the bed.)

MARY LYNN Let him go! What are you doing?!

CHIEF BREWER You're under arrest for soliciting.

JAMIE Soliciting what?

CHIEF BREWER Prostitution.

JAMIE What?! That's crazy!

CHIEF BREWER Come on ... let's go.

(The chief and the officer drag Jamie to his feet.)

MARY LYNN You better let him go, and I mean now!

OGLETHORPE

Oh, is that right ... ?

CHIEF BREWER Cuff her too. She might be a prostitute.

MARY LYNN Whaaat?!

OGLETHORPE Yeah. She looks like one.

MARY LYNN (breathless with outrage)

I am not! I go to the University of Alabama! I am pledged to Chi Omega!!

OGLETHORPE

Then what you doin' with a condom? Come on, missy, let's go.

(Officer Oglethorpe handcuffs Mary Lynn, hustles her out the door into the lobby, followed by Chief Brewer with Jamie.)

OGLETHORPE Hands against the desk and spread your legs.

(Officer Oglethorpe pats them down.)

MARY LYNN

Get your hands off me! My daddy is Leland Skinner, the Chancery Court

Judge of Ponotoc County

CHIEF BREWER . Is that true?

JAMIE Yes. She's just visiting me.

Okay. Let her go.

(Officer Olgethorpe takes Mary Lynn's ID from her handbag, shows it to Chief Brewer)

CHIEF BREWER (to Officer Oglethorpe)

(to Jamie)

Now, Mister James Leigh Pippen, why are you running a

(mispronouncing bordello)

*BORD-uh-low?*

JAMIE I have no idea what you're talking about.

CHIEF BREWER

It's French for *whorehouse*.

(checking his notes)

Do you have a Patsy Sims and a Noreen Hogg stayin' here?

JAMIE Yes. They're waitresses at Leslie's.

CHIEF BREWER Um-huh. Well, apparently, nookie was also on the menu.

JAMIE (shocked)

You're kidding! They always seemed so nice.

MARY LYNN You better drop this or you're going to hear from ...

CHIEF BREWER Miss! Didn't I say you were free to go?

(Mary Lynn nods, silent for once.)

CHIEF BREWER

Unless you want me to change my mind, keep your mouth shut.

MARY LYNN (meekly) Yes, sir.

CHIEF BREWER Now, Mister Pippen, how dumb do you think I am?

JAMIE I wouldn't want to hazard a guess, sir.

CHIEF BREWER You're a college boy. Are you familiar with the term ...  
... niya-VEET-tee?

(mispronouncing naïveté )

JAMIE (puzzled) No, sir. I'm not.

CHIEF BREWER

You want me to believe that you are so *nai-vey* (naive) ... that you didn't see  
what was going on in this hotel?

JAMIE

Yes. That's the truth. I don't know anything about any prostitution.

CHIEF BREWER You would have to be a damn fool not to notice it.

JAMIE

I am that fool.

MARY LYNN It's true, sir, he's the biggest fool you ever ...

CHIEF BREWER (to Oglethorpe) Shh ...  
What's in his wallet?

OGLETHORPE Two dollars. And a condom.

MARY LYNN (shocked, to Jamie)

You already had one? What for, Jamie?

CHIEF BREWER

Are you willing to swear under oath that you were unaware of the

prostitution?

JAMIE

Yes, sir. I swear on my mother's grave. Well, she's not dead yet ... I mean ...  
when she dies ... then I'll swear.

CHIEF BREWER (to Oglethorpe)

Mister Pippen wants us to wait till his mama dies. What you think, Stu? He seem like a fool to you?

OGLETHORPE Yes, sir, he does.

CHIEF BREWER (sternly, to Jamie)

I won't charge you on one condition. Run both of those women out of this hotel immediately.

JAMIE Yes, sir.

CHIEF BREWER (showing his badge)

My name is Brewer. Police Chief Ed Brewer. Keep your nose clean, Pippen. I'll be watching this place.

(Jamie nods. Chief Brewer and Oglethorpe exit.)

## **FOR BRYCE WITH JAMIE**

*Lights up on the apartment. Jamie is getting dressed, anxious to look good when he visits Letty's room. He starts to put on his tie, thinks better of it, tosses it aside.*

*Bryce KNOCKS on the door in his crisp Army R.O.T.C uniform and sock feet.*

BRYCE Jamie. Come on, man. Let me in.

(Jamie opens the door. Bryce enters.)

BRYCE

I need my shoes for drill.



(Bryce retrieves his polished Army shoes from the refrigerator. He sits, puts them on.)

JAMIE (to audience)

Bryce kept his shoes polished to a brilliant shine. And to keep them that way, he stored them in my refrigerator.

BRYCE Why aren't you dressed for drill?

JAMIE

Can't go today. I have to ... uh ... unstick a window ...

BRYCE

Would it by any chance be the window of the alluring Letty Ethridge?

JAMIE What's that supposed to mean?

BRYCE

You better get your mind on R.O.T.C. Keep on missing drill and you're going to flunk.

JAMIE

I didn't come here to play army. I hate mandatory R.O.T.C.

BRYCE

Me too. It should be reserved for patriots who want to serve. Not hippie, peacenik, draft-dodgers like you, Pippen.

JAMIE

I'm not a hippie. I'm a Pantheistic Humanist.

BRYCE Screw you, you left-leaning goldbricker.

JAMIE

Bite me, warmonger.

BRYCE

Hey, want to get drunk tonight? A friend from ROTCEE is bringing me a

quart of moonshine.

JAMIE

The kind that makes you go blind? No thanks.

BRYCE No, the kind that makes you blind drunk.

JAMIE

Can't tonight. Got a term paper due and I'd like to save a few brain cells.

BRYCE

See you later, peckerwood.

(Bryce exits, singing a comic Donizetti aria.)

BRYCE (singing)

*Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête!*

*Je vais marcher sous vos drapeaux.*

**FOR BRYCE, CASSIE, NUBBIE, ALVIN**

(From OFFSTAGE we hear Bryce singing an aria from Rigoletto.)

BRYCE (singing)

*La donna é mobil*

*e Qual piuma al vento*

*Muta d'accento*

*E di pensiero*

CASSIE Oh, Lord. Here he come ...

NUBBIE What the hell's he singin' now?

ALVIN That ain't singin'. That's caterwaulin'.

(Bryce enters, singing loudly, accompanying himself with a violin.)

*Sempre un amabile Leggiadro viso  
In pianto o in riso E menzognero*

ALVIN

Take a load off, Caru-sio. Have a drank with us.

BRYCE

BRYCE

Got my own. (taking a flask from his boot)  
Cognac. A little trick the Old Man showed me at Marion.

JAMIE (to audience)

Bryce was a music major at Ole Miss and a proud graduate of the Marion Military Institute.

BRYCE (singing)

O, Marion...o fight on...

ALVIN

Shut him up, Nubbie. Git out your little TV and let's git the show on the road.

BRYCE

The Henry was home to the world's tiniest TV. And it belonged to Nubbie.

(Jamie exits to his apartment.)

(Nubbie places on the coffee table a tiny portable TV.)

CASSIE

See if your little TV will git the station outta Memphis.. It's Flipper time.

(The light from the TV flickers on their faces as the drinkers stare transfixed.)

(MUSIC CUE#2 : 'FLIPPER THEME')

SINGERS (from TV)

*They call him Flipper, Flipper Faster than lightning!*

CASSIE Flipper look like a minnow on your TV.

SINGERS

*No one you see was smarter than he And we know Flipper, Flipper  
Lives in a world full of wonder Lying there under, under the sea!*

NUBBIE Yeah, I like ‘at ol Flipper. He is one smart fish.

BRYCE Flipper’s not a fish. He’s a mammal.

NUBBIE

A mammal’s got hair on him. You don’t see no hair on Flipper.

ALVIN

It don’t have nothing to do with hair. Mammals feed their babies milk. Just  
like your mama done you.

CASSIE

Nubbie’s Mama? She prolly nursed him with bourbon and Coke.

(Cassie and Alvin crack up.)

ALVIN Bourbon outta one titty and Coke out th’ other.

## **FOR PATSY AND NOREEN**

(Patsy and Noreen come down the stairs dressed for a picnic.)

JAMIE Hey, ladies. Where you headed?

PATSY

Sardis Lake. The Fudge Town Volunteer Fire Department is having their  
annual picnic. And they invited us to join ‘em.

NOREEN Wadden that nice of ‘em?

JAMIE Very nice ...

NOREEN

Them boys works so hard fighting fires and savin' people's lives they oughter have one day off for theirselves.

PATSY We're takin' 'em a big ol' tub of coleslaw.

JAMIE Very thoughtful.

NOREEN

The Fire Captain, Kenny Ross, has got a pontoon boat with a dancin' deck on it. And the name of it is so funny ... what's he call it, Pats?

PATSY

The Fugarwee. As in ...

Where the fugarwee?!

PATSY & NOREEN (laughing)

PATSY

They gonna have a five piece band ... fried fish ... sangria. It's gonna be a hoot!

NOREEN They got us judging the hose battle.

PATSY

The firemen line up in teams and shoot at each other with fire hoses. Blows their clothes off sometimes.

NOREEN (laughing) Here's hopin'!

JAMIE Well, you girls have fun.

NOREEN Oh, we goin' to.

PATSY

Let's swing by Leslie's. I need to pick up some Coppertone.

(Patsy and Noreen exit.)

## **FOR ALVIN AND NUBBIE AND CASSIE**

(Two GRUBBY MIDDLE-AGED PAINTERS enter, carrying buckets and brushes. They are ALVIN, big talker, and NUBBIE, a romantic soul trapped in a redneck existence.)

NUBBIE

Who do you like in a cage match? Sputnik Monroe... Lorenzo Parente or

Bad Boy Hines?

ALVIN It's gotta be Bad Boy Hines.

NUBBIE Yeah. He cheats though. He's a bad hair-puller.

ALVIN That's what makes him good. What time you got?

NUBBIE (squinting at his watch)

Shoot, I don't know. I got paint on my watch ...

ALVIN Feels like it's close to five.

(wiping off his watch)

NUBBIE Four ... fifteen.

Close enough. Quitin' time.

(Alvin and Nubbie put away their paints and brushes, plop down on the couch.)

JAMIE (to audience)

Alvin and Nubbie didn't have to pay rent since they were painting the hotel. More or less.

(Enter CASSIE, the African American housekeeper, 50's, brash, profane, full of life.)

CASSIE Y'all need to watch what you're doin' ...

JAMIE (to audience)

Cassie was a force of nature.

CASSIE You're splatterin' paint all over the place.

ALVIN It'll wear off. It's water base.

CASSIE Hell it will. Ever hear of a drop cloth?

NUBBIE

You don't hafta use one if you're a professional.

CASSIE

Mm-hum. Well, look here, Mister Professional, you suppose to paint the

walls, not the towels.

How am I gonna wash this out?

(showing a paint-splattered towel)

ALVIN

Throw it away. Hightower can afford to buy a towel. He ain't payin' us

diddly.

CASSIE

Yeah? Well he ain't payin' me squat. Git your nasty feet off the table. Imma

have to Windex that all over again.

ALVIN

(holding up a bottle of gin)

Set your ass down if you want somethin' to drank.

CASSIE

(eagerly shifting into party mode)

Now you're talkin' my language. I'll git us some glasses. NUBBIE

Git some ice too ...

JAMIE No ice. Machine's broken again.

ALVIN It's not makin' ice at all?

JAMIE Some. But it's coming out brown.

ALVIN

(pouring gin into glasses)

Well, the hell with it. Ice is for pussies. Here ya go. All right. I got a toast for y'all. May the road come up to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. And may the Devil be far behind you, wallerin' in his own excrement.

NUBBIE I like that.

CASSIE Amen.