



FIRST ACT – SAMPLE

By Robert J. Wheeler, 15 Windsor Cres., London, ON N6C 1V6 Canada – Revised May 1/25

Setting – Living room, funeral home, hotel room, hospital room, bedroom.

Run time -- approximately 90 minutes.

Actors – 9 M – 5 F – 4 With doubling Actors – 5 M – 3 F – 2 + 2 readers

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My scripts are on PGC site.

<https://www.canadianplayoutlet.com/pages/search-results-page?q=robert%20wheeler>

Email robwheeler999@gmail.com if you would like to read the play
for a possible production and I will send it to you.

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
MARTIN	Husband of Cheryl, hypnotist and co-owner of Martin and Norm's Roofing Business	45-50	Male
CHERYL	Wife of Martin. A salesperson	45-50	Female
SAMMY	Donna's boyfriend	30-40	Male
DONNA/DR. DEBRA (1 actor)	Twin sisters -- Donna is Norm's wife, (white trash)	30-40	Female
	Debra, (classy sister)	30-40	Female
REV. . SUSAN GRAY	An attractive minister	30-40	Female
DOCTOR	E/R and Hospital room doctor	30-40	Female
POLICEMAN	At hospital	30-60	Male
NORM'S VOICE	Martin's business partner	40-50	Male
MALCOLM JONES VOICE	In body cast	30-50	Male

SAMMY also plays the POLICEMAN.

REV. SUSAN GRAY also plays the DOCTORS.

FIVE ACTORS AND TWO READERS NEEDED WHEN DOUBLING.

NINE ACTORS IF NOT DOUBLING.

SETTING

LIVING ROOM -- FUNERAL HOME -- HOTEL ROOM

HOSPITAL ROOM -- BEDROOM

THE PLAY CAN BE SET ON A ROTATING STAGE OR A DIVIDED STAGE.

I have written it for a divided stage as a rotating stage might not be available.

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Time: Night.

Place: Martin and Cheryl's living room.

THE STAGE IS DIVIDED IN THE CENTRE

LIGHTS UP ON S.R., OUT ON S.L.

A working man's living room -- lamp, sofa, sofa chair, TV on stand with a computer table and computer with telephone.

Two doors on the UC wall, one into the kitchen and one into the bedroom.

There is a S.R. entrance door into the house.

MARTIN (45-50) sits on the sofa and reads from the newspaper.

CHERYL (45-50) reads from a novel on the sofa chair.

The phone by the computer rings. Martin answers it.

MARTIN Martin and Norm's Quad-A Roofing. *(pause)* Yes, estimates are free. *(pause)* I can come by next Wednesday around noon. *(pause)* No, can't make it sooner. *(pause)* That's 75 Chestnut Street at noon next Wednesday. Thank you, Mr. Carson. *(pause)* Goodbye.

Martin hangs up, scribbles on a pad by the phone and returns to and sits on the chesterfield.

CHERYL Oh, I forgot. Edward called.

MARTIN *(frustrated)* I don't . . .

CHERYL *(interrupting)* He wants you to teach one of his college classes. He's booked more students than he can handle, so I told . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting, frustration)* . . . have time.

CHERYL You'll call him back?

MARTIN The idiot teaches hypnotism for dummies. The last time I gave in I didn't clear expenses!

Cheryl smiles.

Eddie calls me first because he knows I'm the best.

CHERYL Making you Eddie's best idiot or his best dummy?

MARTIN If I gave in, I'd be both. Quad-A's Roofing is booked solid. Two new crew started yesterday. Sammy and Johnny. Isn't that a song?

CHERYL You're thinking of Frankie and Johnny.

MARTIN Right. *(sings)* If Sammy and Johnny don't work out, Normie and Marty will go, *(sour face)* up up up up on the roof.

CHERYL Afraid of heights?

MARTIN Me? No. I bring in business, attend to all the details. He manages the physical side. I tend to stay away from the physical stuff.

CHERYL *(pleased)* You're afraid of heights.

MARTIN It's Norm. He doesn't want me on the roof.

Cheryl sends a questioning look.

(pauses, embarrassed) He thinks I could be a hazard.

CHERYL You?

MARTIN I've noticed a nail gun can magically turn into a machine gun.

CHERYL Norm doesn't want to get nailed to the roof.

Martin shrugs, checks his watch, turns the TV on with a remote, watches it without sound.

Why watch TV with the sound off?

MARTIN When it comes to baseball, words get in the way. It's the Blue Jays.

He watches. He reacts to the TV, throws a fist into the air.

Yes!

CHERYL It seems to me . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting)* Cheryl, I've gotta watch this.

CHERYL . . . if you turned on the sou . . .

Martin SNAPS HIS FINGERS. Cheryl freezes, stops talking mid-word. Martin watches the TV.

MARTIN *(to the TV)* Yes!

Martin jumps for joy.

A grand slam! Yes!

Martin looks to Cheryl, who is frozen in place.

Martin SNAPS HIS FINGERS, puts hands over his ears just as Cheryl continues talking.

CHERYL . . . nd you'd enjoy the whole experience, almost like being at the game. Who are they playing?

Martin takes hands off his ears.

MARTIN The Yankees are the money team.

CHERYL The Toronto Blue Jays?

MARTIN Of course! The Jays are all team spirit, full of heart. I love baseball. After I'm cremated, in my next life, I'm coming back as a professional baseball player.

Cheryl EXITS into the US opening to the kitchen.

The phone rings. Martin turns off the TV with the remote and answers the phone.

Martin and Norm's Quad-A Roofing. *(pause)* Oh, Norm. *(pause)* Problem? *(pause)* Sammy fell? *(pause)* A broken arm and possible concussion? *(pause)* We've got safety harnesses and procedures! The insurance will go up again! *(pause)* Okay, okay. I'll sort out our bookings. *(pause)* We'll manage with three crews. You reshuffle the crews; I'll reschedule and jobs. *(pause)* Norm, listen, I think we should get out of roofing, go into cement. I've studied it. Driveways and sidewalks are a cinch, and the cost of insurance is less . . . *(pause)*

Cheryl, wearing an apron, ENTERS from the kitchen with four letters.

. . . Good. It's our plan. *(pause)* Once we finish up here, we'll go into cement. Thanks Norm. Goodbye.

Martin hangs up.

CHERYL There's leftover meatloaf or frozen dinner.

Cheryl hands the mail to Martin. Martin stands, goes through the mail Sees one envelope, is enthused.

MARTIN I've been looking forward to this.

CHERYL Leftover meatloaf?

Martin holds up one letter.

MARTIN My new health card!

(MORE)

He takes out and inspects the card.

It's got my change.

CHERYL What change?

MARTIN I'm donating my organs after I die. It's on the card.

CHERYL You?!

MARTIN Yes.

CHERYL You got a helpless, dying person to sign off on their organs. You'll make a huge profit, right?

MARTIN No, I'm donating, as I said before, my own organs.

CHERYL You won't give a crumb to a starving man, now you're giving away your insides?
(confused, then new idea) You'll sell them?

MARTIN If that were the case, who'd be the one benefiting? You!

CHERYL I'd need the money to keep my spirits up.

MARTIN Marguerites have always lifted your spirits in the past.

Cheryl jumps up.

CHERYL Your organs could be saving a life any day now.

MARTIN When you remind me of me, it makes me love you all the more.

Martin cheek kisses her.

CHERYL Was that a compliment? or . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting)* I call it death insurance. I can sign you up.

CHERYL I should have known. It's a sales pitch.

MARTIN Can life insurance give one a new life if it is fatally damaged? No. Whereas, with death insurance, one gets exactly what one pays for.

CHERYL Why would anyone pay to die?

MARTIN I'll miss me when I'm gone my Dear, but by having no organs I reduce my chances to zero of waking up in a crematorium on fire! You're going for burial, right?

CHERYL There's a family plot.

MARTIN With my low cost, dollars a day, death insurance, one doesn't wake up in an oak coffin six feet under, clawing to get out. Death is guaranteed before you go in.

CHERYL Martin, you can't be serious.

MARTIN I should be selling it door to door.

CHERYL I'll pass, thanks.

MARTIN I'm going into cement.

CHERYL Cement?

MARTIN Yes. Norm's going into cement too.

CHERYL I didn't know you could.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 1

ACT 1, SCENE 2

Time: Night.

Place: Martin and Cheryl's living room.

LIGHTS UP ON S.R., OUT ON S.L.

Cheryl sits on the sofa. Martin ENTERS through the D.R. door.

MARTIN What a day.

CHERYL Roofing trouble?

Martin moves to the computer. Types into it.

MARTIN George Carson wants Quad-A to shingle his shed. Shed! We've got two churches and a half dozen houses lined up.

CHERYL I think it's a mistake.

MARTIN The shed?

CHERYL Going into cement!

MARTIN It's a modern world, Cheryl. I can go into cement, donate my organs, do anything I want. There are so many options.

Martin turns on the TV with the remote, stands, watches it in silence.

(shouts) Go, go, go!

CHERYL Why do you have to make so much noise to watch silent TV?

MARTIN The runner got thrown out at third. Didn't run hard enough.

CHERYL Louder and you'll throw him in.

He looks at her and shakes his head.

Dinner in ten minutes.

Cheryl EXITS into the kitchen. The phone RINGS. Martin answers it.

MARTIN Hello, Martin and Norm's Quad-A Roofing. *(pause)* Oh, hi Donna. *(pause)* That's terrible. *(pause, then louder)* It's such a shock.

(MORE)

Cheryl ENTERS from kitchen, senses the tension in Martin's voice, stands beside him.

Martin puts a hand over the phone.

It's Donna.

CHERYL Donna?

MARTIN Norm's Donna.

Cheryl cringes and starts to walk away.

(into phone) Donna, hold on a minute. *(to Cheryl)* Cheryl!

Cheryl stops.

Norm died in his sleep last night. They're not sure but, it could've been an aneurism or heart attack.

Cheryl moves to Martin. He holds the phone for her to take. She cringes, backs away.

Please.

Martin hands Cheryl the phone.

I need a stiff drink.

Martin leaves the room.

CHERYL: *(into phone)* Hi Donna. It's Cheryl. *(pause)* Martin told me. I'm so sorry. It must be devastating. *(pause)* It's not so bad? *(shocked look from Cheryl)* *(pause)* He's never looked more relaxed? *(pause)* Yes, I would think . . . *(pause)* He wanted cremation. I understand. *(pause)* Martin wants the same. *(long pause)* Are you sure he wanted his ashes scattered on the ocean at Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia? *(pause)* Martin mentioned Norm wanted to go into cement. *(pause)* Martin wants to go into cement as well. *(pause)* Men need to feel secure even if they are just a pile of ashes. *(pause)* I'm sure the funeral home will accommodate Norm's last request.

LIGHTS OUT ON S.R.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 2

ACT 1, SCENE 3

LIGHTS OUT ON S.R., UP ON S.L.

Time: A week later. Day.

Place: Funeral Home.

Funeral music plays. A 18" w x 18" d x 18" h block of cement with a sturdy handle sits on a table. It has a gold plate with an engraving on its front.

DONNA (40) a sexually well-proportioned woman, stands near the urn. She's dressed in a short, tight red dress that has a ton of bling and she's heavily made up. Her top is quite revealing.

Martin and Cheryl ENTER. are shocked when they see Donna. They approach her.

CHERYL We're so sorry for your loss Donna. If there is anything we can do . . .

Martin goes to the urn, puts a hand on it, says a silent prayer.

(to Donna) Norm and Martin were close.

Martin joins Cheryl and Donna.

MARTIN He was a good man. I relied on him to get the work done year in and year out.

Martin looks to the cement urn.

Donna, I've never seen an urn like this one. Are you sure it's what Norm would have wanted?

DONNA Norm told me he wanted his ashes spread on the ocean at Peggy's Cove, but I saw to it his last request was granted, to go into cement. Cheryl said . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting)* My God, no!

DONNA Cheryl told me Norm wanted to go into cement.

Shock for Martin.

SAMMY (25), a rough looking, wiry, athletic male with a cast and sling over his left arm ENTERS, approaches Donna.

Donna and Sammy talk without sound. Sammy consoles Donna without sound. Body language says he wants her. (arm around her)

LIGHTS DIM ON SAMMY AND DONNA

Martin and Cheryl move to the side.

LIGHTS UP ON MARTIN AND CHERYL:

MARTIN Did you tell Donna Norm wanted a cement urn?

CHERYL I told her what you told me! That you and Norm wanted to go into cement!

MARTIN Cheryl, I wasn't talking about our ashes! I wanted a new business with Norm. A cement business! Sidewalks! Driveways!

CHERYL Oh oh.

Donna and Sammy have light conversation without sound. Both smile, laugh.

LIGHT DIMS ON MARTIN AND CHERYL

LIGHTS UP ON SAMMY AND DONNA

Donna and Sammy are at the urn. Martin and Cheryl, talk without sound.

DONNA So, Sammy, have you been single for long?

SAMMY A year ago I was devastated by my divorce, then Norm introduced me to Wanda. I was happy for a while, then I was devastated, depressed all over again when Wanda dumped me. Norm said my depression would pass, but it didn't. I feel kinda responsible for Norm dying.

DONNA Nonsense.

SAMMY I was on the roof, feeling depressed so I decided to, you know . . .

Sammy makes a jumping motion.

. . . jump off the roof to end the pain.

DONNA Poor baby. Go ahead, get it off your chest.

SAMMY Norm tried to catch me, then we both went down hard. Norm broke my fall, saved me. Me landing on him mighta hurried Norm's death along.

DONNA *(smiling, empty-headed)* Feel better?

SAMMY *(a strange look)* I'm not sure.

DONNA Good. That's all in the past. Water over the bridge. We have to look to our future. You're okay now?

SAMMY Not my arm.

DONNA It looks serious.

SAMMY Broken in three places. All because I wanted Wanda.

He holds up his broken arm.

Damaged goods.

DONNA You're not ready for dancing, but you're okay for dinner and a show, right?

He hesitates

SAMMY Uhummm.

DONNA It's been pretty gloomy around the house. I could use some cheering up.

Donna pulls out a business card and gives it to Sammy.

The number's on the card.

He looks at it.

SAMMY It's Norm's card.

DONNA It'll work for me too.

Sammy hesitates.

Don't worry, Norm won't answer.

Donna giggles, Sammy looks bewildered.

SAMMY Good.

Donna rubs up against him.

You're refreshingly . . .

He thinks for the right word.

. . . uncomplicated?

DONNA Pick me up at 7.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 3

ACT 1, SCENE 4

LIGHTS OUT ON S.L., UP ON S.R.

Time: A week later. Night.

Place Martin and Cheryl's living room as before.

Cheryl reads from a novel on the sofa.

The cement urn with Norm's ashes is on the TV or mantle.

Martin ENTERS through the D.R. door, goes to the urn.

MARTIN She didn't!

CHERYL She ditched Norm at the funeral home like a bad date.

MARTIN I've always wondered what Norm saw in her. Now I know -- thin air!

CHERYL A vacuum!

MARTIN Yeah.

CHERYL Give a simple gal ample bosom, a ton of Bling, caked on makeup and an exceptional tush and you've got every man's perfect woman.

MARTIN *(admonishing)* Now Cheryl.

CHERYL What?

MARTIN Didn't you leave something out?

CHERYL No – bosom, bling, makeup, tush, empty head. That's everything.

MARTIN *(sarcastic)* You left out shopping.

CHERYL Ditsy Glitzy Donna. Her name suits her.

MARTIN Was it you or me who named her? I forget.

CHERYL At their wedding four years ago. You did the glitzy and I did the ditsy.

MARTIN Her low-cut wedding dress with the ridiculous amount of bling gave us glitzy, and her veil that swirled round and round her head like plastic wrap provided the ditsy.

CHERYL When the minister pronounced them man and wife then said you can now kiss the bride, it took two agonizing minutes to unwrap the veil.

MARTIN Something's been bothering me.

CHERYL What?

MARTIN The night before, at his stag, Norm got drunk, talked about Donna and Wanda. I thought he said he was marrying Wanda. Why would he . . .

CHERYL *(interrupting, shocked)* Wanda, Donna. They sound similar.

MARTIN *(shocked)* That explains the wide-eyed look on his face when the veil was removed. He could have married the wrong woman!

CHERYL The funeral home called wanting to know where to send the urn.

MARTIN I'm glad his ashes are here. Ditzzy Glitzy Donna would have flush Norm down the toilet!

Martin goes to the urn.

CHERYL You're taking Norm's ashes to Peggy's Cove?

MARTIN Have to. I couldn't have managed the business without Norm. I'll fly down, spread his ashes, and fly back.

CHERYL You hate flying. It makes you weird.

MARTIN I'll get over it.

CHERYL You'll need me there. We'll do it together.

Electronic beeping comes from backstage.

CHERYL That's the leftover meatloaf calling us.

MARTIN Norm would have been grateful for your leftover homemade meatloaf.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act 1, Scene 4

ACT 1, SCENE 5

LIGHTS OUT S.R., UP ON S.L.

Time: Morning.

Place: Halifax Hilton Hotel room.

Two suitcases are by the door. The hotel room departure notice is on the UC door.

There is a bed.

Martin sprawls on the bed. Cheryl sits on the luggage, checks her watch.

CHERYL The idiots are late.

MARTIN The idiot twins?

CHERYL Are you okay?

MARTIN Recovering.

CHERYL You tossed and turned the whole night.

MARTIN There's a ping pong ball bouncing around in my head.

CHERYL There was more turbulence on the plane than usual.

MARTIN Turbulence! That was a three-hour aerial roller coaster.

CHERYL It was turbulence!

MARTIN The Devil was flying that plane!

CHERYL Here we go again. You know it'll pass.

MARTIN I don't know what I know.

Cheryl pulls a pamphlet from her purse, looks at it.

CHERYL The Halifax Hilton has a lot going for it. You can get tours from the lobby.

Martin sits up.

MARTIN The ping pong ball isn't bouncing around as much as it was on the plane but . . .

CHERYL *(interrupting)* Think about something else. Did you see the look on the faces of the airport staff?

MARTIN Airport? What airport? Oh, the airport. The baggage weigher or handler.

CHERYL Weigher.

MARTIN That was priceless. It took all my strength to get the reinforced gym bag with Norm's urn off the cart and onto the scales.

CHERYL When she saw the weight?

MARTIN Her eyes swelled up. I could tell inside she was screaming "possessed luggage".

CHERYL Did you notice her suddenly turn away?

MARTIN I could tell she wanted to run screaming into the back, but she stifled everything.

They chuckle.

MARTIN And the baggage handler.

CHERYL He was great, a bodybuilder, very muscular, swinging luggage off the scales like pillows until . . .

MARTIN (*interrupting*) . . . he got to the urn gym bag.

CHERYL His body turned but his arm stayed with the bag.

They chuckle.

MARTIN It must have stretched a good two inches before he let go.

CHERYL His little yelp was cute.

They chuckle.

MARTIN Involuntary for sure.

CHERYL When we share these special times, it makes me think it's all worthwhile.

MARTIN Really?

CHERYL Of course. Norm and Donna had their vacuum to share, and we have what we have. What do we have?

MARTIN What would you call it?

CHERYL Our superior sense of humor? The baggage handler and weigher. They were so funny.

MARTIN Or sad.

CHERYL Probably both.

MARTIN Which makes it doubly funny.

CHERYL Or doubly sad.

MARTIN I don't . . .

CHERYL *(interrupting)* It's dumb people humor.

She giggles.

MARTIN Right. We're hooked on dumb people humor.

CHERYL Do you think we're normal?

MARTIN No.

They laugh.

CHERYL It was a big mistake to bring Donna and Sammy.

MARTIN I couldn't tell Donna she couldn't be at her husband's interment.

CHERYL They're not interested in what happens to Norm's ashes. They're here for a good time. Didn't you talk to Norm about how simple Donna was?

MARTIN I did. I said Norm, I'm sure Donna is more interested in the bag of Jango potato chips she's eating than you. He never got past the word Jangos, thought I was saying they had Jangos in common.

CHERYL Jangos are a tasty, light snack.

MARTIN You noticed they spent most of their time on the plane in the bathroom . . . doing what two prehistoric, sex starved morons would do.

CHERYL Passengers were crossing their legs, lined up down the aisle as far as I could see.

MARTIN When the first officer unlocked the lavatory and dragged them out screaming and half-dressed, people wanted to lynch them.

CHERYL I'm surprised they weren't arrested when we landed.

MARTIN They'll have to find another way home.

CHERYL No. The airline will fly them back.

MARTIN Cheryl, guys were pissing in bottles. They'll never let them fly back.

CHERYL The airline needs their business. Want to bet?

MARTIN Fifty.

They shake hands.

I saw them at the airline security counter after we got off the plane.

CHERYL Cheater. Once they get here, we'll go straight to Peggy's Cove for the interment.

A KNOCK on the door. Martin opens it.

Donna and Sammy, lovie-dovie, ENTER.

MARTIN Good morning.

DONNA Yeah.

SAMMY We're a little late.

Martin checks his watch.

MARTIN An hour and twenty-three minutes!

CHERYL We need to get to Peggy's Cove with the urn.

DONNA Oh, I had no idea.

CHERYL I've got to get back for work.

DONNA So, you want to do the ashes show at the ocean right away?

MARTIN Yes! It's an hour to the Cove, then we need to be back for the flight.

SAMMY We've got other plans.

DONNA We kinda planned to go to the magnetic hill.

SAMMY You've heard about it? It's where a car rolls up hill, all by itself?

CHERYL It's an optical illu . . .

Martin snaps his fingers, stopping Cheryl in mid word.

Donna and Sammy stare blankly at Cheryl then to Martin.

MARTIN Unidentified magnetic forces cause cars to roll up hill! UMF! The forces work on cars, trucks, all kinds of transportation, makes them roll up hill! Isn't that weird?

DONNA Oh, we gotta see that.

Martin snaps his fingers.

CHERYL . . . sion.

Confused, Donna and Sammy look at each other.

SAMMY Yeah, the magnetic hill.

DONNA Or maybe we should watch the ashes show.

CHERYL My God, woman, must everything be a show?

DONNA They'll fly through the air, won't they?

CHERYL Donna! It's not like fireworks!

DONNA In that case I'm pretty sure we'll be going to the magnetic hill instead.

SAMMY Yeah. The hill.

CHERYL The magnetic hill will be a better show. I guarantee it.

DONNA You're sure we should go to the hill?

MARTIN Go to the hill! Play with unidentified magnetic forces and let us know how it went. Some people think aliens control it.

DONNA Really?

MARTIN Yeah. Aliens.

SAMMY Wow.

MARTIN We'll see you both back home later in the week.

DONNA You're sure?

MARTIN Very sure.

Martin checks his watch.

If you leave now, you'll get there just in time to see unidentified magnetic forces pull a fire engine up hill. They keep one there for demonstrations.

SAMMY A fire engine moving up hill on its own?

MARTIN They turn on the siren and all the flashing lights. It's quite a show.

DONNA Will there be fireworks?

MARTIN During the day?

DONNA Yeah. I was hoping for fireworks.

MARTIN Sure. There's an amazing fireworks display.

Donna looks bewildered.

(to Cheryl) It boggles the mind.

Donna and Sammy jump up.

DONNA We'll get breakfast on the way.

Donna and Sammy RUSH OUT.

CHERYL Are you pleased with yourself?

MARTIN I boggled two half minds.

CHERYL That's my man.

Cheryl kisses Martin.

MARTIN I did it for every distressed bladder on the plane.

Martin throws his right fist into the air.

Justice!

CHERYL Maybe we should open the urn here, take the ashes in a bag.

MARTIN And leave half of Norm's ashes on the hotel floor? No, I'm not sweeping half of Norm up. He's going entirely and straight into the ocean.

CHERYL How can you . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting)* I brought my roofing hammer. We'll find a high point overlooking the ocean and let them fly from there.

CHERYL We could rent a boat.

MARTIN Cheryl, this trip is costing me an arm and a leg. We don't need any more expense.

CHERYL You're okay with the roofing hammer, right?

MARTIN It's power nailers I'm not good with. I'm a pro with my hammer.

CHERYL You won't bang your finger, right? It's just that . . .

Martin snaps his fingers. Cheryl freezes, stops talking mid-sentence.

MARTIN My roofing skills have been handed down from generation to generation. It was my father's tool of choice, and now it's mine.

LIGHTS OUT.

END ACT 1, SCENE 5

ACT 1, SCENE 6

LIGHTS OUT S.L., UP ON S.R.

Time: Afternoon.

Place: Hospital room.

A chair, wheelchair and a bed.

A hanging white hospital curtain divides a bed from another bed.

Martin sits in the wheelchair. A female doctor finishes bandaging his head. Martin also has a cast on his left arm and on his right leg.

A POLICEMAN is prepared to talk to Martin.

Cheryl sits and reads a magazine to the side.

DOCTOR *(to Martin)* You've had a severe concussion. You'll need rest then have an MRI taken.

COP *(to Martin)* Were there witnesses to the fatality?

MARTIN Yes, my wife Cheryl. She's over there.

Martin points to Cheryl. The policeman goes to Cheryl.

COP Your husband said you witnessed the event.

CHERYL I saw every . . .

Martin snaps his fingers. Cheryl stops talking. Martin wheels over to the policeman by Cheryl.

Frustrated, the doctor EXITS.

COP *(to Martin)* How did you do that?

MARTIN Magic fingers.

The policeman snaps his fingers. Cheryl remains mute.

If you don't arrest me, I'll teach you.

COP Sir, your condition is unstable.

MARTIN I was up on a high rock, banging on cement with my hammer. I couldn't make a dent in it, then I slipped, and that's the last thing I remember until I woke in the ambulance.

COP Why were you banging on cement?

MARTIN I needed to set Norm free.

COP Where was Norm?

MARTIN Imprisoned.

COP A prison break?

MARTIN Cement is very hard.

COP *(confused)* Sir, I think you'd better rest. I'll talk to you later.

Martin snaps his fingers again.

CHERYL . . . thing from the car.

COP Weird! *(to Cheryl)* You saw everything from the car?

CHERYL I just said that!

Martin wheels his wheelchair toward the officer, tries to move between him and Cheryl.

COP *(to Martin)* Please move back. I won't arrest anyone unless I suspect a murder has been committed.

The policeman pushes Martin's chair to the side.

CHERYL Martin! The officer thinks the knock on your head has rearranged its contents.

MARTIN What was I doing on that high rock?

CHERYL Setting Norm free. Remember?

A shrug from Martin.

(to the Cop) He's lost his marbles! Nuts!!

SAMMY Uhhhhuuuu!

COP What was that?

SAMMY *(weakly)* Ahhhhuuuuuu. I'm Sammy. I know what . . . Uhhhhuuuu!

Cheryl pulls a curtain aside.

A mannequin lays on a bed in a body cast, entirely covered in white plaster (Sammy speaks through it.)

The officer goes to Sammy.

COP Sir, did you witness the accident?

SAMMY I waaaaas the accident! Uhhuuuu!

COP Of course. I'm sorry. You're in a lot of pain.

SAMMY Everyyyyyyything hhhurts reeeal baaad!

COP Can you tell me, from your point of view, such as it is, or was, what happened?

SAMMY Donna and I were looking for Martin and Cheryl. *(scream)* They were going to set Donna's husband free.

COP So I've heard. Who was her husband?

SAMMY Norm.

COP Why were you with Donna?

SAMMY We were dating.

COP You were dating Donna while her husband Norm was locked up. Is that it?

SAMMY We wanted to help set him free, *(scream)* but it didn't work out.

MARTIN I know one thing for sure.

COP What's that?

MARTIN Who's on first. Definitely. I'm sure of it.

COP So, what prison was this Norm in?

MARTIN Or on second. No, he's, let me think . . .

SAMMY *(interrupting)* . . . in a cement prison!

COP Did anyone set him free?

MARTIN No, I'm pretty sure he's still in there.

COP Good. He sounds like a dangerous offender.

MARTIN He'll be there until I get him out.

COP Breaking a prisoner out of a secure facility is a serious offence.

CHERYL My God, Martin, will you please shut up!

Martin goes to snap his fingers, but the policeman grabs his hand.

COP I'll need backup on this one.

The policeman reaches for his radio.

CHERYL I'm the only one who wasn't injured. I know what happened.

MARTIN Cheryl, I think I was involved.

CHERYL Shut up! Who's on first? A lot of help you are.

MARTIN Well, he is, and I believe, don't quote me, but I believe Norm could be on second, third, or worse, maybe . . . still in cement?!

CHERYL Shut it!

Martin goes to snap the fingers on his other hand. The policeman grabs that hand and holds both hands.

COP *(to Cheryl)* Go ahead.

CHERYL Norm isn't in jail. He isn't a prisoner. He's a pile of ashes that was encased in a cement block because of a block head misunderstanding.

COP The one that did the damage?

CHERYL Yes. My husband, Martin, was on a high rock with his hammer and the cement urn.

COP Where were you?

CHERYL In the car waiting for my husband to set Norm's ashes free into the Cove. The wind was to blow them up and over toward the water.

The policeman lets go of Martin's hands.

MARTIN That's when I slipped! I remember slipping, then nothing. *(hesitates)*

COP *(to Cheryl)* Please go on.

CHERYL My husband, the one with the concurrent mouth and brain damage, fell off the rock with the cement urn just as Sammy and Donna wandered haplessly under.

Martin starts to snap his fingers, but the policeman warns him with a finger wag.

COP Why were they there?

CHERYL I haven't a clue.

MARTIN They were supposed to be watching aliens work unidentified magnetic forces.

COP Aliens?

MARTIN They were performing tricks on cars . . . even a fire engine.

SAMMY Ohhhh my body. Ahhhhhha. They told me every bone's broken.

COP *(to Sammy)* Please tell me what you know.

SAMMY Every bone! *(scream)* Donna wanted to send Norm off with a bag of Jangos. *(scream)* It was their favorite food.

COP Jangos?

SAMMY A light, refreshing, tasty potato chip snack. *(scream)* She thought it would be cool to throw a handful of Jangos into the air *(scream)* with Norm's ashes.

COP It didn't work out that way, did it?

SAMMY No. Now she's dead *(scream)* killed by her dead husband. *(scream)* That's murder!

COP This Norm is a dangerous offender!

CHERYL Donna's head got in the way of the falling cement urn, then Martin landed on Sammy. Sammy broke my husband's fall, probably saved his life.

SAMMY That doesn't sound right.

CHERYL You saving Martin?

SAMMY *(scream)* A few days ago I was involved in Norm's death.

MARTIN You?

SAMMY *(scream)* Because I tried to kill myself by jumping off a roof.

MARTIN You?

SAMMY Norm died because he broke my fall, now Norm kills Donna by landing on her head?

MARTIN Norm was killed by a suicidal idiot?!

SAMMY Uhhhhh. I think so.

MARTIN Memo to self. Never hire depressed people when heights are involved.

COP How many murders are we talking about here? I'm definitely going to need backup.

The policeman reaches for the radio.

CHERYL There are no murders. A block of cement can't be charged with anything.

MARTIN *(to Sammy)* If you hadn't jumped off the roof, Norm would be alive and none of this would have happened!

SAMMY Yeah. *(scream)* It was Wanda's fault.

CHERYL How's that?

SAMMY I was wanting Wanda and well, you know.

MARTIN Wanda?

SAMMY My ex-girlfriend.

MARTIN Norm talked about wanting to marry Wanda at his stag.

SAMMY Norm and Wanda were an item for a while. *(scream)* At Norm's wedding Wanda had a nail appointment she couldn't cancel, so had Donna take her place and marry Norm. *(scream)* Later Wanda and I were an item, then she dumped me, all because of Jangos.

COP Jangos?

SAMMY Norm and I ate Jangos in bed. Wanda didn't like Jangos in the sheets.

MARTIN Jangos killed everybody!

The policeman has his pen and pad out.

COP *(to Sammy)* Can you give me the last name and address of this Wanda?

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 6

ACT 1, SCENE 7

LIGHTS OUT S.R., UP ON S.L.

Time: Night.

Place: Halifax Hilton Hotel room.

Martin is in a wheelchair with arm and leg still in casts. Cheryl stands beside him. There are two suitcases and the bed. Martin blank stares the wall

CHERYL Are you okay?

MARTIN I remember not wanting to rent a boat because the trip was costing me an arm and a leg.

He lifts his arm and leg in casts a little.

What do you think?

CHERYL You still have them.

MARTIN But for how long?

CHERYL Martin!

MARTIN As soon as I said it, about costing an arm and a leg, I set unseen wheels in motion, wheels that took me here to this painful place.

CHERYL Unidentified magnetic forces?

MARTIN UMF?

CHERYL Alien forces.

MARTIN It's a concussion. I'm not brain dead.

CHERYL Just testing.

MARTIN Cheryl, we did set Norm's ashes free, didn't we? I vaguely remember seeing them fly over the ocean.

CHERYL Yes, we did my love.

MARTIN Was it a disaster like the rest?

CHERYL No-one died, but yes, there was a kind of casualty.

MARTIN Again?

CHERYL It didn't go as planned.

MARTIN Correct me if I'm missing something. It was my brilliant idea to drop the urn again onto a plastic sheet on the rocks, and this time nobody's head got in the way. We freed Norm from the cement and put him in a Mason jar.

CHERYL We did.

MARTIN We rented a skiff and set out to sea with the ashes in the jar.

CHERYL Anything else?

MARTIN We tested the wind, and when it was just right, I let them fly, and fly they did. Wasn't there a bag of Jangos?

CHERYL You insisted I throw an open bag into the air with the ashes.

MARTIN I did?

CHERYL You did.

MARTIN The cloud stretched at least twenty feet in the air.

CHERYL (*dread*) Then it moved.

MARTIN Yes, yes, I remember the cloud moved over a, a . . . old, crusty fisherman in his skiff . . . about a hundred feet away.

Cheryl nods.

Yes, I see it clearer now. When the cloud cleared the fisherman screamed an obscenity, jumped up, started the skiff.

CHERYL Wild eyed, with line trailing behind, he made a bee line for shore. We terrified an innocent fisherman.

MARTIN As he roared past, he held up the bag of Jangos, screamed something. What was it?

CHERYL It was . . .

MARTIN (*interrupting*) That's it! "Aliens eat Jangos"! I must have imagined that, right?

CHERYL No. He's probably on a newscast.

MARTIN Or in a mental institution.

CHERYL UMF in action.

MARTIN You know we've got to look for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, to the silver lining in every cloud, to the bright side of every misery . . . right?

CHERYL What, in your sad state, could you possibly see as a bright side to all of this?

MARTIN We'll be able to use the bathroom on the plane on the way home.

CHERYL That's good to know. I have some unsettling news.

MARTIN Give it to me. Better here than on the plane.

CHERYL Ditsy Glitzy Donna didn't have any siblings. Her parents passed, and she and Norm had few friends. A friend of mine, Rev. Susan Gray will conduct the service. Because DGD was an organ donor, relatives of the recipients could fill the church.

MARTIN That's right. I convinced Norm to sign up for organ donation. He must have convinced DGD to do the same.

CHERYL Death insurance in action.

MARTIN I sent her card in with his. I'm pleased to know others would benefit from their tragic end.

CHERYL You've had quite an influence on many people.

MARTIN Indirectly.

CHERYL I'm feeling better about organ donation. Rev. Gray said there will be a surprise mourner.

MARTIN My love, after all I've been through, I'm surprise-proof.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 7

ACT 1, SCENE 8

LIGHTS OUT ON S.R., UP ON S.L.

Time: Night.

Place: Funeral Home.

A ceramic urn is on a table and a chair beside the table. Five photos of young people are on and around the table.

Rev. Susan Gray talks to a woman in black at the urn. A black veil hides the woman's face.

Martin and Cheryl ENTER.

CHERYL We're in time.

MARTIN Too bad.

CHERYL We owe Donna at least a visitation.

MARTIN I'll say a prayer and be on my way.

Martin sits. Rev. Susan Gray turns away from the woman in black with a black veil, moves to Martin and Cheryl.

REV. . GRAY *(to Cheryl)* How nice of you to come.

Cheryl checks her watch.

CHERYL We weren't sure you'd still be here.

REV. GRAY The room was full of relatives of donor recipients from both Norm and Donna.

She points to the photos.

REV. GRAY Many people will live because of Norm and Donna's unselfishness.

CHERYL *(looks at photos)* They are so youthful.

Martin mouths a silent prayer.

REV. GRAY Lungs, kidneys, liver, even a heart have gone to give people new leases on life.

MARTIN Hallelujah and Amen.

Martin jumps up.

Cheryl, lets go.

Martin moves toward the door.

REV. GRAY Martin, someone who's come a long way wants to meet you.

Martin stops, turns back. The woman in black moves to Martin and Cheryl.

The woman in black lifts her veil. She is THE IMAGE OF DONNA.

WOMAN Hello, I'm . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting)* My God! DGD's back from the dead!

REV. GRAY No, you don't . . .

Martin staggers into Cheryl.

MARTIN *(interrupting)* With her bag of Jangos.

Cheryl grabs him.

Here to haunt me!

REV. GRAY Martin.

MARTIN I didn't kill you! It was Norm!

The woman in black puts a hand on Martin's shoulder. Martin passes out. Cheryl brings Martin around. He's groggy.

MARTIN What happened?

CHERYL You passed out.

REV. GRAY Martin, this isn't Donna's ghost. It's Debra, Donna's twin sister.

MARTIN Twin sister?

CHERYL Donna had a twin sister.

Cheryl motions to Dr. Debra.

Dr. Debra.

MARTIN Oh. I thought . . . I hope you understand. Norm didn't kill anyone. He loved Donna.

DR. DEBRA I understand. I owe you an explanation. I'm a pediatrician in California. My husband Henry is a surgeon, and we have two wonderful children.

REV. GRAY Dr. Debra has been looking for Donna for a month and has only recently tracked her down.

DR. DEBRA Donna and I were identical twins, separated at birth. My biological mother gave me up for adoption because of a bad marriage and money problems.

MARTIN You gave me quite a scare.

DR. DEBRA I see how you would assume I was Donna.

Martin turns Cheryl to the side.

MARTIN *(to Cheryl)* She's the complete opposite of DGD!

DR. DEBRA I was hoping you could tell me something about my sister.

MARTIN About DGD?

CHERYL Yes. We called her DGD because . . .

MARTIN *(interrupting)* . . . because she was . . . what was it?

CHERYL She was was . . . let me remember . . . Oh, right . . . Delightfully Generous Donna.

MARTIN She'd do anything for anyone.

CHERYL Very special.

MARTIN Actually, when we think of her, we think back and realize she was a, a, a sort of . . .

CHERYL *(interrupting)* . . . an angel?

DR. DEBRA That's commendable. I had no idea Donna existed until my adoptive mother told me about her just before she passed away.

CHERYL So you set out to find your long-lost identical twin.

REV. GRAY It's unfortunate you had to find her when it was too late.

DR. DEBRA I felt a part of me had died when I saw the death notice.

REV. GRAY A tremendous shock.

CHERYL We'll tell you what we can about her.

MARTIN Sometimes we called her DGD, our special uhuh, angel. Delightfully Generous Donna.

Donna helped us and everyone she knew.

CHERYL Ask us anything. We'll fill you in on how thoughtful and generous DGD was.

DR. DEBRA I heard there was a man with her when she had that unfortunate accident.

MARTIN No.

CHERYL I can't remember anyone.

REV. GRAY His name was Sammy, wasn't it?

CHERYL Oh, Sammy, right.

MARTIN He's long gone. I'm sure of it.

REV. GRAY I heard he's in the hospital; that he suffered some injuries.

MARTIN Oh, right, our Sammy, one of our staff.

CHERYL He was kind enough to escort Donna to the coast. He's in critical shape in the hospital.

MARTIN I doubt if he'll survive.

DR. DEBRA I have to get back to LA today, but I'll be back as soon as possible to talk with him about my sister. He probably knew Donna very well.

MARTIN As I recall, they spent some quality time together on the plane.

Cheryl kicks Martin without anyone noticing.

DR. DEBRA In that case I'd definitely like to talk with him.

MARTIN We'll visit him together, right Cheryl?

CHERYL I'm sure he'll be taking visitors.

DR. DEBRA There's no need.

MARTIN No sense in giving him a heart attack when he sees you.

CHERYL Although, a good old-fashioned heart attack could be in his future.

MARTIN He's sorta traumatized by the fall, so him having a heart attack isn't out of the question, is it Cheryl?

CHERYL Not at all. Poor man.

DR. DEBRA It's kind of you to visit him to let him know about how important Donna's memory is to me.

CHERYL It's important for us to see that Donna's memory is a pleasant one for you, your children, your whole family and everyone who knew her. Isn't it, Martin?

MARTIN Absolutely.

END OF ACT 1

END OF SAMPLE

LIGHTS OUT.