

Monopoly
of the
Mind

by Don Citarella

MAGIC THEATRE
ENTRANCE NOT FOR EVERYBODY

“Under anarchy independent action taken by one state to increase it’s security may make all states more insecure. If one state builds it’s strength to make sure that another cannot hurt it, the other, seeing the first getting stronger, may build it’s strength to protect itself against the first. The result is that the independent efforts of each to build it’s own strength and security makes both more insecure. It is an ironic result yet neither has acted irrationally. Neither acted from anger or pride, but from fear caused by the threat perceived in the growth of the other. After all, building defenses is a rational response to a perceived threat.”

-Joseph S. Nye Jr.

“...we are all dreaming of a speech without words that utters the inexpressible and gives form to the formless.”

-Herman Hesse, Steppenwolf

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About The Show: *Monopoly of the Mind* is meant to be a provocative journey into the average mind and its components. It is a one act play intended to run in-the-round with a fifteen minute intermission.

Characters are to wear simplistic, non-decorative clothing that fits their personas, free unless specified in the work. The nature of this work allows characters to speak towards the audience as well as each other. All furniture and props used in the work are to be painted a dull, non-lustrous black. There is no set, but a floor of the same black color. Lighting is to be simplistic as well. Characters are to jump beyond the farce of their personas into deeper, rooted selves. Reason is the only one to be dynamic. Any reference to The Body is meant to be androgynous.

Any addition to the Transition Standard (as mentioned in the work) to make it more surreal is encouraged. Since the bulk of the speaking in *Monopoly* is in monologue form, it is dependent upon the dance choreography to elevate the emotion in the work. Much attention should be invested in the Standard to maintain this energy. No direction is given specifically for this purpose. Whether it be stylized towards ballet, jazz, modern, a mixture of each, or something other, it and the carnival dance accompaniment is left for the director to articulate to best heighten the performance. All that can be said is that they are the impulses, the fluid catalysts for fusion and fission, the reaper, and the God. Bonne chance!

SCENE I

Reason: Its a stage, is it? That's what he said, all right. A *stage*. Well, it's more than just the world, it's *[tapping temple]* it's in *here*. He was right, though. The bard certainly was right. It's an act. An act stuffed tight at the seams with scenes. The mind is a freeform impromptu performed for this world around us: sometimes creating a hero, sometimes creating a villain, sometimes never living, but dwelling on the final curtain. But the mind, it's not scripted, no, it's an endless debate. With components like characters. *[pause]* No, wait, I take that back. They *are* characters, not merely *like* them. Bickering, feuding, debating. And guess who's sent to moderate them. *[gesturing towards self]* I suppose the leader, though, is only as great as his followers. Or is it, the followers are only as great as the leaders? *[realization hits]* I'm sorry. You probably have no idea what I'm talking about, do you? Forgive me, I guess I become rather long-winded on this. *[mulling his mind]* Forgiveness is a funny thing, they say. It warms the heart and cools the sting. Yet, ah, I'm not quite sure who *they* are. *[whispering]* Who was it that said that? *[resuming pitch]* Whatever the case, I hope not to sting you, but to warm your heart with a bit of the confusion that occurs up here. Confusion? From Confucius, I believe. A man who taught the chief virtues are respect for parents and ancestors, kindness, faithfulness, intelligence, and proper behavior. But there are also some who say, "Confucius says, man who stands on toilet is high on pot!" Consider the source...I know. Sadly, I seem to be losing quite a few of my sources, these days. Its them, you see. They just keep going and going never once stopping to review their damage or admit their faults. They can't, you see, they're not human, just character. Static, if you will. *[pause, realization again]* But here I go again. I'm afraid, at times, I'm as bad as they are. Let's start from the beginning. I'm Reason, how do you do? Ah, but you see, there is never a response to that because there is never anybody there. Just this, this shell that holds us in. If you'll notice, the only exits here are those, which lead to what some would call, the body. Yeah. That's where we are. Hence, my name, Reason. There are five others, you know. No, well, four, now. We lost Peace quite some time ago. Ah, but I'm sure they'll bring that up soon. Love, enjoys mentioning it: her overtaking of another. You might even say she *loves* it. Unfortunately for her, she fails to see what she is doing at times. Love's blind, you see. Not just here *[pointing with the index and middle finger on his right hand at his eyes]*, but *here*. *[dropping a hand over his entire visage starting from his forehead, down to his neck]*. Nonetheless, there are but four, now. We had an Envy once. Yeah. And a Sadness. I really miss those two. She, Envy that is, had an entire wardrobe consisting of nothing but green. It was quite amusing. Sadness, as you've probably already guessed, had the same dilemma, yet his was blue. I used to enjoy watching them. Their sides, that is. They both were eliminated by others as well, which is the only way to succeed in here since

none can change and none can accept. Their demises, I'm sure, will also be discussed. But first, let me introduce your mind, what's up here *[to temple once again]* in all of you.

Distress: Who are they? Man, I really don't know about this. I mean, all those people. You know how I am in front of crowds.

Reason: Don't worry, they're very sincere—

Distress *[letting off a worried laugh]:* Yeah....Intimidation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Reason *[to audience]:* See what I mean? Ladies and gentlemen, I give you distress. Ah, pardon me. What I mean to say is *[pause]* I give you *[notioning towards Distress]* Distress.

Distress: Cute, Reason. You know how humor makes me uncomfortable. Especially in front of all these people.

Reason: I'm terribly sorry, Distress, though that's normally your job. *[to audience]* Sorrow, you see, is her domain. As is the anxiety she felt upon her entrance. She is the one responsible for the engulfing of Sadness. Her direct translation is the *uneasiness left by interaction with others*. Not that which is related to fear or hate, for they are completely separate entities all together *[they enter]*. But she is mostly what brings on feelings of confusion and stress. And also one of the leading causes for nausea in this body. Not the sole cause, mind you, the other is—

Fear *[seeing audience and scampering about]:* OH MY GOD!!!! OhmyGodohmyGodohmyGod....

Hate: Ah hell, not again.

Reason *[to audience]:* Fear. *[to Fear]* Fear. Fear please, calm down.

Fear: OhmyGodohmyGodohmyGod....

Reason *[to audience]:* Speaking of nausea, I believe I sense a possible encounter. This could get messy. *[to Fear]* Fear! Listen to me. Remember the last time this happened and we ended up sleeping in front of the toilet for two nights? Calm down before it happens again. Fear, dammit, get over here. *[he ceases in front of Reason, head down]* Thank you. *[to audience]* As you probably already knew, he *is* fear, the emotion. Afraid of success. Afraid of failure. Afraid of truth. Afraid of lies. He's afraid of it all. Claustrophobic, afraid of closed spaces. Agoraphobic, afraid of open spaces. To top it all off, he's Phobaphobic, afraid of fear. Essentially, he's scared of you, me, even himself.

Fear: No I'm not.

Reason: Did I mention the fear of failure and lies.

Hate: He's just weak, that's what he is. Little pencil-neck, fraidy-cat!

Fear: Am not.

Hate: Are so.

Fear: Am not.

Reason: All right, knock it off, you two. *[to audience]* This is where the moderation comes in. Though, I tire of it, and Hate surely detests it, it's good for us. The idle brain, they say, is the devil's workshop. And

that's the last thing we'd want around here. See, that's one of the reasons Hate despises it so much: he knows that temptation and all things evil would result, and that's his territory. The other reason, naturally, that he complains about it, is because that's his job. And idleness, they say, is power, according to him. Ah, but there it is again, the infamous *they!* Dammit, who wrote that one now? *[pause]* He's wrong, though. Fear's not weak. In fact, he's stronger than him. He's probably the strongest of them all. You may think he's penetrable because he's afraid of everything, he's the easiest to dispose of, right? Well, the fact is the opposite is so. The fear he feels, is what he thrives on. The self-belief that they generate is what keeps them alive. And the only way to scrap one of them, is to convince them that they don't exist. Sounds impossible, doesn't it? You're close to being right, but not entirely. See, their inability to adapt and accept is what keeps them all here, for the most part. They can't seem to use their own logic as a weapon because they're caught behind themselves. On the other hand, every so often, one finds a...uh...loophole and gains the upperhand. This is when one actually convinces the other of his or her lack of existence and then *poof!* We lose another. Well, we don't exactly lose them, they're absorbed by the dominant one. Sadness became a fraction of Distress. Joy, God how I miss Joy, she became a part of Love. This is good, because old characters are lost all the time, absorbed into another, and new ones are created every day. They're created by finding other loopholes in logic that disproves an old absorption or breaks an accepted link of long ago. There is a bad side to this, too, though. In the event that one persona begins to absorb quite a few, we face the problems of a neurotic, and possibly a psychotic. Imagine, all Fear *[Fear looks up]*, all Hate *[Hate grins and laughs a quite sinister laugh]*, all Distress *[she looks around]*, or even all Reason. It's pretty frightening any way you look at it. *[pause]* Oh, I'm sorry. This is Hate.

Hate: Fuck off!

Reason: First impressions are always the—

Hate: Yeah, impress this *[flipping the bird]*.

Reason: Hate, we have guests—

Hate: —You know how I can't stand your voice. Nag Nag Nag. *[to audience]* You folks are gonna get sick of this fella real fast, I promise you that—

Reason: Needless to say, Hate and Fear are responsible for a lot of the lying that goes on around here—

Fear: Am not!

Reason: See?

Hate: Shut up! You folks wanna get with a winner right now before a whole mess ensues? I'm your man. You don't want a little wussy like her or him, so stick with me, all right?

Reason: He's also responsible for temptation.

Hate: Look, pal, do I have to shake some sense into you, or are you going to listen to me?

Reason *[to audience]*: Amusing, isn't it? Hate speaking of shaking sense into Reason. Seems like a problem that plagues society quite a bit these days, hmm? *[pause]* Oh, yeah, I almost forgot. None of us can inflict bodily harm unto another. The reason being is that none of us actually have bodies. We personify without the person. We embody sans body, if you will. We incarnate without the carnality. Which is the major reason that this place has no bathrooms. *[pause]* We just appear like this for you to better understand. In fact, I'm just assuming you view us as humans. Independently, your minds constructed us into what we are. Chances are, we look different to all of you. Mainly, Hate's face becomes something, or someone, in your lives that you hate, and the same with Fear, Distress, and myself. Sometimes, your minds will create a countenance and body for us out of scraps of others, creating a person that never existed. That may be why we might not look familiar to you. *[Reason picks up a mirror on*

stage] Sometimes, though, the physiognomy, the faces we wear, are all too familiar. You can't hide from your minds, gentle friends. *[holding mirror to an audience member]* Gaze to Distress, Fear, Hate. I pray you don't see yourself gazing back. *[putting down mirror]* Either way, consider yourselves fortunate. We had a fella in here the other day that pictured us all as bananas. Yep, that's right. Bananas. I heard him remark to his wife upon exiting, "Doris, those bananas were some of the crappiest puppets I've ever seen. Did you see the strings hanging off them?" *[notioning like a marionette]* I'm hoping none of you are seeing produce on strings right now. Ah, but I digress.

Fear: That's my job. Why you gotta try to take my job, Reason, what are you trying to do?

Hate: Shut up, ya mindless worm!

Distress: Doesn't anyone care about me, here? I mean, you guys always make me feel unwanted!

Reason: There's that interaction response again. *[whispering]* What I'm worried about is Distress. She's real nice once you get to know her, but she seems to be slipping off into, well, Fear's territory. And Fear's powerful enough. I warned her a couple of times, but she doesn't seem to hear me. None of them do. But I guess I should just face the facts, eh? No one really listens to Reason. *[enter Love]* Late again, as usual.

Love: Reason, up so soon. Have we begun already?

Reason: Soon, Love? It's late.

Love: Don't be silly. A debate without Love is a day without sunshine.

Reason: Well then, not to fear. It's night time.

Fear: Fear?

Love: You needn't worry about that, Reason. I have no fear, nor ever could. Besides Love, I've got hope and peace. And I always keep the faith.

Reason *[to audience]:* Incidentally, Love and Fear house what the body refers to as religion. Yet, that's a new one on me, this faith. What is it?

Love: You, Reason, don't know?

Reason: No, I don't. It's strange, but I've never been able to quite grasp it. You believe in something you cannot see, cannot feel, cannot even ensure existence, yet devote your heart to it?

Love: I have no heart.

Reason: The metaphysical heart, not the pump, I mean. You're all heart, Love.

Love: Why thank you, Reason. And yes, that's precisely what faith is.

Reason: You're even more blind than I thought.

Hate: Hence the phrase: blind faith.

Reason: Hence the redundancy: blind faith.

Love: Hence the misconception: blind faith. They're not synonyms, Reason. In fact, that's the only aspect of my being where I *can* see. There, I need no proof.

Reason: You believe in something without proof, yet are completely, unquestionably certain of existence without evidence. How? I don't get it.

Love: You're not supposed to. *[Reason lets off a noise that is a cross between a grunt and a sigh]* That's my Reason. Always thinking from up here *[pointing to Reason's temple, Reason doesn't flinch]*.

Reason: Well it's better than thinking from here *[pointing to Love's heart]* or even here for that matter *[pointing between her legs, then looking to audience]*. Ladies and gentlemen, may I formally present Love. *[pause]* I'm assuming you caught the head-heart-crotch gestures that we've been making and hopefully are picturing us as humans, instead of fruit. Otherwise, please substitute the organs for their appropriate produce. Ah, the melon for the head. The passionfruit for the heart. And for the crotch? The cherry. Unless Love, to you, is male. In which case, I suppose the banana will do.

Love: Love as a man? *Psh!* We're talking about an entity that can't even accept the proper position of a toilet seat, much less control the component which conquers all. And what's so bad about thinking from here *[pointing to the heart]*?

Reason: I'm afraid it's an endless mobius strip: the blind leading the blind leading the blind. One cannot love, and be wise. Eliot 1872. Finally a source!

Love: Yes, well, I'd rather use the heart than the mind. *[mimicking Reason]* Me *[today's date]*. *[to audience]* If you would like to talk about a mobius strip, take a look at some of his oceans of logic. I mean, I love him to death, but at times, they seem to be more like punctured wading pools.

Reason *[to audience]*: T'is true. I do have my downfalls, my lowpoints. *[to Love]* Yet I can't see how thinking from here *[pointing to crotch]* can establish good decisions. Care to discuss? *[to audience rapidly]* I know this is a stab and may set her up for a problem, but I'm still a little upset about Joy and besides, she had it coming to her.

Love: None of you have ever stopped me before in thinking from there. I'm just addressing personal gain as well as emotional well-being. You don't want to overlook that aspect of a...well, what I mean is that....

Reason: Yes, Love?

Love: It's all part of Love.

Reason: Is it now?

Fear: Why are you drilling her, Reason? You know she's right. I mean, that area of the body belongs to Love—

Love: —Quiet, Fear—

Fear: —what other could be responsible?

Love: Shut up, Fear!

Reason: Yes, what other could it be?

Love: Please, Reason, be sensible.

Reason *[to audience]*: Ah, there it is again. Love telling Reason to be sensible. Such irony. Yet, if you're not following on, Love is in danger of, shall we say, performing mitosis. Cloning if you will, a fraternal sister. *[to Love]* Fine, Love. I'll back off for now. Not for you, but for other reasons.

Love: Forever grateful.

Reason: Not forever, just within Reason *[she blows him a kiss and then exits]*.

Hate: Why are you always so lenient with her, Reason? Why you so soft on her?

Reason: What can I say? She has my heart.

Hate: Nah. There's an ulterior motive. And I'm going to find it out... *[exiting]*

Distress: I can smell you're up to something. It worries me *[starting to exit]*.

Reason: I'd be careful with that.

Distress *[turning]*: With what?

Reason: I've only heard of one emotion that can be smelled. And believe me, it's not yours. Are you sure it merely worries you?

Distress: What are you implying, Reason? That I'm the embodiment of someone else? Don't do this to me, Reason. Don't do this to me now. I've got way too much to think about. On top of the worries you've given me, there's the confusion of the worry and the stress of the confusion. Equally, the stress of the worries and you know what that brings on: nausea, vertigo, head aches, ulcers and stomach aches, heart burn, tension... *[exits]*

Reason: Ah, the quiet is what I live for. No debating, no consoling. Just time to think. It's a good thing thought is free. Shakespeare 1601? Or MacDonald 1874? Hmm... In case you're a bit confused, none of us are more than farce. We're just a slice of character, each holding one specific chunk of human existence. Don't be fooled by Love's virgin white faith and blood-red lust, please. By all means, I don't want you to get the impression that we're separate entities, however hard that is to disavow. Each of us is, well, like what your biology books come to describe the body as: a factory with different groups, or systems, each performing separate tasks for the general well-being of the whole. The digestion group empowers that relating to food and it's digestion, obviously. It is separately its own *sub*-entity, see. It functions on its own, but alone, would have no function. It's a bit confusing, but it should begin to make a little sense. Now, instead of digestion, or respiration, or even reproduction, substitute these physical systems for emotional systems. Love, for example, is separately in charge of a wide variety of emotional components all falling under the system of love. The digestion system, made partly of the esophagus, stomach, colon, and gall bladder, is in charge of ingesting, pulverizing, transporting, absorbing, and eliminating. The Love system, made partly of love, some of lust, faith, joy, and peace, is in charge of carrying out their appropriate actions and stimulations. You see? The same goes for Fear, Distress, Hate, and me. Well, now that we've gone this far, I might as well continue. You may be asking yourself, "Where are the rest of the emotions? Like anger? Lust? Annoyance? Thrill?" Let me show you. *[a bright white light drowns the stage and the for other enter from all corners]* Each of us have the power to command memory. You will notice a bit of the past made present for you at various times by some of us. Let me assure you what is occurring isn't occurring, but rather reoccurring, and sometimes *recurring*. I'm not controlling any of the other emotions because I can't control them. I'm simply rewinding and televising the mind. Anyway, the emotions not present are normally divided among these systems. Let's explore anger, for example. Is anger bad? Possibly, but not exclusively. There's the obvious anger that catalyzes hate.

Hate *[to audience]*: Man, that Reason really knows how to push my buttons. It makes me mad that he can do that. God, I really hate him!

Reason: Ok, ok. So individual memory tends to remember what it wants to and isn't completely accurate. I believe Hate actually had a couple more profanities in there, but I believe that's the gist of it. Did you catch

the little transition between Hate getting mad and Hate getting loathing? That's the connotation for anger. How about this one though?

Fear: Love is really adamant about certain things that I don't agree with or understand and it scares me. But it also makes me angry that she doesn't see things my way or that I can't understand where she's coming from. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I don't know what I'm talking about.

Reason: See that? Since the emotion of anger is so powerful, it made Fear's beliefs unstable. See the stimulus of anger leading to the response of fear. Now this particular example shows anger in a bad light. Lemmie see if I can find a good view of anger. Ah, here's one.

Fear: Reason just won't back down on his demand not to drive. I've sided with Distress and Hate, in that I'm afraid we won't find a taxi this late. You know that can lead to the body sleeping on the street tonight or possibly being taken advantage of. I'm scared. It's making me angry that he won't agree. He always makes me mad when he does this sort of thing. Yet, he's normally right. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe we should just wait until those drinks wear off before heading home.

Reason: Not to point fingers or anything, but we were toasted off our ass that night. Surely we would have gotten into an accident. See the correlation between the trigger of anger leading to the reassessment of the situation by Fear? See his new fear of bodily harm stemming from this? The anger, which led to fear, is what kept us safe. Thus, anger isn't inherently bad, and the responsive emotion may or may not be. Let's try Distress, *[searching for example]* Um....ah! Same situation.

Distress: You know Fear has always been shifty on his position and never holds ground. It pisses me off that he can't make up his portion-of-the-mind, especially for something as simple as driving home. Aw, every time I get mad, I get a stomach ache and a touch of nausea. *[looking pale]* God this makes me mad. Oooh. We can't drive like this, we just had the upholstery cleaned. Maybe we better wait.

Reason: Prime example of anger leading to distress with physical problems as a result of this. And this, also shows anger as a positive emotion. How about one last negative one....Love?

Love: Man, that nice warm pillow sounds so inviting right now. Especially if it's between that and a cold, city sidewalk. But no one will listen to me or Hate. We're perfectly safe to drive. It's only four blocks. It angers me that no one ever listens to love, especially in times like this. I'm longing for someone to just be sensible and listen to me. Agree with me. I'd love for someone to just...ooh. Who's that specimen, over there? Pardon me. I'm drunk and from the smell of your breath, you are too. I don't wanna be raped. I don't want to rape you. I just want a good old fashion one night stand. You do too, don't you? Be sensible and listen. Agree. That's what I thought.

Reason *[almost cutting Love off]:* Let me tell you, this one night stand was not even remotely attractive!!! It had hair in places you don't even want to know! I'm not even sure it was the opposite sex! Yeah, laugh it up. But what you're laughing at is one of many times where anger leads to love. This was a far more obscure one, naturally, but certainly a notable one. *[the four exit where they entered]*. Reason either fine-tunes judgment or impairs it. That is why it doesn't exist separately. Just like annoyance, lust, thrill and hundreds upon hundreds of other less apparent, but not less meaningful, emotions. For almost all of the situations, these emotions can tip us either way on a matter. Sometimes...it makes me mad that they submit so easily to these emotions. Yet, I'm being irrational, aren't I? *[realization]* You see that?!? I just did I myself *[chuckling]* Dear Lord, I must remind myself that I'm their equal. Do these guys make me mad or drive me mad? That is the question. I think that quotation is original. *[pause]* Equally, intriguing, though, is the fact that without these emotions who nearly drive me insane with their presence, I may surely go insane with thought. The knife cuts both ways. I mentioned idle minds, right? I'm afraid the devil approaches. Thence, I must retreat. Bonne Chance! *[exits]*

SCENE II

[Stage is silent. Then Distress walks on from a corner with a Rubix Cube. She seems very frustrated and doesn't seem to notice the audience. After a beat she double takes a glimpse of the audience. She now inches back into her exit and there is silence again for another beat. She peeks in from the exit with wide eyes and looks around, then juts back out of sight. Finally, she slowly enters again and stands center]

Distress *[Quietly at first]:* Uh. *[clearing throat]* Ahem. *[pause]* Hi. Wh-what did the girl say when she realized w-worrying over the size of a dress she bought was pointless? *[pause]* This dress doesn't fit right. *[nervous chuckle]* Get it? *Distress* doesn't fit right. *[again laughing, more boisterously cutting off abruptly]* Psychologists say dreaming about *Distress* is a g-good thing. They say it means you'll have s-success where you feared f-failure. So I'm not all bad, huh? *Distress* also acts as a defense mechanism to warrant away stress from overloads, to promote thinking when uncertainty is near, and to relate sensitivity when dealing with sorrow. See? I'm not that bad. What I said before is true though. *Distress* may sometimes cause nausea, vertigo, head aches, ulcers and stomach aches, heart burn, tension and soforth. Believe me, I've given the body a fair share of that. *[nervous awkward laughter ending abruptly again]* I'm kind of...ah.....worried, though. Reason was drilling Love, today, on something that I'm confused about. I guess I just don't understand where he was going and was afraid he was trying to destroy one of us...Oh, I'm sorry. I'm not sure if he explained the process to you. Creating and destroying ourselves is the procedure of absorbing and splitting, where our belief in ourselves (or lack thereof) is the catalyst. Basically, it is making us active or reserved components in the general decision-making of this body. *[pause]* Kinda like the government. Except with them, there are no active components. Just politicians. I'm not quite sure what all this means, but Reason says it so often, I've kinda memorized it. What I'm guessing is that it means that if we doubt ourselves then we become part of what we hold belief in. Or if we doubt portions of ourselves, they split off to become separate components. It's kinda like raindrops on a windshield. But the wind and gravity that forces them to move and merge, well, that's, in here, the faith we invest in ourselves. *[pause]* Reason tells me sometimes that I am in danger of conjoining with someone else. He says that I sometimes show fear instead of worry. Fear of personal, mental, or social damage, I guess. He says that sorrow is just the fear of isolation at times. Not that I feel sorry for others, but that I'll be left alone as a result of it. I'm not, I mean, I refuse to believe any of this because I know it just isn't true. But what could it be. I mean, I guess I'm not sure. I'm sorry. I guess all this talk makes me afr....*[pause, she looks down]*....makes me worry. *[exiting. There is a beat of silence, and then Hate comes out with a beaten up doll. It is missing an arm and has a black eye. He's dragging it by the hair. He gets to about stage center, banging it against everything he can, and then double takes the audience like Distress did. He then starts to whistle as he reverses direction and heads where he entered. On his retreating, he has ceased banging the doll against things. Once he hits the edge of the stage, he looks quickly at the audience on his right, then his left, and gives the doll on final bang and storms out. After a beat, he enters without the doll and marches center, while beginning his monologue.]*

Hate: It's stupid, you know? The whole damn thing is stupid. I know that bastard Reason mentioned it. He used to like Envy, you know. I mean, a lot more than me. He thought it was cute the way she always strut around her in green grabbing everybody's toys and trying to make herself the center of attention and the topic of discussion. I thought she was stupid! Stupid. I asked a guy like you once what color he pictured her eyes were. He said hazel. How appropriate, eh? Green. So he created the way I saw her from then on. Her eyes. *[pause]* Look, I didn't mean to absorb her, all right? I didn't mean to destroy her. It was Reason's fault, it always is. He'll bring up some abstract point and then drill in for the kill, like he almost did with Love today. *[a white light drowns the stage and Reason and Envy walk on from different sides. The scene begins to replay]* Man, I fuckin' hate that guy. So one day, he says, something to her like, "Do you hate people sometimes?" and she said that she has no reason to because she knows she's better.

Reason: Do you hate people sometimes?

Envy: Why should I? I have no reason to hate anyone inferior to me. And as far as I'm concerned, you all are.

Hate: Reason'll tell you this. Aside from the envy and jealousy, she was in charge of prejudice, conceit, and modesty. Well not really modesty. She felt like she was below everyone else, but acted as if she was above.

Reason: But you know they think you're the one that's inferior because you act like this?

Hate: Then's when I come in and join the conversation. *[stepping into light and focusing now on Reason and Envy]* What are you too arguing about?

Reason [to Hate]: You always seem to think every conversation is arguing. We're just discussing some things.

Envy [to Hate]: Yeah, so butt out.

Reason [to Envy]: See? What was that? Why did you say that?

Envy [to Reason]: Because it was my conversation and he was trying to take it.

Reason [slowly, not drilling]: *Fear of losing attention? Fear of losing focus?*

Envy: NO! It's just that I can always tell the way he thinks and I loathe simple minds.

Hate: Hey, fuck you!

Envy: Don't you wish.

Hate [storming out of light to converse again with the audience, this time on the other side of the light]: Ok so she was right. But I respected her, not loved her. She knows that the only one of us with any sexual desires for the emotion is Love. Sure there's the growing trend of sex based on hate and the age-old screwing because of envy. But who cares. She started the fight, I just participated. It's not like I would let her insult me and get away with it right? *[entering light again]*

Reason: Calm down guys, we're just discussing—

Hate: —You loathe simple minds, then, huh? *[heavily mocking Reason]* Why because you're envious of their devout uses of logic. For their simplicity towards life? For their superiority?

Reason [sarcastically]: Funny.

Envy: Leave me alone, Hate!

Reason: Guys, please—

Hate: Say it! You're envious of them aren't you! You're envious! *[background music begins to build and lighting becomes agitated]*

Envy: Shut up, you stupid reject, shut—

Hate: You're feeling it now, aren't you? You envy me and my way of thinking. You're afraid that I may be your equal or maybe even superior! How do you feel about it? Huh, Envy? What's your opinion of me? Huh? Are you jealous of the way us *simple minds* think or the way most of us just think in general. You could never be that way because you're so concerned with yourself. But how do you really feel about us, Envy? In addition to loathing, what else, Envy? Huh? When you're alone in the dark and thinking, what are your real thoughts. Besides the hatred you explained and the fear you feel, how do you see us?!? *[music builds to a climax]* What do you see?

Envy: Fine, yeah, so I'm envious! I never claimed not to be! [*lights abruptly stop agitating and the music cuts dead at its climax*]

Reason [*frank*]: So envy is just portions of hate and fear? [*lights cut to darkness and Reason and Envy exit the stage. Lights slowly fade up to Hate who is sitting on the stage in the center crying.*]

Hate: It wasn't my fault. It was Reason's. I had no idea what I was saying. That's not my territory. I don't understand the logic behind any of that. I just, just don't know what I was doing. She was my best friend. And now she split off into pieces and inside others. I'll never see her hazel eyes looking at me again. She's gone. Gone forever. [*he gets up slowly cradling himself, takes a beat to look around, then exits. After a beat of silence, Love enters carrying a baby doll as well. She's singing "Winter" by Tori Amos to the doll and runs through the refrain. She finishes the line "things are going to change somehow" and hears the audience with the familiar double-take, almost dropping the doll. She then regains composure and begins to exit hurriedly the same way she entered, singing "Rockabye baby..." Soon, she peeks back in the style of Distress and finally approaches center stage.*]

Love [*looking around blindly*]: Hi. [*pause*] How are you? [*pause*] Love and a cough cannot be hid....Herbert 1640. [*pause*] Love begets love....Herrick 1648. [*pause*] Love laughs at locksmiths...Coleman 1803 [*pause*] Love makes the world go round....both O. Henry and Lewis Carroll, 1902 and 1865, respectively. [*pause*] Love me little, love me long.....Adams 1629. [*pause*] Love me do, the Beatles 1963. You're the one that I love, honey. John Travolta and Olivia Newton John. I will always love you, Dolly Pardon. Later massacred by Whitney Houston. Oh, not Dolly. She killed the song, I mean. No offense to her, as a person, but she has a way of erasing the emotion in a song and making it sound like the nutrients panel on a box of GRAPE NUTS[®]. Speaking of which, I guess that's what's on my mind today: erasing the emotion of love. Reason was saying something today, that kinda got me worried. I wasn't scared of what he was saying, just the fact that the instant he said it, I had a fleck of doubt at a portion of myself. You remember. It was that whole thing of thinking with the banana and not the passion fruit. Well, I said that the aspect of love dealing with personal gain is addressed this way and he kinda implied that essentially, that's not love. [*suddenly*] I don't know, I don't want to think about it. I can't think about it. I risk falling apart. I risk everything. I couldn't live like that. No, I'm not going to think about it. [*pause*] At one time, I wasn't blind, you know. In my purest form, I am, and that's where I am now. Strange how most things stray from purity, but love is different. Only when love is ripe and old, having been worn down by many harvests, does it become pure. Anyway, when I started out, and I wasn't developed at all, I could see everything. All the vivid colors, the pinks, the violets, the magentas. Every fiery hue related to love. That's back when I believed love was equally loving beauty on the outside as well as the inside as if they were one in the same. Or as some may say, love, like beauty, was in the eyes of the beholder. Just think about when you were younger, or how your children act as they grow. What we originally saw as unattractive and uncomfortable visually would more often than not be something we disliked. But now it's different. Now I can't see a thing because my whole existence today is revolving around the fact that I'm not surface, or superficial, but genuine. I don't mean that I blindly lead the body into love, heavens no. I'm simply blind, or unresponsive, to anything that isn't genuine. And believe me, nowadays, there's a lot of that going around. Yeah, love is better off blind, but those days were nice. Reason offered me sight again and he has the power to give it, for sure. But why? As long as there is this growing trend of superficiality dealing with love, why not? Take a look at a modern university campus, for crying out loud, it's all surface love. There's nothing deep. The only thing spiritual about it is misdialing Phone Sex Hotlines and reaching the Psychic Friends Network. And that's where I'm concerned. Is that love? If I let Reason logically walk me into believing I can see by acknowledging the superficiality once more, will I be love? Or someone else. [*pause*] I don't know. [*she looks down at her doll, takes a beat, and then starts the refrain of "Winter" again with "When you gonna make up your mind?" With this, she exits. A short pause ensues and then a voice pops up from outside the curtain.*]

Fear [*from curtain, scared*]: He-hello? Hey. I'm in here. I hope you don't mind me bugging you like this, but needless to say, I'm pretty shy. Oh, don't worry, I've given entire lectures from this curtain, and know it well, I do. Yet, I normally wriggle my way out before I address that much of value. And since man lives by

these values, according to Will Herberg, I might as well say them where I can be heard, eh? Otherwise where is that life if it is without value? Good Lord, Reason's right about us. Well, it should be known that we're just depictions of your mind. What *value* you give to us is what you get in return. There it is again. Value. Guess that's the theme for the day, huh? Well, since at this moment, I'm scared shitless, I might as well go with it. *[Inching out with cap over his eyes]* Value. What do I value? I value my life. I value my integrity. I value my faith and my drive. *[Pause to think]* I value a good beer. Yeah. That's right. I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy. Man, who said that? You've probably already known this, but I'm the one that gets intoxicated when The Body drinks. Yessir, yessir. Distress and I, are the ones that become, shall we say, a bit tipsy. We both hold inhibition, and drawbacks. And the drink allows us to become preoccupied with delight as Hate and Love swell around us. Yup. *[Pulling out a flask and taking a quick swig]* *[Do you]* Like this? Some guy out where you are now imagined it a couple days ago and for some reason, from then on, people tended to see me with some spirits. It's a welcome change, mind you. It gets me through these little lectures. Funny thing is that I can drink as much of *this* stuff as I like and never get drunk or have an overwhelming urge to urinate. Reason this is so, is that it isn't real. Like the body you folks have given me, it is a placebo. And it's sole function is enabling comprehension. It allows us to get through it all. Anyway, this whole Love/Hate swelling thing, that's why these components seem so grandiose when the body is drunk. Because Distress is floatin' in the clouds and I'm pissing on the daisies. Well, the point I was trying to get at was that if you go to a bar or something there is an overabundance of love and violence. Love, in the form of prostitution, sexual aggression, and corny pick-up lines, most of which come from these intoxicated people. Well, that's Love's fault. You may also be fortunate enough to intrude on an argument, sometimes over a woman, sometimes over a man, sometimes over a barstool, sometimes over a shade of lipstick, sometimes it'll be with a big, hairy trucker named Gus over the ownership of the last soggy pretzel marinating in the ashtray. *[Recollecting]* Jesus, were we plowed that night. *[Sipping flask and then regaining composure]* But the point is that we've all been there. Well, Hate's responsible for that. Yup, when they swell up and take over, strange things happen. And without this fear that we all have, we're liable to make stupid judgments. Oh, incidentally, when Distress and I are on the sauce, in addition to inhibiting our inhibition, we also increase the gag reflex in back alleys. Yup. That's us. But we do this, mind you, to make you think twice about going home with that member of the opposite sex that keeps scratching certain parts of their anatomy, you know the one. We do it to get you out of the bar to avoid getting your eyes clawed out by another angry woman. Even if you weren't trying to pick up her boyfriend or girlfriend or whatever. We're the guardian angels of the mortal self, see? *[Ripping off hat dramatically]* Fear is good. Fear is— *[looking around at the audience, then "gulping." Finishing off in a high pitched voice]*.....good. *[exits]*.

SCENE III

[Reason strolls on stage.]

Reason: I imagine you've gotten to know them. Eh? Did Distress tell her "distress doesn't fit right" joke again? I'm sorry. I also bet she shared her feelings on her problem dealing with her possible consolidation. Pity she can't see what to do. Following this, I suppose was Hate, mad as ever. Swearing, screaming, pointing fingers about lost loves and old rivalries? I'm sure that, too wasn't a pretty sight. Again, I'm sorry. Who was it that was next? Fear or Love? Love? Wow, she actually arrived before someone else. All I can predict on what she was relating was that snappy set-up I gave her today about the sex drive being part of love. That is what she talked about, is it not? Starting off with a string of quotations on love and ending with her heart-wrenching story on blindness. Well, I'm sorry again. If I drove her to this, I mean. Perhaps, I should just apologize now for Fear without even considering what he might've said. Christ, I've apologized for all the others. You must understand, my friends, that this is not a board of directors to collect and collate information to make the perfect decision, no, because there is no board and no one here directs. What this is, though, is a battlefield. Ultimately we are fighting for survival in the popular humanlike fashion. We attempt to wipe each other out behind the back, a sort of *Et tu, Bruté*, deal, yet with conviction. And there will be no Octavian Caesar to form decency once again, no triumvirate to piece back the shattered components of a mind that lost itself long ago. And that's why there continues to be hundreds of doomed souls pacing sanitariums, those who've lost their *wits*. Wits, from the archaic, means knowledge or that which is perceived. But that phrase, lost their wits, was sculpted for a different reason. For all misfortunate enough or broke enough to live near these state hospitals who hear those *doomed souls* at

night laughing wildly for hours on end, they know the feeling that control in every manner has left these people and the grasp of wit, as an intelligence, has escaped them; leaving just wit, it's maniacal laugh, piercing endlessly into the night. That's why this is a battlefield. That's why we are the way we are. Because for them, it's kill or be killed, for me, it's listen and suffer, suffer and listen. Contain these static monsters before they devour each other and the body with them. And sometimes, even I, yes I, logical and collected, do develop the taste they nurture and attack by my own accord. But notice, you, that I only attempt to split that which exists today. I taunted Love because I wanted Lust. I cried for Joy, Envy, Sadness, because I knew that besides their company, I'd also be losing their security. I pray for Distress, pray that she'll reform her ways and leave her borderline fear. I can't live neurotic. Not me. Not Reason. For when one assumes power, it's hell or high water and I sure as hell can't swim. *[Brief pause]* You have to understand what a delicate balance it is, up here *[notioning forehead]* and what can happen if one of the pawns is knocked out. A chain reaction leading ultimately to a monopoly of the mind. That's the stuff that nightmares are made of. Those are the charges at play in a pounding migraine. *[Out of breath]* You don't...you don't realize that when you wake up in the morning with a throbbing headache after a sleepless dreamfilled night what work it is for us to ensure reality is there. And to ensure it's coherent with the grain of society and not what some would say leads to the loss of wits. It's hell already, let me tell you. But it can only get worse. *[Pause]* My God, I've really carried on. I should have liked to be brief. *[Exiting, then turning back]* Afterall, brevity is the soul of wit..... *[he makes like he's going to say the author of the quotation, then decides not to. Finally, he exits]*

INTERMISSION

SCENE IV

[Enter Reason, sickly and holding himself. He walks center. Special is on him and the rest of the stage is dark.]

Reason *[noticing crowd]:* Oh. *[long desperate pause]* I want to begin with a quotation, yet I cannot, for none is appropriate. I want to speak to you from here *[notioning heart]* yet, I cannot. It was never my forte, you see, and she, who's forte it was, is indisposed at the moment. Love, I mean. She, too, is sick; still recovering from *the great divide*. It was bound to happen, ye... *[pause]* ...but who would have thought it would catalyze what it has. Ah, at last a few have surfaced. Louis L'Amour once said, "There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning." Unfortunately, he didn't go on to say if it was the beginning of the beginning or the beginning of the end, so we still live in fear of annihilation, though we may have ages to go. I guess I blame myself. I'm Reason, right? I'm common sense! I take control when there is no control. I'm the sole presence here that knows an oligarchy is better than a monarchy. I want no dictatorship. I want no sovereign lord! I am the savior, yet I must also be the reaper! I'm the kinsmen, the subject, and the host, but I must also bear the knife! Why? I don't know! Because that's the way it is in here. That's the way...it has to be. *[chanting]* ...kill or be killed...listen and suffer... *[taking a deep breath]* I suppose...I better let you in on what I've done. The truest expression of a people is in its dances and its music, says Agnes DeMille, so here is my stage *[lights fade arise around Reason, showing others]*, and these are my poor players. Minstrels, start to play, for now the dance begins *[Reason's special fades]*.

Distress *[screaming]:* LEAVE ME ALONE! LEAVE ME ALONE! LEAVE ME—

Hate: What the fuck is your problem, D? Are ya sca-ared? Why don't you throw up some more!

Love: Leave her alone, Hate. No one's in the mood for your sweet nothings.

Hate: You want a sweet nothing? Piss off!

Reason: Hey, hold it.

Hate: Up yours, Love!

Reason: I said hold it!

Love: You know it's a proven fact that a lot of male aggression stems from not enough care in childhood.

Hate: At least I'm not making stupid judgment calls, shit for brains. *[in high voice]* Ooh, maybe I'll make us sleep with someone else so *I* can feel more powerful! *[turning towards Distress]* And you, Distress, what's the deal with puking all over the place? Sure, *[notioning Love]* the dumb slut is asking for trouble, but how we ever gonna get a good screw with you always fucking it up for us?

Distress: LEAVE ME AL—

Reason: —Hate, shut your—

Love: Don't you ever call me a dumb slut again! Ever!

Reason: Love, cool it.

Love: Reason, mind your own business.

Reason: Love, please.

Distress: LEAVE ME ALONE!

Reason: Distress!

Love: No, Reason, this time you stay out of it. I'm sick of your orderly logic. This time we're settling things right, for good.

Reason *[to audience quickly]:* Remember when I explained an emotion's spectrum of components as organs in a bodily system? Stomach, love, pancreas, lust? Well, this is the opposite end of that spectrum. Emotional indigestion, if you will. Mental diarrhea. They're other functions within the realm of the system that aren't specifically clear-cut emotions. It'll pass soon, I pray. *[to Love]* Love, you don't know what you're saying.

Love: Oh, yes I do. I'm saying that you're worthless, Reason. You don't perform a dire emotion like Hate or I. Even our scared spewing friend over there. You're useless.

Reason: You're out of control, Love!

Love: That's right, Reason, I'm out of *your* control. Which means I'm not hiding anymore. I've feared your manipulation long enough. Now all I have to say to you is this. *[grabbing crotch a la Madonna]* I don't care if it's a cherry or a fuckin' banana. EAT ME!

Reason That's what you'd like, isn't it?

Fear *[entering]:* What's he doing?

Reason *[forceful]:* Love is pure. Love is unyielding. Love is what's left in a relationship after all the selfishness has been removed, Cullen Hightower! You know what that means, Venus?

Love: Who gives a—

Reason *[determined]:* You once said that thinking with what was in that little hand of yours was love addressing personal gain, right?

Love [*backing down*]: Ok, Reason.

Reason: RIGHT?

Love [*heaving*]: All right, Reason, I get the point!

Reason: Well according to Mr. Hightower and the rest of the love-bearing world, love has no personal gain.

Distress: Reason, stop it. Look at her.

Love [*shaking*]: Reason—

Reason: —I only know of one emotion with intimacy for personal gain: [*background music cuts*] Lust.

Love [*out of breath and shaking badly, quietly*]: n-no. [*The following effect is extremely brief: Lighting changes to a new array which becomes a Transition Standard, a sadistic carnival-like dance song begins, and a silhouette of Love seems to appear behind Love after a brief fade out. This silhouette, a scantily clad woman, pulls out of Love, and Love falls back. The silhouette dances around a new figure on the stage who has appeared seemingly from nowhere. The new figure, a man, takes an exit with the silhouette still dancing around her. Love lays still. The tune fades as lighting resumes to normal.*]

Fear: You killed her!

Reason: Don't be silly. Fear, will you please help Love.

Fear: She's not contagious, is she?

Reason: Of course not, she's just exhausted [*Fear picks up Love, and they exit with her in his arms*].

Hate [*to Distress, who is crying*]: Now it's your turn, you little fuck!

Reason: Enough Hate. I only divide. Not conquer.

Hate: That's where you and me are different, Reason. You're concerned with the balance. I'm concerned with myself.

Reason: Don't make me do to you what I did to her.

Hate: Impossible, Reason. Hate is universal. When's the last time you watched television. I am murder. I'm assault. I'm rape. There's no love there. I'm anger, greed, war, famine. You know the clichés. Plague and pestilence. Fire and brimstone. Broken families. I'm everywhere. There is no dividing me. There's no conquering here. [*pause*] But you're right. There is one left. Right there [*pointing to Distress*].

Distress: Reason, help.

Reason: Hate, don't.

Hate: Wanna know how this whole thing started, Reason? I'll set the scene. The body enters the bar. The body buys a drink. It's flooded by hormones by your friend, Love, and decides to play it's luck. An unsuspecting member of the opposite sex arrives and inquires. Our scared little buddy here, starts getting a bit, shall we say, fidgety, forgets where she is.

Distress: Reason, please.

Reason: Hate—

Hate *[angered]:* —we were all soooo close, Reason. And you know how we needed this. You know how uptight it's been in here. Then Distress, here, starts getting a little...woozy. She tips the head back and showers our acquaintance with the contents of our stomach and collapses the body *[music begins to climax]*.

Distress: I couldn't help it, Hate, I was nervous.

Hate: Nervous, were you? Why?

Reason: Careful Distress.

Distress: The rejection.

Hate: Oooh. I see. Anxiety of rejection, eh? Hmm, well, that doesn't sound right. Maybe it's because you mean *fear* of rejection, Distress.

Distress: No, it can't be.

Hate: Why am I still calling you Distress? Huh? I should be calling you Fear.

Distress: No!

Hate: FEAR! *[Fear enters, Distress and Fear meet eyes, Distress screams. The familiar Transition Standard lighting change occurs and sadistic dance begins. A silhouette of a woman leaves Distress and begins her dance around Fear. Distress lowers, Fear stumbles back. Lighting remains.]*.

Reason: Stop it, Hate!

Distress: I'm more than just fear. I'm sorrow.

Hate: Sorry you said something because you're *afraid* people will look at you differently? Sorrowful of the loss of a friend because you're *afraid* you'll be left alone?*[Distress moans again. Dance music becomes louder as another silhouette of a woman leaves Distress and joins the other around Fear. Distress lowers now to her knees, Fear stumbles back more.]*.

Reason: Dammit, Hate. Shut up!

Distress *[deeply hurt]:* I-I'm confusion.

Hate: Confused because instead of trying to comprehend something you concentrate on the possibility that you might not be as intelligent? Huh? That's Fear, my friend! *[Distress moans again, weaker. The music becomes louder yet and another silhouette of a woman leaves Distress and enters Fear. Distress is clawing for life, Fear stumbles back more.]*.

Reason: That's it, Hate. *[the music dips a little]* You want to analyze something? Let's look at yourself.

Hate *[caught by surprise]:* Huh?

Reason: Why DO you *hate*, fella? Is it because you don't like other people getting your attention so you bias them? Shame, shame, Hate, that, too, is fear!

Hate: What? No!

Reason: Is it because you can't accept your inferiority or other's diversity because you're worried about competition? That's fear as well, Hate.

Hate: No, it can't be! No!

Reason: What else is there in that black heart of yours, Hate? Your wars, your assault, even your damn rape. It's all based on fear, isn't it, Hate? Let's analyze that!

Hate: No! You're wrong, Reason, you're...*[lighting and music become stronger]* ...what's happening to me?

Reason *[recovering his wits]:* My God!

Hate: Reason, please! *[a short fade out and in produces four or five silhouettes to emerge abruptly from behind Hate and navigate their way to a swelling Fear, joining the others in the dance. Hate is screaming a piercing howl all the while. Lights cut suddenly and the music does as well.]*

Distress *[extremely weak and almost inaudible, in the dark]:* There's nothing left...I keep searching...but there's nothing there.

Reason: No, Distress, there's got to be, please.

Distress: Nothing. I'm sorry. Reason. I'm...

Reason: Distress? Distress? *[After a long pause, the lights slowly rise as a special in the center with Reason holding himself, as the top of the scene. He is shaking.]* She's gone. It's all gone. Distress is...is Fear. Hate is Fear! Look at me *[looking at his shaking hands]*. I hadn't anticipated this...this weakness in me. I suppose that's where they have the most control over me. It's like checks and balances. Without their stability, without their being, it is impossible for me to exist. I can feel myself already slipping away. The only way to abolish Reason is to take away consistency, to take away soundness. Irrational. *[unbelieving chortle]* Unreasonable. And I thought I had control. They own me. *[pause]* I'm afraid—*[catching himself]* I mean I'm wary that Fear has become too powerful and created something far worse than mental diarrhea. I'm wary that the delicate balance I spoke of is tipped and is now swinging too far to ever return. I can feel a presence all around, a new character, consisting not of emotion. Something evil. Call it what you will: chaos, the idle mind, psychosis. Whatever it is, it's coming and I can't fathom a way to stop it. *[crying]* I'm wary that we are, as they say, at *wit's end*. *[a quick, unbelieving laugh is choked up]* Even...at Monsieur L'amour's *beginning of the end*...when...all seems dead...there still exists...that...elusive...*they* *[he sniffs deeply, tosses his eyes slowly side to side to survey the scene and find a hopeful thought against this peril, finds none, looks again at his shaking hands, and steps slowly out of his special. Lights fade down.]*

SCENE V

[Enter Lust in the style of the others in their introductions.]

Lust: You don't know me. I don't know you. But I'd sure like to get to know you. Let me introduce myself. I'm your girlfriend on the beach. I'm your husband at the bar. I'm the camera-man for HBO's latenight pornography. I'm Romeo. Hell I'm Juliet. I'm carefree. *[pause, looking at audience member of the opposite sex]* I'm free tonight, if you care. I'm comic relief. I'm a Kodak moment. I'm what goes bump in the night. I'm a moist undergarment and a one night stand all rolled into one bite-sized package for your satisfaction. I'm beauty. I'm the beast. I'm in you. And you. And you. *[pause]* I'd like to be in you. Or have you in me, depending on how you picture me. If you haven't yet guessed it, I'm Lust.

*Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But Lust's effect is tempest after sun;
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,*

*Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done:
Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies;
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies.*

Shakespeare from VENUS ADONIS. God, I've only spoken with Reason once or twice, and already I'm talking like him. Ah, but Reason's not quite well, right now. I'm afraid he and Love have both been under the weather. And I still have the floor. *[pause]* It looks like Shakespeare's not that much a fan of Lust, even though every one of his works included me. Yep, see for yourself. Lady Mac and her wormish husband lusted the throne. Uncle Claudius lusted, well, everything. Don't even get me started on R & J. After all this time, I have gotten quite a bad reputation, haven't I? *[angered]* Well, I ask you this: who in this room has not known me? Not to sound too prophetic, but let you cast the first stone. Gentlemen, have your lives been free of lust? Ladies? I think perhaps not. Hell, even Jimmy Carter's wasn't. I'm secretly sacred in many of your eyes and many of your homes. Why? Well, as it seems, humans lust after lust, *[lightly]* which is why the population seems to double every forty years. *[pause]* Ah, but Shakespeare realized this and he, too, repented:

*The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust.*

Now, I'm not quite sure. Is that sonnet number 116 or 129? I'd like to ask Reason, but he's as I said, indisposed. He and Love are withered due to this reformation of being and Fear and I have been controlling the body for the past few weeks. It was fine at first. Fear gives me a lot of power since he appears to be afraid to make decisions, which has led to quite a bit of *experimentation*. I guess that was all well and good until I started making some rash decisions. And, uh, that has sorta let to a, er, *rash* decision. *[scratching stomach]* What I mean is that I need them back, Reason and Love. *[reflecting, getting desperate]* Reason, with his streams of logic. Love with her blind innocence. *[switching gears]* I guess you've noticed I'm not blind. I can see all those pinks, those violets, those magentas. Who needs those other colors when your world is tinted rose? Huh? See, Love and I are close to the opposite. Love is without superficiality. Lust is all eyes. Aw, man, that sounds like a READER'S DIGEST *Quotable Quote*. *[pause]* God, if they don't get better, I'm worried about the body. *[scratching stomach again]* Not merely because Reason was the advocate for...protection, but because those too were what kept us balanced and without them we're pretty...unstable. *[pause]* I've got to head downstairs for a little bit. The body has spotted someone and, well, that's my territory now. Oh well, what's another one-night-stand? *[Lust's special fades and opens on Reason and Love, who enter and hobble center. There they meet Lust. Reason is guiding Love to Lust who takes a hold of her and helps her stand.]*

Reason: I'll never get over the ironies of this place once it's gone. You know? Lust helping Love stand free. Reason guiding Love. Love being led or misled to Lust. Reason left standing alone. *[starting to cry]* Reason leading the whole to dementia. Insanity.

Love: Come on, Reason. Don't give up now. Remember, Love con—

Reason: —conquers all? Huh? Look around you Love! You may not be logical, but you do have common sense, don't you? Or isn't that a part of Love either?

Love: Reason.

Reason: No maybe Love is without common sense. Maybe I'm the only one here with any sense.

Love: Reason, please.

Reason: Please what?

Love: You're not helping.

Lust: Yeah, Reason, chill.

Reason: How can you live knowing the end is around the corner?

Love: I guess, I can't see that far. I don't think love was ever meant to see the next morning or the day after.

Reason: Well, that's perfect because there isn't going to be one.

Love: Sure there will. Somehow. Don't you know love is forever.

Reason: Forever? You can't see a tomorrow. Christ, you can't even see today. I've mistaken your optimism for stupidity.

Love: Look, Reason, there's got to be a way to—

Reason: —to what? To a happy ending? There's not going to be a, a sunset, or a rainbow, or a superhero to fall out of the sky and set what's wrong right. Don't you get it? It's over.

Lust: Hey! I haven't been here long. I know that. But I do know that you are the one to go to when we need miracles, Reason. You can't give up this easily.

Reason [*muttering under breath*]: ...miracles...

Love [*touching Reason's shoulder*]: Reason. I don't want a sunset. Or a rainbow. As far as a superhero, we've got one. He has the power to destroy, but chooses to create. [*Reason looks down, she feels for his chin and lifts it*] Sure he makes mistakes, but he's only one facet of mortality. He can make the blind see. [*Reason lifts his eyes to hers*] He understands what needs to be done when no one else can, no matter how painful it may be to him or his friends. [*Reason looks to Lust*] He knows inside him, what needs to be done now, and his fr— and we have faith in that. [*Reason looks back at Love*] He just needs a little faith in himself.

Reason: Blind faith?

Love: No and Yes.

Reason: How did you come by this *faith* and where can I get some of it?

Love: According to Shakespeare, that's my definition: It is to be all made of sighs and tears. It is to be all made of faith and service. It is to be all made of fantasy, all made of passion and all made of wishes, all adoration, duty—

Reason and Love: —and observance—

Reason: All humbleness, all patience and impatience, all purity, all trial, all observance. *AS YOU LIKE IT*. But what of me?

Love: Reason. Undefined and elegant. Infinite and infinitely small. Coupled with love it makes all things possible. Coupled with hatred, it ceases to exist. Coupled with decision it stirs the faith of others, navigates, and with oars of friends, strokes across the tempest towards a calmer sunset. Reason, whatever has to be done. I know you can do it. That's my faith and now, it's your faith.

Reason: I'm sorry?

Love [*closing her eyes*]: For he who understands possibilities of combinations, combinations of permutations, and permutations of possibilities, yet holds open one vote, there's faith.

Reason: It's not me, Love. It won't work.

Love: You're not the one that needs to believe, Reason. I am. For he who can see clearly the path to take, even if it is less traveled, there's faith.

Reason: No, Love, you're weak enough.

Love: For he who keeps mind when the rest have given up, and holds a belief in logic and science, the untraditional religion of reason, there's faith. Reason. I give you your creed. I give you faith *[without warning, the Transition Standard occurs and "Faith" leaps out of Love and dances to Reason, who absorbs it. Love lowers]*.

Reason *[he takes a beat, then smiles at Love, who returns it]:* Thank you, Love. *[Without removing his eyes from Love, he continues.]:* Do you know what you are Lust?

Lust: Pardon?

Reason: You are the absence of Reason. You lack any logic and trace of rational thought. You exist at the opposing end of the mind that I do. Don't you?

Lust *[slowly]:* I suppose, Reason, but—

Reason: If I was Yin, Lust, you'd certainly be Yang, right?

Lust: I guess, but—

Reason: Well, it's commonly known that every action holds an equal and opposite reaction where a duality exists to hold balance in nature. It was Stevenson who said that these are housed in the same entity, detailing that though unlike in polarity, these emotions may split, but are naturally like in existence.

Lust: Meaning?

Reason: Meaning by natural law, God, Newton, Stevenson, Darwin, you are a manifest of me.

Lust: What?

Reason: You are Reason.

Lust: Oh. *[A beat of silence ensues and then Lust nods for understanding the principle, not the reasoning behind it. Then the lighting change occurs and Lust slips into Reason. Everything resumes]*

Reason: That was easy. You on the other hand may be a bit more difficult.

Love: Whatever you're doing Reason, I have faith.

Reason: The reasoning behind your faith is that you believe in *yourself*. The notion of love, something never before understood, is just supreme understanding of emotion, not emotion itself. That's why you are pride, Love. You're ultimate acceptance of the value you hold. The logic behind it, is what generates love.

Love: How?

Reason: Reasoning.

Love: I see. But—

Reason: That's why you are peace, Love. You're the absolute understanding of security. The deduction behind it is what generates love.

Love: Go on.

Reason: In achieving the peak of senses, you exist. You're not an emotion at all, Love. That is why philosophers have disagreed on your definition from the beginning of time. You don't exist as a mere feeling, but a conglomeration of many feelings. That's what keeps you strong. And your existence, in these feelings, is not the emotional value, but what understanding is achieved as a result of these. You are the climax of sentiment, experienced as pure reason, not stimulation.

Love: I'm the best of pride, peace, lust, I understand this. But how may I be reason and not emotion.

Reason: When you think you're in love, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

Love: The first thing?

Reason: The first thing.

Love: I don't know, I'm happy. I'm excited.

Reason: Those are two other emotions that love *logically* induces, it's not *love* itself.

Love: Uh, I feel calm and secure.

Reason: That's peace and personal safety, a manifestation of happiness, granted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. But, those are two logical, *logical* emotions created by love.

Love: So love is...

Reason: The bridge across the gaps. The synapse between emotions. The connection which brings the peaks together, not the peaks themselves.

Love: So love is not emotion?

Reason: No it's *[pause]* ...it's...

Both: Reason.*[At this, the lighting and sound cue changes and five or six silhouettes emerge from Love and enter Reason. She calls "Faith, Reason" in the darkness.]*

SCENE VI.

[Lights brighten and Reason is alone, off center with a special on him.]

Reason *[to audience]:* You may think my work is detrimental, the opposite of what we need. But please understand my logic. And hold that faith that they held in me. *[at this, a special directly opposite on the stage lights and Fear steps into it.]*

Fear: Reason. I see you at last have come to your senses. You scare me with your lack of apprehension.

Reason: Come to my senses? Fear, please. This is Reason you're talking to.

Fear: Wh-what do you want, Reason?

Reason: You know what I want.

Fear: No, I don't, Reason, what?

Reason: Harmony.

Fear: Harmony?

Reason: Yeah? Balance. Equilibrium. Gestalt.

Fear: So...

Reason: You have it, Fear. And I've come to get it back.

Fear: Why, Reason? Look. You and I own this place. The body is our oyster.

Reason: No, Fear. It's not right.

Fear: Not right? Come on. I finally have some control around here. I'll share it with you Reason. You know I like others to hold the power. Or...are you afraid?

Reason: Don't even try it, Fear. It's your turn.

Fear: You did this, Reason. You sent Hate to me.

Reason: And now I want him back.

Fear: Reason—

Reason: You know that control that you feel, Fear? That control you've grown to love?

Fear: What of it, Reason? And calm down. You're scaring me.

Reason: That control is not based on Fear. It's anything but fear.

Fear: Sure it is. I'm glad I have it because I'd be afraid—*afraid*—someone else would get it.

Reason: Precisely.

Fear: What?

Reason: You're glad. The emotion you're feeling is a substitute for the fear that you'd have if you didn't have the control. Right now, Fear, you're experiencing happiness, not Fear. *[the carnival-like dance music sounds faintly and the lighting begins to change].*

Fear: Huh?

Reason: And you wouldn't be fearful that someone else would have the control anyway. You always wanted someone else to have the power, you said so yourself. What you'd really feel is a burn for the person who held the power. A desire to be him. A desire to kill him off so you could get it. There's no fear there, buddy, that's envy. That's hatred! *[the music is louder and the lights become brighter for the Transition Standard.]*

Fear: Stop, Reason, it hurts.

Reason: Nah, it doesn't hurt. You know we can't feel pain. What you're feeling is anxiety, Fear. You're feeling stress. And that's not fear at all. In fact, as I recall, that belongs to Distress. *[the music begins to peak and the lights are coming to their strongest for the cue.]*

Fear: Why Reason? You could have had it all. Why are you doing this to me?

Reason: That tone of misunderstanding is distress as well. You know that, Fear. As for having it all, well, shame, shame, Fear. That's temptation, a popular facet of Hate. And why am I doing this to you, Fear? Is that pity you're feeling? Huh? Or sadness? Come on, Fear, let go. Let them all go!

Fear: I'm scared, Reason. Stop it!

Reason: So you can feel peace, Fear? So you can feel safety? Watch it, you're on unstable ground.

Fear: I don't want to die, Reason! You're killing me!

Reason: You're wrong Fear. Just because you're letting go of Hate, Envy, Happiness, Pity, Distress, Sadness, and many more. It doesn't mean that there won't be fear. We need you as well, Fear. Now let them go.

Fear: I can't Reason, I'm scared.

Reason: Let them go, Fear! And everything will be ok! Come on, Fear! Fear! Let them go! *[At this, about a dozen dancers disperse from Fear and dance to the carnival song in a giant circle around the edge of the stage. As they are dancing, sporadically, Hate, Envy, Happiness, Distress, Love, Lust, Peace, and others enter and crouch around Reason who has hit center. The last to crouch around Reason is Fear. With this, the dancers tighten their circle dance close to the inner ring of characters crouched down. At a climax in the music, shortly after, the lights hit black and all exit. A slow special rises on Reason. He appears wiped out.]* Doctors would perceive that which occurred to the body as a mental breakdown. Luckily, the body will recover from this trauma. And soon everything will be back to normal, except for this intolerable rash, of course. For that I blame Lust, although I shouldn't. Because that's what he is. Lust. And Love is love. Hate, hate. Just as I am nothing but reason. The others are resting now. While the body is healing, I have taken over. You may be familiar with how the body races through thought when it's ill. *[pause]* We're better now. I got my friends back: Distress and Hatred. I even revived Envy and Sadness, complete with their green and blue wardrobes. I also got some new ones: Hope, Peace, even a *Faith*. *[pause]* I needed Lust and Love to become stronger for the battle. Their unification alone wouldn't suffice, but I needed to join myself with them to be powerful enough. I've decided, now, once I've let them go that they should remain separate. Love and Lust truly are different entities.

Love *[entering in dark and startling Reason]:* For that, I'm forever grateful, Reason. *[lights rise softly.]*

Reason: Not forever, yet—

Love: I know, I know. Just within *Reason*.

Reason: I'm glad you're better, Love. I hope I didn't scare, uh, I mean worry you.

Love: No. No, what ever you did, Reason, I held my faith in you.

Reason: Be careful with that, Love. We have a new friend, Faith that—

Love: Shhhh... I know.

Reason: Thank you, Love.

Love *[turning to exit]:* Don't mention it, Reason. What are friends for? *[exiting]*

Reason: Love?

Love: Yeah?

Reason: That *they* you said...*[Love shakes her head to show she doesn't comprehend]* Who was it that stated that quotation, the one about Reason navigating through the Tempest? Shakespeare?

Love *[slowly shaking her head]:* Love. *[A brief grunt of a laugh comes from Reason and Love exits.]*

Reason *[under breath]:* Love. *[taking a pause to take everything in]* Now you can see the struggle that occurs. Now you understand what goes on while you sleep. While you work. While you live. *[pause]* I cannot give you an end to this. Why? Because it never ends, I can say that. I think, though, that it might not be so bad after all. Like I said before, the idle mind is the devil's workshop. And if this wasn't hell, I hate to see what hell really is. Hopefully, you'll remember this the next time a headache develops or a stomach-ache ensues. Be glad you're on the outside, quietly enjoying your pain, instead of being in here where the conflict really is. It's very rare that I can say this. But I'm Reason. And thank you for listening to me. *[lights slowly fade out on him as he makes a broad bow.]*

End.