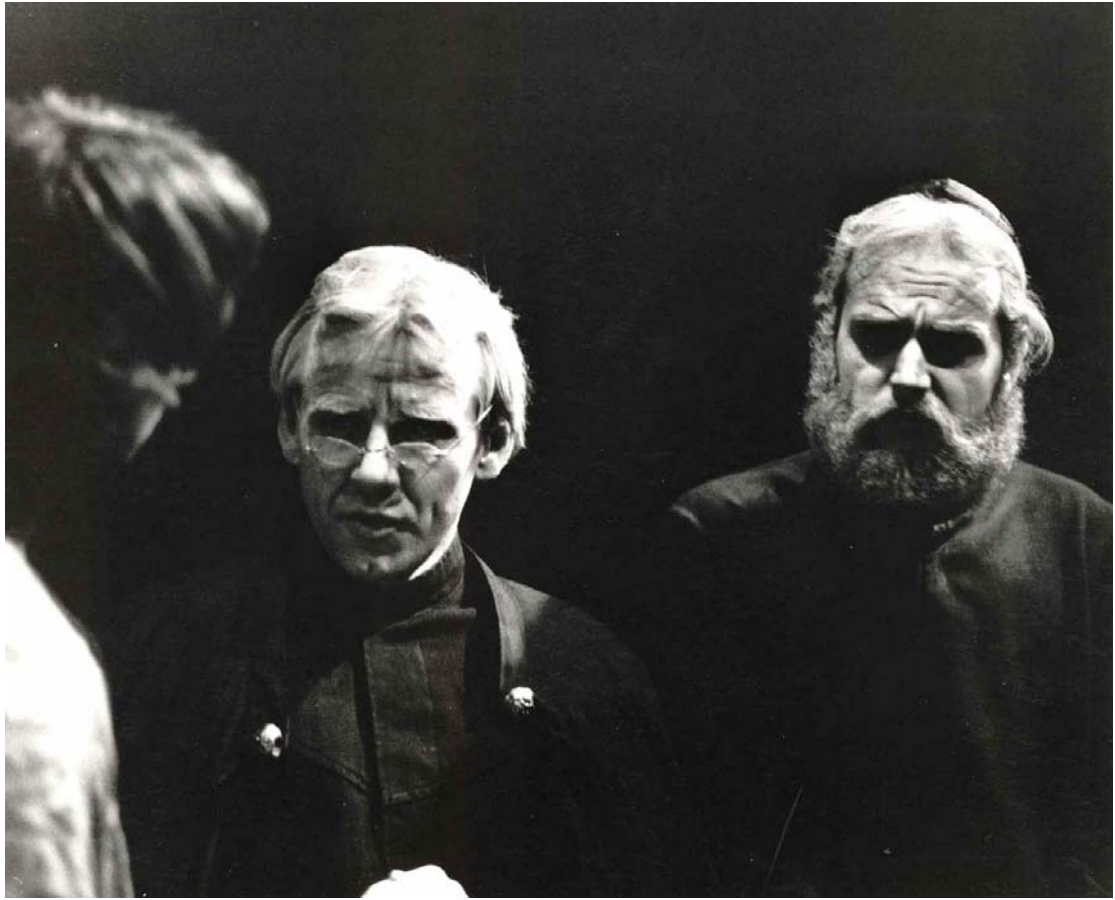




Harvey "Doc Harv" Tavel



Nancy McCormack



Bigfoot



Center : Harvey Tavel
Right : Ben Kushner



Second from Left : Cleo Young

BIGFOOT

A play by Ronald Tavel

Obie Award Winner for Best Play 1972

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Bigfoot
A Play in Two Acts

Ronald Tavel

Characters:

Evelyn, Jack, Bigfoot, Idiot, Lubin, Alpha, Omega, Abbot, Esau, Female, Harvey

Pronunciation: All French words are pronounced correctly. The Latin and Hebrew are pronounced as they commonly are in the United States: e.g., Esau (Eee-saw).

And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

(Genesis 33:9-11)

ACT I.

(Dark stage. EVELYN, a lighting girl in work clothes, loafers, ponytail, etc., is seated on a high stool before a follow spot and lighting board located immediately off downstage right. She seems bored, despondent, very ill at ease. She lights and

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Ronald Tavel won an Obie award for *Bigfoot*.

quashes a number of cigarettes, and continually rubs her forehead as if suffering from a severe headache.

When the audience is seated and EVELYN has dimmed the house lights, JACK O'MAHR, holding a scenario, appears centerstage in rehearsal clothes.)

Jack: These words were written for me by Ron Tavel. Should I be so inclined, there's nothing to insure that I speak them. They are the rigid compartments of his mind, tamed and emasculated since he's been taught what one may and may not do on the stage. With a minimum of verbal adroitness and ordinary self-confidence, I could probably far outdistance his present capacities and you people would never know the difference. Take my word for it, one second after curtaintime the actor, especially the lead, is on his own, all alone, and fairly free to run the show. Unless, of course, you object. And you out there are as free to voice your objections as I am to vent and invent such speeches and activities as I choose. It's that particular equation of the scrim that both vindicates my liberty and absolves me of any penny payments that might accompany its trespassing rules of the Dramatists' Guild.

Evelyn: Jack, you got an aspirin?

Jack: Is that an objection, dear, or have I strained your span of concentration?

Evelyn: I jist wanna know if ya got an aspirin?

Jack: Eve, baby, I started the show!

Evelyn: Is that what they call it now?

Jack: (ignoring her) A little later on I'm going to ask Mr. Tavel's brother to come out here on the stage with me. —Does that idea make you uncomfortable? If so, ask yourself why. I'll bet you wouldn't be at all bothered if I said I was going to have Tavel himself join me. But that's not too inventive, it's a ploy Pirandello might have used—in fact, probably did. I've been thinking a lot about Pirandello lately and if you'll allow of all his plays an obsession to delimit the spaces of himself in the world, of himself as wordsman that is, or to question if such space literarily exists, I believe you'll agree his work is very touching. However, I myself am after a cow of another color, and only Tavel's actual flesh and

blood brother can suit *my* pursuit.

Evelyn: That'll make it pretty hard to tour your show. You sure his brother is gonna always be available? Don't he work?

Jack: Shut up!—it's attention to just such middle class reservations that prevents anything of real value from ever developing. (directly to the audience while EVELYN busies herself removing her contact lenses) Now, before I launch into my project, by way of necessary background, I must introduce you to the existence of certain creatures, certain rare beings whose existence it is middle class to discount. Please, Evelyn, a little light—Evelyn! what are you doing?!

Evelyn: Takin' out my contacts. They gimme a headache.

Jack: Evelyn, child, I have so much work to do and so little reason to do it!

Evelyn: Well, don't let *me* stop you—tear it off!

Jack: Gimme the spot.

Evelyn: You're lit, baby.

Jack: (starting to lose control) Not me!—over here on the floor, dummy! Didn't you see me working all afternoon?

Evelyn: I seen ya put that day-glo on petty-cash, that's what I seen.

Jack: If it works *I'll* pay for it from now on, O.K.?

Evelyn: Don't come outta *my* check.

Jack: Aspirins wouldn't come out of your check. You'd hit the company up for Doublemint gum given half the chance.

Evelyn: Now, Jack—

Jack: You oughta be getting unemployment, that's what you oughta be getting for all your effort amounts to arou—ah! that's more like it.

(EVELYN shifts the spot onto the floor downstage right of center. There, painted in day-glo, is a track of enormous footprints.)

Jack: (childishly delighted) See, it works! —Now, honey, could you followspot these tracks so's the audience can see how, starting from down here, they step upstage in giant strides and disappear into the redwoods? —There were giants in the earth in those days.

(EVELYN, bored, moves the spot slowly along the tracks. The tracks cut diagonally across stage and end in a clump of

redwood trees upstage left, an area closely wooded and congested with multicolored berry bushes and emerald ferns, a miniature Eden.)

Evelyn: Good, Jackson?

Jack: Perfect, honey. And how fiercely beautiful that forest is against the deft disclosure of thy Let-Be light!

Evelyn: Flattery—that only augments my headache.

Jack: You rush me: I'm still feeling my way. You may evaluate my results, but my manner is me and that I do not give you leave to criticize.

Evelyn: All right, what else?

Jack: Wait, first I have to explain this much: (to the audience) People, you have to imagine that this stagefloor is packed with crusted mud. Mud that was very slippery and impressionable during the flood last—ummmm . . . wait: I'll figure out the time sequences later. Anyhow, let's all agree that that's how these footprints came to be here. Now, please concede how very large they are:—very much larger than any human footprints could be. (coming up with a tape measure, kneeling, and measuring one of the prints) Seventeen inches by the rule. From ball of heel to nail of toe. Wanna check me out, Evelyn? (going to EVELYN as he speaks and handing her the tape; she crosses to the print, puts on eyeglasses, reaches down without bending her knees, and perfunctorily repeats the measurement) And barefoot, of course, quite barefoot, which is how we have the heel, arch, sole and toes, gleaming that is a big foot and not just big shoes. Boy, what a joke on me if these were shoe prints and not bare feet! There'd be none more deceived. Seventeen inches as I said, (placing his own shoe in an imprint and waxing somewhat superior in tone) rather peasant in width and low, low-brow of arch, but otherwise altogether human. Right, Evelyn?

Evelyn: I wouldn't know.

Jack: (angrily grabbing the tape from her) They ain't Simioid and certainly not Pongids! What'd *you* get in Biology—"F" minus? No lighting girl gonna lay on me they got great apes gallivantin' around in upper California!

Evelyn: I didn't contradict a word! I'm doin' exactly what

you asked! What do I care who made these—

Jack: (spinning her about toward stage right) Sssssh, enough lip! You'll frighten it off with your ceaseless chatter, dummy! Stand perfectly still—don't even breathe. You folks out there, too, follow my example, not a sound, not a word, and it will come out.

Evelyn: Who?

Jack: This is your last night here you know that, girlie?

(JACK shoves EVELYN to the side and both stand stiffly together. A sense of hushed expectancy sweeps across the stage. Lights search in uncertain waves, gradually coming to focus outside the wooded area upstage left. After several moments a vague shadow moves softly behind and between the trees. The object in question is not seen clearly since the creature is as shy as it is curious, but there is enough visibility to suggest the presence of a BIGFOOT, towering from the ferns to a height of nearly seven feet. Except for its face, palms and soles, it is covered with short, soft, reddish brown hair; it has arms that hang almost to its knees, nearly no neck, an extremely short brow, and a strikingly domed head. The creature is far more human than ape though the audience can not see it well enough at this point to be certain. The BIGFOOT grows bolder and slipping between the barks and wildflowers, makes its way toward the edge of the wood. It peers, shadowed, tentatively out at the audience. Seeming to find nothing amiss, it picks some berries and abstractly nibbles them, gazing blankly about. Then its attention comes to rest on JACK and EVELYN: suddenly, it freezes: the couple starts back. The BIGFOOT drops its arms, crushing the berries between its fingers and letting them slip onto the grass. It sniffs the air in alarm and then throws up its head, emitting a piercing cry utterly unlike any sound known to the human ear: a harsh, grating, long-drawn shriek, sharp as a computer scratch in its highest register but simultaneously accompanied by an underboom similar to the furious breakdown of granite during a tornado. EVELYN grabs the scenario from JACK's hand and jumps back to her lighting board in a frenzied huff and puff; JACK is nearly toppled.)

Evelyn: I sure as shit wouldn't have that guy for dinner—moose meat is preferable!

(She throws a switch that blacks out the redwoods—they disappear all at once along with the BIGFOOT—and brings up a third-degree on JACK. He blinks under the hot spot.)

Jack: Hey, peanut-brain! what're you doing?

Evelyn: Not much, baby. Time to move onto the school-room scene.

Jack: But I don't want to play that scene tonight.

Evelyn: Too bad: I sure as hell don't wanna play this new one *you* wrote in:—(pointing into the scenario) It says here: "At this point the Bigfoot does unto the others on stage as he would have them do unto him"—!! Dig?!

Jack: But aren't you impressed? Have you seen the huge likes of such a creature before? Anywhere? Think of what I had to go through to manage the human appearance of this phenomenon—a phenomenon whose existence most audiences don't even believe in!

Evelyn: I'm quite impressed, believe that: but art can not take the liberties that life dares.

Jack: You think so?

Evelyn: Yeah. It's too hazardous.

Jack: Bull! Who's running this show—you or me? I'm telling you I have to do something different tonight.

Evelyn: *I'm* not trying to run anything. I got a lighting shtick here, that's all, and I was signed up and fully cloused months ago: and my contract don't cover no crack-pot autocrat's altogether nonunion and unsalaried improvisations.

Jack: Your contract won't cover two weeks notice either, should I sic that Bigfoot on you!

Evelyn: (anything but) I'm shocked fulla nuts.

(EVELYN pulls up the lights on stage right with a broad gesture of disgust: the set pieces there give the quaint impression of a country monastery. Three schoolroom desks appear in profile, one behind the other, facing wing right. Behind the desks and running the length of them is a paneless window which affords a charming view of the arched cloister, formal gardens, cotton sky. To the right of the desks, but farther downstage is an ornate, stunning vitrail, approx. 4' x 6'),

seemingly suspended in air. The image on the vitrail depicts the vision of the Jacob's Ladder in electric blues, gradations of yellow, and skywhite. FATHER LUBIN, a frown-faced dean in frock, is leaning against the window as stonelike as a life-sized religious statue, serene, cold, uncalled by temporality ever to move. Yet as JACK begins to speak, LUBIN's expression slowly animates, the lines of his glare dripping downward into a weary impatience he finds increasingly difficult to conceal. His stance (with folded arms, crossed ankles) is plainly for JACK's benefit, and JACK feels his presence without looking at him as one feels a comeuppance it is no longer possible to delay. EVELYN is mildly amused at the appearance of LUBIN. She removes a priest's frock shelved above her lighting board and tosses it over to JACK. JACK puts it on sheepishly as he speaks.)

Evelyn: Here, get into costume and let's get started, huh?

Jack: There's old sour dour puss himself and right on the button. You folks don't worry, I'm gonna give ya the show I promised. I just gotta do this li'l classroom scene and then I'll be right back.

Evelyn: Don't hurry. (to the audience) Well, I suppose he'll be having to save face now. And lose lives.

Jack: Folks, this is the mountainside monastery at which I am retreated, a veritable stable of the Golden Calf. Ahem. Here I further the cause of mystical meditation and in my after-hours pass the wealth of Jesuit gleanings onto a smaller generation. Note the commodious furnishings, animated to proclaim the Hebrew heritage to which we all are heir. And, now, with a little leave, I shall gather my garments farther upstage and profess to the quarrelsome twins, Alpha and Omega. —Wonder what Smilely wants.

Evelyn: Hold it, Jack—ya forget the Idiot.

Jack: Oh, yes, the Idiot! —Pardon me.

(JACK rushes to extreme left, far downstage, where he hurriedly rolls aside a circular screen on which is painted the death of Abel and the banishment of Ishmael. Disclosed there, on a high Cardinal-like throne in strict profile, is a Mongolian IDIOT, pear-shaped, small and squatish, with flat head, slant eyes, etc. Dressed in childish clothes, he

sits quietly with clasped hands as if overseeing the monastery set. Occasionally he swings his legs or plays with his bare toes. His expression is empty and noncommittal but he breathes without sound in great heaves as if it were his destiny to endure all human suffering while denied the alleviative of human knowledge.)

Jack: *That* is the Idiot. And you thought *my* inventions showed bizarre taste. Just dig what Tavel's script calls for! Nevertheless, my duty to do, I've always assumed that this Idiot is argued a student here at our abbey, what with his small stature and all. But I can't be sure. For an actor can never accurately estimate the age of a genuine Mongoloid. Even authorities are give o'er to forever disputing it. So, for what I know, he may be one of the monks. Even a dome-shaved practicing one, a priest of action, a miniature master of mercy, a gentleman and a scholar, a pedant of sorts.

(LUBIN starts downstage showily displaying his annoyance with heavy heels and loud clearing of his throat. JACK prattles quicker to avoid him, sprighting along the footlights.)

Jack: His history is obscure: how, when and why he came here, left a foundling as of a Quas'modo Sunday or intentionally arrived on his own initiative and at such an advancement as when he might propel himself. His history to the side, his symbolic value's more troubl'some still: what lofty reading may we take from a taciturn idiot's baleful gaze, his silent papal propriety as he surveys the agitated parade, always two abreast, that passes below and before him across the stage of circum—

Lubin: A word, Father O'Mahr.

Jack: Just one, huh?

Lubin: You've no objection if I audit your class today?

Jack: Uh, audit my class? What for?

Lubin: Nothing to be uneasy about. My semiannual evaluation is due this week and I haven't observed you once all semestre.

Jack: But I'm not prepared to—

Lubin: Naturally: there'd be little point in my observing your lesson with advance warning.

Jack: (weakly embarrassed before the audience) I don't

fare well under scrutiny, you know.

Lubin: Yet every man must. Relax, conduct yourself as you would on any normal day. The other nontenures have all received favorable ratings. I'm sure you will, too.

Evelyn: Boy, am I glad I ain't in your bracket, Jackson!

Lubin: I'll sit here, in the last row, where I can be out of your way.

Jack: You certain you'll be comfortable? These desks *are* fitted for kids.

Lubin: Quite comfortable. My thanks for your concern.

(LUBIN squeezes into the third desk-seat from wing right, which *is* too small for him and his maneuvers at adjusting hardly improve his mood. Hardly has he forced his legs in under the desk when a pair of adolescent fraternal twins, ALPHA and OMEGA, rushes boisterously in from upstage right. Dressed in parochial uniforms and carrying Bibles, OMEGA, chasing ALPHA, is about to brain him with his Bible. ALPHA reaches JACK, believing he is safe . . .)

Alpha: Father O'Mahr! Omega is after me a—

(. . . when OMEGA leaps from behind grabbing at ALPHA's legs in a perfect football tackle. Both crash to the floor with OMEGA's hands firmly around ALPHA's heels. Both look up, laughing at JACK. JACK is understandably rattled.)

Omega: Hey, Father O'Mahr, how in Heaven's Holy Name do you ever remember all your lines?

Alpha: Well, Omega, they say an elephant never forgets someone that did him dirt, dig?

Omega: Score one! —Still, talky Father, console thyself: 'Tis Friday—the end of memorize-a-week hath come!

Jack: (disconsolate) Aye, Caesar, but not gone.

Lubin: Ah-hem!

Jack: (as the twins, turning, perceive in dismay LUBIN's glare) Boys, we have a visitor with us this afternoon. Father Lubin has kindly consented to share, and thus grace, our Genesis agape just this once, an honor not often afforded the unworthy youngsters confined(!) to our cloister.

(LUBIN frowns down fixedly at the twins, then sweeps out a pen and pad with theatrical ominousness and begins to write.)

Alpha: (fearfully) The right honorable Father Lubin!

Omega: (wide-eyed) O my Passion in the garden. . . .!

Alpha: (to OMEGA) . . . though you haven't exactly been meditating, have you?

Omega: No, but I do a lot of worrying.

Alpha: Don't count.

Jack: (lifting them from the floor) Now, boys, pick up your Bibles and take your seats and let's start from the point we left off last time. Where were we?

Alpha: (obeying) Chap 25.

Omega: (obeying) Verse 21.

Jack: Alpha?

Alpha: (reading) "And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived."

Omega: (reading) "And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord."

Alpha: (reading) "And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels—" —Father O'Mahr, why does It call the twins two nations?

Jack: Because that's what It means. The Bible is exact. Two nations fought within Rebekah's womb.

Omega: What two nations?

Jack: It tells you. What is Jacob's name later changed to?

Omega: Israel.

Jack: Then one twin was the nation of Israel.

Alpha: And the other?

Jack: What does It tell you?

Alpha: It keeps saying Esau was Edom, and that Esau is the father of the Edomites.

Jack: Then the other twin is the nation of Edom.

Omega: Who were they?

Jack: Well, let's see: find me the descriptions of Esau.

Omega: (turning the page, scanning, reading) "And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. . . ."

Jack: Edom means "Red" or "Reddy" . . . it's a sort of

Biblical nickname. Good. What else?

Omega: (scanning, reading) Ummmm "Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field."

Jack: What else?

Alpha: I wouldn't know.

Jack: How could you know, staring at me? You think the answer is written on my face?

Lubin: Ah-hem!

Jack: Look at the Text.

Alpha: (directly to the audience with warning TV tone) Have you ever thought about what it means to drink a bottle of *Coca Cola*?

Omega: (to the audience, ominously) We have.

Alpha: (to the audience, ominously) This message was brought to you by the Pepsi Cola Company.

Jack: Stop that! Turn around. I want

Omega: your undivided

Alpha: attention!

Jack: That'll be enough. All right:—now, tell me what you learn about Esau from the scene in which his mother manages to trick him out of his birthright blessing from old Isaac. Bearing in mind this is further evidence that Esau was not Rebekah's real son: she'd have damned her eternal soul by this deceit if he were.

Omega: (to ALPHA with sadistic satisfaction) But Rebekah *is* the true mother of Israel).

Jack: I'm waiting.

Alpha: Well, Esau was hairy because when his brother—

Jack: We've already mentioned that, young man.

Alpha: He had a deep growl. Jacob tried to imitate it.

Jack: And?

Alpha: And he stunk.

Omega: Yeah, Isaac fonked off his clothes and he stunk.

Jack: O.K., now we have something to go on. During their Exodus from Egypt the Israelites wandered the Sinai Peninsula where they were savagely attacked by the Sheidim, which means the Destroyers. Isaac and Jacob knew these creatures too but by another name—the Seirim—which means the Hairy Ones. Get the picture?

Alpha: Hairy Ones like Esau. —They were the nation of Edom!

Omega: How droll.

Jack: (moving away from the twins and wandering downstage, enchanted with his knowledge) Rebekah was understandably scandalized at the appearance of Esau and if you should ever be able to spot his likes I'm sure you'll have sympathy for the treachery she resorted to to deny any indiscreet responsibility for his birth. For although these Hairy Ones—who, we are told, stank like quote a field of rotten potatoes unquote—were close enough to humans to be spermatologically capable of intermarrying with the Israelites still to all purpose they are more apish than mannish, having lengthy dangling arms, shaggy bodies, a bone structure repellent for its wide neck eke large elbow and equally unseemly heel joints.

Alpha: (whispering to OMEGA) Is Lubin writing this down?

Omega: No, I think it's a *lettre de caché*.

Alpha: He intends to get rid of us.

Omega: But quick!

Jack: The Hairy Ones had any number of zooish habits, I note the particularly irksome one of throwing sticks and stones to break the bones of the tired Israelites. In the Sinai the Chosen camouflaged with sand and foliage against such embarrassing harassment and this is the origin of the *succoth*. The strain of the Hairy Ones in the Israelites' blood proved a curse to the very end for out of their lineage came the likes of King Herod himself.

Omega: The strain of this lecture may prove the likes of *my* very end.

Alpha: Mad, sad, and true.

Jack: Boys, the Bible's earliest reference to the Hairy Ones is obscured by the spurious translation of your King James version.

(LUBIN looks up from his writing, shocked, open-mouthed.)

Evelyn: (to LUBIN) He gonna put his big foot in there now!

Jack: Genesis 6, accurately rendered, reads: "And it was when Man began to multiply that the Sons of Those Who Are Worshipped"—that is, the other Gods—"saw the daughters of

man, for they were fair, and took themselves wives from among such as they cared to choose. And Yahweh said, My power can never profit the perverted ones who have made themselves human. The Sons of Those Who Are Worshipped came unto the daughters of man and there was born to them those Giborim who were later considered to be the people of the Name."

Alpha: This program has been selected for rebroadcast to our alarmed services overseas.

Jack: These Giborim, boys, described as being quote as tall as a tree unquote, are afterward called, *giborei tsayid*. Translated: Mighty Ones of the Hunt!

Omega: (bored to catatonia) And Esau was a cunning hunter.

Alpha: The lecture you are being forced to endure is suggested for *mature* audiences only, and may be hazardous to your health.

Omega: I guess I better go home.

Alpha: A pre-Code lecture. Leave the kids at home.

Evelyn: And babysit.

Alpha: It is, in a word, "Explicit."

Omega: Well, I should hope so:—in an age of chaos, explicitness is the least a lecture owes its audience.

Alpha: Can I quote you?

Omega: To mutes.

Evelyn: Like that Idiot?

Jack: Alpha and Omega! I have *not* given you

Alpha: permission to

Omega: speak!

Alpha: Whadda ya do when a mute comes in to confess?

Omega: Let 'im get graphic.

Jack: I'll have both of you flogged! Flogged! do you

Alpha: hear

Omega: me?!!

Alpha: My, my, a man of the cloth and no composition at all to speak of.

Omega: This lesson has no composition at all to listen to. Is it time to go?

Jack: (furious) I'm sending for both your parents this very

afternoon! And don't tell me they work and can't come up!
Let them leave work and be duly docked! Neither of you
is to show his leering face in class again without them!

Alpha: Hey, how much of him is a put on?

Omega: 14% of him puts ya on.

Alpha: The rest puts ya off.

Lubin: (finally deciding to rise into action, but finding himself stuck in his seat) Father O'Mahr, I believe I had better intervene at this—

Jack: (frantic) Father Lubin, kindly keep your seat—

Lubin: The seat's keeping me.

Jack: Let me handle this my—

Lubin: I think I had better handle it. This impass lacks the least iota of control. You plainly are plain incapable of order. I'd discipline myself if I were you before attempting to discipline the twins.

Omega: (crowning ALPHA with his Bible) Ya hear that! Listen to the trouble you got Father O'Mahr into!

Alpha: (turning fully around and punching OMEGA in the face) The trouble I got him into! It's *your* irrepressible lip that started this!

Omega: (socking ALPHA out of his seat onto the floor, then, standing, calmly, hammy to the end) I ask you, Alpha, to deliberate; now, while you deliberate—

Alpha: You'll take a brain check on that deliberatin'!!

(ALPHA jumps to his feet and pounds OMEGA's head; both battle in dead earnest. JACK, about to pull them apart, hears the ABBOT at the window: the ABBOT, an aged, stooped, heavy man passing along in the cloister and attracted by the commotion, peers, squinting, into the classroom. LUBIN is still stuck.)

Abbot: Mind monitoring the sound in here a bit?

Jack: The Abbot! Oh God, the Abbot!

Abbot: Oh my, what is this—a boxing class?

Jack: (sinking into ALPHA's seat, depleted) I've had it. It's welfare for me.

Lubin: Father O'Mahr! what are you sitting over there for? Help me out of here!

Jack: I think I've just helped myself out of here.

(The ABBOT hobbles around the left edge of the window and into the center of the chaos as quickly as his tiny feet can manage. The twins, falling against LUBIN, make him as in-between, the recipient of most of their blows.)

Lubin: You products of a pagan sliced in two! I feel like a punching panda!

Evelyn: Funny—ya look like a pressed duck.

Lubin: I'll have you both arrested! Arrested do you hear?! Reform school!

Abbot: Children! Children!

Omega: EeeeeeeKKK! Abbot Costello!

(The twins break apart with humorous rapidity soon as they spot the ABBOT and stand stiffly together with heads bowed and hands clasped before them. The IDIOT, standing imitates their gestures, gargling deep in his windpipe as mutes do.)

Abbot: My goodness—how could two brothers behave so bestially? Isn't our hidden abbey sanctuary against the motley's more aggressive aspirations? Or is it for vanity then that your laboring folk enrolled you here, dearly purchasing our ward?

Alpha & Omega: Forgive us, Holy Abbot, the brute within us tempted both and we did war in its advice.

Abbot: That's nice. That's nicely chimed. Still, such precocious phrasing agrees us from the facts to feast on slight of lip. I mean to know how two who brothers be/could fight so savagely.

Alpha: We've been doing it for years.

Abbot: Seniority does not imply impunity.

Omega: But we've always done it.

Abbot: Silence. Repetition does not make right. —In all things is a first. Which, picking up such stitch, initiated the imbroglio?

Omega: I, Holy Abbot, did. I raised my hand to Alpha.

Abbot: (to ALPHA) Did he?

Alpha: Yeah.

Abbot: Why?

Omega: For our namesake. I don't like the name Omega. It makes it obvious that I'm the second born.

Abbot: Such a fact is poignant. Praise God for telling

clarity. Clarity is the charity of God.
 Omega: (sardonic) For that charity I smote Alpha.
 Abbot: (to ALPHA) Did he?
 Alpha: Yeah.
 Abbot: (putting on glasses) Discursive, aren't you?
 Alpha: I have the Oedipal security of the first born. I don't need to say nothin'.
 Omega: You see, Abbot?
 Abbot: Alpha, my child, is not it sooth the first shall be last and the last first? Therefore, do penance.
 Alpha: Well why should I? If it's soothed out that clearly that I'm gonna be last shouldn't Omega be doing the penance?
 Omega: I'm the underdog by birth. You're the twin that's gotta atone.
 Abbot: (to OMEGA) But you shall be first. Therefore must you humble yourself. Therefore, do penance.
 Alpha: Quel gyp! I'm the first born so I'm gonna be last.
 Abbot: Shut up.
 Alpha: So what's the good of being the first born then?
 Omega: (enlightened) I guess *my* name should be Alpha.
 Abbot: Isn't it?—I mean, how confusing!
 Alpha: No! it is *not*! My name is Alpha and Alpha it's gonna stay! I ain't no illegitimate Esau! (rushing at OMEGA to resume the fight)
 Omega: (quickly sitting down in his middle desk-seat) You'd hit a man who's sitting down? (turning to JACK and LUBIN on either side of him) How ya doin', boys?
 Lubin: Slum-bunny!
 Alpha: Get up, you two-penny parvenu!
 Abbot: (restraining ALPHA) No, no, no more of that! And no more regular class for either of you until alteration fledges measurably. I am going to ferret you out from under Father O'Mahr's liberal wing and schedule a proper human conduct program instead for the remainder of the semestre.
 Omega: Wait'll Mommy hears about this.
 Alpha: I don't care.
 Abbot: Evelyn, will you show the boys down to the wash-room and see they clean up without quarreling?
 Evelyn: Be glad.

Abbot: You are to go to your cells after that, change your clothes, and wait there until I send for you.

Jack: (as EVELYN crosses from her lighting board and takes the twins by the hands) I believe I'll go along as well and insure a thorough scrubbing—

Abbot: Oh, please remain, Father O'Mahr; I'd profit in a penny for your thoughts.

Alpha: (to JACK) He's keepin' ya after class.

Omega: Naughty, naughty.

Evelyn: Come on, fellas, I'll beat ya to the washroom.

Alpha & Omega: Put a buck on that, ya got two takers! (singing as they exit with EVELYN upstage right:)

I saw Esau / sitting on the seesaw:

Esau, up-saw, / asked me for a penny:

Down-saw went Esau / because I hadn't any!

Abbot: (altering to an attitude of keen severity) We here at the abbey believe in trusting our non-tenures to every experiment in working ways out for themselves. I am certain you will concur that you've been left to your own ingeniousness for as long as any conscionable religieux could ask.

Jack: I have no argument.

Abbot: I do but was chary till now of airing before others my qualifications concerning your current qualification to enrich the souls of students our charge selected, yet the time, as they put it, hath plainly come. However, before I unburden myself, I should like to listen to Father Lubin's semi-annual progress report. Father Lubin—do you intend to sit there so self-satisfied all afternoon?

Lubin: Oh, wh . . . , I, wh . . . , don't feel fit today, Your Holiness. I suffer from vertigo, you know.

Abbot: From vertigo, eh?

Lubin: Begging your leave. I could recouperate resting right here just a bit longer.

Abbot: Intriguing.

Lubin: (enlivened) But I *am* eager to read my notes:

Abbot: Intriguing.

Lubin: (long stare at JACK, then reading) "Alpha and Omega, as perverse as the parental mentality that could thus label its offspring besiege the classroom in medias res some

Homeric battle and thenceafter protract sans hiatus an ad infinitum of wit and assault whose purport is to impudent disrespect for Authority, Law, Value, Memory, and Faith, the gross enormity of which Father O'Mahr is helpless to alter, nay, abets by his refusal to perform his duty, to all nay-say, to discourage and delay, in loco parentis, this decay and collapse of Western Civilization."

Abbot: Ah! the grandeur of the thing.

Lubin: I do not find levity in order, Your Holiness.

Abbot: Nor I, paranoia. I merely wondered aloud at how the vast dimensions of this matter might have so easily escaped me. Go on.

Lubin: (reading) "His disciplinary shortcomings *à part*, Father O'Mahr's teachings tumble nothing short of the heretical, he being given to strict reliance on apocryphal texts, variant readings, unorthodox as well as highly dubious translations, and, finally, Biblical omissions whose sacreligious implications are superseded only by the outrageousness of his repulsively inventive *commissions*."

Abbot: As goes the liberal, so the indifferentist.

Lubin: (reading) "Furthermore, he preaches, with all the fervor of a Jeremiah, the factual existence of Abdominable Snowmen."

Abbot: Abominable Snowmen?!

Lubin: I will *not* repeat!

Abbot: Thank God. —Abominable Snowmen, Father O'Mahr?

Jack: An unfortunate nomenclature, Your Holiness.

Abbot: But?

Jack: But doubtless the very creature in question.

Abbot: (wearily sitting in the middle desk-seat; the row now recalls three cooks with heads joined) Ah me. . . . Abdominable Snowmen. How this with odiousness in mine old ears uneasy cries. What's happening to the monastery?

Jack: Your Holiness, the Bible repeatedly testifies to the presence of the accursed ones. I can not allow faulty scholarship and half thought-through exegetical tracts to obscure the danger!

Abbot: Danger?

Jack: In Leviticus 16:7 we're told that Aaron, and I quote: "took two of the Hairy Ones, and caused them to stand before the Lord. And Aaron put tags on the Hairy Ones, one tag for Yahweh and one tag for Azazel. And Aaron made an offering of the Hairy One he had tagged for Yahweh; and sent off the One tagged for Azazel that it might atone for the sins of Israel."

Abbot: "Hairy Ones?" Are not the words, *seirei 'izim*—"hairy goats?"

Lubin: —"Scapegoats" in the vernacular.

Jack: The word is *seirim*—very clearly so—not, *seirei 'izim*. It meant the Hairy Ones then and it means the Hairy Ones now. Its root letters are identical with the root letters in the word for "abominate," used when Moses decries the sacrifices to these *Seirim* who are nearer than God and weeps:—"Your fathers did not thus abominate themselves." And, so, Abominable Snowman, if you must.

Abbot: But Father O'Mahr, you surely realize that if Abominable Snowmen are being referred to in the verses you cite, then Aaron's offering to the Lord is tantamount to human sacrifice.

Jack: (standing) And Abraham's was not?

Lubin: This is shock iconoclasm! vacuous tart retort! That Your Holiness should be subjected to such—

Jack: Such acceptance of the Will of God? I find it savorless that men of a monastic life should sit themselves down with the Judas of making the Bible more palatable to their uneducated taste.

Abbot: You mustn't excite yourself this way. Please to remind your temper that a confided self, restraint and privacy, virtues which we inculcate in our pupils, we surely expect of our brothers.

Jack: But listen to the provocation! I am being accused of muddle-minded, empty—

Abbot: Neither for a moment denigrates your scholarship nor consolidates here to hold to scrutiny our choice of you as specialist on the Leviticus Rabba and other ancient exegeses. We simply wish to point out how, in the light of scientific fact, teaching the true existence of Abominable Snowmen

will expose us to an inundation of unanswerable criticisms.

Lubin: A Noah's flood of unanswerable criticisms. We have our Board of Directors to think of—the very fine families who fund our abbey. Complaints have been cascading in since the day you started here and we—

Jack: (shoving LUBIN backwards) You ass-licker!!

Lubin: (*tumbling to the floor, stunned*) His shadow height hides irregularity rightly undreamt of! I heard *nothing*. Nor have I ever heard of an actual Abdominable Snowman: if that loathsome cogitation could be real, surely we would have captured one by now and so had proof of their existence.

Jack: And *that* is logic??—the Snowmen have never captured one of us and so most likely don't as well believe in *our* existence either!

Lubin: This is insanity! I shall appear on my own to personally bring charges of mental incompetence—

Jack: (zigzagging, torn up) Can you conjure the despicable pride, the banal unworthiness, that very pride that goeth before a fall of men who take lack of evidence as evidence that none exists? Sirs, if by such there are no Snowmen, then by such there is no God!

Lubin: (getting up) Which confronts us with your final failing, grand O'Mahr—that of congenital atheism!

Jack: Atheism! ATHEISM! Yes yes yes I *am* an atheist!

Abbot: (standing, distraught) Father—

Jack: *Father!* be father now, be patriarch that could not come between a son and the natural worm in him curls up the cordial spiral of our world—world has no end, it has no place where it began!

Abbot: (to LUBIN) Come, let us go now—

Jack: (grabbing the ABBOT's sleeve) Go where without the Will that Cains you one of humankind?! There never came a real religious except he also was an atheist! That you should own to twice my years and you to hopes for thrice and neither know what any—

Abbot: You must not do this. We want to help you.

Jack: (on his knees) Holiness, Holiness, God is not only indefensible but to the Enlightened Empty, quite unnecessary. You pack the dot between your idea with so much

timber that you must burn up mind with an abstraction in anthropomorphic disguise just to have room to walk forth in your head. And what are you thus?:—a faith in place of belief that your squashed shade must murder off just to think about?

Abbot: I'll send you for your brother. He can be here by nightfall and you with him in his home by noon tomorrow. Son, you have torn off my sleeve.

Jack: (clutching the torn piece, crying) Holiness. . . .

Abbot: You must rest, rest and restore, with those who love you most. I'll visit regularly. Your absence' length I shall tend your cell myself and you will find me praying there to welcome you when you are re—

Jack: Welcome me? *Who* welcomes me? Violating my cell so to have at the covers with which I have my way?

(JACK crawls apart from the ABBOT, his frenzy increasing as he rants. He stands, rages and madly dances. The whole stage darkens except for JACK: the ABBOT and LUBIN are faded out.)

Jack: I note that Womanwill screening me, uncertain though seeing, disbelieving that one ha! out of twenty-five uncovers the craft of masturbation during his infant. I am one of them, that one of twenty-five when I was three or four, maybe younger. I was used to roll up the bed sheets and blankets under me, roll them up into a huge pile over which I draped my pink and trembling body my butt sticking way up in the dark night air, the halves of me trailing down on either side that pleasure dome. I had a name for it back then: I called it, "making a mola." I think the rolling motion cause of course I never took the forbidden sex in my hands the rolling motion roll roll onomatopoes how my peanut brain coined the nominal: mola. That additive "m" I imagine's conventional Indo-European: mother move mound mush mouth make a mola. Mother was that major violence often she'd peek into our bedroom to insure we were in the land of peace and I'd immobile she's say see how funny he sleeps with the blankets all a mountain under him. Mother the worry-factor I don't recall Dad reasoning any about the phenomenon and Esau never awoke to what I was doing he'd

grunt unambitiously on during my whole childhood of masturbating I don't believe he learned to masturbate during childhood I don't think he's ever learned to masturbate if he had it was at a late age and I never knew of it. —No one emits when he's a child, there's no emission no spilling at all, but there *is* an orgasm and oh! such an orgasm it lasts forever! And you force its lasting longer than forever by pressing down hard on the flannel covers soon as you feel it starting so it never delimits plummeting securely into oblivion on the long sweet longplank of the pleasure like a Polynesian pariah into the turquoise together of whatever. . . . Then, of course, came puberty and with puberty an end to this secret making of molas secret I say because no manner how I effort describing what I'm doing to my diminutive peers they can't understand what it is. Though not to secrecy, an end to privacy with seminal emission came for this new emission makes me with every man one and the same. And what a crippling for Jack O'Mahr who never bulwarked against the child's catastrophe of disappointment: because with spilling, the going out, out went the Ecstasy since adult orgasm's only a fraction of a second; a seeded manhood a mere memory of virile infancy. . . . Oh, how my sperm follows now flowing hopelessly from a plinth with returning breath to underline the breathless grave! I charge my danger that at the age of Alpha and Omega I had suffered what my innocent peers could not—the have was already lost, the lessening left to look forward to, the future hiding no promise principle. Think what anguish since then to have had to press on by a flexed will rather than loving no might and being opened to the deceptive Grace of destitution! *Imagine*:—thirteen years old—and wiped out!!

(JACK has jumped onto the desk-tops and, as he screams his last line, he whirls about in a stunningly balanced delirium and plunges through the ornately figured vitrail shattering it to pieces winging out in all directions. He leaps and bounds on the broken glass, reaching astonishing heights and crying out like a Dervish, until he finally collapses covered with his drool, sweat, and blood. He lies downstage right, unconscious, cut in many places and bleeding onto the splintered

glass. The lights slowly fade from him and come up gradually on the redwood area. We hear a crackling of twigs and brushed ferns and then see ESAU O'MAHR leading an exhausted EVELYN through the wood. ESAU is an enormous man, as broad as he is tall, with a full red beard and long, very shaggy red hair. Dressed in a woodsman's outfit, he shoulders a leather outing bag as well as various scientific instruments. EVELYN bears scant resemblance to the homely and pragmatic theatre minion with whom the audience is familiar: her face has a hitherto unseen beauty and her long loose hair falls about a hospital gown gathered in tightly enough to reveal a perfect figure. She appears to have been drained of all her energy and is supporting herself on ESAU's strong arm.)

Esau: That I know the linnet and the nightingale exist though I never see the linnet or nightingale seems somehow to be very important. I love wings.

Evelyn: I should think the chances of spotting one or the other are fairly high around here.

Esau: Not at all. They don't exist in northern California.

Evelyn: Neither can I. At least with you.

Esau: (as they emerge from the trees) I'll gather some firewood. And then camp us for the night. It'll save time if I also do the cooking.

Evelyn: Esau the anti-Renaissance man as andiron of Aeneas. The Nero of the Neanderthals turns founding father, a non-Jack of all domestic trades. Jack O'Mahr.

Esau: Now what's wrong?

Evelyn: Oh, but do, do: it is easier to than not to.

Esau: Listen, Judith, why do you make everything so—

Evelyn: Impossible?

Esau: No, just difficult. You don't burn seriously enough to achieve the impossible. Masochists must—

Evelyn: Please, Esau, don't let me stop you from your work—

Esau: You won't.

Evelyn: —Just go on about keeping up your image. Your image after the fact. Bartering a born Herculean over-all—the kind I once felt and married you for—for the most immediate

consummation, red lentiles, you Johnny-come-lately off a wailing wall penciled with graffiti cartoons of the man you might have been. A wife's love requires the flesh it attached to its attachment, not the illustration.

Esau: (putting down his equipment) Why don't you sit and quit, Judith, or better yet, quit, then sit. We all like you. —Lentile soup sounds good.

Evelyn: "Like," Madam? I know not 'like.'"

Esau: O.K., love. Tonight we'll love.

Evelyn: Why?

Esau: (deciding to erect the tent) Well, you know how it is, hon. I can't abstain from any one body for too long—my libido loses its taste for it. So. Besides, I am normal by temperament, I idealized what I love, I looked the other way.

Evelyn: Do you think you're as good as Jack?

Esau: I have no idea how good Jack is.

Evelyn: Really now!

Esau: Monks aren't supposed to be good. They're celibates, in case you haven't heard.

Evelyn: The new ones, too?

Esau: Judith, instead of insinuating, if—

Evelyn: Well, what *can* you do?

Esau: What a question to ask!

Evelyn: Why? Some people under thirty don't do everything, you know.

(The IDIOT wheezes into a weird, eery laugh, then applauds with hands and feet his appreciation of EVELYN's line.)

Evelyn: (mesmerized toward the throne) Can ya beat that? —a Mongolian Idiot middle a the Redwood forests!

Idiot: Hello, lady.

Evelyn: Hi there, sonny. What, I mean, who had you? (reaching up and fondling his bare feet) Gee, yer real tiny, ain'tcha? 'N freaky as Romulus 'n Remus in the she-wolf's den. 'N about as subtly congruous as all that, too! —Ha! Bet you've catered to some real erotica neurotica in your time—when you ran into the right people, that is.

Idiot: (ashamed, uncomprehending) I don't know.

Evelyn: Bet choo don't. How'd ya like to have a go at it between *my* milkers?

Idiot: (giggling, uncomprehending) I have go.

Evelyn: (turning to the audience) Well! I am culturally shocked. I thought it was only in cause plays that everything on stage had a reason for being there.

Idiot: This is a *because* play.

Evelyn: I'm hip. Tavel sure pees and crosses his "T's."

Idiot: What is my reason?

Evelyn: Your reason, baby, for being—

(Esau, who apparently neither sees nor hears the IDIOT, crosses downstage to EVELYN, distressed by her behavior.)

Esau: Evelyn, is your every failure to irk me going to touch off your talking to the trees like this?

Evelyn: Don't touch me, Esau, I'm not trying to irk you. I've just uncovered my lineage in the Idiot.

Esau: Your "lineage in the Idiot"?

Evelyn: Yes.

Esau: I don't know who I'm talking to.

Evelyn: (despairing) And if you knew the whole truth you would not say so little.

Esau: (taking her in his arms) Judith, listen to me: Will you love me now, things reconsidered, as I bartered for your not back then? Can you?—Why must you live in the arrears of so unarrangeable a den? What is lineage, really? If I can—

Evelyn: Love, Esau? do you call this part-possession love?

Esau: I don't want to possess you. I want to let you be, hoping to be with you.

Idiot: (dimming out) Hoping, at best, to be awhile you. . . .

Evelyn: The wings of your linnet and nightingale can no longer lift, Esau. Have you see the footprints?

Esau: What footprints?

Evelyn: Behind you.

(ESAU, turning about and spotting the prints, releases EVELYN.)

Esau: (dropping to his knees in astonishment) My God! how enormous. How incredibly enormous! And they're human, too—I think. Look, Judith, look at them!

Evelyn: Thanks but no thanks: I believe I've seen that biologic-contradiction-contribution to biologics before.

Esau: (excited, not listening, completely absorbed in the

prints) Seen this before?—where could you?

Evelyn: I get around to plays—*sic*—places. Fall in and out of them. —The plays, that is.

Esau: (his shoe in a print) Come here, they're fabulous!

Evelyn: *That* in the literal, and at the very most, take it from me. Think I prefer sitting this bit out by the campsite, such not inconveniencing you.

Esau: What a find! If this is what I think it is and I think it is, I've made THE historic discovery of a—

Evelyn: Follow yer instincts, apeman, follow right / to the bottom of the night. My own tell me to squat back here. (muttering abstractly under her breath) Better vengeance vantage fer upstaging, anyhow . . .

(ESAU, almost childishly joyous, tracks the prints to downstage right. There, to his shock, JACK lies, still prone.)

Esau: Unbelievable! We're rich! rich as—Good God! it's —it's Jack! Jack! How did—he's all—(kneeling beside JACK and lifting his head) Jack! Jack! wake up—what happened?

Jack: (his eyes opening in pain) Esau. I saw / Esau.

Esau: What happened to you? What are you doing *here*? You're covered with blood!

Jack: Yes . . . I was looking for you. And I found you. . . . Or you found me.

Esau: Yes, I found you: but I never expected to find y—

Jack: Just what did you expect to find, tracking the footprints backwards?

Esau: Backwards?

Jack: That's right, Mark Trail. Track the footprints backwards and you find me, track them forwards in the direction toward which they point and you will discover the Bigfoot.

Esau: The Bigfoot? —The Abominable Snowman?

Jack: The *American* Abominable Snowman. So-called because in America everything is big, bigger than envy, bigger than ethics, bigger than right and wrong and our match is long, longer, Esau, than you can—

Esau: Your uniform is tattered. There's blood on it, and more smeared all over your face. You look like you've been knifed in a hundred places.

Jack: My heart's my wound, it has a hundred mouths. I

ran into a Jacob's Ladder and got cut up instead of promised to—you see, I was running to find you instead of away from you, Esau, as I should have been; as my namesake did Who points the way.

Esau: Come to our campsite.

Jack: Wait, I have to tell you first why I'm here.

Esau: (lifting JACK to his feet) Yes, why?

Jack: I came because *you must* help. Strangers have sperm spits out when they're stabbed, but a brother's blood must let to tourniquet the brother losing most, an—

Esau: (pulling JACK along) Yeah, yeah, O.K.

Jack: *You must* bleed! You who are the best at nursing me, knowing the nuance and quick cure of the familiar, our agreed reality, our little jokes, even though O Subtle Saboteur YOU are the cause of my blood-sucking treachery, for you, with your ardor's forced mechanics to locomote the loves of us, brought that murderous oath on our halved home, a guilt too depended upon even for *your* villainously strengthened heart to cancel out!

Evelyn: And all in one sentence, too!

Esau: (shocked, saddened) Is this a way to talk to me?

Jack: (bowed) I go your way.

Esau: No, I go yours. I always have. Who am I? You ask that question, Jack, I never. (they cross slowly to EVELYN in a shamed silence) Judith, Jack's here.

Evelyn: Welcome to wonder! To me it is a bore.

Esau: Unfrock him, will you, see that he's comfortable. I'll find wood real quick. We'll need the heat. (He enters the forest area and is gone from view.)

Evelyn: Sit down. The ground's nice 'n damp. Lotta little goosing stones, too, stickin' up here 'n there. How'd you find us, Jackson?

Jack: (sitting with difficulty) I followed in my brother's footsteps. Esau mapped out this terrain last time I saw him. His next position had to be some place along the Bluff. You his assistant now?

Evelyn: (tenderly removing his frock with uncalled-for contact) No, just his jockey. They imprisoned me in the Eureka Infirmary, I'm down with hepatitis now you know,

and Esau just up 'n come 'n got me: he'd had enough of my being in there, doesn't trust hospitals anyway especially with hepatitis where they can't do any real Nightingaling for you and, believe me, don't even try. Came in the night big boy did, flaunting all rules and restrictions, even the state law I think, stole me out of bed clad as I'm now in this in-patient gown—classy, huh?—and hussled me off into the woods just like Alcibiades. What romance! We reached the end of the blacktop road this morning and had the edge on daylight to hike Bluff Creek.

Jack: Was it painful for you?

Evelyn: Plenty. That sawtooth back about a mile really did me in. —Make ya jealous?

Jack: What?

Evelyn: (softly fingering the center of his chest) His stealing me off half-naked into the night like that?

Jack: You sure it's hepatitis you were locked up for?

Evelyn: Think they put you in for lechery these days? You been at that monastery too long.

Jack: Do tell.

Evelyn: Wherever I go where there's people I sleep with them.

Jack: Beats bestiality I suppose.

Evelyn: Why don't you reformat, Jackson? I could give you a reason for believin' in God that *Aquinas* never dreamt of.

Jack: Is there something to cook besides red pottage?

Evelyn: I can fix ya eggs. Drop ya pants. (the IDIOT, dimly spotting, erupts into his eery laugh) Thanks, flat-top, I earn one admirer anyway.

Jack: (shouting) Esau, you felling timber in there?!

(ESAU emerges from the wood: his armpit sweat is so profuse the stains meet on the front of his shirt; he bears branches.)

Esau: Strange, thought I heard the Kennicott's Screech-Owl. It's not like them to be this far south.

Jack: Was probably your schizoid wife: schizoids are known for unplaceable emanations, noises which just aren't like them.—However, *that* much is forgivable.

Evelyn: (almost sneering) Bless you, Father.

Esau: (indicating his load) How's this?

Jack: That's more than adequate as are you. Put down your gatherings, Turk. I'll start the fire.

Esau: (arranging the wood on the ground) Why not let me. I've a certain gift for managing outdoors—or I'm on annual salary under false pretense. And why not let God enjoy operating His universe for a few minutes? He's fairly adept at turning the world around on His own, you know. So.

Jack: (bending over the woodpile) Will He spark our fire on His own? You do too much for me.

Esau: (restraining JACK) Not nearly enough. Else you wouldn't be in the state you are.

Jack: I just thought you mightn't have the time, Turk, for me *and* the Promethean flame.

Esau: (adding dry leaves) It's not a matter of having time. The more you do the more you can do. It's really a matter of not having time.

Jack: Not having time is the least we must excuse of a Titan who has to gift the race of man with fire. Or was it life, itself, Turk, that huge Prometh—

Esau: (finally goaded) Why do you call me "Turk"—what am I? some character in a porno paperback!

Evelyn: "Creative porno," I think they call it now.

Esau: (lighting the fire) Life's no checkerboard: I need more constructive ends than the exchanging of ironic projections. What do you gain? The inbreeding of our impotencies? And how you extend this parasitic enfeebling: as soon as I relax my guard, you make me ugly in the eyes of outsiders the better to monopolize what strength I've left. Yet strangers can move me to make only for love of them, though you two, my family, can employ me out of duty and guilt, much more firmly muscled foremen. Isn't the enlarging of my love to your advantages? Or am I wrong here also? I think you two lose who we three are with the suicidal aid of each other, some sycophant Idiot, and a rebellious irrelevance of concentration. My name is not Stud Turk—Prometheus!!—and I won't follow the two of you to a falling in and out of a play, the Tavel play, in order to make life a play,

Evelyn: and the play life.

Esau: There, it's started.

Jack: (slowly: to the fire) His symbiotic jest-ture. . . .

Esau: (laughing) Now we're getting somewhere. Maybe.

Evelyn: (as ESAU sits) Tell me, Esau at Rest, how can you still want me? What madness makes you even like me?

Esau: Like a lake with little minnows that make the refracted moon their station of Delphic pause is all thy quiz-zical integrity. I like thy likeness to such a lake. O.K.? Some lentil soup?

Evelyn: But what do you actually see in me?

Esau: (fingering a bag of lentils) Safety.

Evelyn: You have to have the hide of a hog to see—

Esau: It's time for your injection.

Jack: (taking the bag from ESAU) Injection?

Esau: Just vitamins; got to keep up her stamina.

Evelyn: The better to goad you with, my child.

Esau: Some mercy, no more.

Evelyn: No, no, I need to know why you need me, the truth! What have I, salt-dried and strung-up venison, to offer a fresh field man, an outdoor activist, award winning zoologist, orinthologist, and—

Esau: Rima the "bird girl" hath charms to—

Evelyn: to soothe the hairy he-goat? What does a hairy he-goat want with a wilted lily?

Esau: (drawing vitamin-liquid from a small vial into a long needle) Don't wilt: have some vitamins.

Evelyn: I want Jack to give me the injection. Come, Jack.

Esau: You may be venison too long in city salted, but to call yourself a shrinking violet—was it wilted lily? is to be euphistic in the optimistic.

Evelyn: Not nearly so optimistic as he who married me and thought (with direct and obscene viciousness) his figure *lay* in such a course!!

Esau: (standing angrily as EVELYN laughs with ribald abandon) I've eaten it! I'm going to take a good dump! Prey on yourselves for a while!

Evelyn: (watching ESAU stride into the wood; taking the bag from JACK) Huh. Passionate, ain't he? for a birdwatcher, that is. Here, Jack, you do the honors. (caressing the needle, then handing it to JACK)

Jack: You're so much more idiotic than any memory I've kept of you. Haven't you, yourself, some small investment in making your marriage viable?

Evelyn: I invest in nothing. The world prefers me that way.

Jack: (readying her arm) I pity you, Judith.

Evelyn: Of course. What can you, in monastery pent, expect to know about undividing life?

(As JACK and EVELYN out-stare each other with the needle poised between them, ESAU moves farther up into the foliage. Sudden but silent, the BIGFOOT steps from behind a tree and trails the unaware ESAU several yards. Then, just as JACK injects EVELYN, the BIGFOOT raises its powerful arm and slams it down on ESAU's back. ESAU crumbles. The BIGFOOT turns quietly, shuffles to the edge of the wood and, crouching, spies on the humans with small, searching red eyes. JACK places the needle on the blanket and turns his back on EVELYN in order to look through the leather traveling bag. EVELYN, mesmerized, glares at him.)

Jack: You're bleeding; I'm sorry; I might have warned you I'm about as practised in medicine as I am in marriage counseling. And about as effective. Hold on, there must be gauze somewhere in this kit.

Evelyn: (hesitating for a decisive moment: then, picking up the blood-wet needle) I counsel you to an investor's share in the world's buy and sell:—merchandising brings that sympathetic tear you so sorely lack, Jack—and apparently crave, you couldn't care less the *going* price!

(EVELYN stabs JACK squarely between the shoulders. He slips from his bending position to all fours, groaning with new pain. Thrusting the needle before his face, her free hand clamps his neck: she transforms, salivating, wolflike, a predator:)

Jack: Aaaaaahhhhh!! What have you done?!

Evelyn: Given the hepatitis to you! See! See! our blood is both upon this pin! It's married here, miraculously matched, your baby-blue my watery-weak, your undrunk fluid my thinned-out's new found will to want!!

Jack: (bleating softly, his voice lost) Ohhh . . . Esau, Esau . . .

Evelyn: (scratching and tearing at JACK) Come, twin,

come, let us love e're the light of our making light of him comes to the twin lightening himself!

Jack: Judith, get off me—my force . . . I haven't force . . .

Evelyn: Don't lose your force! You must not lose your *force*! Scent of bloods hath made me sexual! Come, growlll, take his birthright, that much belongs to record, Man of The Book say me nay! and drives down time ordained to you by both your loaded monikers.

Jack: —Esau, where—where are—

Evelyn: (rolling on the ground, biting JACK, lustful, insane) How many holes between us, Jackson? thirty-two I'll bite in you since those by birth you've put aside—then! Prince Privacy, Priest of No Parcel, we'll rut till timber seedlings snap their twigs on the clouds—

(The BIGFOOT parts the ferns and crashes out of the red-woods into the open space and lighted circle of the campfire. Unbending his lithe hair-covered naked body and rising to his full staggering height, he is seen clearly now for the first time. His arms dangling nearly to his knees, [he does not pound his chest or make other gestures associated with the great apes], the BIGFOOT tosses his head high, parts his everted lips revealing salivated sawteeth, and emits the howl as voluminous and all-encompassing as a herd of water buffalo stampeding during an earthquake. EVELYN falls away from JACK who instinctively reaches for the bag of lentils. The BIGFOOT watches his movement while cautiously approaching the fire. There he crouches and examines, obviously fascinated by and unaware of what fire is. He reaches into and pulls a lit branch from the flames, shrieks in pain and fright, and flings the branch away. Then fury gets the better of fear and he pulls one log after another from the fire, tossing the glowing pieces about in every direction. JACK struggles to his feet.)

Evelyn: (grabbing at JACK's hands) Jack! what is it?? I'm hallucinating tell me I'm hallucinating save me!!!

Jack: (clamping his hand on her mouth) Be still for God's sake! —Thief! let go of my lentils . . .

(The BIGFOOT approaches the standing couple, slowly, fearfully, sniffing the air in their direction and shifting with a

hand cupped about its ear, trying to listen, a perfectly human gesture. He reaches them, towering about them, grunting to himself and to them in low gutturals gradating in tone and peculiarity. He snatches the bag from JACK, rips it open, and scatters the beans on the ground. Finding no threatening response, the BIGFOOT places a rough hand on EVELYN's head: then, with a gentler movement, he runs his fingers through her long hair. Able to endure the contact no longer, EVELYN bites into JACK's palm: as his hand falls in pain, she begins to shriek and attempt to back off from both JACK and the monster. The BIGFOOT, alarmed, seizes her with a swift sweep of his arm and pulls her, screaming and fighting, far downstage. There, when she continues to punch and tear at him, he catches up all her hair in his fist and with a strong yank jerks back her head so she falls, all at once, limp and unconscious in his grip. Then, taking her about the shoulders with one hand, he drags her upstage and rams into JACK, spilling him to the ground. From there he pulls EVELYN into the fire, kicking and scattering all the remaining branches in a chaotic swirl about him. With the campfire dispersed, the stage goes quickly dark. The shadowed monster's terrifying cries are heard as he carries EVELYN through the wood, crashing into and breaking down trees in his fierce, confused abduction. On the in-rush of silence, JACK is discovered far-downstage center in a narrow pale glow revealing the edge of the apron. On all fours, he is gathering up the scattered beans; and a new sense of self.)

Jack: That is the Thing that brought me begging to my knees—hah!—on the very highest promontory hemming the Pacific. Begging to retain the most humiliating of positions thrown to me like a bone by my point-blank inferiors. That is the Thing, the matter of its existence, who can pull out the tongues of hundreds of cattle in a half hour's rage so powerful are its fingers alone. I'll have its hide—no, no, I'll have *it* itself and then we'll hark unto who makes the mockeries at the Abbey of all-Ignorance!—and proud, how proud they are of their ignorance! They'll appoint me heir apparent to the Abbot himself—that's if he has the courage not to kill his irreligious self and give me place upon the spot deciphering how

measurably out of mind he be from the racial recall is the umbilicus of all our spontaneity. I'll HAVE the Thing! it took my Rebekah mother's lentil bag and tore it open like a scrotum to let my lineage bake-out on the cliffs so whilst peers prided in their new grown pubic hairs I *weeded* mine till the crab grassed groin choked out dear-held infancy and left a lifeless man! —Now *look*:—This age is the apple of my art:—and in *His* house hath He many mansions for me. (standing and turning, staring up into the dark and opening his arms out to their full span) For ME!

(Far upstage center between the wooded area and the monastery set, both now concealed in darkness, a blue and golden light begins to grow. Originating from backstage, the light throws its disclosure into black outline. A beautiful and intricately wrought ladder, 4' in width, stretches from the dark ground up into the obscurity of the rafters, more resembling a magnificent staircase than an actual ladder. Midway on the rungs (or steps) is the dark outline of what appears to be the BIGFOOT, its shaggy tousled hair falling on wide hunched shoulders. As JACK trances upstage toward the ladder, the FIGURE comes several steps down to meet him. Light/shadow-play across the backdrop gives an unearthly atmosphere to the ensuing action. The challengers meet on the third or fourth step but the hirsute form keeps a step above JACK, its height being thereby considerably exaggerated. The two wrestle: an almost choreographed match underscored by strange holy songs; the light begins to brighten as if dawn were near and, as it does so, it appears that the hairy creature is being slowly subdued by JACK. The FIGURE reaches down, placing a strong, nearly still hand between JACK's thighs and from there gently, but firmly arcs out his right thigh and dislocates it. Then the hairy hand retains an unmovable hold on its opponent's genitals. The light continues to brighten: the voices of the two are heard rhythmically and as if through an echo chamber:)

Jack: Thou touchest the hollow of mine thigh in the sinew.

Figure: And the sinew I shrink which is upon the hollow of the thigh.

Jack: Do I see God face to face? And is mine life preserved?

Figure: Let me go, for the day breaketh!

Jack: I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

Figure: What is thy name?

Jack: Jacob.

Figure: Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Jack: Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.

Figure: Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? (the golden light explodes with all the fullness of dawn, revealing the weeping face and identity of the speaker) My name is Esau.

ACT II.

(During the intermission the schoolroom desks, shattered vitrail, and the campsite with all its equipment are removed. The IDIOT's throne is moved to the central spot between the monastery pieces and the redwoods. Once again the throne is concealed by its rolling screen.

When the lights go up the redwood area is in bright focus with the morning sun streaming down through the close majestic tree trunks. All sorts of gay colors now appear in the dense foliage, the various shades of green dotted here and there with lively little flowers native to northern California. JACK and EVELYN are huddled together downstage right with the IDIOT squeezed in between them. All three share the campsite blanket wrapped around their shoulders: they shiver in unison in the chilly morning air.)

Jack: And I've played off Esau's strengths long enough.

Evelyn: Who you kidding? That's just covering your hands and neck with the goatskins all over again. In fact, you probably never remove them. That's why you get the design confused. In fact, that's why you two have every force between you forever mixed up. Mixed up and immobile.

Jack: Don't talk dumb with me. Your temperature is high enough to feel how factitious identities can be in competitions like ours. We necessarily exchange faces as adroitly and

truthfully as Lon Chaney, Sr.

Idiot: Show *business*.

Jack: And an innocent venerator who reverently washes between your feet will mature as certain as fear itself to introduce knives between your shoulder blades. Believe me, I know.

Evelyn: Well, Man of a Thousand Faces, so long as you've a single mind.

Jack: Am I ever *literally* wrong?

Evelyn: No. But that's why you're hardly ever right either.

Idiot: Show *business*.

Evelyn: Was that "knives between your shoulder blades" a reference to me, too?

Jack: Not at all. But I can't say anything unless I'm right in a lot of other ways as well.

Idiot: Agreed. Show *business*.

Jack: (to IDIOT) Oh, shut up.

Evelyn: Heads up!—here they come again. Ooooooooo.

(The BIGFOOT, accompanied by a FEMALE BIGFOOT, emerges from the redwoods, both carrying a supply of berry-branch and roots. They move suspiciously forward studying JACK and EVELYN, then squat Arab-fashion centerstage [i.e., as one would to defecate], study the humans again, and finally begin to eat. The FEMALE has huge pendant breasts and is slightly shorter than the MALE. Her body hair is tinted a shade lighter red. They are noisy.)

Evelyn: Looks like breakfast time, don't it? I've seen goats had pickier taste than that pair.

Jack: I, for one, am glad of that. Think where we'd be if they had evolved to the carnivore stage.

(The FEMALE strips a branch of its berries in a single greedy suck and then throws it directly at JACK and EVELYN; they duck.)

Evelyn: They're starting in again! It's one unreasonable thing to be kept incommunicado in this God-forsaken forest, but to be continually subjected to such puerile harrassment—(the MALE BIGFOOT throws another branch at her) is against all the rules and regulations of the Geneva Convention!!

Jack: Why be so negative? I'll bet they mean this (examin-

ing a stripped branch) as our share of their breakfast. Perhaps the naked twig is regarded as a great delicacy in Bigfoot circles and they, by extension, exemplary hosts.

Evelyn: (taking the branch) Oh yeah, what do they think we are, termites?

Jack: *He* certainly found out that you aren't.

Evelyn: So why doesn't he relate that info to her? I could use some of them berries.

Jack: He probably doesn't dare.

Evelyn: Look at her, she's disgusting. Stuffin' her sated maw, droolin' all over her fingers 'n fur. And to think that she's my cousin-german.

Jack: Coulda sworn she was Tibetan. Call 'em Yetis there.

Evelyn: I call 'em pigs, don't care what their country a national origin is. How in the wonder world can you equate Esau with creatures like this?

Jack: Both equate you. I mean, Esau and that guy, right?

Evelyn: Don't talk dumb with me!

Idiot: Show *business*.

Jack: I will! Listen:—When Esau came to Tarzana spring before last the two of us really had it out, one of those all-night confrontation scenes that can only happen between brothers, we hadn't heard each other for nearly a year, and hadn't shared truths in twice that time. The space between us became gelatin, became that psychic cylinder measured at either end by conversation, you know how the air can become gelatin when it's stirred for early hours by intimate talk, thickened slowly as with starch we drank not a drop I swear. Then, at point of dawn, just as the sun was about to stand, Esau, parched dumb, stood up and went into the kitchen for a glass of water. Who thirsted for pottage now slakes with water. You know his walk, bent forward slightly, the rounded shoulders and all that long firehair falling before him. I could see him exactly from where I was sitting, a centralized in the doorframe to kitchen green like that Poussin pastoral in the National Gallery. Then slow, ever so slowly, slow and through our thickness, he bent forward over the sink, his shoulders came up over him like a wolf and he bent, he bent toward the sink, he bent down into the sink, his hair

spilling from the fall cut between his hunched shoulders like the bloodbath from a butchered buffalo its headball furry rolling away and Eve I saw, I envisioned and thought, I believed he was going right down into that sink, down past that sink and onto the floor on all fours and you can believe it Eve if he had done that gone down on the floor on all fours I would have gone down there with him down there with him on all fours and never gotten up again. Never! no, never gotten up from our all fours ever in life our lives again.

Evelyn: (long pause. Then:) Could you repeat that?

Jack: Tomorrow night. Can't break continuity.

Evelyn: No, I'm serious. Repeat it exactly but with some dictional direction this time so the point is made. Everything's said so off-hand around here. Now that I mention it, the blocking's equally as vague: I've been dizzy as a dog after tail since ten to nine.

Jack: That's because the tale in the play *I'm* after is a bit behind you, bitch.

Evelyn: Filthy paradoxes in place of plainness! You can't act to save your Equity Card in *this* play, and you're trying to make up one of your own.

Jack: And *your* acting is good?

Evelyn: Good as should in a script everyone's dumping on. I don't care whose play this is. I just wanna be told what to do. Loud and clear!

Jack: Do nothing, my dear, that men thereby may read two acts into your artlessness.

Evelyn: That's the dumbest line to date! Whadda ya mean do nothing? —with them two ghouls sockin' away enough grub to feed a circus 'n gettin' ready to start up God knows what with us and I should do nothing?? That hepatitis has gone to your head, half-wit! Listen, you invented this Bigfoot bit:—what are their intentions?

Jack: Tavel's intention is to do another one of his twin plays, right? I just thought I'd get straight to the problem and crack it for him once and for all. On my honor.

Evelyn: Why should you care about Tavel's problems? You think what the world needs is another play? Who you really doing this for? Yourself? The audience? Some girl you can't

impress any sane way? What?

Jack: Plays aren't made for an audience. Nor for any author. They're made as children are, for themselves. I'm only the contract, and the contraction, of what tonight is becoming about. It draws me toward it as virgin soil draws a tractor, to upset it from the amorality of ineffectiveness. Allow occur.

(Two small MALE BIGFEET, apparently just adolescents, dart through the forest. Timid at first, they scurry to hide behind the adult pair and peek out from their protecting shield to eye the humans. Their confidence increasing, they scamper about to impress JACK and EVELYN with their courage, then rush back and hide behind the feeding adults. The IDIOT giggles playfully.)

Evelyn: Here's two additional hostile horrors. I want you!

Jack: How can you label such little fellas "hostile"? And yet, there's the first four letters of that word . . .

Evelyn: (gazing glass-eyed and hopeless at the BIGFEET) Just call me Herbivorous, the famished parasite.

Idiot: Peek-a-boo, you two!

(The IDIOT crawls several paces toward the young BIGFEET and gestures at them to approach; he points to and rubs his flat-head. The young BIGFEET respond with irresistible curiosity; the adults grow protectively alert, and cease feeding. Much noise.)

Evelyn: Dig 'em: they look like Stanley finding Livingston.

Jack: (maliciously) But only the big boy presumes?

Idiot: (enjoying the young BIGFEET fondling his head) We have same brain. We three brothers be.

Evelyn: (rushing toward the IDIOT; the adult BIGFEET rise and begin circling about nervously) Leave him alone you overevolved chimpanzees! Let my baby be!

Jack: Careful Judith, you'll scare the parents. Don't get involved with foreign internal affairs.

Evelyn: Whadda ya mean, foreign? I'm a scared parent!

Idiot: (confused, twitching) Lady.

Jack: (astonished) Could you repeat that?

Evelyn: (steadfast) This Mongolian's my baby, Jack.

Jack: You announcin' that the cross between a Californian

and a Tibetan invites ya to a Mongolian's bris?

Evelyn: (defiantly staring down the encircling BIGFEET) I ain't Mendel, but I know my begats, Mr. Monk. I'm the ravished one, right? not you.

Jack: What idiocy!—who put that in the script? Even the wildest legends about Snowmen don't—

Evelyn: (totally tensed-up) *Whose* script, Jackson, whose script are you talking about now?!

Idiot: Lady Now. . . .

Jack: But the *time* sequence:—accepting the productivity of cross-breeding, even so, mustn't there be a gesticulation period? Some eight or nine restfilled months, shall we speculate?

Evelyn: (ready to war) *Time*, Jackson, you talk about *time*? What kinda clock have you been goin' by tonight?

(EVELYN madly pushes aside the young BIGFEET and snatches up the IDIOT. The MALE BIGFOOT attacks while the FEMALE tears into the medley to gather her offspring about her. A great clamor of yelps and threats. JACK, struggling to stand with pain, makes apparent a very pronounced limp. EVELYN and the BIGFOOT lock over the IDIOT whose arms flay ineffectually.)

Jack: Judith, get back! quickly, get back!

Evelyn: My wombsworm! let go of him! Help, some son help!

Idiot: All people! Lady! let me be . . .

Esau: (off-stage) Judith! Judith—where are you?

(The BIGFOOT wrenches the IDIOT out of EVELYN's arms and, roaring his terrorful cry of challenge, tosses her backward so powerfully that she spins wild and finally falls against the lighting board. JACK, as well, retreats to the lighting board. The family of BIGFEET remains temporarily, nervously, at bay.)

Evelyn: (supporting herself from collapsing against the board, reaching for the scenario) The script! The script! This is a *pièce à clef*, you said it is, it must have the key, the links, the answer is in it!!

Jack: That's *my* scenario, Eve, the one I—it doesn't—

Evelyn: (hysterically pulling the pages of the scenario)

That's O.K., Jackson, a man's gift maketh room for him! You wrote it you had to you said so, it drew you, you put in the answers, the ANSWER O GOD!!—

(The BIGFOOT, clutching the IDIOT as he would his child, wavers back and forth in a growing panic. The FEMALE, deserting her young, gambols across the stage as if to attack JACK, then she turns unexpectedly and yanks the scenario out of EVELYN's hands and tears it to shreds. She retreats, eating the pieces.)

Jack: My play!

Evelyn: (half hysterical/half daemonic) Not any more.

Jack: My play, she's eating my—

Evelyn: As Esau ate your pottage, that earlier power-play. This isn't your play any more, Jack Jacob O'Mahr. Now we're stuck in some unknown Tavel play yours engineered us into.

Idiot: (comfortably cuddled in the arms of the BIGFOOT) And you're welcome to whatever that will be, all well come to the ambitious maze of your own making, maze, children, mish-mash, that hath no evolution! (laughing insanely) Experience as the factitious. . . .

(A spot brightens middlestage far left revealing ESAU, standing legs apart, with a rifle aimed directly at the BIGFOOT. His appearance is unbelievably dishevelled, he is haggard and near collapse but has mustered all his remaining strength to shoot.)

Esau: Stand still, both of you. Don't frighten them. I want a hit on the first shot.

Evelyn: You'll kill the Mongoloid!

(The BIGFOOT turns about to face his adversary, with the wry eyed IDIOT clutched against his breast. Everyone faces ESAU.)

Esau: I won't, I'm aiming for the animal's throat. They have no heart, only a scream which comes from the throat God meant the Word to come from.

Idiot: (steadily controlled) Esau, *you* have no Word.

Esau: (taking final sight, pausing) Must hit its throat, first shot. . . .

(ESAU fires: the loud crack shocks the air. A jet of blood

spurts from the BIGFOOT's neck, splattering the IDIOT. The BIGFOOT's mouth yawns wide in an agony without sound; he turns slowly, hunching over to still protect the IDIOT and ESAU fires again, hitting him in the back. The FEMALE and young BIGFEET shriek in fear and scatter in bewildered zig-zags trying to make for the trees, panicked because ESAU stands between them and safety. Gathering around the wounded MALE, they support him from toppling for several seconds. Then ESAU, his strength giving out, drops the rifle and sinks to his knees whining.)

Esau: Jack . . . quick . . . stop the things from. . .

Evelyn: (to JACK) Get the rifle!

(JACK and EVELYN run toward ESAU. JACK and a small BIGFOOT make for the rifle, but JACK reaches it first. The youngster retreats to the group; supporting the bleeding MALE, the entire family makes off into the forest carrying the IDIOT with them.)

Idiot: (mournfully, to EVELYN) Lady Mother-Lady Now. . .

Evelyn: (gazing after the IDIOT) I—I can't stop—my—
(turning quickly to ESAU, kneeling) Esau! you're badly hurt, you're—

Jack: (standing somewhat apart) He's shot!

Evelyn: Shot?

Esau: (in EVELYN's arms) No, I was jabbed by that male monster up in the wood and—and when I—the kid, Judith, have they captured our kid?

Jack: The Idiot?

Esau: (wandering) The kid whose skins my twin's after.

Evelyn: Wait for now. We can search for him soon as—

Esau: The Beasts from On High have bargained for our boy? They came to reclaim? The Sons of Those Who Are Worshipped came, came back to take everything from me?

Jack: He's been shot, see that? there's a wound huge as a hippo's mouth middle of his back—

Esau: (becoming delirious) Who has babies in my mouth?—Onan, who? . . . No, I've not been sh—

Jack: —There's blood in his shirt: some caked on like a butcher's apron, the more immediate's running fresh.

Evelyn: Help him! He's in pain!

Esau: (smiling at her/wandering) That there is blood does not mean there is pain: times are the corpuscles manufacture more blood, poor Judith, than they need and must find ways to release it:—nose bleeds, (laughing lightly, amused) donny-brooks, intestinal leakage instead of—

Jack: He's shot. I tell you he's shot in the back.

Esau: No, I was struck, strongly slammed down by that Bigfoot and then. . . . after. . . . and then after that I fought with. . . . the twin who came after. (lifting slightly, staring up at JACK) I wrestled with. . . . (he stares deeply at JACK till his eyes shut in a faint)

Evelyn: (holding ESAU tenderly; slowly, intently to JACK) What did he mean? . . . —Jack, what did he mean?

Jack: (standing up carefully; pausing) At last, Eve, we have captured the Bigfoot.

Evelyn: What are you talking about?

Jack: You witnessed it yourself. He was felled by the rifle wound in his back.

Evelyn: Who?

Jack: This wound he suffered, see? when he fired his rifle.

Evelyn: Esau shot the Bigfoot.

Jack: I know. Himself. As time, so space. Twins they are, functioning in, the functions of, a single woman's womb. They're never born. Stillborn.

Evelyn: You're nuts.

Jack: I'm saved!

Evelyn: I'm splitting.

Jack: Where?

Evelyn: Right off this ruinous stage. And I'm going to black you out of this stage of my mind, both of you, Esau and you—both of you: your philosophically Einsteinian but falsely imagined play and you in it!

Jack: You won't succeed, you realize that, everything's under control now: *my* control.

Evelyn: (reaching the lighting board) You are just so self deceptive. You're reality's runaway, the martyr of deluded penitents, quitting earth to put God's house in order. —Let God regret.

(While JACK holds centerstage, seemingly helpless, EVELYN pulls down a large switch and blacks out the stage. She gropes for her cigarettes, shaking with nervous fatigue, and finally manages to light one. She is seen only by her cigarette's tiny light. As she muses she binds her hair back into a pony tail, puts on her glasses, slips off the hospital gown, etc., and returns, troubled, to her first manifestation: the lighting girl:)

Evelyn: I don't know sometimes I think I shouldn't claim anything at all. It's a cop-out to call him crazy, it's a cop-out to call anyone crazy I've had hardships enough to know that much. But how else can you answer a man and matters when they're pushed this antagonistically beyond you because what else do you crucibly know besides that? When I get done with this job I walk home, I live just a few blocks from here in one of those dump rooming houses they rent to actors only, charge ya seventeen bucks a week cause they put a bureau and bed in there and change the sheets once a month. I go home and lie on that lumpy bed every night and stare at the rusty ceiling for insomniac hours and wonder what do I know? all things seem so unreal. And it needs just that much: staring at the junk in that cubicle and pondering it and in five minutes' time objectivity is Theory's chattel. Sure he's right about space and time, what the hell are they? what the hell is anything? But how can you go about the business of living if you start out thinking like that? you won't even know where you're going, you can't walk around. A person needs a sort of sense of safety, of self-protection, they can't just let themselves loose cause they'll think themselves right out of being that way, that's if they're lucky that is and if they're not they'll become as frightened as the unfavored majority but probably, more unfavorably yet, end up in the bug house shrieking and pulling on their clothes, too scared to let the doctors even come near them so they can pretend to be administering. Oh, I don't know, I just don't know anything. I feel tired that's all I wish tonight were over so I could go on home or go somewhere, anywhere, life simply hasn't the least joy in it lately, it hasn't even enough mystery to keep a person audienced. What that guy wants to do is instinctive enough I know what he wants to

do, something good that's all. But if you can't be sure of anything, then you can't really know what's good either and if no outsider knows what's good then no damn actor I don't care what his credentials is going to get a chance to create an eveningswhile of worth. That's why I told him he's reality's runaway and I think I'm right, as right as an observer can be in this man-breaking matter.—Oh, I don't care maybe he should go on trying anyhow, maybe that's nobler than me fashioning nothing here even if he comes around backward to the self-same nothingness. Maybe it helps him to flesh-out his imagined substance when he tries. But I don't think so. I really just don't.

(Lights rise on the backdrop of stage right bringing to life the lovely arched cloister, garden and cloudless sky framed in the paneless window of the monastery. Downstage of the window, i.e., the cell inside the building, remains as yet in darkness. FATHER LUBIN and the ABBOT are strolling in the garden.)

Lubin: Horticulture is our single successful mimic of the Lord's Creation.

Abbot: Monkey-mimic.

Lubin: As He let be the heavens and earth, so our pupils here let these laden orchards be. (picking a petunia and sniffing it with inordinate self-satisfaction)

Abbot: A cherished fiction. Horticulture, my dear Lubin, vacuums up their excess idea energy as it were the Devil's own I deem it to be, and shuts it into wry Pandora's box. Such is its only cross-point at the Creation. What is a petunia's quidditas?

Lubin: Don't you approve of growing things?

Abbot: Certainly: pupils.

Lubin: And not plants?

Abbot: What is growing? The longer I sojourn that length connects my inception and acceptance by the Lord, the more uncertain I grow of growth or length. If my immortal reputation rested on the account, I wouldn't pit that plucked petunia's left of life against the certain growing distance that I have come. Shall we go in?

Lubin: Unarmed?

Abbot: Come, come, the man's a master of the slight-of-mind but neither of our minds is so slight as to be undone by that. Or are you suggesting he intends us bodily harm?

Lubin: I am.

Abbot: Then that will be: and with it an end to what your human imago and my imagined growing are.

(The ABBOT and LUBIN walk toward wing right and enter the monastery cell through the entrance upstage right. A very dim light grows within the cell apparenting only vague silhouettes. Weeping and soft groans gradually become audible.)

Abbot: (tentatively) Father O'Mahr . . . *nous voila!*

Lubin: Have you the cost of a candle, Father O'Mahr? (silence) Or has holy austerity brought you to receive, as well as think, in darkness? . . . (more silence) I know:—this is some newly come-by considerateness=May the Almighty wish no end to His wonders=wishes you to spare us your foul face.

Abbot: Father Lubin, hush.

(Several moments of tense silence and ominous immobility pass. Then JACK shuffles about with dragged difficulty within the cell and finally strikes a match. He haloes his visage: it is haggard and daemonic. LUBIN gasps but the ABBOT urges his composure. JACK crackles with evil amusement, then puts the match to a candle. The cell brightens with the broadening flame: the holies stiffen in horror. JACK, costumed in a Biblical robe and taut with the defensiveness of the insane, pours out the sweat of his full fever of hepatitis; behind him, at the left edge of the window frame, is ESAU down on all fours dressed only in shredded undergarments, his very hairy body gored and wet, his face almost groveling on the floor with his red hair hung before him. A 3" wide iron collar around his neck renders him incapable of speech, he emits congested groans; a chain hooked to the collar is bolted on the leftmost pillar of the window frame. The chain is just long enough to allow ESAU to rest on all fours: he can not move, if standing, more than a semi-step in either direction. The ABBOT and LUBIN, digesting the scene, dare not stir before deciphering JACK's condition and intentions, his quick speaking with what seems the deliberate logic of the

calculating mad:)

Jack: Abbot, Abbé Armand David first saw the fur of the Giant Panda in Szechwan Province rimming the low Tibetan plateau in 1869. For the next sixty years the best equipped and competitively motivated expeditions were unable to secure a single second skin admitting the Panda's existence. Not till two sons of President Roosevelt shot one in 1929 was the world shocked proof again and it took till '37 the Harkness woman to bring-'em-back-alive to our Brookfield Zoo, Chicago. The Giant Panda, that same stuffed toy that doll since then sits up in the den of generations of growing Americans—this Panda inhabits the *same* plateau the Abominable Snowman does, think, elevation merely six to twelve thousand, and it took sixty-six years to—

Abbot: (feigning calmness) You're limping.

Jack: (jarred; then:) I halt upon my thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of mine thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Lubin: (dumbfounded) Sacrilege . . . Vanity of vanities!

Jack: Thank you, Father Lubin, but the vanity of vanities is when a man begins to hallucinate that he can actually be understood. What hubris that!

Lubin: (staring wide-eyed) . . . Megalomania. You hallucinate that you are Jacob now . . . the Yaqub of Genesis.

Abbot: Father Lub—

Lubin: Projection! identity-exchange! schizophrenia! and first hand megalomania!

Jack: Megalomania? Identity-exchange? Is not a Ya'qub the "Heelholder?" the subjugator of Esau? Heelholder, sweet euphemism, I had his scrotum in my hand!

Abbot: Then how have you the halting in the hollow of the sinew that shrank? Should not poor Esau limp?

Jack: Esau? He—we—*we both*—There is no Esau! Man's in the mold of the Mouth that hath the Word.—What word has Esau, see? You invent an Esau and by doubling simplify the firmament, reducing it to the two dimensions that flatly make the sense your sense needs it to make. Esau? no!—the Bigfoot, gentle men. I've come back to make the gift of—

Lubin; frills and furbelows to fringe around our brows just low enough to obscure *all* vision!

Jack: I've come back to make you the gift of the most magnificent find since to find first fired the Phoenician to shape and board his cunning craft. To the monastery and to you I offer it in dear devotion to the Bible's verity. The ceratotheres, the okapi, the kouprey, White Rhino and Woodland Bison—all giant beasts! eluded capture, more, even the sight of men till nearly yesterday—is it not credible then that time stand still till I, the Promised-to of Yahweh, should find the means to bring the Bigfoot back and—

Abbot: Cover his nakedness.

Jack: As much to say this Thing hath drawn the Mosaic veil of shame and mysticism over its organ and act of generation. Know, Abbot, it was given me to lift that guiltful veil, that guilt was lifted *from* me!

Abbot: Cover his nakedness, I say. We'll deal with the Mosaic injunction concerns such violating or its revocation when *I* am ready to.

Lubin: And preferably across the distance ordained by the dimension of bars. For our contemplation's sake.

Jack: Yes! bars: you cage sub-humans without conscience; who accords them that apple-eating grows fig leaves fore and aft?

Abbot: (unbuckling the gold chain of his cloak, letting the cloak slip into his hands and moving toward ESAU so as to cover him with it) This human is not a Bigfoot, nor is your brother a bear to be baited at the cross or a bull who's to bleed for such stains on us as betoken our Iberian Catholicism.

Jack: Wait! I'll show you both how this *is* the Bigfoot. —The candle.

Abbot: (calculating obeying to be wiser than additional protest; removing the candle from the windowsill; then, seeing by its light ESAU's full condition:) Ah! immoderacy. Lord God how Thou dost let.

Jack: Look in his back, you'll see the bullet wound that brought this beast to bay.

Abbot: (examining ESAU's back) I've never toted a gun

myself, I'm no pope—but that's no bullet wound either.

Lubin: (examining) It's little larger than a pin prick.

Abbot: Or needle mark.

Jack: Needle mark?

Abbot: Yes. Was he felled by an injection—

Jack: (unnerved) Injection?

Lubin: (impatient, didactic) Such as ployed to put beasts to sleep so one may tag them as Aaron for further study before releasing them to Azazel again.

Jack: (touching the mark on ESAU's back; then inadvertently feeling his own back) Did you say a needle mark? . . . Think you we both are . . . —And it's not infected?

Abbot: Correct.

Lubin: Any further suggestions, Doctor?

Jack: (greatly perplexed, agitated, losing control and, grabbing ESAU by the hair, yanking him cruelly to his feet and pressing him against his own weight from collapsing) The Devil hath power to alter, to geld, *to alter the geld, Ghashû sha'ir*, the Presser, the Incubus, the Coverer of Women hath powers—this goat, satyr, hirsute daemon who overlays all women and is on whom pubescent virgins are forced to tear their virginity when he assumes his stone zoomorphic form, the Osiris at Medes!

Lubin: Let him go!

Jack: (to ESAU) Admit as much! Quick, before—

Abbot: He can not speak, O'Mahr, release h—

Jack: *Par force!* What animal can?!

Lubin: Holy, shall I run for help?

(The ABBOT stops LUBIN from leaving, afraid to precipitate more violence. ESAU's legs quiver, his lips sadly opening to emit mere gutturals, tears stream over his cheeks, his torture the more pitiful for his attempts to cover himself with the ABBOT's cloak. JACK, rapidly reaching pure hysteria, threatens the holies' welfare as much as his pilloried brother's.)

Jack: Midrashic revelation renders irrevocable Esau's undergoing reprecense before he is twenty!—thus returned to his postnatal unclean state he discovers theft, murder, rape, and sodomy his each day instinct, this semi-human of the pendant

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puendum, this enormity against order, this mark of the beast! Radical Ben-Abba himself shrieks as Job to God when he wails of Esau's availing himself free to all like a field, spreading his but—

Lubin: Be still! this is the House of God.

Abbot: Father, try to con—

Jack: Even as the illimitable harlots of Herod he is plowed by unfamiliar tribes! till Israel rebukes Yahweh, weeping, "O Forger of the Firmament! is not it vengeance sufficient that we are subject to the strange of all and every nation in the cess compiled sewer of the world? Need we now be subject to this one too, who, uncircumcised, is used the lust-long roadways of the Orient as a woman is used?!"

Lubin: *Your* tongue should be extracted!

Jack: For having the intelligence to take hold the truth?

Lubin: For putting the sophistic autodidact's fustian phrasing to the eclectic's amorphous service, the better to bilk the unwary and confound the Church's real servants. *You* dare to speak of intelligence?

Jack: —I prophesy that I, as this state, yes! as the nation east of it, shall suffer demolition through its exploiting bank of low intelligence. A brain compounded from our country's majority would be, like the dinosaur's, too small to insure its survival! Survival of the fittest—now, as then, means mind for man. Behold, old Abbot, just the samples in this cell:—a Bigfoot and Father Lubin!

Abbot: With the assured, insult is never anger's companion.

Jack: Father Lubin is above insult:—beware of dropping a penny—in front of him:—he'll pick it up.

(The ABBOT digs into his pocket and comes up with coins. He selects a penny and drops it at LUBIN's feet. All three search each other. JACK backs off, puzzled, defensive, embattled.)

Jack: Our trinity in a strategy. —The warrior popes, you! I must arm—no, no, we must arm, must fortify ourselves. There's no argument amongst *us*.

Abbot: So I've been maneuvering to pledge.

Jack: (stepping back towards them, suddenly aggressive) Pennies on my eyes put both of you—removing them from

your own where they are homed to shelter you from seeing what we must do: *yet see it now*:—boiled Yetis produced a potent extract its medicinal value shames penicillin but its power to Godlike empower the imbiber is wherein consists its *sublime* marvel! Let us immune our minds from the enemy Perplexity! Let us strengthen our hold on Ephemera's Retreat and perfect our aim at the target of Flux, Constant Flux, its satanic velocity—by drinking his blood! the captive Bigfoot's blood—(drawing a Biblical dagger from under his robe)

Abbot: Drinking his blood!—

Jack: (rushing at ESAU) And eating his genitals!!

(The ABBOT and LUBIN make after JACK and, each succeeding in seizing one of his arms, try to pull him away from ESAU.)

Abbot: Stand back! In Mother Mary's name, stand back!

Lubin: Give me that dagger—let go of it!

Jack: Smear, smear his blood in our gun barrels on our bullets the teeth criss-crossed over our chests!

Lubin: Give that dagger to me!

Jack: This abomination *must* be exorcised from the land! Israel requires the raising of its prideful face that Jacob may gaze once more upon his approving Yahweh top of Heaven's stairs! Let me to it!

Abbot: We will not!

Jack: You'll not! (twisting away from them and racing far downstage) YOU'LL NOT?! I'll seek an ex cathedra bull from a higher source than the unwilling either of you! I'll have the *ultimate authority* in this! (raving, viciously, to the audience) And now, as Tavel's invention begins to flag, hated Tavel, I'll treat you all to something that'll really alleviate the pain!!

(JACK leaps to upstage center and fiercely, maliciously rolls aside the screen concealing the throne. Seated on the throne with an ambiguous air of quiet/disquiet is HARVEY TAVEL. He wears a contemporary suit and tie; a gold key dangles from a link around his neck. With one arm elbowed on the throne, the back of his hand partly covers his lips. JACK throws himself on the throne's lower steps. The ABBOT and

LUBIN stare up at HARVEY in total astonishment. They draw closer to him.)

Abbot: Who is sitting?

Harvey: Huh. Who's standing?

Lubin: *You* are the intruder. Need we identify ourselves in our own monastery?

Harvey: Probably. Especially if you take on identity via a monastery. Which implies this set at stage right?

Abbot: He's right. We've never a plethora of professional definition given the dimensions in which any given soul must operate this century. But who are you?

Jack: (his face in the steps) His brother, pretenders, your playwright's brother—yours, not mine!

Lubin: (to the ABBOT) Ours?

Abbot: (open mouthed; awed) Our playwright's brother. . . .

Jack: (lifting his head) May I kill him?

Harvey: Who?

Jack: Wh—Esau.

Harvey: Are you serious?

Jack: The opposite of serious is insane.

Harvey: (shifting uncomfortably) Don't you love him?

Jack: Loving's opposite is dying.

Harvey: (pausing; then, slyly) So you die for him?

Jack: I live for him! What was all that material before half-time about?—What good is my death to anyone?

Harvey: Then what good is Esau's death?

Jack: He wars with your brother over my allegiance, my outcome. And right now I need an existence inside this play. Every night.

Harvey: Is it an inside the play warring or really your every night outside existence that's making you act so peculiar? And entertaining.

Jack: Their struggle over my love is the most damaging accusation possible: they publish thereby their estimate of the miniscule affection I have to consign. And assign me, thereby, my walking papers.

Harvey: (rubbing his chin) Are you Jacob?

Jack: No; my name is Jack.

Harvey: Then this can't be all that ponderous. You should

stick with the script. Ron's Esau wouldn't eject you. A Jacobean Esau might . . . And euphoria will be the price of so much suffering. Think you can pay it?

Jack: (standing) Euphoria? But I have to walk on water!

Harvey: So, that's easy enough:—just freeze it.

Jack: But where do I build the Herculean stamina I need for so many people, your brother included, who squat on my back without title? :Inside the play? Yes?

Harvey: Without title? No one finds himself in a predicament like yours sans the blessing of his own volition. (taking the dagger out of Jack's hands) Listen, Jack:—if you'd be just a little weaker, you'd be a whole lot stronger, understand?

Jack: *You* don't understand. Esau seeks to eliminate me in invisible ways:—by slowly imploding himself, thuswise obviating my personal invulnerability.

Harvey: That correlative stinks. What the hell are you—one and the same person? And following your reasoning, if I may call it that, croaking him would croak you, too. You're getting to be a drag.

Jack: (walking away) So's your munificent sympathy . . . Killing Esau could cut free this act's stagnancy come from his snail-paced eliminating of himself.

Abbot: (Now flanking the throne's left side; feeling helpless) Well, Jack *you* brought Junior on.

Lubin: (at the throne's right side) Having second thoughts?

Harvey: He wouldn't know second from first. That's the fact. (calling to JACK) Listen, fellmonger, let me work on the problem for a while. Why don't you beat it off stage, get lost for five minutes. Maybe you'll find yourself.

Jack: Where?

Harvey: Oh, I don't care. How's about off down-right:—that (pointing to EVELYN) girl's too pretty to sit there alone so long; a waste.

Jack: (going) You'll call me?

Harvey: Count on it.

Lubin: (softly, anxious) Will you call us?

Abbot: (humbly) Hush.

Harvey: As you count.

(When JACK reaches the lighting board it is spotted in a dim

but ice-grey hue turning EVELYN, in her stillness, statue-like. The same hue spots the ABBOT and LUBIN as both quietly freeze into standing positions either side the throne. Both virtually become religious statues. HARVEY, standing, seems at this moment the only real person, his familiar clothing heightening that effect. As he speaks ALPHA and OMEGA, dressed as before, enter from behind the throne, ALPHA coming around the right side to several steps downstage of LUBIN, OMEGA around the left to several steps downstage of the ABBOT. Both relate to the holies, if at all, as children do to stone sculpture.)

Harvey: What a mess! A half-dozen dummies so incompetent we couldn't make public welfare let alone back off outta this dead-end, these formal and transfixed guilt arrangements, that *he* got us into, and every one comes to *me* for help. I'm not going to get going on the "Am I my brother's keeper?" bit, but sometimes I can't help feeling that *some* one's imposing, taking real advantage of me, you know, like I was his Father Confessor or something?

Alpha: (kneeling at the throne) Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned against purity.

Harvey: (to the audience) Ya see?? (sitting with sigh; resigned; automatic:) Alone or together?

Alpha: Together.

Harvey: Never too young, huh?—Hold it:—I wanna save time. You, Omega?

Omega: (kneeling) Father, I have sinned against purity.

Harvey: (sighing) Alone or together?

Omega: Together.

Harvey: (dutiful; bored) Depict.

Alpha: We spilt,

Omega: we thrashed within and winnowed without;

Alpha: I have fallowed my field;

Omega: I did plow yet I left her unseeded;

Alpha: and we spilt together,

Alpha & Omega: even as Isaac and Ishmael.

Omega: We spilt,

Alpha: sinning against women and the levirate,

Omega: our hands held the blood

Alpha: which is the semen shed in vain,
 Omega: together, even as Isaac and Ishmael,
 Alpha: which are Yitzhaq the Penis-Beaten, and Mitzhaq
 the Rubber, so that Sarah that saw saw unto the banish-
 ment of the mutzahiq that is the self-abuser.
 Harvey: —Wait a second, I think that gerund, “Mitzhaq,”
 can’t be proper-nouned in Hebr—
 Alpha & Omega: We spilt, we self-polluted,
 Alpha: making the seminal sacrifice to Satan,
 Omega: such Satanic abuse being the Black Mass
 Alpha: which is ever the orgiastic parody of our holy
 Catholic rite.
 Alpha & Omega: We spilt, that vanity that is the Noah’s
 Flood,
 Omega: waters as they were God’s seminal fluid, His Holy
 Seed
 Alpha: which corrupted the earth
 Omega: on account that the people of Noah abused their
 own fountains, they poured semen on rocks and trees.
 Alpha & Omega: We spilt, self-sufficing,
 Omega: becoming equal with Our Lord Who sufficeth
 Himself,
 Alpha: and thus have we violate the Feast of the Circum-
 cision
 Omega: which is ever the flesh made Spirit in the spirit-
 procreative.
 Alpha & Omega: Amen!
 Harvey: Very educational. But I got my own problems,
 boys. Why don’tcha do a couple hundred Hail Marys ’n double
 again of Holy Fathers? ’N a li’l farther downstage please
 cause I got some visionary work to do and don’t need the
 drone as background music of yet two more penitents for
 what kinda actual guilt I can’t in Comedy’s Name conceive.
 (ALPHA and OMEGA hear HARVEY but do not react to
 him as a living presence. They stand and move, obeying, a
 bit downstage.)
 Alpha: What nerve! If that ain’t beatin’ a dead horse when
 he’s down, you comically tell me what is!
 Omega: Mule-cruel and unusual punishment

Alpha: above and beyond the ball of rank callousness. They keep this up 'n I ain't comin' to confession no more.

Omega: Between memorizin' that explication of the fascinatin' sin 'n repentin' for it

Alpha: ya kill yer whole day.

Jack: (staring at the boys, mesmerizing) How alike my adolescent self and little Esau they both seem . . .

Evelyn: Sharp of you. *I* figured that was Tavel's usage from the start. Call it the subplot subsidy:—like the Earl of Gloucester 'n sons?

Jack: When we were innocent and yet unnamed by the removal of pleasure's least iota from our youths. . . .

Omega: Well, the slicker we get down to expiating, the sooner we can get back to sinning.

Alpha: So why don't you do the Hail Marys and me the Holy Fathers?

Omega: Yeah, we can finish in double time.

Alpha: (kneeling; suddenly cutting)—So you can suck up my phallic strength again that much the sooner?

Omega: What?

Alpha: (imitating) "What?" Don't "what" me. I boned up on more than the *Sefer ha-Zohar* for today's ordeal: I checked out my Freud as well.

Omega: Heart of the scholar! You may go to the dead of the class and tell us, Alpha, how the good doctor, never putting too fine a point upon it, adjuncts our understanding in this area. *Ne plus ultra*. (kneeling, preparing to pray, not listen)

Alpha: It don't take no Einstein to straighten it out:—the white spurt of birth, the faucet of chromosomes, the seed that both replenishes the earth and multiplying subdues it, winning dominion over every living thing that moveth—

Omega: Save it for Sunday, Ishmael.

Alpha: Ishmael is right! You, Isaac, can't get that pecker of yours up without *me*!

Omega: So, like father like son. What's wrong with that?

Alpha: Wrong?—You, without my fist, can't spill a single drop, that's what's wrong! Your fathering force gets into you and comes out of you through me. You drain me as the

heir apparents of Egypt drained the high priests of On; and it's *my* seed you're spilling, my future in a space apart, and my first-born birthright dominion over every crawling thing!

Omega: Scrawl your complaint on the back of a fifty-fifty dollar bill will you, complicitor? and I'll see what I can do for you next play.

Jack: And so, at that exact point, you decided to turn the table, did you Esau?; though being slow of wit took fifteen years to come to such costly revenge: for by Indian-giving your phallic force you spilt out of the universe, a fool as great as Iscariot, a fall as far as Satan's: for your force once given, you ceased to be; but wanted back lost you even your proxy.

Alpha: But I can spill without *you*, Omega, and that in and that for my rightful future I intend to do. From now on, it's just me, me alone, understand?

Omega: Idle threats, Indian-giver.

Alpha: You'll find out! And find yourself out.

Omega: In the cold?—"Hail Mary, full of grace, (etc.)

(The twins repent together softly, a touching conclusion to their differences. JACK, entranced, begins to leave the lighting board. EVELYN's ice-grey hand grips his sleeve.)

Evelyn: What are you doing now?

Jack: Let go. I'm going in.

Evelyn: I took it you had finished your play.

Jack: I did.

Evelyn: So you're starting another?

Jack: Correct. Best time to begin a play is when you finish one.

Evelyn: Proves the whole futility of the business.

Jack: For whom life is a business, both her acts are futile. (moving surreptitiously onto the stage) Alpha? . . . Alpha, my boy?

Alpha: Who's that gentle gimp what's pricking on the plaine?

Omega: Ycladd in ye ol' Bible fineries, no less?

Jack: (closing in) Alpha, my boy? . . . Esau? . . . Esau??

Alpha: (staring; becoming apprehensive) Wherein old dints of deepe woundes do remaine. . . .

Jack: Come, Esau, come here.
 Omega: It's Father O'Mahr.
 Alpha: Gone mad.
 Jack: (grabbing ALPHA) Ha-ha! I have you now! and at age when it can benefit if benefit hath being!
 Alpha: (struggling) Hey, lemme go!
 Omega: Let 'im go—he ain't finished his Holy Fathers yet.
 Jack: No need! I'll finish his holy father eke all else irks the adulterous product with a mother-sanctioned smite! Father Isacc's blind, you know!
 Alpha: The neighbors ain't:—corporal punishment's against the state law!
 Jack: (blazing wild) Holy sacrifice supersedes the law!
 Omega: (standing, wide-eyed) Gee, he *is* nuts.
 Harvey: (sorrowed at the display) Ah, worse and worse.
 Jack: You animal shill to history's headstart half!—I'll show you how the re-deceiving of the *human* twin heralded the dawn for Western Man, shall herald Sentient Mankind yet! —This time around, *you die!*
 Omega: (kicking JACK in the groin with all his strength) Goddamn gimp! Drop dead yourself!!
 Jack: (howling with pain, releasing ALPHA) Self-denier!
 Alpha: (breathless, trembling) Wow! Let's disappear
 Omega: 'n call on the governor or something.
 Alpha: Governor, nothing! I'm gettin' an elephant gun!
 Omega: (racing with ALPHA toward wing left) I tagged that fraud fer a psycho first day in his class. . . .
 Jack: (limping after them) Turn about, disevolve! come here, Esau! This escape is illusory! time-taking!
 (Maniacally, JACK trails the twins, exiting after them into wing left. A hiatus of silence except for the weeping of ESAU, more clearly in focus now, and on all fours. Finally HARVEY stands, sighing sadly, and begins slowly to descend the throne steps. His left thumb plays along the dagger's edge.)
 Harvey: A formal garden; a distinct space; then a forest of redwoods. What am I to make of that? Ron's stage right knows not what his stage left does . . . —Hear, O Israel! the Lord Our God, *that* Lord is One! (casting a long look of

question at the ABBOT)

Abbot: (lowering his eyes; long pause) I am alone. And I am not young. And I am afraid.

Harvey: You look awful, too, the way people do who get up in the morning looking awful, as if they've just returned from someplace very bad, and maybe they have. (turning, looking, inquisitively, to LUBIN)

Lubin: (indicating) This distinct space between the garden formal and forest wild:—Ron placed *you* here.

(The IDIOT juts his head up above the high-back of the throne; giggling derisively, he scrambles over the high-back to squarely seat himself. HARVEY laughs in agreement:)

Harvey: Did *he*? You know, Lubin, I can't give you anything. Consequently, you have no interest for me.

Evelyn: (watching HARVEY move toward her; then:) Don't look here. I slipped my leash three-quarters on in this, about double the time it would've taken an intelligent person, and I've been gone long ago, understand, your dilemma has nothing to do with me.

Harvey: (stopping; greatly disappointed) Such repeated fictions steel us to the isolation through which Each We, quite needlessly, has learned to function.

Idiot: (jeering) Is it indeed all this scum

That you seek approval from?

Harvey: He's right! (determined, going to ESAU and pulling him up) Get on your feet.

(HARVEY yanks the gold key off his link and fits and turns it in the iron collar around ESAU's neck. The collar springs open, plummets and, dangling at the end of its chain, clanks in a slowing pendulum. ESAU, semi-catatonic, rubbing his sore neck and swaying unsteadily, stares blearily at the dagger. Then he looks to the others: they alternate between returning his gaze and staring outward or at each other; the IDIOT shifts uneasily.)

Esau: This . . . this isn't necessary.

Harvey: Nothing is. That's exactly why I must do it; and once and for all, for all present.

Esau: —How middle-course. . . . How straight down the mid way of every thing each one of you seems. . . . And that, this,

is how I leave us.

(HARVEY pushes ESAU's hand away from his neck and, with a quick, powerful cross-cut, slashes his throat. The blood spurts forth in shocking volume, splattering a wide circumference. ESAU sinks lifeless to the floor. HARVEY picks up the ABBOT's cape and spreads it very slowly and carefully over the body.)

Harvey: (slowly) Your cloak, old man, religion's night-black drape, knight this victim of your Jerusalem.

Idiot: You want my throne back now?

Harvey: (wearily) No more thrones. I'd appreciate it if you could move it off: maybe you two holies could hel—

(JACK crashes in from wing left dragging ALPHA, who is gagged, by tightly criss-crossing the boy's arms over his chest. JACK is flushed, sweat-drenched. HARVEY, all but dispirited, hurries toward the struggling two. The lights lower on the upstage area.)

Jack: Look alive, Surrogate Scribe and Scribbler! I have the adolescent Esau in Yahweh's hands at last! Let me the dagger, I'll dispatch him now, now before he chews up his cocoon and fledges out unhindered into the licentious puberty of his predestined catastrophes. For this is Esau, who is Edom, the seed of the curse on my House of Judah, being Herod the hate— What? Why is the dagger wet?

Harvey: Let the boy go, Jack.

Jack: Jack? I am Jacob.

Harvey: I don't think so. And I don't think you think so, either. Come on, give Alpha here.

Jack: I am too Jacob! Look, see, how I halt upon my thigh, I, the altered by God as a seasoned beloved is altered enlarged by lover's insertions—what more through the Almighty's beauty might a called-to come by in the Biblical walk of life? —The knife!

Harvey: I'm telling you to let Alpha go. The irrevocable murder that you necessitate has already been made.

Jack: (stunned, relaxed his grip) It has?

Harvey: I made it.

Jack: What do you mean?

Harvey: The meaning is all yours, mastermind. What did you

undertake tonight?

Jack: —Undertake? Have *I*, then, self-propulsion?

Harvey: I said, What did you undertake tonight?

Jack: You brother's salvation.

Harvey: Not this audience's?

Jack: Wh—no, not in *my* work.

Harvey: O.K. I've achieved it for you.

Jack: But how could you? A man must do for himself.

Harvey: (angrily) *You* must do for my brother's self? My brother's salvation? What about mine? *Mine* is the existence you put into question by this compulsive interference of yours, you bastard!

Jack: (intimidated; releasing ALPHA) *Your* existence?

Harvey: Exactly. Necessarily. When you set out to accomplish what you have, you might at least have minded its core, the *forced* focus among the indivisibilities illuminated.

Jack: Which is *your* existence?

Harvey: Of course. And in which case I've been pretty damned courageous about it, wouldn't you say? (cutting ALPHA's gag with the dagger)—Here we go. Now get lost, kid. And live.

Alpha: (breathlessly relieved) Thanks, mister, thanks to you!

Harvey: (giving ALPHA a friendly shove toward upstage) Just one troubled brother to another . . . Bye. (saluting to him as ALPHA exits through the forest)

Jack: (apprehensive) I don't understand.

Harvey: Fratricides never do. Therein lies the dream of them. (leading JACK by the hand up to the monastery set) Come with me. I've severed your conterminous concern through which you ruined Ron's original intention tonight. Can you gimme a spot, no gels, Judith? (EVELYN turns a brilliant light on the caped corpse) So stagewise, at least, you're liberated, Jack. (pulling the cape away) You can go make a play about and by your own self now . . .

(JACK shrieks in agony; the others, except for HARVEY, gasp with horror: the body revealed is that of the MALE BIGFOOT, clothed in ESAU's torn undergarments. Lying in the position that ESAU fell to, its blood oozes continuously from its slashed throat.)

Jack: (sinking to his knees) The Bigfoot! THE BIGFOOT!!!

Evelyn: How did he get th—

Lubin: What *is* that?

Harvey: Yes, Jack, the Bigfoot. Here, there is no Esau.

Jack: (touching the BIGFOOT; closing its eyes) No Esau?...

Harvey: Shocked?—or insulted? You've been declaiming as much to the others for over an hour. Or was that just the remarkable muscle of Will we all took it to be?

Jack: (stammering; incredulous) There is no Esau?

Harvey: But that's what you wanted, isn't it? To be bettered of your beast, purified out of Time the procreative and all you call earth-imaginary? The UnGodly, as you, mysteriously, define it?—You're your God's own now.

Jack: (frozen) But I—

Harvey: All the attributes you convince yourself convince you to go before all, shouldering the centuries that they may attain and being for each and every In Place of each and every. So wise art thou strengthened at last, the Single Son. —Move that throne off, will you, son?

Idiot: Righto.—A hand, fellas: I'm little.

(LUBIN and the ABBOT aid the IDIOT to quickly push aside the throne: the staircase-ladder is thereby exposed. The IDIOT rushes up the ladder, wet rainbow lights following his climb and touching the ladder as with a wand so that it glows and mirrors with increasing magnificence and painted brilliancy way into the rafters. HARVEY helps JACK to his feet.)

Harvey: Behold, Jack, Heavenward! Thou art here this upon as a prince with God. . . . A God among Gods!!

(JACK slowly raises his exhausted gaze toward the height of the ladder: there, near its top, is the FEMALE BIGFOOT. She takes the IDIOT up and clutches him to her breast as if to nurse. The young BIGFEET, descending to their mother, peer down solemnly.)

Jack: The Gods, they! I did—I didn't will *this* triumph . . .

Harvey: Ascend the Jacob's Ladder! quickly! aerial! Icarian! to your desiderated light of Alone. Could any man, I or my brother included, accommodate more?

Jack: (turning away, shuffling downstage) Please. . . .

Harvey: How does this feel, Jack? Tell us, belletristic, what this is like. Leave *me* your proxy on earth.

Jack: (slowly pulling his robe off over his head and letting it fall to a heap on the floor; a very long, downcast pause) Please, can you help? I want to go home now. And for all come back again. Someday. O.K.?

Harvey: O.K.

Jack: (at the edge of the stage, directly to the audience, with uncontrollable tears) That is, if forgiveness is due, is correct here, if you will forgiven me . . . and if you will have me then . . . I want to walk home through you.

(JACK steps down from the stage and walks slowly into the audience. The BIGFEET, the FEMALE carrying the IDIOT, cautiously descend the ladder through a slow dim and amble with much trepidation to the edge of the stage. They peer out after JACK disappearing in the dark at the back of the house.