

BACK TO THE GARDEN

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CAST

ADAM
EVE
NEHEBETH
SHOMEIN
THE SERPENT
GOD
NOMAD
WAYFARE
FECUNDA
THE GUARDIAN

(THE SERPENT also plays Wanda, The
Blind Woman and The Shaman)

Dedicated to my Eve
Special thanks to Voltaire, J and Eddie Schechter

Production Notes: While the play takes place in a number of different locales, simple suggestive set pieces are all that is intended. The play is meant to be essentially comic in tone, but never so farcical or caricatured as to defeat those moments meant to capture the tragedy and joy of human existence. The Serpent's incessant questioning of God should likewise be funny but pointed. For ease (of language, mostly) I have made God a man. God, ideally, should not only not be a man but should not even be a human, but for the purposes of a play I needed to make a choice. I did not intend this choice to preclude casting a woman in the role, in which case the pronouns could be changed (or not, if you want to take a chance) although the historical damage done by the gender specificity of God is not the subject of this play. In addition, I strongly recommend multi-ethnic casting (particularly of Adam and Eve).

(The Garden of Eden. ADAM and EVE sit on some sort of wood or rock "bench". They are either naked, or dressed — as in a body suit — to suggest nakedness. They say nothing for a long time, sitting mindlessly as if sunning themselves. EVE occasionally takes a bite out of a banana)

ADAM

(Seeing something in the distance) Rabbit. (Pause. He sees something else closer by) Grass...hopper. (Another pause) Odd...vark.

NEHEBETH

(From off) Hello? Anybody home?

(NEHEBETH enters)

NEHEBETH

There they are. (To someone offstage) Shomy, they're here, just like the guy said. (To ADAM and EVE as to a foreigner) Hello, do you speak -- well, do you speak, let's start there. (To offstage again) Shomein, get your ass over here, I found them.

(SHOMEIN enters)

SHOMEIN

Where? Oh, there they are. (Gesturing a hello with his hand up) Hi. Shomein.

ADAM

(Imitating SHOMEIN's gesture) Shomein.

EVE

(Also imitating SHOMEIN's gesture) Shomein.

NEHEBETH

And I'm Nehebeth.

EVE

(With gesture) Shomein.

NEHEBETH

Uh, no. My name is Nehebeth and his name is Shomein.

EVE

Oh, it's your name. I see.

SHOMEIN

(With gesture) Shomein.

ADAM

(With gesture) Shomein.

NEHEBETH

(To SHOMEIN, under her breath, from between clenched teeth)
You're not helping. (To ADAM) And you are?

ADAM

(Beaming) Yes. By God's wondrous miracle, we are.

SHOMEIN

(Beat. SHOMEIN looks around) So, this is the garden we were told about. Beautiful.

EVE

Yes. Another of God's miracles.

NEHEBETH

I'll say. (Looking at EVE's nakedness) Honey, could I ask you something? Don't you ever get cold?

EVE

No.

(There is a silence. EVE and ADAM sit complacently. NEHEBETH and SHOMEIN are obviously ill at ease)

NEHEBETH

Do you mind if we sit?

EVE

Of course not.

(NEHEBETH and SHOMEIN sit)

SHOMEIN

Lovely weather, isn't it?

ADAM

Yes, weather is lovely.

EVE

It is God's smile.

NEHEBETH

Okay. So, let me begin by apologizing for barging in uninvited. We weren't sure there was anybody here.

ADAM

We are.

NEHEBETH

So we see.

ADAM

I mean we are sure.

NEHEBETH

(A little baffled) Right.

SHOMEIN

(SHOMEIN examines a flower) What is this thing?

EVE

A flower, a daffodil.

ADAM

Or so I have named it.

EVE

Flowers are how God kisses us.

SHOMEIN

(To NEHEBETH) Does that mean weeds are how God screws us?

(NEHEBETH pokes him with her elbow)

ADAM

Praise the Lord.

EVE

Sometimes when I am standing by it, I feel our Creator's presence so deeply (EVE is misty).

NEHEBETH

Yes, it's very beautiful.

EVE

God is beautiful. We are all beautiful.

SHOMEIN

Well, you two certainly are.

ADAM

All that is is of God; that's what beautiful means. That which is of God.

EVE

He is so good with words. He's been naming all the plants and animals.

SHOMEIN

That's a good job. Is that like a family thing, you had an uncle in the business or -

NEHEBETH

(Sharply) Quiet, Shomy. (To ADAM and EVE) Look, I know you folks are wondering why we came.

EVE

Well, that's a word we don't know. You say "wondering?"

SHOMEIN

Have you ever been outside this garden?

EVE

No.

ADAM

I'm not sure I even know what that means.

NEHEBETH

It's like this. This is a very beautiful garden you have here. Fruits and vegetables, lush surroundings, flowing streams, shade and soft meadows to lie down in.

ADAM

The Lord's bounty.

EVE

God be praised.

NEHEBETH

Honey, there is more to the world than just this garden. Surrounding you is a desert. That's where we live.

ADAM

A desert?

SHOMEIN

It's not at all like this. There are no trees, nothing edible grows in the ground and we have been forced to eat and wear unnamed animals to survive. There are few streams, no rivers; it almost never rains. It is unbearably hot during the day and freezing at night because of the great sheets of ice.

EVE

God's infinite grace expresses itself in endless ways.

SHOMEIN

Every day it takes all we can muster just to make it through.

NEHEBETH

We are not sure how long we can go on.

ADAM

I am certain you are enriched by your struggles.

EVE

In your barrenness there is that much more room for God to surround you.

SHOMEIN

Surround us? Your god -- what do you call your god, by the way?

EVE

God.

SHOMEIN

I mean what's his name?

ADAM

Name? God has no name. You only need a name for that which you cannot keep in your heart.

SHOMEIN

Well, whatever his name is, he not only doesn't surround us, he doesn't even know we exist.

EVE

God knows everything.

NEHEBETH

I don't think so. (Beat) Several days ago we were packing for the winter migration, most of the bigger beasts had left already, and a stranger wandered into camp. As is our custom, we invited him to the evening fire to tell us of himself and his travels. But the story he told us was unlike anything we'd ever heard.

(The lights fade on them and up on THE SERPENT in the guise of a wanderer. NEHEBETH and SHOMEIN turn in their seats so as to be part of the flashback)

THE SERPENT

Before a plant of the field was in earth, before a grain of the field spouted, God had not spilled rain on the earth nor were there rivers to flood the land. Yet from the day God had made earth and sky a mist from within would rise to moisten the surface. God shaped two earthlings from clay from this earth, blew into their nostrils the wind of life. Now look: they become creatures of flesh.

NEHEBETH

He blew life into clay?

SHOMEIN

Hefty set of lungs on that son of a gun, that's for sure.

THE SERPENT

Indeed, the breath was so great it swept over the earth, raising the dust as it went. And as it settled, it, too, took the shape of earthlings, though none so perfectly formed as those molded by God's hands.

SHOMEIN

The mass-produced stuff is never as nice as the hand-crafted.

THE SERPENT

Now look: These dustlings are also alive, although God's breath has never entered their nostrils.

NEHEBETH

(Covering her nose) And never will, if I have any say about it. Even the thought of it gives me the willies.

THE SERPENT

Now look: For the two earthlings God has created a garden where all manner of fruits and vegetables grow unattended, and all the beasts of the field and birds of the air and fish of the seas are there.

SHOMEIN

Oh, please you -

NEHEBETH

Quiet, Shomein, let him finish.

THE SERPENT

But what of those created from the dust?

SHOMEIN

Yeah, what of those?

THE SERPENT

God's breath is not in them, and so he knows not of their existence, and they struggle in the Wilderness, following the great herds, and survival is the god to whom they pray.

SHOMEIN

You got that right.

NEHEBETH

Actually, we pray to many gods, but we never got a garden.

SHOMEIN

We're happy if they can fix the leak in the cave.

THE SERPENT

This God can make the Wilderness bloom. But only for those who have known his kiss.

(NEHEBETH and SHOMEIN pause to see if that is the end of the story, and then applaud)

NEHEBETH

Well, I've heard a lot of stories of the creation, but that one takes the cake.

THE SERPENT

Because it is true.

SHOMEIN

Please. We've wandered these deserts for years and we never saw any garden.

THE SERPENT

Yet it exists.

SHOMEIN

Sure, sure. Like the mastodon's burial ground.

THE SERPENT

I know it exists.

NEHEBETH

How do you know?

THE SERPENT

I've been there.

SHOMEIN

You were in this garden, you saw these clay people?

THE SERPENT

Yes.

NEHEBETH

I don't believe you.

SHOMEIN

Me neither. First of all, if there were such a place, why would you have left it?

THE SERPENT

It is given that only those of God's blessing can stay there. All others can but see it, they then must go.

NEHEBETH

Where is this place?

THE SERPENT

Walk towards sunrise in the morning, rest at noon, walk towards sunset in the evening and you will be there.

SHOMEIN

That sounds like the directions to your Aunt Millie's cave.

THE SERPENT

God can make the Wilderness bloom. But only for those who have known his kiss.

(Crossfade back to ADAM and EVE.
NEHEBETH and SHOMEIN turn to face them
again)

NEHEBETH

Of course we thought it was nonsense. But our life has been so hard, we thought it was worth the try.

SHOMEIN

It was on the way, anyway.

ADAM

It is a very beautiful story this wanderer told.

NEHEBETH

Beautiful? According to him we are soulless, don't you understand?

EVE

But surely that cannot be. Perhaps your storyteller was mistaken. All that is knows God.

ADAM

And God knows all that is.

NEHEBETH

Don't you think we would know if your god was inside us? He's not. I don't know how we came to be alive, but I do know it had nothing to do with your god because up to now, your god has had nothing to do with us.

ADAM

God knows everything and has to do with everything.

SHOMEIN

Not us. Your god doesn't know about us. We are an accident, a byproduct of existence, caca of the Creation.

NEHEBETH

And now that we can see what your god can do (indicating the Garden) we realize how truly alone we are. We need your help.

EVE

How can we help?

SHOMEIN

You can bring your god to us.

ADAM

We are trying to do that now, but you seem reluctant to let him in.

NEHEBETH

It's too late for us, but we have children. They, of course, are as godless as we are. But if you had children, they would inherit the breath of god that is in you. If your children married our children, their children, our grandchildren, would likewise have the breath of god. And our people would live in places like this. This is how we want you to help us. Can you do this?

ADAM

Of course. If it is God's will.

EVE

If the Lord so moves us.

(Beat; SHOMEIN and NEHEBETH look at each other)

SHOMEIN

Could we possibly set a more definite schedule?

NEHEBETH

You have to do this. You have to decide to do this and do it.

EVE

It is not for us to make decisions.

ADAM

We are only servants of a much more glorious plan than ever such as we could devise. Can't you rejoice in God's gifts to you rather than devoting yourself so recklessly to trying to rearrange them? God has made everything possible.

SHOMEIN

Including our suffering and our deprivation.

NEHEBETH

And our visit here today.

EVE

(An exhilarated sigh) Praise God's infinite diversity.

ADAM

And trust in God's infinite wisdom. All that you want and need will come to you. And if God selects us to be the blessed messengers of your deliverance, we will rejoice in our office.

EVE

And if God rewards us with the gift of children, God would also be entrusting us with the responsibility to share this most special blessing. We realize that and would surely honor it.

NEHEBETH

(Beat) Look, it was a long, difficult journey to get here. There are no roads, just the hot, unyielding desert ground. We had no provisions, no water. Time and again we looked at each other, about to give up. But we kept thinking of the wanderer's story and what it might mean to our people. We knew we had to keep going. Please, we beg you, please do not deny us. Please do not forsake us.

SHOMEIN

We can see now you are our only hope.

NEHEBETH

Tell us you will do this thing. Give us faith.

ADAM

Surely that, above all else, is in God's hands. We await our Lord's will. I am certain you will not be excluded from God's pervasive compassion.

SHOMEIN

But it's your compassion we need.

NEHEBETH

Shomein, enough.

ADAM

They are one and the same, my good friend. God is with us here and has heard all. Trust in the infinite and the unknowable.

SHOMEIN

Oh, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Look at yourselves. What are you going to do, just traipse around this garden playing with yourself making daisy chains for the rest of eternity. You've got to take action. You've got to -

NEHEBETH

Shomein, enough I said. (To ADAM and EVE) Thank you for your hospitality. We will leave now. Come, Shom, let's go.

ADAM

(As they leave) God will watch over your travels, today and always.

(SHOMEIN and NEHEBETH leave)

EVE

They were a nice couple.

ADAM

Like all God's creations.

EVE

Of course. (Pause) It's nice to know there are other people.

ADAM

Yes, it is pleasing to see God's work in so familiar a form. Well, when I say familiar, I mean in comparison to an aardvark, let's say.

EVE

Uh-huh. But I guess what I meant to say is I'm glad we're not alone.

ADAM

We're not alone. (Indicating the presence of God)

EVE

No, but still... (Beat) What are we going to do?

ADAM

What do you mean?

EVE

I'm thinking of what Shomein said. Are we just meant to eat, sleep and walk around this garden, forever?

ADAM

Why must we be "meant" to do anything? We are as God is.

EVE

Yes, certainly that's true. When I think like that about today, it makes me happy. But when I think like that about forever, I think it makes me sad.

ADAM

That's why we take just one day at a time.

EVE

(Beat) Do you think we should help Shomein and Nehebeth?

ADAM

How?

EVE

By having a child.

ADAM

When God wishes us to have children, we will be so blessed.

EVE

So, this isn't something we should be doing; there isn't anything we can do to make it happen?

ADAM

Creating life is an act of God. We are of God but we are not God. What can we do unless God wills it?

(Beat) Do you even know how to have children?

EVE

(Beat) No.

ADAM

Then that will be our sign. When we gain the knowledge of how to have children, we will have them. Thank you, Lord, for once again lighting our path.

EVE

(Uncertain) Yes, thank you, Lord. (Beat) And help us, Lord.

End of scene

THE TWO TREES

(THE SERPENT stands
by two trees. EVE
enters)

THE SERPENT

Hey, lady, check it out.

EVE

(Giggles) Again?

THE SERPENT

Come on, honey, take a look. You're gonna love this.

EVE

Every time I pass here you do this. You know I can't.

THE SERPENT

I know you don't wanna. That's a different story.

EVE

It's not that I don't want to. God says I can't and so I
can't.

THE SERPENT

Look, I know I can't change God's mind -- God knows I've
tried often enough -- but maybe I can change yours.

EVE

Change my mind?

THE SERPENT

(Indicating tree) Check it out. You eat all the other
fruit. I've seen you eating bananas and pomegranates and dates
and figs. Recently I seen you eating avocados, apricots, acai, I
figure as long as you're in the A's you should
check out this fine apple I got growing here.

EVE

God has forbidden it. You are incorrigible.

THE SERPENT

I'm such a tease, I know it. Humor me. Addie isn't serious
when -

EVE

Addie?

THE SERPENT

Short for Adonai. It's a family nickname. Addie isn't
serious about you not eating this. It's a test. Wants to
see how brave you are. God loves courage. He knows it's
going to come in very handy in the millennia to come. Trust
me on this one, sweetie, it's a test.

EVE

I've been forbidden. If it's any test, it's a test of obedience.

THE SERPENT

Let me ask you this. Forget God for a second -

EVE

Impossible.

THE SERPENT

I don't mean forget forget, but look inside yourself and see if there isn't some area in there where maybe God isn't hanging out. Look inside and see if you can just see yourself in there -- okay? Now look at the apple, and tell me, honestly -- God don't allow no lying, remember -- honestly, wouldn't you like to taste it? Isn't what's really happening here is you wanna but you don't 'cause God told you no?

EVE

(Beat) I don't know. I'm confused.

THE SERPENT

You don't know, see, that's my point.

EVE

It is?

THE SERPENT

There's a lotta you-don't-knows swirling around inside of you, I'd be willing to guess.

EVE

Yes.

THE SERPENT

Things you wanna know.

EVE

Yes.

THE SERPENT

That's why you should eat the apple.

EVE

Why?

THE SERPENT

So you'd know.

EVE

(Beat) About the apple?

THE SERPENT

More than the apple. This is the Tree of Knowledge. Once you sink those luscious lips into one of these red and

juicy babies you're gonna know all sorts of things.

EVE

Like what?

THE SERPENT

Eat it and find out.

EVE

(Hesitates) I don't think so. We're allowed to eat from this tree. (She goes to the Tree of Life)

THE SERPENT

The Tree of Life. Bor-ring. You already got life.

EVE

God says if I eat from it I will know all I need to know.

THE SERPENT

Which is what?

EVE

I will know God.

THE SERPENT

Honey, I been there. Faith, nothing like it. On a stormy night, the day your grandmother dies, when you feel a lump, you need a tree like that. But what about the rest of your life? What about the rest of the world?

EVE

What about them?

THE SERPENT

No, you don't ask me, you ask the Tree, the Tree of Knowledge.

EVE

Knowledge of what?

THE SERPENT

Of everything else. For example, after your first bite you will know the difference between right and wrong. After your second bite you will know the secrets of your body. And after your third bite, you will know the most important thing you can know; you will know yourself. You will know you exist independent of God. You will know that you are a you, something no other living thing knows. After that, you pick up a useful item with each bite: A nibble here and you know about time; a slurp here and you learn about fire; a quick nip off this corner and you discover wholesale.

EVE

Will I know about children?

THE SERPENT

What?

EVE

Will I know about children, how to have a child?

THE SERPENT

(Dumbfounded) You don't even know that?

EVE

No.

THE SERPENT

(Looking up) Oh, Lord, what were you thinking of? (Back to EVE) Of course you will. That's the first thing I think of when I bite into one of these suckers: Sex. Try it, you'll see.

EVE

But you see, I'm not sure I want to know about that. I'm not sure what that would mean. It feels very frightening.

THE SERPENT

Exactly. What we don't know is very scary. That's why you gotta taste this thing. Folks in the know, like God, are scared of nothing.

EVE

That's true.

THE SERPENT

Right now what you got is doubts. This round and red beauty is the only road to certainty. And that's what you need.

EVE

(Long beat) Give it to me.

THE SERPENT

(Ala a French waiter taking an order) One apple for zee mademoiselle. Now, our vegetables today are -

EVE

Give it to me, now.

THE SERPENT

Mon dieu. Calm down, kid. Here.

(THE SERPENT hands her the apple. There is a dull rumble of thunder which repeats in increasing volume as the scene progresses)

EVE

How do I -

THE SERPENT

Just bite.

(EVE bites)

THE SERPENT

Well, what do you think, now that you can.

EVE

(There is a sentience in her eyes as she looks around as if for the first time) I think...I think...I think it was wrong to have done this. But it also was right. I'm confused. I need to understand better. (She takes another bite) How did you get here, anyway?

THE SERPENT

I came down with a herd of antelope. I always use mass transit.

EVE

We were led to believe we were the only people here, and until recently, the only people anywhere.

THE SERPENT

Yes, you were "led to believe" I'm afraid. All right, seriously now. There are essentially two places: Heaven and Earth. Heaven is for God and the gang; Earth is for everything else.

EVE

The gang?

THE SERPENT

The angels.

EVE

You're an angel?

THE SERPENT

Yep. Rapidly becoming arch, but an angel.

EVE

So which are we in now, Heaven or Earth?

THE SERPENT

The Garden of Eden is where Heaven and Earth meet.

EVE

Were you originally in Heaven?

THE SERPENT

Oh yeah. And one day God comes in and says: I have decided to make a creature in my own image. And all the angels, the Angel of Righteousness, Peace, Justice, they all start kissing ass: What a great idea, why didn't I think of it, whatever. But not me. I thought it was a terrible idea and I said so. Of course, this didn't sit too well with Addie. Whenever he's not sure of himself, he tries to cover it up by making like he knows everything, you know what I'm saying?

EVE

No.

THE SERPENT

Keep eating, you will. Usually I just make fun of him a little and drop it. But this was too big. I wouldn't back down. So I got the boot. This is as close as I get to Heaven now.

EVE

(Beat) And who are you?

THE SERPENT

I just told you, an angel.

EVE

Yes, but you talked about the Angel of Righteousness, the Angel of Peace; I want to know what you are the angel of.

THE SERPENT

(Beat) Truth.

(ADAM rushes in)

ADAM

Do you hear the -- (sees EVE has eaten of the Tree). What have you done?

EVE

Adam, you must taste this.

ADAM

We were forbidden.

EVE

If you taste this, Adam, you will understand why, and why it is all right. (She pushes the remaining apple in his hand)

ADAM

Why do you call me Adam?

EVE

It's your name.

ADAM

Why must I have a name? We only need to have names for that which we cannot hold in our hearts.

EVE

Adam, please taste it. Everything will become clear.

ADAM

This is wrong.

EVE

You can't know that, Adam, until you taste it.

THE SERPENT

Got you there, pal.

EVE

Adam, do you love me?

ADAM

Of course.

EVE

(She is next to him, looking into his eyes) And I love you. Adam, once you taste this you -- we will never be the same.

ADAM

Why do we need to change? God -

EVE

Once you taste this, you and I will be closer to God than ever before. (She touches him for the first time)
(Loud crash of thunder)

THE SERPENT

(To no one in particular) Whoa, he's a goner now.

ADAM

I can't.

EVE

Adam, you must have faith in me. Taste it.

(ADAM tastes the apple and takes a long look at EVE)

ADAM

Eve.

(They reach to kiss, and as they do so, a huge wind blows up; it is pulling EVE one way and ADAM the other)

EVE

(Reaching for him) Adam!

ADAM

(Reaching for her) Eve, I -

(They are pulled apart off the stage in opposite directions. The storm dies. GOD appears)

THE SERPENT

Well, I got to hand it to you, Addie; you told them not to do it, you told them you would punish them if they did, they didn't listen and whammo, they're history. Which is good, in a way, because history has to start somewhere. Although didn't you say you were going to kill them if they ate from

the Tree?

GOD

I am no longer inside them; they are as good as dead.

THE SERPENT

Well, I always say in situations like this: Look on the bright side. Now they're following your advice. What was it you told them: "Vegetate and divide." "Vegetate and divide," kiddo, you are the king of the phrasemakers, I'll grant you that.

GOD

(Glaring at THE SERPENT) Be fruitful and multiply.

THE SERPENT

Oh. I thought for sure it was vegetate and divide. I know I heard that somewhere; maybe that's what you told the amoebas. Anyway, Addie, I have to tell you I love these kids. They're terrific. I know I gave you a hard time about it, but they have won me over. I was against this "In The Beginning" but now I am pro creation. (Big smile) Whew, language. It's awesome. That was the best thing you did, Addie, really. Now people can communicate, they can make jokes, they can take your name in vain, they can lie, they can fail to communicate. You're a genius. Language: It's simple, it works and you can accessorize the hell out of it, so to speak.

GOD

Why did you give Eve the forbidden fruit?

THE SERPENT

Devil made me do it? Just kidding. I figure like this, we pull down that whole fig orchard over there and put in a development, I'm thinking adobe, maybe terra cotta roofing -

GOD

Why did you do it?

THE SERPENT

Why did I do it? Why did they? But wait a minute, don't we have this wrong? Isn't the real question: Why did you? I mean, are you omnipotent, or are we talking free will here? Because if we are, you may want to look into writing up a set of rules, although I would advise you not to write it in stone, it makes the amendments really messy. But forget that for the moment. Let me ask you again what I asked you before, which when I asked you then got you so pissed at me that you threw me out of Heaven, which is what is the point of this? These two kids have been running around this garden for a long time. What did you accomplish? What was in it for you?

GOD

(Beat) Existence. God does not exist in a vacuum.

THE SERPENT

So you needed somebody to love you and adore you and praise you just to know you exist?

GOD

I wouldn't use those words, but in a way I do live through them.

THE SERPENT

(Ala a therapist) And how long have you been having these feelings?

GOD

(Threateningly) You are treading a very fine line.

THE SERPENT

What are you going to do to me, terminate my existence? How? I don't live through you.

GOD

(Relenting) No, you don't. (Beat) What is to be done?

THE SERPENT

About what?

GOD

I will miss them.

THE SERPENT

They'll come back.

GOD

I've banished them.

THE SERPENT

Ooh, and we can see how scared they are of disobeying you.

GOD

They'll never find their way back.

THE SERPENT

Don't be so sure. This is a pretty resourceful creature you've created.

GOD

And I wouldn't allow them back in in any event, not unless I could be convinced they would never disobey me again. I've stationed an angel with lightning bolts at the gate.

THE SERPENT

God, what idiot took that assignment? Don't tell me it was Devotion. You put a lightning bolt in her hand and the streets won't be safe for anyone.

GOD

If they insist on disassociating themselves from my grace, they must know the power of my authority.

THE SERPENT

Well, if you don't want to do it at your place, maybe you'd like to come over to their place. I'll have their girl call yours; maybe you can do lunch.

GOD

(Leaving) I can't listen to you anymore.

THE SERPENT

I know the feeling. (THE SERPENT is alone)

End of scene

IN THE WILDERNESS

(The Wilderness.
ADAM enters wearing
some sort of cloak or
garment)

ADAM
I feel so lost. I must find Eve. I hate being away from
her. (Beat) I hate being away from God. This seems a
terrible price to pay for knowledge. (He shivers) It's
cold here. Thank God for this cloak.

(NOMAD emerges from the bushes and
throws a net over ADAM. WAYFARE
follows)

NOMAD
Got it, whatever it is.

ADAM
What are you doing?

WAYFARE
Watch its claws and watch it doesn't bite.

ADAM
Please, let me go.

NOMAD
What a fearsome roar it has. Wanda, be sure to write that
down for the campfire tonight: Fearsome roar.

(THE SERPENT emerges disguised as
Wanda, a member of NOMAD and WAYFARE's
clan. Her "writing" consists of chalk
on pieces of slate)

THE SERPENT
(Writing) "Fearsome roar," got it.

ADAM
There must be some mistake.

WAYFARE
And maybe a quick sketch of us catching the beast for the
wall in the eating hall.

NOMAD
Yeah, yeah. That's good.

(NOMAD and WAYFARE pose on either side
of ADAM. THE SERPENT squints and poises his
writing implement over the pad)

THE SERPENT
Move in a little, Wayfare. Nomad, the club, up a little.

Smile now.

ADAM

What is happening?

THE SERPENT

Ready? Okay, hold it. (Sketches) Got it. Great.

(WAYFARE and NOMAD come over to look)

NOMAD

Nice, very nice.

WAYFARE

I look fat. I always look fat.

NOMAD

Wanda, when you transfer it to the wall, make me a couple of copies, six by eight, and one pouch size.

THE SERPENT

And you?

WAYFARE

I guess. Game has been so scarce lately, better take glory when I can get it.

NOMAD

No glory, no story.

WAYFARE

No story, no oral history; then where would we be?

(ADAM, unattended, has been sneaking away)

THE SERPENT

The beast!

(NOMAD runs him down)

NOMAD

Where do you think you're going?

WAYFARE

Yeah, you've got a dinner date.

ADAM

What do you mean?

NOMAD

We've got a clan that hasn't eaten a good meal in a long time.

WAYFARE

I don't know how good a meal he's going to make.

ADAM
You're going to eat me?

WAYFARE
I don't even know what he is. Antelope?

NOMAD
Don't think so. No hooves. (Opens ADAM's mouth) No cud.

WAYFARE
Does he have feathers?

ADAM
I'm a human.

NOMAD
(Looking him over) Yeah, he is. He's a human, Wayfare.

ADAM
I'm a human like you.

NOMAD
Whoa, don't panic here. You're a human but you're not like us.

ADAM
Why not? Look at me. Don't I look like you?

WAYFARE
A bit. But we are us and you are other.

ADAM
What?

WAYFARE
Other. You're other than us. You're not us.

ADAM
So you're going to eat me?

WAYFARE
We eat everything that's other than us. That's like a...I don't know, like -

THE SERPENT
Survival of the fittest.

WAYFARE
Right. Survival of the fittest.

ADAM
Surely there must be something else to eat.

NOMAD
There is something else. You. You're else. Other is else. You're else and we're going to eat you.

THE SERPENT

There are no gardens in the Wilderness.

ADAM

But does that mean there can't be, does that mean things can't grow?

THE SERPENT

God doesn't care about the Wilderness so things don't grow.

WAYFARE

Yeah, all the gods of growing things can manage is to make you grow tired.

NOMAD

And the ice. That seems to be growing pretty well.

WAYFARE

I mean, some stuff grows, but not enough to feed the clan. Like this thing (indicating bush) that nobody but the beasts can eat. So they eat the shrubs and we eat them.

NOMAD

It's only fair. After all they're them and we're us.

ADAM

But suppose some other us decides that you're them; suppose he decides that he's him and you're other and he decides to eat you.

WAYFARE

Whoa, good point.

NOMAD

But what choice do we have?

ADAM

Look, where I come from things grew wonderfully well.

WAYFARE

How?

ADAM

Well, I guess we had a wonderful gardener.

WAYFARE

What's a gardener?

ADAM

Someone who makes things grow.

NOMAD

(Skeptically) Right.

ADAM

I'm telling you, he can make things grow; he can do anything.

NOMAD

Uh-huh. (Beat) Well, can we get him? Is he booked?

WAYFARE

Is he expensive?

ADAM

I don't know. But whatever he costs he's worth it. He can work wonders.

THE SERPENT

The real question is will he work in the Wilderness?

ADAM

He works everywhere. He can cultivate the soil or the soul.

NOMAD

I can handle my soul myself, thank you. Can you give this gardener a call? We're like running out of things to hunt. Did you ever eat salamander? It does not, I repeat, not taste anything like chicken.

ADAM

I don't know if he will hear me -

THE SERPENT

Try it. Let's see what happens.

ADAM

(Prayer) Lord, it's Adam. Can you help these people; can you transform these lands into gardens like the one Eve and I lived in?

(GOD appears. ADAM, without seeing him, is aware of his presence; NOMAD and WAYFARE cannot hear him)

GOD

Adam.

ADAM

Lord, I -- I am sorry for what happened.

GOD

You are sorry that you were banished.

NOMAD

(Whispering) Who's he talking to?

WAYFARE

(Whispering) I don't know.

ADAM

Yes.

GOD

But you do not truly repent disobeying me.

ADAM

(Beat) No. But Lord, I miss Eve and I miss you. And I miss the Garden. And I do not ask for myself. These people need your help.

GOD

They must first help themselves.

ADAM

How?

WAYFARE

Time out, Buddy. Who are you talking to?

ADAM

God.

WAYFARE

Did you say godener? I thought you said gardener.

NOMAD

It's that accent of his.

ADAM

I'm talking to God. You can't see him, I know. But still you can be helped.

WAYFARE

Which god?

ADAM

Jehovah, the only God.

WAYFARE

Wanda, you getting all this?

THE SERPENT

Word for word.

NOMAD

This will be great at the campfire. I'm thinking maybe a Chant.

(WAYFARE and THE SERPENT make Rap back up noises behind NOMAD)

NOMAD

*We were hunting in the Wilderness
The pickings were atrocious
When we came across an Adambeast
Who really was ferocious
His fangs and teeth were glistening
With razor sharp serration
But much more scary still
Was his incessant conversation
He talked us up, he talked us down
Under us and over*

*And then, when done with us,
He started talking to Jehovah*

Give it up
WAYFARE AND WANDA

For the winner
NOMAD

Give it up
WAYFARE AND WANDA

For your dinner.
NOMAD

God?
ADAM

The ice will melt; the temperature will rise. They must
have faith.
GOD

(To NOMAD and WAYFARE) You must have faith. It will get
warmer and the ice will melt.
ADAM

Right.
WAYFARE

I got a counterproposal. First let your friend make the ice
melt and the temperature go up and then we'll have faith.
NOMAD

Absolutely.
WAYFARE

When I see a stalk of broccoli or a rutabaga growing in this
ground, I will have faith in anything.
NOMAD

A couple of kernels of wheat and a tomato and we got
something. See, it don't have to be complicated. You would
be amazed how reverent I am after a good meal.
WAYFARE

God?
ADAM

Those who believe can see no end to the sky; those who do
not cannot see beyond their arms.
GOD

It's no good. You have to take God into your hearts.
ADAM

Look into your own heart. Do you find God there?
THE SERPENT

ADAM

(Beat) No.

GOD

No, Adam. You ate from the wrong tree. You have learned of your self, and it is your self that now resides inside you. There is no room for God.

ADAM

(Impassioned) But I do believe.

WAYFARE

We're missing the best part of this, I just know it.

GOD

Then for you perhaps the earth will yield. Goodbye, Adam.

(GOD exits)

ADAM

Don't go.

NOMAD

Is he gone?

WAYFARE

Are we getting a gardener?

ADAM

I'm afraid not. Not unless you're willing to take him into your hearts.

THE SERPENT

Why can't we just go back to that garden you said you came from?

WAYFARE

Yeah. Good thinking, Wanda.

ADAM

I think of little else, night and day, getting back to the Garden, and to Eve. But I have no idea where it is.

(ADAM unconsciously reaches into his pouch and removes the apple and takes a bite)

NOMAD

Whoa, what you got there, son?

ADAM

What? Oh, this. This is an apple.

WAYFARE

You know if you're going to bring food, you're supposed to bring enough to share.

ADAM

Sorry. (ADAM spits out a seed. He looks at it for awhile) Hmmmm.

THE SERPENT

What?

ADAM

Seeds. Pits. All the fruits we eat have them. I wonder.
(He bends down and digs at the earth) See, everything that
grows grows from the earth.

NOMAD

You writing this down, Wanda?

ADAM

From seeds. Do you think if we put this seed in the earth
an apple trees will grow? The ground here is hard and cold, but if
we dig a little deeper it gets warmer. It could work.

WAYFARE

You want us to go around digging holes and dropping pits in
them?

ADAM

Sure. I think so. It's worth a try.

(ADAM starts clawing at the ground)

NOMAD

You gotta get a shot of this, Wanda.

THE SERPENT

Right on it.

ADAM

This is hard. Wait. (He finds a stick and uses that) That's
better; that's much better. (He makes enough of a hole to
drop the seed in and then covers it up) This is still hard
work. I wonder. (He rubs his stick against a rock and
creates a point) There. (Uses it) Much better. Want to give
it a try?

NOMAD

I don't think I got the hang of it yet. Too complicated.
Show me again.

(ADAM starts to dig another hole. He
is very pleased with himself)

WAYFARE

Not bad, Kid.

ADAM

Of course, working alone would take a long time. But
perhaps we can get help.

(NOMAD and WAYFARE look at each other

and then around)

WAYFARE

Help?

ADAM

Yes. What if we could tether this stick I am digging with to some large animal.

NOMAD

Large animal?

WAYFARE

I don't know any large animals.

ADAM

Like an ox.

NOMAD

Oh, great. First we hunt and eat them, then we try to persuade them to pull a stick around for us.

WAYFARE

We'll be hearing from the animal rights people on this, I just know it.

ADAM

I'm telling you, this is the answer. (He is digging and sweating very energetically) We can grow things if we work hard enough.

NOMAD

"We?"

WAYFARE

I though he was a them.

NOMAD

Yeah, me too. Who elected you a we? All right, enough of this nonsense. It's suppertime.

WAYFARE

(Going over to ADAM) Sorry, son. As entertaining as this is, there comes a time when you have to face the fire.

ADAM

But you can't. I'm telling you we can feed the world this way.

NOMAD

Right now we just want to feed the clan.

ADAM

You're making a big mistake, I tell you. I can feed you all many times over, but not this way. (They are dragging him off) Please, I beg of you, you must have faith in me.

NOMAD

First we have to have faith in some god that wasn't there;
now we have to have faith in you.

WAYFARE

Make it easier on yourself, son. Just quiet down and enjoy
the scenery.

ADAM

But this is not the way.

THE SERPENT

Look! Something is sprouting from this hole the Kid
dug.

NOMAD

(Letting ADAM down) Where?

WAYFARE

That? That's just, uh, what is that?

NOMAD

It's green and it's agrowing all right. But what is it?

THE SERPENT

It's an apple tree.

WAYFARE

How can you tell?

THE SERPENT

Smell it.

WAYFARE

(Does so) Well I'll be. Whooeey, can you imagine that.

NOMAD

(Smelling) Yes!!! Go Kid. Plant something else.

ADAM

Yes, of course. What's that over there? (Gets some stalks
growing out of the ground)

THE SERPENT

Barley.

ADAM

Barley it is. (ADAM starts to dig; it is strenuous)

NOMAD

Now all we need are malt and hops.

ADAM

This is amazing. Come, both of you, feel the rich soil in
your hands.

WAYFARE

Sorry, just had my nails done.

NOMAD

Really, Kid, we wouldn't think of horning in on your fun.

ADAM

(As he continues to work) That's okay. (ADAM whistles or hums as he works) Good, that's it for the barley. But surely there must be other plants we can find.

WAYFARE

Surely.

NOMAD

Let's go back to the cave. Wanda, you got all this, right?

THE SERPENT

Yes, boss.

NOMAD

This is gonna make a great show tonight. Sort of a big shindig this evening, since we're migrating in a couple of days.

ADAM

Migrating?

NOMAD

Gotta follow the herds. Not much left around here now.

ADAM

But see, now you won't have to. You can grow all the food you need yourself.

NOMAD

Hmmm. What do you think, Wayf?

WAYFARE

Man, I would love not to have to travel anymore. It takes me two weeks just to get regular again.

NOMAD

It is definitely worth looking into. But the tribe will need some convincing. What do you think, Kid? Think you could work up some kind of a planting dance for the campfire, sort of show the folks how you did it?

ADAM

I'm not sure. I'll be happy to try.

WAYFARE

That's the spirit. (They start to leave, except THE SERPENT) The young ones love that stuff, they'll eat you up, if you'll pardon the phrase.

NOMAD

And those ritual dances are just the thing for appeasing the gods.

ADAM

(Sighs) If it were only that easy.

(They are gone. THE SERPENT remains.
GOD appears)

THE SERPENT

You are so sneaky. Give a man a fish and you feed him a meal; give a man a fishing pole and you feed him forever. Good stuff.

GOD

That was not meant as a lesson. He was being punished for what he did. He could have enjoyed my bounty forever. Instead, he will now have to toil to survive.

THE SERPENT

Tough love. That's the only way to reach these kids. Great system, by the way. First you give life; then you invent death for all those things you gave life to; then you make it impossible to stay alive unless you kill and eat other living things. Hey, I understand. You were tired, it was the end of the week, you were having a bad day. (Looking after where ADAM went) Look at that Adam. The sky's the limit for that kid. Whatever they were bebbitzing about "other" and "else" they're gonna find him irresistible. He won't be an "other" for long.

GOD

But I will be. To Adam I will be something apart, something other than himself. No longer will he be at one with his God; from now on he will need to search outside of himself to find me.

THE SERPENT

Can you please lighten up? I mean really. They grow up, they leave the nest, you say goodbye and hope for the occasional call. It's long distance, I admit, but as long as he can reverse the charges you'll be hearing from him. Especially when he needs something: "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, can you co-sign my mortgage."

GOD

I don't care about hearing from him. What's important is that he not walk around soulless like these other poor creatures.

THE SERPENT

What's important is that he becomes a part of "these other poor creatures". What's important is that he and "these other poor creatures" learn enough about humanity to survive.

GOD

Humanity is pointless without God.

THE SERPENT

God is impossible without humanity.

GOD

Once he becomes a part of their world, he will forget me.

THE SERPENT

And you, will you forget him?

GOD

That would not be possible.

THE SERPENT

Then he will never forget you.

(GOD stares at THE SERPENT. Then
turns to leave)

THE SERPENT

Don't forget to smell the apples on your way.

End of scene

IN THE WILDERNESS

(The Wilderness. FECUNDA sits by the side of the road. She is very pregnant. EVE enters. While talking to FECUNDA, EVE is very distracted, looking around for ADAM, and does not at first notice FECUNDA is pregnant)

EVE

Hello.

FECUNDA

Hi.

EVE

Have you seen Adam?

FECUNDA

Who?

EVE

I'm looking for Adam. We were separated and I want to be with him again but I can't find him.

FECUNDA

I don't know anybody by the name of Adam.

EVE

He is about this tall (indicating with her hand) -

FECUNDA

Sorry, hon. Last time I saw a man was nine months ago and I was in no position to judge his height, only his weight, if you get my meaning.

EVE

Oh. Have you seen God then?

FECUNDA

I sure in hell thought so that night nine months ago.

EVE

No, I mean recently.

FECUNDA

I don't think so. I don't think I've ever seen a god.

EVE

Oh. Could you help me look for Adam?

FECUNDA

Sorry. I'm don't get around much any more. Honey, could you help me up.

EVE

Sure. (EVE takes FECUNDA's arm and as FECUNDA begins to

rise EVE sees FECUNDA's pregnant stomach and let's go of her arm with a shriek. FECUNDA falls back down) Oh! What happened to you?

FECUNDA

I fell down, thank you very much.

EVE

Your body. Were you in an accident?

FECUNDA

I guess you could call it that.

EVE

Was it a wild animal attack, a loose boulder?

FECUNDA

Boy, talk about not getting around much.

EVE

You're so terribly disfigured. Are you sick? Is that some disease?

FECUNDA

Honey -- what did you say your name was?

EVE

Eve.

FECUNDA

Hi. My name is Fecunda. I'm pregnant. (Beat; EVE is dumbfounded) I'm going to have a baby.

EVE

(Terrified/repulsed) No. That's what happens to you when you have a baby?

FECUNDA

Of course. Where did you say you come from?

EVE

Eden. The Garden of Eden.

FECUNDA

Don't they have babies in Eden?

EVE

No. And if that's what happens to you when you do, we never will. You are so grotesque, so ugly.

FECUNDA

This is what I get for going out without makeup.

EVE

(Shudders with disgust and turns away) And I thought I displeased Jehovah. You must have done something unspeakable to be punished this way.

FECUNDA

Really? Must've been when I said: You know, it might be nice if we occasionally did it face to face. That was the last I saw of him. (Noticing something in the distance) Here comes the old woman.

EVE

Who?

FECUNDA

The old woman. She was going to help me but her eyes have clouded up on her and if it snows early this year, we're going to be in for a tough time. Look, I promise you if you help us out for the next few weeks, I'll take you into our clan. We'll find somebody for you.

EVE

What do you mean?

FECUNDA

Forget about this Adman -

EVE

Adam.

FECUNDA

Whatever. When they go, they go.

EVE

I can't forget Adam. And I don't want to stay here, I want to get back to the Garden. I just don't know where it is anymore. I don't know how to get there.

FECUNDA

Well, look, we need help here, you know, and I don't know how you got to us, but you are a godsend. A strong, healthy woman.

EVE

What do you mean a godsend?

(THE SERPENT enters. He is in the guise of an old blind woman)

THE SERPENT

(Looking at EVE) Fecunda, is that you?

FECUNDA

Yes.

EVE

No.

THE SERPENT

You've given birth. And your baby is talking already.

FECUNDA

No, old woman.

EVE

I'm not a baby.

THE SERPENT

I have seen this before. In times of great stress, a person's personality can split into two.

FECUNDA

We have a visitor. Her name is Eve.

EVE

(EVE peers intently at THE SERPENT whom she doesn't recognize, trying to catch his eye) Can't you see me?

FECUNDA

I told you she was blind.

EVE

That means she can't see? You can't see at all?

THE SERPENT

Not a thing.

EVE

(Looking at FECUNDA's stomach and back at THE SERPENT) Are all who live in this forsaken place afflicted? What terrible disobedience to Jehovah has brought these ills on you? What kind of people are you to have incurred God's wrath in these horrible ways, to have become so pitifully handicapped?

THE SERPENT

Full moon has come a little early this month.

EVE

And how you must hate God for taking your sight.

THE SERPENT

Right now I'm mostly peeved that he left me my hearing.

EVE

I must get away from you. I have been punished enough already.

FECUNDA

Oh! (She is in labor) Old woman, it is my time.

THE SERPENT

All right. Don't panic. Go to the cave. (In the direction of EVE) We need water and skins. There's a bucket by the cave entrance and the stream is down the hill.

FECUNDA

Help me up, Eve, and I'll show you.

EVE

No. It is too horrible.

FECUNDA

Please help us. My baby is about to come out, we will need you. (She groans as she struggles to her feet; she almost falls and EVE rushes to steady her and helps her off)

THE SERPENT

(Checking her pouch by touch) Do I have enough myrrh? Well, it will have to do.

(There is a loud cry from FECUNDA; EVE rushes back on, clearly shaken)

EVE

She is suffering awfully. God has inflicted a grievous torture on her.

THE SERPENT

It wasn't God, love; it was that Neanderthal she bedded with.

(Another cry from FECUNDA)

EVE

(Praying) Oh God, please pity her, please look after her.

(There is a silence. FECUNDA cries again)

THE SERPENT

Right, so much for prayer. Let's go to plan B. You get the water and I'll -

(FECUNDA cries again, this time more prolonged. EVE is petrified)

THE SERPENT

All right; it's too late for the water. Come, we better see what we can do, or at least you'll see what we can do. Lead me to the cave. (EVE doesn't move) Lead me to the cave, she needs us. (EVE is still petrified and doesn't move) It is so hard to get good help.

(THE SERPENT starts to wander off in the wrong direction towards the edge of a cliff [the edge of the stage]. EVE rushes to stop her)

EVE

How is it you can find your way here through the Wilderness but not back to your cave?

FECUNDA

(Screaming) Help me, help me, please.

EVE

(Beat as EVE struggles with what to do) Oh, Lord. Come on.

(EVE takes the Old Woman's arm and leads her towards the cave. During the following FECUNDA's screams abate. The dialogue is from offstage. During the dialogue, GOD appears on stage)

EVE

What should I do?

THE SERPENT

Just hold her. Wait, we forgot the skins.

EVE

Should I get them?

THE SERPENT

No, you're needed here. I'll go.

EVE

No, don't leave me here alone. What if something happens?

THE SERPENT

(As he emerges) Just trust your instincts. (To GOD) You did give her instincts, didn't you?

GOD

Your interference serves you ill. You are not a god, you should not tamper with the divine plan.

(There is another cry from FECUNDA)

EVE

(From off) Old woman, please hurry back.

THE SERPENT

Tamper with your plan? Why would I want to do that, it's so well thought out. Some horny stud knocks some poor dame up, abandons her, she waddles through nine months of discomfort only to have her insides ripped out when she finally gives birth. That works for me. Good system.

GOD

She is not of my creation.

THE SERPENT

Oh, so that will never happen with your people.

GOD

If Eve had obeyed me and stayed put, no, it would never have happened to any person.

(FECUNDA screams again)

EVE

Old woman, old woman -- (to FECUNDA) Hold onto me. Wait, something, something is happening. The baby is coming.

THE SERPENT

Why did you come here, just to scold me again?

GOD

I am present at every miracle.

(The baby cries. After a moment EVE enters holding the crying baby at arm's length from herself. She is terrified by it. GOD has disappeared. The song *Everlasting Love* begins to play)

EVE

Old woman, it's come.

THE SERPENT

How is Fecunda?

EVE

She's resting. How can we make it stop crying?

THE SERPENT

Fecunda is all right? You're sure?

EVE

Yes. But the baby, why is it crying so?

THE SERPENT

It has just left the womb where it was warm and protected and fed. It has found itself expelled into a cold, strange world.

EVE

What does it want? How can we make it stop crying?

THE SERPENT

If something like that were to happen to you, what would you want?

(EVE looks at the old woman and then back at the crying baby and slowly brings it to her bosom. As she does we hear the refrain: *Here I stand with my everlasting love*. The crying stops. EVE smiles, and then starts to tear up. Once again we hear the refrain: *Here I stand with my everlasting love* as the lights come up on GOD standing on a ledge above them)

End of act

ACT II

THE SHAMAN'S OFFICE

(The waiting room for
the local shaman.
WAYFARE and FECUNDA
sit and wait)

FECUNDA
(After some silence) What time was your appointment?

WAYFARE
(WAYFARE crosses his hands above his head)

FECUNDA
Really. Boy, he'll never get to me. (Beat) What are you
here for?

WAYFARE
A mate supplication.

FECUNDA
Oh. Really? Me too.

WAYFARE
What a coincidence. (Beat) You from around here? You don't
look familiar.

FECUNDA
My clan moved off with the herds. So I joined you guys. My
name's Fecunda.

WAYFARE
Wayfare. Welcome.

FECUNDA
Thanks. How long do we have to wait for this guy?

WAYFARE
No idea. Shamans, you know. (Beat) I was talking to this
guy from the Fork River Clan, and he says their shaman comes
to their caves when they need help.

FECUNDA
Probably cost you an arm and a leg.

WAYFARE
Nah, they're vegetarians over there. Looking for a mate, huh?
You know -

(THE SERPENT as the Shaman enters)

THE SERPENT
Sorry, folks, for keeping you waiting. And who do we have
here? (Checks his appointment slate)

WAYFARE

I think I'm first, doc. I'm here for a god consult.

THE SERPENT

Oh, yes. You're looking for a mate.

WAYFARE

Right.

THE SERPENT

And, if my memory serves me correctly, so are you?

FECUNDA

Right.

THE SERPENT

What a coincidence. Okay, let me get my equipment (Pulls from behind his desk a huge, oversized mask that fits over his head and rests on his shoulders with a ridiculous face painted on it. When he speaks, his voice now sounds somewhat distorted, as if amplified with echo or reverb. He also clearly cannot see as well through the mask) I think we're ready to begin. Is there any particular god you had in mind?

WAYFARE

Isn't Ingutu the traditional goddess of finding a mate?

THE SERPENT

Yes indeed. You know your goddesses, very good. (To FECUNDA) I like piety in a man, don't you?

FECUNDA

Not really.

THE SERPENT

(The Shaman starts to write) So you want a referral to Ingutu -

FECUNDA

One second. (To WAYFARE) Excuse me for interrupting your session.

WAYFARE

No, that's fine, really.

FECUNDA

(To the Shaman) If you don't mind, could you tell us Ingutu's numbers for the year?

THE SERPENT

Ho-ho, I can see we have an experienced consumer here. You're absolutely entitled to know that. Absolutely (Looking at a slate which to read he has to put right up against the eye slits of the mask) Ibi, Ikkiwawa, Imh, here she is, Ingutu. Okay. She had 38 supplications and 14 prayers answered.

WAYFARE

Whoa, that's under .400.

FECUNDA

Is that just for mating supplications?

THE SERPENT

Uh, no, that's everything. Fertility, crops, rain, the whole ball of wax.

WAYFARE

What are the mating numbers?

THE SERPENT

Let's see, 6 for 24.

WAYFARE

Forget it. I'd be better off making a supplication to myself. Who else is there?

FECUNDA

Huaha does matings.

THE SERPENT

Yes he does. (Looking at slate again) Okay, that's the H's. Hoohex, Hoomer, Huaha. Let's see .410 overall but only .311 on matings.

FECUNDA

What are the numbers if you throw in a virginal sacrifice?

WAYFARE

If I had a virgin I'd marry her.

FECUNDA

I'm just interested.

THE SERPENT

The number are about the same, actually a little lower.

FECUNDA

I always suspected that. What hype.

WAYFARE

Man, this sucks.

FECUNDA

Yeah. And Ingotu is minimum a two ram offering.

WAYFARE

Minimum.

FECUNDA

I think I'm going to shop around a little.

WAYFARE

Good idea.

THE SERPENT

Waiwaiwait. (Beat; he looks around as if to insure secrecy)
Look, I got something I'm not supposed to be dealing in but
I think I can trust you.

WAYFARE

Not me. I wouldn't trust me as far as I can throw me.

THE SERPENT

There's this goddess who, well, she's not really in the
pantheon.

FECUNDA

Meaning?

THE SERPENT

Technically she's a pagan. I mean, she's perfectly legit,
she just hasn't been certified yet. Anyway, she has a small
practice, obviously doesn't have a temple, but mating is her
specialty and she's well over .500.

FECUNDA

I'm Reform anyway. That's fine by me.

WAYFARE

A pagan?

FECUNDA

They were all pagans once.

WAYFARE

That's true.

THE SERPENT

And I'll only charge one fee for this consult, so you can
split it.

WAYFARE

(Sighs) I don't know.

THE SERPENT

And she's cheap. What more could you want?

WAYFARE

Okay. What have I got to lose.

THE SERPENT

Great. Her name is Aphrodisia. She takes supplications at
the olive grove.

FECUNDA

When should we -

THE SERPENT

Open 24/7. You can go right now.

FECUNDA

What are we offering?

THE SERPENT

I'm glad you reminded me. (Produces a clay vessel) This.

FECUNDA

A pot? We're offering a pot?

THE SERPENT

It's what's in the pot. It's a special potion made from rotten grapes, if you can believe that. (Hands it to WAYFARE)

WAYFARE

And we just, what, lay it down, break it open, spread it on our bodies, what?

THE SERPENT

This is the kinky part. You drink it.

WAYFARE

You want me to drink rotten grapes?

THE SERPENT

Go know these modern religions. This is how you do it. You drink it, you sort of sip it, actually. Sounds wacky, I know, but she's been knocking 'em out. .500, I mean you're not going to do better than that.

WAYFARE

All right.

FECUNDA

Don't I get a bottle?

THE SERPENT

There's enough in there for the two of you.

FECUNDA

Cool.

THE SERPENT

You can go down together, do a joint offering. After all, this is a mating supplication.

WAYFARE

Cool. So, are you busy now?

FECUNDA

No. My friend is watching my daughter. This would be a good time.

WAYFARE

You have a daughter?

Uh-huh.

FECUNDA

I like kids.

WAYFARE

Yeah? So do I.

FECUNDA

Another coincidence.

THE SERPENT

Okay. Oh, what about the bill?

WAYFARE

I'll settle up and you can pay me back.

FECUNDA

Okay. Thanks, doc.

WAYFARE

Always glad to help.

THE SERPENT

(WAYFARE leaves)

So what's the damage?

FECUNDA

Well, I have to check my fee schedule which is in the back room. If you would excuse me for a second.

THE SERPENT

Of course.

FECUNDA

(THE SERPENT leaves. After a few moments EVE walks in)

EVE

Fecunda.

FECUNDA

Eve, what are you doing here? Where's Alana?

EVE

I left her with the herb lady.

FECUNDA

Oh, did you have another attack?

EVE

Yes. Every time I hold her.

FECUNDA

What a peculiar allergy.

EVE

Yeah. So I figure it's time I saw somebody about this.

FECUNDA

Of course. I've been telling you to.

EVE

I know. But these gods you worship, I just -- is he in?

FECUNDA

Yeah, he just went to work up my bill. He's sending me to some new goddess called Aphrodisia.

EVE

Oh.

FECUNDA

Look, I better get back and make sure Alana is okay. Would you just get the bill from him when he comes back and tell him I'll pay him tomorrow?

EVE

Of course. And good luck.

FECUNDA

Thanks. (FECUNDA leaves)

(ADAM as the Shaman in the mask enters. He and EVE cannot recognize each other because of the mask.)

ADAM

Here's your bill.

EVE

My friend's bill, you mean?

ADAM

Excuse me?

EVE

My friend's bill. You haven't done anything for me yet.

ADAM

(Confused but covering) Right, your friend's bill. Here it is -- for your friend. (Beat)

EVE

Thanks. Look, I don't have an appointment -

ADAM

Oh, right, um (looking to back room) I guess that'll be all right. Have a seat.

(EVE is already sitting)

EVE

Thanks.

ADAM

Now, what seems to be the problem?

EVE

(Beat) Longing.

ADAM

It's hard to hear in this -- again?

EVE

Longing. I get attacks of longing.

ADAM

I see. I don't think there's any god or goddess that specializes in longing per se.

EVE

No, I didn't think so. I would try my God but that's one of the things I'm longing for the most.

ADAM

I can well understand that.

EVE

I get these attacks most often when I hold my friend's baby, that's the woman you just saw.

ADAM

The woman I just saw?

EVE

The one you gave me the bill for.

ADAM

(Covering) Oh, right, the woman I just saw. Sorry about all this confusion, it's just so hard to see or hear anything through this mask.

EVE

That's all right. You could take it off, you know, I don't really care.

ADAM

No, I can't. The Shamanic Oath, very strict.

EVE

I didn't know. Sorry. I'm new here and I haven't really caught on to all the local customs.

ADAM

Me too.

EVE

Excuse me?

ADAM

(Covering) Meetu, that's the god of local customs, if you need help with local customs that's the god -- of local customs.

EVE

Oh, thanks.

ADAM

So, when you hold your friend's baby you get attacks of longing.

EVE

Any baby, really. I mean I long almost all the time, it's just worse when I hold a baby.

ADAM

So when you hold a baby you long for a baby?

EVE

Sure. I mean who doesn't. But I also long for a time that seems so long ago and a place that seems so far away and a man from whom I was separated just when I first got to know him. And it aches and aches.

ADAM

And it's worse when you hold a baby?

EVE

Right.

ADAM

Well, the first thing to do is to stop holding babies, that's for sure.

EVE

Well, I can't stop; I'm a midwife. That's what I do here.

ADAM

Ah.

EVE

Yeah, here's my card. (She hands him a card-sized slate which he places on the desk without trying to read it)

ADAM

That is an impediment.

EVE

I often think about just going off into the Wilderness to look for him, and for my home -

ADAM

(Longingly) -- and for God.

EVE

Yes, and for God.

ADAM

(Snapping to) So why don't you?

EVE

I'm afraid. I wouldn't know where to start looking.

ADAM

Me neither.

EVE

Excuse me?

ADAM

(Covering) Minitha. Goddess of locating things.

EVE

Oh, well, that might actually be useful.

ADAM

Forget Minitha. You can handle this yourself. (Getting worked up) Look, longing means loving, am I right?

EVE

I suppose.

ADAM

Believe me, I know all about it. It could be love for a person or love for your home or love for your god; but whatever it is, isn't it worth a little danger? Isn't it worth giving up comfort for? Isn't it worth a little hard work? Isn't it worth the journey, wherever it takes you?

EVE

(Beat) I don't know. Is it?

ADAM

(Backing down) I don't know either. (To himself) It sure hasn't been for me.

EVE

I didn't get that. Was that another god?

ADAM

No. (Beat; to himself) There is no other god.

EVE

Those are the right questions, though. And I think what you're saying is right, the only way to know is to try it.

ADAM

I said that?

EVE

(Getting up) You're a good shaman. I probably shouldn't be telling you this, but I don't really believe in a lot of this local religion.

ADAM

Me neither.

EVE

Minitha? Didn't you just tell me that was the god of locating stuff.

ADAM

Yeah. She moonlights as the god of skepticism.

EVE

Oh. Interesting combination. Anyway, despite that, I feel you've really been helpful. What you say is right on. This longing is a message to me to get moving, and that's just what I'm going to do.

ADAM

Really? I said that?

EVE

So, what's the bill?

ADAM

Oh, ummmm, it's on the house.

EVE

Oh, that's very kind. Thank you.

ADAM

Any time. And good luck on your journey.

EVE

Thanks. Good luck on yours -- if you ever take one. (She exits)

(ADAM sits in silence for awhile. He then abruptly tears the mask off his head)

ADAM

God damn it.

(THE SERPENT enters)

THE SERPENT

Thanks for covering for me. Did you give that woman her bill?

ADAM

Sort of. Look, I don't want to do this anymore.

THE SERPENT

Why not?

ADAM

Suppose somebody finds out?

THE SERPENT

Who's going to know you under that mask?

ADAM

I'm not licensed. They're not going to like being fooled. And I'm still a virgin, you know. I'll end up on some sacrificial altar somewhere.

THE SERPENT

Believe me, you're perfectly safe.

ADAM

But that's only part of it. I don't like playing god with these people. They have real problems. This stupid mask and all this mumbo jumbo, I can't help them.

THE SERPENT

Don't be so sure, Adam.

ADAM

That woman you told me to give the bill to wasn't even here, it was some friend of hers who came for help.

THE SERPENT

Who?

ADAM

I didn't get her name. How can I help her? She's got the same problems that I have.

THE SERPENT

Another coincidence.

ADAM

I don't want to do this anymore. In fact, I don't know if I want to stay here anymore.

THE SERPENT

In the office?

ADAM

With the clan.

THE SERPENT

Where do you want to go?

ADAM

Back to the Garden. I want to go home, I want to reconcile with God and, more than anything, I want to find Eve.

THE SERPENT

(Beat) Hate to lose you. But if you gotta go, you gotta go.

ADAM

I gotta go.

THE SERPENT

I hear you. Good luck.

ADAM

Thanks.

NOMAD

(NOMAD rushes into the room) Kid, I was hoping I'd find you here. Sorry to barge in, Doc.

THE SERPENT

No problem.

NOMAD

We need you bad, man. The Steppe Clan are trying to build a temple to their main god, Thwak, and they want to build it smack dab in the middle of the Plain of the Large, Sleek, Furry Beasts with the Long Noses.

THE SERPENT

They can't do that. That land is sacred; it was promised us by Fnord.

NOMAD

Exactly.

ADAM

That's such nonsense.

NOMAD

Fnord said it was ours until the sun melts in the sky.

ADAM

You heard him?

NOMAD

Huh?

ADAM

Did you ever actually hear Fnord say this?

NOMAD

Fnord's a god; of course not. He doesn't speak to mortals.

ADAM

Then how do you know he said it, how do you know it was promised?

NOMAD

(Proudly) My father told me, just as his father told him and just as his father told him -- and somewhere in there I may have had a cousin who told somebody.

ADAM

This is so stupid. Why can't you share it?

NOMAD

I don't think Fnord would like that very much, do you? Anyhow, the Steppe people are very adamant about this. And we can't let them get away with it.

ADAM

So?

NOMAD

So we're going to fight them.

ADAM

What?

NOMAD

We're going to fight them. We are going to kill them.

ADAM

Nomad, you have completely lost it. Kill others for a stupid piece of land?

NOMAD

Exactly. "Others." That is permitted, the killing of "others". And we're going to do it. All of the men are preparing.

THE SERPENT

The Steppe Clan are very big people, and very numerous.

NOMAD

We thought of that. Thanks to the Kid, we can handle them.

ADAM

What do you mean thanks to me?

NOMAD

Remember that day you showed us how to tame the ox? You said we could tame other animals as well, like the donkeys. So Wayfare had this great idea: We are taming the donkeys to let us ride them and then we'll be bigger and faster than the Steppe Clan. And that's what we're going to do. But what we need you for is we keep falling off. Is there some way you can make it so we don't fall off?

ADAM

Yeah, by stopping you from getting on.

NOMAD

Great. You work on that, I'm going back to the men.

(NOMAD exits)

ADAM

This is madness.

THE SERPENT

Don't worry. I'm their Shaman, madness is my specialty.

I'll take care of this.

ADAM

How? By putting on your mask and warding off the evil spirits?

THE SERPENT

We don't call them evil spirits any more; just ethically challenged. I'll organize a mass appeal to Fnord. Now, where is the liturgy on that (starts rummaging through the documents on his desk).

ADAM

I can't believe you buy into your own nonsense. I have to go talk to them. Maybe they'll listen to me.

THE SERPENT

Wait, what's this? A midwife's card. Is this yours? (Handing him EVE's card, smiling broadly) Is there something you haven't told me? Still a virgin, who're you kidding.

ADAM

No, the woman left that...(he is now looking at the card for the first time) Eve! (He starts to move in the direction EVE left)

THE SERPENT

Where are you going?

ADAM

This is Eve, the woman I told you about, the woman from the Garden.

THE SERPENT

What luck. Well, go after her. Don't worry about the men. I'll prepare them for battle.

ADAM

(Starts to go, but is troubled by this last statement) You're not seriously considering letting them fight.

THE SERPENT

Don't worry. I'm sure they'll be victorious.

ADAM

That's not the point. This is no way to act. First of all it won't settle anything and second of all we are not empowered to take away a life that God has created.

THE SERPENT

Interesting theological point. I'd love to discuss it with you, but I must bless the men before they sally off and I would have to guess your Eve is well on her way by now.

(ADAM looks in the direction she exited. The sound of men preparing for battle is heard and gets louder)

ADAM

Oh, God, what am I to do?

THE SERPENT

Let me help. (Consulting his gods book) Let's see, the god of choosing between love and war, that would be...

ADAM

Forget it. (He rushes out in the direction of the men)

(GOD appears)

THE SERPENT

What do you think of your boy now, Addie?

GOD

He is becoming one of them.

THE SERPENT

It's human nature, if you'll pardon the blasphemy. You can't blame him, dysfunctional family, absent father. And then I ask: Becoming one of them, is that good or is it bad? (Hits his forehead) Look who I'm asking about good and bad. Talk about going to the horse's mouth. Speaking of which, isn't it ironic about this donkey business? I guess that's just human nature too. They take a constructive idea and adapt it for destructive purposes. And I'm afraid this donkey business is just the beginning. Wait until they see what they can do with fire, or the wheel, or the atom -- or religion.

GOD

It is you who have caused this. Can you not see the great tragedy your meddling has created?

THE SERPENT

For you it's a tragedy. For him and for Eve time will tell. But for the other folks that have to live here, it is their only hope at salvation. How can you deny them that?

GOD

I did not put these creatures here; I did not mold them; and I certainly did not breathe life into them.

THE SERPENT

So much for omnipotence..

GOD

But I would love to know who did.

THE SERPENT

And omniscience. (Beat) I did.

GOD

(Beat; he stares at THE SERPENT hard) Hear me on this. There can be but one God.

THE SERPENT

Pardner, this universe isn't big enough for the two of us.

GOD

The universe is big enough; but not the soul of a human being. (Beat) Are you going to the battlefield?

THE SERPENT

Wouldn't miss it for the world. I'm off to the Plain of the Large, Sleek, Furry Beasts with the Long Noses.

GOD

It will not be called that for long. After today it will be known as the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

(The sounds of men preparing for battle, which has continued through the preceding dialogue, now covers the segue to the next scene, changing to sounds of war and becoming louder and continuing throughout)

End of scene

THE BATTLEFIELD

(A crag overlooking
the battlefield.
WAYFARE and NOMAD
come on, WAYFARE, who
has a bad leg wound,
is leaning heavily on
NOMAD)

NOMAD
Horses. Who would have thunk it?

WAYFARE
They're sure running rings around our donkeys. Can you see
from here?

NOMAD
(Peering into the valley below) Yeah. A lot of dust and
smoke. It looks pretty bad. There's only a handful of us
left. But Fnord will not forsake us.

WAYFARE
What was his average this year?

NOMAD
.320.

WAYFARE
(Beat; they look at each other) We better go back.

NOMAD
Can you walk?

WAYFARE
I have no choice. (He tries to stand and collapses)

NOMAD
Maybe we should wait for Fnord's intervention.

WAYFARE
I wish we hadn't lost our donkeys. We'd at least have
something to sacrifice.

(FECUNDA and EVE enter)

FECUNDA
Oh my, are you all right?

NOMAD
What are you doing here? This is no place for you.

EVE
Why not?

WAYFARE
Yeah, why not?

NOMAD
They'll only get hurt.

WAYFARE
Unlike us.

EVE
What's happened to your leg?

NOMAD
He was fighting off six of the Steppe vermin when one snuck up from behind and clubbed him with the thighbone of an ox.

WAYFARE
(After staring down NOMAD) After I fell off my donkey for the thirteenth time, he got pissed off and kicked me.

FECUNDA
Poor baby. Eve, can you help me?

EVE
Of course. This is such a terrible thing.

NOMAD
We're doing our best.

EVE
This could never be described as anybody's best.

(NEHEBETH enters, carrying a club)

NEHEBETH
Shomein, here are two more.

NOMAD
It's the Steppe people. (Rising to attack NEHEBETH) For the greater glory of Fnord.

(NEHEBETH raises her club to strike.
NOMAD stops dead in his tracks)

FECUNDA
Don't hurt him, please.

(SHOMEIN enters, also carrying a club)

SHOMEIN
Good work, Beth, you have found more of the infidel.

EVE
Don't I know you?

SHOMEIN
We will take them to camp with the others. Come, all of you.

NEHEBETH

Shomein, they outnumber us and might overpower us on the trail.

SHOMEIN

Yes, that's true. I'll disable them.

FECUNDA

No!! (She tries to intervene but is brushed aside violently by SHOMEIN. EVE also tries to stop him but is grabbed by NEHEBETH)

NEHEBETH

Stop struggling, little one.

EVE

Don't do it. Stop. Don't you remember me?

(SHOMEIN takes his club and hits NOMAD who is badly dazed. WAYFARE tries to get up but SHOMEIN clubs his injured leg causing him to cry out. FECUNDA tries to intervene again and SHOMEIN clubs her)

SHOMEIN

I'll poke out their eyes.

(He takes from his belt a pointed stick like the one ADAM created. He grabs first WAYFARE and then NOMAD in turn by their hair and pokes out their eyes. They scream in pain. FECUNDA screams and starts to cry. The background noise of fighting has grown quite loud)

NEHEBETH

That should hold them.

(Released finally from NEHEBETH's grasp, EVE looks aghast at WAYFARE and NOMAD. She falls to her knees and cries out)

EVE

Jehovah, where are you?!!!

(The crying of the men and FECUNDA and the battle noise all abruptly stop. There is a long pause. SHOMEIN peers over the ledge to the battlefield below)

SHOMEIN

The fighting is over. We have won.

FECUNDA

Barbarians.

NEHEBETH

Barbarians you say. Ten years ago, your people claimed one of your cockamamie gods promised you a stream that was on my son's land. We found out it was because your well had dried up. He resisted. All I ever found was his decapitated head up a tree and my daughter-in-law suffocated with her eight month old fetus, which had been torn from her womb, stuffed in her mouth. Who is the barbarian?

FECUNDA

But I didn't do it.

NEHEBETH

You bathed in your clan's stolen water. Now you will bathe in their blood.

EVE

You are so horrible. What happened to you? You seemed to nice at the Garden.

NEHEBETH

(Looking at EVE carefully) You're that woman, the one from the miraculous oasis.

EVE

And to think I wanted to help you.

NEHEBETH

If you had, this might never have happened.

FECUNDA

Wayfare, oh, my poor baby.

SHOMEIN

Come, our people are leaving. We must join them.

NEHEBETH

(To EVE) There's still a chance. Where is your mate?

EVE

I don't know. We were separated.

NEHEBETH

Well, find him. (To SHOMEIN) Leave this one, she is the woman from the Garden.

SHOMEIN

Oh, yes, didn't recognize you with your clothes on. How're you doing?

NEHEBETH

Find your mate.

EVE

How? I don't know where he is; I don't even know where the Garden is anymore.

NEHEBETH

Walk towards the sunrise in the morning; rest at noon; and walk towards sunset in the evening and you will be there. That's how we got there, after Shomein got us lost first.

SHOMEIN

Who could read that stupid map.

NEHEBETH

But would you ask for directions? No. So stubborn.

SHOMEIN

Come, they're leaving.

NEHEBETH

I still have corns from that trip

(SHOMEIN rouses a moaning NOMAD and WAYFARE to their feet. FECUNDA helps WAYFARE walk)

NEHEBETH

(As she exits) Find your mate. Have children. Save us.

(All except EVE exit. THE SERPENT enters. He is himself)

THE SERPENT

Yes, please, save them.

EVE

You. You caused all this.

THE SERPENT

Actually, I like to think of this as a team effort.

EVE

If you hadn't made me... (She pauses)

THE SERPENT

Words fail you?

EVE

(A different tone) You didn't make me. I wanted to. I wanted to know everything. And now I do.

THE SERPENT

I don't think so.

EVE

I know as much as I want to know. More, much more.

THE SERPENT

But this is what is.

EVE

But it doesn't have to be. If God had breathed life into them, as he did with Adam and me, this could never have happened. They need God inside them to understand how wrong all this is. The way they treat each other, no one with God in his heart could ever do this. I need to find Adam. We need to make children who will go out and make their own children with these people so that God's love can be in all.

THE SERPENT

You think that's the answer?

EVE

(Indignantly) My children will have God in their hearts. No son of mine could ever kill another person.

(There is a silence)

EVE

You always have something to say. Why are you silent now?

THE SERPENT

I am the Angel of Truth, Eve, and you have just told me that you know more than you ever wanted to know.

EVE

No, I don't. I still need to know what the point of all this is.

THE SERPENT

Here words fail us all. Find Adam.

EVE

He knows?

THE SERPENT

No, but he needs to know as badly as you.

EVE

Where is he?

THE SERPENT

Looking for you, I am sure.

EVE

That means he will go back to the Garden. Were that woman's directions right?

THE SERPENT

You don't need directions. Just go.

EVE

(Beat as EVE peers over the ledge to the valley) Is there nothing that can be done for my friends?

THE SERPENT

All humanity are your friends.

EVE

Those brutal, violent people could never be my friends.

THE SERPENT

But they, more than anyone else, are the ones that need your help.

EVE

I don't know how to do that.

THE SERPENT

Neither do I. Find Adam and perhaps together you will find a way.

(EVE exits. THE SERPENT stands there for awhile, expectantly. He looks up and around from time to time. Finally)

THE SERPENT

Well? Where are you, Addie? You always drop by after anything happens to rub my face in it. (Looking out at the plain) I guess there are some things even you would prefer not to look at.

(ADAM enters)

ADAM

You. You started all this.

THE SERPENT

I should have listened to my horoscope this morning.

ADAM

I was kicked out of Paradise, I was separated from my love, I was almost eaten, I've invented better ways for men to maim and kill each other and I have lost my God. All because of you.

THE SERPENT

I'm sorry. This is terrible, I admit. What can I do?

ADAM

You can help me find Eve.

THE SERPENT

She's at the Garden.

ADAM

Good. (Starts to walk, stops) Where is the Garden?

THE SERPENT

When the sun rises you..what is it you do? No, it's when it

sets, you...forget it. Follow me.

ADAM

I've gotten into nothing but trouble doing that.

THE SERPENT

You think you've seen trouble? Believe me, you ain't seen nothing yet. Wait 'til you have kids. (THE SERPENT walks off ADAM reluctantly follows)

End of scene

AT THE GATES OF EDEN

(The Gate to Eden
stands stage center,
facing out. Standing
at it or perched on
it stands the
Guardian)

GUARDIAN

(Singing) *I'm on the outside, lookin' in
And I wanna be, and I wanna be
Back on the inside, oo woo woo*

(EVE arrives, slightly out of breath)

EVE

I found it. I can't believe I found it. This is it, right?

GUARDIAN

This is what?

EVE

The Garden of Eden.

GUARDIAN

(Very suspicious) Possibly.

EVE

Great. (EVE starts to walk in)

GUARDIAN

(In a ferocious voice) HALT!! Wait right there, sister.
Nobody, and I mean nobody, goes in. You get that?

EVE

Nobody but me, you mean.

GUARDIAN

Right, nobody but -- NO, nobody including you.

EVE

Oh. When does it open?

GUARDIAN

It's closed for good. Somebody pissed the big guy off and
he shut it down. And he left me here to make sure nobody
gets in, understand? That's from the big guy. I'm not name
dropping, I just want you to know the organization I got
behind me on this.

EVE

Right. You know the big guy?

GUARDIAN

Yes.

EVE
You're an angel, aren't you?

GUARDIAN
Possibly.

EVE
What are you the angel of?

GUARDIAN
(Beat, she looks around) Vengeance. Used to be Revenge, then there was a shake-up in the department and so we had new job categories so now I'm Vengeance which is a lot classier, don't you think?

EVE
Oh, much. I know an angel.

GUARDIAN
(Skeptically) Right.

EVE
No, but it's true. I know Truth.

GUARDIAN
Truth? Whatever happened to him? I haven't seen him in a sloth's age.

EVE
I've even met the big guy.

GUARDIAN
Yeah? Hmmmm.

EVE
So I'm sure it would be all right. (She tries to get in; the Guardian throws a small lightening bolt at her which explodes and throws her back)

GUARDIAN
Yeah, it's been a while since I seen Truth. Not that we were ever that close.

EVE
Please, you have to let me in.

GUARDIAN
(Condescendingly patient) No, you're not listening. What I have to do is prevent you from getting in, that's what I have to do.

EVE
But you don't understand -

GUARDIAN
Not a trait usually associated with me, I'll grant you that.

EVE

-- I used to live in the Garden. I was in love in the Garden. The man I loved, Adam, was torn from me and if I'm ever to find him again I must get inside.

GUARDIAN

You used to live in there?

EVE

Yes.

GUARDIAN

So you're the one pissed the old man off. Forget it, you're the last person I'd let in there.

EVE

(Trying to walk in) That's okay, I don't mind being the last. (She gets struck by another lightning bolt and falls back) I'm getting in; I have to find Adam. (She tries again and is thrown back again; she gets up, somewhat dazed, and tries again. She is again thrown back by a lightning bolt. God walks through the gates)

GOD

Eve.

EVE

Jehovah.

GUARDIAN

Whoa, God, glad to see you. What a pest this one is. Uh, if you have a moment, can we talk about getting me a couple of days off? I have been sitting here -

GOD

(To EVE) It's bad enough that you disobeyed me at the Tree; but now you disobey me again. You were banished from the Garden, you know that.

EVE

I won't stay; I won't eat anything or touch anything. I just want to find Adam. He's in the Garden, isn't he?

GOD

(Beat) Yes.

GUARDIAN

No way. He never came through this gate, that's for sure.

EVE

Then you have to let me in to see him.

GOD

Are you giving me orders now, Eve?

EVE

I'm sorry. I did disobey you. But then all I was was you.

I couldn't understand how what I did could be anything but your wishes. I never knew where I stopped and you began.

GOD

You do now?

EVE

Yes.

GOD

And how does that feel?

EVE

It aches. (Beat) And it's liberating. I want both.

GOD

That I am not able to do.

EVE

Then at least give me Adam.

GOD

I made you to persevere; and this made you disobey me. I gave you boundless love which you now feel for another; this makes me jealous.

GUARDIAN

Jealous? That's right up my alley. Should I off her?

GOD

But you are right. You are only what I have made you.

EVE

Then can I go through?

GOD

Why would you want to?

(ADAM appears with THE SERPENT)

ADAM

Eve!!

EVE

Adam.

(They run and embrace)

THE SERPENT

(Of their embrace) Oh, that's nice. (To God) You old softy. (To the Guardian) Yo, Revenge, how's it hanging?

GUARDIAN

I'm not Revenge anymore; I'm Vengeance.

THE SERPENT

They shook up the department again?

GUARDIAN
Where have you been?

THE SERPENT
Miss me?

GUARDIAN
Not really.

EVE
Adam, I have seen such amazing things.

ADAM
As have I. And terrible things.

EVE
Yes, very terrible things.

ADAM
Eve, I was the Shaman you visited, did you know that?

EVE
No. Oh, how funny. Why didn't you say something?

ADAM
I didn't know it was you from underneath that mask. Only when I looked at your card. Eve, I am so glad to be back with you.

EVE
Adam, I saw a child being born; I held it, Adam.

ADAM
That is wonderful, I know.

EVE
I want to have children.

ADAM
We will, I promise.

EVE
Now, I want it now.

THE SERPENT
Sorry, folks, not in the Garden. You know how it is, no kids, no pets.

GOD
And your children, of which tree will they eat?

ADAM
What do you mean?

GOD
I have decided to forgive you and let you and Eve remain in the Garden, but only if I am assured that you will obey me.

ADAM

We will obey you.

EVE

But you cannot lie to us.

GOD

When did I lie?

EVE

You said Adam was in the Garden. But he was out here where I am.

GOD

That was no lie. This is the Garden. That (pointing through the gate) is the Wilderness.

GUARDIAN

Whoa, you got to be kidding. I've been facing the wrong way all this time?

ADAM

This is the Garden?

EVE

This is not the Garden we left.

GOD

You are back now and it will bloom again. This is the Garden you left.

ADAM

(Beat as he takes it in) Eve, I think our place is out there (meaning through the gate).

GOD

Perhaps you did not understand me. I have given you a second chance. The Tree of Life still bears fruit. You may eat from it. You will know immortality and you will forever receive the infinite love of God. All you have to do is stay and obey.

EVE

(Beat) Adam?

ADAM

I don't know. It just seems pointless to receive God's love unless I can also give it (looking through Gate) to those who most need it. (EVE smiles at him)

GOD

And immortality, that means nothing to you?

EVE

If we can create life, then that will make us eternal, Adam, don't you think?

ADAM

Yes. Yes, I do.

EVE

Creating a life; I'll be like you, God.

GUARDIAN

Watch it, sister, you're pushing it.

GOD

(Angrily) Then you must leave. Now.

EVE

I'm sorry that you're angry, but this is how you made us.

ADAM

You will help us, Lord, will you not?

(GOD does not answer)

EVE

You won't answer us? You won't reassure us?

THE SERPENT

You better get used to that.

(ADAM and EVE look at God, and then start off together through the gate. EVE stops and turns back)

EVE

I know you're angry at us now, but even if you never talk to us again you should know that we will always hear your voice.

(GOD says nothing. ADAM and EVE exit)

GOD

(Softly, looking after them) And you should know that I will always hear yours.

THE SERPENT

(Looking around at Garden) Man, talk about you can never go home again.

GUARDIAN

Nobody was talking about that.

THE SERPENT

They will someday; trust me.

GUARDIAN

Sorry, not in my nature. (To God) Uh, look, Lord, I -- about letting them in and -

GOD

Don't worry. It's not your job anymore anyway.

GUARDIAN

You mean I'm finally out of here?
Thankyouthankyouthankyou—

GOD

We're reorganizing your department again.

GUARDIAN

Uh-oh.

GOD

Your new job title is Angel of Passive Aggressiveness.

GUARDIAN

(Beat) You're not serious.

GOD

That's it.

GUARDIAN

Is it at least a promotion?

GOD

Nope. Lateral transfer.

GUARDIAN

Man. Can we at least change the title? How about Angel of Aggressive Passion instead?

GOD

Sorry.

GUARDIAN

But who's going to handle Vengeance?

GOD

That will be mine for the time being. Go on, back upstairs.

(The GUARDIAN has a very sulky face on
as she exits)

GOD

(Calling after her, impressed) Good start.

THE SERPENT

Hey-hey, aren't you the one for mood swings. Just a second ago you weren't speaking to your children, now you're teasing angels.

GOD

I don't need to speak to them, as long as I have you to do it for me.

THE SERPENT

What's that supposed to mean?

GOD

Nothing. Just that you seemed to say everything I would have said, given the circumstances. And we certainly got the result we wanted, didn't we?

THE SERPENT

Wait a minute. Are you trying to tell me that you planned this whole thing?

GOD

Well, I do move in mysterious ways.

THE SERPENT

But if this is what you wanted, why didn't you just send them out into the world in the first place?

GOD

Those born in the dust dream of the dust. Those born in the Garden dream of growing things: Crops, babies, civilization. Now if they can find some way to motivate those dust balls you created, we'll be off and running.

THE SERPENT

They'll do fine. Good genes. But I don't believe for a second that this is what you planned. You're telling me you knew this was what was going to happen?

GOD

(Shrugs as if to say: Who knows?) The fact is -- and I know you're big on facts -- I don't know what I know.

THE SERPENT

(Beat) That doesn't make any sense.

GOD

That's the difference between being God and being the Angel of Truth. I'm not expected to make sense. In fact, sometimes it's just the opposite. People need the inexplicable to explain the unendurable.

THE SERPENT

I'm having a hard time following this.

GOD

To connect the dots one needs logic and science, your specialties; but to get the whole picture, to see it as anything but lines on paper, you need distance and perspective and suspended disbelief.

THE SERPENT

(Smiles) One last question: What is the point?

GOD

Beats me.

THE SERPENT

Come on, tell me. What is the point?

GOD

(Long beat) I don't know how I came into being. I don't even know when, because there was no when then. But the first conscious thought I had was accompanied by a doubt. And what I've learned is that existence, matter, all that is, is composed of opposing forces pulling against each other. There is no other way to have stability. If there is to be life, it must have a wind to run against.

THE SERPENT

See, but that's the question: What is the point of having life?

GOD

Every force must have its opposite. (Looks at THE SERPENT) Every force, including us. (We begin to hear *Higher and Higher* by Jackie Wilson) But tell me, do you really think you can't go home again?

THE SERPENT

You can go home. It just won't be the home you left.

GOD

Think so? Wanna give it a try?

THE SERPENT

I can go back?

GOD

If you want.

THE SERPENT

(Beat as he considers it) Well, maybe to visit.

GOD

Right, that's about as long as I can stand it up there too.

THE SERPENT

You devil you. So that's the point. That's why you did all this, to have someplace to go other than Heaven.

GOD

(Looking around) Shhh! It's no fun if they know. Let 'em wonder; it will keep them out of trouble.

THE SERPENT

If they keep out of trouble, you'll be out of work.

GOD

From your mouth to God's ears.

THE SERPENT

Bor-ing.

(They start to walk off)

GOD

I don't agree. There will always be mystery, and it's the mystery that makes it interesting. Year in, year out, you sow your seeds, watch the vineyard grow, never knowing what wine those grapes will yield.

THE SERPENT

It's an amusing but troublesome little civilization; A promising bouquet, if somewhat hard to swallow, with a bitter aftertaste; but after the second sip, you begin to hear the rhythm, and that makes it all worthwhile.

GOD

Well said. (Producing a fruit from his robes) Apple?

THE SERPENT

No thanks; I'm trying to cut down.

(They exit as we hear Jackie Wilson sing: *You know your love keeps on lifting me higher and higher, etc.*)

- End of play -