

The Gaping Void of Human Loneliness
A comedy by Dawson Moore

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CHARACTERS

The Leading Man	Male, middle-aged
His Failed Self	Male, elderly.
That Girl	Female, younger than the Leading Man
The Other Woman	Female, middle-aged.

SETTING

A void, littered with scraps of memories, potential futures, and skewed pasts.

TIME

Irrelevant.

The Leading Man, That Girl, and the Other Woman call out “Hello” from the darkness. The cries start friendly and gregarious, but grow more desperate and sad. The female voices fade away as lights rise on the Leading Man. That Girl approaches him.

THAT GIRL

You can't yell in here! It's a museum.

THE LEADING MAN

Sorry. I thought I was alone.

THAT GIRL

Why would you think that?

THE LEADING MAN

No... what I mean is ... I thought I was **alone**. I thought I was the last person in the universe. There was no one else. Darkness and silence all around me.

THAT GIRL

... so who were you calling to then? I mean, if you were the last person in the universe...

THE LEADING MAN

I didn't want to be alone. So I was hoping maybe you and I could...

He leans in suggestively. His Failed Self enters. They don't hear or see him.

HIS FAILED SELF

Hello?

THAT GIRL

Oh really?

THE LEADING MAN

If that's not asking too much.

THAT GIRL

And if it is?

THE LEADING MAN

Then I'll be embarrassed, and I'll leave.

HIS FAILED SELF

Hello?

THAT GIRL

How old are you, grandpa?

THE LEADING MAN
Come on, I'm not that old.

HIS FAILED SELF
I'm lost!

THE OTHER WOMAN
Entering.
Hello!

They don't hear or see her either.

THAT GIRL
In dog years, you're practically immortal.

THE LEADING MAN
I'm not a dog.

THAT GIRL
You're trying to hook up with a stranger at a museum. How are you not a dog? When you went through puberty, I wasn't even alive. That doesn't creep you out?

THE LEADING MAN
Can I say no? Can I admit that? I like that you're younger than me. It makes me feel wise.

THAT GIRL
Do you think I'm pretty?

THE LEADING MAN
Yes!

THE OTHER WOMAN
Hello?

The Leading Man heard her this time.

THAT GIRL
Tell me I'm pretty.

THE LEADING MAN
Um... yes, yes, of course, you're beautiful.

THAT GIRL
Thank you.

They share a romantic moment.

HIS FAILED SELF

Hello? I was here. I was in this museum. I was looking at that thing ...

He gazes skyward at something towering over him.

THE OTHER WOMAN

Hello!?!?

HIS FAILED SELF

And then I was completely alone. I blinked... and now I'm a really old man. And alone... Hello?!?! I've lost my mind. Maybe if I just wait here...

He lies down behind them, still staring at the towering object.

THAT GIRL

I can't see you anymore.

THE LEADING MAN

What? Why?

THAT GIRL

Your forehead is too big and your ambition too small.

She exits. He yells after her.

THE LEADING MAN

I don't understand how I'm supposed to ... fix my forehead.

A spot rises on The Other Woman.

THE OTHER WOMAN

Hello.

The Leading Man turns to her. He feels she's there, but can't see her.

THE LEADING MAN

Hello? It's good to ... hear you ... where are you?

THE OTHER WOMAN

I'm right here. I don't know about you. I'm in transition. All my plans involved my boyfriend... fiancé... we got married... my husband. I hate change. It confuses things. We were going to move to France together. Then he changed his mind. Eight years, erased in a moment. My boyfriend never would have done that. My husband didn't think twice.

THE LEADING MAN

How do I get to your place?

THE OTHER WOMAN

Don't ask me that.

THE LEADING MAN

I just mean... if I could find my way to you... if you could help me do that... I'd like to help you find the rest of yourself.

THE OTHER WOMAN

I'm not ready.

THE LEADING MAN

But... I listened to all your... I care about you.

The Other Woman exits. The Leading Man is crushed. He sees His Failed Self lying there. He walks up and kicks him in the shoes, a little viciously.

THE LEADING MAN

Hey, you can't just lie there. This is a museum.

His Failed Self rises, pointing up at the towering object. The Leading Man sees the it as holy, proof of the meaning in existence. His Failed Self thinks the opposite: it is the embodiment of all lies.

THE LEADING MAN

What on earth is that?

HIS FAILED SELF

What the hell is that?

THE LEADING MAN

I knew it. I knew it were real. I just have to reach it ... there should be a bridge.

HIS FAILED SELF

Don't touch it... it's evil.

THE LEADING MAN

That's ridiculous. Who put it all the way over there?

HIS FAILED SELF

You'll fall. You'll fall, and you won't die, but you'll want to. Leave it alone!

THAT GIRL

Granddad!

That Girl enters. His Failed Self goes into full doddering mode.

HIS FAILED SELF

What?

THAT GIRL

What are you doing? You're standing here screaming, bothering people. Let's go to your nice home with all those nice people and the nice cafeteria and the nice attendants.

She takes him off. The Leading Man is still trying to reach the towering object.

THE LEADING MAN

Almost got you... come on... come on! When I get you I'm going to... um.

He has no idea. The Other Woman enters, rapt in the towering object.

THE OTHER WOMAN

I don't know if I like it. My friend says it's phallic.

HIS FAILED SELF

(off) Hello??

THE OTHER WOMAN

But she says everything is phallic. Hot dogs. Mustard bottles. Picnics are hard for her.

HIS FAILED SELF

(off) Hello???

THE OTHER WOMAN

She says I'm naïve. But I'd rather be naïve than live in a world filled with manhood-forests. But I like this.

The Other Woman gazes at the object. That Girl enters.

THAT GIRL

What are you doing?

THE LEADING MAN

This? I was just... waiting for you.

THAT GIRL

You didn't know I was going to be here. Hello there.

THE LEADING MAN

Sorry if this seems forward, but it's really great to actually... be here, with you. Because you are always on my mind. I've moved along, moved on, all of that, but no matter where I go, my memories of you are waiting. It's inconvenient, because I miss you and you're not there.

THAT GIRL

I'm here now.

THE LEADING MAN

You are.

THAT GIRL

You're sweet.

THE LEADING MAN

You're beautiful.

THAT GIRL

You're here.

She grabs him and kisses him deeply. His Failed Self charges in.

HIS FAILED SELF

She's lying to you! She's the queen of lies, a succubus ... too late.

He exits. That Girl breaks away from him.

THAT GIRL

I can't see you anymore.

THE LEADING MAN

What? Why?

THAT GIRL

Your ego is too big and your self-esteem too low.

She exits.

THE LEADING MAN

Please! I can love myself... more, or less... whatever you want! I'll do it. Just ask!

The Leading Man exits after her. The Other Woman reflects on the towering object.

THE OTHER WOMAN

I think it's more like a skyscraper. I know some people say those are phallic, too... but not everything can be phallic. I mean, it is tall... erect. The way it... thrusts skyward...

That Girl joins her in looking at it.

THAT GIRL

I don't get what the big deal is. Other than that's it's so huge.

THE OTHER WOMAN

You just don't get it.

THAT GIRL

There's nothing to get. You worshipping it doesn't make it real.

THE OTHER WOMAN

I don't worship it. Don't call me naïve, but I believe in love. And happiness. And forever after. And soulmates. Chocolate on Valentine's day and walking the dog together and getting a tax break and being a mother. And maybe life's made you jaded, so you can't see the good things anymore. Be alone. Be lonely, and pretend it's a choice. Tell yourself, tell everyone about how free you are. Meanwhile, I'll be busy believing in love.

HIS FAILED SELF

Entering.

All rise for... the Leading Man!

THE OTHER WOMAN

Oh!

The Leading Man enters now in a suit and looking sharp. He stares at That Girl. The Other Woman watches them.

HIS FAILED SELF

He's been wooing you for over eight years. He's been patient, impatient, impertinent and bi-curious. He's bought you breakfast, lunch, and dinner. You've taken a little piece of him away every time, so he's a lot smaller than when we started, but it's now... or never!

The Leading Man approaches her, wary.

THAT GIRL

Hello!

It's really great to see you.

I've taken up surfing.

And massage.

You should let me practice on you.

No?

Are you ... not going to talk to me?

THE LEADING MAN

... Hello.

THAT GIRL

That's better.

THE LEADING MAN

It feels better.

THAT GIRL

I've been thinking.

THE LEADING MAN

Uh-huh.

THAT GIRL

I've started to think that maybe it's been you all along.

THE LEADING MAN

Really?

THAT GIRL

We always find each other, and you're always here for me. When my drain was clogged recently, I wanted to call you. But I was too proud. I don't want to be too proud with you anymore.

THE LEADING MAN

You're sure?

THAT GIRL

Yes!

THE LEADING MAN

I mean really sure.

THAT GIRL

Yes!!

THE LEADING MAN

Because I couldn't ... I don't think I could take it if ...

THAT GIRL

Don't you believe me?

THE LEADING MAN

... I believe you. I believe in you.

*That Girl takes his hand and they look out happily over the audience together.
After a few moments, she looks at him ... takes him in ... and takes her hand back.*

THAT GIRL

I can't see you anymore.

THE LEADING MAN

Why?

THAT GIRL

Your expectations are too high and your defenses are too low.

THE LEADING MAN

Just go.

She joins The Other Woman. He yells after her.

I'm not coming back a fourth time! I mean it. I'm changing my Netflix password. And don't be talking to my mom ... she's my mom, you can't have her!

THE OTHER WOMAN

Ignore him. He's a jerk.

The women exit the stage together.

THE LEADING MAN

Don't even think about coming back!

HIS FAILED SELF

Don't worry. She won't.

THE LEADING MAN

Never?

HIS FAILED SELF

From now on, you get to strike out with all new women.

THE LEADING MAN

You don't know that.

HIS FAILED SELF

Oh, but I do. Because ... I ... am ... YOU!!!!

THE LEADING MAN

Oh that's crap.

HIS FAILED SELF

No, really, from the future.

THE LEADING MAN

You are not. You're almost a foot shorter than me. (*whatever is most distinct between the actors*)

HIS FAILED SELF

You shrink with age. Ask me something only you would know about.

THE LEADING MAN

How old was I when I first masturbated?

HIS FAILED SELF

... some things you forget.

THE LEADING MAN

Likely story.

THAT GIRL

Entering.

Granddad! You've got to stop running away.

THE LEADING MAN

You ... remind me of someone.

THAT GIRL

I get that a lot.

They leave. The Leading Man follows, meeting the Other Woman.

THE OTHER WOMAN and THE LEADING MAN

Hello.

THE OTHER WOMAN

I'm so lost. Can you help me?

THE LEADING MAN

It comes down to... I don't think anyone can really help anyone.

THE OTHER WOMAN

Seriously? I'm just looking for the restroom.

THE LEADING MAN

I thought you meant ... sorry, it's this way. I should introduce myself. I'm the leading man.

THE OTHER WOMAN

(flirtatiously) You all think that.

The two of them exit. End of play.