

The Television Play

By

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Cast of Characters

<u>THE TRAVELER:</u>	Indeterminate age; rugged, weary, deeply emotional.
<u>YOUNG WOMAN:</u>	No older than 20; pretty, both whip-smart and naive.
<u>THE PRIEST:</u>	Older than Young Woman; heavy-set, exuding wisdom.
<u>VOICE:</u>	Any age, male or female. Can be a pre-recorded track.

ACT I

Scene (MOVIE)

In the blackness, we hear an urgent POUNDING.

THE TRAVELER

LET ME IN!! LET ME IN, I NEED HELP! FOR GOD'S SAKE LET-

The Traveler stumbles onstage from the audience and collapses. He carries a dirty pack with him.

Lights come up slowly, to about halfway.

THE TRAVELER

Hello? Hello! Is anyone there?

Young Woman enters. She is pretty and ephemeral.

The Traveler can't believe his eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN

You've come.

Lights up the rest of the way.

THE TRAVELER

I didn't believe it was true. I'd heard rumors-

The Priest enters. He is dressed in rags which may once have been vestments. He wears a gold ring.

THE PRIEST

You heard wrong.

Young Woman withdraws quickly from The Traveler.

The Priest regards him warily. Tableau.

VOICE

Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives.

(Voice speaks in a measured, even tone. Characters do not acknowledge Voice, except where indicated.)

THE TRAVELER

Please help me. I need food!

THE PRIEST

There is no food here.

YOUNG WOMAN
But-

THE PRIEST
There is nothing for you, here.

THE TRAVELER
Outside, it's gotten worse-

THE PRIEST
I know what's outside.

THE TRAVELER
You can't send me back there.

The Priest considers. Finally, to Young Woman:

THE PRIEST
It is time to pray.

YOUNG WOMAN
Yes father.

She exits. The Priest turns to go.

THE PRIEST
You may stay the night. One night. And then...

The Priest exits.

The Traveler crawls up stage center, to a chair.

VOICE
There are some things money can't buy. For everything else, there's Mastercard.

Blackout.

Scene (OPRAH)

Lights up on The Traveler, still seated. (The light change is accompanied by a CLICK! sound.)

To his right is The Priest, as if sharing a couch.

Young Woman sits in a separate chair to his left. She is an Oprah-like talk show host.

YOUNG WOMAN
So what did you find?

THE TRAVELER
In the diary?

YOUNG WOMAN
Yes. Were there confessions, complaints, fantasies...?

THE TRAVELER
No, no, nothing like that. To be honest, there wasn't anything in there about me at all.

YOUNG WOMAN
Nothing?

THE TRAVELER
Nothing. I mean, we were living together, we were having problems, you know- in the bedroom and whatever, and- it was hard for us to talk about. That's why I looked in her diary, I wouldn't normally do that, but-

VOICE
Diamonds are forever.

YOUNG WOMAN
And what was your reaction to that? To not being there?

THE TRAVELER
I didn't understand it. I didn't know how she could not have written anything about me. I mean, two years we're living together, it's a pretty big journal but there was maybe one or two things about me, in all that time-

Blackout.

Scene (MSNBC)

Lights up. CLICK!

The Traveler is now the host of a political talk show, flanked by the Young Woman and The Priest.

THE TRAVELER
-to my left: Democratic Senator from Illinois Mary Ellen Delgado-

YOUNG WOMAN
Thanks for having me.

THE TRAVELER
-and joining us live via satellite from his campaign headquarters in Dayton, Ohio, Tom Vincent, Republican Speaker of the House.

The Priest speaks with a slight delay.

THE PRIEST

It's good to be here.

THE TRAVELER

The subject today is global warming, and my first question is for you, Senator Delgado-

Blackout.

VOICE

Energy is neither created nor destroyed.

Scene (INFOMERCIAL)

Lights up. CLICK!

Young Woman and The Priest host an infomercial.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm not talking to anyone else, I'm talking to you. And I'm not saying, "change your life," I'm saying "CHANGE YOUR LIFE!"

THE PRIEST

Not only that, we're so excited to share this product with you today that we're gonna give you FREE SHIPPING, anywhere in the continental United States. What's next?

YOUNG WOMAN

You're gonna love this. This next item we have for you, it's amazing- I can't wait to get one of these myself!

Blackout.

Scene (OPRAH)

Lights up. CLICK!

Back to the Oprah talk show.

THE PRIEST

We're all wounded. We all have psychic wounds, which can come from- either from some traumatic event, in your childhood or even in your adult life, or the traumatic event can simply be growing up. The process of separation from your parents begins at birth and lasts-- well shoot, your entire life.

VOICE

If you love someone, set them on fire.

YOUNG WOMAN

You're not saying this is about his mother, are you?

THE PRIEST

Well, that's a very simplistic way of putting it- but since you brought it up, is there anything...?

THE TRAVELER

Not really.

THE PRIEST

What was your relationship with your mother like?

THE TRAVELER

I was afraid of my mother growing up. She was very emotional, you know? She would like, blow up at the smallest things sometimes. So you never knew what to expect, like- coming home from school.

YOUNG WOMAN

Do you think this affected your relationship?

THE TRAVELER

Honestly? I don't know.

THE PRIEST

Do you think perhaps you kept parts of yourself secret, because you were afraid of what her reaction might be?

THE TRAVELER

I wasn't the one keeping secrets. She had that whole journal, she didn't write anything about me-

YOUNG WOMAN

Were you faithful to her?

THE TRAVELER

Faithful?

VOICE

All that grunts and withers in this world is beauty; love is the language it speaks.

Scene (COMIC)

Lights up. CLICK!

The Traveler is now a stand-up comic. He takes a microphone downstage and addresses the audience.

Subtle laugh track throughout.

THE TRAVELER

You know what I realized the other day? I'm 32 years old, and already I'm a cranky old man. Seriously, I am just a cranky old bastard, and I hate-- honestly? I hate just about everything. Temperatures, for instance. I don't like temperatures. I like things room temperature, or maybe six degrees on either side. But otherwise room temperature. I don't like things with hinges. Anything with hinges, anything sealed in plastic, I don't like. Noises? I hate noises. I hate people yelling across the street to their friends. In fact I hate waving of all kinds. Public bathrooms, across the board. The handblowers, the toilet doors that don't stay closed, the whole thing-hate it. I hate directions. Giving directions, getting directions, following directions, I just- I can't stand it!

Blackout.

Scene (MSNBC)

Lights up. CLICK!

Back to the political talk show. Dialog overlaps.

THE PRIEST

Look, all we're asking for is for the Democrats to put their money where their mouth is, and engage us-

YOUNG WOMAN

Seventy-two percent of Americans believe global warming is happening and that it's caused by human factors-

THE PRIEST

And that number is *down* from last year!

YOUNG WOMAN

Fifty-three- FIFTY-THREE percent of Americans support legislation that would curb carbon emissions, and-

THE PRIEST

Fifty-three percent is hardly a mandate for change-

THE TRAVELER

Okay, Mr. Speaker, let me stop you there-

THE PRIEST

It's a fair point!

THE TRAVELER

I agree, but I want to get back to something you said earlier: we were talking about political will globally, you said you didn't think it was there but look at what came out of the latest round of climate talks--

THE PRIEST

Let's be honest. What came out of those talks is a joke! Countless days, weeks wasted- and for what? A non-binding resolution? A motion to continue cooperating? You might as well have gotten the G8 together for tea and cupcakes!

VOICE

You want the truth? You can't handle the truth.

YOUNG WOMAN

Can I respond to that?

THE TRAVELER

Just a moment, Senator. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear where you stand, here. Are you saying you would have preferred a more *robust* agreement from this last round of talks?

THE PRIEST

Look. My responsibility is to the voters of Ohio, first and foremost. And what I'm hearing from them, from my constituents, is that they are sick and tired of all the political wrangling going on in Washington. What they want is an open and honest conversation-

THE TRAVELER

Okay, but Mr. Speaker I asked what kind of agreement you would have liked to see-

THE PRIEST

And I'm telling you! What I want is what the people want, and that's to see more openness in the whole debate.

YOUNG WOMAN

Can I just jump in here? Because I see where you're going with this and I want to say, for the record-

THE PRIEST

Let me finish, Senator-

THE TRAVELER

I'll get to you in a moment, but Mr. Speaker I'd really like you to answer the question I posed earlier-

VOICE

(suddenly, sternly)

TRY IT!! You'll like it.

Everyone lifts their eyes skyward for a moment.

Blackout.

Scene (MOVIE)

Lights up. CLICK!

The Traveler lies on the floor, in a blanket.

Young Woman kneels beside him, strokes his hair.

He awakes with a start, pulls away from her.

THE TRAVELER

You shouldn't get so close!

YOUNG WOMAN

Why?

THE TRAVELER

What if I was sick?

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm not afraid.

THE TRAVELER

You should be.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm not.

THE TRAVELER

Please. Stand away from me. Please.

YOUNG WOMAN

All right.

She moves away, watches him. After a while.

THE TRAVELER

Outside, everyone's sick. You see it on their faces:
pain, unimaginable pain.

YOUNG WOMAN

Father says pain is a sin of the body. We pray on
broken glass for the forgiveness of our many sins.

She begins to cry.

THE TRAVELER

Are you all right?

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm so happy you're here! I want to know all about you.

THE TRAVELER

What is there to know? I've been traveling.

YOUNG WOMAN

Have you seen a lot?

THE TRAVELER

Yes.

VOICE

No news is good news.

YOUNG WOMAN

Like what? I want to know everything.

THE TRAVELER

I've seen a lot.

YOUNG WOMAN

You don't want to tell me?

THE TRAVELER

It's not that. It's-- difficult to talk about.

YOUNG WOMAN

All right.

(beat)

What do you think of me?

THE TRAVELER

You seem nice.

YOUNG WOMAN

That's a boring answer.

THE TRAVELER

Sorry. I haven't talked to anyone in a very long time.

YOUNG WOMAN

Neither have I. But at least I'm trying.

The Traveler considers, then takes the plunge.

THE TRAVELER

I was coming from Dallas, years ago. There were maybe thirty of us on a bus. When the first quake hit, we were somewhere- maybe in Oklahoma? I don't remember. The bus went off the road-

YOUNG WOMAN

And you were the only one who survived?

THE TRAVELER

No. Me and four others. After the quakes, the rains started. Endless. We traveled in them for a time, didn't make it far. Eventually we took refuge in an abandoned hotel. Every night more and more people would arrive. They slept in the lobby, in the hallways...

YOUNG WOMAN

Did you have plumbing?

THE TRAVELER

No, no plumbing. No electricity.

YOUNG WOMAN

Do you remember plumbing?

The Traveler smiles in spite of himself.

THE TRAVELER

Yes. I remember plumbing.

YOUNG WOMAN

It must have been wonderful!

THE TRAVELER

Yes.

A beat. Traveler drinks her with his gaze.

THE TRAVELER (cont'd)

Yes. We were in the hotel when-- the sickness came.

YOUNG WOMAN

Father told me about the sickness.

THE TRAVELER

What did he tell you?

YOUNG WOMAN

He said that God made the sickness to kill the sinners, but that sometimes even a good person can get sick. And he said it hurts. And that pain is a sin of the body, so we pray on broken glass-

Young Woman appears to be in pain momentarily, but she pushes it aside with some effort.

YOUNG WOMAN (cont'd)

Please keep talking.

THE TRAVELER

At first we had a system, but with more people every day it became hard to manage. Someone got sick, and

(MORE)

THE TRAVELER (cont'd)

within a week the whole floor was sick. The bodies would just pile up in the hallway... so I left.

YOUNG WOMAN

You left!

THE TRAVELER

I left my group. And- a girl. I told myself I would go back for her, but I knew when I left... she wouldn't last long on her own. So I left her. I left her behind.

YOUNG WOMAN

And where did you go?

THE TRAVELER

Denver.

YOUNG WOMAN

Denver? Oh, how wonderful! Is it true what they say? That everything still works there?

THE TRAVELER

It was true for a while. By the time I got there Denver was just like the hotel, only worse. You wouldn't believe how many people! They put up tents when the rain started. And afterward they put up more tents, and canvas covers on the walkways-

YOUNG WOMAN

And they built the aqueducts!

VOICE

When all that can be imagined can be created, there will be nothing left to imagine or create.

THE TRAVELER

Yes. The aqueducts.

YOUNG WOMAN

Did you see them?

THE TRAVELER

They were just starting when I left. I took a plane-

YOUNG WOMAN

An airplane!

THE TRAVELER

This was years ago. I had money saved, I was young-

YOUNG WOMAN

I was born on an airplane.

THE TRAVELER

You were?

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, yes. I was baptised in the airplane bathroom.

THE TRAVELER

Well. There are no airplanes now.

YOUNG WOMAN

No.

THE TRAVELER

How long have you been here?

YOUNG WOMAN

Seventeen years.

THE TRAVELER

Seventeen! Where do you find food?

YOUNG WOMAN

I shouldn't say.

THE TRAVELER

Of course, I understand.

YOUNG WOMAN

I could talk to my father. Maybe you could stay-

THE TRAVELER

No. Even if he agreed, I wouldn't stay.

YOUNG WOMAN

Because of me?

THE TRAVELER

Yes. Because of you.

VOICE

Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon.

Young Woman watches him.

Carefully, she withdraws a small bag of almonds from beside her breast.

YOUNG WOMAN
Almond.

She moves toward him, cautiously.

When she's near enough, she produces a single nut and places it gingerly in his mouth. He lets her.

THE TRAVELER
Thank you.

YOUNG WOMAN
How old are you?

THE TRAVELER
Older than you.

YOUNG WOMAN
How much older?

THE TRAVELER
I don't know. I've lost track.

The Traveler smiles at her.

YOUNG WOMAN
We have a farm.

THE TRAVELER
I'm sorry?

YOUNG WOMAN
Next door there's a farm. No, not a farm. A glasshouse?

THE TRAVELER
A greenhouse?

YOUNG WOMAN
Yes! There are many men who work there. They collect the rain, and they purify it. My father taught them to. He's very wise. They care for the plants like children. They even sleep next to them.

THE TRAVELER
And they share them with you?

YOUNG WOMAN
Of course! They would do anything for my father.

THE TRAVELER
I see.

VOICE

If you liked it then you shoulda put a ring on it.

The Priest enters with a bag of broken glass.

He hands it to the Young Woman, wordlessly.

The Priest pauses just before he exits.

THE PRIEST

It is almost nighttime.

THE TRAVELER

I'm leaving now.

THE PRIEST

If you find medication-

THE TRAVELER

Yes. I'll return.

The Priest exits.

Young Woman begins to scatter the broken glass.

YOUNG WOMAN

Would you like to pray, before you leave?

THE TRAVELER

I have nothing to pray for.

YOUNG WOMAN

You should pray on broken glass for the forgiveness of-

THE TRAVELER

It is getting dark. I should go. Thank you for talking.

He starts into the audience, to exit.

YOUNG WOMAN

Wait!

He lingers, before leaving.

YOUNG WOMAN (cont'd)

Will I see you again?

THE TRAVELER

I doubt it.

He exits.

Blackout.

Scene (INFOMERCIAL)

Lights up. CLICK!

The infomercial again.

THE PRIEST

Hey, let's face it. We live in the twenty-first century now, and the last thing you want to do is interact with another human being. Right?

YOUNG WOMAN

You got that right!

THE PRIEST

You want to be hooked into your iPod, you want to have your music going, and you want everyone else to basically just leave you alone. Right?

YOUNG WOMAN

I sure do! You what I hate? I hate it when I have to call someone on the phone, or talk to a delivery person when I want to order some food-

THE PRIEST

That's enough. Then let me share with you a revolutionary new device, this is called the iDon't. And what this does is absolutely incredible-

YOUNG WOMAN

Looks nice!

THE PRIEST

Wait until you see this thing in action. Here, just put these glasses on-

He hands her a pair of oversized glasses.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh! They're comfortable!

THE PRIEST

Aren't they? They're stylish, too. You look good in them. Now I'll just turn this setting on here, and-

The Priest dials a small button on the iDon't.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh my God! Wow, you don't look like yourself at all!

THE PRIEST

Who do I look like?

YOUNG WOMAN

Well, you look- now I know this may sound strange, but- you look *twenty years younger!*

The Priest laughs.

THE PRIEST

And that's just a little sample of what this device can do. Using the latest image- and motion-mapping technology, the iDon't is able to systematically and SEAMLESSLY alter the appearance of the people around you. Let's try this setting.

The Priest makes an adjustment.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh! Oh, my goodness! It's *Brad Pitt!*

THE PRIEST

No, it's still me. But the iDon't comes with over four hundred celebrity "skins," so now you can ride the subway with the STARS! And let me tell you something, these skins are *totally* lifelike.

The Priest winks lasciviously.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, wow! I love the iDon't!!

THE PRIEST

And remember, there are thousands more skins available for purchase on our website. Just one more setting-

The Priest makes an adjustment.

YOUNG WOMAN

Where did you go?

THE PRIEST

Sometimes you need to get away, right? With the iDon't you CAN get away, even in a city of ten million people. Using a high-definition rotoscoping camera, the iDon't can completely erase the presence of your fellow human beings. Now whether you live in New York City or Duluth, Minnesota; whether you live in Hong Kong or Barcelona- you can be *completely alone* on the planet.

YOUNG WOMAN

I want one!

THE PRIEST

The future is the iDon't: I don't want to see you, I don't want to hear you, I don't want to know you exist. Boom.

Blackout.

Scene (MSNBC)

Lights up. CLICK!

Back to the political talk show. Dialog overlaps.

YOUNG WOMAN

Look, you can argue that global warming is not a priority and you can argue that there are hundreds of things worth spending our time or money on first-

THE PRIEST

Thank you, because that's exactly what I'm arguing.

YOUNG WOMAN

-but you have to admit that eliminating our dependence on foreign oil is only going to make things better-

THE PRIEST

Of course I agree with that. It's the Democrats who want to take money out of the War on Terror-

THE TRAVELER

Let's stick to global warming, Mr. Speaker if we can-

THE PRIEST

Look. This is what I'm saying, Senator. We obviously agree that decreasing our dependence on foreign oil is a priority. But what the Democrats won't say is that we have plenty of oil *right here* in the United States!

YOUNG WOMAN

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker: ANWAR is *not* on the table. The American people do not want-

THE TRAVELER

ANWAR, that's the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge-

THE PRIEST

There are *ten billion barrels of oil* just sitting up there in Alaska.

YOUNG WOMAN

Sitting up there in a protected wildlife refuge!

THE PRIEST

Do you realize what kind of effect ten billion barrels of oil would have on the US economy? Oil we don't have to import? I think American jobs are worth more than-

YOUNG WOMAN

We import ten million barrels of oil a day, Mr. Speaker, so this is a hundred days' worth of oil coming from Alaska. Hardly an economic stimulus. And hardly worth disturbing the largest remaining caribou herd on Earth!

VOICE

We have nothing to fear, but fear itself.

Blackout.

Scene (COMIC)

Lights up. CLICK!

The Traveler becomes the stand-up comic again.

THE TRAVELER

When I was younger I used to like to make bets with myself. You ever do this? You make a little bet, like: "I'll bet you can't toss that piece of paper into the wastebasket from halfway across the room." Little things, to make life entertaining. Only my bets were a lot more self-destructive, more like "Bet you can't have five more beers and still drive home," or "Bet you can't graduate college with a coke addiction." Little things, little small things to keep you entertained...

Blackout.

Scene (OPRAH)

Lights up. CLICK!

YOUNG WOMAN

Self-pity?

The Traveler speaks earnestly, with difficulty.

THE TRAVELER

Yes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Self-loathing?

THE TRAVELER

Yes.

YOUNG WOMAN

A desire to completely obliterate your physical being-?

THE TRAVELER

Yes!-

YOUNG WOMAN

-to destroy the world by destroying yourself?-

THE TRAVELER

Yes, yes!

The Traveler buries his face in his hands, crying.

She touches him lightly, comforting.

YOUNG WOMAN

It's not your fault.

THE TRAVELER

(sobs)

YOUNG WOMAN

I mean that, it's not your fault. Right, Doctor?

THE PRIEST

Nothing is your fault, son. It's in your genes.

VOICE

Out of college, money spent.

YOUNG WOMAN

Explain that to us, Doctor-

VOICE

See no future, pay no rent.

THE PRIEST

You see, all our behaviors are guided by chemicals. They control everything we think, everything we do- you can't help it if your chemicals are out of whack, son, that's just a fact of life. But you can get help. If you're strong enough to ask for it.

YOUNG WOMAN

Well? Are you strong enough to ask for help?

VOICE

All the money's gone, nowhere to go.

THE TRAVELER

(between tears)

Will you... will you... help me?

Blackout.

Scene (COMIC)

Lights up. CLICK!

The Traveler is the stand-up comic again.

THE TRAVELER

Listen I've been masturbating for like, twenty years. Right? Which means--that's the longest time I've ever had sex with one person. I mean, twenty years! That's longer than some people are married. But you know what? And this is true. I think the honeymoon period is over. I'm serious! When I first got together with myself we were doing it ALL THE TIME-- the shower, the living room, the backseat of my Pontiac Bonneville... and I used to really bring the romance, you know: light a few candles, maybe take a nice hot bath. Nowadays it's just- very functional. It's like the love is gone. I don't even cuddle with myself afterwards, anymore...

Scene (MOVIE)

Lights up. CLICK!

The Priest takes the Young Woman by the hand.

He leads her down to the broken glass, still scattered across the stage.

She lays down on it.

He climbs on top of her.

Dispassionate intercourse.

The Priest gets up, goes and prays on the glass.

Young Woman lies on her back, staring at the ceiling.

THE PRIEST

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume-

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't love you.

The Priest stops his prayers for a moment.

Then resumes.

THE PRIEST

"and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them--"

YOUNG WOMAN

What I thought was love, it turns out-- is not love. Love is-- so much bigger than I imagined.

THE PRIEST

You should pray.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes.

But she doesn't move. The Priest continues.

THE PRIEST

"...Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Amen."

He crosses himself. He stands-- the glass sticks into his flesh, and he must pull it out carefully.

It's clearly very painful, but he makes no sound.

YOUNG WOMAN

I can't stop thinking about him, Papa. Do you think he thinks about me?

THE PRIEST

You should learn to forget. You're old enough, now.

YOUNG WOMAN

Why can't I go outside?

THE PRIEST

Because it is raining. And because only men can go outside.

YOUNG WOMAN

Do the farmers go outside?

THE PRIEST

No. The farmers care for the plants.

YOUNG WOMAN

Don't they ever want to go outside?

THE PRIEST

No.

YOUNG WOMAN

Because of me?

THE PRIEST

Yes. Because of you.

VOICE

Every fair from fair sometime declines.

YOUNG WOMAN

Am I sick, Papa?

THE PRIEST

Yes.

YOUNG WOMAN

And you want me to get pregnant? Before I die?

THE PRIEST

Yes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Do you think it will happen?

THE PRIEST

I don't know. You must pray, now.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes, Papa.

She stands, crosses to the glass. Perhaps we see the bloody holes in her back from lying on it.

She kneels, and begins to pray.

YOUNG WOMAN (cont'd)

"All wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with him forever. Who can number the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity? Who can find out the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the deep, and wisdom? Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. The word of God most high..."

Scene (MSNBC - end)

Lights up. CLICK!

Back to the political talk show. Dialog overlaps.

THE PRIEST

All right Senator, let's look at the facts. You know what happens to the American economy if you start

(MORE)

THE PRIEST (cont'd)

piling higher and higher taxes on carbon emissions? Complete economic collapse. *This entire country* runs on gasoline. How are we going to ship goods, Senator? How are we going to fly our white collar workers around the world? You're going to do that without *gasoline*?

YOUNG WOMAN

So you're saying we shouldn't pursue it because-

THE PRIEST

Because it's a PIPE DREAM, Senator! You can't just throw a switch and suddenly you don't need petroleum-

YOUNG WOMAN

France generates 80% of its energy from nuclear power-

THE PRIEST

France is NOT the United States, Senator!

YOUNG WOMAN

But even Russia is investing heavily in nuclear technologies. Mr. Speaker, the economies of tomorrow are *green* economies. If you and your colleagues want to dig your heels in and cling to old-world thinking-

THE TRAVELER

All right, Senator-

THE PRIEST

All due respect? This is precisely the doublespeak that Americans are sick of hearing from the Democratic party. You talk about this beautiful green future, this imaginary green economy, and then you talk about nuclear power! Your entire party is afflicted by this *left-wing optimism* which believes Science is your savior, when in reality-

YOUNG WOMAN

Hold on a moment, Mr. Speaker-

THE PRIEST

No! You hold on a moment. I am *so sick* of you people! You lump all the devout into one group and call us religious nutcases, while you've all drunk the Kool-Aid of eco-scientific Earth worship, which is basically-

YOUNG WOMAN

Mr. Speaker-

THE PRIEST

Which is basically PAGANism! Senator, the way I look at it is: our time on Earth is limited. We ought to take

(MORE)

THE PRIEST (cont'd)
 care of the things we can take care of. We can't do anything about tomorrow. All this running around like Chicken Little is NOT going to put food on anyone's table, and it's not going to put clothes on their back.

YOUNG WOMAN
 So we should do nothing?

THE PRIEST
 We should focus on problems we can SOLVE, Senator. The rest is in God's hands.

THE TRAVELER
 Let me just jump in, because we have to take a break.

VOICE
 We never. Stop working. For you.

Blackout.

Scene (BLACKOUT)

Voice speaks naturally.

VOICE
 We are not economic models. We do not behave rationally. We seek our mothers and our fathers, our brothers and our sisters. We seek our tribe in everyone we meet. Community is built with effort, not by accident. We cannot continue to pursue a definition of the Self which does not include a definition of the Other. The triumph of the human spirit is not a solo performance. Will is not a singular experience. Collective will. Conscious evolution. Pushing ourselves beyond the boundaries of comfortable thought-- no, not quite. Allowing ourselves to be pushed by the inner movements which exceed the outer toil. We are the children of the Lord. We are the fragments of the shattered mirror which began the Universe. We reflect and complete each other. We are human. We are divine.

Scene (END)

In the blackness, we hear an urgent POUNDING.

THE TRAVELER
 Let me in!! Please! LET ME IN!!

The Traveler stumbles onstage from the audience.

Lights come up slowly, to about halfway.

Young Woman enters. She is covered in blood.

A moment, as they look at each other.

Lights up the rest of the way.

YOUNG WOMAN

You came back.

THE TRAVELER

Yes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Did you come back for me?

THE TRAVELER

I brought you medicine.

YOUNG WOMAN

It's no use.

THE TRAVELER

You're sick. This will help you. Here-

He pulls a small bag of pills from his breast and tries to feed it to her, but she produces a knife.

He backs off, scared.

THE TRAVELER

What did you do?

YOUNG WOMAN

I killed him.

THE TRAVELER

I see.

YOUNG WOMAN

I want to go outside. Will you take me?

THE TRAVELER

You're sick. You can't go outside.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes. I'm very sick.

She draws near to him. He doesn't move.

She presses the knife to his neck.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm going to die.

She leans toward him, kisses him.

THE TRAVELER

It's not too late for you. I have medicine-

A DRUM BEGINS TO BEAT offstage.

YOUNG WOMAN

It *is* too late. It's too late for both of us.

THE TRAVELER

What is that?

YOUNG WOMAN

They found his body.

THE TRAVELER

The farmers?

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes. They will come for me now.

Drumming slowly increases in pace.

THE TRAVELER

Do they know you're here?

YOUNG WOMAN

They've heard stories. They must have believed them.

THE TRAVELER

When they find you- they'll tear you apart!

YOUNG WOMAN

That's what I'm hoping.

She kneels on the broken glass and begins to pray.

THE TRAVELER

All right come with me! I'll take you outside.

YOUNG WOMAN

In the rain?

THE TRAVELER

Yes. We'll take the medicine, we'll find somewhere...
somewhere safe.

YOUNG WOMAN
And then?

THE TRAVELER
I'll take care of you. Girls your age can live three or four years with the medicine. Maybe that would be enough time... to start a family.

YOUNG WOMAN
No. I want to go outside alone.

THE TRAVELER
You haven't been out there, you don't know what it's like. There are terrible people everywhere, terrible men. You won't last five minutes without me!

YOUNG WOMAN
I'm going outside. And I'm going alone.

THE TRAVELER
No! I won't let you!

VOICE
When it rains, it pours.

They acknowledge the voice, briefly.

Then each other.

THE TRAVELER
Here.

He takes a length of rope from his bag.

He ties it to her wrist.

YOUNG WOMAN
What is this?

THE TRAVELER
In case you change your mind.

YOUNG WOMAN
I won't.

THE TRAVELER
I know.

YOUNG WOMAN
You're sweet.

Young Woman caresses his face.

*Just as they are approaching an impossible frenzy,
the drums come to a sudden stop.*

YOUNG WOMAN (cont'd)

They must be outside the door.

THE TRAVELER

Why did they stop?

YOUNG WOMAN

They're praying.

She stands.

MUSIC UP: "Ring Them Bells," Bob Dylan.

She walks slowly down the aisle of the audience.

*The string is tied to one hand, which she holds
above her head--keeping tension on the string.*

She holds her knife in the other hand.

She exits out the rear door.

*The Traveler continues to feed out string, as the
lights begin to slowly come down.*

Lights fade to about halfway.

The line suddenly goes slack.

Blackout.