

# EMISSIONS

## A climate comedy

By Ann Cavlovic

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An original musical score was composed for this play by Scott Irving of The PepTides, and used during its first production. This score will also be available under a Creative Commons license soon. Check back at: [www.climateplay.ca](http://www.climateplay.ca) to download it soon. The play can certainly be staged without it, but it is so, so lovely to have.

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*"Best in Fest" winner at the 2013 Ottawa Fringe Festival*  
**[www.climateplay.ca](http://www.climateplay.ca)**

*We are stardust, billion year old carbon  
We are golden, caught in the devil's bargain  
And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden  
- Joni Mitchell*

*Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering.  
There is a crack in everything,  
That's how the light gets in.  
~Leonard Cohen*

## Synopsis

After Adam and Eve destroy a second garden with poison, spears, fire, and a chainsaw, we might ask ourselves: “why do we keep screwing up paradise?” A modern Adam and Eve bump up against that question in the subsequent quirky scenes, but without any of the preachy or dogmatic dialogue you might expect. Each scene – dealing with anything from an international meeting to the office microwave – explores the unexpected but entirely human factors that lead us to piss in our own swimming pool. In the end, key characters come together in another post-Eden romance. No quick fixes, but no antidepressants required either.

## Outline

Scene 1: The Beginning

Scene 2: Knowledge

Scene 3: Tragedy of the (Unmanaged) Commons

Scene 4: Us vs. Them

Scene 5: Guilt Trips

Scene 6: Denial

Scene 7: The End

## Running Time:

Approximately 60minutes.

## Cast of Characters

Total number of actors: Minimum 6, many more can be accommodated. Ideally a minimum of 2 males and 2 females, with suggested genders for other roles. The ideal gender of characters are noted. A “\*” indicates either gender works easily.

In order of appearance:

### **Eve**

An average female, early-20s or so (no matter what time period). Passionate and highly dependent on others.

### **Adam**

An average male, early-20s or so (no matter what time period). Cool and fiercely independent

### **Dr. Geb\***

Nerdy, has difficulty communicating, but endearing

### **Bus rider\***

Human with other stuff they'd rather be doing

### **Voice**

The deep voice of that man in all the commercials

### **Mindy\***

Friendly enough

### **Margaret Wente**

Being herself (or replace with locally recognisable figure that is often misinformed)

### **Guilty\*, Dopey\*, Jerky\*, Cranky\*, Snobby\***

Guilty and Cranky are best as females. Rest best as males. Guilty uses "Valspeak"

### **Minister Sharma\***

Best as a female. A Minister (political) from India or some other less-developed country (alter name as required).

### **Adam's Aide\***

A political staffer

### **Sharma's Aide(s)\***

Extra political staffers for Sharma, who do nothing but take notes. If more than one, only one person speaks

**Protestor\***

Strident (Option for this character to also be Mindy)

**Gus\***

Well meaning but righteous

**Them** (numbers 1-15)\*

Variants of normal people, with busy lives, like you and me. (Them 10: could be Guilty)

**Stan**

Best as a man in his 60s, damaged yet bombastic

**Doctor**

Ideally a female.

**Guide**

A tour guide.

**Set Requirements:**

Can be performed on a blank stage. The use of most props can be mimed.

When first produced, the following props were used: material for a 'river', a wooden plank, 6 chairs, a microwave, a table, a bus stop, a bicycle, a banner, a horn, and a shawl.

The first production contained many musical elements, and portions of scenes 1, 5 and 7 were done as a musical. The original score is available for use (see title page for information).

Slang and expletives should be modified to suit the nature of the audience/performers.

A placard bearing the title of each scene (after the first) could be displayed before the scene starts, in the spirit of Bertolt Brecht.

**Time and Place:**

The present day (except the first scene, which notionally takes place in the time of Adam and Eve, despite intentional anachronisms).

**Log Line (49 words)**

An intelligent satire about the human dynamics behind climate change that will have you peeing your pants laughing. A modern Adam and Eve deal with anything from international negotiations to the office kitchen, exploring what it is that makes human beings piss in our own swimming pool.

## SCENE 1: The Beginning

SETTING: The garden of Eden. A river runs down the centre, dividing stage left and stage right. (Text written such that other elements of "garden" can be mimed)

AT RISE: EVE walks onto her "half", leisurely surveying the nice things there.

EVE: Ah, my Sycamore trees, givers of such sweet fruit ...Hello little goats, my sweet dears. And oh, how beautiful the sun shining on the whitewash of my cosy home.

*(ADAM enters on the other side, surveying his side and checking things off on a clipboard. EVE does not notice.)*

EVE: My fire pit, my warmth and security ... And what would I do without my gurgling river. *(She collects water, and pours it on her garden)* And what bounty in my vegetable patch - such nourishing and tasty greens. *(Annoyed)* Fuck, weeds. *(She digs in the garden. In a beat sees Adam)*  
Morning... jerk face.

ADAM: *(Sarcastic)* Howdy, sunshine.

*(They eye each other suspiciously, then resume. Once EVE is focused on gardening, ADAM gets a plank of wood, places it over the river and starts to crawl over)*

EVE: *(seeing Adam)* Fat chance, moron. Remember: *(points to their respective halves of the stage)* this is *my* piece of paradise; that's *your* piece of paradise. Back off!

ADAM: *(shrugs and goes back)*

EVE: *(looking where Adam was)* You just eroded more of the riverbank!

ADAM: That's nothing compared to getting us banished from the first paradise.

EVE: Would you let go of that forbidden fruit thing. Let it go. You can't keep blaming me for that.

ADAM: He was more pissed at you than me.

EVE: How many times do I have to say this? I never heard it straight from him. He only bothered to tell you, before I was even made. You didn't make it sound like such a biggie. And how was I supposed to know you were telling the truth? That the friggin' snake was even less honest than you?

ADAM: O ye of little faith.

EVE: And if he was so damn concerned about desertification and proper irrigation practices, why were you all going on about apples?

ADAM (*cool*): We tried to tell you.

EVE: I was two days old, asshole. How was I supposed to know what "metaphor" meant?

ADAM: I guess females have crappy listening skills.

EVE: All right. I've had it! (*She grabs a piece of fruit*) Here's another piece of fruit for ya then, poor little man who can't say no for himself. (*Pitches the fruit at Adam*)

ADAM: Ah, my rib! It still hurts!

(*EVE: returns to garden patch*)

(*ADAM: grabs a tube, puts a substance into one end, blows on the tube to spray contents onto Eve's garden*)

EVE: Ah! That much lime will kill my garden. You monster! (*She picks up rocks and starts throwing them continuously*)

ADAM: Stop! My cob house.

EVE: (*continues*)

ADAM: I said stop!

EVE: (*continues*)

ADAM: All right then. (*he collects three spears and throws them over*)

EVE: My goats! You murderer! (*she puts a torch in her fire pit, then launches it over*) Take that, wonder of creation.

ADAM: My spears! All in flames! That's the last straw. (*exits, returns and fires up a chainsaw<sup>1</sup>. He jumps over the river and cuts down several fruit trees on Eve's side*)

EVE: No! No! (*she gets another fire torch, jumps over to Adam's side, and lights his trees on fire*) Burn, baby, burn!

(*ADAM and EVE are wild with destruction*)

EVE: O my god! Wait! Stop! There's only one tree left on either side. Let's call a truce.

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<sup>1</sup> Strongly suggested to include sound effect of a chainsaw, if possible.

ADAM: It's too late.

EVE: But we can't keep going like this –

ADAM: (*interrupting*) I mean, watch out, your last tree is about to fall on mine.

(*ADAM and EVE brace themselves as the falling tree takes down the last remaining one*)

EVE: It's all gone.

ADAM: Everything.

EVE: My fruit trees.

ADAM: *My* fruit trees.

EVE: My goats.

ADAM: My house.

EVE: My garden.

ADAM: My fuel for power tools.

EVE: All the things we need to survive.

ADAM: Fat lot of good knowledge does.

EVE: Why do you keep doing this to me?

ADAM: Do this to *you*? Miss Pyromaniac?

EVE: You started this! It's your fault.

ADAM: It's everyone's and it's no one's.

EVE: You keep screwing up paradise. *You* have to fix it.

ADAM: Not my problem.

EVE: Do something!

ADAM: Nope.

EVE: Fix this. I can't stand this!

ADAM: Me too.

EVE: (*worried*) Excuse me?

ADAM: (*lightly*) I said I can't stand it either. Finito. I'm outta here.

EVE: What do you mean 'outta here'? Where can we go next?

ADAM: There's no "we". *I'm* heading down the Tigris...

EVE: What?

ADAM: ...*You* can take the Euphrates, or wherever the heck you want.

EVE: You can't dump me. We're Adam and Eve!

ADAM: Babe, I'm so "just-not-into-you" right now.

EVE: No, wait. We need each other –

ADAM: I don't need you or anybody. I'll do better **on my own**. Just watch me. (*exits*)

EVE: Adam! You can't do this. (*to herself*) Okay. I can handle this. That's right. I can move on. I'll find a man who loves me just the way I am. We'll create our own paradise. I'll birth him fifteen babies, and when they grow up, they'll do all the work! Gardening. Cooking. Lice picking. We'll take care of our paradise this time. Yes! *We* will do it. We'll do better **as a collective**. (*looking where Adam exited*) Just watch me. (*exits opposite direction*)

(LIGHTS fade)



## SCENE 2: Knowledge

SETTING: A city street.

*In this scene, Adam sends outgoing texts/tweets.*

AT RISE: Dr. Geb is waiting at a bus stop with Bus Rider. Nearby, Adam is in his car, idling, waiting to pick up someone. The SOUND effect of an idling car is heard.

ADAM: (*preens himself, excited for a first date. Texts: "At your front door. Ready when u r :)"*)

GEB: (*irritated by exhaust. He motions for Adam to turn off the ignition, but ADAM doesn't see. After a few beats, he walks over to car, knocks on window*)

ADAM: (*rolls down window*)

GEB: Could I respectfully suggest that you turn off your engine?

ADAM: Ah, sure. (*smiles, rolls up window, locks door, and returns to preening himself and/or checking messages on phone – still idling*).

GEB: (*returns to bus stop, frustrated. Motions again to turn off ignition*)

ADAM: (*notices Geb, then calls someone*) Hey, Jay. Sorry, man, but I had to call somebody. (*Pause*) No, no. I'm waiting for her to come down. (*Pause*) 'Cause I'm trying to look busy. (*Pause*) 'Cause there's this warrior geek stalking my car. (*Pause*) Seriously...that type can go off the rails. (*Pause*) But it's disturbing my *sanctity* in here, you know what I'm saying? (*Pause*) Yeah ok, man. Peace. (*Hangs up, checks something on his phone while Geb speaks*)

GEB (*to Bus Rider*): Each gallon ... 20 pounds of CO2...and not even generating useful locomotion. I should simply inform him. This is precisely the sort of anthropogenic radiative forcing that very likely – that is, greater than 90% probability – exacerbates the observed increases in global average temperatures, and which must be reduced to avoid the resulting disruptions to many natural systems. But perhaps its better, for a lay audience, to speak of global warming potentials? (*sees lack of reaction*) Oh fiddlesticks. (*Goes up to car*)

ADAM: (*Rolls down window*)

GEB: Sir, your... emission perturbations ... do you realize that....(*pause*) are you familiar with radiative forcing?

ADAM: Is that what this is?

GEB: Perhaps I should try again -

ADAM: I'm just here for a couple minutes, and I don't want to get towed. OK?

//GEB: What's the causal connection? Officers will enforce parking by-laws whether your engine is running or – (*returns to bus stop*)

//ADAM: (*Rolls up window, to himself*) Too many rules, breaking my back.

// GEB: (*Takes a piece of paper out of his bag, scribbles a note,*

// ADAM: (*Sees Geb writing. Tweets: "Have new car for 1 week and getting a ticket from f-star-ampersand-percent-pound-exclamation Greenpeace!"*)

GEB: (*places note under Adam's wipers, muttering about clear speech*)

ADAM: (*once Geb back at stop, rolls down window, grabs note, reads out loud to himself:*) "FYI: Ten second rule: You reduce gas consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions, if you turn off your car after 10 seconds."

ADAM: (*Rolls down window, to Geb*) Uh, no! It actually uses way more gas to turn it on again.

GEB (*excited*): That's incorrect. Not with modern cars –

ADAM: Look. You gotta have some basic knowledge of the internal combustion engine, okay.

GEB: Is that your field of specialisation?

ADAM: No. But I still get it.

GEB: Proceed.

ADAM: Well, you see, the spark plug thingy there, has to get to the top of the... compression chamber, and like, if it's cold, the distributor cap could pop off, so it's better to just leave the car warm. Saves gas too.

GEB: That is patently false.

ADAM: Yeah, well, I have it on expert advice.

GEB: Which experts?

ADAM: My dad.

GEB: Is your father an automotive engineer?

ADAM: Sort of. *(Pause)*. He's a plumber.

// GEB: On what basis would you accept the recommendations of a ...*(stops when sees Adam has rolled up window)*

// ADAM: *(rolls up window)*

What is this 10-second shit? *(looks toward Geb, as if contemplating asking him)* Nah, I'll do better on my own. *(googles on phone:)* Ten... second.... rule. First hit: "Urban dictionary: If a female does not enter within 10 seconds of a porno it's a gay film but..." whoa! That can't be it. OK, next entry: "A variation of the five second rule dictating how long food can stay on the floor and still be edible. Mostly employed by street vagrants, or others too lazy to apply the 5 second rule." Ha! It says right there: vagrant! OK, fine *(googling:)* Ten... second.... rule...cars. "Turn off your car when stopped for more than 10 seconds. Not including stop lights or during stop-and-go traffic." That can't be right. *(He thinks, then rolls down window, to Geb)* Wanna know how I figure out who to believe?

GEB: The consensus of the majority of experts?

ADAM: Whoever pisses me off the least. Bye! *(Rolls down window. Texts: "Being harassed by a (pause to think of word) vagrant. May drive around corner. C U soon!" Turns on radio)* Yeah baby!

VOICE: *(as a commercial)*: Are you young?

ADAM: Yes

VOICE: Virile?

ADAM: Yes!

VOICE: Is your car as man as you are?

ADAM: Oh no!

VOICE: Introducing the all new Selfiac. See its muscles ripple under its shiny sheet metal, fenders bulging. Some cars just hug the road. With its V8 engine, this car can actually impregnate it. *(pause)* Oh, and its kinda fuel-efficient so it's green so chicks dig it. Some exceptions apply.

ADAM: *(turns down music, opens window, to Geb:)* What about the biological drive in females to like powerful cars. A car that's waiting, turned off, and the girl thinks 'oh, he's patient, calm ... and likely has a low sperm count'. But a car that's rumbling, can take off at any second, that says something to the girls.

GEB: Are you trying to increase your reproductive success?

ADAM: No, I'm just trying to get laid.

// GEB: There is a significant likelihood that you are jeopardising the prospects of any children –

// ADAM: (Rolls up window)

GEB: Simple logic doesn't penetrate. But his exhaust penetrates into my lungs! So I'm going to....*(he searches)* I'm going to... I'm going to recite Pi to 50 digits! *(shouting through window, as many as needed)* 3.14159 26535 89793 23846 26433 83279 50288 41971 69399 37510....

MINDY: *(enters, walking to car)* Hi, sorry I'm late!

ADAM: Quick, hop in!

ADAM and MINDY: *('drive' away rapidly, coming close to Geb)*

SOUND EFFECT: *(of roaring engine as they go)*

GEB *(dodges out of way)* Scientific illiterate! Ignoramus.

MARGARET WENTE: *(enters, watches from sidelines with notepad)*

//BUS RIDER: *(flags down bus, 'gets on')*

//GEB: Unacceptable! He almost killed me. Did you see that? I'm going to file a report. Did you see his license? I'll still report him. I have a good image of his face. *(pause)* Aren't you Margaret Wente?

WENTE *(to herself, scribbling in a notebook)*: Pedestrian road-rage. Perfect. I'll use this for my next column.

GEB: But you didn't see what happened!

WENTE: So? *(Exits)*

BUS RIDER: *('seated' on bus, exits)*

GEB: *(keeps gesticulating in frustration, then notices bus leaving and runs after it)*. My bus. Wait. I was at the stop. Wait. Stop! *(Exits, running after bus)*

(LIGHTS fade)

### SCENE 3: Tragedy of the (Unmanaged) Commons

SETTING: An office area with a microwave.

AT RISE: EVE is looking at microwave, irritated.

Note: Scene takes place during the lunch hours over 6 days. Dialogue and transitions should be fast-paced, like a dance choreography.

To simplify stage directions:

- Microwaving lasts an abnormally short amount of time, i.e. enough for brief dialogue, then a beep if possible, then character removes food and exits, unless otherwise noted.
- When a character enters, they immediately place food in microwave (or wait until free if someone else is on stage), unless otherwise noted.

#### (Monday)

EVE: That is so depressing.

CRANKY: *(enters)* What?

EVE: The microwave. It's a slimy crusty disaster.

CRANKY: Just because I'm the secretary doesn't mean –

EVE: No, you shouldn't have to do it alone.

CRANKY: I used to clean it, but everyone else trashed it. So why should I?

EVE: Yes, we need to work as a collective. This is an opportunity, really, for ... a team-building exercise!

CRANKY: I hate those. *(exits)*

EVE: The boss will fix this! *(exits)*

DOPEY: *(enters. opens microwave, starts food, and places head on microwave as if 'power-napping'. Startled awake by beep, takes out food, exits)*

JERKY: *(enters, shows disgust)* This is precisely why I don't take the bus.

GUILTY: *(enters)* Um, like... Hi!

JERKY: Whatever. *(exits)*

GUILTY: Okay. *(takes out food)* Oopsies. It spilled. That's, like, bad. *(pause)* Oh well. *(exits)*

(LIGHTS dim)

**(Tuesday)**

(LIGHTS up)

EVE: *(attaches a note to wall/microwave)*

JERKY: *(enters)* Some people are slobs, eh?

EVE *(incredulous)*: Some. *(exits)*

JERKY *(puts food in then reads note)*: "Please cover your food. Help keep microwave clean, for the greater good of all." Hum. Greater good? Sounds to me like a nice warm slice of pizza.

// *(removes food but lingers)*

//CRANKY: *(enters, reads note, puts in food)*

Little Miss bossy pants.

JERKY: Neat freak.

CRANKY: Figures. *(she sneezes over Jerky's food without covering)* Ah, this cold. Don't know where I got it from. *(removes food, exits)*

JERKY *(grossed out)*: I'm going to hide a microwave in my cubicle. *(exits)*

DOPEY: *(enters, exactly as before, places head on microwave as if 'power napping')*. *Startled awake by beep, takes out food, exits)*

GUILTY: *(enters, reads sign)* Oh, poo. I hate microwaving my plastic lid. I'll get cancer or something. *(opens microwave and starts food, without lid)* I guess I could have, like, used a plate or something. *(truly guilty)* Oh, I feel so bad. *(pause, then glib)* O well, just this once. *(grabs food and exits)*

(LIGHTS dim)

**(Wednesday)**

(LIGHTS up)

EVE (*looking inside microwave*): There are seven stalactites of cheese hanging from the ceiling. Encrusted, bubbled over bits of red stuff. And a pool of brown liquid with three fluffy white mold spores floating on top.

DOPEY: (*enters and listens*)

EVE: If everyone just chipped in a bit. We need rules. We need a staff meeting. We... I'm telling the boss! (*exits with cold food*)

DOPEY: (*shrugs, opens microwave and starts food. Places head on microwave as before, but it gets stuck on something sticky. He peels off slowly*) There some kind of a cloth or something? (*contemplates, until 'beep'*) Lunch time! (*exits*)

GUILTY: (*enters and starts food*)

JERKY: (*enters just afterwards and waits while using blackberry*)

GUILTY: Morning. How's it going?

JERKY: (*still on device*): Good. Busy.

GUILTY: (*opens microwave*) Sorry. My food splattered.

JERKY (*still on device*): Don't sweat it. The secretary should clean it up.

GUILTY: I'm so relieved. Thanks! (*exits*)

JERKY: (*starts food, grossed out by microwave*) Ick. Whatever. (*removes food, notices something, picks hunk of crud off top of food and flicks it off*)

CRANKY: (*enters*)

JERKY (*suggestively*): Microwave sure is getting dirty, eh? (*exits*)

CRANKY: I'm not his mother. Asshole. (*exits*)

(LIGHTS dim)

**(Thursday)**

(LIGHTS up)

EVE: (*stares inside microwave*)

DOPEY: (*waiting behind*)

EVE: Why does this depress me so?

DOPEY: Um, have *you* ever just cleaned it?

// JERKY: (*enters*)

// EVE: (*she blocks access to the microwave with her body*) This microwave is a common resource that we all share, as a collective.

CRANKY: (*enters*)

EVE: We spend eight hours a day here. We have to live with each other.

CRANKY: Yeah. It's a pain in the ass.

EVE: People, shouldn't we keep our own little environment clean?

JERKY, DOPEY and CRANKY: Why?

EVE: This is Environment Canada!

CRANKY: What's your point?

EVE: (*releases stance*) I'm going to do some yogic breathing in my cubicle. (*exits*)

JERKY: (*gets to microwave first*) Chick needs a stress leave. (*removes food and exits*)

CRANKY: (*next to start food*) She's not the boss of me. (*exits*)

DOPEY: (*next to start food, he hesitates over putting his head down. Removes food and exits*)

GUILTY: (*enters, starts food, then removes*) Oopsies. My pasta kinda... splattered, again. Oh, I'm just awful. But I'm really busy. It's not all my mess anyway. Icky – other people's cooties! I feel really bad about it though. (*closes door and walks away, stops midway*)

(LIGHTS dim, SPOTLIGHT on Guilty)

GUILTY: Nothing's happening. (*pause, looks around*) I'm not getting in trouble. (*pause*) Cool! (*exits*)

(LIGHTS remain dim, SPOTLIGHT off)



**(Friday)**

(LIGHTS up, JERKY at the microwave)

JERKY: OK. There's a puddle in there. How do I put my cardboard tray down on that?  
*(he eyes supply cupboard down below. Pulls out paper towel, decides only to place it on bottom and put his food on top. He leaves paper towel inside and exits)*

CRANKY: *(enters and sees mess)* I'll use the microwave on the 22nd floor. *(exits)*

DOPEY: *(enters, sees chaos of paper towel in microwave. Contemplates. Decides to shove food in, turn on, and put head down on another object)*

*(SOUND of explosion. Door to microwave bursts open)*

DOPEY: *(hits floor)*

CRANKY, GUILTY, JERKY and EVE: *(enter)* What happened?

DOPEY: The microwave. It exploded!

GUILTY: What the?

EVE: Now do you see, my teammates?

JERKY: I thought Eve was supposed to clean it.

ALL (EXCEPT EVE): Why'd you stop, Eve?

EVE: *(screams, exits)*

// GUILTY: *(drags DOPEY offstage)*

// JERKY, CRANKY: *(exit)*

(LIGHTS fade)

## SCENE 4: Us vs. Them

SETTING: A meeting room, with space on both ends for each of the two delegations to speak in private, and for aides to take notes.

AT RISE: Sharma and Sharma's aid (SA) arrive, and speak to each other privately at stage right. (If possible, Sharma is also flanked by several other aides who simply follow along, or take notes, but contribute nothing.)

SA: Would you like to see the negotiating instructions again, Minister?

SHARMA: I've got the gist. No emission reduction targets - no developing country should.

SA: And clean technology?

SHARMA: Yep.

SA (*coaching*): Clean technology is our middle ground.

SHARMA (*dismissive*): Yes, middle ground. Very key. What do you think of the West so far?

SA: The boardrooms and airports are lovely, Minister.

SHARMA: Should be. Paid for through the wealth they stole from the colonies. Pass me that bottle of Perrier there, please.

SA: Of course. Croissant?

SHARMA: Good idea. (*sneezes in SA's face*) Ah, this cold. Don't know where I got it from.

SA (*remaining composed*): Here are your speaking points.

SHARMA and SA: (*They review papers, 'speak' silently*)

ADAM and ADAM'S AID (AA): (*enter opposite and speak to each other privately, others do not hear. Adam is wearing a short-sleeved shirt and tie.*)

AA: Ready for your very first bilateral, Minister?

ADAM: Please, call me Adam. So what am I trying to get here?

AA: It's laid out in your speaking points, 20 point font, as requested.

ADAM: Two pages!

AA: I could condense it.

ADAM: No I got the gist: their factories spew crap in the air. There's more of them than us. They have to accept a target too.

AA: Perhaps you'd prefer to use the language found in points one to three. *(pause)* There is also the question of clean technologies.

ADAM: We could make a fortune selling clean tech to these guys.

AA *(coaching)*: There is great potential for mutual benefit.

ADAM: Right. *(reading)* "Technology is our middle ground." Brrr, it's cold in here...

AA: We brought a jacket for you –

ADAM: ... turn on that space heater please.

AA: Yes, Minister. *(pulls a heater out and turns it on)*

// ADAM and SHARMA: *(approach each other to begin talks)*

// SA and AA: *(take seats behind their respective Ministers, and take notes throughout rest of scene)*

ADAM: Minister Shawarma!

AA: *(corrects Adam discretely)*

ADAM: Uh, Sharma. How nice to meet you.

SHARMA: A pleasure.

ADAM: I'm so glad we have this opportunity to speak informally with each other.

SHARMA: Indeed. A chance to smooth out any bottlenecks before the multilateral negotiations.

ADAM: So let's speak frankly.

SHARMA: Absolutely.

ADAM: Climate change is a global challenge requiring global cooperation.

SHARMA: And leadership from developed countries is crucial.

ADAM: The meaningful participation of developing countries is crucial to avoid ...  
whatsit...(*searching*) 'dangerous interference' with the climate system.

SHARMA: Yes, so industrialised nations must show leadership, and respect the rights of poorer countries to improve the lives of their people.

ADAM: This moment in history poses a unique opportunity for (*searching*) developing nations to 'leapfrog' the fossil fuel era – just skip it I guess – and undertake a cleaner path of development.

SHARMA: Precisely.

ADAM: Which means (*searching*)... firm agreements to limit emissions for both of us.

SHARMA: Of course, you must acknowledge that industrialised nations have a historical responsibility to fix the problem they created.

ADAM: (*throwing down his notes*) Oh like hell we do.

SA and AA: (*shocked. From this point forward they continue scribbling furiously*)

SHARMA: (*throws down her notes*) Excuse me?

ADAM: Victim attitude. Very strategic.

SHARMA: Minister!

ADAM: It doesn't matter whether the gases are leaked in Los Angeles or Timbuktu.

SHARMA: You created this problem. 90% of emission are from rich countries.

ADAM: Not for long, the way you're going.

SHARMA: We have a right to develop.

ADAM: But anything we do is pointless if all six billion of you buy cars.

SHARMA: You mean if we all acted like you!

ADAM: So you want your turn to pollute then?

SHARMA: We did next to nothing to create this, yet we will suffer the most. Our people live near rising oceans. Your people live in condos. You have a moral obligation –

ADAM: So do you! Stop building coal-fired power plants every week.

SHARMA: We won't do anything until *you* do something!

ADAM: *We* won't do anything until *you* do something!

SHARMA: No, you do it –

ADAM: No, you do it –

SHARMA: No, you do it –

ADAM: No, you do it –

SHARMA (*mimicking a child*): I know you are but what am I?

ADAM: You're a ... (*realising he fell for a prank, then also mimicking a child*) Nah nah nah nah boo boo!

SHARMA and ADAM: (*They make more childish gestures and sounds to each other for a few beats, e.g. sticking out tongues, fart noises under the armpits*)

SA and AA: (*rush up behind their Ministers, pulling them apart or waving a piece of paper noisily*)

// SHARMA (*reaches for briefing, reading*) My esteemed colleague...

// SA: (*returns*)

SHARMA: Most of my people live on less than \$10 a day. A quarter of our children are underweight or stunted. Do you really think I could tell my people to go longer without electricity, so that we can maybe spare unborn generations from this thing called climate change?

// ADAM: (*reaches for note, reading*): Minister Sharma,

// AA: (*returns*)

ADAM: I do acknowledge the challenges facing your country...but (*improvising*) you have all that sun. Wire a village with solar power.

SHARMA: It's more expensive.

ADAM: It would pay for itself.

SHARMA: We need support from the global community.

ADAM: Which you'll spend on more private jets?

SHARMA: Are you a moron?

SA: (*rushes up to pass a note to Sharma, then returns*)

SHARMA: Every person on earth deserves an equal share of a safe level of GHG emissions. That means a mother in my country should have an electric stove. And a mother in your country should stop flying to my country just to get a tan.

AA: (*rushes up to pass a note to Adam, then returns*)

ADAM: (*reading somewhat from note*) Technologies, like high-efficiency dung stoves... cheap *and* low in emissions... give your mother one of those.

SHARMA: Then pay for it!

ADAM: Pay for it all? Seriously? Bankrupt ourselves and our businesses that make the damn solar panels, or else you won't cooperate? Is that the only choice we have?

SHARMA: Remain poor forever. Is that the only choice we have?

(*pause*)

ADAM: Look, there's got to be some middle ground here –

PROTESTER: (*enters*) It's the polar bear delegation comin' to have our say! (*Could run with a sign, or shout slogans e.g. 'save the planet', 'we need a fair and effective climate treaty now'*)

// ADAM: Security! [Mindy, is that you?]<sup>2</sup>

PROTESTER: Planet destroyer! (*is aggressive toward Adam, e.g. whack on the butt with sign*)

ADAM: [I'm telling your mom!]<sup>3</sup> (*runs offstage*)

PROTESTER: (*chases Adam offstage*)

AA: (*follows behind them waving notes*)

SHARMA (*pause*): That didn't go too badly.

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<sup>2</sup> Lines in square brackets only work if Protester is the same actor as Mindy. If they are different actors, these lines should be deleted.

<sup>3</sup> If this line is deleted (see above), replace with "No one briefed me about this!"

SA: What would give you that impression?

SHARMA: We staked out our territory well, I think.

SA: Are you anticipating negotiations will be easier when there are 190 countries in the room?

SHARMA: Let's hope so. Did you pack my snack? My blood sugar is waning.

SA: A power bar, Minister. *(passes food. They move toward exit)*

SHARMA: Anyway, getting money for adaptation will be easier.

SA: If an ounce of prevention is so difficult, Minister, I worry about the pound of cure.

SHARMA: Drought-resistant crops. Adaptation will strengthen our nation.

SA: Much like a liver transplant would strengthen an alcoholic.

SHARMA: Can we skip the next bi-lat<sup>4</sup>?

SA: But, the press is scheduled to interview you after –

SHARMA: Well of course I didn't mean 'skip' skip. *(when almost offstage)* Oh, turn off that light, would you? *(exits)*

SA *(pleasantly surprised)* Yes, Minister. *(flicks a switch)*

(LIGHTS - one turns off)

SHARMA *(from offstage)*: Hey, can we get credits for that?

SA: We can try, Minister. *(exits)*

(LIGHTS fade)

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<sup>4</sup> This is short for "bilateral", as in a bilateral meeting.

## SCENE 5: Guilt Trips

SETTING: A street corner with an information booth, and a steady stream of pedestrians that pass by. At all times, between 1-3 THEMs are walking in either direction, ignoring Eve and Gus unless otherwise noted. At the booth are two signs that say "Join us!".

AT RISE: GUS is on stage at the booth, setting up pamphlets.

EVE: *(enters, walking her bicycle)*

EVE and GUS: *(They acknowledge each other via a "secret handshake", e.g. banging heads in helmets together)*

GUS: Thanks for volunteering, Eve.

EVE: I'm so excited. What a great way to build community and collective action!

GUS: Awesome! OK, first, could you pick up the banner from headquarters?

EVE: That's rather big isn't it? Can't someone else deliver...

GUS: *(dirty look)*

EVE: OK I'll do it. Back in five. *(gives a high-5 to Gus, exits with bike)*

GUS *(to Them)*: Alright, sign-up here for the Cycling Challenge, folks. Pledge to get to work this week on your bike instead of your car. Reduce the threat of climate change and air pollution.

THEMs: *(ignore)*

GUS: Get your daily physical activity and save money.

THEM 1: Sure. I'll do it. *(starts to sign)*

GUS: Thanks so much. We need people like you to –

THEM 1 *(cutting him off)*: Thanks. *(exits brusquely)*

GUS *(to himself)* – to participate. Sheesh. *(to Them)* Sign up for the Cycling Challenge. Pledge to bike to work for one week. Learn how awesome it is for you and the planet.

THEM 2 *(picking up something from the booth)*: Can I keep this if I drive to work again next week?



GUS: (*snatches button back*) Fail!

THEM 2: (*exits*)

GUS: Come on, who's smart enough to improve your health and get some free exercise?

EVE: (*Enters with bike as before, but with a large, somewhat crumpled banner*).

GUS: What the...?

EVE: Oops.

GUS: It's totally smushed!

EVE: Sorry!

GUS: No, no! You gotta improve your technique. You need paniers, front baskets, bungee cords.

EVE: Sorry!

GUS: (*sets up a crumpled "Cycling Challenge" banner across front of booth*). See that's just it. We're so used to carrying things in cars we don't even know about alternatives.

EVE: I've just never had to carry...

GUS: I'm thinking more about the mainstreamers here. We've got to teach people how to make the right lifestyle choices...

EVE: 'Cause once people understand it isn't that hard ...

GUS: That's right. We're promoting a little planetary peace and harmony, (*pause*) even if it's against their will. Here's how it's done. (*turning to THEMs, and blows a loud horn*)

THEM<sub>s</sub>: (*all startle*)

GUS: Another good reason for getting on your bike: did you know it takes 130 trees to combat the carbon dioxide from your car each year?

THEM 3: I see 130 trees over there.

GUS: They're not all for you!

THEM 3: (*exits*)

EVE: Actually, those are being cut next week to build a by-pass.

GUS: Figures. You try now, Eve.

EVE: OK. (*to Thems*) Here's a great way to ... um....come learn all the great things about cycling to work! Saves more time than you think! You feel great when you get there! (*not getting any reaction*) No more parking hassles! (*pause*) Feel that 'togetherness' from being part of a community of people all trying to save the planet! (*pause*) Deep breathing in the morning is a great way to help deal with your colleagues? (*To Gus*) Sorry, I suck at this.

THEM 4: But then you breathe in all that exhaust.

GUS: So just pile in your car and be part of the problem?

EVE: Just imagine if everyone cycled to work, together!

THEM 4: But how do you get *everyone* to?

EVE: You... inspire them!

GUS: Convince them

EVE: Motivate them.

GUS: Educate them.

EVE: Love them.

THEM 4: I think you need better urban planning.

GUS: Cop out!

THEM 4: Guilt cop!

GUS: Fascist!

THEM 4: Commie.

EVE: Stop! Please... how about a group hug!

GUS and THEM 4: Ah! (*turn in opposite directions*)

THEM 4: (*exits*)

EVE: Um, anything else I can go fetch?

GUS: (*looks at the sky*) Umbrellas?

EVE: Sure, back in 5! (*tries to give a high 5 but Gus doesn't respond, exits with bike*)

GUS: OK people, sign up for the Cycling Challenge. Help fight climate change.

THEM 5 (*while walking past*): Weather changes all the time (*exits*).

GUS: (*groans*) OK fine. Help fight 'global warming'.

THEM 6: I just don't feel fit enough to ride all the way to work.

GUS: We can fix that.

THEM 6: Oh but I –

GUS: (*spoken as military drill command*) Attention!

THEM 6: (*snaps to standing straight position, like a soldier*)

GUS: (*as before*) Forward, jumping-jacks. (*4/4 military cadence*)

// Hup, two, three, four. (*repeat a few times*)

// THEM 6: (*does jumping jacks, then after a few*) Why the fuck am I doing this? (*stops and exits*)

GUS: (*no longer drilling*) Softie.

EVE: (*enters with umbrellas, sneezes in elbow*) Ah, this cold. Don't know where I got it from.

THEM 7: (*enters*)

GUS: I don't catch colds. I 'm a gluten-free, sugar-free, palm oil-free, local, organic, biodynamic, raw food vegan.

THEM 7: Can you still kiss with saliva?

GUS: Fail!

EVE: Any other errands I could run?

GUS: Lunch. How about lunch?

EVE: Sure! (*almost starts a high-5, then just exits with bike*)

GUS: Sign up for the Cycling Challenge. Get up off your ass and do something.

THEM 8: I'll have you know I'm on my way to lobby City Council for better transit.

GUS: You taking transit to get there?

THEM 8: No, my car, because our transit is crappy.

GUS: So why not cycle there.

THEM 8: Because if I arrive at City Hall late, stinky and tired, I might not be as effective.

GUS: But you'd set such a good example!

THEM 8: I'm trying to change communal infrastructure. I'm not trying to change people.

GUS: I'm not trying to *change* people. I'm trying to ... teach them how not to be dumbasses.

THEM 8: You just taught me to buy a Hummer (*exits*).

GUS: Fail!

EVE: (*enters with left arm in sling*)

GUS: What happened?

EVE: Oh this really nice nurse helped me out.

GUS: But, what happened to your arm?

EVE: I was waiting to turn left, with my arm signal and everything (*lifts left arm, trying to do a proper 'left-turn' signal, grimaces in pain*) and this guy drives up and says that's a stupid place to be. I said that's the proper position for a left turn. He said that was just stupid.

GUS: He was a moron. You did nothing wrong.

EVE: Well, not at that point.

GUS: Oh?

EVE: 'Cause then I gave him the finger.

GUS: Oh.

EVE: So he sped off and knocked me off my bike.

GUS: Oh my god!

EVE: Fortunately I rolled into some bushes, and this nice woman who pulled me out made this sling for me. But then I got back on my bike, and she called me stupid.

THEM 9 (GUILTY): (*enters, does not see Eve*)

EVE (*seeing Guilty*): Hide me. (*Stands back to back with Gus, hiding*)

GUS: Take the cycling challenge. Pledge to give up your car for a week.

THEM 9: Oh, I do drive my car a lot. I'm sorry. (*trying to make it better*) But, like, I feel really bad about it!

GUS: Not forgiven!

THEM 9: (*screams and exits*)

EVE (*emerging*): Um, you know I have a car, right?

GUS: What?!

EVE: But I've been asking for better bus service for years and they still haven't given it to me!

GUS: Doesn't that make you the biggest hypocrite ever?

EVE: Yes. Because that's what happens when I'm honest.

GUS: Eve, you can't. You've got to lead. You've got to inspire others to be like you.

EVE: (*looks at her arm*) You sure about that?

GUS: But you know how screwed we are. (*turning to Thems*): I can't take this! People, don't you realise how urgent this is?

THEMS: (*start to speed up their pace*)

EVE (*to herself, sincere*): I do. I really do.

THEMS: (*until end of scene, all are moving very fast, trying to dodge out of Gus' path or protect themselves, e.g. dropping to the floor and rolling, cartwheels, frantic running*)

GUS (*continuing rant, never hearing Eve*)<sup>5</sup>: ... The climate is gonna get nasty from the damage we've already done. All we can do is stop making it worse. It's hard to hear, but it's true. We should be taking to the streets. Saying 'no, we don't want to screw future generations'. But instead we just get in our cars and drive...

EVE: I was trying...

GUS: ...Tropical rainforests, our best carbon sink, we chop em' down. We're gonna get more violent storms, crazy weather that slams houses and bridges. Drought in some places. Massive floods in others. More cyclones, more killer waves, more heavy rain. There's already forty percent less phytoplankton in the oceans from warmer waters. Phyto-what you say? The basis of the whole frickin' ocean food chain, that's what. Coral reefs – gone. Tuvalu and other small islands – gone. The prairies will get even dryer, screwing our food supply. Our *food*, you know, what you need to survive...

EVE: Why is everybody running away?

GUS...People in cities clamouring over water, getting sicker, dying in the heat. Smog will get worse. Nasty diseases, like lime disease, carried on these little ticks, those bugs just love warmer weather. Summer sea ice will be totally gone soon, maybe then you'll see. Rising sea levels will displace millions of refugees looking for food and shelter...

EVE: Where is my collective?

GUS: ...That means war, people, war. They were fighting over water in Darfur 'cause of droughts made worse by a screwy climate. War can happen here too...

EVE: Why does my collective want to run me over?

GUS: ...We're heading for a complete collapse of natural systems. Some say that 90% of the human population will be dead by the end of this century if we keep this up.

EVE: Why can't we all work together?

GUS (*suddenly positive*): ...But together, we can do something about this. So come on! Join us! Join us! (*picks up sign and repeats 'join us' several times*)

EVE (*absurdly, half-heartedly*): Join us? Join us?

(LIGHTS fade)

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<sup>5</sup> This section could be done as a musical.

## SCENE 6: Denial

SETTING: A hospital

AT RISE: Stan is lying in bed, with a doctor beside him writing on a chart.

*(STAN tilts over to one side. DOCTOR pushes him back up. After a beat, STAN tilts slowly to the other side; DOCTOR pushes him upright again. This repeats a third time.)*

ADAM: *(enters)*

STAN: Adam! This place, I tell ya, they won't even let an old man fart in peace.

DOCTOR *(sarcastic)*: Cute. I've never heard that one before.

STAN: They haven't even told me why they're keeping me here.

DOCTOR: Yes we have: Alcohol-induced dementia, with aggressive behaviour and a RAGE score of 3. In other words: Drunken Asshole.

STAN: *(no reaction)*

ADAM: How can you say that in front of him?

DOCTOR: It's part of the condition. He'll only hear what he wants to hear. Watch. *(to Stan)* Roll over. It's time for your catheter!

STAN: *(no reaction)*

DOCTOR: Hey, how about them Blue Jays.

STAN: What a bunch of stinking losers....

DOCTOR: Perhaps you can try explaining that he can't have a drink in the hospital.

*//(exits)*

*// STAN: I just need one drink a week. Is that so bad? And I barely even taste it anymore, so why would I drink too much. Doctors don't know everything.*

ADAM: Right. Look, I don't have a lot of time.

STAN: Well just take me home then. How about you use your influence and ... suggest they let me out, if they want to keep their funding.

ADAM: I don't think you could walk out of here if you tried.

STAN: I've been walking all day with no problem.

ADAM: Walking all day?

STAN: Don't believe me? Just watch.

ADAM: No, come on Dad.

*(STAN gets out of bed, despite ADAM's attempts to stop him. He walks a few paces in a proud strut, singing "If you want my body, and you think I'm sexy, come on sugar let me know...<sup>6</sup>". He trips and falls to the floor, taking ADAM down with him)*

ADAM *(pinned under Stan)*: Ow! Can you? Oh, hell.

STAN: I'm just stiff from being confined in bed.

ADAM: Help! Someone, help!

STAN *(as if nothing is abnormal)*: Anyway. Met any nice ladies lately?

ADAM: What?

STAN: You know. A pretty Mary Poppins to settle down with. You've been a bachelor too long.

ADAM: How can you ask me this now?

STAN: Why not?

ADAM: I feel... under pressure.

STAN: You'll never find a wife with that attitude young man.

ADAM *(yelling)*: Heeeelp!

DOCTOR: *(enters)* Having a bonding moment? *(hoists Stan back into bed)*

ADAM: *(gets up)*

STAN *(to Doctor)*: Maybe we should go for more walks together, then I won't be so out of practice.

DOCTOR: Ooh. Dirty old man with his ass hanging out of a hospital gown. Sexy! *(exits)*

STAN: So, what was I saying again?

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<sup>6</sup> Or use any other hubris-filled song.



ADAM: You were sharing how you were feeling.

STAN: I'm done talking about medical nonsense and that's final. We were talking about family, weren't we, about settling down. You should try it, Adam. Despite all these tubes and forced incarceration, I'm a happy man. Total peace in my heart. You know why? Because I have you guys.

ADAM: Us guys?

STAN: You know, family.

ADAM: You mean my sister in the ashram, and my brother the cross-dressing stand-up comic in LA that you disowned?

STAN: Steve's in LA?

ADAM: For the past three years.

STAN: Oh. (*processes for a beat*) Ah, his flight must be delayed. Anyway, how's work?

ADAM: You mean, being a cabinet Minister. You remember –

STAN: Of course, yes, I've read every article on you. You know where you get your entrepreneurial spirit from, eh? You know what I did?

ADAM (*by rote*): You built one of the most successful oil companies –

STAN: I built one of the most successful oil companies in the whole province. I came here with two suitcases. Barely spoke English. But I did it anyway. I worked hard and I was rewarded. Nothing wrong with that. The Premier even toured my biggest wells. And do you know what happened that day?

ADAM (*by rote*): The Premier stepped out of his car and –

STAN: The Premier stepped out of his car and shook my hand!

ADAM: (*makes a "jerk off" gesture*)

STAN (*continuing, not seeing Adam*): I still have a certificate from him, with his signature and everything. That must be where you get your political instincts! (*pause*) What are you Minister of again?

ADAM: Environment.

STAN: Now don't you start acting like those radical types.

ADAM: It's just a junior Cabinet position.

STAN: I always passed government inspections. The only ones complaining were the birds and a bunch of natives. There's nothing wrong with the way I lived my life.

ADAM: I never said –

STAN: I am a good man, my boy. A hard-worker. A provider for my family. I did nothing wrong.

ADAM: Sure.

STAN: That's right. I'm a good man. So get me out of this stinking place!

ADAM: Don't you remember falling?

STAN: It's their fault for confining me to this bed.

ADAM: Would you quit that! When will you finally just –

STAN: I was fine a couple days ago. How could I possibly need all this set-up? Something funny's going on here.

ADAM: The funny thing is I'm trying to help you.

STAN: Help is the last thing I need.

ADAM: Then why the hell did you do this to yourself?

STAN: I didn't.

ADAM: You did.

STAN: I told you, I only have one drink a day. *(throws a bedpan at Adam)*

ADAM: You just said one a week. *(throws it back)*

STAN: So you were the one who put me in this prison! *(throws it back)*

ADAM: You did it all on your own. *(throws it back)*

STAN: Stop telling lies to those doctors! *(throws it back)*

ADAM: I didn't. Because I'm nothing like you. *(throws it back)* I'm outta here.

STAN: Fine!

STAN and ADAM (*shouting, in unison*): I'll do better on my own!

ADAM: (*freezes, realising*)

DOCTOR: (*pokes head in room*) Everything OK?

ADAM and STAN (*in unison, chipper*): Sure. Fine. No problem at all!

DOCTOR: (*exits*)

(*pause*)

STAN (*childlike*): I want to go home.

ADAM (*softening*): It's just not working this time.

STAN: Maybe they'll let me go tomorrow.

ADAM: I'll ask the doctor, tomorrow.

STAN: I better rest before that conversation. Now, would you fix these stupid pillows?

ADAM: Sure. (*He adjusts pillows*) Better?

STAN: That will do.

ADAM: I have to leave now, dad.

STAN: (*grunts*)

ADAM: Just take it easy, OK? (*exits*)

STAN (*to himself*): Dammit. (*towards hallway*) Doc, hey doc!

DOCTOR: (*pokes head in room*)

STAN: Sweetheart, what do you say you prescribe me a shot of Southern Comfort, strictly for medicinal purposes?

DOCTOR: (*shakes her head, exits*)

STAN: Geez, she can't take a joke.

(LIGHTS fade)

## SCENE 7: The End

SETTING: A road beside flooded grasslands, within the Tigris–Euphrates river system, approaching a tourist "Garden of Eden"

AT RISE: GUIDE is driving a jeep. Other characters are in the back. EVE is reading a book, wearing a tank-top. ADAM, SHARMA, GEB, and CRANKY look around. Body movements suggest road is bumpy. CRANKY has a shawl around her neck or in a bag.

GEB (*to himself, pointing at species that 'pass' by*): Grass-like triangular green stems. That must be *Cyperus papyrus*. Fascinating. And, a monocotyledonous flowering grass, possibly a species of *Juncus*. And *Typha angustata*, and – Oh! A hoping rodent. Clearly the *Dipodidae* family!

EVE: (*annoyed, and accidentally drops book over side of vehicle*) Oops. (*To Guide*) Oh, Mr. Tour Guide, sir, can we stop for a second? I dropped my book.

GUIDE: If we stop here we'll get eaten alive.

CRANKY: Eve, we're on an eco-tour, and you just littered!

EVE: I didn't mean to!

SHARMA: Youth today are so jumpy.

EVE: But it pulled a classic "Chapter 7".

ADAM: What?

EVE: It's when a book goes on about how screwed we are, but the author wants to end on something uplifting. So there's this predictable last chapter on 'easy things you can do to save the planet'. Recycle your pop bottles and your conscience is clear.

GEB: But a clear depiction of the facts is instrumental in attaining the required behavioural and policy changes.

ADAM: But, how do you not just depress people?

EVE: Maybe you can't. Or maybe this author just sucked.

(SOUND of a car breaking down, grinding to a halt)

GUIDE: Uh oh.

ADAM: What's going on?

GUIDE: I should have fixed that.

CRANKY: Fixed what?

GUIDE: It was just a tiny tiny hole...

EVE: In what?

GUIDE: The fuel line.

ALL, except GUIDE: (*one-liners of despair, e.g. "Oh my god"*)

GUIDE: (*feigns looking under hood, calm, as he knows there's nothing he can do*).

ADAM (*trying cell phone*): There's no cell phone coverage here.

CRANKY: How far are we from the Fairmont Garden of Eden?

SHARMA: Far.

EVE: What'll we do?

GEB: We should remain here and wait.

CRANKY: That's the stupidest thing I ever heard.

GEB: It's what experts advise.

EVE: Explain, Dr. Geb, I'm listening.

GEB: People will come looking for us. If we stray from our expected path, we will be more difficult to locate.

CRANKY: Who's gonna come look for us?

GEB: The authorities.

EVE: That's right. The authorities!

CRANKY: (*snorts*) So we're really screwed.

ADAM (*slapping his face*): The mosquitoes are catching up to us.

CRANKY: The longer we wait, the thirstier we get, 'till we're too weak to walk outta here!

GUIDE: *(tries to sneak away without being noticed, soon exits)*

EVE: Dr. Geb's right. We should stick together...

CRANKY: He looks like he knows what he's doing. *(follows Guide, exits same direction)*

EVE *(towards Cranky and the Guide)* No, wait. Come back. You can't just leave us here!  
*(seeing they are gone)* Oh god, this is really happening.

ALL: *(From this point forward, the "mosquitoes" intensify, and all characters continually swat parts of their body)*

ADAM: Which way did they go? *(He hops out of jeep, goes a few paces, and then freezes)* Ah! Snake! Big! Snake!

EVE *(knowingly)*: Oh shit.

SHARMA: I know that species! *(Hops out, and imitates the sound of the flute-like instrument used by shake charmers, along with 'hypnotic' movements. These flute sounds are interspersed with the following fragments of dialogue, also said with hypnotic intent)* Global challenges require global cooperation. *(flute sounds)* Strategic multilateral negotiations. *(flute sounds)* Leveraging strategic deliverables with synergies. *(flute sounds, then Sharma twists the snakes neck and kills it)* There! Got 'em.

ADAM: You saved my life!

SHARMA: You owe me now.

ADAM: Oh shit.

SHARMA: I have a low blood-sugar condition. I was expecting lunch by noon on this tour.

GEB: I'll undertake a study of the vegetation. *(exits)*

SHARMA *(toward Geb)*: If you find me food, I just might save you. I know my way in the jungle.

CRANKY: *(Enters, dishevelled)* Um, question.

EVE: What?

CRANKY: Can you breathe with your head in quicksand?

ADAM: No!

CRANKY: Oh. Then I guess the guide's not breathing.

ADAM and EVE: What?!

SHARMA: Hey, you got any food in that luggage?

CRANKY: Stay away from me! (*exits*)

SHARMA: (*chases after Cranky*)

EVE: This is crazy.

ADAM: I hate not knowing what to do.

GEB: (*enters*) Where are the others?

EVE: The Guide's dead! Quicksand. The others took off.

GEB: Unfortunate. You can think you're walking in a straight line in the jungle, but actually be walking in circles. (*exits*)

EVE (*panicking*): I came here to unwind. Doctors orders. Take a trip, she said, *to relax!*

ADAM: I came here for a conference, and I thought, hey, why not take in the beauty of nature? (*swats vigorously*)

(*In this sequence they are talking to themselves, not really to each other*)

EVE: I told her I didn't want to go on a plane, all the emissions. But I can't make a solar-powered plane. Not all by myself.

ADAM: My mother. Always said I was a good problem-solver.

EVE: My own two hands. My own two hands. (*to Adam*) Let's stay put in this car, like Dr. Geb said. (*pulls Adam into car with her*)

ADAM (*still to himself*): This is a problem I can't solve by myself.

EVE (*still to herself*): Should I make noises to scare the animals off? Or would that attract them?

ADAM: What goes around, comes around. She used to say that too.

EVE: (*she roars like a lion*)

ADAM: I can't fix this myself.

EVE: No one's going to come fix this for me.

ADAM: You can't do it alone.

EVE: You can't expect someone else to do it for you.

ADAM: No dumbass is an island.

EVE: It's every dumbass for herself.

ADAM: We're all in this together. And it's like...

EVE (*aware of Adam again*): Do I know you from somewhere?

ADAM (*still not fully aware of her*): ... someone piercing their way back into my ribcage.

EVE: You lost your mind?

ADAM (*aware of her*): Hun? Oh, just having a moment.

EVE: A pretty freakin' dark moment!

ADAM: Both dark and light.

EVE: The guide's dead. The authorities won't come. The next snake can attack at any moment!

ADAM: Listen, we don't have to be perfect. We just gotta find the crack that let's the light get in.

EVE: You think we'll survive?

ADAM: Yes.

SHARMA (*enters, now driven mad by the mosquitoes and low blood-sugar*): You're making me angry, little buggies. You're not being nice, little buggies. Not nice at all. I kill you now! (*exits spastically, as if wrestling mosquitoes*)

ADAM: ... at least, some of us will survive.

EVE: (*Slaps more vigorously on forearms*)

ADAM: Here, I'll cover you with these. (*He reaches in pockets, and pulls out an abundance of hankies. He drapes them under her tank top straps, ties around legs, etc.* )



EVE: Hankies?

ADAM: Don't worry, they're clean.

EVE: Why... so many?

ADAM: Every man should carry a handkerchief! I learned that back when I was a Lone Scout. It can bandage a small wound, wrap delicate items. Lately I've been wiping my brow with them before meetings.

EVE: Oh.

ADAM (*continuing to cover her*): Last week I even used one to cover my food in the microwave.

EVE: (*looks at Adam with wide-eyed adoration*)

ADAM: (*continues to cover her, until he notices*) You alright?

EVE: You cook, then?

ADAM: Yeah, I love cooking. You should see my kitchen (*realising he's looking good*) and my whole house, where I like to curl up by my wood stove wearing a cable-knit sweater reading The Economist. You?

EVE: My roommates cook...but I always do the dishes. Local food?

ADAM: I hunt it myself. Dirty socks?

EVE: Picked up off floor. Power failure?

ADAM: I cut wood with chainsaw. Sore shoulders?

EVE: I rub them. Feelings?

ADAM: I talk about them!

EVE (*wild abandon*): You are the sexiest man alive!

ADAM: Come here!

ADAM and EVE: (*embrace, flailing their arms to swat mosquitoes off each other's back*)

GEB (*enters, crawling with one leg dragging*): I completed my study, but my leg appears to be – (*sees their embrace*) Oh, excuse me.

ADAM and EVE: Oh no, Dr. Geb! *(They run to him, ADAM tends to his wound)*

CRANKY: *(enters)*

GEB: I fear attempting to clean the wound may not make a difference.

CRANKY *(melting down)*: No difference? I'm back here again? We're screwed. It's hopeless. Ahhh! *(pulls a shawl out of her luggage, buries her face in it and sobs)*

EVE *(turning toward Adam)*: It's dark.

ADAM: It's light.

EVE: I'll initiate!

ADAM: I'll cooperate!

EVE *(moving toward Cranky)*: Hey, that's a beautiful shawl you've got there. It really brings out your eyes.

CRANKY *(eating it up)*: Really?

EVE: Yes. You look gorgeous in it. Makes me see you in a whole new light.

CRANKY: Aw, thanks.

EVE *(motioning toward Geb)*: Now go wave that to keep the skeeters off.

CRANKY: *(moves toward Geb and Adam, flaps the shawl over them and herself)*

SHARMA: *(enters, still in hypoglycemic shock, muttering about "buggies")*

ADAM: Dr. Geb, you find anything edible?

GEB: Yes, there are specimens of papyrus ...

EVE: Speak english, dammit!

GEB: Eat the top bits of that *(points)*.

EVE: I'll get them. *(picks a few leaves and puts them in Sharma's mouth)*

SHARMA *(devours leaves)*: Oh that's better.

EVE: Now, how do we get to the garden?

SHARMA: But I need more food. I'll lead the way if you give me food.

EVE (*scuttling Sharma to the other side of Adam*): I'll do the work if he (*pointing to GEB*) tells me what's safe.

GEB: I'll share my knowledge if you put it to use.

ADAM: I'll pull your ass if you save mine.

CRANKY: I'll help out if you call me pretty!

EVE: Okay people. Step in time. Including me. Step in time!

*(In effect, they should have rapidly assembled in a machine-like formation. SHARMA is at the front, 'driving' which way they go. SHARMA pulls ADAM by his belt, since ADAM is walking backwards, dragging GEB along by holding him under his armpits. GEB will point out food sources to EVE. EVE works very hard running to the various places where GEB directs her and then shoves the food directly in SHARMA'S mouth. CRANKY stays upstage of the formation, shooing mosquitoes off everyone with her shawl. For the rest of the scene, they move together, like a 'machine', while all roles (e.g. shawl flapping, dragging of Geb) continue with full energy, as a take-off on the Mary Poppins scene "Step in Time".)*

ALL: Step in time, step in time. Step in time, step in time  
Never need a reason, never need a rhyme. Step in time, step in time

EVE (*in rhythm*): Keep it up!

ALL: Keep it up, step in time. Keep it up, step in time  
Never need a reason, never need a rhyme  
//Keep it up, step in time

// CRANKY: (*stops waving shawl*)  
Man that's work.

GEB: Oscillate!

EVE: Do your bit!

//CRANKY: (*resumes waving*)

//ALL: Do your bit, step in time. Do your bit, step in time  
Never need a reason, never need a rhyme. Do your bit, step in time

SHARMA: (*elbows ADAM by accident*)

ADAM: Ow, my rib. Don't be an asshole!

EVE (*cheery*): Don't be an asshole!

ALL: Don't be an asshole, step in time. Don't be an asshole, step in time  
Never need a reason, never need a rhyme. Don't be an asshole –

SHARMA (*yelling*): Stop!

ALL (*singing stops, all freeze and look in same direction*)

SHARMA: I see it! (*pointing*) The Fairmont Garden of Eden!

EVE: Where?

SHARMA: Across that valley. I think I see (*pause*) a Porta Potty!

ALL: Yeah!

EVE: If we can just hang on for that distance!

CRANKY: But what are our chances?

GEB: Given the conditions, I forecast between 10 and 30 percent.

CRANKY: It's still hopeless!

GEB: Technically, hopeless is a zero percent chance. (*pause*) Which is what we'll have if we stay here.

EVE (*pause, then resuming routine*): All right people, suck it up!

ALL: Suck it up, step in time. Suck it up, step in time  
Never need a reason, never need a rhyme. Suck it up, step in time.

Step in time, step in time. Step in time, step in time  
Never need a reason, never need a rhyme. Step in time, step in time.

(*Ends with a crescendo, or repetition of last verse until exit offstage*)

(END of Play)

## Dedication

For Kiran, my ray of light. *Use your words!*  
And for all the world's children, who need love and protection just as much.

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