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The Killing Noise of the Out of Style

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The Killing Noise of the Out of Style

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Playwriting

by

Bryon Reiger

B.A. American Military University, 2014

May, 2017
Characters:

Lazlo - First Brother

Gordon - Second Brother

Setting:

Feels like a submarine.
“Our machine, it has done its work, played its part well
Without a scratch on our bodies and we bid it farewell
Starfish and giant foams greet us with a smile
Before our heads go under we take a last look at the killing noise
Of the out of style, the out of style, out of style”

-Jimi Hendrix
Act One.
Scene 1:

Gordon leads Lazlo. Lazlo has a black bag on his head. Gordon removes the bag.

GORDON

We just aren’t getting it across.

LAZLO

I have an idea.

GORDON

The Sea King is looking really bored out there. Really bored. When he’s bored—

LAZLO

I know, he tries to throw us to the sharks.

GORDON

Or worse.

LAZLO

So we don’t let him get bored.

GORDON

What do we have left?

LAZLO

Garbage Boy.

GORDON

Garbage Boy?

LAZLO

Yes.

GORDON

No.

LAZLO

Garbage Boy is our ticket out of here.
GORDON

There is no ticket out of here.

LAZLO

Will the Sea King call for us again tonight?

GORDON

Yes. I’m afraid that he will.

LAZLO

Will you have to put a bag over my head again?

GORDON

Yes. I’m afraid that I will.

LAZLO

That’s fine. One question.

GORDON

Shoot.

LAZLO

How tall is the Sea King again?

GORDON

I’m worn out just now.

LAZLO

How tall is he exactly? I mean, what is his highest terminating point, elevation wise?

GORDON

Let me rest!

LAZLO

I’ve got some great new ideas about Garbage Boy.

Garbage Boy!?

GORDON

LAZLO

Garbage Boy!
GORDON
How are we, meaning the two of us, going to put on a full-scale musical?

LAZLO
I don’t suppose we would need more than just the two of us really.

GORDON
Ha!

LAZLO
Ok. Then we continue to dance for—was it a sky-scraper sized?—fish-man until he gets bored with us and boils us with his eye-lasers, a tasty treat for the brood of crab he keeps tucked under his tail.

GORDON
I did tell you about the brood of crab didn’t I?

LAZLO
I remember things.

GORDON
Oh, you remember when it’s convenient. When it comes to the location of the Composition Notebook containing our original records, especially the record of the exact height and terminating point of the Sea King however—

LAZLO
Can’t you simply measure and record his height a second time?

GORDON
Where is the record in the Composition Notebook. Where is the Composition Notebook itself?

LAZLO
Lost I suppose.

GORDON
Of course, you don’t remember.

LAZLO
Things turn up missing all the time. One day you visit your brother in Meat Machine prison and the next thing you know he puts a bag over your head and whisks you away beneath…which ocean again?
GORDON
Tonight I will put the bag over your head. I will lead you back into the Sea King’s magic bubble and we will stand side by side remembering not to reach our arms out too far for fear that the bubble will break and the sea water will rush in.

LAZLO
The magic bubble that feels like a closet wall on account of the Sea King’s trickery?

GORDON
The same. We will be careful not to touch it and we will dance.

LAZLO
He’s hated our dancing every time and nearly killed us in all manner of bizarre ways as you have narrated the events while I leaned this way and that to direct the magic bubble away from danger.

GORDON
We have always managed to escape into the ship.

LAZLO
What happens when we can’t escape into the ship?

After a beat.

LAZLO (cont’d.)
Or, hear me out, Garbage Boy the Musical! It’s a good show. At least, it will be when we finish writing it. Come on. Let’s keep working on it. I will stop asking you about the height of the Sea King.

GORDON
And you will finally take the blame for the loss of the Composition Notebook in which you and I made our records, including the record of the highest terminating point of the Sea King we made while standing in the magic bubble and using the laser distance finders of the Atlantean surveyors.

LAZLO
Yes. I will take the blame.

GORDON
And you will cease to continuously pester me about getting a like measurement to replace the one that you lost?
LAZLO

Yes.

GORDON

And you will no longer ask me to repeat the finer points of the things that I used to read from the Composition Notebook, especially regarding the number and sizes of things, of the scales on the Sea King’s mighty tail, or of the color and location of each eye on his mighty head. You can’t question me about these things and then call to mind your memory of something I already described and say that I am now describing it differently. This you can never do again.

LAZLO

Never.

GORDON

Fine.

LAZLO

And Garbage Boy?

GORDON

Fine.

LAZLO

I’m assuming you still remember the part we already wrote.

GORDON

Lights up on Garbage Boy.

He is Garbage Boy.

GORDON(cont’d.)

He is remarkable in his resonance with his environment.

LAZLO

A flock of bluebirds approaches.

Vocal embodiment of bluebirds.

GORDON

A bluebird alights on his shoulder. Hello, Mr. Bluebird.
LAZLO
A swell of string music arrests us into pure joy.

GORDON
Garbage Boy Free: a Ballad

I AM THE FABRIC OF THE CITY
EVEN WHEN I’M FEELING DRY.
THE SHOE STORES HERE ARE ALL REAL SHITTY
IT’S NOT THE PLACE I’D LIKE TO DIE.

THE SHOE STORES!
OH THE SHOE STORES!
HOW THEY BECKON ME TO CRY
I AM THE FABRIC OF THE CITY
EVEN WHEN I’M FEELING DRY.

LAZLO
As shoe salesman.
Welcome to the shoe store.

GORDON
Hello. I’m looking for new shoes, something sturdy, like a pair of boots.

LAZLO
Boots huh? You some sort of day laborer?

GORDON
No. No. Nothing like that. I’m just feeling sturdy, maybe for the first time in a long time.

LAZLO
Aren’t you that Garbage Boy what turns into a ravenous, cannibal monster when splashed with dumpster water?

GORDON
I’m afraid it’s true.

LAZLO
Well don’t get all down about it. Here, let me show you our selection of boots.

GORDON
More like your selection of boot.
LAZLO

Well, this is the bad part of town.

GORDON

I’ll take it!

LAZLO

Now things begin to quiet down.

GORDON

Nobody moves. Nobody breathes. Garbage boy stares into the middle distance.

LAZLO

Out of the darkness a single violin intones a single note, the vibration of a single string soon joined by a single voice.

GORDON

I AM THE FABRIC OF THE CITY EVEN WHEN I’M FEELING—

LAZLO

He stops. What was that noise? A moment ago it seemed he was standing in a shoe store. Now he is alone on an empty stage. Except, he is not alone. There it is Garbage Boy, a dumpster. Oh it is juicy from the rain, Garbage Boy. Imagine all the water.

GORDON

No!

LAZLO

And that’s all we have written, I mean besides the pages of notes we lost in the Composition Notebook.

GORDON

You lost.

LAZLO

Right. I lost.

GORDON

As well as the Plot Diagram that was also in the Notebook.

LAZLO

Right. The Plot Diagram.
GORDON
Wait. I remember he runs off screaming.

LAZLO
Right. Then that was it.

GORDON
No. No. There was the attack.

LAZLO
Of course. Garbage Boy kills and eats two people.

GORDON
Tastefully. Offstage. The lightest suggestive material. You know, I like this. I think this can really work.

LAZLO
You mean you think our performance will please the Sea King and we will soon be freed?

GORDON
I mean I think our performance will please the Sea King and we will not soon be eaten.

End of Scene.
Scene 2:

Lazlo enters carrying cell phones.

LAZLO
I’ve been thinking. Our dead cell-phones, I could take them and wrap them in tin-foil.

GORDON
I’m not sure I see the reason.

LAZLO
A transmitter.

GORDON
I still don’t follow.

LAZLO
It’s simple, we’ve been looking at one side of this for too long. Now, we must consider the other side of the equation. What are we going to do after we escape from the lair of the mighty Sea King?

GORDON
Why, we can do anything we please as long as we keep to the edges of Atlantis. I’ve a mind to begin collecting the pure hydrogen from undersea volcanoes. With it, we could manufacture enough fuel to power my infernal submarine for several lifetimes.

LAZLO
Right. However, on the off-chance one of us has a wife and kids to get back to, it would be useful to tell everyone back home where we are. Don’t you think your buddies back in the Meat Machine are starting to wonder about you?

GORDON
Those guys.

LAZLO
Yea, those guys.

GORDON
Fuck those guys.

LAZLO
You don’t mean that.
No. I probably don’t.

The cell phones?

Yea. Wrap ‘em.

Good. Good. I’m going to my quarters.

But first we must decide what happens to Garbage Boy after the expositional prologue.

I’m at a loss.

Okay, how about this, he becomes a megalomaniac, retreats to the ocean to build wealth and exert studied political influence. Garbage Boy says, I mean to tear the glimmering heart out of the ocean and use it to buy kings.

Now wait a minute.

Because the ocean is just one big dumpster. And Garbage Boy loves the dumpster. Everything is free in a dumpster.

Except every time he gets wet—

He goes ravenous, yes.

Why was that again?

Oh, mutation from his original exposure to garbage water. Each new exposure causes the expression of a protein called—
Skip it.

What pain?

From being wet with garbage water.

We are going to have to do better than that.

Better?

We are going to have to go deeper.

Deeper into—

Deeper into what makes Garbage Boy tick. We should each go into a period of deep contemplation and brainstorming.

I agree. Let’s meet back here later and talk about what we came up with.

They both leave.
Scene 3:

Gordon comes right back out. Eventually, so does Lazlo.

GORDON
Here is what I came up with. Remember when the power went out in the middle of summer and mom was onto dad for his alleged homosexual affairs? Then, she hit him with a crow-bar?

LAZLO
Incorrect. It was, in fact, a pry-bar.

GORDON
Whether it crows or it pries, it goes to the lateral aspect of the right thigh.

LAZLO
That must have hurt like a bitch.

GORDON
Two complex lacerations, bit of a venule bleed, gonna need a bandana on that.

LAZLO
Listen, Gordon. I’ve been in touch with the surface.

GORDON
All along we just had to wrap the cellphones in tin-foil?

LAZLO
What can I say, it just came to me.

GORDON
What did the surface have to say?

LAZLO
They want us to come back. Gordon, they want you to go back to the Meat Machine.

GORDON
Back? Well. Did you explain to them about the situation with the Sea King? I mean, we are at his mercy.

LAZLO
Yes. I’ve explained.
GORDON
And?

LAZLO
They don’t seem to be very sympathetic. They want you to remember your duty. They say that there is nothing wrong with you—

GORDON
Aside from the Sea King you mean?

LAZLO
Right, but—

GORDON
Look, you know as well as I do that if I could go back to the Meat Machine I would. Heck. I volunteered. I should do my duty. It’s just, what with the Sea King and everything.

LAZLO
I understand. But Gordon, they are pretty upset on the surface. It just so happens that the Meat Machine is starting to spin up. It just so happens they need everybody they can get.

GORDON
I’m sure they do. I just can’t right now.

LAZLO
They said you might say that. They told me to remind you of when you first signed up.

GORDON
I thought it was going to be the end of me. I thought I was going to be popped, split like a grape.

LAZLO
If I was around I would have stopped you.

GORDON
I don’t know if you could have stopped me. I was pretty determined to be split like a grape.

LAZLO
But you weren’t split like a grape.

GORDON
I survived.
Can you describe the Meat Machine?

Oh, I’m worn out just now.

Just tell me again. Tell me about the darkness.

Well. It was dark, real dark, except for the glow from the hell hole.

Oh yes. The hell hole. And the heartbeat?

Right. The heartbeat of the machine pushed us for a long time. I was pressed shoulder to shoulder, knee to back.

For how long?

The descent took hours, then hours to unload, hours to walk, knees buckling, blood flowing into pin-pricked leg muscles.

Then?

Then we flowed from bigger machines to smaller machines, smaller groups of passengers, operators, prisoners. The whole Meat Machine moves together. Its smaller parts, containing only small units of men, the most terminal, finger-like protrusions, you must travel awhile to get to these.

What did you hear?

Hear?

Yes. The noise. Tell me about the noise it made.
The Meat Machine?

Yes.

Constant, mechanical chewing.

After a beat.

I’ve thought of something that might actually help with Garbage Boy.

Oh yea?

I’ve remembered a harrowing moment.

Let’s hear it.

We went out on the Levee, me and Becky Beauregard.

Who?

That’s just the girl’s name. She’s not important at the moment. We went out on the levee. There was a barge in the shallows of the river bank.

So what?

So I went inside it.

It was a hollow barge?
LAZLO
The walls must have been ten feet up from the deck.

GORDON
And Becky?

LAZLO
She stayed outside. I found an old boat bumper and stole it, clutched it in my teeth, clambered up the wall.

GORDON
In your teeth?

LAZLO
The rope, I clasped the rope between my teeth. The boat bumper was tied to a rope. They are always tied to ropes right?

GORDON
What’s a boat bumper?

LAZLO
The rubber things on the side of boats. They hang off the boat by a rope.

GORDON
So you stole it.

LAZLO
I won it.

GORDON
And Becky?

LAZLO
We got drunk after that.

GORDON
How does this help us with Garbage Boy?

LAZLO
The point is I did something. I risked something. I didn’t know what was down in the bottom of that old stray coal barge caught up in the rushes. I didn’t know what I would find or what would happen. But I did it anyway. I came up on the other side with a prize.
GORDON
And so Garbage Boy?

LAZLO
Garbage boy needs to find something to fight for. He needs to find something that will make it worth getting up in the morning, make it worth staying out of the dumpsters in the first place. He needs to find something that will send him back into the daily grind.

GORDON
Of course. You are brilliant. He must find something to fight for and then lose it. This is what will finally drive him into the ocean for good.

LAZLO
Or he could sacrifice himself for something bigger than himself, a national cause. He could go back and finish out his term of service so that he doesn’t go back to prison, for instance, apropos of nothing.

GORDON
No. It would just be hollow rhetoric on the part of Garbage Boy, a ploy, a vain attempt to do something worthwhile. No. Garbage Boy must lose everything he cares about and turn into a bitter villain and finally be killed by the crushing weight of his own schemes. Only then can we achieve the correct balance of emotion for purgation that will placate the Sea King long enough for us to escape.

LAZLO
Fine. What on Earth can we get Garbage Boy to care about?

GORDON
You said it yourself, a girl.

LAZLO
So one of us must play a girl?

GORDON
Oh, we’ll put a bit of kelp on your head.

LAZLO
And who is she?

GORDON
A shark princess.
LAZLO
Hello, my name is Dorsal Fin the fair of the shark people.

GORDON
Dorsal Fin. You are kidnapped! I will keep you forever in the dungeons of my infernal submarines!

LAZLO
Whoa! Hands. We are building to the megalomaniac. You don’t go full megalomaniac, not right away. You gotta build to it.

GORDON
Dorsal Fin. So nice to meet you. Welcome to my infernal submarine.

LAZLO
Infernal?

GORDON
Welcome to my normal submarine. What brings you here so unexpectedly?

LAZLO
I’ve come because I want to run away from my people.

GORDON
The Shark People?

LAZLO
The same. Though you have come here to teach us the ways of science and the conversion of volcanic gas into useable fuel, my people have conspired to cast you out of the Fertile Shark Plains.

GORDON
Diabolical.

LAZLO
Yes. But I have come to warn you that tonight they will come and bind you and cast you out of the Fertile Shark Plains.

GORDON
Right. Excellent. It’s time to pack it out of here. And what about you? You are coming with me?
LAZLO
I would love to.

GORDON
No. Sorry. No. Garbage Boy works alone. I must use my band of disabused sailors and divers to gather a bunch of pearls to pay for the murder of Arch-duke Ferdinand.

LAZLO
The pearls that are sacred to my people?

GORDON
Sorry, sweetheart. While you have been jabbering with me here my army has gathered all of the pearls. Now we will destroy your village.

LAZLO
No!

GORDON
Wait really?

LAZLO
No. No. Destroy the village. Totally destroy it. We have to really see how far Garbage Boy has sunk. I was saying no as Dorsal Fin. No!

GORDON
In time you will come to respect me, Dorsal Fin. You will see in the end that I had to destroy your village.

LAZLO
I’ll never believe you!

GORDON
Take her away! And then the beating of a drum.

LAZLO
CALL OFF YOUR DOGS, GARBAGE BOY  
I’M NOT A DOG TOY, BOY  
HELEN OF TROY  
WOULD LAUGH AND LAUGH AND LAUGH
LAZLO (cont’d)

HA HA DORSAL FIN
WHAT DID YOUR BEAUTY WIN?
WHAT USE YOUR SHARK SMOOTH SKIN?
AND THEN DIN AND SIN AND A DUNGEON
THEN NUTHIN.

GORDON
And then complete darkness. Wow. Ok. Let’s do it for real. This time with the bag over your head. I begin to sense the vibrations of the Sea King’s summons.

End of Scene.
Scene 4: They enter as champions, Lazlo is yet still bagged.

GORDON
What a rousing applause there was from the Fish-house of Commons. Oh, we really speak to the common fish people, Lazlo. Did you hear them, the rousing applause?

LAZLO
Ah-hem.

Debagged.

LAZLO (cont’d)
Yes I did hear you describe it to me.

GORDON
Funny what the influence of the Sea King’s specific gravity has done to the workings of your inner ear.

LAZLO
Wondrously funny.

GORDON
Nevertheless, applaud they did and the Sea King did look very purgated.

LAZLO
Great. I sure hope he gets—was it purgated?—I hope he gets purgated soon because things do not look good on the surface.

GORDON
What do I care?

LAZLO
Because you want your brother to return to his family and not be a prisoner of the Sea King for the rest of his life because he made the mistake of visiting you on the day you were making your escape into the mysterious depths of undiscovered trenches of some ocean.

GORDON
I’m sorry, Lazlo. It was never supposed to happen like this.
LAZLO
If you feel bad about it then you should be trying to find a way to get to the surface again. Yes. They are going to put you back in the Meat Machine, but lots more people come back than don’t come back.

GORDON
Yea.

LAZLO
And what about duty and all that stuff they put on the recruiting brain scan?

GORDON
No. That stuff means something to a lot of people.

LAZLO
But not you.

GORDON
I guess not anymore.

LAZLO
At least you don’t believe in it enough to get back in the Meat Machine.

GORDON
Right.

LAZLO
You’d rather just continue to lead me in and out of the closet—

GORDON
Magic bubble.

LAZLO
Right. Magic bubble. You’d rather just continue to lead me in and out of the magic bubble with a bag over my head.

GORDON
To keep your head from exploding due to the combined force of the gaze of the multifarious array of the Sea King’s eyes.

LAZLO
How many eyes again?
Tisk, tisk.

Ok. Fine. But the surface is losing patience. They say they might come here themselves.

I know, and throw me back in prison for refusing to return to the Meat Machine.

Or worse.

So what then?

Our only hope is to really get to work on Garbage Boy.

Garbage Boy?

Yes. We’ll show them what you have created, what we have created, and they will know its precision matches the symmetrical vibrations of a sane mind.

They will set me free?

They will put you back in the Meat Machine for a little while and then yes.

Ok.

Really?

As soon as we escape from the Sea King we will go up to the surface and I will surrender.

Then you must hurry up and think of something because your prisoner has just shut herself into the airlock and will soon jettison herself into the ocean.
GORDON

Such a pity.

LAZLO

Do you have compassion for no one?

GORDON

No, Dorsal Fin. I do not. Compassion is weakness. I view the world with cold utility.

LAZLO

Your army of disabused sailors and divers speaks of a different Garbage Boy. They speak of a hero who rescued them in a time of need.

GORDON

A Submarine Captain must have sailors. A rescued sailor is a loyal sailor. I’m always and forever rescuing sailors.

LAZLO

Prove you are so cold-hearted. Let me jettison myself out into the ocean.

GORDON

Do it.

LAZLO

I will count to three, Garbage Boy. I will count to three and then I will press this button.

GORDON

You are a fool. You are throwing your life away.

LAZLO

You are just as foolish to not stop me.

GORDON

What do you want me to say?

LAZLO

That you are capable of caring about someone.

GORDON

Why are you doing this?
LAZLO
Because you were right, you asshole. There was a tyrant in control of the Fertile Shark Fields all along. He was using the pearls to finance his scientific research. He was about to turn us all into half-people, half-shark, monster soldiers. You saved my people from the slow horrific death of being sewn to living sharks.

GORDON
Is that too shocking for the fish audience?

LAZLO
No. I mean, they are mermaids, or mermen, or whatever.

GORDON
True.

LAZLO
One. Two.

GORDON
Oh! He presses his button just as she presses her button.

LAZLO
There is a malfunction and both doors get stuck a little open.

GORDON
Sort of like a grease trap.

LAZLO
Water rushes in from the ocean side of the airlock and will eventually spill out over the top of the other door and into the ship.

GORDON
Causing Garbage Boy to get wet.

LAZLO
While both openings are too small for poor Dorsal Fin to make her escape, water will slowly fill the airlock for one to ten minutes.

GORDON
The low vibrating hum of a cello brings our purgative members to readiness.

LAZLO
And the princess, she swims as the water continues to rise.
GORDON
Damn these infernal doors, a duet.

LAZLO
DAMN THESE INFERNAL DOORS.
OPENING CLOSING
PECULIAR POSING
OF LOVERS DIVIDED

GORDON
THEIR WORLDS COLLIDED.

LAZLO
Get out of here! You’re going to get wet, then you will go ravenous and destroy the whole ship in your madness!

GORDON
From the pain.

LAZLO
DAMN THESE INFERNAL DOORS.
THE SITUATION IS PRESSING.
THERE’S THINGS WE COULD BE UNDRESSING.

LAZLO AND GORDON
DAMN THESE INFERNAL DOORS!

GORDON
Wait, why don’t I wear some sort of waterproof suit at all times!?

LAZLO
Right! I didn’t think of that! You should probably have something like that!

GORDON
As long as it has some sort of weakness!

LAZLO
Right! Like you could forget to put it on!

GORDON
Right! Good idea!
LAZLO
Are you wearing your waterproof suit!?

GORDON
I forgot to put it on!

DAMN THESE INFERNAL DOORS
MY CONDITION IS PUZZLING
FROM TRASH WATER GUZZLING
I TURN INTO A BEAST!

Oh no! And he gets wet!

LAZLO
You’re going to tear the ship apart! We’re at 40,000 leagues under the sea!

GORDON
I’m not going to leave you! (Beast noise.) You are the last of the noble Shark People! (More intense beast noise.) I really cared for the people in your village! Your father taught me how to train a shark for riding and war! (Most intense beast noise.) And he completely transforms!

LAZLO
He uses his beast strength to unjam the airlock doors. He rescues Dorsal Fin and the two of them embrace as the water empties out of the airlock all around them.

GORDON
Dorsal fin!

LAZLO
Yes? Oh my, you aren’t eating me! Has Garbage Boy learned to control the pain that rises up inside him every time he gets wet with garbage water?

GORDON
I believe that he has.

LAZLO
Then it is clear what he must do.

GORDON
Is it?

LAZLO
GORDON

Whatever can you mean, Dorsal Fin?

LAZLO

I was wounded, Garbage Boy, quite fatally, just now. You can see the assassin’s hand retreating out of the closing airlock doors.

GORDON

Those doors are still closing?

LAZLO

Just the last bit. You must live on. You must deliver the pearls to the assassins who will take out Arch-duke Ferdinand.

GORDON

No. I must not deliver the pearls to the assassins.

LAZLO

Why not?

GORDON

Because I no longer want to control the world from the depths of the ocean if I can’t do it without you by my side. Curse you assassin!

LAZLO

He was an agent of—

GORDON

Save your strength, Dorsal Fin.

LAZLO

He was working for—

GORDON

There, there tender Dorsal Fin.

LAZLO

He was working for the tyrant! And she dies.
GORDON
The Tyrant! I should have known. And now the creation of a super hero suit!

End of Scene
Scene 5:

Gordon enters wearing a super-suit.

LAZLO
And now I will play the evil tyrant. You think just because you came here with a super-suit, imbued with super-strength—

GORDON
Yes, strength that I titrate with the madness of pain. I infuse micro amounts of garbage water through these IV pumps which are bolted on—

LAZLO
Skip it. You think you can come here and insult me? You think you can come here and you, the one who stole all of my pearls. You think you can destroy me?

GORDON
It’s over, tyrant.

LAZLO
It’s over when I say it’s over.

GORDON
Save it for the judge!

The most ridiculous stage combat scene possible. Gordon falls.

GORDON
My suit. Destroyed. How?

LAZLO
I’ll tell you how, Garbage Boy. The tyrant never forgets to take out the trash. Take him out boys. I’ve got a meat shortage to attend to.

Lazlo fades away into the darkest corner he can find.

GORDON
Well?

There is nothing.
GORDON (cont’d)
Oh I get it. You want me to take myself out. That’s the way you see this ending, is it? You see Garbage Boy taking himself out.

LAZLO
What are you doing?

GORDON
Is that a trash can over there? All I need to do is exert a large force of will and stand against all odds and despite my near fatal beating.

LAZLO
Again a single string vibrates.

GORDON
Little by little I begin to gather strength from the uplifting music.

LAZLO
The drum moves your feet.

GORDON
My feet!

LAZLO
You are lurched forward by the full crescendo of cymbal and drum!

GORDON
THE PURE POWER!
THIS IS THE HOUR.
I’LL NO LONGER SIT AND SOUR LIKE MILK.
I’VE GOT PURE POWER
AND A WATER BOTTLE
AND A TRASH CAN
AND I CAN
COMBINE!

He dumps the trash water all over himself.

GORDON (cont’d.)
RAVENOUS CANNIBAL MODE
CONTROLLABLE
MARKETABLE
POSABLE
THE THUMB TO MAKE YOU NUMB.
LAZLO
The whistle of a train!

GORDON
YES IT IS TRUE
THAT I’M IN BEAST MODE
BUT I AM STILL BLEEDING
AND THE TYRANT IS HERE.

LAZLO
Surrender! The walls of this prison, which is overlooking a picturesque cliffside that drops 50 feet to a train track, the walls of this prison are electrified! Don’t even think of escape, even though in beast mode you clearly have the strength to bust through there and out the wall of the prison. You would receive quite a shock but it would probably just knock you out thereby increasing your chances of surviving the fall into the open topped garbage train that is now passing beneath us.

GORDON
I go!

Gordon fades away into the darkest corner he can find.

LAZLO
Curses! But don’t worry. We’ll be waiting for you when you wake up. And, If my calculations are correct, in your current state, you will receive such an exposure to garbage water that you will surely die! Away. I have a meat shortage to attend to.

GORDON
Excellent. So good. Ok. Let’s do it for real. This time with the bag on your head.

They exit. End of Scene.
Scene 6:

They enter again together, Lazlo bagged.

GORDON
Now he will let us live until we finish the thing. There is no way he will kill us before he finds out what happens to Garbage Boy. Does the massive dose of garbage water kill him? Does it instead make him stronger? Didn’t you hear them debating about it as we were cheered off?

L A Z L O
Gordon. I need you to listen to me.

GORDON
I can’t hear anything you are saying.

Debagged.

L A Z L O
There are men in my quarters. They are from the surface.

GORDON
In your quarters?

L A Z L O
Yes. They were the ones who suggested wrapping the cell phones in tin-foil. They wanted to give you one last chance to come to your senses.

GORDON
How did they—

L A Z L O
How did they get in here? You aren’t going to like it, Gordon.

GORDON
Not going to…what is that sound?

L A Z L O
That’s the sound of constant mechanical chewing.

The sound of constant mechanical chewing.

GORDON
You don’t mean?
LAZLO
That’s right. The Meat Machine is here. As a matter of fact, they bored through the wall of my quarters three nights ago. It was the thinnest, finger-like protrusion of the Meat Machine, containing only a few men. At first I protested at their treatment of a private citizen but they convinced me. Oh they are very convincing, Gordon. But you are in luck, Gordon.

GORDON

Luck?

LAZLO
They want to take you back. You see the Meat Machine is really starting to spin up just now. They are ready to overlook any indiscretions, any suicidal tendencies, any willful break with reality. After all. You did volunteer.

GORDON

I did. I will go.

LAZLO
But as I said, you are in luck. A Big Wig has come all the way from the heart of the Meat Machine. He is really interested in Garbage Boy. He wants you to finish Garbage Boy.

GORDON

And the Sea King?

LAZLO
Oh I wouldn’t worry about the Sea King, Gordon. The Meat Machine has been looking for him for a long time, Gordon.

GORDON

That’s not the sound?

LAZLO
There is a Meat shortage, Gordon. The Meat Machine must produce meat.

GORDON

Oh, Fish King! Never will I mingle pity and fear to bring you to full purgation! You must go into the after-life unbalanced.

LAZLO
He has become the honored dead.
Honored with gravy and bread.

Only one question remains. What happens to Garbage Boy?

A long beat.

He survives the fall forever changed.

How changed?

He doesn’t change. He has become fixed.

Fixed?

Fixed but not fixed.

How fixed?

Completely fixed, Beast Mode always. He is a hideous, all-powerful ball of wet garbage and rage with one purpose.

Destroy the tyrant.

And now I must yell and in my howl you must feel all the pain of my blood being completely overtaken by the protein—

Skip it.

Fine. The ding of a bell on a familiar merchant door.
LAZLO
I see you are right back where you started, here, in my shoe store.

GORDON
That’s right. I came here once before. You sold me a boot. I still have it.

LAZLO
Come into the light. I can’t see you.

GORDON
Does it terrify you?

LAZLO

GORDON
Yes. Yes. It’s a perfect match. I must put these boots on and step through that door. The world is waiting out there.

LAZLO
It is waiting, what will you do with it when you find it?

GORDON
I’ll search the fabric of the city. I’ll look it over for traces of the Tyrant, even if I have to crawl through every dumpster. I will build a mountain of his own garbage, and dump it right on his front door.

LAZLO
I’m sure you will, Garbage Man, I’m sure you will.

GORDON
Good bye friendly shop-keeper.

LAZLO
Good bye, Garbage Man.

Gordon pushes himself into the darkest corner he can find.

LAZLO (Cont’d.)
Yes. Go, Garbage Man. Defeat the Tyrant. Then the world will know a new Tyrant. For I am no shoe store salesperson. I am Dorsal Fin who did fake her own death!
GORDON
No way!

LAZLO
Yea it just came to me. She was the one sewing people to sharks all along.

GORDON
Oh, sick.

LAZLO
Yea, sick. Ok now let’s do it for real with the bag over your head.

GORDON
I must wear the bag?

LAZLO
Oh yea. The Big Wig is not going to let you see his face. You have to do the whole thing with the bag over your head. Oh and don’t reach out your arms too far.

GORDON
I must not reach my arms out too far?

LAZLO
No. Definitely don’t do that. They will shoot you.

GORDON
What?

LAZLO
Right this way.

Lazlo bags Gordon and leads him off. There is a loud mechanical crunch and the chewing stops.

End of act.
Act Two.
Scene 1:

Gordon enters, bagged. He debags himself. Lazlo enters.

Lazlo
Another rousing battle with the agents of the so-called Tyrant. I think the Big Wig was pleased. Though, I do think it’s getting harder and harder to keep him distracted. Did you forget something?

Gordon bags himself. Lazlo debags him.

Lazlo (cont’d.)
Here.

Gordon
Flypaper?

Lazlo
Flypaper. The Meat Machine refrigeration has failed in 5,000 sectors and counting more sectors every minute. The smell of rotting meat is going to be a regional disaster, not to mention how it is worsening the meat shortage.

Gordon
And the flypaper?

Lazlo
The rotting meat is attracting flies. The whole Meat Machine is filling up with flies. The flies will filter down through the hole in the hull in my quarters. The Big Wig wants us to be preventative.

Flypaper can and should go up anywhere.

Gordon
Where are we on repairing the Meat Machine?

Lazlo
Still attempting to remove the Sea King’s crown from the shredder cortex. Where are we on peace talks with the new Atlantean Lord Protector?

Gordon
Everybody is really angry. We just have to get all the rebel factions to sit down at one table.
GORDON(cont’d.)
Since the meat machine toppled the Sea King and then began to grind the Sea King into single portions freeze dried and aluminum wrapped, then, as you say, it broke and steamed out and came to rest on the precipice of—was it a cliff?—the shredder cortex clogged with the Sea King’s crown, the underdog factions have been having it out with the overdog factions. It’s pandemonium on the pearl causeways of Atlantis. How are your wife and kids?

LAZLO
Looking forward to my return. Little Billy is walking. Jeanie, boy oh boy, that Jeanie is a handful. Martha just can’t wait for me to get back and set her straight.

GORDON
Right. Which will be when again?

LAZLO
As soon as we are satisfied with Garbage Boy.

GORDON
We?

LAZLO
Them, the agents of the Meat Machine.

GORDON
Right. Them. What were their names again?

LAZLO
The agents?

GORDON
Right. I always have the bag over my head. I mean, I’ve heard you talk to them but they never say a word.

LAZLO
They don’t want you to be able to identify them, plausible deniability and all.

GORDON
I see, and the names?

LAZLO
Not names, numbers, 1, 2, 3 and the Big Wig.
GORDON
Right, how simple. And they are satisfied with Garbage Boy so far?

LAZLO
Oh, they are just wild about it.

GORDON
Which one likes it best do you think?

LAZLO
Oh you never can tell with a question like that. Which one likes it best? That’s a wisp of smoke. That’s evaporation. How do you quantify personal taste?

After a Beat.

LAZLO (cont’d.)
Garbage Boy. He’s got two boots now.

GORDON
Both of them.

LAZLO
He fights crime.

GORDON
A bit at a time.

LAZLO
And the tyrant.

GORDON
Hot on the trail. And Dorsal fin?

LAZLO
Hello, Garbage Boy

GORDON
I’m sorry person I don’t recognize, it’s Garbage Man now.

LAZLO
Of course.
Wait a minute. Dorsal Fin?

Yes.

Dorsal Fin!

You must not touch me Garbage Boy. I’m not quite the same Garbage Boy. Things are different for me now.

A single stick riding a single cymbal.

I’M NERVE DAMAGED.
I’M BANISHED
FROM A PLACE THAT DOESN’T EXIST.
YOU DREW LINES AROUND IT.
YOU DRILLED FOR HYDROGEN.
AND YOU DRILLED AND DRILLED AND DRILLED AGAIN.

AND ANYWAY, THOSE DAYS ARE OVER.
BUT I’M NERVE DAMAGED.
AND I’M DAMAGED IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES
TIED UP WITH BOOT LACES
AND ALL MY SHARKLIKE GRACES
ARE GETTING ME INTO ALL THE RIGHT PLACES

Dorsal Fin, would you consider traveling with me on my Infernal submarine like the old days, fighting crime and donating money and arms to hydrogen-rich countries with puppet dictators?

I can’t engage in any kind of partnership at this time. My experiments are moving along at a good clip. Things are working in a way they have never worked before. I feel like it will be the dawning of a new age.

A new age?
LAZLO

The New Age: A Duet

IN THE FUTURE THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT.

GORDON

IN THE FUTURE THINGS WILL TURN OUT ALRIGHT.

LAZLO

NOBODY WILL BE WRINKLED OR FOLDED TOO TIGHT.
IN THE FUTURE YOU WON’T HAVE TO BUY ANY CLOTHES
YOU’LL HAVE ONE GARMENT YOU WEAR.

GORDON

ANY COLOR!

LAZLO

EVEN BUTTER COLORED.

LASLO and GORDON

LIKE GOLD!

GORDON

In the future, I’m going to accept the horrible trash-disfigured visage that is my face.

LAZLO

In the future, sharks sewn to people will win a majority vote in congress, thanks to you, Garbage Boy!

GORDON

What? What have you done to me? Whole. body. completely. immobile.

LAZLO

You brought this on yourself, Garbage Boy.

GORDON

Man.

LAZLO

What?

GORDON

It’s Garbage Man!
LAZLO
Struggle all you want, Garbage Boy. The venom I’ve injected you with will leave you paralyzed long enough for me to extract your essence. With your power my army of sharks sewn to people will be unstoppable.

GORDON
Let’s you and me real talk for a minute.

LAZLO
Real talk.

GORDON
I think Garbage Boy has carried us as far as he is going to carry us.

LAZLO
What do you mean? This is a tense moment.

GORDON
We all know he is just going to drink garbage water somehow and get free.

LAZLO
So. She drains him completely.

GORDON
Drains him then leaves him alive. He learns humility through great adversity and the molar mass of his virtue gets more balanced; he regains his power. Bleh. What is it accomplishing, Garbage Boy?

LAZLO
What is it accomplishing?

GORDON
Accomplishing. As in, what is it really doing, like really really.

LAZLO
We are providing a useful distraction. We are repairing relations. We are building a nation of the fish people bereft of a central monarch. We can’t exact tribute from an unstable region.

GORDON
We?
LAZLO


GORDON

Right. Nation-building. Then what?

LAZLO

Then, we can do anything we want. I have a mind to buy a little house on the corner of two empty lots with nothing but nothing in any direction, nothing but miles for little Billy to stretch those growing legs. I can buy a pony for little Jenny.

GORDON

Little Jenny?

LAZLO

Boy oh boy Martha can’t wait for me to get back and straighten her out. Boy oh boy.

Right. Lazlo?

GORDON

Gordon?

LAZLO

What if—

GORDON

What if—

LAZLO

Lazlo!

GORDON

Gordon.

LAZLO

Lazlo! Lazlo!

GORDON

Gordon. Gordon.

LAZLO

We kill him Lazlo?
L A Z L O

Kill?

GORDON

Kill Garbage Boy.

LAZLO

Oh. Like a resurrection thing.

GORDON

No. Like a dead forever thing.

LAZLO

So what? We just kill him? End of story? We have to stretch this thing out. We have to figure out how to dislodge the Sea King’s crown from the shredder cortex, we—

GORDON

We kill him in one beautiful moment of patient martyrdom. Oh, Lazlo can’t you see it? He’ll make a speech. He’ll make such a speech. He’ll arrest the hearts of the Lord Protector, the underdog factions, the overdog factions, the Big Wig—

LAZLO

The Big Wig?

GORDON

And Things 4, 5, and 6

LAZLO

1, 2, and 3.

GORDON

Them too. All of them. They will all be purgated in the utmost by the sacrifice of Garbage Boy. They will embrace. Tears will fall from their faces. The tears of peace will mingle with the juice of roasted meat at their feet.

LAZLO

So everyone from over there, and everyone from over there. They will all converge—

GORDON

Converge here, yes. They will all converge here for one final performance.

LAZLO

And you don’t see any problem with that?
GORDON
As long as you don’t see a problem with that. I mean there are agents of the Meat Machine—

LAZLO
Of course! There are fish folk—

GORDON
Of course!

LAZLO
I don’t know. I don’t know. That seems highly unlikely. The agents of the Meat Machine will not want you to see their faces. And what about the constant need for nourishing ocean currents that you often spoke about when I would ask you why the Atlanteans never visited us here before?

GORDON
They have a suit that allows them to visit dry land.

LAZLO
There is a suit now?

GORDON
There has always been a suit.

LAZLO
Oh. Now there has always been a suit. Convenient.

GORDON
Convenient?

LAZLO
Very convenient I would say. Almost as convenient as the disappearance of the Composition Notebook!

GORDON
You promised you would no longer mention it!

LAZLO
When this whole thing started we made a covenant you and me. Everything we agreed upon went into that notebook. It was the ground we stood on, our immutable truth.
GORDON
You don’t think I mourn the loss of it as much as you do? You don’t think I pined for it when you
would pester me with questions about Atlantis? You don’t think I want to know things: what
prison I was in and why, how we came to be here, how old I was that summer the power went
out and mom hit dad with a crow bar?

LAZLO
Pry-bar.

GORDON
Whatever! You don’t think I want to read in it our original discussions of the Meat Machine, how
you helped me remember, how you helped me remember the darkness, and the hellhole, and the
heartbeat, and the pinpricked leg muscles, and the most fingerlike protrusions? You don’t think I
want to study the plot-diagram, to remember the true and original ending to Garbage Boy?!

LAZLO
Well. Well. The fact remains that it is gone. It is gone.

GORDON
And you lost it.

LAZLO
Well, now, let’s just. It seems to me we have to revisit that. You want to kill Garbage Boy I mean
that’s quite a risk. Garbage Boy means a lot to the agents. Things 1, 2 and 3 why they can’t get
through a day without an episode of Garbage Boy. Why they get smaller and smaller rations of
meat every day. That’s quite a risk we are taking killing Garbage Boy.

GORDON
So if I take the blame—

LAZLO
You taking the blame that’s a start but the fact remains that the Big Wig will not show his face.

GORDON
Then, he can wear the bag!

LAZLO
Well if he is wearing the bag how is he supposed to be purgated, which not even a word by the
way!

GORDON
Purgated! I said it! It’s a word!
Gordon Storms out. Lazlo pulls raisins out of his pocket and starts putting raisins on the flypaper. He exits. End of scene.
Scene 2:

Gordon comes out and starts examining the flypaper, counting the raisins.

GORDON

One, two, three…

As he counts Lazlo sneaks across into Gordon’s exit.

GORDON(cont’d.)
Lazlo! There are more flies, Lazlo! Lazlo, there are more of them!

He hangs more flypaper.

GORDON(cont’d.)

Lazlo comes out of Gordon’s exit wearing the bag. He debags himself. Gordon sees him.

LAZLO

Hello, Gordon.

GORDON

What were you doing in there?

LAZLO

Oh. Just having a little conversation with the Atlantean Lord Protector.

GORDON

Ha!

LAZLO

Thanks to a little device the Big Wig implanted in my inner ear that is.

A device?

GORDON

LAZLO

That’s right, Gordon. A device.
GORDON
So what. So you can hear the fish people. Big whoop. Good luck getting them to budge on peace talks. Now you can listen to the endless accountings of blood debt going back thousands of years.

LAZLO
You are right, Gordon.

GORDON
I am?

LAZLO
You are, Gordon. I dropped a few hints. I didn’t give anything away, of course. Let’s just say the Lord Protector is very interested. He is very interested in a final performance. We are going to kill Garbage Boy. I have it all worked out.

GORDON
And the Composition Notebook?

LAZLO
I wouldn’t worry about that, Gordon. It won’t matter. Not after the final performance.

GORDON
Ok then. I really do think this plan is going to work.

LAZLO
Suresuresuresure.

GORDON
We will have peace. We will have everybody in agreement.

LAZLO
Suresuresuresure.

GORDON
So let’s hear it.

LAZLO
First you give the speech.

GORDON
The big arresting speech.
LAZLO
Then we kill him with a gun. She drains him of his power and shoots him in the head. The sharks sewn to people are imbued with his genetic essence and march across the face of the earth making slaves, or chum, out of everyone.

GORDON
What is the point, then?

LAZLO
Shock value. Shock and Awe.

GORDON
So what, you’re just going to stand there and watch your infernal machines drill me for my essence again and again and again?

LAZLO
No, Garbage Boy, because it’s over. This is your last moment, Garbage Boy. Any last words you putrid sack of wet refuse?

GORDON
Only three. It’s Garbage Man!

LAZLO
You are a pitiful sight. There’s nothing you want to say? Nothing at all that will bring a certain rebellious people to a mellow sort of servile calm perhaps? Hmmmm?

GORDON
Of course. Yes. In the last moments of my life I look and I see.

You look and you see.

LAZLO
I see shoe-stores dotting the landscape. Shoe-stores as far as the eye can see.

THE SHOE STORES HERE ARE ALL REAL SHITTY
IT’S NOT THE PLACE I’D LIKE TO DIE!

LAZLO
What’s going on here, Gordon. This speech was your idea.

GORDON
I know.
LAZLO

So, what’s the problem?

GORDON

I just feel like I have to access something deeper. I feel like I have to touch something that squiggles out of the way like a fly when you swat at it. That’s what I have to do. That’s what I have to do to really write the death speech. I have to find that thing inside Garbage Boy that won’t squiggle out of the way when I try to touch it.

LASLO

Don’t worry about it.

GORDON

Don’t worry? How can I not worry?

LASLO

Because you are working yourself up.

GORDON

Everything depends on this. This speech, the patient martyrdom of Garbage Boy, the subsequent ultimate purgation of the Atlantean Lord Protector, the embrace like brothers of he and the Big Wig, the yearly tribute of fish folk served up on a platter to feed the growing meat shortage, it all depends on this!

LASLO

Sure.

GORDON

Sure?!

LASLO

But that’s no reason to worry about it. Look at the flypaper.

GORDON

The flypaper?

LASLO

The flypaper. Does the flypaper worry? Does the flypaper fret? No. No. No. It just stands in the gap for us Gordon. It stands in the gap for us between them and us. You’ve seen the flies haven’t you?

GORDON

I never look for very long.
LASLO

Why there’s one!

Gordon looks. Laslo puts more raisins on the flypaper.

GORDON

So fast. Almost invisible.

LASLO

Why look at that. Just now the good old flypaper has caught a whole handful of those rascally bastards.

GORDON

I hate flies, Laslo.

LAZLO

I know you do, Gordon. I know you do.

GORDON

I’ve hated them ever since that summer that the power went out and mom hit dad with a crow bar.

LAZLO

Pry-bar.

GORDON

Whatever. You left. You left Lazlo but the flies overtook us. They filled up the kitchen. It started in the fridge Lazlo. The infestation stated there with two of them on a rotten piece of meat in the darkness of a powerless refrigerator, two flies copulating on rotten meat. Who do you think let them out, Lazlo? Who do you think let out a cloud of flies when he’d thought the power came back on after so many weeks because of the buzzing?

LAZLO

It was you.

GORDON

It was me! They had filled up the refrigerator. They attacked me, Lazlo. They attacked me.

LAZLO

Shhhhh.
I hate the noise they make.

I know. I know. I know. Gordon?

Lazlo.

Are you thinking too much about this? I mean, the thing inside Garbage Boy that doesn’t squiggle?

Right.

Just make the speech, Gordon.

I wish it was that easy.

It is that easy.

Oh but it isn’t!

You know, Gordon. I’m beginning to wonder if you even care about my family. I’m beginning to wonder if you care about my wife and kids. Can you imagine little Jamie—

Jamie?

Little Jamie, poor unfortunate Jamie all alone without a father to straighten her out. You know the statistics, Gordon?

Statistics?
LAZLO
Right. Do you know the statistics on what a wreck fatherless daughters are? You are wrecking the life of my daughter Gordon because you are looking for something in Garbage Boy that doesn’t squiggle.

GORDON
Well, I’m sorry! It’s just that if the speech is going to work it has to be based on something immutable—

LAZLO
Fuck the speech, Gordon it’s the killing that’s is the important part!

GORDON
You don’t mean that? How will the purgation work if the purgative members aren’t primed? The death will be without context. It will be meaningless.

LAZLO

I need time.

GORDON

LAZLO
Yes, yes. You have to keep working on that death speech. I have something new in mind. Yes. We have to finish Garbage Boy. We have to finish him off.

GORDON
We as in me and you.

LASLO
Will kill you.

GORDON
As in kill Garbage Boy.

LASLO

GORDON
Right.

Lazlo Exits. End of Scene.
Scene 3:

The Flypaper is filling up with raisins.

GORDON

I can’t even count them anymore.

LAZLO

It’s not even worth counting them.

GORDON

It’s like we are in a sea of flies.

LAZLO

What is the buoyancy of a ship floating on a sea of flies?

GORDON

I give up.

LAZLO

I don’t know either but it is probably shitty.

GORDON

Ha. Ha.

LAZLO

How are things going with the death speech?

GORDON

How are things going? They aren’t going. Train wreck. More like plane wreck. Plain wrecked is more like it. I need more time.

LAZLO

Things 1 and 2 say the Big Wig is miffed. They say he is getting really impatient. They say Atlantean technology is the only thing that can repair the shredder cortex. We need this death speech to work.

GORDON

We all want peace talks to resume.

LAZLO

Let me hear what you have so far.
GORDON

I die!

LAZLO

Well. I like that as a conclusion. Especially the part where you die, Garbage Boy!

GORDON

Oh. You are still standing there. You plan to watch your infernal machines drill me again and again to extract my essence.

LAZLO

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

GORDON

Well executed.

LAZLO

Thank you.

GORDON

You know something, Dorsal Fin?

LAZLO

What’s that, Garbage Boy?

GORDON

I changed my mind. You aren’t the last of the shark people. You’re their leftover, their refuse, their garbage. And those things you’ve created, they are garbage too.

LAZLO

Whatever, Garbage Boy. Soon it won’t matter. The infusion of your essence into all of my sharks sewn to people is almost complete. My sharks sewn to people will be one at last, an unstoppable army.

GORDON

You know, the funny thing about sharks, even the garbage sharks you have created, even that shark garbage

LAZLO

The funny thing is—?

GORDON

The funny thing is, you have to keep that shark garbage wet.
LAZLO
Wet garbage! No! Music!

GORDON
REVERSE,
REVERE MY HEART.
RIGHT BECOMES LEFT.
HEMISPHERES OF MY HEART
SUCK INSTEAD OF BLOW
TAKE INSTEAD OF GIVE
FROM YOUR PEOPLE
YOUR WET GARBAGE PEOPLE
INSTEAD OF GIVING MY ESSENCE
I TAKE IT FROM THEM
AND INFUSED WITH THEIR FLUIDS

LAZLO
No! Turn off you stupid machine! No! How are you doing this?

GORDON
The power of garbage!

LAZLO
No!!!! And he comes to full power, more powerful than he has ever been before.

GORDON
I CRUSH
AND AM CRUSHED

LAZLO
You fool. You’ve punctured the hull of my infernal submarine! Now we’re both going to die!
And the onslaught of water pushes them together one last time.

GORDON
And they die. And the shark people die. And the world is rid of Garbage Boy.

LAZLO
And poor Dorsal Fin.

LAZLO AND GORDON
The end.
GORDON
I’m not sure.

LASLO
It sucks, and it’s not even what we talked about. Where is the big speech? Where is the shock and awe?

GORDON
Lazlo. What is general order number one?

LAZLO
General order what?

GORDON
Never mind, just something only someone who works for the Meat Machine would know.

LAZLO
Why would you ask me something only someone who works for the Meat Machine would know?

GORDON
Never mind. How are your wife and kids?

LAZLO
Oh just grand, just grand. That little Junie sure is a handful.

Junie?

LAZLO
By the way, they gave me a gun.

They?

LAZLO
Sure. Sure. Sure. Thing 1 and Thing 2. Thing 3 has starved to death by the way. Last in first out. That’s the way it works. There is a meat shortage going on after all.

GORDON
How logistically sound.
LAZLO
They’ve heard about your difficulty with the final speech. They wanted to give you a little motivation.

Reveals it.

GORDON
Twenty-two. Not much stopping power but it will tumble around in your ribcage.

LAZLO
Or your brain pan.

GORDON
Or your brain pan.

LAZLO
It’s for you.

GORDON
For me?

LAZLO
A prop. They think if Garbage Boy is going to give a speech he has to do it with a gun to his head. It’s the only leverage he has. If he is dead she can’t drain his life essence. She can’t finally unite the shark half with the person half to create the perfect soldier.

GORDON
I see. With a gun to my head she will stop everything and listen to me. With a gun to my head, I have all the power. With a gun to my head, I finally have the discipline to order my own reality.

LAZLO
Exactly.

GORDON
Exactly.

He takes the gun.

LAZLO
Don’t forget the bullets.

GORDON
Exactly.
We want it to seem real.

Real clip full of bullets.

Loads the gun.

Wait. How does Garbage Man get the gun?

He’s a walking mass of garbage mixed with human parts. People throw guns in dumpsters all the time. He’s had a gun buried in his rib cage since day one. He’s just never had a reason to tear it out.

Until now!

Gun to head.

Drat. Well. You have everyone’s attention, Garbage Boy. What do you want to say?

Say?

Yes, the big arresting speech. Now is the time.

The one everyone has been expecting.

Yes. Tell us the thing that doesn’t squiggle.

The truth?

Yeah. Sure. Whatever.
I don’t sleep much at night.

uh huh.

I’m always on edge.

uh huh.

Oh forget it. This is impossible.

No. This is the moment. Forget about everything. You are a man with a gun in his hand. There is only one way this can end. You pull the trigger. End of story. So pull the trigger already.

No.

No?

I don’t want to do it anymore.

It’s too late. I’ve already decided.

We can undecide.

I don’t want to undecide. I want you to pull the trigger. That’s my will. I’m the one with the bag, Gordon. That’s my will. My will wins. Pull the trigger, Gordon!

No!

Pull it!
Wait.

Pull it!

Wait.

Pull—

Quiet! Do you hear that noise?

What noise?

It’s the sound of constant mechanical chewing!

The sound of constant mechanical chewing.

You mean?

Yes!

The meat shortage is over!

Meat for everyone!

I suppose we’ll be grinding up all the fish people next.

Well, there is a meat shortage going on. That gives me an idea for Garbage Boy!

Oh yea!
GORDON

Stay right where you are, Dorsal Fin!

Gordon aims the gun at Lazlo.

LAZLO

Of course. We survive and wash up together on the shore of a beach. Both of us in a severely weakened state. You killed them all, Garbage Boy.

GORDON

Yea. I killed 200 shark monsters and I’m still breathing air. I can’t say the same for you in about thirty seconds.

LAZLO

You couldn’t kill a fly.

GORDON

Yes I could.

Dry click of a ruined gun.

GORDON(cont’d.)

This gun is ruined.

Throws it away.

LAZLO

Goodbye, Garbage Boy.

Attempts to flee. Fails Hard.

GORDON

You are as weakened as me, Dorsal Fin.

Dorsal flees. Garbage Boy Pursues. They fail hard.

LAZLO

The piano plays us out.

GORDON and LAZLO

AND IT’S MEET TO GREET THE MEAT MACHINE WITH AMPLE OFFERINGS OF MEAT:

OF MAIDENS,
OF MERCHANTS, OF EVERYONE YOU MEET BECAUSE THE MEAT MACHINE NEEDS MEAT TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR MEEEAT!!!

LAZLO
Ok and we faint offstage to thundering applause. This really will sell to the upper planning echelons of the Meat Machine. They will love how you incorporated General Order Number One.

GORDON
You think? Wait. I thought you said you didn’t know General Order Number One. Do you work for the Meat Machine?

LAZLO
Gordon. You aren’t going to like this. (Coming to attention.) General Order Number One:

GORDON and LAZLO
I will greet the meat machine with ample offerings of meat!

GORDON
Son of a Bitch.

LAZLO
Gordon, I am the Big Wig.

GORDON
Son of a Bitch!

LAZLO
I know. I joined up that summer they shut off the power and mom hit dad with a pry-bar.

GORDON
Crow-bar.

LAZLO
Whatever.

GORDON
So this whole time—
LAZLO
I’ve been protecting you. But now it’s time to go back, Gordon. You are valuable, Gordon. Garbage Boy is valuable.

GORDON
When I go back to the Meat Machine, will I have to wear the bag over my head the whole time?

LAZLO
Yes. But don’t worry. I’ll be with you, right next to you, narrating it all to you as you lean this way and that.

Laslo bags Gordon.

LAZLO (cont’d.)
You know what?

Laslo debags Gordon.

LAZLO(cont’d.)
You’ve earned this.

Laslo hands the bag to Gordon.

GORDON
Really?

LAZLO
SureSureSureSureSure.


GORDON
I have a confession to make.

LAZLO
Oh?

Reveals the Composition Notebook.

GORDON
I found this under my mattress this morning.
LAZLO

That’s right. I don’t know what possessed me to look under there. It must have been under there the whole time. That’s just like me to forget something like that, to think I put it in one place and really have left it in another.

LAZLO

Does it still contain the diagram. Does it still contain our original plot diagram of Garbage Boy the Musical?

GORDON

Yes. It’s still in there.

LAZLO

Oh! Let me see. Let me see.

GORDON

I spent the morning just contemplating the lower right quadrant of the plot diagram. I almost told you about the notebook until I saw the lower right quadrant. It disturbed me, you see, disturbed me enough to go on with the suicide.

LAZLO

Oh I used to love staring at the lower right quadrant.

GORDON

I just thought about how the lower right quadrant slowly decays to zero, but never reaches zero, ever.

LAZLO

Gorgeous.

GORDON

I was terrified you see because that meant it could never stop. Garbage Boy could never stop. For so long I’ve seen Garbage Boy as obscuring something, getting in the way of something. But Lazlo, Garbage Boy is the only thing we have ever agreed on.

LAZLO

That’s right.
GORDON
Maybe it isn’t obscuring something. Maybe it is something. Maybe it is what doesn’t squiggle.

LAZLO
I don’t know.

GORDON
Think about it. What is the name of your daughter?

LAZLO
My daughter?

Yes.

GORDON

LAZLO
Boy oh Boy Martha can’t wait for me to come back—

GORDON
I know. What is her name?

LAZLO
Why it’s. It’s. This is stupid it’s right here in the Notebook. Let me just see. Yes. Right here. Oh. Gordon. Gordon. You aren’t going to like this, Gordon. I don’t have a family. Gordon, I’m not even married.

GORDON
Really?

LAZLO
Really. Don’t I feel like the wrong end of a donkey. Geez, I’m sorry about that.

GORDON
I forgive you but don’t you see?

LAZLO
Not really.

GORDON
I’m trying to say I was wrong to try to ever kill Garbage Boy. It can’t stop. It can’t ever stop. If it stops the whole thing breaks. Everything we’ve built here. It all breaks. I just wanted to apologize.
LAZLO

We’re glad to hear it.

GORDON

We?

LAZLO

They and me.

GORDON

They?

LAZLO

I mean me, only me.

GORDON

How about a song, Lazlo?

LAZLO

What did you have in mind?

GORDON

Garbage Boy forever: a duet

IN THE ANNALS OF TIME THERE’S ONLY BEEN ONE MAN.

LAZLO

REALLY A BOY COMBINED WITH A TRASH-CAN.

GORDON

Dorsal Fin?

LAZLO

That’s right, Garbage Boy. I’ve changed my ways and will battle along side you to face a greater threat until I can learn some weakness of yours to exploit. Whoops, I’ve said too much.

HE’S GARBAGE BOY AND HE’S REALLY KEEN

GORDON

TO DEFEAT THE EVIL OF THE MEAT MACHINE.

LAZLO

IT GRINDS UP THE FISH FOLK TO FEED THE RICH
GORDON
WHILE REGULAR PEOPLE STARVE IN A DITCH

LAZLO
HE’S GARBAGE BOY!

GORDON
SHE’S DORSAL FIN!

GORDON and LAZLO
AFTER A BUMP IN THE ROAD THEY ARE TOGETHER AGAIN.

GORDON
You know, I’ve built another infernal submarine. You could have your own quarters. I mean, it would be nothing like your old dungeon.

LAZLO
Garbage Boy, You shouldn’t have.

GORDON AND LAZLO
GARBAGE BOY AND DORSAL FIN!!!

GORDON
Alright!

LAZLO
Yes!

GORDON
Pick it back up tomorrow?

LAZLO
I can’t wait.

GORDON
Goodnight, Lazlo.

LAZLO
Goodnight, Gordon.
They exit to opposite sides. The sound of constant mechanical chewing fades towards silence but never quite reaches silence. It can’t. Ever.

End of Play.
Vita

The playwright was born in Iron River, Michigan. He completed his B.A. at American Military University while serving in the U.S. Army. He joined the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans to pursue his M.F.A. in playwriting in 2014.