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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.

GORDON

Garbage Boy!?

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.

GORDON

No. I probably don't.

LAZLO

The cell phones?

GORDON

Yea. Wrap 'em.

LAZLO

Good. Good. I'm going to my quarters.

GORDON

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

LAZLO

I'm at a loss.

GORDON

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.

LAZLO

Now wait a minute.

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Except every time he gets wet—

GORDON

He goes ravenous, yes.

LAZLO

Why was that again?

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Skip it.

GORDON

Basically he just goes bonkers from all the pain.

LAZLO

What pain?

GORDON

From being wet with garbage water.

LAZLO

We are going to have to do better than that.

GORDON

Better?

LAZLO

We are going to have to go deeper.

GORDON

Deeper into—

LAZLO

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

GORDON

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.

LAZLO

Can you describe the Meat Machine?

GORDON

Oh, I'm worn out just now.

LAZLO

Just tell me again. Tell me about the darkness.

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Oh yes. The hell hole. And the heartbeat?

GORDON

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

LAZLO

For how long?

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Then?

GORDON

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.

LAZLO

What did you hear?

GORDON

Hear?

LAZLO

Yes. The noise. Tell me about the noise it made.

The Meat Machine?

GORDON

Yes.

LAZLO

Constant, mechanical chewing.

GORDON

After a beat.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

Oh yea?

LAZLO

I've remembered a harrowing moment.

GORDON

Let's hear it.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

Who?

LAZLO

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.

GORDON

So what?

LAZLO

So I went inside it.

GORDON

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.

Debugged.

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?

GORDON

Tisk, tisk.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Or worse.

GORDON

So what then?

LAZLO

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

GORDON

Garbage Boy?

LAZLO

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.

GORDON

They will set me free?

LAZLO

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

GORDON

Ok.

LAZLO

Really?

GORDON

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

LAZLO

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 UNDESSING.

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

Oh wait. Not yet. Goodbye, Garbage Boy.

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?

LAZLO

Gordon. I need you to listen to me.

GORDON

I can't hear anything you are saying.

Debugged.

LAZLO

There are men in my quarters. They are from the surface.

GORDON

In your quarters?

LAZLO

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—

LAZLO

How did they get in here? You aren't going to like it, Gordon.

GORDON

Not going to...what is that sound?

LAZLO

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.

GORDON

Honored with gravy and bread.

LAZLO

Only one question remains. What happens to Garbage Boy?

A long beat.

GORDON

He survives the fall forever changed.

LAZLO

How changed?

GORDON

He doesn't change. He has become fixed.

LAZLO

Fixed?

GORDON

Fixed but not fixed.

LAZLO

How fixed?

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Destroy the tyrant.

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Skip it.

GORDON

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

I think you are beautiful. You look. You look like a Garbage *Man*. Here. Let me sell you a matching boot.

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.

GORDON

Wait a minute. Dorsal Fin?

LAZLO

Yes.

GORDON

Dorsal Fin!

LAZLO

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

GORDON

A single stick riding a single cymbal.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

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?

LAZLO

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.

GORDON

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

Them. The agents of the Meat Machine.

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.

GORDON

Right. Lazlo?

LAZLO

Gordon?

GORDON

What if—

LAZLO

What if—

GORDON

Lazlo!

LAZLO

Gordon.

GORDON

Lazlo! Lazlo!

LAZLO

Gordon. Gordon.

GORDON

We kill him Lazlo?

LAZLO

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.*)

There, you little demons. There. There. Good. Yes. Lazlo. Lazlo we need more flypaper.

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.

GORDON

A device?

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

Suresuresure.

GORDON

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

LAZLO

Suresuresure.

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.

LAZLO

You look and you see.

GORDON

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 started 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.

GORDON

I hate the noise they make.

LAZLO

I know. I know. I know. Gordon?

GORDON

Lazlo.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

Right.

LAZLO

Just make the speech, Gordon.

GORDON

I wish it was that easy.

LAZLO

It is that easy.

GORDON

Oh but it isn't!

LAZLO

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—

GORDON

Jamie?

LAZLO

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

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 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

Yes. Yes. Of course. Of course. Yes. How silly of me.

GORDON

I need time.

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

Man. It's Garbage Man.

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

LASLO

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.

GORDON

Junie?

LAZLO

By the way, they gave me a gun.

GORDON

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.

LAZLO

We want it to seem real.

GORDON

Real clip full of bullets.

Loads the gun.

GORDON (*cont'd*)

Wait. How does Garbage Man get the gun?

LAZLO

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.

GORDON

Until now!

Gun to head.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

Say?

LAZLO

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

GORDON

The one everyone has been expecting.

LAZLO

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

GORDON

The truth?

LAZLO

Yeah. Sure. Whatever.

I don't sleep much at night.

GORDON

uh huh.

LAZLO

I'm always on edge.

GORDON

uh huh.

LAZLO

Oh forget it. This is impossible.

GORDON

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.

LAZLO

No.

GORDON

No?

LAZLO

I don't want to do it anymore.

GORDON

It's too late. I've already decided.

LAZLO

We can undecide.

GORDON

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!

LAZLO

No!

GORDON

Pull it!

LAZLO

Wait. GORDON

Pull it! LAZLO

Wait. GORDON

Pull— LAZLO

Quiet! Do you hear that noise? GORDON

What noise? LAZLO

It's the sound of constant mechanical chewing! GORDON

The sound of constant mechanical chewing. LAZLO

You mean? GORDON

Yes! LAZLO

The meat shortage is over! GORDON

Meat for everyone! LAZLO

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

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

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,

GORDON and LAZLO(*cont'd.*)

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

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 bags himself. Gordon debags himself.

GORDON

I have a confession to make.

LAZLO

Oh?

Reveals the Composition Notebook.

GORDON

I found this under my mattress this morning.

LAZLO

The Composition Notebook!

GORDON

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.

Lazlo pours over it like it is a piece of meat.

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?

GORDON

Yes.

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.

We're glad to hear it.

LAZLO

We?

GORDON

They and me.

LAZLO

They?

GORDON

I mean me, only me.

LAZLO

How about a song, Lazlo?

GORDON

What did you have in mind?

LAZLO

Garbage Boy forever: a duet

GORDON

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

LAZLO
REALLY A BOY COMBINED WITH A TRASH-CAN.

Dorsal Fin?

GORDON

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.