

Lunacy

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Scene One - The Walnut Street Theater

EDWIN stands on an empty stage. There is a bound copy of Shakespeare's King Lear brightly illuminated on a stand. It is FORREST's prompt book. He is only twenty-one but is already a cocky veteran of the stage. He wears the robes of a King and is very theatrical, preening and delighting in his every move and the sound of his own voice.

EDWIN

(Rehearsing LEAR Act. 4. Sc. 6)

*"Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man."*

(Pause)

Oh, come now Edwin. Again.

(Pause)

*"Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man.
Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very fond foolish old...
No, no.*

(Enunciating each word)

*"I am a very foolish fond old man. Ah.
Fourscore and upward...."*

*(There is a rustling in the darkness. EDWIN
stops, peers out into audience.)*

Hello?

(Back to rehearsal)

*"Fourscore and upward... not an hour more nor less;
And to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."*

(Annoyed with his performance)

No. No. No. No. No!

(Loudly and emphatically)

*"AND TO DEAL PLAINLY,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."*

(A loud noise in the theatre)

Just who the hell is out there.

(SILENCE. Going back to his rehearsal.)

"I fear I am not in my perfect mind."

CORNELIA

Hello?

EDWIN

Hello!

CORNELIA

Forgive me, please...

EDWIN

Come down here where I can see you.

CORNELIA

I didn't mean to disturb you --

EDWIN

--well you've already accomplished that feat.....

*(CORNELIA is standing in front of him.
EDWIN mistakenly thinks she is the
journalist he expects to interview him.)*

Dear lady, welcome.

(He bows grandly and theatrically.)

CORNELIA

I am looking for Mr. Forrest.

EDWIN

(Sarcastically)

Of course you are. C'est moi. Now let's get on with it.

CORNELIA

I'm sorry. Mr. Edwin Forrest? The Shakespearean actor?

EDWIN

(Irritated)

Yes, yes, yes, please, that is my name. Now let us move this little meeting along so I can get back to my rehearsal.

CORNELIA

You are preparing to play King Lear?

EDWIN

Exactly. That's why you're here.

CORNELIA

Exactly. But how could you know that?

EDWIN

Remember, I am Edwin Forrest. The reason you are here. So, please, sit. I am eager to speak with you.

CORNELIA

I am speechless.

EDWIN

Good! You need not speak a word, until you are ready of course. Sit.

(EDWIN holds out a chair.)

CORNELIA

There? On the stage?

EDWIN

Yes, yes, yes, please, sit here on the stage.

CORNELIA

I am quite prepared to stand.

EDWIN

I can assure you the chair is quite comfortable. A King's chair to be sure, but certainly fit for a lady.

CORNELIA

I do not mean any inconvenience to you.

EDWIN

No inconvenience. It's always an honor and a privilege to talk about my work.

CORNELIA

Well, that's... very...generous of you.

EDWIN

So, what it is you would like to know about me?

CORNELIA

Actually, Mr. Forrest, I wanted to talk to you about my father.

EDWIN

Your father?

CORNELIA

Benjamin.

EDWIN

Of course. Is he a fan of the theatre too?

CORNELIA

He is a school teacher...I mean he was a teacher....a headmaster...he taught Shakespeare for years.

EDWIN

Oh, dear lady, please, say no more. It would be my honor to have you both attend the opening night of my debut as Lear on the New York stage.

CORNELIA

That's very generous but...

EDWIN

Please, it's the least I could do.

CORNELIA

Actually, Mr. Forrest, he doesn't want to go to the theater to see you because he thinks he is King Lear.

EDWIN

(Laughing)

Ah, yes, well, we ALL imagine we're someone else, don't we. When I was very young I thought I was Romeo and went around all day seeking the perfect Juliet. And just a few weeks ago, when I was visiting Stillwell Asylum for the Criminally Insane, I met two George Washingtons and one Jesus Christ.

CORNELIA

I heard you had gone to Stillwell.

EDWIN

Yes, in preparation for my role as the "mad" King.

CORNELIA

What were you looking for?

EDWIN

What an odd question. I wasn't looking for anything. I was simply there to observe the madmen imprisoned there, Miss ...

CORNELIA

So you went for your work?

EDWIN

Of course. Everything I do is about my work, Miss? What did you say your name was?

CORNELIA

Lamb.

EDWIN

Miss Lamb, yes... why aren't you taking any notes?

CORNELIA

Why would I take notes? I can hear you perfectly well from here.

EDWIN

To remember my every word, of course.

CORNELIA

As I said, I hear you perfectly well.

EDWIN

But certainly the readers of the Gazette deserve nothing less than the exact truth of what I say.

CORNELIA

I wouldn't know.

EDWIN

(Condescendingly)

You must agree it is our first responsibility to give our public what they want?

CORNELIA

I'm sure that may be true for you, but it has little to do with me.

EDWIN

(Cheeky)

Oh, you are playing coy with me Miss Lamb, I knew I was in for a run when they told me they were sending their first female journalist.

CORNELIA

But I am not a journalist.

EDWIN

You're not a journalist?

CORNELIA

No. Never.

EDWIN

Then who are you?

CORNELIA

I am Cornelia Lamb from Friends Asylum.

EDWIN

And you don't write for the Gazette?

CORNELIA

I don't even read it.

EDWIN

Then why are you interrupting my rehearsal in the guise of someone else.

CORNELIA

I never said I was anyone else, you did.

EDWIN

(In full "LEAR" a la 1,4)

(MORE)

EDWIN (cont'd)

*"Hear, Nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose...that [you] may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child. Away, away!*

(CORNELIA doesn't move.)

What more do you want from me? A trinket? Some souvenir because if that is what will satisfy you take this.

*(EDWIN holds out a portrait of himself but
CORNELIA doesn't move.)*

I'm told it's very good likeness of me as Hamlet. Some women wait in long lines around the theater to get such a souvenir.

(CORNELIA doesn't move)

What is it? You want a lock of my hair perhaps, but no, I will not cut it, even for you, for if I gave every intruder who wanted one strain off my head I would be as bald as the Bard himself.

CORNELIA

I really do not want your picture or your hair Mr. Forrest -

EDWIN

(Very loudly interrupting her)

*Come not between the dragon and his wrath!
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!*

CORNELIA

First of all Mr. Forrest, when I was standing in the back of the theatre listening to you before....

EDWIN

So you were listening, trying to catch a bit of the King, eh?

CORNELIA

I would not say that was the Lear I heard was the Lear I had imagined.

EDWIN

Oh, and now you a critic?

CORNELIA

Madness is more than just being loud.

EDWIN

Did you really come here in the middle of the day to tell me how to play Lear?

CORNELIA

No. I came to tell you about my father, Benjamin Lamb, who is the perfect King Lear.

EDWIN

You said your father was....a teacher.

CORNELIA

Up until three months ago he was a teacher, and a scholar most respected in our Quaker community. Then my mother Elizabeth died quite suddenly, she had not even finished reading this copy of Lear beside her bed when she fell to the floor dead. It broke him.

EDWIN

I am sorry for your tragedy but --

CORNELIA

(Interrupting)

Let me finish. Please.

(Pause.)

My father always exclaimed it was Elizabeth's love for him and her beloved faith that forged a moral man out of a quick-tempered angry young boy and saved him from a life of misery and sorrow. *(Pause)* Now he has no other name but Lear. He spends his days writing the words to this play on the walls of his room and his nights speaking to no one but the people in this book. My father can show you how to play Lear exactly as you wish, perfectly, and you can help him leave his prison.

EDWIN

I can not help you. My skill is only as a poor actor.

CORNELIA

His skill is that of a schoolteacher but his madness has made him the perfect King. Come and see him. Talk to him. Lead him out of his madness.

EDWIN

I must play the script as it is given to me.

CORNELIA

(Beat.)

Do you really know every word in that play?

(Referring to the book on the stand.)

EDWIN

Of course. That is my job.

CORNELIA

Then you could talk to him wherever he begins in the script.

EDWIN

Yes, I could, but I have already done my research.

CORNELIA

You would be right there with him face to face in the same room.

EDWIN

There are no bars between you and the inmates.

CORNELIA

Friends Asylum is not a prison.

EDWIN

Are you fearless or foolish?

CORNELIA

We do not think of our loved ones who are there as inmates.

EDWIN

What makes you so brave?

CORNELIA

We believe no matter how mad some person may appear, no one is completely insane. There is the light of God in every human being waiting to be touched. It is our moral duty to help our loved ones.

EDWIN

That sounds like a very noble idea, I'm sure.

CORNELIA

Just come with me to Frankford, it's only a few miles from here. If you just see our work and meet Benjamin I am --

EDWIN

--No!

CORNELIA

Are you afraid of our asylum?

EDWIN

My own father died of consumption in an asylum when I was thirteen. I am not afraid of yours.

CORNELIA

My father is not dead yet. You can help him.

EDWIN

Unlike you and your Friends, I do not believe lunacy is living.

CORNELIA

He lives in the world you want to conquer. He does your work every day. Every word he speaks is only in that book. He shouts at his imaginary daughters. Laughs at imaginary fools. His whole world is that play and he is the King. Tell me Mr. Forrest, are you afraid to see the perfect Lear?

EDWIN

You've never seen me perform.

CORNELIA

You've never seen my father.

(Picks up her bag and begins to leave.)

EDWIN

*Better thou
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me
better.*

CORNELIA

You are an irritating man Mr. Forrest.

EDWIN

Pray do not mock me!

CORNELIA

I am sorry I interrupted your precious rehearsal. I was wrong to think you could help me.

EDWIN

I am a very foolish fond old man.

CORNELIA

I've never had much use for theater and now I see why. It really is all just for nothing.

EDWIN

*And to deal plainly....
(Act 4, Sc. 6)*

CORNELIA

Good day, Mr. Forrest.

*(CORNELIA goes into the blackness and
leaves EDWIN standing alone on the stage.)*

EDWIN

*(Shouting.)
I fear I am not in my perfect mind!"*

Scene Two - *The Waiting room at friends' asylum*

Three days later. Edward sits dramatically waiting on the bench in his theatrical cape and hat. CORNELIA enters and crosses on her way to somewhere else.

EDWIN

(Rising to greet her.)

Miss Lamb.

CORNELIA

Oh! Mr. Forrest?

EDWIN

Yes....

(CORNELIA leaves EDWIN standing speechless until she returns a few moments later when he continues where he left off.)

Miss Lamb, it's so good to see you.

CORNELIA

What are you doing here?

EDWIN

Isn't it obvious. I am here to see your father.

CORNELIA

I don't think so.

(She leaves. He waits cooling his heels again. She returns again.)

EDWIN

Miss Lamb, please, has something changed?

CORNELIA

My mind. Good day, Mr. Forrest.

EDWIN

You cannot say "No" Cornelia.

CORNELIA

Then I will say, "It is not possible, Edwin."

EDWIN

Your father is still alive?

CORNELIA

I believe, to quote you exactly, "Lunacy is not living".

EDWIN

I merely questioned my ability to help.

CORNELIA

You dismissed me.

EDWIN

I did not see how I could contribute anything to his condition.

CORNELIA

Madness.

EDWIN

You are so direct.

CORNELIA

I will assume that is a compliment.

EDWIN

It is a fact.

CORNELIA

No, his madness is a fact. His life is a fact. His work is a fact.

EDWIN

(Gently)

The fact is, Miss Lamb, that I have reconsidered my decision.

CORNELIA

And the fact is that three days ago I asked you to come and your answer was NO.

EDWIN

That was three days ago.

(The ACTOR speaks grandly)

Time changes all things. Even the human heart.

(As EDWIN)

Quakers do forgive?

(Pause.)

I saw several old men in the garden when I came through. I was wondering if one of them was your father.

CORNELIA

His name is Benjamin.

EDWIN

Is Benjamin nearby?

CORNELIA

Your change of heart does not effect my change of mind.

EDWIN

I don't understand. You were so eager for me to help him.

CORNELIA

"Time changes all things," Mr. Forrest, to quote you exactly.

EDWIN

(Gently)

Please, I just wanted to know if your father is alive and if he believes he is still Lear?

CORNELIA

He is alive, and he is still Lear.

EDWIN

Then I may still be of some service.

CORNELIA

Service? You went to Stillwell to become the perfect Lear and I gave you the opportunity to fulfill your ambition. You said no but I am still here and so is he. It was a small request from me for a great reward for you -- and your behavior was atrocious.

EDWIN

I apologize Miss Lamb. I was upset. You must forgive me. I thought you were someone else.

CORNELIA

Someone who could do something for your career.

EDWIN

I am contrite. (Pause) Truly. (Pause) Embarrassed. (Pause) Completely. (BEAT) Oh, for the love of God, what do you want me to say! I am not used to women breaking into my rehearsal, asking me to drop everything and follow them to some Asylum-

CORNELIA

- Friends Asylum -

EDWIN

-- Friends Asylum - to play all the characters in their father's fantasy of *King Lear*, to bring him back to a daughter I had scarcely met moments before. What was I supposed to say?

CORNELIA

So Mr. Forrest, is this you being contrite?

EDWIN

Cornelia, please. I have made an effort to come all this way from Philadelphia at my own expense and time - at the very least you could do is to allow me to meet him. (Pause) Miss Lamb I am a man of great influence and if I choose to plead my case to the Superintendent of this Asylum he will allow me to ...

CORNELIA

No.

EDWIN

(Gathering his things together to leave.)

I am sure the Superintendent will be more amenable to my request than you are.

CORNELIA

I don't think so.

EDWIN

Oh, this is nonsense.

(Going to leave.)

CORNELIA

Mr. Forrest, I am the Superintendent of Friends Asylum.

(BEAT)

Shall I send for your carriage?

EDWIN

You never mentioned you ran the Asylum.

CORNELIA

I don't believe you ever asked. In fact, once you found out I was not the reporter from the Gazette but merely an ordinary woman who was not even a fan of your work -- you were not interested in me at all.

EDWIN

(Surrender)

I can honestly state that - you are no ordinary woman.

CORNELIA

You threw me out.

EDWIN

You insulted my profession.

CORNELIA

And still you are here.

(Beat)

EDWIN

You have every right to be angry with me. But perhaps we can both agree that our relationship until this moment seems to be built on one misstep after the other. Surely such Friends would offer even the rudest actor a second chance?

CORNELIA

(Taking the first step.)

When I had heard you had been going to Stillwell to watch the men there, and that you were a great actor for King Lear, I was so hopeful.

(MORE)

CORNELIA (cont'd)

I admit I knew nothing of your history, had never seen you play a part on the stage, never seen anyone play anything in the theatre - but everyone I asked assured me you were one of the finest actors of our time. It was then that I allowed myself to hope that your talent might prove the bridge to bring my own dear father back to sanity.

EDWIN

(Gently.)

I have a mother, three sisters, and women in my life who clamor for some little piece of me.

I was surprised and disappointed you knew nothing of my work, and yet you asked me to do something even the greatest actor in the world would find daunting. I admit to being somewhat difficult because I honestly do not know if I may be the man you seek, but I sincerely hope Miss Lamb, that you will allow me to meet your Lear so that we may come to know one another as he wishes.

CORNELIA

(BEAT)

Today he took a fearsome turn. Though I think he is no danger to anyone but himself, I cannot be perfectly sure of his behavior. He shouts orders from his bed, continues to write all of Shakespeare's words on his walls, eats nothing and answers "Yes, No, Yes, No, Yes" to questions no one else hears. I know in my heart he remembers I am his daughter, but I have no idea what name he calls me in his head. At this point I (interrupting herself) Why are you here?

EDWIN

I am curious. You knew I would be curious when you told me of "The Perfect Lear". (Pause) I am here.

CORNELIA

(Finally)

I will take your visit as a blessing. He's just across the hall.

EDWIN

Thank you.

(EDWIN starts across the room.)

CORNELIA

You should know my father was always a gentleman, immaculate to the point of vanity. No matter what you are about to see in there, Edwin, I must believe he is still that gentleman.

Scene 3 - BENJAMIN's asylum room.

CROSSFADE.

The walls of Benjamin's room are covered with the text of Shakespeare's *LEAR*. Some of it is like wallpaper, some of the text is written in what appears to be human blood.

BENJAMIN as a man who was once a scholar, a schoolteacher and a pillar of the Quaker community is now submerged in the anger and betrayal of a former King. He is in a ratty nightshirt that is soiled, torn and tattered by several imagined storms. EDWIN is horrified and is at once aware that he has stepped in too far. BENJAMIN, feeling their presence, bolts up from his bed.

NOTE: even though BENJAMIN is speaking *LEAR*, it is not as terrifying for him, as when he disconnected from his character in the text. In sheer madness he is terrifying.

BENJAMIN

*(Act. I, Sc. 4)**Darkness and devils!**Saddle my horses, call my train together**Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee.**Yet have I left a daughter.*

EDWIN

Dear God.....

CORNELIA

Father, you have to eat....

BENJAMIN

(interrupting)

No...no...no...

*(Goes to the wall in search of text. Coming back to EDWIN and CORNELIA)**(Act IV, sc. 7)*

*"You do me wrong to take me out o' th grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."*

CORNELIA

Father, please...

BENJAMIN

No. No. No. No. No.....

(Again he goes to the wall in search of text.)

You are a spirit, when did you die?

EDWIN

Cornelia, I'm not sure what will happen, but you need to say the line he wants - "*Sir, do you know me?*"

CORNELIA

Sir, do you know me?

BENJAMIN

(BENJAMIN calms down.)

"You are a spirit, I know. When did you die?"

CORNELIA

I am not dead. I am your daughter...

BENJAMIN

(BENJAMIN recoils in confusion.)

No, No, No!

"You are a spirit, I know. Where did you die?"

EDWIN

(Whispers.)

Still, still far wide.

Say it.

CORNELIA

(As CORDELIA.)

Still, still far wide!

EDWIN

(To assure CORNELIA that the next line is his, he places his fingers to his lips as in the mode of the DOCTOR, goes to LEAR to deliver the next line.)

He's scarce awake. Let him alone awhile.

BENJAMIN

Where have I been? Where am I?

Fair daylight?

I am mightily abused.

CORNELIA

(Under LEAR's speech)

Look how calm he is now.

BENJAMIN

*I should ev'n die with pity,
To see another thus.
I know not what to say.*

EDWIN

(Under LEAR's speech)

We're in his play at last.

BENJAMIN

*I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition."*

EDWIN

Trust me. Continue.
"O, look upon me, sir...."

CORNELIA

Oh, look upon me, sir....

EDWIN

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.

CORNELIA

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.

EDWIN

You must not kneel.

CORNELIA

You must not kneel.

BENJAMIN

(Responding to CORNELIA)

*"Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you and know this man,
Yet, I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is, and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments, nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me,
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia?"*

CORNELIA

Cornelia.

BENJAMIN

No, no, no, no.

EDWIN

Please, Cornelia, you must say the words he wants to hear.

(Pause)

And so I am. I am.

CORNELIA

And so I am. I am....I am.

(BENJAMIN is visibly moved by CORNELIA's answer. He moves to her and speaks directly to her drying her tears.)

BENJAMIN

"Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray, weep not.

(BENJAMIN brushes her cheek with his hand tenderly. Then abruptly he changes his demeanor and goes to EDWIN starting in a new place.)

Am I in France?

EDWIN

Am I....

BENJAMIN

Am...I...in...France?

EDWIN

(Reassuring him, as KENT, responds.)

In your own Kingdom, sir.

BENJAMIN

(Elated at EDWIN's response, BENJAMIN goes over to the plate of biscuits and starts eating hungrily.)

Yes, No, Yes, No, Yes, No.....

CORNELIA

Merciful heavens, oh look! He's eating, Edwin. That's what I've prayed for.

EDWIN

My God, he's amazing. Absolutely....

CORNELIA

Can you get him out of the room?

EDWIN

I think so.

CORNELIA

He hasn't been out in so long. It would be wonderful to see him out in the garden again and I know it would be so good for him.

EDWIN

Yes, I know I can. The next line will do it:

(Going over to BENJAMIN who is enjoying his biscuit.)

Will it please your Highness walk?

BENJAMIN

Will it please your Highness....

(BENJAMIN gets up.)

Will it please your Highness....

(EDWIN takes off his cape and places it around EDWIN's shoulders.)

EDWIN

Will it please your Highness walk?

(BENJAMIN puts his arm out. EDWIN takes his arm and then turns back and stuffs some biscuit into the pocket of EDWIN's cape.)

CORNELIA

Take him to the courtyard. I'll go to the kitchen and bring him more food. This is wonderful, Edwin, perfectly wonderful!

(CORNELIA runs out. EDWIN and BENJAMIN cross slowly out.)

BENJAMIN

You must bear with me.

Pray you now, forget and forgive, I am old and foolish.

Scene 4 - The Garden

CROSSFADE to the Courtyard. BENJAMIN, quite the KING now, is sizing EDWIN up.

BENJAMIN

(Act. I, Sc. 4 between LEAR and KENT)

How now! what art thou?

EDWIN

(Aside)

All right old man I know where you are,

(MORE)

EDWIN (cont'd)

(As KENT)

A man, sir.

BENJAMIN

What dost thou profess? what wouldst thou
with us?

EDWIN

(aside)

Let's see. "I do profess to be no less than I seem..." Ah,
that's it.

(As KENT)

I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve
him truly that will put me in trust: to love him that is
honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says
little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot
choose; and to... I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a
curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message
bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am
qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

BENJAMIN

(Because he is happy to have a friend in
KENT/EDWIN, he kicks up his heels in a
Hee-Haw and whinny)

Hee-haw, hee-haw....

EDWIN

(Aside)

Now we'll see if you can follow me. Act. 1, scene 4.

(As FOOL Act. 1, Sc. 4)

Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

BENJAMIN

(Finding his place in his mind.)

Ahhhhhhh.....Do.

EDWIN

Mark it, Nuncle:
Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest.
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest,
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score."

BENJAMIN
(Repeating the FOOL's line and enjoying the lesson.)

*....And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score." And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score."*

EDWIN
 What was that miserable section....Ah, Right. 3, 6.

*(As LEAR making some noise stumbling for
 the line.)*

Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

BENJAMIN
Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.....thy horn is dry....

EDWIN
 Yes!

BENJAMIN
*Then let them anatomize Regan; see what
 breeds about her heart.
 Is there any cause in nature
 that makes these hard hearts.*

EDWIN
 Yes. How perfect.

BENJAMIN
*You, sir, I
 entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like
 the fashion of your garments: you will say they are
 Persian attire; but let them be changed.*

EDWIN
 Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

BENJAMIN
*Make no noise, make no noise; draw the
 curtains: so, so, so.....We'll go to supper
 'i the morning.....*

EDWIN
 Let's see how you handle the fool scene.

BENJAMIN
 Fool?

EDWIN

Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

BENJAMIN

No, lad, teach me.

EDWIN

*That lord that counseled thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,
Do thou for him stand.
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear -
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.*

BENJAMIN

Dost thou call me fool, boy?

EDWIN

All thy other titles thou has give away. That thou wast born with.

BENJAMIN

(Now very lost.)

*Doth any here know me? ...Doth any here know me?
Who is it that can tell me who I am?*

EDWIN

"Lear's shadow."

BENJAMIN

(ACT 3, Sc. 2)

*Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow! You cataracts
and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks! ...
And thou, all-shaking thunder, smite flat the thick rotundity
o' the world! Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at
once, That make ingrateful man!*

EDWIN

*(Unbelievably in awe of BENJAMIN's
performance.)
(Aside)*

Dear God....

(FOOL)

*Fool O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than
this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy
daughters' blessing: here's a night pities neither wise man
nor fool.*

(MORE)

EDWIN (cont'd)
 (*CORNELIA enters during the next speech
 carrying a tray of food and is horrified.*)

BENJAMIN
 (*Now quite in a rage.*)
 Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain! ...
 here I stand, your slave, A poor, infirm, weak, and despised
 old man:

CORNELIA
 (*Overlapping BENJAMIN's monologue.*)
 Edwin. Edwin? What is happening? Please make him stop. You
 must make him stop.

BENJAMIN
 O! O! 'tis foul! ...
 No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
 I will say nothing.

(*BENJAMIN grows completely silent then
 drops in a faint.*)

CORNELIA
 Father? Father.....please.....Edwin?

EDWIN
 Lord, forgive me. I had no right. I had no right at all to
 come.

(*EDWIN runs out leaving CORNELIA
 rocking her father in her arms.*)

Scene 5 - Walnut street theatre

Afternoon. Ten days have passed. EDWIN is sleeping in
 his LEAR robes on the stage, his script by his side. He is
 unkempt.

CORNELIA appears at the foot of the stage. She is
 holding a basket of food.

CORNELIA
 Mr. Forrest!

EDWIN
 I'm sleeping.

CORNELIA
 It's the middle of the afternoon.

EDWIN

I was up half the night rehearsing. Go away and leave me in peace...

(He rolls away from the sound across the stage.)

CORNELIA

Mr. Forrest -- Edwin....

EDWIN

(EDWIN stops, recognizing the voice.)

Miss Lamb?

CORNELIA

(Entering the stage.)

You look well.

EDWIN

Liar.

CORNELIA

You look terrible then.

EDWIN

I wasn't expecting guests.

CORNELIA

I didn't mean to interrupt you.

EDWIN

Of course you did.

(Pulling his LEAR robe around him.)

Forgive me for not dressing.

CORNELIA

I should have sent word I was coming.

EDWIN

But you didn't and now you are here..

(Goes to the bowl and douses his face with water.)

Ahhhh. Oh. It's cold.

CORNELIA

(Trying to find him something to dry his face.)

Here.

EDWIN

(Waving her away.)

I'm fine.

CORNELIA

Have you eaten?

EDWIN

(From the haze.)

I remember eating a very good dinner once. Now Miss Lamb, I am sure you did not come all this way to ask about my eating habits.

CORNELIA

Here, I've brought you food. Biscuits and jam.

(Taking a tablecloth, food and utensils out of her basket as she takes over his space.)

EDWIN

You and your biscuits. How thoughtful. You never cease to amaze me.

(EDWIN starts eating them hungrily.)

CORNELIA

The jam comes from the strawberries in our garden.

EDWIN

Do you ever sleep?

CORNELIA

Oh, I didn't make these. I have no talent in the kitchen.

EDWIN

They're delicious. Perfection.

CORNELIA

I did think about bringing some fresh eggs too, but I'm afraid they would have arrived scrambled.

EDWIN

This is heavenly.

(EDWIN is eating hungrily.)

Thank you.

CORNELIA

No, it is I who should thank you.

EDWIN

I think we should not fight over gratitude.

CORNELIA

(Entering slowly)

Your visit has done Benjamin a world of good.

(Pause)

(MORE)

CORNELIA (cont'd)

He's been eating. And he even goes outside on a good day. But I do wish he would let us give him a new nightshirt.

EDWIN

Well we men grow fond of our old clothes.

CORNELIA

I suppose I should be patient. (Pause) And grateful. (BEAT) He looks for you Edwin. Everywhere. So you must understand why I'm here to ask you to come back.

(There is a palpable silence.)

EDWIN

I hate to leave you so quickly, Cornelia, but I really should go to my room and change my clothes.

(She doesn't move.)

I may be a long time.

CORNELIA

I have no other appointments.

EDWIN

It wouldn't be proper for me to leave you here alone in the theater.

CORNELIA

I'm not afraid. Do what you need to do. I'll wait.

EDWIN

Surely you have other things to do!

(BEAT. CORNELIA seems frozen.)

Very well then ---

CORNELIA

You just left and never came back. No note. Nothing in ten days. I had no idea when to expect you.

EDWIN

I am not coming back. (Beat) I know how worried you were about him not eating properly or that he wasn't leaving his room and I am truly happy to hear of his progress. Your Friends Asylum is a remarkable place.

CORNELIA

You didn't hear me at all.

EDWIN

I heard you when we first met. I believe that I fulfilled that request.

CORNELIA

Certainly you realize there is more work to do.

EDWIN

I think you are unwilling to truthfully look at his condition.

CORNELIA

You were the one who ran away. Not I. I think I am fully aware of his condition.

EDWIN

You are his daughter.

CORNELIA

I am also the Superintendent. I understand what he needs. I have asked the great Edwin Forrest to lead him out of the play, not just out of his room.

EDWIN

I left him in your arms. I played the fool to your father's King but I am not his Orpheus.

CORNELIA

So you came the first time for yourself?

EDWIN

You were the one who dangled the perfect Lear before me.

CORNELIA

And did I lie?

EDWIN

No, you knew exactly what you were doing.

CORNELIA

It brought you there, Edwin.... and it worked.

EDWIN

Yes, it worked. Perhaps too well.

CORNELIA

You saw something, didn't you?

EDWIN

I saw a place just as you described it.

CORNELIA

Everything has changed Edwin.

EDWIN

You said he was better.

CORNELIA

Benjamin eats and walks but my father is not the same.

EDWIN

What's wrong with him now?

CORNELIA

He will not speak.

EDWIN

To you?

CORNELIA

To anyone. Not a word.

EDWIN

Read the words of the play to him. You have the book.

CORNELIA

It makes no difference, he looks only for you. He eats. He leaves his room, but you are not there and no words pass his lips. He is as silent as a corpse. You were close to him, Edwin. Closer than anyone has been. You saw something.

EDWIN

No.

CORNELIA

He said something to you?

EDWIN

Shakespeare's words.

CORNELIA

Something more.

EDWIN

I saw a man who called himself Lear and nothing more.

CORNELIA

Something made you run.

EDWIN

Some things are better left alone.

CORNELIA

What are you afraid of?

EDWIN

I am a coward. In Stillwell there were bars between myself and those men.

(She stands looking at him.)

CORNELIA

The truth.

EDWIN

What? He ate his biscuits....he went outside into the sunlight he feel asleep in your arms. Miss Lamb, what more do you want from me. Life does not answer all our demands, no matter how worthy they may seem.

CORNELIA

Oh, don't spout that at me. Leave it to you to try to teach a Quaker about sacrifice.

EDWIN

What do you imagine? That he is back home, shaven and clean and reading from his bible and that you are restored to the dream of a family that is gone forever.

CORNELIA

How dare you make this about me. I saw your face. What did you see when you looked into my father's eyes? Tell me the truth.

EDWIN

I saw the perfect Lear. A man so completely his part that Benjamin's Lear must end this play on his terms, not yours.

CORNELIA

Give me this one last day Edwin and I promise you will never see me again. That should be more than enough reason to come back to the Asylum --

EDWIN

(Interrupting)

You are not listening, Cornelia!

EDWIN (CONT'D)

When Lear dies, Benjamin dies and he will not rise again. Are you truly willing to risk that for one more day?

CORNELIA

He is already a stranger. Come back. I just want to be his daughter for one more day.

EDWIN

I am not his son. I cannot lead a man to his death. I am sorry. I will not return.

CORNELIA

(As close as she can to cursing him.)

Then shame on you Edwin Forrest! Shame on you and your Lear.
(CORNELIA walks out on Edward who is left to sink slowly back onto his throne alon

Scene 6 - The Waiting room at Friends' asylum

Two weeks later.

CORNELIA sleeps on the long bench. She is completely disheveled and tosses and turns talking to herself in her sleep.

EDWIN comes in and watches her a few moments more, then knocks, startling CORNELIA awake. As she rises head up, EDWIN is shocked at how she has changed since he last saw her. Her pristine dress and hair are a mass of wrinkles and wildness.

EDWIN

Miss Lamb.

CORNELIA

Father!

EDWIN

(Gently shaking her as she talks and tosses in her sleep.)

Miss Lamb!

CORNELIA

Is something wrong? Is Benjamin all right.....Edwin?

EDWIN

I didn't mean to frighten you.

CORNELIA

Edwin?

EDWIN

Yes.

CORNELIA

I must still be sleeping. I think I see Edwin Forrest standing in front of me but I know that can not be possible.

EDWIN

You are not dreaming, Cornelia. I am here. Again.

CORNELIA

Well, I must look like a nightmare.

(CORNELIA tries to pull herself together.)

EDWIN

You look fine.

CORNELIA

Liar.

EDWIN

...a little tired perhaps.

CORNELIA

Perhaps? You are a very good actor, Mr. Forrest, but even Quakers can look into the mirror...

*(There is a commotion and the voice of
BENJAMIN booms out in a banshee's wail.)*

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

How, howl, howl, howl!....O, you are men of stones....

CORNELIA

As you see, my father has regained his voice.

BENJAMIN O. S.

*Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm....I AM FIRM....O vassal!
Miscreant!....On thy allegiance, hear me!*

CORNELIA

He'll stop soon. He always does.

BENJAMIN O. S.

*Look there, look there!....that Face of hers
again....again....again....*

CORNELIA

Most days he simply shouts until he falls back to sleep exhausted. Though not in his bed. No, he tore that to pieces last week during a thunder storm.

*(CORNELIA appears to wobble and EDWIN
catches her)*

EDWIN

When was the last time you had anything to eat? Or slept in a bed?

CORNELIA

Come now, Edwin, you didn't really come all this way to ask such questions of my health.

EDWIN

I did not expect to come at all. I turned back twice. But I could not stop thinking about what you said.

CORNELIA

I believe I begged and pleaded and shouted, though I can't remember everything except that you said No.

BENJAMIN

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life....have life....you see me here, you gods, a poor old man....

CORNELIA

(Beat. Walking to the window.)

Have you ever wondered how the leaf knows exactly when it is the right moment to fall? Or is just too tired to hang on.

EDWIN

I am sorry I did not come back sooner.

BENJAMIN

*You heavens give me the patience that I need.....
You think I'll weep. No, I will not weep.*

CORNELIA

Tell me Mr. Forrest, in your work do you know when the play is going well, or must you wait to read your critics?

EDWIN

Critics! That is the last thing I would do.

BENJAMIN

Oh, fool, I shall go mad.

EDWIN

When I am in the middle of a play I must listen to everything and everyone around me to know how I must speak and when. But if I want to hear how the play is going, I must still my heart enough to listen to the spaces in between the words. The silence tells me when it is going badly.

CORNELIA

Did you come because you think this can go well?

EDWIN

For him or for you? I'm not sure they are the same.

CORNELIA

You said you turned back twice. Why?

EDWIN

Honestly?

CORNELIA

Honestly.

EDWIN

I believe I may be able to lead him out of the play, but I don't know if I will lead him back to you.

CORNELIA

(BEAT)

I have grown to hate this play as much as he loves it. Take it with you when you leave.

(CORNELIA tosses the book to the floor.)

EDWIN

(Picking up the tattered volume.)

You have marked all of Cordelia's words.

CORNELIA

And committed them to memory. Which has not been easy. But then, sleeping has been less so.

EDWIN

You will do fine.

CORNELIA

What if I lose my place?

EDWIN

I will whisper the words in your ear.

CORNELIA

What if he will not believe me?

EDWIN

He needs to believe in you as much as you need him.

CORNELIA

And if he will not speak to me.

EDWIN

If this is his time, he will not be silent.

CORNELIA

I long for silence now. I hated it when I was young. When I was a child I couldn't stand sitting on those benches waiting for someone to speak. Every time we went to meeting I wanted to testify whether the Lord had come to me or not. *(Pause)* "Patience," my father would say gently touching me lightly on the cheek. "Patience and silence." And I would answer, "When does that come father?" And he would simply smile and tell me it would come, someday, just be patient.

(Pause)

How will you know where to start?

EDWIN

He will tell us where he wants to start. Cornelia, you will not be alone. We will be there together.

CORNELIA

I am sorry you never got to know him when he was just Benjamin. You would have liked him. Everyone did.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

(Screaming and raving)

Give me that map. Give me that map. Give me that map. Where is my map.

EDWIN

(Looking over to CORNELIA)

Are you ready?

CORNELIA

God speed.

EDWIN

Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

BENJAMIN

(Repeating.)

Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

EDWIN

(As GLOUCESTER)

I shall, my Lord.

BENJAMIN

Give me the map there.

(EDWIN comes to him and holds out the imaginary map. BENJAMIN eagerly spreads it out on the floor)

*Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburdhen'd crawl toward death....crawl toward
death....that... that future strife
May be prevented now.
And here are to be answer'd. And here are to be
answer'd.....
Tell me, my daughters,*

*(Approaching CORNELIA now and looking
straight into her eyes.)*

Tell me, my daughters....my daughter.....

(MORE)

BENJAMIN (cont'd)

(CORNELIA stands facing him, frozen.)

EDWIN

"Now, our joy...."

(BENJAMIN remains silent. EDWIN repeats the line, now stronger.)

"Now, our joy..."

BENJAMIN

"Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

(CORNELIA stands speechless.)

Speak....Speak....Speak....Speak....Speak....

(Going in circles....)

CORNELIA

I can't do this.

EDWIN

You must not fail him now.

CORNELIA

The line.

EDWIN

"Nothing, my lord."

CORNELIA

"Nothing, my lord."

BENJAMIN

(Stops and listens.)

"Nothing!"

CORNELIA

(There is a long pause.)

"Nothing."

BENJAMIN

"Nothing will come of nothing: speak again."

CORNELIA

"Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth:"
I love your majesty....(Pause)
I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less."

BENJAMIN

(Pleased and animated.)

"How, how Cordelia! Mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes."

CORNELIA

(Makes the transition from memory to meaning)

"Good my lord.....
You have begot me, bred me, loved me. I
Return those duties back as right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.

EDWIN

(Seeing she needs help. As KENT)

Good my liege,--

BENJAMIN

Peace, Kent!
Come not between the dragon and his wrath. I loved her most,
and thought to set my rest On her kind nursery. ...

EDWIN

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king, Loved as my father, as
my master follow'd, As my great patron thought on in my
prayers,--

BENJAMIN

The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

(No response.)

The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

EDWIN

Really?

BENJAMIN

The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

EDWIN

"You do me wrong to take me

BENJAMIN

(Overlapping. BENJAMIN continues without EDWIN>)

...out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."

EDWIN
(*CORNELIA is quiet.*)

Cornelia?

CORNELIA

Yes.

EDWIN

Do you know where you are?

CORNELIA

I do.

EDWIN

Then speak to him.

CORNELIA

"*Sir, do you know me?*"

BENJAMIN

"*You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?*"

EDWIN

(*Going to CORNELIA*)

"*He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.*"

BENJAMIN

"*Where have I been? Where am I? Fair day-light
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die....with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands...."
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I know not what to say.....I know....
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition!"*

CORNELIA

"*O, look upon me, sire,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.*"

BENJAMIN

I fear I am not in my perfect mind....

(*Confused*)

"*Methinks I should know you and know this man:
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is, and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments, nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.*

CORNELIA

And so I am, I am.

BENJAMIN

*Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray, weep not....weep not.
(Skipping to another section.)*

*You must bear with me. Pray you now, forget and forgive:
I am old and foolish....old and foolish....*

EDWIN

A King....

BENJAMIN

*Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was the cause?*

EDWIN

T'was adultery sire.

BENJAMIN

Adultery?

EDWIN

Adultery.

BENJAMIN

*Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive;*

EDWIN

O, let me kiss that hand!

BENJAMIN

Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

EDWIN

Dost thou know me?

BENJAMIN

(pause)

*"What, are mad? A man may see how this world goes with no
eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon a
simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places, and, handy-
dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?"*

*(BENJAMIN sits down and puts his bare feet
out in the air in his pantomime.)*

*"Now, now, now, now, : pull off my boots:"
(MORE)*

BENJAMIN (cont'd)

(EDWIN stands a moment not moving.)

Pull off my boots!

(EDWIN takes up the pantomime and begins to pull at the air.)

....harder.....harder.....so:

(BENJAMIN kicks EDWIN and laughs.)

*When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools.
I will die bravely....like a smug bridegroom."*

CORNELIA

No!

BENJAMIN

No?

*He that parts us shall bring a brand from Heaven...
Wipe thine eyes.....
The goodyears shall devour them.....Wipe thine eyes.*

CORNELIA

I'm lost. Where is he going now? I can't remember anything.

EDWIN

It's time.

CORNELIA

No! It can't be.

EDWIN

You asked me to come back here to help lead him where he wants to go.

CORNELIA

Not yet.

EDWIN

He wants to finish this play Cornelia. He wants your blessing. Please....let him go. Let him finish the play he hears.

CORNELIA

(BEAT. Exhale in resignation.)

Continue.

EDWIN

Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,...

BENJAMIN

.....upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia....

EDWIN

We are not the first
Who with best meaning....

CORNELIA

....have incurred the worst.
For thee, oppressed King, am I cast down.

BENJAMIN

(Looking at EDWIN as if he knows and is grateful and walks over to CORNELIA and takes her hand gently like the old father from her story, brushing her cheek)

Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage;
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out;
And take upon the mystery of things
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by the moon.

EDWIN

Cornelia, if you want this to end, you must lay down. And close your eyes.

(She takes a moment. Looks at the man who used to be her father, and lays down.)

BENJAMIN

Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone forever!
I know when one is dead and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone)

Why, then she lives.....
This feather stirs; she lives. If it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

EDWIN

Oh my good master.

BENJAMIN

*Prithee away.
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, And thou no
breath at all? Thou'lt come no more, Never, never, never,
never, never! Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir. Do
you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there.*

*(HE dies. CORNELIA collapses in EDWIN's
arms.)*

EDWIN

*"He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer."*

Scene 7 - EDWIN's dressing room backstage at the bowery theatre in new york city.

A few months later.

EDWIN has been performing LEAR to sold-out audiences. It is the rave of the city.

EDWIN has his back to the door. He sits fatigued removing his make-up and muttering his lines to himself.

EDWIN

*"Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man.
And to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."*

CORNELIA

-- excuse me for barging in but I simply could not wait to tell you how wonderful this evening has been for me.

EDWIN

Cornelia? You saw the performance?

CORNELIA

My first King Lear. You were brilliant. My first Shakespeare. It was so moving, truly my heart is beating so loudly you must hear it across the room. It pleased me beyond my wildest expectations. I shall never be so content to only read my plays alone again.

EDWIN

(Very quiet)

Miss Lamb, thank you. I'm sorry. But could you please just sit down and talk to me.

CORNELIA

This is your dressing room? I expected something much more grand for a king.

EDWIN

It is very dangerous to think of yourself as a King offstage.

CORNELIA

Oh, Edwin I was transfixed all the way through until the play's last words:

*"We that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long."*

EDWIN

I am in awe by your memory and your response.

CORNELIA

My cheeks are still moist from the tears at your death.

EDWIN

You wept at my death?

CORNELIA

It was like losing my own father all over again. I saw him completely.

EDWIN

Completely?

CORNELIA

I had no idea a play could cause such empathy and sympathy for a live audience as I witnessed tonight. It is, indeed, a noble cause to tell these stories for a greater purpose. And I bless you for that.

EDWIN

I believe that is the greatest review I have ever received, though, of course, I never read them. But Miss Lamb, you are the only one that knows how shallow and insignificant my performance was.

CORNELIA

Insignificant? I wasn't the only one moved tonight. All around me mothers and fathers, husbands and wives....all were moved by your performance.

EDWIN

But Miss Lamb, you and I have both seen the perfect Lear and my work will never be as great as his life.

CORNELIA

But Edwin, you gave him back to me before he died. You must believe that too.

EDWIN

I saw his great affection for you.

CORNELIA

And now I know I can come back here any night and be with him again. That is your greatest gift to him and to me.

EDWIN

I fear I am the one who is now speechless.

CORNELIA

You must tired. I should not keep you.

EDWIN

Please. A moment more. (Pause) How long will you be in New York.

CORNELIA

Actually, I am on my way to England.

EDWIN

To England?

CORNELIA

London.

EDWIN

Really?

CORNELIA

We sail at the end of the week.

EDWIN

So soon?

CORNELIA

My first ocean voyage. I'm both excited and terrified. (Pause) There's really nothing more to keep me here. And our Friends are doing the best work on madness in England. They have a wonderful hospital there and Friends has already found a new Superintendent to carry on my... I need to continue my work.

EDWIN

Of course you must continue your work.

CORNELIA

And you?

EDWIN

You see who I am.

CORNELIA

But surely, you will perform in London sometime?

EDWIN

No! well, perhaps. No one can ever be completely sure of anything in this life.

CORNELIA

(Cheeky)

Not even in the theater.

EDWIN

No, not even in the theatre.

CORNELIA

I really must go, it's beginning to snow and I've kept my friends waiting long enough.

EDWIN

God Speed Cornelia Lamb.

CORNELIA

Edwin Forrest, God Speed.

(CORNELIA gives him a soul soothing hug.)

Thank you.

(Quickly leaves the room.)

EDWIN sits down at his make-up table and rehearses.

EDWIN

(Absolutely naturally without "actorly" artifice)

EDWIN

*"You do me wrong to take me out o'th grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."*

Again, Edwin Forrest. Again, and again and again until you get it right.

(As the lights go down, EDWIN continues rehearsing into into the blackness.)

*"You do me wrong to take me out o'th grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."*

(MORE)

EDWIN (cont'd)

*"You do me wrong to take me out o'th grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."*

END OF PLAY