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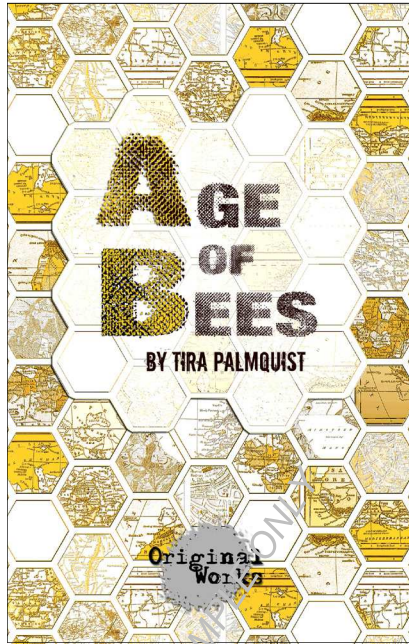
*The Armageddon Dance Party*

© David L. Williams

Trade Edition, 2015

ISBN 978-1-934962-09-1

*Also Available From  
Original Works Publishing*



**Age of Bees by Tira Palmquist**

**Synopsis:** The bees have gone, disease and scarcity are rampant, but Mel, a young pollinator, finds refuge on an isolated farm. This place is fertile and safe, and Mel counts herself lucky to have a place where – even if it is not exactly happy – she has a purpose. When that purpose and safety are threatened, Mel faces an awful choice: will she risk leaving this relative safety, or will she hide from greater dangers, even if it means giving up some chance that something good can grow in this ruined world?

**Cast Size:** 1 Male, 3 Females

# **THE ARMAGEDDON DANCE PARTY**

**by David L. Williams**

SAMPLE ONLY

**The Armageddon Dance Party**, written by David L. Williams, premiered in August of 2006 as part of the New York International Fringe Festival.

Cast of Characters:

Tommy Day Carey\* - John

Lordan Napoli\* - Michelle

David Matranga\* - Tom

Lindsay Joy - Trixie

Maya Parra\* - Clea

Lucas Howland\* - Charlie

Eve Udesky\* - Janis

Cedric Sanders\* - Monty

Brittany Scott - Erica May

\*Appearing courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

Directed by Kara Lynn Vaeni

Costume Design by Camille Assaf

Set Design by Kanae Heike

Production Stage Manager: Kelly Shaffer\*

Stage Manager: Catherine Povinelli

Produced by W&W Productions and Lordan Napoli

## **Cast of Characters**

### Michelle

New Yorker, early thirties.

### John

Michelle's live-in boyfriend, early thirties.

### Tom

Michelle and John's friend, mid thirties.

### Trixie

Tom's girlfriend, late twenties

### Clea

Trixie's friend, mid twenties.

### Charlie

Clea's friend, late twenties

### Janis

Clea's friend, late twenties

### Monty

Clea's friend, late twenties.

### Erika May

Guest at Michelle and John's party, mid twenties.

## **PLACE**

The spacious living room of Michelle and John's New York City apartment.

## **TIME**

Next Friday night.

“Because the Italians and the English in those consulates and even that illiterate clerk are all men. Their anxiety is the same as my father’s, what is coming to be my own, and perhaps in a few weeks what will be the anxiety of everyone living in a world none of us wants to see lit into holocaust. Call it a kind of communion, surviving somehow on a mucked-up planet which God knows none of us like very much. But it is our planet and we live on it anyway.”

**-V. - Thomas Pynchon**

“I know we’re gonna meet someday in the crumbled financial institutions of this land,  
there will be tables and chairs  
there will be pony rides and dancing bears  
there’ll even be a band

‘cause listen after the fall there’ll be no more countries  
no currencies at all  
we’re gonna live on our wits  
throw away survival kits  
trade butterfly knives for adderal  
and that’s not all  
woah!  
there will be snacks, there will  
there will be snacks!!”

**-“Tables and Chairs” - Andrew Bird**

## ***THE ARMAGEDDON DANCE PARTY***

### **ACT I**

#### **Scene 1**

*(The New York City apartment living room of MICHELLE and JOHN. JOHN is sitting and MICHELLE is standing. There is a stereo in the room.)*

JOHN: Oh God, oh God, oh God. Oh ... God.

MICHELLE: You're overreacting.

JOHN: I'm not.

MICHELLE: You are, John. You ... take it from me, you are.

JOHN: It's not that--

MICHELLE: Just because it's Armageddon doesn't mean it's the end of the world. Let's dance.

*(She pushes play on the stereo. Loud, raucous music, Immaculate Machine's "Broken Ship" plays. She dances with gusto, jumping up and down.)*

JOHN: Michelle. *Michelle.*

MICHELLE: Why are you talking to me when I'm dancing?

JOHN: I'm--

MICHELLE: You know that never works.

JOHN: We need to talk.

*(He pauses the music.)*

MICHELLE: Put the music back on.

JOHN: Let me say one thing.

MICHELLE: Fine. What?

JOHN: Armageddon *is* the end of the world.

MICHELLE: John.

JOHN: Literally. It is. That's what "Armageddon" means.

MICHELLE: Oh.

JOHN: Yeah.

MICHELLE: Okay.

JOHN: You understand?

MICHELLE: Yes.

*(She looks like she's about to cry. JOHN sees this and he puts his arms out to her.)*

JOHN: Oh, Michelle.

*(She goes to hug him, but ducks out of the way and hits play on the stereo. The music starts and she dances again.)*

JOHN: Oh, God.

*(Lights down.)*



## Scene 2

*(Lights up. MICHELLE is dancing. JOHN is sitting, glum. MICHELLE turns off the stereo.)*

MICHELLE: Could you have heard it wrong?

JOHN: What?

MICHELLE: I'm saying, you said you *heard* Armageddon was here.

JOHN: Yes.

MICHELLE: Could you have heard it wrong?

JOHN: I don't think so.

MICHELLE: But you don't *know*.

JOHN: I'm not following--

MICHELLE: What was said? When you heard it. How did you hear it?

JOHN: Okay. I came home, I turned on the news, it was already going, and the anchor said, "Armageddon is here."

MICHELLE: That's it? Nothing more?

JOHN: They went to commercial after that.

MICHELLE: Really?

JOHN: *(Shrugging)* You've gotta pay the bills.

MICHELLE: Hmm. *(Slight pause)* I think you heard it wrong.

JOHN: What else could it have been?

MICHELLE: There's a--

JOHN: I mean, come on. Seriously.

MICHELLE: Please don't interrupt me.

JOHN: Sorry.

MICHELLE: There's a ... what do you call it? A demolition derby type thing that tours the country. It's very popular. You know what it's called?

JOHN: Armageddon?

MICHELLE: No. *Carmageddon. (Brief pause, quietly)* Smart ass.

JOHN: I guess it could be that.

MICHELLE: You see. You said the news was already going.

JOHN: I mean, I can't prove it's not.

MICHELLE: Right.

JOHN: I suppose I could turn on the news again.

MICHELLE: Don't. I feel we've been watching too much TV lately. I'd like us to cut down.

JOHN: Well, this is ... I feel like this is something I should know about.

MICHELLE: Don't end a sentence with a preposition.

JOHN: Leading grammarians have begun to question that rule in light of verbs that are inextricably linked to prepositions, such as "put up with."

MICHELLE: *(A pause, then)* Even still. You know, you could call Tom.

JOHN: Sure. Tom. *(He takes out his cell phone and calls.)* He watches the news all the time. He'll know if Armageddon is here or if Carmageddon is here. It's going to voicemail. *(Slight pause)* Tom has a really nice voice.

MICHELLE: Doesn't he?

JOHN: Hey, Tom, it's John. Michelle and I were hoping you could settle an argument for us. Give me a call please.

*(He hangs up.)*

MICHELLE: We're good?

JOHN: We're good.

MICHELLE: Good.

*(She turns on the music and dances. This time JOHN joins her. Lights down.)*

### Scene 3

*(Lights up. JOHN and MICHELLE are dancing. JOHN pauses the music.)*

JOHN: I just had a really good idea.

MICHELLE: About the end of the world?

JOHN: No. I just had a really good idea for a reality show.

MICHELLE: Ooh, tell me, tell me.

JOHN: So, you take the staffs of a bunch of bars. You've got your Irish pub, your sports bar, your gay bar, your trendy downtown watering hole. The whole gamut.

MICHELLE: Sure.

JOHN: And every week they compete in wacky, you know, made-up, sort of bar-themed games. And the two bars placing lowest have to go head to head in a drink-off.

MICHELLE: They all have to drink?

JOHN: No, they have to make drinks. Make an assortment of them.

MICHELLE: So it's not really a "drink-off."

JOHN: No.

MICHELLE: No, it's a ... a mix-off.

JOHN: Okay, a mix-off.

MICHELLE: And who judges it?

JOHN: I hadn't thought about ... okay, maybe a ... you get a college kid, a frat-boy type, a barfly, female, aging, you know the type. And then, I don't know, to add legitimacy, like a world class bartender. Someone who knows drinks. Someone with an accent.

MICHELLE: And the losing bar is out.

JOHN: Exactly. And every week there's a new type of drink. Like gin drinks one week, rum another.

MICHELLE: Shots, girly drinks.

JOHN: Sure. When it's all over, one bar is left standing. What do you think?

MICHELLE: I don't know.

JOHN: Oh, but you haven't heard the name of the show yet.

MICHELLE: Go ahead.

JOHN: *(A pause, then)* Barageddon.

MICHELLE: *(A pause, then)* That's pretty good.

*(He hits the play button and they dance. Lights down.)*

#### Scene 4

*(Lights up. JOHN and MICHELLE are dancing. A knock on the door, and then it opens. MICHELLE stops the music. In comes TOM with CLEA and TRIXIE.)*

TOM: Hi guys.

MICHELLE: Hey, Tom.

JOHN: Hi, Tom. You didn't have to come over, I just ... did we give you a key to the door?

TOM: It was unlocked.

JOHN: Michelle.

MICHELLE: Yes, John?

JOHN: You left the door unlocked again. You know it's not safe.

MICHELLE: Well, I figured since it was Armageddon, who cares?

JOHN: No, you didn't. You didn't know it was Armageddon when you left it unlocked. You didn't even know what Armageddon means.

MICHELLE: Well, it might not even be that. It might be Car-mageddon.

JOHN: Really, Michelle, that's what you want? A bunch of dirty demolition derby drivers coming in and out, willy-nilly?

MICHELLE: I'll make you a deal.

JOHN: With their greasy hands, their outfits dripping oil on our nice clean rug. I mean, if that's what you really want--

MICHELLE: John.

JOHN: Fine. A deal.

MICHELLE: If it's Carmageddon, I'll be extra vigilant about locking the door.

JOHN: I should hope so.

MICHELLE: But if it's Armageddon, we leave it unlocked.

JOHN: Deal.

*(They shake on it.)*

MICHELLE: So which is it, Tom? Armageddon or Carmageddon?

TOM: It's Armageddon.

JOHN: I knew it! *(Slight pause)* Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh ... God.

*(TRIXIE clears her throat.)*

TOM: Sorry, this is my girlfriend Trixie and her friend Clea. This is John and Michelle. John overreacts a lot.

JOHN: You think I'm overreacting to this? To the end of the world?

TOM: No. Not this time. But typically you do.

JOHN: I guess that's true.

TRIXIE: But on the bright side, you won't overreact ever again.

JOHN: I guess that's true too.

MICHELLE: Trixie.

TRIXIE: Yes?

MICHELLE: What's that short for? I've always wondered.

TRIXIE: Beatrix. Like Beatrix Potter.

MICHELLE: Oh, Peter Rabbit. I have that book around here somewhere. I always wanted to read it again. Ah, well.

CLEA: What were you guys doing? We heard music.

MICHELLE: Dancing. Just dancing.

CLEA: That sounds like fun.

MICHELLE: You should dance too.

CLEA: I don't know.

TRIXIE: I like dancing. I thought you did too.

CLEA: I do. But after a while, the music will get slower. You'll be with Tom, and Michelle with John. I'd rather not dance alone.

MICHELLE: Call some friends if you like.

CLEA: Should I? Okay, thanks. Really.

JOHN: Sure.

*(MICHELLE turns on the music as CLEA ducks out into the hall. The couples dance. Lights down.)*



## Scene 5

*(Lights up. CLEA is downstage, in the hallway in front of the apartment. Music is playing in the background and the COUPLES are dancing in low light. CLEA is on her cell phone.)*

CLEA: Hey, Charlie ... nothing, I'm just at this party ... I dunno, friends of Trixie's boyfriend ... yeah, I think they're newlyweds who met in the military ... well, they said something about an Army wedding. That or a demolition derby party ... no, it's not good at all ... well, no, *you* should come *here*. They told me to invite people. I'm serious, so come. Bring Janis ... sure, Monty too. Whoever you ... What? ... No, I don't watch the news, but I TiVo'd it. You can watch it at my place tomorrow, 'k?

*(Lights down.)*

SAMPLE ONLY

## Scene 6

*(Lights up on the apartment. All are dancing. TOM stops the music.)*

TOM: The hills of Megiddo. Or Mount Megiddo to be more ...

TRIXIE: Tom?

TOM: That's what Armageddon means, literally. The battle at the end of the world begins on Mount Megiddo. The Bible names it as the place for the final battle between good and evil. The end of the world. And today, a battle started there. They call them hostilities now, but I doubt anybody was truly hostile about it. Just soldiers following orders.

MICHELLE: Which soldiers?

TOM: Well, ours, of course. I can't speak for the hostility of the enemy soldiers.

JOHN: Whom are we fighting?

*(A pause.)*

TRIXIE: Tom?

TOM: I swear I knew it this morning. Iran, I think. Or Syria. Or Iraqi insurgents.

MICHELLE: Al Qaeda?

TOM: Maybe.

JOHN: Breakaway PLO members.

TOM: Perhaps.

TRIXIE: Lost North Korean soldiers?

TOM: Possibly.

JOHN: Neo-Nazis?

MICHELLE: Sandanistas?

TRIXIE: Basque Separatists?

TOM: I can't say for sure. We'll win, though. That's all that's important.

*(Slight pause)*

MICHELLE: Wait a second. When we asked you before if it's Armageddon, did you think we meant it literally?

TOM: I thought--

MICHELLE: Because we didn't mean it literally. We don't care about one battle. We care about the end of the world.

TOM: I thought you meant the battle.

JOHN: That's a relief.

MICHELLE: Yes. *(She goes and locks the door.)* Since it's not the end of the world.

JOHN: Thank you.

TOM: Oh, it still is the end of the world. The battle was just the first step.

MICHELLE: How do you know?

TOM: What was that phrase, Trixie? The one we heard on the court show? I liked it so much.

TRIXIE: A preponderance of evidence.

TOM: Isn't that smart?

JOHN: What evidence?

TOM: Well ... for starters, the polar ice caps have melted. Both north and south. The ozone layer is on its last legs, with more holes than actual layer. Four new strains of flu with a ninety percent infection rate have been discovered. All of the countries that have the bomb have reported theft in their facilities, including, but not limited to, weaponized anthrax, zyklon B, smallpox, and three thousand kilograms of weapons grade plutonium, tritium and palladium. Tensions have flared between India and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, Israel and Lebanon, Japan and China, Greece and Cyprus, Canada and French Canada, and the U.S. and everyone else.

MICHELLE: *(A pause, then)* That sounds pretty bad.

TOM: Oh, and the sun just burned out. Inexplicably.

*(Pause. A knock at the door.)*

MICHELLE: Yes?

CLEA: *(OFF)* It's Clea. I called some people. They're on their way.

MICHELLE: Good.

*(She goes and unlocks the door. CLEA enters. Silence.)*

TRIXIE: It had to happen some time, right?

*(JOHN and MICHELLE shrug. TRIXIE turns on the music. They all dance. Lights down.)*

## Scene 7

*(Lights up and now the apartment is full of people. All are dancing. MICHELLE approaches a woman, ERIKA MAY.)*

MICHELLE: Hi.

ERIKA MAY: Hi. Great party, huh?

MICHELLE: Thanks. It's my apartment.

ERIKA MAY: Oh yeah?

MICHELLE: I'm Michelle.

ERIKA MAY: Erika May.

MICHELLE: You really think it's great?

ERIKA MAY: Sure. But I'm very optimistic lately.

MICHELLE: Really?

ERIKA MAY: Last night a DJ saved my life.

MICHELLE: I don't think I have that song in my CD's, sorry.

ERIKA MAY: No, I'm being serious. Last night a DJ actually saved my life. I was at a club downtown and it was ... awful. All the guys were hitting on me, and I just wanted to leave. I was going to too, but they changed DJs at the club, just as I was walking out, and the new guy was amazing. He, the first thing he played, he put on some new song, but underneath it he played "Candy's Room." Do you know it?

MICHELLE: No, sorry.

ERIKA MAY: It's a Springsteen song. Now I'm not into the whole classic rock thing, but my brother has the album it's

on and I used to make him play that song all the time. It has those great drums, lightning quick at first, to show he's anticipating seeing this girl, and then, to show how strong their love is, almost apocalyptic at the end.

MICHELLE: How appropriate.

ERIKA MAY: And the guitar, the vocals, the ... I think there's a sax in it too ... the DJ was so good I ended up staying the whole night. Crawled into bed at six thirty. It was a great night.

MICHELLE: I don't ... I mean, that's great. But how did he save your life? You weren't gonna commit suicide, were you?

ERIKA MAY: No, no, no. See, if that DJ hadn't played that song, I wouldn't've stayed. I would've gone to the bus stop and waited. I found out later that at about the time I was planning on leaving, there was an accident at the bus stop. A drunk driver plowed into it. I would've been dead, were it not for that amazing DJ.

MICHELLE: Wow.

ERIKA MAY: I know.

MICHELLE: That's quite a story.

ERIKA MAY: Yeah. (*Slight pause*) What did you mean, "how appropriate?" About the apocalyptic drums.

MICHELLE: The obvious.

ERIKA MAY: We're all dancing. That's the only obvious thing I can think of.

MICHELLE: Don't end a sentence with a ... do you know why we're having this party?

ERIKA MAY: You're nice people?

MICHELLE: I mean, the occasion. The reason for the party.

ERIKA MAY: Who needs a reason to dance?

*(She goes back to dancing. A beat, then.)*

MICHELLE: *(Yelling)* John! *(No answer)* John!!

*(He pops his head up.)*

JOHN: What?

MICHELLE: We need to talk.

*(Lights down.)*

SAMPLE ONLY

## Scene 8

*(Lights up. JOHN and MICHELLE are downstage, in the hallway in front of the apartment. Music is playing in the background and the guests are dancing in low light.)*

MICHELLE: I think you should know--

JOHN: Have you ever thought, Michelle, that maybe *I* don't like to be talked to while *I'm* dancing?

MICHELLE: John.

JOHN: No, you've never thought of that, have you?

MICHELLE: John, did you know these people don't know it's the end of the world?

JOHN: I asked you first.

MICHELLE: *(A slight pause, then)* No, I never thought of that.

JOHN: Well, I don't.

MICHELLE: John, people don't know it's the end of the world.

JOHN: We do. Tom and Trixie do.

MICHELLE: But nobody else in there does. We should tell them.

JOHN: I don't know. They're all having such a good time. I'd hate to spoil that.

MICHELLE: That's true. *(Brief pause)* Maybe they'd have a better time if we told them.

JOHN: I doubt that.



MICHELLE: You never know. People are always saying, live each day like it's your last. Maybe they would if they know it really is.

JOHN: That's true.

MICHELLE: I'm just not sure.

JOHN: We're the hosts, right? If we tell them, we need to do it in a way that's ...

MICHELLE: Congenial?

JOHN: No.

MICHELLE: Gentle?

JOHN: No.

MICHELLE: Appropriate.

JOHN: Exactly. You do have a way with words, Michelle.

MICHELLE: Thank you, John.

JOHN: We should probably go back in.

MICHELLE: Yeah.

JOHN: You want me to tell everyone?

MICHELLE: No, I'll do it. Way with words and all.

JOHN: True.

*(Light change. The lights come down on the hall and go up on the apartment. CLEA, TRIXIE, and TOM are dancing.)*

CLEA: So did Tom's friends meet in the Army?

TRIXIE: What?

CLEA: Since we're celebrating their wedding.

TRIXIE: What are you talking about?

CLEA: You guys said this was an Army wedding party.

TOM: *(Laughing)* No, no, no. Not "Army wedding," Armageddon. It's an Armageddon party.

CLEA: Oh. That makes much more sense.

TRIXIE: Yes.

*(Slight pause)*

CLEA: It's Armageddon?

TOM: Yes.

CLEA: *(Louder)* It's Armageddon??

TRIXIE: Yes, but--

*(JOHN and MICHELLE enter.)*

CLEA: *(Louder still)* It's Armageddon!!

*(The music stops. Everyone stops dancing.)*

MICHELLE: Okay, new plan.

*(Lights down.)*

## Scene 9

*(Lights up. Nobody is dancing. Everybody looks depressed.)*

MICHELLE: I'm sure this is a shock to a lot of you, and if you have any questions, we'll try to answer them as best as we can.

CLEA: You aren't sad about this?

MICHELLE: Of course I am.

CLEA: You don't seem sad.

MICHELLE: I was sad before. Now I've come to accept it as an inevitability.

TRIXIE: It had to happen some time, right?

MICHELLE: Thank you, Trixie. Well put. Who's next?

*(A few people talk all at once.)*

MICHELLE: Well, this won't do. Raise your hand if you have a ...

*(A man, CHARLIE, raises his hand.)*

MICHELLE: Yes, you.

CHARLIE: Is Armageddon the same thing as the Apocalypse?

MICHELLE: Tom, you wanna take this one?

TOM: Sure, Michelle. The short answer is yes and no.

*(Pause. CHARLIE raises his hand again.)*

CHARLIE: What's the long answer?

TOM: Oh. Well, the word “Apocalypse” means the revealing of information not know to all humans to a specific group of people. So that’s the no. The English language, however, has taken the idea of Apocalyptic Eschatology, that is, revelations about the end of the world, and uses the word “Apocalypse” to refer to the end of the world. That’s the yes.

MICHELLE: It’s synecdoche.

JOHN: Metonymy, actually.

MICHELLE: Synecdoche is a form of metonymy.

JOHN: A form in which a part of something stands in for the whole. I don’t think this qualifies.

MICHELLE: Any revelation about the end of the world, would, by definition, be a part of the end of the world itself. So calling it synecdoche would be correct.

*(CHARLIE raises his hand again.)*

MICHELLE: Yes?

CHARLIE: I just mean ... we are talking about the end of the world, right?

MICHELLE: Yes.

CHARLIE: Okay. Glad that’s straight.

*(A woman, JANIS, raises her hand.)*

MICHELLE: Yes?

JANIS: Should we be repenting?

MICHELLE: Repenting what, dear?

JANIS: Our sins.

MICHELLE: Well, I don't know. If you didn't feel bad about them before, I think it's pretty clear you'd just be doing it because of what's going to happen.

*(A man, MONTY, speaks.)*

MONTY: What *is* going to--

MICHELLE: Hands please.

*(He raises his hand.)*

MICHELLE: Yes?

MONTY: What *is* going to happen?

MICHELLE: Haven't you been listening? The end of the world.

MONTY: But what does that entail?

JOHN: It entails the ... well ...

MICHELLE: John.

JOHN: I'm trying to answer our guest.

MICHELLE: Were you going to say it entails the world ending?

JOHN: *(A slight pause, then)* And if I was?

MICHELLE: Skip it. And it's "were."

JOHN: Perfectionist.

MICHELLE: As if that's a bad thing.

MONTY: Do you know?

MICHELLE: The specifics? No. Tom?

TOM: Well, there are a variety of theories on--

MONTY: So, no.

TOM: Not enough to be sure.

MONTY: Then why would you have a party at a time like this?  
Why would you invite us?

JOHN: We didn't invite you. We don't even know you.

MICHELLE: Who *did* invite you?

MONTY: (*Indicating JANIS*) She did.

JANIS: But I don't know them either. (*Indicating CHARLIE*)  
He invited me.

CHARLIE: Clea invited me. She told me to call you guys, to  
bring friends.

MONTY: Why would you bring us here? Why would you have  
us spend Armageddon *here*?

CLEA: I didn't know it was Armageddon.

JANIS: How could you not know?

CLEA: You didn't.

CHARLIE: Yeah, but we weren't out inviting people to some  
party. We were just minding our own business.

TRIXIE: And what was that?

CHARLIE: None of your business.

CLEA: Well, leave if you hate it here so much.

MONTY: It's too late for that, don't you see? It's already begun. The end of the world has begun, and we could all end, could be blinked out of existence any minute.

CLEA: So you better get moving.

JANIS: I bet the best places to spend the Apocalypse are already full.

MONTY: And you know what's worse than being here for the end of the world? Trying to find a place to spend the end of the world.

CHARLIE: I mean, what'll we tell everybody else, assuming an afterlife. Oh, I was at the Ritz, drinking champagne and eating caviar when it all ended. Where were you? Me, I was on the N/R. We'd be a laughingstock.

JOHN: So ... you're staying?

CHARLIE: Damn right we're staying.

CLEA: Well, I don't want to stay at a party where everybody hates me.

TOM: Trixie and I don't hate you, Clea. We like you.

MICHELLE: John and I are indifferent.

MONTY: You're not going anywhere.

CLEA: Why not?

JANIS: You could find a better party somehow. You've always been good at sniffing that sort of thing out.

CLEA: Then you guys can--

JOHN: (*To MICHELLE*) You're not going to correct her?

MICHELLE: Who?

JOHN: (*To JANIS*) You. I'm sorry. I don't know the names of many people here.

JANIS: Janis.

JOHN: Thank you, Janis. (*To MICHELLE*) You're not going to correct Janis? "Sniffing that sort of thing out."

MICHELLE: "Sniff out" is, leading grammarians would say, a verb-preposition phrase wherein the two elements are inextricably linked.

JOHN: Thank you, Michelle. (*To CLEA*) You were saying?

CLEA: You guys can come with me then. If I'm so skilled at sniffing out good--

MONTY: But there's just as good a chance you'll find nothing as the chance that you'll find something better. So we stay here. All of us.

CLEA: I'm not staying.

CHARLIE: If you try to leave, we'll kill you.

CLEA: Charlie!

MICHELLE: (*To JOHN*) I'm guessing that one's Charlie.

CHARLIE: Maybe not kill, but ... they have knives here, I'd imagine. In the kitchen? If you try to leave, we stab you. Incapacitate you so you can't leave.



JANIS: It's not as if we'll be arrested, or go to jail, or stand trial. The end of the world may have some benefits.

CHARLIE: Nobody leaves. Monty.

MICHELLE: And that's--

JOHN: I got it.

*(MONTY puts the music on. They all dance. Lights down.)*

SAMPLE ONLY

## Scene 10

*(Lights up. All are dancing. JANIS stops the music. She raises her hand.)*

MICHELLE: Yes?

JANIS: I had one more question.

MICHELLE: Go ahead.

JANIS: Trixie.

TRIXIE: Yes?

JANIS: What's that short for? I've always wondered.

TRIXIE: Beatrix. Like Beatrix Potter.

JANIS: Oh, Peter Rabbit. I've always wanted to reread that book.

MICHELLE: Me too.

JANIS: Do you have it here?

MICHELLE: Sure.

JANIS: May I borrow it?

MICHELLE: Why?

JANIS: The reason anyone borrows a book.

MICHELLE: But with all that's going on--

JANIS: It's a short book. I'll take my chances.

MICHELLE: I'll go get it.

*(She exits. TOM goes to turn to music back on but is stopped by the sound of ERIKA MAY crying.)*

TOM: Are you okay?

ERIKA MAY: Of course not. Who cries when she's okay?

TRIXIE: What's wrong?

ERIKA MAY: This. All this. The end of everything.

TRIXIE: It had to happen sometime, right?

ERIKA MAY: But I was spared. Last night a DJ saved my life.

JANIS: I love that song.

CHARLIE: I hate it.

ERIKA MAY: I mean a DJ really saved my life last night. And I was spared for what? For this? To see the world end?

TOM: You'd rather be dead?

ERIKA MAY: Of course. One of the few benefits of being dead is mourners. People to remember your good qualities, and ignore your bad ones. People to miss you. All of us gone, all at once, there'll be nobody to mourn for us. Just nothingness.

*(A heavy silence. MICHELLE returns with the book.)*

MICHELLE: Okay, here's your book. *(She hands it to JANIS)*  
All right.

*(She turns the music back on. Nobody dances but MICHELLE, who stops after a few seconds.)*

MICHELLE: What?

*(Lights down.)*

## Scene 11

*(Lights up. MICHELLE turns off the music.)*

MICHELLE: What??

JOHN: She's wondering why she was spared.

MICHELLE: One of us was spared? While I was out of the room? Well, that's not fair.

ERIKA MAY: I was. Before.

JANIS: Last night a DJ--

MICHELLE: I know. I heard.

ERIKA MAY: So?

MICHELLE: How should I know? You got to live one more day than all those who died yesterday. Shouldn't you take comfort in that?

ERIKA MAY: In living to see the end of the world? Who would take comfort in that?

MONTY: So many good things will be gone.

TRIXIE: But so many bad things too.

CHARLIE: What?

TRIXIE: Genocide, for example. It's over and done. Never to be seen again. Child molestation, too. I'm glad that's gone. And NASCAR. I won't miss NASCAR.

CLEA: I won't miss traffic jams.

MONTY: I won't miss overbooked flights.

JANIS: I won't miss overpriced drinks at trendy bars I have to wait in a line to enter.

MICHELLE: I won't miss Mongolia.

JOHN: What's wrong with Mongolia?

MICHELLE: Nothing. I just won't miss it.

CHARLIE: I won't miss the first fifty eight minutes of any NBA game.

TOM: I won't miss fake award show banter.

TRIXIE: I won't miss people who can't figure out the boarding process of an airplane.

JANIS: I won't miss people who cut shopping lines because they "just have one quick question" for the sales clerk.

MONTY: I won't miss reality show contestants who want to become actors.

JOHN: I won't miss self-help books.

CHARLIE: I won't miss historical thrillers that everyone thinks are true, but clearly aren't.

JOHN: I won't miss my parents.

MICHELLE: I won't miss your parents.

CLEA: I won't miss people trying to squeeze onto packed subway cars.

TRIXIE: I won't miss wacky family films.

TOM: I won't miss fake nostalgia cable shows.

MONTY: I won't miss republicans.

JANIS: I won't miss any politicians, really.

MICHELLE: I won't miss people longing for an America that never actually existed.

CLEA: I won't miss racism.

CHARLIE: I won't miss people who think they have a right to go through life without being offended.

JOHN: I won't miss lame, one-joke musicals, movies, or sitcoms.

MICHELLE: I won't miss critics who only like something when nobody else does, and hate something if anyone else likes it.

TOM: I won't miss people who have absolutely no sense of what assholes they really are.

JANIS: I won't miss a lot of people, actually.

*(This may go on longer, with all adding in more things they won't miss.)*

TRIXIE: *(To ERIKA MAY)* And you? What won't you miss?

ERIKA MAY: Me? I'll miss everything.

*(A pause)*

CLEA: Bullshit. There's gotta be something you'll be glad to see go.

ERIKA MAY: I don't know. ... Roaches, I guess?

TOM: Roaches don't count. They may survive the apocalypse.

CLEA: What else?

ERIKA MAY: I won't miss .. preschools that require interviews.

TRIXIE: Good. That's something.

ERIKA MAY: I won't miss room temperature, soggy french fries. Bad drivers. People who sing slow songs at karaoke. Fundamentalists on any belief or issue. Showboating football players. The media's obsession with the disappearance of young, attractive white women. The media's sensationalism being confused with liberalism. The media. Angst as art. Anyone who looks at abstract art and says, "Even I could do that." Ignorance masquerading as morality. The belief that two people screaming platitudes at each other is debate. Political spin. Hagiography. Poor vocabulary. Constant mistakes in the usage of the perfect tense, and the words, "literally" and "ironic." People who make you listen to their poetry. People who follow bands around on tour. Bands who play their songs live exactly the same way they play them on their albums. Paparazzi. People who devour celebrity gossip. The slow death of privacy. The inability of people to read a room. Hypocrisy. And the suffocating belief by baby boomers that nobody in subsequent generations can do anything that will ever surpass or even be on par with anything they've ever done.

*(Silence. Satisfied, ERIKA MAY goes and turns on the music. She starts dancing with a renewed vigor. Soon, everyone joins in. Lights down.)*

## **Scene 12**

*(Lights up. All are dancing. ERIKA MAY stops the music.)*

ERIKA MAY: Oh, and police procedural slash crime investigation shows.

*(She starts the music. She stops it after a second.)*

ERIKA MAY: Except for *Law & Order* reruns.

*(General consensus among the group. She starts the music. All dance. Lights down.)*

SAMPLE ONLY



### Scene 13

*(Lights up. All are dancing. TOM enters, Bible in hand, and stops the music.)*

TOM: I've been reading.

TRIXIE: Tom's so good at that.

JOHN: The Bible?

MONTY: Good idea. I'm sure Revelations can tell us—

MICHELLE: Revelation. Singular. Not plural.

MONTY: Is that right?

TOM: No. *(He looks down at the open Bible.)* Sorry, yes.

MICHELLE: The Revelation of John is the full name of the book.

ERIKA MAY: You've read it?

MICHELLE: No. I'm just someone who knows things.

JOHN: She's actually not being sarcastic right now.

TRIXIE: What did you read, Tom?

TOM: Revelations. -tion, sorry. I'm used to saying ... I read it. Skimmed it really. Lots of number imagery. Sevens mostly. They mention the number seven--

MICHELLE: He.

TOM: Excuse me?

MICHELLE: He mentions. The Revelation of John.

TOM: Right. He mentions the number seven fifty-two times.  
Weird coincidence, huh?

CLEA: Wait a second! There are seven of us here.

*(They all look around.)*

CLEA: Not counting two of us. Are there any mentions of nine?

TOM: No. Mostly sevens. Seven churches, seven spirits, seven lampstands, seven stars, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven signs, seven crowns, seven plagues, seven golden bowls, seven hills, and seven kings.

TRIXIE: I told you he's good at reading.

JANIS: What does it tell us about what's to come?

TOM: It's hard to say. Most of it's pretty symbolic. Written for people who lived in the first century.

JANIS: Great.

*(She goes off to a corner of the room and reads her book.)*

CHARLIE: What can *you* tell us?

TOM: Well, there's a woman, a whore. And there are beasts, and one of them has the number 666 on it. Or he makes people put that number on them. Anyway, that's where we get that whole 666, *Omen* thing.

CHARLIE: So, sixes and sevens.

TOM: And twelves. And 144,000. Which is divisible by 12.  
Twice.

ERIKA MAY: But what's to come for us?

TOM: The description of heaven is really nice. Lots of jewel-encrusted streets. And rivers and gates. So if you're going there, you're pretty set.

ERIKA MAY: But for us here on Earth, before that?

TOM: It doesn't look too good. If I'm getting the symbolism right. *(Pause)* I was mostly just impressed that seven was mentioned fifty-two times. *(Pause)* Sorry.

*(He turns the music back on. All but JANIS dance. Lights down.)*

SAMPLE ONLY

## Scene 14

*(Lights up. All but JANIS are dancing. MONTY stops the music.)*

CLEA: What caused it?

TOM: Armageddon? *(CLEA nods.)* Sin, I imagine. I'll check.

*(He flips through the Bible.)*

CLEA: Sin's been around forever, though. What tipped the scales?

JOHN: Maybe there was a clock on all of us, and it just ran out.

CLEA: So there was nothing we could do? Bullshit. I'm not buying it. Someone's at fault here.

TRIXIE: You think someone here did it?

MONTY: I blame the Baby Boomers.

ERIKA MAY: Our parents? Why them?

MONTY: Because they committed the unforgivable sin.

TRIXIE: What's that?

TOM: I'll check that too.

*(He flips through the Bible.)*

MONTY: The unforgivable sin is apostasy.

TRIXIE: I still don't know what that is.

MICHELLE: Apostasy is affirming belief in something and then later rejecting that belief.

CHARLIE: Changing your mind is the unforgivable sin?  
That's hardcore.

MONTY: It's more than just changing your mind. It's taking up a religion and renouncing it. It's demanding the reins of power, protesting against war, talking about free love, and then, when you get a bit older, never ceding power over to your children, starting war, and criminalizing sex.

ERIKA MAY: That sounds like the Boomers to me.

CLEA: So they're dicks, so what? How does that cause the end of the world?

MONTY: It has nothing to do with the Bible. Well, I mean, it might, but ... what I'm saying is, what is the one way that the Baby Boomers could be assured of never being out of power in this country?

CHARLIE: Anti-aging pills.

MONTY: Rephrasing: what's the only realistic way?

MICHELLE: They find out that the world could possibly end and they do nothing, assuring that they will be the last generation to rule.

MONTY: Exactly.

JOHN: That doesn't quite work.

MONTY: Why not?

JOHN: Well, it's not as if America just gets information that nobody else in the world does.

MONTY: Then all the countries are in on it. Most of them are ruled by Boomers anyway.

JOHN: Except that the Baby Boom is a specifically American phenomenon. So what do they care in other countries?

MONTY: I don't ...

CHARLIE: And if they're keeping knowledge about the end of the world from us, who's to say they're not hiding anti-aging pills from us too.

MICHELLE: He's right.

CHARLIE: See.

MICHELLE: Not you. John. John's right. It can't be the Boomers. Sorry, Monty.

MONTY: But what if it started with the Boomers here. Then all they'd have to do is convince the leaders of other countries that they'd never have to worry about losing an election or being overthrown. No matter what the generation, people would go for that.

*(A pause, then.)*

JOHN: Fucking Boomers.

MICHELLE: Seriously.

CLEA: Is there an outside chance that they'll die in Armageddon first.

TOM: Lemme check.

*(He flips through the Bible. CLEA turns on the music. All but JANIS dance. Lights down.)*

## Scene 15

*(Lights up. All are dancing. JANIS is reading. ERIKA MAY is dancing with CHARLIE. She gives him a kiss.)*

ERIKA MAY: Come with me.

*(They exit and go to the hall. JANIS shuts her book. She gets up and stops the music.)*

JANIS: Has anyone read this? I mean, has anyone actually read this?

TRIXIE: Read what?

JANIS: This book, this awful book by your namesake.

JOHN: Beatrix Potter can't be Trixie's namesake. Trixie was born after Beatrix.

JANIS: I'm saying--

JOHN: *(To MICHELLE)* That's right, isn't it?

MICHELLE: Yes, John, very good.

JOHN: Thank you, Michelle.

JANIS: Peter Rabbit. Anyone ever read it?

*(All raise their hands.)*

JANIS: And who remembers what it's about?

*(All lower their hands.)*

JANIS: Nobody?

MICHELLE: Well, I know there's Peter. And there's Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail. Which leads one to believe that the only other option was "Dropsy," so "Cotton-tail" seemed better to Ms. Potter.

JANIS: And what happens to Peter?

MICHELLE: I can't recall. He's chased by Mr. McGregor, I think. I'm drawing a blank.

JANIS: The story starts with Peter's father being dead.

*(TRIXIE gasps.)*

JANIS: There's more.

TRIXIE: But in and of itself, that's so surprising. Usually it's the mother that starts out dead. Wicked stepmothers and all. I wonder what that might signify.

TOM: We should probably hear the whole story first.

TRIXIE: I suppose you're right.

TOM: But something to keep in mind, certainly.

JANIS: Peter's father is dead, at the hand of Mr. McGregor. And Mrs. McGregor has put Peter's father in a pie.

TRIXIE: Savages.

JANIS: Peter's mother tells her children to stay away from Mr. McGregor's farm.

MICHELLE: That's right. And Flopsy, Mopsy, and not-Dropsy obey but Peter doesn't.

JANIS: Yes. Peter's mother goes out and gets a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns, while his siblings go get blackberries.



TRIXIE: Lots of food imagery in this story.

JANIS: Anyway, Peter goes to see where his father was murdered, and he ends up eating vegetables from Mr. McGregor's garden. Mr. McGregor finds him and chases after him.

MICHELLE: Like I said.

JANIS: Peter tears up his clothes and barely makes it home alive. And do you know what happens when he gets home?

MONTY: He's rewarded for learning more about his father's killer?

CLEA: No. I remember now. He's sent to bed without any supper.

JANIS: That's exactly it. Peter has a spoonful of tea, and Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail have bread, milk, and blackberries.

TOM: Respectively?

JANIS: No. Peter's the only member of his family to care that the father is dead, and he's punished for this. Ignorance and apathy are rewarded.

TRIXIE: *(A pause, then)* That's fucked up.

JANIS: I'll tell you ... I won't miss *Peter Rabbit* either.

*(She hands the book back to MICHELLE and turns on the music. She dances. All dance. Lights down.)*

## Scene 16

*(Lights up. ERIKA MAY and CHARLIE are kissing downstage, in the hallway in front of the apartment. Music is playing in the background and the couples are dancing in low light. They break off.)*

ERIKA MAY: I'm Erika May.

CHARLIE: Charlie.

*(They awkwardly shake hands.)*

ERIKA MAY: You said you'd kill that girl.

CHARLIE: I didn't mean--

ERIKA MAY: You did. You said it.

CHARLIE: Maybe I did.

ERIKA MAY: I liked that.

CHARLIE: Okay. If that's what it takes.

ERIKA MAY: What it takes for what?

CHARLIE: For ... well, for end of the world sex.

ERIKA MAY: You think that's why I brought you out here?

CHARLIE: Yeah. Didn't you?

ERIKA MAY: For starters.

*(They kiss again.)*

CHARLIE: And what else?

ERIKA MAY: I want you to kill *me*.

CHARLIE: (*A pause, then*) Are you serious?

ERIKA MAY: But not until after the sex.

CHARLIE: Okay.

(*They kiss. Lights down. End of Act I.*)

SAMPLE ONLY