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***Ratface—First Printing, 2007***

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**Fetal Pig**  
**by Dennis Bush**

1 Female, 1 Male

**Synopsis:** FETAL PIG is a provocative mix of intense drama and twisted comedy that explores a coupling that some might describe as sadomasochistic; others may call it familiar. After five years with her boyfriend, Emma wants things to be different. She loves Mark in the same way you can love a beautiful pair of shoes, even though it hurts like hell to wear them. But love – or lust – isn't enough. Control is fleeting and victimization is a dance that requires a partner. The stage is literally set for Emma to turn the tables. Whether or not she has what it takes will be unveiled right here, right now.

**Suburban Peepshow**  
**by James Comtois**

6-8 Males, 2 Females

**Synopsis:** Bill is a husband, father, and professional. But this week, a cross dressing social deviant gets fired at the office and Bill is poised to step into his position. The promotion all but guarantees new dishtowels for the wife, and the in-ground pool for son Jeremy. But a New Girl in the office has designs for Bill, and he ain't gonna pass it up... if you know what I mean. Who can blame him with his wife contemplating jumping the Pool Guy, a strange Carnie Barker interrupting dinner, and the occasion Gladiator battle waiting at home. It all depends on how the Playwright is feeling tonight.

**RatFace**  
A Teenage Suicide Comedy  
by **j. Snodgrass**

**RatFace**  
A Teenage Suicide Comedy  
...Nearly An Autobiography.  
By **j. Snodgrass**

Notable Draft Dates: October 16th, 28th, November 1st, 1997  
Additional Section added April 28th, 1998

**CAST:**

Charlie Thompson/RatFace—17, Who botched his own suicide  
Jesse Steinberger—17, His best friend  
Betty Thompson—34, His mother  
Doctor—25, Three guesses (Can be male or female)

In Loving Memory, TjS + GCE 1997-1997  
Dedicated to Ben C, Pete C and Dave P.  
Dedicated to me.

## Production History

**RatFace** was first produced by The Scar Program (or, j. Snodgrass), directed by the author. The venue was the back room of the Olean Public Library (Olean, NY), the dates were June 23rd-25th, 1998. The Cast was as follows:

Patrick Raymond as Charlie/RatFace  
Peter Snodgrass as Jesse  
Riki Lindhome as Betty  
Patrick Mulryan as the Doctor

**RatFace** had its professional debut in the 2005 NYC International Fringe Festival, produced by Wall St. Productions, directed by Adrienne Willis. The venue was the Collective Unconscious Theatre, and it had seven performances between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 2005. The cast was as follows:

Bill Fisher as Charlie/RatFace  
Cass Bugge as Jesse  
Emily Schweitz as Betty  
Lisa "Foss" Curtis as the Doctor

Lights by Jason Wells, Costumes by Sara Hopgood, Sound by Isaac Everett, Sets and props by Lisa "Foss" Curtis. Original song, "RatFace Theme" written by j. Snodgrass, performed by Isaac Everett and various singers.

Note - during this production, the actors spent their off-stage time in a line upstage, facing the back wall. It was one of Adrienne's many excellent ideas to have a "Heather" standing there, as if she'd be playing a part. Adrienne's choice of a female Doctor was so inspired that I went through and changed the stage directions, it's how I've come to see the role.

**Playwright's Note: "A Teenage Suicide Comedy?!"**

As I worked toward the first production of *RatFace* I received a mysterious telephone call, asking me what's so funny about *Teenage Suicide*. Absolutely nothing, I replied, having been a suicidal teenager at the time of its composition, I took the idea quite seriously. Originally, I started writing this play to cheer me up a bit, as I couldn't get to sleep on what I thought would be my last night on earth. I laughed while writing, but mostly I cried. This was going to be my unfinished final work. Ten years later I find myself still alive. And over those years, this play has come back to me several times, first to be completed, then through various rounds of re-working for productions. As I gear up the script for publication, I know the question will come forth again: 'What's so funny about teenage suicide?' My answer would remain 'absolutely nothing, but from my own experience, when I'm lost in the darkness of my doubts and fears, the smallest flicker of laughter can brighten my whole world.' Being a teenager almost killed me. Suicide almost killed me. Comedy - the ability to laugh at my doubts, my fears, my self - has kept me alive.

*-j. Snodgrass, November 2007*

## RATFACE

### Scene 1:

*(Setting: a hospital room, suggested by bed at upstage center and all the trimmings, including a beep machine with little lights on it. October 1997.)*

*(At Rise: CHARLIE is lying on the bed, in a coma. JESSE walks on from right and sits down on a chair near the bed. He looks at CHARLIE and shudders. During the following line, JESSE prods CHARLIE, then proceeds to beat him mercilessly with his pillow.)*

JESSE: Just couldn't handle it, could you, Charlie? You dumb-ass. You fool, you *idiot!* So what was it, anyway? What was so important? Couldn't make the grade or what? Couldn't handle all the pressure? ...'Hell, *what* pressure? Nobody ever even expected anything from you! But you had to go and show us anyway. Show just the kind of person you really are. So melodramatic. And look at you now, Chuck. *Now* look at you. Couldn't even take your own life right. ...So, when are you going to come out of this coma? Another couple days, maybe? ...Years? I should warn you, enjoy it while you can, because you'll *never* hear the end of this. Not as long as you live. ...Suppose it's not worth saying you'll wish you were dead, because obviously--

CHARLIE: ...Jesse, is that...you?

JESSE: Welcome to Heaven.

CHARLIE: How did you get here?

JESSE: Because I'm such a gosh-darned nice guy. Why do *you* think?

CHARLIE: Well...

JESSE: *Honestly* now, Charlie.

CHARLIE: ...Is Heaven gonna beep for all eternity?

JESSE: You're not in heaven, Chuck.

CHARLIE: Then I guess I'm not in consecrated ground, either. Is this the dung-heap?

JESSE: You're in St. Anne's hospital. You failed.

CHARLIE: I did?

JESSE: You bet your sorry ass you did.

CHARLIE: ...So then I'm not dead. I'm alive! And I can--

JESSE: *Bright*, Charlie, a bold return to form. If you're not dead, then you must be...*alive*. What I don't understand is...With such superior powers of deduction, who would *want* to--

CHARLIE: Okay, quit being a wise-guy...or I'll--

JESSE: You'll *what*? I'd like to know. Gonna try to O.D. on Vitamin C pills next? I should warn you - you'll only end up pissing green. As a matter of fact, I think--

CHARLIE: Jesse, I'm *sorry*. I mean, I *tried* my best, but I just--

JESSE: Your "best" clearly wasn't good enough, Charlie. So there *I* am, sitting in school Wednesday, wondering where the hell you are and the next thing I know, Mr. Buchenwald over the announcements is telling the *whole school* not to panic!

CHARLIE: Was everybody panicking? ...Anybody?

JESSE: Hardly. How many people at school do you honestly think are aware of your existence?

CHARLIE: ...They said it over the announcements?

JESSE: "Typical Thompson" was the general consensus. Didn't take long to get around that you'd botched your own suicide. Imagine that. You couldn't even be a *statistic*.

CHARLIE: ...Wait a minute. So Heather knows? What does she--



JESSE: The guys laughed like hell in the locker room. Before *and* after gym class. The girls probably did too. Imagine that, just what you always wanted. Charles Thompson - topic of girls' locker-room discussion.

CHARLIE: That's not what I wanted. Jesse, I just...

JESSE: Attention? Well, you've got it in *spades* now, buddy. I hope you--

CHARLIE: Look, I don't care about any of that. ...Are you mad at me?

JESSE: Mad at you? Charlie, how long have we known each-other?

CHARLIE: Eight years?

JESSE: Eleven, if you count the three you've spent in this coma.

CHARLIE: I've been in a coma for *three years?!!*

JESSE: Yeah. This is fall break for me. I'm a sophomore at Amherst now and I--

CHARLIE: Where's Heather going to—

JESSE: Just kidding. It's been three days. Anyway, my point, is that you and I go back a long way, and it'd take a lot more than this to get me really mad at you. I'm just...disappointed.

CHARLIE: ...Because I'm a quitter.

JESSE: Well, that too. I'm disappointed because you're a cop-out *and* a failure.

CHARLIE: Are you...happy that I'm alive?

JESSE: Did you will me all your stuff?

CHARLIE: *Jesse!*

JESSE: Hey, kidding, kidding! Sure, I'm happy. Come on over sometime and I'll make you a ham on rye.

CHARLIE: I don't eat ham on rye.

JESSE: Well then come over and I'll make *myself* a ham on rye.

CHARLIE: Yeah. So what about...

JESSE: Heather?

CHARLIE: Heather! What about--

JESSE: Did I tell you I think I have a loose tooth? It's the craziest thing, I mean, I'm seventeen now, haven't lost one in six years, and suddenly...

CHARLIE: *Jesse!*

JESSE: ...I wonder what the tooth fairy--

CHARLIE: Heather! WHAT ABOUT HEATHER!? You're gonna lose *all* your teeth if you don't tell me! Where is Heather? Does she know? IS SHE STILL MY GIRLFRIEND!?

JESSE: Take a chill-pill, Charlie. Take several. But read the label--

CHARLIE: Jesse...

JESSE: Oh, don't you worry, she'll visit.

CHARLIE: She's mad at me, I know it.

JESSE: Mad isn't the word... It's more like--

BETTY: (*offstage*) Charlie, is that you? If it is, you'd better *play dead*, because I am *not* in the mood to deal with your sniveling apologies right now.

CHARLIE: ...Why'd she come to see me then?

(*CHARLIE Starts playing dead*)

JESSE: I'd better go, Chuck. I'll see you later.

*(BETTY appears through the door, running into the retreating JESSE.)*

BETTY: Has he re-surfaced?

JESSE: No, I'm just so...traumatized that I've taken up his side of the conversation. Standard reaction. See you later, Jesse. Yeah, get well soon, Chuck. You can have all my Police records, Jesse. Wow, thanks, Chuck. Could you please take care of my girlfriend for me, Jesse? Sure--

BETTY: Will you *shut up*?

JESSE: 'See you later, Ms. Thompson. If Charlie comes to, please--

BETTY: Hey, you prick, I don't tell you how to do your job so *don't* tell me how to do mine.

JESSE: Okay.

*(JESSE runs off)*

BETTY: Jesse's a nice guy, isn't he? Been your best friend for a long time now, hasn't he? 'Stood by you through thick and thin, huh? SO WHY THE HELL DID YOU WANT TO GO AND LEAVE HIM ALL BY HIMSELF? Huh? What kind of scum *are you* to abandon your best friend? ...*(a new tactic)*... Heather's a cute girl. She was crying over your comatose body today after she got out of school. 'Said she'd never be able to get another boyfriend as long as she lived, because she dated *you* and you went and tried to *kill yourself!* WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT TO HER? ... Selfish little wart. I could tell you were gonna be a waste of time from the first moment I saw the blue plus sign. *I* wanted to abort you, but *no*. Your father wouldn't hear of it. Mister Responsibility. So, where is your father now? Three hundred miles away from your dumb unconscious ass, taking responsibility with a twenty five year old blonde-haired broomstick. I guess you're a lot like him. Nothing but demands, demands and disappointment. *(Takes out handkerchief, blows her nose.)* ...Maybe *someday* I could get over the pain of my son killing himself...but I'll *never* get over *this*...

CHARLIE: *(Sits up, puts an arm around her.)* Aw, Mom, it's okay...I'm sorry that my father... Well, I'm sorry...

BETTY: Well, look who decided to wake up. ...And look who's *sorry*.

CHARLIE: Mom, I said I--

BETTY: Oh, I must be having trouble hearing. You see, I've got this throbbing headache. Do you know *why* I have this headache?

CHARLIE: Mom...

BETTY: Guess. Take three guesses.

CHARLIE: Is it because you *always* have throbbing headaches when I try to talk to you about my problems?

BETTY: Two more guesses, then I pull the plug on you.

CHARLIE: I give up.

BETTY: Maybe I have this headache because you got bored one day and *ate* all the *aspirin*!

CHARLIE: That was going to be my next guess. Honest.

BETTY: I'll bet it was. So, what do you have to say for yourself?

CHARLIE: (*thinks, then...*) I give up.

BETTY: What is this? Is giving up your new hobby? Are you going to spend the *rest* of your *life*--

DOCTOR: (*walking on.*) Excuse me, Ma'am, but--

BETTY: That's...*Ms.* Thompson.

DOCTOR: Oh, I'm sorry, *Ms.* Thompson. I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to stop hassling the patient. Go somewhere and get some rest, huh? Save your energy for when he...hits the street again.

BETTY: You wouldn't happen to have any aspirin, would you, Doctor?

DOCTOR: *(takes a bottle of aspirin from pocket. Begins rattling it.)*  
I'm sorry, Ms. Thompson. I never hand out aspirin. If I'd given any to this kid here, I'd be neck-deep in lawsuit right now. *(puts the bottle back in his pocket)*

BETTY: Oh, forget it. I'll go to the Giant Drive-Through Drugstore.  
*(To CHARLIE)* Don't go *anywhere*. I'm not done with you yet.

CHARLIE: I won't.

BETTY: And if I come back and find out you've tried again and failed, I'll do the job myself.

CHARLIE: I won't. 'Bye Mom. I love--

BETTY: *Piss off. (walks off)*

DOCTOR: Boy, you're really in deep shit.

CHARLIE: ...What?

DOCTOR: She's pissed. Is that your mother, or just some random lady who came in to harass you?

CHARLIE: No, that's my Mom.

DOCTOR: Oh. Aspirin, huh?

CHARLIE: I guess it was...pretty stupid of me...

*(Long, meaningful moment of silence.)*

CHARLIE: So you're...going to be my doctor?

DOCTOR: Your name's Charlie, right?

CHARLIE: Yes. Charlie Thompson.

DOCTOR: From henceforth, all generations shall call you...**RatFace**.

RATFACE: No!

DOCTOR: 'Sorry. Already done.

RATFACE: Well then *undo* it. You're a doctor, for Goodness sake!

DOCTOR: Unfortunately for you, I choose...*not to*.

RATFACE: ...Well how soon do you think I'll be able to get out of here?

DOCTOR: 'Can't talk now, RatFace. I have delicate surgery to perform in ten minutes. (*Winks, walks off, turning off the light on her way out.*)

RATFACE: (*In darkness*) ...Hello? Hello?

**Scene 2:**

(*Setting : Same place, next day.*)

(*At Rise : CHARLIE is lying in bed, reading a copy of THE BELL JAR. BETTY is sitting on the chair and the DOCTOR is talking to her.*)

DOCTOR: Well, Ms. Thompson, we have every reason to believe that your boy RatFace here will live for about as long as he would have anyway.

BETTY: Great.

DOCTOR: The catch is that attempting to overdose on aspirin usually causes severe liver damage which can get pretty nasty down the road.

BETTY: Oh?

DOCTOR: However, we didn't detect any liver problems in the multitude of tedious tests we ran on him.

BETTY: Oh. ...Aren't there some *more* tedious tests you could run? I'm not asking for much. A tumor would do just as well.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry. He should be fine in just a few days. We feel that before letting him go, we should...get some hospital food into him. It'll make him more responsive to your cooking when he gets home.

BETTY: Thank you so much, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Please, call me Lenny.

BETTY: ...Your name's Lenny?

DOCTOR: No, but I've...always wanted people to call me Lenny.

RATFACE: Me too. Please, call me Lenny. I'm tired of being Rat-Face.

DOCTOR: Do you think this is some *game*, RatFace?

RATFACE: Well, no, but...

BETTY: Oh, do as the doctor says, RatFace. Really, there's no need to make a big scene. Just get used to it.

RATFACE: How do you expect me to get used to RatFace?

BETTY: How do you think I felt with you calling me "Mom" all the time?

DOCTOR: It took me years to accept people calling me "doctor", and I never complained once.

RATFACE: But that's different. You *are* a doctor.

DOCTOR: How do *you* know?

RATFACE: Okay. I give up.

DOCTOR: What was that?

RATFACE: ...I give up?

DOCTOR: Just hold on to that bright, cheery attitude and we'll have you out of this hospital and back on your feet in no time, RatFace.

BETTY: I'd better be getting to work.

DOCTOR: Call me sometime. We can play doctor.