

A DollZes HoUse

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in the Theatre Department
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ChAracTerZeS

TULIP, a Nora

BERMUDA GRASS, a Maid-Servant

CHAINSAW, a Torvald

THE KING, also a Director, Roman God, Viking, and Rap God

THE MINION, also an Assistant Director and Chamber-Minion

DUMP TRUCK, an Astrologer (played by actor playing Chainsaw)

A BATTALION OF NORAS

LAVENDER, an Ex-Nora, fifties or older

POPPY, an Ex-Nora, fifties or older

SNAPDRAGON, an Ex-Nora, fifties or older

PETUNIA, an Ex-Nora, fifties or older

BLUEBONNET, an Ex-Nora, fifties or older

BEGONIA, an Ex-Nora, thirties

LILY, a Nora, twenties

SUNFLOWER, a Nora, twenties

BABY'S BREATH, a Nora, early teens or younger

DAFFODIL, a Nora, early teens or younger

VIOLET, a Nora, early teens or younger

A ROYAL ARMY

SERGEANT FRANK, manly and handsome, the King's bath buddy

PRIVATE BENCH PRESS, manly and handsome

MEAT FLAP, manly and handsome

pre show

Pre-Show

pre show

Three members of the Royal Army, SERGEANT FRANK, PRIVATE BENCH PRESS, and MEAT FLAP, greet audience members at the door. They give each patron a program, as well as a costume piece: a gold bow tie for the men, and a pink hair bow for the women. Frank, Bench Press, and Meat Flap tell audience members that they will be instructed to don the costume pieces at a certain point in the piece.

When the house is closed, and house-lights go to half, a pre-show announcement is made (turn off cell phones, emergency exits, etc., as well as a reminder for audience members to have their costume pieces on hand).

At the end of the pre-show announcement, house lights go out, and Frank, Private Bench Press, and Meat Flap set the stage for the top of the show. *They will handle all scene transitions throughout the play.*

Stage lights fade to black. The Royal Army exits. A long slurp is heard from the audience.

Stage lights come back up, revealing: ***

scene 1

Scene 1

scene 1

A perfect little living room. Lots of porcelain, lots of pink, lots of lovely antiques. TULIP, as Nora, wraps a stack of presents, adding bows and ribbons, humming gaily. ***
BERMUDA GRASS, as Ellen, the Maid-Servant, decorates the Christmas tree. Bermuda Grass is impossibly fat and often bumps into things. She is not a very good tree-decorator. ***

TULIP/NORA ***

Decorate the Christmas tree carefully, Ellen. I can't wait for the children to see it this evening, when it's lighted up. ***

BERMUDA GRASS/MAID - SERVANT ***

Yes ma'am.

Tulip removes a pouch of pink macaroons and happily munches on them. She goes on tip-toe to a door upstage. She listens.

TULIP/NORA

Yes, he is at home.

Tulip begins to hum again. From behind the door, CHAINSAW, as Torvald, calls into the living room.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD (OFF)

Is that my lark twittering there?

TULIP/NORA

Yes, it is.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD (OFF)

Is it the squirrel frisking around?

TULIP/NORA

Yes!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD (OFF)

When did the squirrel get home?

TULIP/NORA

Just this minute.

Bermuda Grass bumps into the Christmas tree. One of the ornaments falls off. It breaks.

BERMUDA GRASS

Oops.

TULIP/NORA

Come here, Torvald, and see what I've been buying.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD (OFF)

Don't interrupt me.

(He opens the door and looks in.)

Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

Chainsaw steps into the living room. He is only partially off book for the scene. He is clearly searching for lines, and sometimes he forgets lines altogether.

TULIP/NORA

Why, Torvald, surely we can afford to launch out a little now. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Come come; we can't afford to squander money.

TULIP/NORA

Oh yes, Torvald, do let us squander a little now - just the least little bit! You know you'll soon be earning heaps of money.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Yes, from New Year's Day. But there's a whole quarter before my first salary is due.

TULIP/NORA

Never mind; we can borrow in the meantime.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Nora, Nora! What a woman you are! But seriously, Nora, you know my principles on these points. No debts! No borrowing! Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debt.

TULIP/NORA

Very well - as you please, Torvald.

Bermuda Grass accidentally breaks another ornament.
Someone in the audience grumbles.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Come come; my little lark mustn't droop her wings like that. What? Is my squirrel in the sulks?

(He takes out his wallet.)

Nora, what do you think I have here?

TULIP/NORA

Money!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

There!

(He gives her some money.)

Of course I know all sorts of things are wanted at Christmas.

TULIP/NORA

Ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Oh, thank you, thank you, Torvald! This will go a long way.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

I should hope so. It's a sweet little lark, but it goes through a lot of money. No one would believe how much it costs a man to keep such a little bird as you. ***

TULIP/NORA

Hmph! If you only knew, Torvald, what expenses we larks and squirrels have.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

(Struggling with lines)

You're . . . You're a . . . You're a strange little being! But I don't wish you anything but just what you are, my . . . Uh . . . My - ***

TULIP

(Whispering)

Sweet little song bird. ***

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

(Remembering)

You're a strange little being! But I don't wish you anything but just what you are, my own, sweet little dong bird - ***

TULIP

Song bird.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

My own sweet little schlong bird! ***

Bermuda Grass stifles a laugh. Chainsaw is totally lost. Someone in the audience grumbles, louder this time.

AUDIENCE/KING

Oh my God.

TULIP/NORA
(Attempting to save the scene)

Torvald do you think I look suspicious today?

CHAINSAW

Uh . . .

Tulip mouths “sweet tooth.” Chainsaw suddenly remembers.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Oh. Shit. Yes! Nora, it strikes me you look so - so - so suspicious today! Hasn't the little sweet-tooth been playing pranks?

TULIP/NORA

No. How can you think such a thing!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Didn't she just look in at the confectioner's?

TULIP/NORA

No, Torvald, really -

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Not to sip a little . . . slurpee?

TULIP

No, certainly not.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Hasn't she even nibbled a . . .

(Breaking, as Chainsaw)

Fuck, what's it called?

TULIP/NORA

No, Torvald, indeed, indeed!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

I . . .

(Breaking, as Chainsaw)

Line?

THE KING, currently costumed as The Director, pops up from the audience. He throws a fit.

KING

Oh for the love of God! CUT! HOLD! Whatever! What is this shit?! What *is* this shit?!

The King charges the stage. He goes straight to Chainsaw. ***

KING (cont'd)

(To Chainsaw)

Are you off book?

CHAINSAW

Well, I -

KING

Coffee! Where is my coffee? Someone has misplaced my coffee!

THE MINION, currently costumed as the Assistant Director, jumps up from a different seat in the audience. He holds a large Starbucks iced coffee.

MINION

I have it! I have it right here!

A pause. The Minion stands, holding the coffee.

KING

Well, bring it over *here*. Idiot.

MINION

Right!

The Minion dashes to the stage with the coffee.

KING

Complete and total idiots. I am surrounded by them.

(To Tulip)

Except you, darling. You are not an idiot. So far, you are a very good Nora.

TULIP

Oh. Thank you. I certainly try not to be an idiot. Though, I don't think that anyone tries to be an idiot. I'm not entirely certain, but I think you might simply be surrounded by confused people. Not idiots.

KING

Idiots and confused people are the same thing.

(To Chainsaw)

Now. You. The Torvald. Hacksaw. What happened?

CHAINSAW

I forgot my line.

KING

Oh, you forgot your line. Well.

MINION

Well.

CHAINSAW

Well . . .

KING

Are you mocking me?!

CHAINSAW

No, I just - We've been rehearsing for hours now. I'm tired.

KING

Oh, you're tired? Table Saw is tired, everyone. He is a tired actor. Boo-hoo-hoo. Actors are athletes, you foofy ninny puss. You are an athlete! Suck it up!

CHAINSAW

This is against equity rules.

KING

Don't tell me how to run my rehearsal room!

In his rage, the King accidentally spills his coffee.

KING (cont'd)

Are you happy now, Power Drill? Hm? Is this what you wanted to happen, Drill Press? You wanted me to spill my coffee, didn't you, Drill Wrench? Is that a thing, a drill wrench? You spilled my coffee!

CHAINSAW

No. I had nothing to do with that. I'm way over here.

KING

FIRE!

CHAINSAW

What? Man, please don't fire me. My parents will be pissed.

KING

You forgot your line. And told me how to run my rehearsal room.

CHAINSAW

Look, I didn't mean to -

KING

And then you spilled my coffee!

CHAINSAW

I didn't spill your -

KING

Leave! Get off the stage!

MINION

(Quietly)

Mr. Director, are you certain you want to do that? The Chainsaws are huge donors to the theatre. They funded the -

KING

FIRED!

CHAINSAW

Whatever.

Chainsaw exits.

KING

God, he is foul! You are foul! Did you hear what he said to me?! "Whatever." Awful! Just awful! Oh, I am upset. Where is my coffee?!

The King remembers that he spilled his coffee. He throws a miniature tantrum. The Minion massages his shoulders, humming a soothing tune.

MINION

There, there, Mr. Director. It's alright. Alright. Shhh. Shhh.

(Singing softly)

We are calm like a ducky; we are calm like a cow. We are handsome; we are charming; very rich and so high-brow; We're the King; we're the ruler. We are calmer; we are cooler.

(MORE)

MINION (cont'd)

Like a ducky, like a cow. We are calm; we are calm.

(The King is subdued.)

Would you like to take a break from directing for a bit? Go back to just being King?

(The King nods. The Minion replaces his
director hat with a kingly crown.)

There we are, Sire.

KING

(Sniffling)

What about your costume? We must have dramaturgical cohesiveness.

MINION

Of course.

The Minion replaces his Assistant Director hat with a
Minion Hat.

MINION (cont'd)

There. Now. Would you like me to bring you another coffee?

(The King nods.)

I'll bring you another coffee.

The Minion exits.

KING

(Sniffling)

Tulip?

TULIP

Yes?

KING

Do you find me respectable?

TULIP

Of course. You're the King.

KING

As a director, I mean?

TULIP

You are certainly the best only director I have ever worked with.

KING

Lately I've been feeling as though people don't respect me. Did you see how Chainsaw disrespected me?

TULIP

I did.

KING

I had such high hopes for him. His family is one of the wealthiest in the kingdom. They've been around for generations. I thought he would be a good actor. I am not looking forward to explaining the situation to his grandparents. I should probably get a new Director costume. ***

TULIP

How will that solve anything, Sire?

KING

This costume is obviously causing people to disrespect me. It's not powerful enough. It's sending out the wrong message. Last week's Director costume was much better. It was very classy, very *couture*. Do you think Chainsaw thinks I'm sophisticated?

TULIP

I'm not sure. Shall I go ask him for you?

KING

No. NO! Don't do that. I'll just . . . I'll have the Costume Designer make a few more adjustments to my attire.

TULIP

Of course.

KING

Pet my head as I nuzzle your bosom.

Rather awkwardly, Tulip sits next to the King. She gently strokes his head. He nuzzles his face in her breasts.

BERMUDA GRASS

So are we done with rehearsal for the day, or . . . ?

KING

Oh. You're still here. Great. Take a lap around the perimeter of the kingdom.

BERMUDA GRASS

What?

KING

You, Maid-Servant, very annoying. You, Maid-Servant, also very fat. Maid-Servant need exercise. Maid-servant fat ass knock many things over during rehearsal. Very bad. Maid-Servant go run, run, run to make fat ass less fat and stop breaking things onstage. Take a lap now or you're fired.

BERMUDA GRASS

Whatever.

Bermuda Grass exits.

KING

Why is everyone always saying that to me?!

The Minion re-enters. He is covered in dirt and grime. He might have suffered a few minor injuries.

KING (cont'd)

Ah! We're back!

The King jumps up and replaces his Kingly crown with his Director hat.

TULIP

(To the Minion)

What happened to you?

KING

He's fine.

(To the Minion)

Switch your costume!

The Minion quickly changes back into his Assistant Director costume.

KING (cont'd)

Assistant Director, where is my coffee?

MINION

I'm afraid that Starbucks is closed, Mr. Director.

	KING	***
What.		***
	MINION	***
It appears to have been . . . blown up.		***
	KING	***
No!		***
	MINION	***
Twenty-six people were killed.		***
	KING	***
That's terrible!		***
	MINION	***
I'm sorry, Sir.		***
	KING	***
Well, will it be reopening soon?		***
	MINION	***
I'm not sure.		***
	KING	***
Oh, it just . . . How could it . . . One minute it's there, and the next it's . . . gone. I guess you just never know when your favorite corporate establishment is going to be blown up.		
	MINION	
I am sorry for your loss, Mr. Director.		
	KING	
	(Collecting himself)	
Yes. Well. The show must go on. We can't let the loss of a single Starbucks ruin my 442nd rehearsal process for <i>A Doll's House</i> . I know we all feel the pain and emptiness in Starbucks . . . StarbuckZes? . . . Starbuckyses . . . In <i>its</i> absence, but we must use that pain to make art.		
	TULIP	
Very profound words, Mr. Director.		
	KING	
Release that statement to the public. Quote me directly.		***

The Minion removes a small note-pad. He scribbles the King's words on the pad. Tulip munches on the macaroons.

KING (cont'd)

Next item of business. We need a new Torvald. What understudies are available to us?

MINION

None.

KING

Come again?

MINION

There are no understudies available to us. All of the men in the kingdom have been deployed.

KING

Deployed?

KING (cont'd)

To the War.

KING (cont'd)

Ah, so that's what it's called when the King sends troops into battle. I've always wondered. Deployed. I like it. It has a nice ring to it. Make sure Chainsaw is deployed too.

MINION

Of course, Sire.

KING

Tell me, are we close to winning this war?

MINION
(Lying through his teeth)

Mmmhmmm.

KING

Splendid!

MINION

Shall we postpone rehearsals until the war is over?

KING

What? No! Never! In all the years we've been fighting a war, we've never postponed rehearsals for the play.

MINION

Perhaps, then, we could call back a few of the troops to audition for the role of Torvald?

KING

What? No! Never! I'm not *un-deploying* a single troop until the insurgents have been annihilated. I don't care how long it takes. We need this war. It's good for morale. It stimulates the economy. I like it. The royal court loves it. All the people on the inside like it too. And deep down, the people on the outside like it a lot also. It gives the poor something to complain about.

(To Tulip)

Tulip, stop eating those. You're going to get fat.

TULIP

Of course. I'm so sorry.

KING

(To the Minion)

Wasn't there one other fellow who hadn't been deployed? The royal botanist or pharmacist or something? What was his name? I remember it being very manly. Monster Truck, or something like that.

MINION

Oh, yes, Dump Truck, the royal astrologist. He was permitted to stay because his cards predicted that you would be dethroned if he were forced to leave the kingdom.

KING

Hm. I prefer the name Monster Truck, but perhaps that's just my Sagittarius Moon talking. Anyway, locate this Dump fellow and inform him that he will be receiving a promotion from astrologist to Torvald.

MINION

Yes, Sire.

KING

And find the Costume Designer while you're out. Tell her I need a new costume. Also - see what you can do about the Starbucks situation. Find out when they'll be reopening. In the meantime, I'll need you to locate a substitute coffee shop.

MINION

Right . . .

KING

Is there a problem?

MINION

It's just that I'm scheduled for Chamber-Minion duty later this evening. I'm worried I won't make it back in time.

KING

I forgot you were still doing that.

MINION

Yes, Sire. I've been pulling double-duty for quite some time now. Ever since the last of the men were deployed, I've been both Chamber-Minion and Regular Minion.

KING

Well. Good for you. Working two jobs is good. It's good for morale. It stimulates the economy. I like it. The royal court loves it. All the people on the inside like it too. And deep down -

MINION

Yes, Sire. I understand.

KING

Good. Now, off you go!

The Minion exits.

KING (cont'd)
(To Tulip)

Join me outside for notes?

scene 2

Scene 2

scene 2 ***

The King and Tulip stand outside of the theatre: a lush and beautiful landscape, swans and fountains - unnecessary extravagance. Beyond the castle wall, sounds of bombs and explosions.

The King smokes a cigarette. He inhales deeply, taking in the splendor of his kingdom.

TULIP

It's a beautiful evening, is it not?

KING	***
What do you think of the new sculpture?	***
TULIP	***
It's very nice. I've always been fond of badgers.	***
KING	***
It's not a badger. It's me. It's a sculpture of me.	***
TULIP	***
Oh. Right.	***
KING	***
I'm having another one constructed on the other side of the theatre. Solid gold. Just like the theatre, just like the wall. I want everything in the kingdom to glisten.	***
TULIP	***
That's a lot of gold, Sire.	***
KING	***
Exactly. Sing me the National Anthem. I'm feeling patriotic.	***
TULIP	***
Of course -	***
TULIP	***
Suddenly, a series of shots beyond the castle wall.	***
TULIP (cont'd)	***
What is all that?	***
KING	***
The guards are shooting at the fatty while she runs!	***
TULIP	***
Why would they do that?	***
KING	***
To put a little pep in her step.	***
TULIP	***
I hope they don't actually hit her.	***

KING ***
 Nah. She'll be fine. You've seen her. She's strong as an ox. ***

(Removing a pair of opera glasses) ***
 Strong as an ox. And fat as a heifer. Don't ever become a poor person, Tulip ***

TULIP ***
 I won't. ***

KING ***
 My sources tell me being poor is very bad and just generally unpleasant. Now. How did you feel about today's rehearsal? ***

TULIP ***
 Well, the incident with Chainsaw obviously wasn't ideal, but aside from that, I thought things went well. I am very much enjoying playing Nora. I do have a question, though, if you don't mind, about - ***

KING ***
 Yes, but how did rehearsal *feel*? ***

TULIP ***
 Good, I think. ***

KING ***
 Good, you think. ***

(Smoking, smoking) ***
 Well. Let me tell you how I feel about today's rehearsal. ***

TULIP ***
 Yes, please do. I would love to hear your thoughts. ***

KING ***
 I'm not going to sugarcoat my feedback. My sources tell me that is not what good directors do. And I am a good director, Tulip. ***

TULIP ***
 Yes, you are. I appreciate the honesty. ***

The King takes a long drag of his cigarette. ***

	KING	***
Tulip . . . I feel that . . .		***
	(Another long drag)	***
You have a smokin' hot bod.		***
	TULIP	***
Pardon?		***
	KING	***
Your bod. It's bangin'. It's bangin' and I want to bang it - you. I didn't pay attention to anything else at rehearsal. I have absolutely no idea how it went. All I could think about was banging that bangin' bod.		***
	TULIP	***
I -		***
	KING	***
Shhhh.		***
	He puts his finger in her mouth. It's gross.	***
	KING (cont'd)	***
Oh, Tulip-Nora, I know you've just taken over the role, but oh, how I want to . . .		***
	He licks her ear. It's gross.	***
	TULIP	***
Um . . .		***
	KING	***
Oh, how I want to . . .		***
	He sucks on her nose. It's the grossest.	***
	TULIP	***
Oh -		
	KING	***
But alas. I cannot.		***
	(He pushes her away.)	***
I'm sorry.		***

TULIP

Oh, it's quite alright. To be honest, I didn't very much enjoy any of that. It was all very strange, what you just did.

KING

Stop being so emotional and upset, Tulip-Nora. I would sex you if I could, but now that you are rehearsing to be the star of my show, I must exercise restraint. No longer are you a mere understudy, who that which I can fondle without consequence. No, no. Now you are the lead actress. Banging the lead actress during rehearsals would be bad for publicity. We should schedule a sex scandal for after we open. The royal court loves when I schedule a sex scandal.

TULIP

Is it actually a scandal then, if it has been planned?

KING

Your mind. It's fascinating.

TULIP

Thank you.

KING

I don't think it's a compliment.

TULIP

Oh.

KING

But you're doing a very good job as Nora. You're easy on the eyes and very youthful-looking. I think we could potentially actually open with you in the role!

TULIP

Oh wow!

KING

And if it doesn't work out, as is sometimes the case - collaboration can be a tricky thing - if it doesn't work out, you will simply join the other Noras that didn't work out in the lovely Home for Retired Noras. It's just on the other side of the kingdom. It has a lake, and swans, and puppies!

TULIP

I love puppies!

KING

So do all the other Noras!

TULIP

I am confident I will be the Nora that opens this show. Did you know that puppies are born deaf and blind? ***

KING

I did not. ***

TULIP

Their eyes open at 10 to 14 days old, and their hearing develops shortly after. ***

KING

You are just full of information, aren't you? ***

TULIP

I spend a good amount of time in the library. ***

KING

Doing what? ***

TULIP

Reading books. ***

KING

None of the other Noras read books. *Read* books. Whatever. ***

TULIP

Perhaps I'm not like the other Noras, Sire. ***

KING

No. It seems you are quite . . . irregular. ***

TULIP

Will the library ever get more books? The entire collection is quite small. It consists of 17 copies of *A Doll's House*, old press clippings of all your triumphs as King, and encyclopedias A, D, H, K, R, S, T, U, and Z. I've read everything in there multiple times, including the version of *A Doll's House* that you had translated into French. Have you ever considered doing a different play? ***

KING

What do you mean? ***

TULIP

Doing a play that is not *A Doll's House*? ***

King	***
Producing - it will go up - and impossible: A Doll's House is the only play that survived.	***
Tulip	***
Couldn't someone write a new one?	***
King	***
Why would they want to do that? That's a lot of unnecessary effort. Besides, everyone in the Kingdom has always really liked the idea of seeing my production of A Doll's House. You don't mess with perfection, Tulip.	***
TULIP	***
Of course. Just a thought.	***
KING	***
Well, stop having those, you silly goose!	***
TULIP	***
I'll do my best. Well, actually, before I stop having thoughts, might I voice one other thought? I've been dying to talk to you about it; it's a question about the end of the play.	***
KING	***
You're very inquisitive.	***
TULIP	***
Guilty.	***
KING	***
I can't decide if it's obnoxious or . . . charming. It reminds me of . . . Tulip, I have a gift for you.	***
TULIP	***
A gift?	***
KING	***
Yes. A "Welcome Newest Nora" gift. Let me go get it for you. BRB!	***
The King exits. He returns a moment later with a large, oddly-shaped present. The King struggles to push the package across the stage.	***
KING (cont'd) (Pushing)	***
God this thing is heavy!	***

	TULIP	***
Would you like me to help you?		***
	KING	***
No, just . . . Stay over there!		***
	The King slowly moves the object across the stage. He stops when he reaches Tulip.	***

	KING (cont'd)	***
	(Winded)	***
For you, my lovely.		***
	TULIP	***
Are you alright? You seem a bit -		***
	KING	***
Open it.		***
	Tulip unwraps the present, revealing a pink stationary exercise bike.	***

	TULIP	***
Oh my!		***
	KING	***
It's an exercise bicycle. So you can work out.		***
	TULIP	***
Thank you. It's really lovely.		***
	KING	***
We want you in top form for opening night.		***
	TULIP	***
Am I not in top form now?		***
	KING	***
What?		***
	TULIP	***
Well, earlier you told me that I have a bangin' bod and that you want to bang it - me - and that you didn't pay attention to anything at rehearsal because all you could think about was banging my bangin' bod. Perhaps I am confused, but to me, that indicates that I'm already in top form.		***

KING	***
Well, I wasn't being literal, of course.	***
TULIP	***
About what?	***
KING	***
Anything - everything - I don't know. There's a book on the handlebars for you.	***
TULIP	***
Is it the R encyclopedia? That's my favorite.	***
KING	***
No, this book isn't in the library.	***
TULIP	***
That's so exciting!	***
KING	***
It's called <i>Bangin' Bods 101: Diet & Exercise Plans for your Boobs, Butt, and Belly</i> . I figured you could read it while you exercise.	***
TULIP	***
Thank you. I am sure it will be very useful in clearing up my confusion with the definition of "top form" and its seemingly illusory relationship with having a "bangin bod." With a little more research, I am confident I can resolve the discrepancy with the nomenclatures and achieve a simultaneous state of top-form-dom and bangin-bod-ery. Thank you so much, Sire.	***
KING	***
You're welcome. I suggest you start with the no carb no fat no sugar skinny skinny beach body diet. My sources tell me it is top-notch. I've marked the page for you.	***
TULIP	***
Wonderful. I will start there. Thank you again.	***
A particularly loud explosion - or series of explosions - is heard on the other side of the wall.	***
KING	***
Ah, the serene sounds of the war.	***
(Pridefully)	***
Did you know, Tulip, that my troops have now annihilated over 82% of the insurgents?	***

	TULIP	***
I did not, Sire. Thank you for informing me.		***
	KING	***
Does that turn you on?		***
	TULIP	***
It . . . No. Not really.		***
	Another massive explosion. The King breaths in the destruction.	*** ***
	KING	***
Ahhhh.		***
	TULIP	***
Do you ever miss the Queen, Sire?		***
	KING	***
She's been gone a long time now. I'm over it.		***
	TULIP	***
But she was your wife. You don't -		***
	KING	***
We didn't really get along. Her boobs were saggy, and she was always nagging.		***
	TULIP	***
Saggy naggy.		***
	KING	***
What?		***
	TULIP	***
She was naggy. And her boobs were saggy. Saggy naggy.		***
	The King guffaws like "Oh my God, that is really funny!"	***
	KING	***
Oh, my God, that is really funny! "Saggy naggy." Oh. I have to remember to tell that one		***
to Sergeant Frank. Oh . . . Good stuff. No, but in the end it was best that the insurgents		***
abducted and savagely murdered my wife. It hastened my divorce and gave me a reason to		***
start the latest war. Don't you just love the war?		***

TULIP

It's been going on my entire life, and I've led a very happy life so far, so I suppose that means I like the war. Though I do wish that so much of our pre-Wars culture hadn't been lost when the fighting started.

KING

What do you mean? We have culture now! We have a library with 17 copies of *A Doll's House* and 1/3ish of the alphabet in encyclopedias. We have a kingdom made entirely of gold!

TULIP

I just mean, for example, I read that -

KING

Tulip, you said you are happy, right?

TULIP

Yes.

KING

Then stop with all this unnecessary thinking. It's going to cause you to wrinkle.

Another explosion.

KING (cont'd)

Ah, see how the explosions glisten off the gold? Beautiful. National Anthem. Now.

Sergeant Frank, Bench Press, and Meat Flap come on.

They sing/rap the National anthem. The music bleeds into the transition for the next scene.

SERGEANT FRANK

King, King; He's the Kingy King King

King, King; He's the Kingy King King

(Rapping)

Like a missile in the night; bringin' truth, bringin' light

Bombs go off; he got power

They strike back; he don't cower.

He's our ruler; he's the King

He da flyest; he got bling

Cause he's the

King, King; He's the Kingy King King

King, King; He's the Kingy King King

(MORE)

SERGEANT FRANK (cont'd)

(Rapping)

That's right	***
Diamonds on his neck, diamonds diamonds in his grill	***
That's right	***
Noras in his palace; he know how to keep it real	***
He got Gucci suede boots, g-g-gold up in his kicks	***
And a wall made outta gold to keep out tha fuckin hicks	***
He's the	***
King, King; He's the Kingy King King	***
King, King; He's the Kingy King King	***

Scene 3

A lovely bed chamber. Lots of pink. Very girly.

Tulip rides her new exercise bike. Bermuda Grass studies a blueprint, eating Twinkies and Cool Ranch Doritos. She has a bloody bandage on her arm and a cold compress on her knee.	***

Tulip cycles. Bermuda Grass eats and studies. This can go on for several moments before Tulip finally breaks the silence.	***

TULIP

What's that you're reading?

BERMUDA GRASS
(Without looking up)

Nothing.

TULIP

I love reading. It's my favorite past-time.

BERMUDA GRASS
(Without looking up)

Cool.

TULIP

What's your favorite past-time?

BERMUDA GRASS
(Without looking up)

Nothing.

Oh. TULIP ***

Well, the King told me that you are a member of the poor. TULIP (cont'd) ***

What. BERMUDA GRASS

The King. We were talking, after rehearsal, and he told me that you are a member of the poor. It's so great that you're allowed to act in a play inside the kingdom! What a great opportunity for you! TULIP ***

Yeah. It's great here. Love it. BERMUDA GRASS

Me too! I am having the loveliest time. The King gave me this exercise bike today. He also gave me this book! Let me know if you ever want to borrow it! TULIP ***

(Pedaling furiously)
Alright. Last twenty seconds. Almost. Push! Push it! Yes, yes! Almost! Almost! Ugh!
Ah! Agggghh! YES!

(Tulip slows her pedaling.)
Yes.

(Climbing off the bike)
Would you mind holding my feet while I do the abdominal portion of my work-out?

I'm occupied. BERMUDA GRASS

With what? TULIP

My thoughts. BERMUDA GRASS

Oh. TULIP

Tulip peers over Bermuda Grass' shoulder.

TULIP (cont'd)

Why, you have a blueprint of the kingdom! How charming!

Tulip picks up the blueprint. Bermuda Grass attempts to get it back.

TULIP (cont'd)

Here's the library, and the theatre; it even has the King's statues on it!

BERMUDA GRASS

Yeah. Cool. Give it back.

TULIP

Hmm. That's strange. I don't see the HFRN on there.

BERMUDA GRASS

The what?

TULIP

The Home for Retired Noras. It's supposed to be on the other side of the kingdom. It has a lake and puppies. Did you know that puppies are born -

BERMUDA GRASS

Just. Ugh. Give it back.

Bermuda Grass snatches the blueprint.

TULIP

Fine. I was done looking at it anyway. It's entirely inaccurate, your blueprint. It doesn't show the HFRN, or the newest wing of the theatre, and it doesn't show any of the tunnels or guard posts.

Tulip starts doing sit-ups.

BERMUDA GRASS

Tunnels?

TULIP

Mmmhmmm.

BERMUDA GRASS

What tunnels?

Bermuda Grass holds Tulip's feet while she does sit-ups.

TULIP

The ones that are beneath the castle. I used to explore them all the time when I was a young Nora, around seven or eight.

BERMUDA GRASS

You've been playing Nora since you were eight?

TULIP

No. That would just be silly! I've been a Nora understudy since I was eight. I grew up here, in the castle, preparing for the role with other young Noras. The King likes to have several Nora understudies on hand at all times.

BERMUDA GRASS

So you know the castle pretty well then?

TULIP

Oh, definitely.

BERMUDA GRASS

Uh-huh . . . Does the King always have guards right outside of rehearsal like that?

TULIP

Yes. Everywhere.

BERMUDA GRASS

What about on opening night?

TULIP

Yes, of course.

BERMUDA GRASS

Great.

TULIP

I'm so glad we're getting to know each other. I want to know everything about you! I've always wanted to make a friend!

BERMUDA GRASS

We're not friends.

The Minion, now costumed as the Chamber-Minion, enters with a tray of food. Bermuda Grass stashes the blueprints somewhere.

MINION

So sorry I'm late, Madam! I got caught up with Minion duties. Finding a new coffee shop for the King has proven quite challenging. Anywho - I've brought your dinner! Yummy, yummy!

TULIP

Wonderful. Thank you.

MINION

In accordance with Madam's new no carb no fat no sugar skinny skinny beach body diet, Madam shall eat one quarter cucumber, sliced, and one head of lettuce, triple-washed and patted dry.

TULIP

But I ate that for breakfast today.

MINION

Madam! What are you doing eating breakfast?! You mustn't do that again. Now. Would Madam like to spruce up her dinner beverage?

TULIP

How so?

MINION

Madam is permitted to spruce up her dinner beverage with one slice of lemon, one slice of lime, or better yet: *two* slices of cucumber, which has natural deflating and fat-burning abilities.

TULIP

I'll have lime, please.

MINION

Oh . . . Unfortunately, I didn't bring any lime. I was certain you would choose cucumber, especially after I told you about its deflating and fat-burning abilities.

TULIP

I'm already eating cucumber for dinner.

MINION

And you are permitted to have even more cucumber in your water, if you wish.

TULIP

I don't really -

MINION

Cucumber is the only option.

TULIP

I'll have cucumber in my water, please.

MINION

Wonderful. Eat. Take one sip of water between every bite. It boosts the metabolism.

BERMUDA GRASS

Where's my dinner?

MINION

No dinner tonight.

BERMUDA GRASS

Why not?

MINION

The King is worried about your girth.

BERMUDA GRASS

What about it?

MINION

He - how shall I phrase this politely - he says you're the size of a small hippopotamus.

TULIP

Oh my.

MINION

In lieu of dinner, he wants you to take a lap around the perimeter.

BERMUDA GRASS

I just took a lap around the perimeter. It sucked.

MINION

Yes, well, the King wants you to endure the suckiness again.

BERMUDA GRASS

No. The guards shot me. Look at my fucking arm.

MINION

Oh! They actually hit you? Impressive. Normally they're horrible shots.

BERMUDA GRASS

I'm not running another lap.

MINION

The King will ex-communicate you if he doesn't see you running within the next two minutes. He has a pair of binoculars. Get going.

TULIP

At least you're strong as an ox. And fat as a heifer.

BERMUDA GRASS

You mother -

MINION

(To Bermuda Grass)

Camouflage yourself. It helps.

BERMUDA GRASS

You suck. Both of you.

Bermuda Grass dons a camouflage cape and exits.

MINION

She is quite the grouch!

(Turning to Tulip, smiling)

I'm going to prepare your nightly regimen now. When did you last exfoliate?

TULIP

The seventh.

MINION

Of April? Oh, no, no, no.

TULIP

What if they accidentally kill her?

MINION

You said it yourself. She's strong as an ox and fat as a heifer.

TULIP

Yes, but, now that I've said it, I don't know why I said it. I heard the King say it. And it seemed sensible at the time. So I repeated it. But now that I'm giving it further consideration, I think a gunshot would hurt - or kill - anyone just the same. Wouldn't it?

MINION

She'll be fine, Madam. The King used to make me run around the perimeter all the time before I received my promotion to Minion/Chamber-Minion.

TULIP

What were you promoted from?

MINION

Let's talk about something pleasant, hm?

A beat.

TULIP

Well, I've been preoccupied with aging lately.

MINION

Understandably so. You're a woman.

TULIP

Aren't you?

MINION

Aren't I what?

TULIP

A woman.

MINION

(Really considering)

I don't know.

TULIP

Oh.

MINION

Are you done eating?

TULIP

Not quite -

MINION

Wonderful!

The Chamber-Minion snatches Tulip's food. She begins to apply various creams and ointments to Tulip's face.

MINION (cont'd)

Un-scrunch your forehead. Oh, dear. You have to stop crinkling your brow so often. You have wrinkles. At least three of them.

TULIP

Well, three doesn't seem -

MINION

Relax your jaw so I can inject you.

TULIP

What is the point of all this?

MINION

Beauty. Youth.

TULIP

But it's not actually youth. It's just disguising age. I will still be the same age regardless of how young I look.

MINION

This, what you're doing right now, this is why you have four wrinkles.

The Chamber-Minion injects Tulip with Botox. She slathers on one more layer of ointment. Tulip is covered in gunk.

The Chamber-Minion moves on to tidying the room, picking up Bermuda Grass' Doritos, Twinkies, and blueprints.

MINION (cont'd)

Eck. She is slovenly.

The Minion wads up the trash and picks up the tray of leftover food.

MINION (cont'd)

Now. Make sure to sleep on your back tonight. It keeps the fluids from accumulating under your eyes. I've put a bucket here, in case you wish to expel any of your dinner. Good night, Madam.

TULIP

Good night, Chamber-Minion.

The Chamber-Minion exits.

Bermuda Grass re-enters. She is coated in sweat and dirt.
Her hair might be on fire. She looks rough.

BERMUDA GRASS

Alright, I went on the run, now where's my - AGH! - What is all that shit on your face?
You look like a - I don't even fucking know what you look like! - Wait - Where's all my
shit?

TULIP

What shit?

BERMUDA GRASS

All my shit. That was over here.

TULIP

Oh. The Chamber-Minion took it.

BERMUDA GRASS

What?! Why was the Minion -

TULIP

Chamber-Minion.

BERMUDA GRASS

I'm not in the mood to play this stupid game. What did he do with my stuff?

TULIP

She, the Chamber-Minion, left with it.

BERMUDA GRASS

Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck.

TULIP

Well, I think you've probably had enough Twinkies and Doritos for the day. They are
loaded with sugar and sodium.

BERMUDA GRASS

Exactly.

Bermuda Grass sits. She plucks twigs and leaves out of her hair. She might scrub dirt and grime off her face.

TULIP

What happened to you out there? As your friend, I am very concerned.

BERMUDA GRASS

All the usual shit happened. And we're not friends.

TULIP

Sorry. Best friends. I'm very excited to learn more about you. Are blueprints your favorite thing to read? What's it like on the other side of the wall? How are you liking rehearsals so far? How did you end up playing Ellen, the Maid-Servant?

BERMUDA GRASS

God. You just don't . . . I auditioned to play Ellen, the Maid-Servant. The King wanted an "authentic lower class."

TULIP

Well, congratulations on getting the part! That's so exciting! What contract are you under? Are you equity?

BERMUDA GRASS

If I stay in the role for 10 years, I am permitted to live in the kingdom permanently. Otherwise, I will be deported.

TULIP

One day down, 3,649 more to go.

BERMUDA GRASS

Yeah. Whoo.

TULIP

Will you tell me more about your life on the outside?

BERMUDA GRASS

Will you shut up afterward.

TULIP

Hm?

BERMUDA GRASS

The King has made it really lovely on the other side of the wall. There's a lake, just like at your HFRN. It's a toxic lake. Swim in it, and your face melts off. And instead of swans and puppies, there are mutant ducks and opossums.

(MORE)

BERMUDA GRASS (cont'd)

Before I came here, I was fortunate enough to spend a delightful two week vacation with the mutant ducks and opossums. We vacationed in a hole. Beneath the factory I worked in, which collapsed after being bombed by the Royal Army. I was trapped. So were the ducks and opossums. We were all vacation buddies. Until I had to eat them. I had diarrhea for a month after that. We can stop talking now. ***

TULIP

That's alright. We don't have to. Why was the factory you worked in bombed?

BERMUDA GRASS

Because there were "insurgents" inside.

TULIP

The Royal Army has killed over 82% of the insurgents now. But I'm not turned on by it. ***

BERMUDA GRASS

Okay.

TULIP

I love conversation! Do you have any questions for me?

BERMUDA GRASS

No.

TULIP

That's alright. I have a few more for you. Why were you so interested in the tunnels earlier? Are tunnels a hobby of yours? My hobbies include reading.

BERMUDA GRASS

Jesus Christ. I am interested in the tunnels because I'm going to kill the King! I'm going to kill the shitty King and then flee this shitty kingdom! ***

A pause. Tulip laughs.

TULIP

Oh, that's a silly joke! I told a joke earlier! Would you like to hear it?

BERMUDA GRASS

NO.

TULIP

Fine. Well. I'm going to get ready for bed now. You should do the same. A lady needs her beauty rest; eight hours to be her best. I made that little rhyme up myself. ***

Tulip crosses to the exercise bike, placing the Bangin Bods book on the handlebars.

TULIP (cont'd)

Bermuda Grass?

BERMUDA GRASS

What.

TULIP

I'm sorry that you went through everything you went through. I had no idea the situation was so terrible out there, but I intend to discuss it with the King as soon as the opportunity presents itself. You really are strong as an ox. I mean it as a compliment this time.

BERMUDA GRASS

Thanks, Tulip.

Scene 4

The theatre. The King sits in his Director's chair. He wears a new costume now: a Roman God.

The Minion sits beside the King, clad in his usual Assistant Director garb.

Tulip and DUMP TRUCK are onstage. Dump Truck is a horrible Torvald. He is obviously very uncomfortable on the stage.

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

Nora, I can see by your manner that he has been begging you to put in a good word for him. And you . . . You were to say nothing to me of his having been here did he suggest that too?

(Breaking, As Dump Truck)

I'm sorry, Your Majesty, but I really don't think I am right for -

KING

Don't break! Keep going, you buffoon.

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

Nora, Nora! And you could condescend to that! To speak to such a man, to make him a promise! And then to tell me an untruth about it!

TULIP/NORA

An untruth!

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

Didn't you say that nobody had been here? My little bird must never -

KING

Louder, Dump Truck! We can't even hear you in the first row! Good God.

Dump Truck clears his throat. He does his best to speak louder.

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

My little bird must never do that again! A song-bird must sing clear and true no false notes! And now we'll say no more about it!

(He awkwardly crosses to a chair. Sits.)

Oh, how cozy and quiet it is here!

KING

Somebody shoot me.

TULIP/NORA

Torvald!

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

Yes.

TULIP/NORA

I'm looking forward so much to the ball the day after tomorrow.

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

And I'm on the tenterhooks to see what surprise you have in store for me.

TULIP/NORA

Are you very busy, Torvald?

Tulip Drapes her arms around Dump Truck. He is uncomfortable with the staged affection.

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

Well -

KING

It just gets worse and worse.

TULIP/NORA

If you hadn't been so very busy, I would have asked you a great, great favor, Torvald.

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

What can it be? Out with it.

TULIP/NORA

Nobody has such perfect taste as you, and I should so love to look well at the ball. Torvald, dear, couldn't you take me in hand, and settle what I'm supposed to be, and arrange my costume for me?

DUMP TRUCK/TORVALD

Ah-ha! So my wilful little woman is at a loss, and making signals of distress!

Dump Truck trips. He falls.

KING

Alright. I've seen enough.

DUMP TRUCK

I'm sorry, Sire. I am trying my best - really, I am. I just. I've never done anything like this. It makes me extremely uncomfortable. I'm a Virgo. It's not in my nature to be the center of attention. I get terrible stage fright.

KING

Dump Truck, you are fired. You are the worst actor I've ever seen in my life.

DUMP TRUCK

Oh, thank you, Your Majesty! That's your South Node in Sagittarius 4th house coming through. Thank you so much!

KING

Don't thank me. I'm banishing you from the Kingdom, you idiot.

DUMP TRUCK

What? But I - The cards! If I leave, you'll be dethroned.

KING

I've grown bored of astrology. It's a heap of shit. You can leave now.

DUMP TRUCK

But I - Where am I supposed to go?

KING

On the other side of the wall. I'm deploying you. ***

DUMP TRUCK

But, but - You'll be - I'll be -

KING

(To the Minion)

Get him out of here.

MINION

(Shooing Dump Truck offstage)

Shoo shoo. Away you go. Bye bye.

The Minion shoos Dump Truck out of the theatre. The King is silent. He takes a seat. He let's out a huge sigh. He rubs his eyes. He stares at the stage in disgust.

Then:

KING

Tulip, your breasts look horrible.

TULIP

Pardon?

KING

You're breasts. They've gotten smaller. They're tiny. ***

TULIP

Well, I've lost a little weight with the diet and exercise program. ***

KING

I can hardly see them at all. They're so tiny I have to use a magnifying glass to see them from the audience.

Tulip laughs.

KING (cont'd)

What's so funny.

TULIP

Hyperbole is one of my favorite figures of speech. ***

KING

Okay. Well. Stop losing weight from your chest area.

TULIP

Right . . . How do I ensure the weight I lose doesn't come from my breasts?

KING

I don't know. I've never had breasts.

Tulip laughs again.

KING (cont'd)

What now.

TULIP

I'm just picturing you with breasts. They don't suit you at all.

The Minion laughs too.

MINION

No, no they don't.

The King glares at Tulip and the Minion like "if you don't stop laughing, I will gouge out your eyeballs."

KING

Does the *Bangin Bods* book have any sort of trouble-shooting section? Anything that might cover this predicament?

TULIP

I'm not sure, Mr. Director. I'll check.

Tulip thumbs through the *Bangin Bods* book.

TULIP (cont'd)

It says here that a small chest can be enhanced by wearing clothes that have a detailed neckline. Lace, ruffles and jewels, gathered material, pleats, ruching and twists are some examples of neckline details that enhance breast size appearance.

KING

Great. Get the Costume Designer in here. Let's have her make some adjustments.

MINION

I, uh, wasn't sure how to tell you this, Mr. Director, but the Costume Designer is dead. Apparently he was one of the twenty-six people that died in the Starbucks explosion.

KING

Good God!

TULIP

Oh my goodness!

KING

Did you say *he*?

MINION

I did.

KING

For fucksake, do people not understand the natural order of things in the theatre anymore?! Men are directors, scenic designers, and actors. Women are costume designers and actresses. Unbelievable. I guess we will just have to enhance the breasts some other way. Here. Try these.

The King tosses a pack of balloons and a small pump to the Minion.

TULIP

Um. What are -

KING

(To the Minion)

Stand her up on that. Give her some height so you can see what you're doing.

MINION

Right.

The Minion hoists Tulip onto something.

KING

Lift her arms.

The Minion lifts Tulip's arms.

KING (cont'd)

Shove a balloon in there.

The Minion shoves a balloon in there.

KING (cont'd)

And inflate!

The Minion uses the pump to inflate the balloon in Tulip's dress.

TULIP

Oh my! This is exceedingly -

KING

Little bigger, little bigger. Hold!

The Minion stops inflating. The King scrutinizes.

KING (cont'd)

That's fine. On to the next one. Inflate!

The Minion inflates the second balloon.

KING (cont'd)

Little more. Little more. Little -

The balloon pops.

TULIP

With all due respect, Mr. Director, is this really the best solution?

KING

Yes. Leave your arms up.

(To the Minion)

Try manually inflating the balloons.

MINION

Right.

The Minion manually inflates the balloons.

TULIP

Is there any way you can not use your tongue like -

KING

Let the man work!

The Minion accidentally lets go of the balloon. It flies
around the stage. He chases after it. The King sighs. He
scrutinizes the stage. ***

KING (cont'd) ***

Where is the scenic designer? I'm not happy with the way the thing turned out. ***

MINION

Uh-oh.

KING

Uh-oh?

MINION

It's just that the scenic designer is also dead. She was bludgeoned to death with a two by four at the Home Depot.

KING

Oh, that is just sick. It's a sick world we live in, full of sick people. A female scenic designer. Disgusting. I need a new Director's costume.

MINION

I'm sorry, Sir?

KING

This one is itchy. I'm all itchy. I can't think when I'm itchy. I need a new costume, so I can come up with a solution for our male actor, scenic, and costume designer predicaments.

MINION

And what of the breasts?

KING

We'll deal with the breasts later. Go get me a new outfit.

MINION

Yes, Mr. Director. Right away.

The Minion scurries out of the theatre. The King sits. He pouts.

KING

Tulip, my production is falling apart. No designers. No Torvald. Tiny breasts. I learned today that the Starbucks won't be reopening. I'm stuck with . . . *Dunkin' Donuts!* ***

TULIP

Dunkin Donuts isn't that -

KING

Don't interrupt me. I'm trying to lament.

TULIP

Of course. My apologies, Sire. Do lament. I'm all ears.

KING

I'm not in the mood now.

TULIP

Perhaps we could discuss something else then? I could sing to you, or -

KING

Let's just sit here in silence. I want to wallow in self pity for a while.

TULIP

Of course. Let me know if there is anything I can do to make your wallowing more fruitful. ***

KING

Just stop talking.

Tulip pretends to zip her lips and throw away the key. She gives the King a thumbs up.

The King mockingly returns the thumbs up, scowling.

He takes a deep breath.

And begins to wallow in self pity.

He sighs, pouts, groans and moans, until he finally settles on staring straight ahead, at the wall, sitting in complete silence.

A long pause.

TULIP

Sire, did you know that there is a wasteland, with toxic water and mutant opossums that give you diarrhea on the other side of the wall?

KING

Don't ever say diarrhea again.

TULIP

Bermuda Grass told me about her old life out there. It sounds horrible.

KING

Yes, well, she's a member of the poor, so . . .

TULIP

Why aren't we told about it?

KING

Why isn't who told about what?

TULIP

Why isn't anyone in the kingdom told about the state of things outside the kingdom?

KING

Because they don't need to know about the state of things outside the kingdom. It doesn't pertain to them. You are a Nora. You need only know things that pertain to Nora-dom.

TULIP

That just seems -

KING

I've already warned you about the dangers of unnecessary thinking. So stop doing it. ***

TULIP

I've tried. But I'm finding it impossible. I can't just turn off my thoughts, can I? I am open to any advice you have to offer.

KING

Perhaps you can't turn off your thoughts, but you can certainly stop voicing them, lest you wish to relocate to the other side of the wall with your diarrhea opossum friends. ***

TULIP

The other side of the - ***

KING

If you can't perform your duties as a Nora, you can get the fuck out of my kingdom. ***

A pause.

TULIP

Yes, Sire. I understand. I'll do better.

MINION (OFF)

Yes, I know that it is what you are wearing right now, and that you will be naked if you take it off, but I don't care! I need it!

(Pause.)

No, this is *A DollZes HoUse*, the Columbia University thesis production. That production is in the big theatre. You should've taken a right at the top of the stairs. Are you going to give me your outfit or not? ***

(Pause.)

I know that you are in no way affiliated with this production. I understand that. It doesn't change the fact that the King needs your clothes.

(Pause.)

Yes, we do have a King, and he's sitting right in there! Give me your outfit or I will knock your fucking teeth out!

A ruckus. The Minion re-enters a moment later, bleeding, a forced air of calmness about him. He carries a new costume for the King.

MINION (cont'd)

Your new costume, Mr. Director.

The Minion proudly holds up a Viking costume: helmet, fur cape, hunk of meat. ***

KING

Any trouble getting it? ***

MINION

(Smiling; his mouth is bloody.)

None at all.

The Minion assists the King as he dons his new garb.

KING

(To The Minion)

How do I look?

MINION

Might I suggest you add this?

The Minion places the Viking helmet atop the King's crown.

KING

Well?

MINION

Hmm . . . Almost, almost . . . I think we should add this, too. It was part of the accessory kit.

The Minion gives the hunk of meat to the King.

KING

And now?

MINION

You. Look. AMAZING.

KING

Tulip?

TULIP

Um -

KING

Stop scowling. How do I look?

TULIP

Very handsome, Sire.

KING

And?

TULIP

Powerful.

KING

And?

TULIP

High-brow.

The King is smitten.

MINION

Speaking of high-brow, Sire, I ran into Mr. And Mrs. Chainsaw while I was out.

KING

Oh God.

MINION

Needless to say, they are not happy with the fact that the young Chainsaw has been deployed. They threatened to withdraw their funding for the second gold statue.

KING

What? No! That's not fair! Chainsaw was very rude to me. I had to deploy him. He didn't respect my art. He spilled my coffee! The Chainsaw Foundation can't just un-fund my statue because I fired their grandson and sent him to war.

MINION

Unfortunately, Sire, they can. And they intend to do so, unless Chainsaw is removed from active duty and reinstated in the role of Torvald.

KING

No.

MINION

While I understand your resistance to the idea, I think it might be a smart move. Chainsaw was an adequate Torvald, and at this point, we have no other actors to fill the role. If Chainsaw is allowed back into the play, you will have a Torvald, and you will have a new gold statue of yourself.

The King considers the proposition for a moment.

KING

You're sure I look powerful and sophisticated in this?

MINION

Absolutely, Sire.

KING

Find Chainsaw. Inform him that I am reinstating him in the role of Torvald. Alert his whiney grandparents too.

MINION

I will find Chainsaw and the whiney grandparents immediately.

The Minion scurries offstage.

KING

Tulip, we're back in business. Let's deal with those breasts now.

Scene 5 ***

Tulip and Bermuda Grass' bed chambers. ***

Bermuda Grass builds a makeshift sugar bomb: she scrapes the frosting out of Twinkies, punctures a cold compress and dumps its contents into a beaker, crunches a bag of Doritos, then mixes the tiny pieces in with the frosting and cold compress. She is probably wearing safety goggles. It's all very scientific. She might read a book titled *Bangin BOMBS 101*. ***

Tulip furiously rides the exercise-bike. She is totally oblivious to the fact that someone is building a bomb beside her. Likewise, Bermuda Grass is totally oblivious to the fact that someone is having a nervous breakdown on an exercise bike. ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***

Hey, so, is there a freezer anywhere in this place? ***

TULIP ***

There's a miniature refrigerator in the bathroom. The Chamber-Minion keeps my Botox in it. I have four wrinkles. ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***

Cool, cool. Good to know. And, uh, there wouldn't happen to be a digital scale or balance lying around here would there? ***

TULIP ***

The Chamber-Minion brings a scale with her on Mondays for my weekly weigh ins. Last Monday I was .7 pounds too heavy. The King was very mad. ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***

Monday. Alright. No worries. I'll eye it for now. I also need to find some sort of electrical charge. I was just gonna' shoot the King and make a quick escape, but now that I've scoped out the guard situation and interacted with all the people in this place, I realize that I'm just gonna' have to build a bomb and blow the entire kingdom to shit. Maybe I can find some stuff to use on my evening jog. Are you done with that water bottle? ***

TULIP ***

Evening jogs are a great example of a steady exercise regimen. ***

	BERMUDA GRASS	***
	(Taking Tulip's water bottle)	***
Alright.		***
	Bermuda Grass dumps her ingredients into the water bottle and vigorously shakes it.	***
	TULIP	***
Water can be a helpful tool for weight loss. It is 100% calorie-free, helps you burn more calories, and may even suppress your appetite if consumed before meals.		***
	BERMUDA GRASS	***
What the hell is wrong with you?		***
	TULIP	***
Who? Me?		***
	BERMUDA GRASS	***
Yes.		***
	TULIP	***
Oh. I'm fine, thank you. My breasts are horrible though. The King is replacing them with balloons. But that's alright. Balloons are very nice. They're festive.		***
	BERMUDA GRASS	***
Your tits look fine to me.		***
	TULIP	***
Oh, but they're not. Fine. They're tiny. Too tiny. And I don't know what to do about it. I've tried doing push-ups, to build muscle in my chest. But the King said the push-ups made me look manly and muscular. So then I tried doubling my lettuce intake, in hopes of gaining weight in my breasts. That didn't work either. The King said the extra 7/10th's of a pound I gained went straight to my gut. I just need to figure out how to have my breasts plump, but the rest of my body slim.		***
	(Stops pedaling.)	***
Bermuda Grass?		***
	BERMUDA GRASS	***
Yeah . . .		***
	TULIP	***
Do you ever feel like you're cycling up a giant hill?		***

BERMUDA GRASS ***
I think there's a knob on the bike to adjust that. ***

TULIP ***
No, I mean, in life, I guess. ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***
Yeah. Constantly. Being alive sucks. ***

TULIP ***
I think I'm starting to go insane. Last night, I had a dream that I quit the play, beat the King to a bloody pulp with the *Bangin Bods* book, then escaped the kingdom on my exercise-bike. I know I'm unraveling because it wasn't even a nightmare. I woke up feeling relieved that I didn't have to be a Nora anymore. Do you like *A Doll's House*? ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***
No. I fucking hate it. ***

TULIP ***
Me too. ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***
Really. ***

TULIP ***
Oh, yes. I've never said it aloud before. Who would I say it to? The King? The Minion? The Chamber-Minion? No. But it's true. I fucking hate *A Doll's House*. May I have one of those? ***

(She takes one of Bermuda Grass' Twinkies)
I haven't eaten anything but lettuce in weeks. ***

BERMUDA GRASS ***
Um. Sure. Yeah, you can have one. ***

TULIP ***
Thank you. ***

Tulip looks at the Twinkie for a long moment, debating whether she dare take a bite. ***

She takes a deep breath. ***

And takes a bite. ***

TULIP (cont'd)	***
Oh my goodness. This is really, really good.	***
BERMUDA GRASS	***
Yeah, they're alright.	***
TULIP	***
(Another bite)	***
Wow.	***
(Another bite)	***
Mmmmmm.	***
(Another bite)	***
Oh, this is scrumptious!	***
(She swallows)	***
Did you know, Bermuda Grass, that until just now I had never tasted sugar?	***
BERMUDA GRASS	***
What about the macaroons you eat in rehearsal? Those are sugary.	***
TULIP	***
Those are lettuce. Wrapped in a ball. And dyed pink. Noras don't eat sugar.	***
(A beat.)	***
Noras don't eat sugar.	***
(A beat.)	***
Ohhhhhh, I really shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have eaten that. Why did I eat that? That was stupid of me. Stupid, stupid, stupid.	*** ***
BERMUDA GRASS	***
Whoa. Calm.	***
TULIP	***
I'm on the no carb no fat <i>no sugar</i> skinny skinny beach body diet. I'm not allowed to eat sugar. Ohhhh. What am I going to do?	*** ***
Tulip frantically flips through the Bangin Bods book. She finds the page she is looking for.	*** ***

	TULIP (cont'd)	***
Yes. That's it. That's the solution.		***
	(Reading aloud to herself)	***
Insert fingers - up to three may be used, but two is generally the most comfortable - into the throat . . . Trigger gag reflex . . . Toilet or vomit pail . . . Air-freshener and breath freshener recommended after.		***
	Tulip takes one of Bermuda Grass' scientific beakers or containers or whatever they're called. She hunches over it. She holds up her fingers. Should she use two or three?	***
	She decides on three.	***
	She takes a deep breath.	***
	Shoves her fingers down her throat. And vomits.	***
	BERMUDA GRASS	***
Whoa. Okay. Stop. Please. That's fucking gross.		***
	TULIP (Wailing/Whimpering)	***
Uuuuuuhhhhhhh.		***
	The Chamber-Minion enters, carrying a silver dinner tray.	***
	MINION	***
Good evening, Madam. I've brought your dinner. Yummy -		***
	(Seeing the half-eaten Twinkie & Tulip over the vomit pail)	***
Madam. What is that?		***
	TULIP	***
I - it -		***
	MINION	***
<i>What is that?</i>		***
	TULIP	***
It's a Twinkie!		***
	MINION	***
No! Madam!		***

	TULIP	***
I ate a Twinkie.		***
	MINION	***
Madam! No!		***
	TULIP	***
Please don't tell the King. Please. I didn't mean to. I don't know what came over me. I was just so - I'm going to throw it up right now. It'll be like it didn't happen.		***
	MINION	***
But it did happen, Madam. I'm afraid I'll have to report it.		***
	TULIP	***
No. Please -		***
	MINION	***
You know the rules. No dinner tonight. And three laps around the perimeter every night for the next two weeks.		***
	TULIP	***
For the next - Please don't make me. I've never been out there. What if I - I'll do anything. I'll - Please.		***
	MINION	***
I'm just following protocol. It's procedure. You know that. Run your laps. When you come back, we'll do your nightly regimen, and I'll draft the report to give to the King first thing in the morning.		***
	TULIP	***
He'll - I'll -		***
	MINION	***
Go. Now.		***
	Stunned, Tulip walks towards the exit.	***
	BERMUDA GRASS	***
	(To Tulip)	***
Tulip.		***
	(Giving Tulip the camouflage cape)	***
Take this.		***

Tulip dons the cape and exits. ***

MINION ***

(To Bermuda Grass) ***

Would you care for dinner this evening? ***

Scene 6

Dress rehearsal. Tulip's breasts are balloons. She is dirty and disheveled from two weeks of nightly runs around the perimeter. ***

The King sits in his director's chair. The Minion sits beside him. The King is now clad in a Roman God costume. Elements of his Viking costume might remain as well. He is in foul spirits. ***

Chainsaw and Tulip are onstage. Chainsaw has suffered a serious head wound. There is a massive gash in his stomach. He is not well. ***

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Wretched woman - what have you done!

TULIP/NORA

Let me go - you shall not save me! You shall not take my guilt upon yourself!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

I don't want any melodramatic airs. Here you shall stay and give an account of yourself. Do you understand what you have done?

TULIP/NORA

Yes, now I begin fully to understand it. ***

CHAINSAW/TORVALD ***

You have destroyed my whole happiness. You have ruined my future. And all this brought upon me by an unprincipled woman! The matter must be hushed up, cost what it may. As for you and me, we must make no outward change in our - ***

Chainsaw faints. ***

	KING	***
	(To Tulip)	***
Don't break!		***
	A long goad emerges from offstage.	***
	It prods Chainsaw.	***
	He jolts back to action.	***
	CHAINSAW/TORVALD	***
Henceforward there can be no question of happiness, but merely of saving the ruins, the shreds, the show.		***
	A doorbell rings.	***
	CHAINSAW/TORVALD (cont'd)	***
What's that? So late! Can it be the worst? Can he -		***
	Bermuda Grass enters, as Ellen, carrying a letter.	***
	BERMUDA GRASS/ELLEN	***
Here is a letter for you, ma'am.		
	Chainsaw snatches the letter and shoos Bermuda Grass offstage.	
	CHAINSAW/TORVALD	
Give it to me. Yes, from him. You shall not have it. I shall read it.		***
	Chainsaw hastily tears the letter open, reads a few lines, looks at an enclosure, and with a cry of joy says:	
	CHAINSAW/TORVALD (cont'd)	
Nora! Oh! I am saved! Nora, I am saved! Look here - he sends you back your promissory note. Oh, Nora, Nora - it's over, all over! I have forgiven everything. I should be no true man if your womanly helplessness did not make you doubly dear in my eyes. I forgive you Nora. I swear I forgive you.		***

	TULIP/NORA	
I thank you for your forgiveness.		
	Tulip exits.	

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

No, stay! What are you going to do?

TULIP/NORA

To take off my dress.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Yes, do -

Chainsaw faints again.

The goad re-emerges.

It prods. Nothing.

It prods again. Nothing.

It prods a third time. Still nothing.

KING

Chainsaw! Chainsaw, wake up! Oh, for the love of God!

The Minion runs onstage, goad in hand.

TULIP

Perhaps we should -

KING

You look like shit.

(To the Minion)

Clean him up. There appears to be some intestinal seepage.

The Minion adjusts Chainsaw's intestines.

MINION

They won't stay put! They keep falling out.

KING

Just shove them back in there. Use some tape or something. CHAINSAW, your shenanigans are ruining the dress rehearsal!

(To Bermuda Grass)

Your fat ass is also ruining the dress rehearsal. I could see it sticking out of the curtain. Tuck it in, you fatty, Tuck it in.

TULIP

Mr. Director, I do not think that Chainsaw is well. I think we should -

KING

You're not well! This is what eating a Twinkie two weeks ago does to you!

BERMUDA GRASS

She threw most of it up right after. It was disgusting.

KING

TUCK IN, DAMN YOU!

Chainsaw suddenly comes to.

KING (cont'd)

Ah! Perfect timing! We're just finishing up notes. Chainsaw. CHAINSAW, are you paying attention? I need you to work on enunciating. Diction, diction, diction. The words have no meaning if we can't understand them.

CHAINSAW

Just kill me.

KING

Now. All of you take a moment - get offstage, Bitch Grass! - and process everything I've just said . . . And . . . Breath in . . . Great - and Nora is just about to leave to take off her dress - Tulip, give him the cue; say the -

TULIP

I'm going to take off my dress.

Tulip exits.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Yes, do dear. Try to calm down, and recover your balance, my sacred little song-bird. There is something indescribably sweet and soothing to a man in having forgiven his wife. She becomes his property in a double sense. That is what you shall henceforth be to me, my bewildered, helpless darling.

Tulip re-enters, wearing a super slutty outfit.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD (cont'd)

Why, what's this?

TULIP/NORA

I was a very naughty Nora, and I need to be punished. I'm wearing your most favoritest outfit, but I need my strong Torvy to help me with the top. My boobses are just too big!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

I will help you with your boobses! But first, I'm going to teach you a lesson for being such a naughty Nora.

Chainsaw removes a whip and/or various S&M toys.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD (cont'd)

Play-time is over; now comes the time for education!

TULIP/NORA

Educate me! Yes, yes! I'm just a little dolly living in a dollzes house.

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

You are my dolly. In my dollses house.

TULIP/NORA

Oh, Torvy, you are so strong, and handsome, and powerful, and high-brow! Guide me, Torvy!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Oh, I will guide you; and I will ride you!

TULIP/NORA

Ride me! Yes! Hooray!

CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Call me King!

TULIP/NORA

Oh Kingy, King, King!

The lights fade as Chainsaw bangs Tulip.

Black-out. The Minion claps enthusiastically.

Lights up.

MINION

Bravo! Bravo!

The King is silent. He takes a long sip of his coffee.
Chainsaw collapses.

KING
Great.

MINION
Should I revive him, or . . .

KING
Let him sleep it off. Tulip. How did that feel?

TULIP
I think Chainsaw might be - ***

KING
We'll deal with him later. How did that feel?

TULIP
Um . . . Honestly, it felt, this is to say, the ending feels - ***

KING
The ending sucks. It's horrible, just horrible.

TULIP
Yes, it is. I know. I've been trying to -

KING
Your boobses are not too big for the top, like Nora says in the script. I just don't buy that Torvald would have to help Nora with her boobses. You are not in top form, Tulip. In fact, you are far from it. Right now, the ending is so terrible - I can't even begin to describe - how wrong it - you - are. ***

TULIP
You think the issue with the end of the play is my body? ***

KING
Your boobses, yes. ***

TULIP
The issue couldn't possibly be the fact that the writing in the end is horrible? "I'm in your favoritest outfit. I'm a dolly, living in a dollsses house." Dollses is not even proper English. ***

KING
Yes it is. Third person second plural possessive. I know grammar!

TULIP

I don't think you do. But that's beside the point. The end of the play is horrible because of the writing. It's just stuck on there, like someone tried to rewrite the actual ending. ***

KING

Well, that is just absurd. Clearly you -

TULIP

And the outfit? And the whip? It just doesn't feel right. The ending doesn't feel right. A lifetime of studying *A Doll's House*, and the ending has never made sense to me. Nothing makes sense to me anymore. ***

KING

(Strained)

Tulip, my sweet Tulip, trust me when I say that the ending of the play is 100% dramaturgically sound. Do you not trust the most genius playwright ever? ***

TULIP

But Ibsen is sort of the only playwright ever, isn't he? We don't have any other plays. ***

KING

Exactly. So stop doubting the one we have. ***

TULIP

I just think that Nora would react - ***

KING

What you are proposing makes no sense, dramaturgically. Clearly, two weeks of running around the perimeter was not enough for all the rules and regulations of being a Nora to sink in. Now. I've warned you about the dangers of unnecessary thinking. I have also warned you about the size of your breasts. I have warned you about these things time and time again, yet you repeatedly irk me with your tiny breasts and your incessant inquisitiveness - inquisitioness - inquisitive - ***

BERMUDA GRASS

Inquisitiveness.

KING

Fired!

MINION

Mr. Director - ***

Fired, fired, fired!	KING	***
Whatever.	BERMUDA GRASS	*** ***
	The following monologue builds into a full-on temper tantrum.	*** ***
AGGGH! I am so sick of - SO SICK OF - Get the fuck out, you, you hick! I ought to gouge out your eyeballs! No! I ought to have someone else gouge out your eyeballs! WHATEVER! I'm the King. I'm the king, damnit! I'm the King, King, Kingy-King-King, and my Kingdom is the most high-brow and powerful in the world!	KING	*** *** *** *** ***
	Sergeant Frank, Private Bench Press, and Meat Flap come rushing into the theatre with weapons drawn.	
It's alright. He's just . . .	MINION	
Whatever! Whatever! WHATEVER! I thought I told you to reapply your lipstick, Tulip. You and your stupid, tiny boobs! Your breasts are tiny, Tulip! Tiny, tiny boobs! AGH! AGGGGH!	KING (Still in tantrum mode)	*** *** *** *** ***
Should we . . .	TULIP (To the Minion)	
He'll tire himself out in a moment.	MINION	
Tiny boobs. Dumb Fat- Bush. Stupid Dump Truck. Fat-Grass. Whatever. Whatever.	KING (Winding down)	*** *** ***
	The Minion sits next to the King. He softly hums "Calm Like a Ducky" until the King is subdued. This can take several beats.	*** *** ***
	Then:	***

KING (cont'd)

I want you to kill her. The fat one. I want her dead.

TULIP

What?

MINION

I think it's best you go to your chambers.

TULIP

But he just -

MINION

Go. Now.

Tulip looks at the King. She opens her mouth to speak.
Then thinks better of it. She exits.

MINION (cont'd)

Sire, you must careful about who you -

KING

I don't care. Get rid of the fat-ass. Now.

MINION

And Tulip?

KING

Tulip is the most defective Nora we've had since the Queen. Her breasts are too small. And there's something off about her. She's too . . . She's always. Ugh. I hate her. I loathe her entirely.

MINION

Very well then. I'll take care of her too.

The Minion stands. He makes to leave.

Before he exits:

KING

No, wait . . . Don't - don't kill her . . . I don't want . . . I don't know. There's something about her that just . . . infuriates me. Yet simultaneously . . . I just don't want to mess with bringing in a new Nora right now. It's too much of a hassle.

MINION

I understand. I'll get rid of the fat one, and schedule an emergency audition for the Maid-Servant role. ***

KING

No. No audition. I'm sick of using the poor. They're all disgusting. I want you to play the Maid-Servant again.

MINION

But, Sire, I already put in my time as Ellen the Maid-Servant. ***

KING

And now you'll be putting in even more time as Ellen the Maid-Servant. ***

MINION

Surely another person from the other side would be willing to -

KING

I've just told you that I don't want to use someone from the other side of the wall. The poor are disgusting. ***

MINION

With all due respect, Sire, *I* am from the other side of the wall. I, too, was poor before you brought me into the kingdom to act in the play.

KING

Yes, and I was originally very disgusted by you.

MINION

And now? ***

KING

Now I don't mind you so much. You have been successfully rehabilitated. Use the costume you wear as Chamber-Minion for the Ellen, the Maid-Servant costume. They're similar. ***

MINION

Am I expected to continue performing Minion and Chamber-Minion duties, in addition to playing Ellen, the Maid-Servant?

KING

Yes. Duh.

MINION

How much additional compensation will I be receiving? ***

KING
None. Duh. ***

MINION
So I'm being demoted.

KING
Yes . . . Duh. ***

MINION
Sire, I -

KING
Go kill Bermuda Grass. Now. ***

(To the Royal Army)
Sergeant Frank, I'd like to go to my chambers now. I need a nap. ***

Sergeant Frank, Private Bench Press, and Meat Flap pick up the King. ***

KING (cont'd)
(To the Minion)
I want a new costume for opening night tomorrow. I would like to wear a grill. ***

MINION
A grill?

KING
Yes. A gold one. Like the rappers wear. I want to be a rap god. Text me after you've disposed of the cadaver.

MINION
Of course, Sire. ***

Sergeant Frank, Private Bench Press, and Meat Flap carry the King offstage. ***

The Minion looks at Chainsaw's dead body and the mess its created. He sighs. ***

Scene 7

Tulip and Bermuda Grass' bed chamber. Bermuda Grass' bomb(s) are now completed. She packs them away in a duffel bag.

BERMUDA GRASS

I'm gonna' kill him. I'm gonna' kill him so fucking much. Everyone in here. Dead. Fucking dead. Oh my God, I am sick of this thing.

(Taking off her dress)

Stupid. Fat. Stupid. Ugh.

Bermuda Grass is now disrobed, revealing a fat-suit. She begins to remove the fat-suit.

BERMUDA GRASS (cont'd)

This thing does not smell good.

Tulip enters.

TULIP

Bermuda Grass! The King just ordered the Minion to -

(Seeing Bermuda Grass in the fat-suit)

I . . . You're - You've . . .

BERMUDA GRASS

Been wearing a fat-suit. Yeah.

TULIP

You . . . Why?

BERMUDA GRASS

To ward off gross sexual advances from the King. And to hide this.

From within one of the fat rolls in her suit, Bermuda Grass removes an AK - 47.

BERMUDA GRASS (cont'd)

Don't scream. I'll shoot you in the face if you scream.

TULIP

Why do you have that?

BERMUDA GRASS

I already told you. I'm going to kill the King and blow the entire kingdom to shit.

TULIP

No, but, that was a joke. Remember? You told me a joke, because we're friends, and friends tell jokes, and I thought it was a very funny joke. And then I offered to tell you a joke in return, but you didn't want to - Are you an insurgent?

BERMUDA GRASS

Yup.

TULIP

Oh dear . . . So, you were curious about the tunnels, then, because -

BERMUDA GRASS

Because I was going to shoot the King on opening night, set off a shit ton of bombs, and flee through the tunnels. Now I'm having to improvise a little. So uh. Let's go. Show me where they are.

TULIP

You were going to kill me?

(Realizing)

Are you still going to kill me?

BERMUDA GRASS

Only if you rat me out and/or refuse to show me where the tunnels are.

The Minion enters with a gun drawn.

MINION

Bermuda Grass! The King sent me here to - Oh, what the hell is this?

TULIP

She's an insurgent!

MINION

(To Bermuda Grass)

Drop your weapon.

BERMUDA GRASS

No. You drop your weapon.

MINION

This entire ordeal will be much faster if you just cooperate.

BERMUDA GRASS

This entire ordeal will be much faster if I kill you and go on my merry way.

TULIP

Please don't kill each other. You're my only friends.

MINION

We're not friends.

BERMUDA GRASS

We're not friends.

MINION

(To Bermuda Grass)

I would advise against shooting me. Three royal army members are just outside the door. You'll be dead within seconds of shooting me.

BERMUDA GRASS

Well, you're going to kill me anyway, so if I'm gonna' die, I mine as well kill you first.

MINION

I was sent here to kill you. That doesn't mean I was actually going to do it. Now. If you'll just lower your weapon, I have a bit of information you might like to hear. Information that might be useful to your mission. Based upon the bag of bombs you're holding, I assume you have a mission. Trust me. It would behoove you to hear what I have to say.

A beat.

Bermuda Grass places her weapon on the ground and slides it to the Minion.

MINION (cont'd)

Thank you. Now I'm just going to need the knives from your cankles, the nunchucks from your under-boob, and the hatchet from your fupa. Let's go. Hand them over.

BERMUDA GRASS

Ugggghhhh.

Bermuda Grass relinquishes the weapons.

Still aiming the gun at Bermuda Grass, the Minion removes a thumb drive from his Minion belt pack. He hands it to the sound board op.

MINION

Track four.

The sound board op plays track four. It is two gun-shots, followed by a woman's scream.

The Minion puts away his gun. He sits. Fiddles with his nails or something.

BERMUDA GRASS

What the shit is going on.

MINION

The King needs to hear the gunshots to believe I actually killed you. Oh dear. I somehow managed to break a nail during all of that. I'll have to see if Patrice is in tomorrow. I think she's on vacation. Oh well.

(Looking up from his nails)

Sit. Let's talk. What's your plan for the bombs and all the weapons? And why in God's name are you wearing all that blubber? It smells. Eck.

BERMUDA GRASS

I'm blowing up the kingdom - and all the clowns in it - and getting the fuck out.

MINION

Exciting. Well. You certainly aren't alone in wanting The King dead. Decades of servitude to that awful man - dodging grenades to get his coffee, singing about cows and ducks when he's upset, whacking people with a bat to steal costumes for him - all of that, and I ultimately end up right back where I started. As Ellen, the Maid-Servant. Believe me, I would love to see him dead, but unfortunately, you'll never pull it off. He's surrounded by guards. Even now, in the bath-tub, he's bathing with a member of the Royal Army. Sergeant Frank. His bath buddy. Tulip, are you alright over there? You're being all fidgety and weird.

TULIP

Do you think the King was right, about my proposal not making sense dramaturgically?

BERMUDA GRASS

Of course that's what you're thinking about.

MINION

Darling, the King doesn't even know what "dramaturgically" means. No one does. Everyone is always saying it, but no one knows what it means. Besides. You were right about the ending of the play. The King redacted it.

TULIP

What?

MINION

In the real version of *A Doll's House*, Nora leaves Torvald in the end.

TULIP

I don't understand. Why would he change that?

MINION

Yeah, so here's the thing: when the King first took power, he got really obsessed with the "finer things in life," you know, all the "high culture" stuff, like bougy dinners and fancy art, and "the theatre." He got super into theatre. So he had one constructed. Out of gold. And he decided to produce the only play that survived, A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen. The King cast a beautiful woman from this called Broadway - not sure if you know it - as Nora. He became so enamored with her that he forced her to marry him and become Queen. On opening night of his first ever production, the King finished reading the play; and he hated Ibsen's ending. He just couldn't deal with the idea of Nora leaving Torvald. So he redacted it on the fly. Made it all [gesture] and [gesture]. The Queen hated it. She refused to act in it, quit the production, and left the kingdom. She gave up her status as Queen to live with the poor on the other side of the wall. The King was crushed, and he obviously couldn't have the rest of the world know what really happened, right? So he invented the insurgents. Crazy, huh? Yeah, he said they savagely murdered the Queen and he waged a fake war against them. Real insurgents only rose up because someone had to stop the King from killing innocent people. They didn't exist before he invented them. It's insane.

TULIP

What happened to the Queen after she left?

MINION

No one knows. But the King has never found an adequate Nora to replace her. He's always dissatisfied. He's ordered me to kill 440 Noras. But I've never killed a single one. Murder requires a lot of effort, and it's very messy. The only ones the King hasn't ordered me to kill have you been the Queen and you, Tulip.

BERMUDA GRASS

What about that HFRN shit with the swans and the puppies?

MINION

Also a lie. Totally made up.

BERMUDA GRASS

God, this kingdom is bullshit.

TULIP

I agree with you.

BERMUDA GRASS

What.

TULIP

This kingdom is bullshit. I'd started to think that I was just a defective Nora. But now I'm fairly certain that it's the kingdom itself that is defective. Everyone in here is focused on the dumbest things. Like my breasts. Why is everyone so concerned with my breasts? They are ultimately small and unimportant in the grand scheme of things.

BERMUDA GRASS

Yeah. They are.

TULIP

My entire life has been dictated by someone else. I don't know what I am anymore. But I know I'm not this.

(She takes off the Nora wig.)

And I have to believe that the world can be a better place. I think about the King being murdered and this kingdom being wiped off the face of the earth . . . And it's not entirely bad. I think about the world out there, and I think of the world in here, and . . . You're right. Things have to change.

Scene 8

Opening night.

House lights are up. The stage is set for the top of *A Doll's House*. The King sits in the front row of the audience. He has amalgamated all of his costumes into one giant, fucking ridiculous costume: Director, King, Roman God, Viking, Rap God.

Sergeant Frank, Private Bench Press, and Meat Flap sit in the audience as well. They talk amongst themselves as they wait for the show to begin.

House lights go to half. A recorded pre-show announcement is played through the speakers. It is the same announcement that we use at the beginning of the actual play, but with the added line: *You may now don your costume pieces.*

After the pre-show announcement, house lights go out, and stage lights fade to black.

A beat.

Lights up to reveal Tulip, as Nora, wrapping the stack of presents, adding bows and ribbons, humming gaily. The Minion, as Ellen, the Maid-Servant, decorates the Christmas tree.

TULIP/NORA

Decorate the Christmas tree carefully, Ellen. I can't wait for the children to see it this evening, when it's lighted up.

MINION/MAID-SERVANT

Yes ma'am.

Tulip goes on tip-toe to the door upstage. She listens.

TULIP/NORA

Yes, he is at home.

Tulip begins to hum again.

She looks to the door.

Nothing.

TULIP/NORA (cont'd)
(Louder)

Yes, he is at home!

Silence.

TULIP/NORA (cont'd)
(Louder still)

YES, HE IS AT HOME!

From the audience, the King frantically motions for the Minion to do something about the predicament.

The Minion scurries upstage. He opens the door and looks behind it.

MINION (OFF)

Shit.

The Minion runs downstage and grabs a defibrillator. He goes behind the door.

MINION (OFF) (cont'd)

Clear!

Sounds of Chainsaw being shocked.

MEAT FLAP

(Whispering to Sergeant Frank)

Dude, is this supposed to happen?

MINION (OFF)

Come on! Come on, Chainsaw!

SERGEANT FRANK

I think it might be avant garde or something.

MINION

Clear!

Shock.

BENCH PRESS

Hey, do you guys wanna grab a beer after the show?

Sounds of flat-lining from behind the door.

KING

Oh, this is bad. Oh, goddamnit.

A pause.

Sounds of the Minion scrambling around behind the door.

A moment later, the door opens. Chainsaw is wheeled into the room on an upright dolly, a pair of sunglasses over his eyes.

The Minion wheels Chainsaw around the stage, moving his limbs as necessary to perform the scene. He might mouth Chainsaw's lines (like a ventriloquist), or say nothing and simply move Chainsaw's body to communicate the lines (like a puppeteer).

MINION/CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

BENCH PRESS

Is that guy dead?

Chainsaw's small intestine falls out.

MEAT FLAP

Yeah, he's definitely dead.

TULIP/NORA

Why, Torvald, surely we can afford to launch out a little now. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch.

MINION/CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Come come; we can't afford to squander money. There's a whole quarter before my first salary is -

The Minion loses control of the dolly. Chainsaw crashes to the ground.

KING

I hate everything.

(Shouting at the actors)

Don't just stand there; pick him back up! Put his guts back in!

Tulip and the Minion struggle to put Chainsaw back on the dolly as they perform the scene. Shit is bad - really, really bad.

MINION/CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Nora, hasn't the little sweet-tooth been playing pranks today?

TULIP/NORA

No, how can you think such a thing!

MINION/CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Didn't she just look in at the confectioner's?

TULIP/NORA

No, Torvald, really -

MINION/CHAINSAW/TORVALD

Hasn't she even nibbled a macaroon or two?

TULIP/NORA

No Torvald; indeed, indeed!

KING

Oh, for fucksake! Just . . . I don't know . . . CHAINSAW, you are ruining my show!

(Shouting at someone in the audience)

Do you see, Mr. And Mrs. Chainsaw, how awful he is?! Now do you understand why I deployed him?! AGH!

(To Tulip and the Minion)

Just . . . Fuck! . . . FUCK! . . . I don't . . . Just skip ahead to the end! Just - Oh, forget it - I don't even - I'm coming in, damn it! I'M COMING IN!

The King charges the stage. He rips the Torvald costume from Chainsaw's lifeless body and puts the costume on over his own costumes.

MEAT FLAP

This shit is weird, man.

SERGEANT FRANK

Yeah . . .

KING

(To Meat Flap, Bench Press, and Frank)

Will you shut up, over there?! It's very rude to talk during a performance! You know better than that, Sergeant Frank!

(To the Minion)

What are you staring at? Get him offstage, you idiot! He's stealing focus!

The Minion drags Chainsaw offstage.

KING (cont'd)

(Shouting at the board-op)

We're skipping to the end! Yoo-hoo! Yes, you, up there! We're skipping to the - We need lights for the -

(The lights shift to the "end of play look.")

Dumb-ass.

(The King positions himself in a Torvaldy stance.)

(MORE)

KING (cont'd)

Um, let's see . . . Where should I . . .

(To Tulip)

I'm Torvald now! Get in character!

(As Torvald)

I should be no true man if your womanly helplessness was not super hot in my eyes. Now, uh, go put on my favoritest outfit so I can teach you a lesson for being so stupid or whatever.

TULIP/NORA

Of course, Torvald.

Tulip exits.

KING/TORVALD

(Calling offstage)

There's something very sexy about all this, Nora, about the idea of me forgiving you and teaching you a lesson or whatever. Now get out here in that outfit I like so I can bang you into submission!

Tulip steps onstage, menacingly holding a Botox injector and the *Bangin Bods* book.

KING/TORVALD (cont'd)

Nora - you haven't changed - that's not my -

(As the King)

What the fuck are you doing?

TULIP

This kingdom has been nothing but a play room. And all the Noras your playthings. It's gone on long enough.

Throughout the following, all the Noras & Ex-Noras trickle onto the stage. Some Noras are young; some are old. They are all different shapes, colors, and sizes - but they all wear the same Nora costume; and they all brandish the "weapons" with which they have been tortured over the years (curling irons, eyelash curlers, Botox injectors, cucumbers, balloons, ointments, creams, wax strips, etc.).

SUNFLOWER and DAFFODIL step onstage.

KING

What is this shit?! What IS this shit?! Is that -

POPPY steps onstage.

KING (cont'd)

You - you're supposed to be dead.

BEGONIA steps onstage.

KING (cont'd)

And so are you.

SNAPDRAGON and PETUNIA step onstage.

KING (cont'd)

And you, and you, and -

Bermuda Grass steps onstage.

KING (cont'd)

And you. You - have a smokin' hot bod. I didn't realize you were so hot, Sexy Grass.

BERMUDA GRASS

It's Bermuda Grass. You revolting, disgusting -

TULIP

This charade has gone on long enough, Sire. I think it's time you come clean about the history of this kingdom.

KING

You have a duty towards this production, towards this kingdom, towards this King!

TULIP

I have other duties equally sacred.

DAHLIA and BABY'S BREATH step out.

KING

There's more of you? Great.

(To Tulip)

What the fuck are you talking about?

TULIP

Duties towards myself.

KING

Above all else you are a Nora!

ALL OF THE NORAS should be onstage, brandishing their weapons.

TULIP

That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else, I am a human being, just as much as you are - or at least that I should try to become one. I know that most people in this kingdom agree with you, and that it says so in books; but henceforth I can't be satisfied with what most people say, or what is written in books. Because none of it is true.

LAVENDER, the Ex-Queen and original Nora, steps onto the stage.

LAVENDER

Ain't that right, Kingy King King?

KING

Lavender? Is that . . . Is that you? God, you did not age well. Your breasts, they've gotten all -

LAVENDER

You're a toad.

SERGEANT FRANK

I have no idea what's going on anymore.

BENCH PRESS

Yeah, me either.

MEAT FLAP

Nope.

LAVENDER

Why don't you tell everyone the truth about your kingy king kingdom, Sire?

I - Guards! GUARDS!

KING

Hey, that's us.

BENCH PRESS

Dude, this is super meta.

MEAT FLAP

Suuuuper meta.

SERGEANT FRANK

What? No! It's not meta! It's - they're - Agh!

KING

The King attempts to dash. Sunflower steps in front of him.

Nope.

SUNFLOWER

The King attempts to dash in another direction.

Not this way.

BEGONIA

The King tries another direction.

Fess up, Sire.

BABY'S BREATH

The King is surrounded by pissed-off Noras. It's terrifying.

Alright, alright. No need to . . . Just lower your . . . weapons? And we can . . .

KING

Noras are hissing and growling, closing in on King like a pack of wild animals.

Okay. Alright. I understand. The truth is . . .

KING (cont'd)

(Muttering inaudibly)

I'm a fraud. A total fraud. I'm not rich at all. I just sort of -

MINION

Speak up. They can't even hear you in the first row.

KING

I'm . . . I'm . . . I'm a fraud. I used to be a member of the poor. I'm not old money, like the Chainsaws. I'm . . . new money. All the culture and couture - it's not real. I used to be . . . an actor. Oh! I was auditioning for a role one day, wearing a crown, and the crown suited me so well that someone mistook me for a King. So I sort of just went with it. No one questioned me. And so now, here I am, the King.

BERMUDA GRASS

Oh, what the fuck.

LAVENDER

That makes a lot of sense. But I was actually referring to the fact that you redacted the end of A Doll's House, staged an abduction/murder, and waged a fake war against a group of non-existent insurgents. Hello, everyone. I'm Lavender. The Ex-Queen and original Nora.

A GIGANTIC HUGE EXPLOSION IS HEARD. It is ridiculously huge. The biggest explosion EVER.

BERMUDA GRASS

Fuck yes! This kingdom is GONE, bitches! GONE!

KING

No!!!! NOOOO!

All the Noras and Ex-Noras rush the King. The King screams and wails as the Noras inject him with Botox, wax his upper-lip, force feed him cucumbers, etc. etc. The Noras should feel free to ad-lib lines as necessary.

MEAT FLAP

Guys, I think maybe this isn't meta . . .

KING

Oh my God! My face! My face! It burns!

BABY'S BREATH

It's Retinol, you whiney bitch!

BENCH PRESS

Yeah, I think it might be for real.

MINION
(Dumping coffee in the King's face)

Here's your coffee!

AGHHHH!
KING

SERGEANT FRANK
Yeah. It's definitely for real.

KING
(To the Royal Army)
Help me! Do something! Do something!

The guards look at each other.

BENCH PRESS
He's kind of an ass-hole.

KING
No! No! Not the balloons!

SERGEANT FRANK
And he's a terrible bath buddy. He always hogs the rubber ducky.

KING
(Being waxed or tweezed)
No, no, no, no, NO!

MEAT FLAP
Guys wanna go grab that beer?

Bench Press, Meat Flap, and Sergeant Frank slip out of the theatre.

KING
What! No! Where are you going?! Get back here you foofy ninny-pusses! GET BACK HERE! AGH! AGGGHHH!

The Noras have overtaken the King. Tulip whacks him over the head. He crumples, knocked-out. The Noras use feather boas or pretty pink ribbon to tie up the King.

They step back and look at him, shocked by their success.

BERMUDA GRASS

Not gonna' lie. I didn't really expect this to work. I dunno that it makes sense dramaturgically.

A beat.

LAVENDER

He looks small, doesn't he?

Tulip picks up the King's crown.

Black-out.

TULIP

Tiny.

Epilogue

The King is chained to the exercise bike. He wears the slutty Nora outfit. He cycles, sobbing. He performs the entirety of *A Doll's House* while he rides. He does all the roles, alternating voices as he changes characters.

KING/NORA

Decorate the Christmas tree carefully, Ellen. I can't wait for the children to see it this evening, when it's lighted up.

MAID-SERVANT/KING

Yes ma'am.

KING/TORVALD

Is that my lark twittering there?

KING/NORA

Yes, it is!

KING/TORVALD

Is it the squirrel frisking around?

KING/NORA

Yes!

KING/TORVALD

When did the squirrel get home?

The house lights start to rise.

KING/NORA

Just this minute. Come here, Torvald, and see what I've been buying.

KING/TORVALD

Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

House at full. The King continues cycling and performing *A Doll's House* until the house has emptied.

EnD oF pLaY.