

10/26 Script

By

The THEA 228 Ensemble

ACT I

Mel's "Once Upon A Time"

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No.4, 1st movement, plays softly.

THE PROFESSOR enters with a bold tug on the door, in professorial attire: all tweedy and corduroy, argyle sweater vest and penny loafers, different argyle socks. Old man's hat and a plaid scarf, white oxford and tie with a full Windsor knot, and carrying a leather satchel. Like Joe Cruz from Philosophy, but each sartorial element is from a different day's outfit. Stands in front of a table, looks to audience, opens mouth to speak. Closes mouth. Tries again. Nope, not this time either. Plucks a pipe from his pocket, tamps down the tobacco, lights with a zippo. Also lights a candle or 5 on the table. Puffs. Absentmindedly puts pipe back in pocket.

Opens satchel, pulls an old, leather-bound book out. Takes book downstage, hold up to audience as if this holds all the answers they have come looking for. Caresses the book. Holds as if to open its pages, but instead unzips the books revealing an iPad inside. Winks at audience -- Ha, tricked you! Drops case to floor, pats pockets looking for something, pulls a silver flask from interior breast pocket, blushes and looks guiltily at audience, tucks that back away out of sight. Exterior breast pocket has what he's looking for, and old leather glasses case. Opens it and -- Ha! Got you again! -- pulls out a stylus. Taps and slides on iPad, periodically looking at audience as if taking notes on them. Eventually finishes, sets iPad on table and plugs it into a cable.

THE PROFESSOR changes physicality as a young woman's voice, speaking frenetically, emerges from speakers on the table. THE PROFESSOR gesticulates, moves about, and makes big facial expressions to illustrate the story being told by the voice from the iPad. Or maybe he lips syncs it perfectly, this is his voice, telling the story. Perhaps he continues to hold the iPad, using it to show visual aids (portraits, maps, woodcuts, frescoes, timelines) to the audience. Or maybe instead of plugging the iPad in to the speakers, he strapped it to his head instead, like the ritual mask of some high-tech tribal shaman, and Mel's face appears on the iPad, telling the story, while THE PROFESSOR's body gesticulates like a marionette.

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THE PROFESSOR:

There is a novice mapmaker and one experienced map maker. They come from map maker school. The novice has the unconscious mummy type of people that were like the mummy monologue I did while spinning in circles. The experience mapmaker has people that are like Sara's "I am here". The people in maps rely on expert systems and trust power of the mapmaker and his world. The mapmakers are like Harold and the purple crayon. The people are dropping pins in their worlds in the mapmaker and after the world they know has excited it exists. The novice mapmakers people get away from him he can't control them and his reality. The map maker couldn't find the balance between balancing and not balancing, like mapping and not mapping, because like we talked, it is naïve to believe you can map everything. In the novice mapmaker's world there are "freaks" (like the schizophrenic person that I did in class with the hallucinations) that the experienced map maker tells him that is because even mapmakers must play by the rules and it's like "the only truly abnormal thing would be if nothing abnormal happened". Weird sort of perception of time is included in the play, at one point the mapmaker can pause time and freeze characters and he actually has this big clock that is a full body motion to rewinding a physical clock that rewinds the entire stage, the entire stage is rewinding before the audiences eyes. He tries desperately to impose order and gets angry at the experienced map maker and suddenly. The battle of the mapmakers breaks out. There's a beautiful narrative of a dreamy reality. The stage has just yards upon yards of cloth that is green and beautiful with lighting that is rich dark pinks and magentas on stage creating interesting shadows, and there is a dance, one of the dances that if you were 5 would have made you want to become a dancer. The audience is set up with this moving experience of being entertained and they are then exposed to moral questions. There is comedy also as the map makers play pranks on each other and do ridiculous things to one another, like remove the next scene and there is a frantic search by the mapmakers who has an office somewhere above the audience , or can be on stage for same but is projected up top by a downward omniscient view of the audience. Create conflicts like Euler's method, solve problems to discover they he cant solve the problem and he tries all these different ways and all these different maps, this mapmaker is working feverishly, he is in the feeding loop, just showing himself what he wants to see, in the process human psychological traits and states are elucidated and in his maps we highlight framing of mind that imposes on perception. Naïve

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE PROFESSOR: (cont'd)

beliefs can create connections like how people see trees and the murders connection, then. Then he has a breakdown as he asks what does it matter if he does or does not create maps? Terrible emotional breakdown and the characters in his play are stripped bare, very disorienting for the audience because there is a clear limbo, turns out it's the troop? The troop could also set it up and be weaved into the narrative. As the narrative is weaved into the troop.

When the story is complete THE PROFESSOR makes a final gesture of summary -- See, it's all perfectly clear to you now, right? -- and zips the iPad back into its case. Contemplates, but rejects, sneaking a quick nip from the flask. Instead removes pipe from pocket, puff puff.

Exit.

The Final Project

MASTER MAPMAKER addresses classroom full of NOVICE MAPMAKERS. Master stands on platform, novice sits at desk.

MASTER

(pompous as all get out)

Well, you've done it. You've reached the final year of your studies in map-making. Your time as novices here is drawing to a close. As you approach the day when you may finally be able to call yourselves map-makers, it is time to draw together all the things you've learned and create something that's entirely your own.

(pompous pause)

You will take on the challenge of making a map in the image of our own world, our own glorious cube of life, the perfect 6-sided shape of the cosmos. You will map a theoretical world, according to the standards and traditions that have been instilled in you at this illustrious institution. We expect you to fully commit to this world, to develop and build and synthesize something that epitomizes the fruits of your studies in map-making.

(remarkably pompous pause)

You will spend the year working on it; this is no small task. It will show us those among you who have the potential to be master mapmakers.

(surveys the class)

NOVICE MAPMAKER raises hand

(CONTINUED)

MASTER

Yes? Question?

NOVICE

Yes. Professor, how do we know that the world is a cube?

MASTER

What do you mean, "how do we know?" You went to grade school, you've been taught what the world looks like.

NOVICE

But we've seen theories that we could make maps in all kinds of shapes: spheres and toruses and mobius strips and all sorts of things, but we don't. We make cubes because our world is a cube. How do we know?

MASTER

There is a reason that those are theories instead of practices. They don't work. It was proved centuries ago that a map can only work, can only sustain life, can only have consistent physical rules, if it is cube shaped.

NOVICE

How was that proved?

MASTER

Mathematically. There are books and books of proofs for it.

NOVICE

Math has changed a lot since then. When was the last time someone checked them?

MASTER

The proofs are flawless. There is no need to check.

NOVICE

What about the corners and the edges? We assume that they are there, but I never remember hearing about what they look like.

MASTER

They are in the middle of the oceans. You've taken classes on this. You know why continents can't cross the edges. You know how the water works, with gravity. I don't understand what your question is.

NOVICE

I've crossed the ocean on a ship, and I don't remember ever coming to an edge.

(CONTINUED)

MASTER

That's because our ships are really good, and the edge is beneath the ocean. Did you expect the ocean to come to a point one molecule thick?

NOVICE

No, but--

MASTER

If you can't wrap your head around this, then maybe you ought to consider a different occupation.

NOVICE MAPMAKER is shocked into silence.

We Bare Teeth at Each Other

(tick tocks littered throughout. mel enters, yawning, crosses to computer, looks at self in computer? smiles fakely. turns on the following recorded words.)

THE NOVICE MAP MAKER:

We bare teeth at each other,
 While the frequencies of atoms resonate on queue.
 In this perfectly unstoppable atomic clock, matter is time.
 We bare teeth at each other,
 In a procession to a guaranteed lunch, cafeteria requiem,
 Where your countenance is a mirror of the mask on mine.
 We bare teeth at each other,
 Despite radiant sunbeams playing catch on fields of retinas,
 Mummies squint out of eyeballs;
 While imprisoned in them lives Soular Luminosity.
 This hostage of light cannot leave,
 If we never check others in.
 But who'd dare remind us, who holds the key?
 ...You're just human.

The calling of age,
 Sparks a wildfire;
 Dread claws in rigid jerks,
 A metronome onto a tightened chest.
 We pay our ultimatum little heed, but enslaved
 We buy all of her products,
 Because we know:
 This sack of skin that encases our bones
 Will grow splotchy, purpled with bruises, and sag,
 And these hands that now clickety-clack with speed and precision
 Will soon falter and shake,
 And the memories from which I draw essence of self

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE NOVICE MAP MAKER: (cont'd)

Will crumble before me, into a pile of empty;
We're just human.

Noise:

I clatter at you and you rattle at me
On a sidewalk, from A to B,
Raucous words that are but echoes of hollow.
For many, so many are immune to sounds:
Like the cyclic tangle of birds twittering in spring,
Instead, hollow spills out on a Saturday night when I'm
indistinguishable
From the other hundred intoxicated mummies.
But we like to don our blindfolds,
And carry earplugs,
Don't we?
Our fortress from truth's insults,
We bury ourselves behind bricks of:
Racism, sexism, religionism, ageism
... but I heard somewhere that now that's trite
So convenient, isn't it, that hate can keep base
anywhere:
Weight, education level, geographic location, sexual
preference;
Too dense to know,
They're all just human.

You never bared your teeth my way,
You are of the few that Smile.
Remember when we talked of matter?
Remember when most every fiber of our beings was
awakened by
A single brush?
We were held by invisible bonds,
Connected by strings that pulled in a state of flow,
As puppets, linked no less than magnets.
Remember when you, a man, not merely held my hand,
But held my heart?
And so I could wrestle into a mummy
These breaths of life, but
Without you,
I'm just human.

Show Time

*The MASTER and NOVICE MAPMAKER enter the space and
rush up onto the stage, clearly in a rush. The
MASTER is carrying a book, a flask, and a robe.
NOVICE MAPMAKER is carrying a stack of papers, one
of which is a map of the world one a bear.*

(CONTINUED)

MASTER

Come on. We haven't got all day. They're going to be here in five minutes to here your presentation and we haven't even started to set up. We shouldn't have wasted so much time earlier. Hurry up. Put those papers down and put this on.

He helps the Novice into her robe

Don't tug at your lapels. It makes you look nervous. Now here, take this.

He hands her the book

It's a copy of one of the first sets of map-making rules. I've checked it out of the library just for this occasion. You don't have to do anything with it, but holding it will make you look more studious and emphasize how much attention you are paying to the rules. Now, this is for after your presentation.

He hands her the flask

Trust me, you're going to need it.

The novice mapmaker fumbles with the flask, tries to tuck it into a pocket of the robe, but discovers that it has no pockets and ends up dropping it or the book or both multiple times before either tucking the flask into the back of her pants or kicking it gently towards the back of the stage.

Okay, so let's go over your presentation one more time.

He looks at the papers NOVICE MAPMAKER carried in

What are these? This is not what we discussed.

NOVICE MAPMAKER

I know, I've changed it.

MASTER

you've changed it! You do realize that your degree depends on this right? Look at these lines, this is sloppy work. None of these angles are correct.

NOVICE MAPMAKER

That's how it's supposed to be.

MASTER

What? This is ridiculous! What is the topology of a bear?!?

NOVICE MAPMAKER

I've worked hard on this.

(CONTINUED)

MASTER

You can't seriously be presenting this!

NOVICE MAPMAKER

I am,

MASTER

Whatever. It's your thesis.

He hands her the papers and storms off.

Lars Looks for Love

LARS

What the... where the hell am I?

(Pause)

Looks like you forgot something! Ha! Ass.

(Pause)

What even is this place?

(Pause)

You really didn't think this one through, did ya?

(Pause)

Nope, clearly not. There's hardly a damn thing even here... IF I'm supposed to be on a logical planet, what are these things even doing in the same place? I mean, this dog is a fossil! It only has three legs! Its clearly not even real! You really screwed the pooch

(Let it sink in)

on this one.

(Pause)

At least I'm not the only thing that you fucked up...

(Change)

What on Earth?

(Pause. Lars sits.)

Okay then... interesting choice... I'm just not sure I understand what you're trying to accomplish here. I mean, I'm on the edge of whatever stupid reality that you've managed to create, and all you can do to me is...

(Change)

Make me change clothes. Sort of a damning statement on exactly how much control you've got over your creations.

(Pause)

You know, I've always envisioned any omnipotent creator to sorta look down on us lowly creations with this 'holier than thou' and 'I could crush you as easily as you crush ants' demeanor.

(Thinks for a moment)

How hard was it to create ants anyway? Like, did you spend weeks and weeks just drafting that one little thing up, then have your boss wander over and be like 'sorry we're over budget on this whole "reality" thing

(MORE)

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LARS (cont'd)
 you've got going here, so we can only make your main
 creation at 1/100th of its size'. I mean, like, do you
 get pissed off when we crush those stupid things?
 (Change and pause)
 Well there's my answer I guess...
 (Pause. Sits.)
 So what if I started to break stuff? Huh? What'd you do
 then? Would you 'strike me down'?
 (Haughty pause)
 I thought not...
 (Thoughtful)
 I guess 'meaningful' isn't really your schtick.
 (Change. Lars stares off for a while,
 after this one, clearly miffed)
 I guess I kinda deserved that...
 (Pause. To himself.)
 I don't know... I just wanted some meaning here, and
 all I've gotten appears to be the end of everything...
 I'm just so lonely... I miss my ladies...
 (Wistfully lists the Ironic Ladies)
 Constance the Flake... Prudence the Brash... Chastity
 the... yeah... Honor the Thief... Grace the Clumsy...
 Temperance the Lush... Patience the Edgy... Faith
 the...

FAITH
 (Off)
 Lars!

LARS
 (Seeing the edge for the first time)
 Holy...

FAITH
 (off)
 Lars! Where are you?

LARS
 (Not hearing)
 What on Earth is going on? This is... This is...
 (Excited)
 INCREDIBLE.

FAITH
 (enters)
 Lars! Where on Earth are we?

LARS
 (seeing Faith)
 Look! Look! We're... We're...
 (excitedly gushing)
 HERE. Wherever the hell that is...

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

Oh my god... Are those...

BOTH

PEOPLE?

FAITH

They look so... Real...

LARS

There is no way this is possible.

FAITH

(a la high school girl)
Oh. My. God.

LARS

This is so weird...

FAITH

I wonder if they can see us...

LARS

Lets try to get their attention!

*They both do various things to get their
attention. Jumping, shouting, etc.*

LARS

This is SO COOL.

FAITH

I feel like they're looking at me, but only kinda...
Like they're looking past me or something...

LARS

Yeah, like their watching us awkwardly or something...

FAITH

I wonder... If we could touch one...

LARS

I don't know... most of them seem pretty far away...

FAITH

But how cool would it be...

LARS

That guy's kinda close...

FAITH

I dare you.

(CONTINUED)

LARS

What?

FAITH

Betcha won't touch him.

LARS

What's the bet?

FAITH

You won't do it anyway...

LARS

I will for a kiss...

FAITH

Done. You won't.

LARS

Watch me.

(He tries to touch one. Falls.)

Shit.

The Normal Picnic

ABNORMAL WOMAN enters carrying a purse, picnic basket and blanket.

She crosses to center stage in a perfect line, and unfurls the picnic blanket. She adjusts it until it is a perfect square, and she only walks in perfectly straight lines and right angles, but it is not absurdly emphasized to the audience.

She sits at the exact center of the picnic blanket, and opens the basket and gets out the red mug and book, and glasses from her purse. She puts the glasses on, opens her book and begins to read, very normally. She sips from the mug.

A few minutes pass, and ABNORMAL WOMAN closes the book and reopens the picnic basket, taking out her knitting. She knits happily for a few minutes.

Another pause, she sets the knitting down and removes a single perfect rose. She removes it and sniffs it happily and then lays it out in a straight line perfectly parallel to the downstage edge of the picnic blanket. She adjusts it several times. She also sets up two candles downstage edge of the blanket - romantic, eh?

(CONTINUED)

The next few actions come at an increasingly more rapid pace, approaching a crescendo. Out come the two shot glasses; moments later, the handle of Jack. She pours the two shots and takes both. Next casually extracted and placed on the picnic blanket is the three-legged dog. Then the sword, also perfectly laid out parallel to flower; from the purse the money clip, and matches from the picnic basket. She burns the money and leaves it burning on the blanket. Next the gun which she leaves on her lap, and finally the baby from her purse, (maybe there is a moment of tension that the gun is for the baby) but no, it's the scissors, the scissors with which she cuts off the baby's head.

ABNORMAL WOMAN

(holding the baby's head in one hand and the scissors in the other)

The only truly abnormal thing would be if nothing abnormal happened.

She puts the baby head and scissors down. Takes the bicycle horn from the basket, beeps it twice, stands and exits from whence she came periodically beeping the horn.