

SCENE

A clearing in the forest.

TIME

Present day.

ACT I | SCENE I

SETTING: *We are in a clearing in the woods.*

AT RISE: *The whole class of animals is focused in a deep squat, lifting alternate legs and arms, swinging—steady, repetitive focused exercise in unison.*

BEAR CHONDRA

(speaks with a low, calm, authoritative, and kind voice, encouraging while also transcendent) Ok, you all look beautiful. Scales and fur and paws and hooves AR-TIC-U-LAAAAA-TED. Yes, every element of your body is separate and united. Feel that? Connected and alone. Just like you, circling the sun alone. Circling the sun with each other and with every twig and tree and ocean and stone. Stay with it. Use your core and stretch and stretch and stretch and stretch and kick and kick. You're getting your heart rate up but you are also slowing your mind. Slow those gamma waves. And always stretching and expanding and growing and loosening. You are teaching yourself that you can stay with it. Stay with hard times. Stay with it even when you are tired. Stay with it when you are bored. Stay with it when you wish only to dash off into a strawberry patch and roll in the sunshine of god's eternal love. Stay with it as you get stronger and calmer and cooler. Feel the pain burning up your sex, rock a little, yeah, rock.

BEAR continues in exercise-monologue voice while doing a slow, sexy grind, not campy.

Burn. Get lower. Get down on the floor. Get down in the soil where you'll be soon enough. Feel that pain as a reminder of your coming death. A reminder of your current state of aliveness. Ummmmm. Alive, yeah...

BEAR and class go up on toes.

Lift your head up, place the tippy-top of your head exactly over your neck, your neck exactly over your spine. Tuck your tail in just a bit and stretch yourself up to the heavens and puuuulll yourself down to the earth. In ballet all the dancers' motions are away from the earth, they are on pointe shoes so that very little of their body is touching the earth, they are reminded again and again to imagine a string pulling them from the crown of their head, pulling them towards the heavens where the European god is. In many African dances the motions are directed towards the earth, the legs are bent, the foot is flat and broad—spread and pressed against the earth, the knees are bent and the body is pressing into this earth where the African gods are, the food and the ancestors in the earth. Pull yourself down and pull yourself up. There's no right place to put your gods, animals. You'll be in the soil soon enough. You'll be in the clouds, on the wind, in your fellow's mouth and fur soon enough. Feel the pain as a reminder of your coming death.

Animals are still up on toes, with knees bent wide and arms out (goddess pose). They are focused and pained with the strain of holding the position.

Your present life. Deeper, slower. Puff your stomach

full of air and tighten your bum. Feel it? Feel it like light flowing from the ground into your sex and all the muscles that keep your sex on your body. Keep your sex on your body as you contemplate your body dissolving. Good. Tighten...endure...embrace...Your ass is going to be so high, people are going to fuck you with their ideas—right through their third eye into your gloriously strong and decaying sex.

VELIA OTTER turns to PENNSTIN THE YOUNG WOLF and attacks her brutally, sensationally. Strobe lights flash, speed metal plays—stylized, sexualized...all other animals circle the attack and watch hypnotized, neither enjoying nor disliking, stopping or encouraging PENNSTIN's murder. This goes on for a few minutes, with VELIA OTTER ripping the blood and body and fur which fly everywhere as she crouches over PENNSTIN's body. All characters freeze, VELIA over PENNSTIN, all other animals surrounding VELIA OTTER and the body.

ALL (BUT VELIA)

(spoken and sung) WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

HARRISON HARE

It took a minute to realize that something sensational is not always the answer to existential ennui.

TURTLE

I feel bad I got a little excited.

BISON

I feel worse I got a little wet.

LIZARD

I was scared but I did nothing to stop it.

FERN CARDINAL

(singing fully now) I was composing a poem with the effluence of sorrow emitting from both of these animals who I have known my whole life.

BEAR CHONDRA

Animals whose paws I have envied and animals whose hooves I have held.

TIGER SEPET

Animals who brought me books when I was lonely.

ELMOND FOX

Animals from whom I ran in the night.

BISON & TURTLE

Animals I enjoyed tormenting.

ALL

(spoken or sung by all animals and/or broken into duets & trios)

Animals whose detritus I lived upon.

Animals whose days I watched from air.

Animals whose feces I rolled in...rolling and rolling through the matter of both body and earth, the matter which erupts from darkest innards and summons forth the essence of an animal.

Capital A. Animal.
Who sings what is flexible.

BLACK OUT / END OF ACT.

ACT 2 | SCENE I

SETTING: *Another clearing in the woods, adjacent to what will serve as the courtroom.*

AT RISE: *REPORTER ELLE E. PHANT is speaking directly to a television news camera while FERN CARDINAL stands dazed beside her, TIGER SEPET stands stiffly, and ZINNIA SNAKE wanders behind them with disinterest.*

OFFSTAGE CAMERA PERSON

This broadcast brought to you by a future directory.

REPORTER ELLE E. PHANT

I'm broadcasting from the scene of a horrible slaughter which occurred earlier today at Bear Chondra's Mix Flow Get Up And Go weekly exercise class in the hollow by the wishing well behind the beaver club. Yes, back there amongst the trees, a young wolf was brutally attacked and killed by an angry otter. The attack came as a surprise to the animals who regularly attend Bear Chondra's Mix Flow Get Up And Go class which has a wonderful reputation for peace and generally good-feeling feelings post, and during, class. We have a few of the attendees here.

The animals are still covered in blood.

Fern Cardinal, I understand you were standing right next to Pennstin, the young wolf that was murdered,

throughout the class.

FERN CARDINAL

Yes, I spent the class next to her. She always worked hard and inspired me to stay focused and not fall into worry that I won't finish strong. She was an inspiration to us all and we will be hard-pressed to go on with the same *joie de vivre* in class next week.

REPORTER ELLE E. PHANT

Thank you, Fern.

FERN CARDINAL

(continues talking) Things happen. That's the only surety. Things happen and we were there while this was happening. Pressure is an eventuality and it is true we are all filled with blood.

REPORTER ELLE E. PHANT

Thank you, Fern. I'm going to speak to some of your classmates.

Turns to ZINNIA SNAKE.

Zinnia, I understand you are a regular participant of Bear Chondra's Mix Flow Get Up And Go class and were in the back when this incident occurred.

ZINNIA SNAKE

Mmmmmm. Mmhhhh. Yeah. That was some shit. I sort of feel like Fern though. I mean, is everything gonna be understood? We're animals...this whole arresting and reporting, I mean, I don't know what we're playing

at. Regulating and blaming and making up gods and making up rules and reasons. We're not scared like the humans. We know it's all wack and we're not trying to convince ourselves it ain't.

REPORTER ELLE E. PHANT

Thank you, Zinnia, and lastly let's hear from Sepet. Sepet, were you able to witness the incident?

TIGER SEPET

Yes, but I'm uninterested in speaking about this with you.

REPORTER ELLE E. PHANT

Ok, thank you. We'll be covering the trial and will bring you the most up-to-date news as it breaks.

BLACK OUT / END OF SCENE.