

NOTES

Gilgamesh, Iowa is the setting for this Midwestern reunion between two life-long buddies, Jay and Ken. As children, the two spent countless hours in Ken's basement creating a magical world, *Gilgamesh*, out of paper cut-outs. As the two friends recreate their childhood role-playing games of yesteryear, we slowly learn the real reason for this reunion. Ken is terminally ill, and he wants to ask Jay if he would be willing to keep him company when his illness becomes more debilitating. This poignant excerpt from Scot Augustson's play should be performed by two male actors and should be entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting; however, a male performer might choose to perform this selection individually and enter it in Dramatic Interpretation. It is important for the two actors to establish a contrast between their imaginative world of role-playing and the more honest moments reflecting the reality of their lives today. Play the role-playing scenes for their humor; however, play the dramatic moments with warmth, tenderness and 100% honesty. This is a challenging play for two mature actors!

Jay: Can I just tell you how weird it is to be here? It's like jumping in a time machine and going back a million years.

Ken: It hasn't been a million years.

Jay: It even smells the same.

Ken: Can I get you a beer?

Jay: You gonna have one?

Ken: Can't.

Jay: Can't?

Ken: Some of the meds I'm on are already doing a number on my liver. But you can still have one.

Jay: Better not, you'll get me drunk and steal my wallet.

Ken: (*Nods*) Might.

Jay: Besides, it would feel weird drinking a beer in your parents' basement.

Ken: It's not my parents' basement anymore.

Jay: Sorry. Hey, did you keep your old bedroom? I mean, you're not sleeping in your mom and dad's old room, are you?

Ken: Noooo. That would be...strange. I wouldn't do that.

Jay: Good, because sometimes I don't know what you're capable of.

Ken: I don't know myself.

Jay: (*Points at the trunk*) Ah, the trunk! That's it, isn't it? Gilgamesh.

Ken: (*Big smile*) Yup. Hear that?

Jay: Hear what?

Ken: (*Little murmur*) I think—(*Murmurs again*)

Jay: That I heard.

Ken: (*Putting his ear to the trunk*) Shhh. I think it's coming from in here.

Jay: Is it?

Ken: (*Little voice*) Help. Help. Let us out. Let us out.

Jay: We've got to help them.

Ken: I don't know. We should really wait. (*Little voice:*) We can't breathe in here.

Jay: For the love of Pete! We gotta help 'em! I'm serious.

Ken: Ok, but remember, it was your decision.

Jay: Oh, man. (*Starts to reach in*)

Ken: Hey, this is me being weird and neurotic, but I think we should set it up in order.

Jay: Order. Like?

Ken: Chronological. Like the earliest ones first.

Jay: Oh, yeah. Think we can remember?

Ken: Uh-huh.

Jay: Ok. So, first one was...the old west saloon?

Ken: Ah-ah-ah!

Jay: No?

Ken: Before there was a saloon. Before there was a Gilgamesh. There was ...Monkey Town! (*Pulls out a tree*)

Jay: I'd forgotten! Monkey town. Monkey Joe and Monkey Jim.

Ken: Together again.

Jay: (*Points at self*) Joe?

Ken: (*Nods*) Joe Monkey.

Jay: (*Points at Ken*) Jim Monkey.

Ken: (*Pointing at self, nodding*) Jim Monkey.

Jay: And if I remember correctly, I'm better at things like getting out of cages.

Ken: Why would you need to do that?

Jay: So that we can escape from the circus and have adventures in the city.

Ken: But we're not in the circus. We're here in this beautiful tropical rain forest that we call home. Perhaps you've been in the sun too long, Monkey Joe.

Jay: But we do, at one point escape from the circus. Yes, Monkey Jim?

Ken: Oh, I imagine that if we keep wandering through the jungle we will, eventually be captured by the circus, necessitating our escape. Until then, however, we are in our natural, that is to say, monkey, state.

Jay: And a lovely day it is, here in the jungle, the jungle we call home.

Ken: Teeming with life.

Jay: Hmmm?

Ken: The rain forest. Teeming with life. Filled to the brim with it.

Jay: Does that mean there are bugs on everything?

Ken: Uh, yeah. In a real rainforest, lots of insects.

Jay: Don't think I'd last long in a real jungle. I'm guessing you're never completely dry in a real jungle.

Ken: Monkey Joe?

Jay: Yes, Monkey Jim?

Ken: Shall we climb to the upper canopy?

Jay: Now that I like the sound of.

Ken: Joe, I have always suspected you of being an upper canopy sort of primate.

Jay: Monkey Jim.

Ken: Yes?

Jay: This monkey's hungry.

Ken: (*Picking an imaginary insect off of Jay's imaginary fur*) Grub?

Jay: Don't want grubs.

Ken: Then what will you eat?

Jay: I want bananas.

Ken: Where ever are you going to get a banana?

Jay: Bananas, plural.

Ken: Where are you going to get bananas, plural?

Jay: I think I saw some jungle explorers, wouldn't be much of a trick to swing down, swipe some fruit.

Ken: That would be stealing.

Jay: Uh-huh.

Ken: You know, Joe.

Jay: Yes, monkey Jim?

Ken: I think monkeys who steal...

Jay: Uh-huh?

Ken: Become monkeys who start hanging out with different animals.

Jay: So, you're saying that this banana business is a slippery slope?

Ken: A slippery slope indeed.

Jay: All because I wanted a banana.

Ken: Grubs are sounding better, aren't they?

Jay: Grubs aren't so bad.

Ken: An important lesson to learn.

Jay: This jungle is shabby. Should be spruced up with flowers or something. Vines.

Ken: Good luck finding anything green this time of year.

Jay: Well, the monkeys will just have to wait till spring. Can I trust you to remember, Ken? Or will I have to call?

Ken: Well, Jay. You can call, but...chances are I'm not going to be here