



The GHOST of DICKENS

(A Musical in Two Acts)

Book and lyrics by Sidney Goldberg

Music by Michael C. Cwynar

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The GHOST of DICKENS

Cast

LEE.....45, charming English professor.

LEONARD.....50, witty psychiatrist.

MADAM ZENOBIA.....43, outrageous, amorous, bearded, gypsy fortune teller.

CHARLES DICKENS.....65 years old.

The GHOST of DICKENS

Hear score on: <http://www.soundstreamstudio.com>

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE (Lee).....	1-1-3
USED TO BE ME (Leonard).....	1-1-4
CROOKS (Madam).....	1-2-7
CROOKS (refrain / Madam).....	1-2-9
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE (Underscoring).....	1-3-12
YOUR APPOLOGY (Dickens, Lee).....	1-3-13
USED TO BE ME (Underscoring).....	1-4-17
GREAT, GREAT, GREAT GRANDFATHER (Lee).....	1-4-18
IGNONIMITY (Leonard).....	1-4-20
CROOKS (Underscoring).....	1-4-22
CROOKS (Underscoring).....	1-5-24
NOBODY'S PERFECT EVEN ME (Madam).....	1-5-27
NOBODY'S PERFECT EVEN ME ((Underscoring).....	1-5-28
MY FINAL ADIEU (Lee).....	1-6-31
HOW COULD I FORGET? (Lee).....	1-6-35
LISTENING MY ASS! (Lee).....	2-1-39
A LITTLE SPERMY (Madam).....	2-2-41
CUTIE PETUTIES (Lee).....	2-2-44
YOUR APPOLOGY (Underscoring).....	2-3-47
I SHALL SAY IT AGAIN (Dickens).....	2-3-47
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I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE (Underscoring).....	2-4-52
FORNICATING (Lee).....	2-4-55
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The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT I

Scene 1

Now. **DR. LEONARD ROSEN'S office.**
Bookcases filled with books. A desk,
two chairs, lounge and a Rembrandt
painting. Shaking hands, LEE enters.

LEONARD

And how is my favorite middle age aspiring, DeNiro doing?

LEE

Terrible, thank you.

LEONARD

Any particular reason, Lee?

LEE

(Sings. 🎵)

I had a dream about you know who and as usual it was hell-of a nightmare. "*I couldn't sleep at all last night, 'cause I was tossin' and turnin'.*"

LEONARD

Tossin' and turnin', huh? Care to elaborate?

LEE

I was 20 and back in college and this time *HE*, was my psyche professor, and you know what he said? What he always says, I have no life of my own, that all I do is live vicariously through one famous person, him. How egotistical. What should I do?

LEONARD

A man of your intellect, I'm sure you'll figure it out sooner or later.

LEE

(Sings 🎵)

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE

It's not just the dreams that are bugging me,
They call my great, great grandfather great.
I'm going crazy I can't see.
And how I hate my beleaguered fate!

My mind is one big freaking blank, blank.
 Its one big zippo, nada, nothing, bleh.
 I have nothing, no one to thank.
 And how I feel is worse than feh.

I can't take it anymore.
 It's time to hang up my jock-strap.
 I can't take it anymore.
 Its 'cause this guy feels worse than crap.

How long have I been teaching? Twenty-years.
 They say that all things must come to an end.
 The pain fills my heart with tears.
 What I need's a caring friend.

I can't take it anymore.
 It's time to hang up my jock-strap.
 I can't take it anymore.
 Its 'cause this guy feels worse than crap.

LEONARD

If my memory hasn't failed me, no pun intended, it seems you've been teaching about your preeminent sage of British literature, Charles Dickens for 20 years. The money, the fame and what about *Newsweek*, *Time*? You are the most sought after English professor in the country. What country? The world. So, what exactly is your problem *monsieur*?

LEE

I'm bored silly, out of my snap Doctor. I'm going bananas doing the same old thing; Reciting from rote his books and plays isn't doing it for me anymore. I just can't. I didn't become professor emeritus to do the same damn thing over and over. It's coming out of my big ears. Don't you understand? I'm bored! I feel like throwing up, packing it in. Maybe I'll call my old acting teacher and see if he still wants me to act. Yeah, I always wanted to act, "*Et tu Brute?*" I told you I loved teaching, because when I touched, moved my students, when I heard them applaud, it used to be exciting, euphoric,

(Sings. 🎶)

past tense, doctor. "*So long for awhile.*"

LEONARD

(Sings 🎶)

USED TO BE

How can you say used to be? when you are.
 Don't you realize you've attained nirvana.
 You are blessed with such an abundance of smarts
 How can you say used to be? when you are.

All you need's a new angle, a new twist,
Something to get you out of your ennui.
Think and, you'll be as excited as ever,
My fine feathered thespian you shall be.

How can you say used to be? when you are.
Don't you realize you've attained nirvana.
You are blessed with such an abundance of smarts
How can you say used to be? when you are.

You have no wife, no children to bug you.
And I wish I had that brilliant mind of yours.
It's worth more than all the tea in China.
Of course you're bored, you're fighting all those wars.

How can you say used to be? when you are.
Don't you realize you've attained nirvana.
You are blessed with such an abundance of smarts
How can you say used to be? when you are.

LEE

You don't understand. Not only am I bored doing the same *sh tick* over and over, my memory, which has always been my prize possession. What happened to my memory? I'm losing it, that's what happened, I'm losing it.

LEONARD

What about taking Ginkgo Biloba? It works for me.

LEE

If that shit will alleviate the boredom and help my memory, get me a ton of it.

(sings)

I have to do something real fast, but I don't know what it is, what to do. "*Who should I turn to? When nobody needs me.*" Will someone, anyone please tell me? "*Who should I turn to*"?

End of Scene 1

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT I

Scene 2

Two days later.

LEE, warily enters MADAM Z's fortune telling parlor. All the paraphernalia one could imagine is evident. Very sexy, the MADAM is wearing a beard.

MADAM

(Accent adjusts beard spooky.)
Welcome to Madam Zenobia's house of the mystical, the occult, the supernatural, Oooh, oooh.

LEE

Thank you, my name is...

MADAM

...Do not bother with such incidentals, I know your name Lee Morgan, Madam Zenobia (Spooky.) knows everything, I know everything, *Oooh, oooh.*

LEE

What happened to your accent?

MADAM

It's part of the show. Don't tell anyone, but I'm a frustrated Groucho, Harpo, Zeppo.

LEE

And the *oooh, oooh*?

MADAM

(Adjusts beard.)
Also part of the show, I was trying to get you in the mood for the mystical, the occult, the supernatural. Didn't I just tell you that? Why don't you listen, what's wrong with you, (Grins.)
are you also deaf? WHAT'D YOU SAY?

LEE

And the beard?

MADAM

I told you, it's part of the show and you know what they say, don'tcha? The show must go on. The first show I saw was Buhda's, hell of a performer. A couple of years later, Abraham, Moses. I was so impressed with the ten commandments that *Ma nishtanor halilor hazeh* became everything to me. Then I met Jesus, a nice man, thin. I forgot about *Ma nishtanor* and I believed what he believed. Then Muhammad and I believed him. Like a dope I believed them all. I'll tell you the truth, I'm so confused, I don't know who the hell to believe anymore. You see, I come from a long, long line of fortune tellers. My great, great, great grandmother was Madam Clofulia, the bearded lady from Rumania. Not like me, she was world famous. She made a dollar, she made a dollar. PT Barnum made a fortune on her too. She was his first major exhibit. Unfortunately, I

(Takes off beard and tosses it to LEE.)

wasn't blessed with a beard, so I bought this at Macys. Here, try it on, it'll probably look better on you.

LEE

(Catches beard and looks at it.)

Oh my G-d.

MADAM

What oh my G-d, what oh my G-d, didn't you ever see a beard before?

LEE

I just thought it was real.

MADAM

Of course it's real, it's a 100% human hair. That's why those crooks charged me a small

(Sings ♫)

fortune.

CROOKS

Crooks, department stores are all crooks.

And they think that we're all *schnooks*.

Suckers are born every minute.

Give them a finger right in it.

Every cent I make is blood money.

Do you think that they give a damn?

To me those cheaters aren't funny.

I struggle for a piece of ham.

Crooks, department stores are all crooks.
And they think that we're all *schnooks*.
Suckers are born every minute.
Give them a finger right in it.

I walk around, tired lonely.
And what do they do, they laugh.
I wish I found my one and only.
No one wants my autograph.
Here, put it on!

LEE

(Looks at beard and then gives it back.)

I, I don't think so, I'd rather not.

MADAM

(Puts beard back on.)

All right, you just looked like you could use a present. How do I look?

LEE

Gorgeous, better than Lincoln and Moses.

MADAM

(Shuffles cards.)

Now you're talkin'. It's time we got down to business. Did you bring the money like I told you?

LEE

A \$150 like you said. You know, you're almost as expensive as my shrink.

MADAM

You'll have more fun with me, shrinks don't say a word, all they do is listen with their eyes closed. Most of those bastards are sleeping on the job, me, I don't shut up.

(Offers deck.)

Come on, pick a card. Time is money, you know, pick a card!

(LEE picks a card and gives it to HER. MADAM stares at it.)

MADAM

Queen of hearts, Queen of hearts is good. I see you're not married, too bad, 'cause you're real good looking. I've been looking for a good looking guy like you for years, to

(Touches Lee's faces amorously. Realizes what she just said.)

fool around with. Ever fool around...? Fool around, where'd you get that idea...? I see you're a very successful professor, and now you want to be an actor that fools around? At your age, leave me alone, what the hell's the matter with you?

LEE

You want me to tell you?

MADAM

(Accent.)

No, no, I'll find out, *MADAM Zenobia finds out everything.*

LEE

I know, the accent's for show, right?

MADAM

(Eerie.)

Everything I do is for show... Now, I think it's time for a little crystal ball. *Are you in the mood for a little crystal ball, Lee?*

LEE

Yeah, why not, I could go for a little crystal ball.

MADAM

(Points to crystal ball.)

So could I, because the one I have weighs a ton. Would you be so kind and get it, and be careful, I don't want you to get a *killer*, that's a hernia. My malpractice is high enough,

(Sings 🎵 partial refrain of "CROOKS.")

damn it.

CROOKS

Crooks, insurance companies are crooks
And they think that we're all *schnooks*.
Suckers are born every minute.
Give them a finger right in it.

My malpractice is driving me broke.
I struggle for a corned beef on rye.
And to them they think it's a joke.
You think they give a dame that I cry?

They are worse than that rotten F. B. I
They want to know what I eat, what I think.
And it's costing a fortune just to die
To me all those son of a bitches stink.

Crooks, insurance companies are crooks
And they think that we're all *schnooks*.
Suckers are born every minute.
Give them a finger right in it.

Be careful, don't drop my crystal ball, damn it, it costs me a fortune!

(LEE struggles with large crystal ball and puts it on table. Immediately, MADAM mystically waves hands over it and eerily chants *Oooh, oooh*, looks at LEE, pinches his cheek and smiles.)

LEE

(Sings ♪♪)

I know, it's part of the show, "*There's no business like show business.*"

MADAM

(Sad.) (Moving hands over crystal ball.)

Ain't that the truth. Should I say *abracadabra* or *inka binka bottle of inka*? Forget about *inka binka bottle of inka*, that's horse shit. Merlin said *abracadabra* and like dopes, King Arthur and those *schmucks* sitting at that round table believed him. But like the

(Eerie.)

great Madam Clofulia, I too say *oooh, oooh*, and it always works, trust me.

LEE

You promise?

MADAM

Promise her anything but give her Arpeg, that's a joke *mister*. 40 years ago, it used to

(Looks in crystal ball.)

be my favorite commercial. I see you can't sleep, huh, having problems in bed?

LEE

Nightmares, just nightmares.

MADAM

Don't tell me, I'll tell you... Who's that guy with the long hair you've been dreaming about? What is he a hippie and are you gay? Wait a minute, you're not gay, what kind of gay? And I know him.

LEE

I'm not gay and that's my...

MADAM

...Great, great, great grandfather. I don't believe it. You're Charles Dickens...

LEE and MADAM

...Great, great, great grandson.

MADAM

I'm impressed.

LEE

You're impressed and I'm going out of my mind, I'm bored with boredom, ennui.

MADAM

What kind of *schmuck* word is *ennui*, why can't you be bored like the rest of us plebeians? Since you're so, I hate that word *ennui!* I hate every G-ddamn *ennui!* Anyway, how about making a little *hanky panky* on my water bed? I promise you won't be *ennuied* in my water bed, no one is, I'm a pro, mister, I know what I'm doing.

LEE

I'm losing my mind and you want to make *hanky panky*? How can we make *hanky panky*, I don't even know you.

MADAM

Don't you know that without *hanky panky* life is, excuse the expression, *ennui*. That's why you're so, I hate that word, I really do, trust me I know. So, err, why don't you do something different, like...?

LEE

...I am, I going to become a thespian and traipse the boards, I love traipsing.

MADAM

(An eerie bong sounds.)

Uh oh, time's up Lee, it's 45 minutes.

LEE

(Looks at watch.)

Really? According to my watch, it's only 30 minutes.

MADAM

What's 15 minutes between friends and what are you worried about, I'll owe you 15 minutes, 'nu?' I have an opening in three weeks, that's when I'll pay you back.

LEE

Can't I see you sooner? Please, it's imperative.

MADAM

All right, I'll squeeze you in tomorrow at 12 and don't forget to bring cash and speaking about cash, pay up mister. Lemme have it, give me my *moolah* and promise we'll at least talk about my waterbed and *hanky panky*.

(LEE pays MADAM as lights dim.)

End of Scene 2

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT I

Scene 3

The following day.

In HIS office, pacing, LEE recites what he is reading. We hear the Underscoring of “I CAN’T TAKE IT ANYMORE.”

LEE

(Sings ♫)

(Speaks as if to audience.)

“So long for awhile. . .” Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming to the final tribute of my great, great, great grandfather, the illustrious, brilliant, and in my opinion, the most important writer since the bard, Shakespeare: the incomparable Charles Dickens. Born February 7, 1812, he was the son of John Dickens, a forlorn clerk going

(Looks up.)

no where, in the pay office of the British Navy and where am I going? His mother, Elizabeth Barrow was the daughter of a lieutenant in the same Navy. They lived in London where young Charles went to various primary schools. Because of his inability to earn a living, Charlie’s father had difficulty paying his debt. As a result, his father was put in the Marshalea prison. Perhaps this inadequacy was caused, because his father imbibed ever so often. Charles was embarrassed by his father’s inadequacies. Feeling responsible for the well being of his family, at the tender age of 12, the young man took a job with a blacksmith, even though he thought he was too smart for such a degrading job. While attending boarding school, he began clerking for an attorney, was a shorthand reporter, and fell in love with a girl who later appeared as Dora in *“David Copperfield.”* Later, he was a Parliamentary reporter for London newspapers and wrote humorous speeches which he penned under the pseudonym Boz. In 1839 he married Catherine

(Crumples paper and tosses it away.)

Hogart, the daughter of a London journalist... Boring, this sounds like the freaking history lesson I hate teaching. What the hell am I doing his biography for? I always do his books and plays, not his biography. Students want action, sex, drugs, not historical biographies, what am I doing...? *Meanwhile back at the ranch.* His first major novel was *“The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby,”* followed by the highly acclaimed and the very popular, *“Oliver Twist.”*

(Underscoring ends as lights flicker and the ghost of Charles Dickens appears. LEE is taken aback.)

DICKENS

LIAR, FRAUD, CHEAT! How dare you misrepresent my auspicious life. I demand you put an end to all this inconsequential, slanderous gibberish, immediately. You have maligned my history long enough young, man.

LEE

You demand, and who the hell are you and how the hell did you get into my office building? You better leave, before I call security.

DICKENS

Security, alas there is no security in death. And I am Charles Dickens, the ancestor who you have been so maliciously maligning, defaming, much to my dismay, might I add. If you dare to do so, get it right or say nothing, I refuse to be made a non sequitur of by you, my misguided, heir apparent.

LEE

(Rubs eyes in disbelief and drinks.)

You can't be, it's impossible, you're dead, you've been dead since...

DICKENS

...June 9, 1870. I wish I were not, but unfortunately I am. I was just having a cup of the most delicious *ketapa*, which for your edification young man, is Egyptian tea. I was sharing this delightful treat with the magnificent Cleopatra, when I was made aware of your misdirected, fraudulent misnomers. I begged her highness's forgiveness and here I am to correct you, but I can't stay too long, for she needs me, she really does.

LEE

Did you say Cleopatra, of the Nile? But you were married to...

DICKENS

...Catherine Hogart and although I did marry Catherine, between you and I, I much preferred her *beautiful sister*. Biggest mistake I ever made and speaking about mistakes, "*Oliver Twist*," came before "*Nicholas Nickleby*!" Distortions, I object, I object! Utter distortions. How dare you call yourself the preeminent professor of English literature, my literature, if you please!

LEE

(🎤 Sings, sort of like opera.)

YOUR APPOLOGY

I'm sorry I don't believe I'm apologizing to a Dickens.
I'm talking to a Dickens, a real live Dickens that is unbelievable.
Imagination, unconceivable, that I'm talking to a Dickens.
Because you were so poor, I know, I am sure, you were so poor.

DICKENS**(Sings  opera.)**

Your apology is not accepted.
 It is defective and hence rejected.
 You, who have made a fortune from me and my work.
 My reputation and what do you do you jerk?
 You squander all my money that should be given to the poor,
 The impoverished, the misfortunate, I'm sure.

Did I not spend my life writing,
 About the needy, the hungry.
 Why have you not used the money that you have stolen, that's right, stolen from me,
 From my life long quest of helping, writing about the people
 with whom I so identified: the orphan, the chimney sweep,
 the homeless who sleep in the street,
 underdog, the misbegotten, now, I believe you know why I beseech you, don't you?

LEE

I'm sorry I don't believe I am apologizing to a Dickens.
 I'm talking to a Dickens, a real live Dickens that is unbelievable.
 Imagination, unconceivable, that I am talking to a Dickens.
 Because you were so poor, I know, I am sure, you were so poor.

DICKENS

At least you have one fact right. As Scrooge said...

LEE and DICKENS

...*Bah humbug!*

DICKENS**(Talks.)**

Since you claim to be so learned about my work, dare we do "*A Christmas Carol?*"

LEE

I'm dying to act, splendid idea. Shall we give it a go, my illustrious great, great, great, great grandfather? Your, "*A Christmas Carol,*" it shall be, I'm so excited.

DICKENS

Do you think you're up to it, I mean explicitly, every word, every gesture?

LEE

Indubitably, thank you, for this is the chance I've been waiting for, to act with none
(Laughs.)
 other than you. I'll play the moderator and Scrooge, and you'll be Marley's DICKENS.
(Aside.)

no pun intended. ghosts, how ironic, I don't believe in ghosts, do I? Ahem... *"Scrooge had often heard it said, that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it. No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of it's death-eyes..."*

DICKENS

Death cold eyes, cold eyes! How dare you take such liberties? Are you not aware that in 1842 I toured these United States and spoke out in favor of the abolition of slavery and the implementation of international copyright infringement? Must I sue you, must I?

LEE

Well, pardon my English. *"Death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before,--he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses."* *"How now!"* said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. *"What do you want with me?"*

DICKENS

"Much!"

LEE

"Who are you then?"

DICKENS

"Ask me who I was."

LEE

(Loud.)

"Who were you then? You're particular for a shade."

DICKENS

"In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

LEE

"Can you sit down?"

DICKENS

"I can."

LEE

"Do it then..." *"Scrooge asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a seat?"*

DICKENS

Take a chair, not take a seat! You take such liberties. How frivolous, you may continue.

LEE

“Scrooge asked the question, because he didn’t know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair.” Not seat, I know. “And felt that, in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were used to it.”

DICKENS

“You don’t believe in me.”

LEE

“I don’t.”

DICKENS

“Why do you doubt your senses?”

LEE

“Because, a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach muscles, makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are.”

DICKENS

Well done, well done young man. You see, you can be factually explicit.

LEE

(Bows.)

I am honored my Lord. *“Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the specter’s voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.”*

DICKENS

I am impressed, Lee, splendid performance, but unfortunately I can stay no longer, for I must not keep Queen Cleopatra waiting. But I will return and if you wish to continue this splendid dissertation, at your pleasure we shall.

(The lights flicker and the DICKENS is gone.)

LEE

Wait, wait, we haven’t finished, I haven’t finished... I must be losing my mind, or my mind is losing me. Was he here, did I actually speak and act with the great Charles

(Looks up.)

Dickens, and how the hell could I say seat instead of chair? What’s wrong with me,

(Looks up.)

what the hell is wrong with me? Please tell me help me, anyone, please.

End of Scene 3

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT I

Scene 4

The next day

Office of Dr. LEONARD ROSEN. Eyes closed, Leonard is leaning back in chair which is behind desk as if sleeping. LEE is staring aimlessly. LEONARD opens eyes and looks at watch. WE hear Underscoring of “USED TO Be.”

LEONARD

Lee, it's been five minutes and you haven't said a word. What exactly is troubling you? This is highly unusual behavior, you usually don't shut up. Want to talk about it? Is this what you are paying me a \$200 an hour for?

LEE

It's only 45 minutes, remember, you only give me 45 minutes?

LEONARD

What's 15 minutes among friends.

LEE

We're not friends, you're my shrink.

LEONARD

And a damn good one, I might add.

LEE

Not to mention expensive.

LEONARD

The best costs, mister.

LEE

Don't I know.

LEONARD

Want to talk about it?

(Underscoring ends. There is silence. After a beat.)

LEONARD (cont'd)

What is it Lee, what the hell is troubling you? Pardon my French, well?

LEE

I saw a ghost.

LEONARD

Anyone you know?

LEE

(Sings 🎵)

GREAT, GREAT, GREAT GRANDFATHER

I saw the ghost of my great, great, great grandfather.
Not my grandmother, my great, great, great grandfather
Who drives me mad,
And makes me sad.

I think that I'm going crazy I have lost my mind.
To see him sneer, hear him bitch, I'd rather be blind.
Can't take the pain,
Going insane.

I thought I was so happy.
I thought I had it all.
I'm nothing but slap-happy,
I'm climbing up the wall.

He haunts my dreams, when I pee, even when I fart.
I know he was a genius, to bad I'm not that smart.
Please for G-d sake,
Give me a break,

I thought I was so happy.
I thought I had it all.
I'm nothing but slap-happy,
I'm climbing up the wall.

So, do you believe I saw the ghost of my great, great, great grandfather?

LEONARD

(Sort of laughs)
Great.

LEE

I don't think that's funny.

LEONARD

Well, I do.

LEE

Ghosts are not funny, I think I'm losing my mind.

LEONARD

(Smiles.)
You only think?

LEE

I need a shrink, not a comedian.

LEONARD

Don't we all.

LEE

You have no idea. I was scared, frightened, because I saw a ghost. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, THE GHOST OF CHARLES DICKENS!

LEONARD

A mere apparition, a figment of your vivid imagination.

LEE

It wasn't an apparition, or figment, he was there as plain as day and he spoke to me.

LEONARD

Spoke to you. How interesting, and what exactly did your ghost say?

LEE

He berated, corrected me like he was an editor. Said I was a fraud, that I was maligning his auspicious life. He was outraged.

LEONARD

Outraged... Hmmm. How interesting.

LEE

And he was right.

LEONARD

Really.

LEE

I was in my office, sort of going over my farewell lesson plan, my last lesson plan, talking to myself, so what else is new? How long have I been teaching, 20 years? I am considered by many, to be the foremost authority on Charles Dickens, am I not and what happens, what happens? He suddenly pops up, not in my dreams like he always does, but out-of-nowhere, like I invited him and screams, LIAR, FRAUD, CHEAT! He accused me of misrepresenting his life. Me, I can recite every sentence of every page he's written by memory and I misrepresent him? Why don't you say something, damn it?!

LEONARD

(Sings 🎵)

I'm listening, Lee...

IGNONIMITY

...That's what you pay me to do.
Listening to your ignonimity.
Really between me and you.
Your ignonimity is a pity.

I thought that you had it all.
In fact at times of you I was jealous.
How only you can recall.
How your Dickens was overly zealous.

In time your ghost will surely pass.
Into the dark unknown
Sure he has better things to do.

Alas, you're living in the past.
Of this you doth bemoan.
A scholar like you must make-do.

Your story appears unique.
The fear that you endure seems to pervade.
You feel your future is bleak.
Try not to feel so unique.

In time your ghost will surely pass.
Into the dark unknown
Sure he has better things to do.

Alas, you're living in the past.
Of this you doth bemoan.
A scholar like you must make-do.

LEE

And you should have heard the big deal he made when I said *seat instead of chair*. So I goofed up on one word, one word. It's like I committed the biggest crime of the century. SENTENCE ME! SEND ME TO THE GALLOWS! I think I'm losing my mind, what mind? And thanks for moving my appointment up.

LEONARD

When, as you say, your supposed apparition appeared and all apparitions are just that, supposed, what were you doing?

LEE

Are you trying to say I was doing something weird, freaky, me?

LEONARD

Well then, why do you think you suddenly imagined you saw the ghost of Dickens? That's not an everyday occurrence, is it? Quite frankly, I don't believe I have another patient who's seen a ghost recently. Come to think of it, I did have a patient about ten years ago who spoke to a ghost.

LEE

What happened?

LEONARD

He's still presently a permanent guest at the funny farm.

LEE

(Sobs.)

This is not a laughing matter, Leonard, he called me a fraud and I think I am.

LEONARD

You are not a fraud, Lee, a *meschugeneh*, all right, but a fraud? Who knows more than you about Charles Dickens, the Smithsonian, the encyclopedia? You have to stop feeling sorry for yourself, you have a new class that is supposed to start in two weeks.

LEE

I *had* a class that was *supposed* to start in two weeks, “*So long for awhile.*” I’m canceling it.

LEONARD

Impossible, how can you cancel what has been Harvard’s most successful English literature class for the past... You can’t cancel it, think of your students.

LEE

Forget about my students, I’ve never been so shook up in my life, Doctor and I use that term loosely. You don’t understand; I keep looking over my shoulder, he’s there, even when I pee. How’d you like to pee with an audience? I’m going crazy, gaga.

LEONARD

Go on...

LEE

What happens if I’m teaching “*David Copperfield,*” or “*A Tale of Two Cities*” and he shows up and starts correcting me in front of my class? I’ll look like a *schmuck*, and I forgot to tell you, I went to see Madam Zenobia.

(WE hear Underscoring of “CROOKS.”)

LEONARD

And who may I ask is, Madam Zenobia?

LEE

The strangest woman I ever met. She’s this weird, far-out gypsy fortune teller, and what a pair of *bazoomas*, *SEXY!* You should have seen her, unbelievable. She had this beard and then she takes it off, just like that. I flipped. I really thought it was real, and then she throws it at me and tells me to put it on. Me, she wanted me to put it on, can you believe it?

LEONARD

I bet you must have looked quite dashing with a beard.

LEE

(Laughs)

She didn’t know that I never wear beards, especially second hand beards. That’s why I didn’t put it on. I almost peed in my pants when she said it was a 100% human hair and “*They’re all CROOKS! Oooh, oooh.*” You should have heard her accent and what an

(Accent ala Madam Z - eerie)

accent. *Velcome to Madam Zenobia’s house of the mystical, the occult, the supernatural.*

(Snaps fingers.)

Then, just like that, she didn’t have an accent, said its part of the show. Can you believe it, she wants to be in show biz. She made me carry this enormous crystal ball that weighed a ton. I could’ve gotten a *killer*, that’s hernia. She says a killer is a hernia.

LEONARD

It is.

(Underscoring is heightened.)

LEE

She was a riot, she knew all about my problem, she's so outrageous, I think I love her.

LEONARD

I knew you'd fall in love, sooner or later, but with a bearded gypsy, really? How exotic.

End of Scene 4

The DICKENS of DICKENS

ACT I

Scene 5

The next day.

**LEE enters MADAM Z's
parlor, quite anxious. WE hear
Underscoring of "CROOKS."**

MADAM

(Looks at watch.)

I'm glad you're on time, what time is it? Good, you're on time. Cash on the barrel?

LEE

(Takes money from wallet and gives.)

200 smackers and you deserve it. Why, I don't know, but I bet you do, don't you?

MADAM

(Pinches Lee's cheek.)

Because I squeezed you in, that's why. So, are you in the mood for a little action big boy, or what?

LEE

I'm really in the mood for a little crystal ball, but I don't want to get a *killer*, a hernia, know what I mean?

MADAM

How's about a little sand, a little cuneiform?

LEE

Cuneiform?

MADAM

That's sand writing in ancient Persia and Arabia. Don't you know anything, what is it with you, I thought you were a college professor? What about a little *cuhtchy, cuhtchy*? Ready?

LEE

(Black southern drawl)

No maam, I ain't ready for no *cuhtchy, cuhtchy*.

MADAM

All right, all right, we'll sit at the table, but I don't know what you have against *cuhtchy cuhtchy*?

(LEE and MADAM sit at table, as she takes out small pouch and says, *abracadabra* as she sprinkles sand.)

MADAM

And don't mention Merlin, King Arthur or those *schmucks* that sat around his round table. Do you think it was really round, maybe oval, but it wasn't round. Those *schmucks* couldn't make a circle if you paid them. And since you're not in the mood for some *hanky panky*, I'll settle for a little. . .

LEE and MADAM

(Both smile.)

. . . *Inka binka bottle of inka.*

MADAM

I thought you, the great professor, was forgetting things.

LEE

How do you know? I didn't tell you that.

MADAM

(Eerily ooohs - puts beard on.)

Because *oooh*, Madam Zenobia knows everything. I almost forgot my front. Sorry, *nu, buhby*. Tell Madam Zenobia what you believe Lee, tell me what you believe in, *nu*? I'm waiting.

LEE

(Eerily ooohs.)

Yes I believe, oh wise one, *oooh, ooh*.

MADAM

Of course you believe, but tell me what, what the hell do you believe in?!

LEE

I believe in the mystical, the occult, the supernatural.

MADAM

But do you believe in a good stuffed derma? What about chopped liver? I love chopped liver. Are you hungry?

LEE

I guess I could go for something.

MADAM

(Accent.)

After I get through with you, we'll go for a bite. Because, *I want to drink your blood. Remember Bela Lagosi, he said he was my cousin. They all want to be my cousin. Can you blame them?* I'm good, real good.

LEE

You know, you're very funny.

MADAM

As funny as Mel?

LEE

You mean Brooks?

MADAM

No, I mean Ott, of course I mean Mel Brooks, I love him, I could eat him up. "*I was in every war, even the war of the Roses!*"

LEE

What about the sand? I thought you were going to read the sand for me.

MADAM

(Reads the sand.)

Boy, for a guy that told his psychiatrist that he's starting to forget, you don't miss a trick, do you mister?

LEE

How do you know that I said that to...

MADAM and LEE

...Dr. Leonard Rosen. That sonofabitch sleeps half the time and he gets paid to take a snooze, *nu?*

LEE

(Smiles, - eerie)

I know, because *oooh*, Madam Zenobia knows everything. You are unbelievable, fantastic.

(MADAM will read sand throughout)

MADAM

I see that you are totally bananas, frustrated is more concise.

LEE

Touché.

MADAM

Bored is even more definitive.

LEE

Touché, touché.

MADAM

Lonely and a little horny. Horny, now you know how I feel.

(Underscoring ends.)

LEE

Boy, you know everything, don't you...?

MADAM and LEE

Oooh, Madam Zenobia knows everything.

MADAM

(Extends hand.)

Give me five, brother.

(LEE slaps HER five and they bump hips. MADAM sings ♪)

MADAM (cont'd)

NOBODY'S PERFECT EVEN ME

Hey, nobody's perfect even me,
Madam Zenobia,
Who has a phobia,
I like sex, what the heck, I like sex.

You know, I really like you, I think you're cute.
Maybe we could fool around?
Wanna fool around?
Lets have some fun.

Whatever gave you that idea? Forget it.
It's out-of-the-question, I'm not a floozy?
I was a floozy.
Son-of-a-gun.

Hey, nobody's perfect even me,
Madam Zenobia,
Who has a phobia,
I like sex, what the heck, I like sex.

At my age I still feel a little horny.
I thought I would outgrow.
And wouldn't you know,
You're the one.

At my age I still feel a little horny.
I thought I would outgrow.
And wouldn't you know,
You're the one.

(Lights flicker and CHARLES DICKENS appears.)

LEE

Oh, my heavens, not here too? What are you doing here, did you follow me?

DICKENS

Hello Lee, Madam Z.

MADAM

Hello Charlie, how the hell are you?

DICKENS

I'm fine thank you and yourself?

MADAM

Like your great grandson, a little horny and a little hungry.

LEE

That's great, great, great grandson.

MADAM

Great Lee.

LEE

Oh, my Lord, my psychiatrist said the same thing.

MADAM

(Laughs.)

You don't say?

DICKENS

What happened to your beard? It used to be red.

MADAM

So was my snatch.

DICKENS

Your snatch?

MADAM

My *poontang*, my vagina!

DICKENS

(Bows graciously.)

Nothing's changed, has it Madam Z?

MADAM

Except your paunch, you used to be much thinner.

DICKENS

Must you remind me?

MADAM

How's Cleo?

DICKENS

Ravishing.

MADAM

And how's her *asp*?

DICKENS

Delectable, utterly desirable.

MADAM

I said *asp* not...

DICKENS

I know what you said. Must you always be so vulgar, so crude, so, *gauche*?

MADAM

If I remember correctly, it is you that fooled around with your wife's own sister, Mr. Gauche, who couldn't keep it in his pants. Now, you see who made *hanky panky*, Lee?

LEE

You did, you really fooled around with you're your sister in-law?

(Lights flicker and the DICKENS is gone.)

LEE

(Snaps fingers.)

He's gone, he disappeared just like that.

MADAM

Good, who the hell needs that loud mouth, *old fart?* And he's got a little one, little nothing .

(Off, we hear *Bah humbug*. After a beat, MADAM sings 🎵 refrain.)

NOBODY'S PERFECT EVEN ME

Hey, nobody's perfect even me,
Madam Zenobia,
Who has a phobia,
I like sex, what the heck, I like sex.

Like King David and Clinton, and Jefferson.
He had cake and cookies and had some nooky.
Filled with desire,
He had a fire.

Hey, nobody's perfect even me,
Madam Zenobia,
Who has a phobia,
I like sex, what the heck, I like sex.

End of Scene 5

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT I

Scene 6

The following day.

**In HIS office, LEE is pacing while
HE speaks to himself.**

LEE

You know, that's not a bad idea I had for my final *adieu*. Instead of doing just his books and plays, which is boring the hell out of me and probably my class, now, that I know he cheated on his wife, I think I'll concentrate mainly on his life, his biography. Let's see

(Sings ♫ aria, sort of opera.)

what I can come up with... Hmm...

MY FINAL ADIEU

Charlie's love of his home I believe helped bring about his ultimate separation.
That was his salvation, his separation.

His home was more than a place to hang his hat, eat, sleep, to him, it was a spiritual place.

To rest and to save face, where he found his grace.

And wherever he traveled, whatever triumph he attained, he always wanted to go home.
Write about his gnome, was his hippodrome.

For he hated being away from his children, whom he adored more than a day.
And as he turned gray, that became his way.

At least he had someone to love, to adore, and only then he wasn't lonely.
He felt his wife looked homely, thus he lived pronely.

He knew his future was for humanity to decide.
He believed he had much to share with the world.
And so he would write until he no longer could.
That is understood.
He would write until he no longer could.

He took his beloved family with him and set up a new home, and started working;
Life was tear-jerking, he was hard working.

In England, France, Italy. That's how he was able to renew his energy.
For his synergy, turned to clergy.

Mid-life crisis, Charlie hated going home, because Catherine would be waiting.
He started hating then started dating.

He knew he needed, wanted someone other than his wife, but he did not know who.
He had a clue, knew what he must do.

Wracked with trouble, and his nerves worn to a frazzle, that's why he turned to drinking.
Prevented his thinking and started sinking.

Charlie went to live with his mother, never to return until Catherine was gone.
It was thus foregone, he must carry on.

Despite it all, he told his beloved girls they could see their mother if they chose to
What else could he do, what else could he do?

He knew his future was for humanity to decide.
He believed he had much to share with the world.
And so he would write until he no longer could.
That is understood.
He would write until he no longer could.

(Lights flicker and Dickens appears.)

DICKENS

...And in case you don't know, I told my boys, who were away at school, they could also
visit their mother.

LEE

DAMN, I don't believe you're back! What the hell are you doing here?

DICKENS

I prefer you keep your vulgarity in abeyance and of course I'm back, did you think I'd
stay away? How could I, when for the first time you most accurately I might add, were
recalling my illustrious past, bravo!

LEE

Hallelujah, you mean I finally got it right?

DICKENS

(Smiles.)

Right, not that I like paraphrasing anyone, including as you say, your shrink and just what is a shrink?

LEE

(Smiles.)

Madam Zenobia also said right, right?

DICKENS

Madam Zenobia, who may I ask is Madam Zenobia?

LEE

You know, that gypsy fortune teller with that beard you said used to be red.

DICKENS

I'm sorry, but I've never had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a bearded, gypsy fortune teller. But, enough of your bearded fortune teller.

LEE

You remember, don't you? You saw her yesterday.

DICKENS

Most certainly not, I remember nothing of the sort.

LEE

Didn't you say she was so vulgar, so crude, so gauche?

DICKENS

Say that to whom?

LEE

(Looks up.)

Oh my nerves, I'm definitely losing it. Why are you doing this to me?

DICKENS

And what exactly are you losing?

LEE

Me.

DICKENS

By your malevolent intonation, I suppose I should feel sorry for you. My condolences, but that is not why I am here. I took leave of my Scheherazade...

LEE

...Scheherazade, now it's Scheherazade.

DICKENS

(Takes out and proudly waves veil.)

A magnificent enchantress if there ever was one. Her veils, her veils are so alluring and now she only has six. I took leave of my princess, because I became aware of you recalling my past, and now that I am here, shall we resume where we left off?

LEE

I'm really not in the mood for, "*A Christmas Carol*," right now.

DICKENS

Well, what are you in the mood for?

LEE

Nothing.

DICKENS

Nothing?!

LEE

All right. What about "*The Story of Goblins Who Stole a Sexton*?"

DICKENS

One of my favorites, a splendid choice. Paragraph two, page six, I shall play Gabriel...

LEE

...And I the Goblin, I always wanted to play a goblin. Paragraph two, page six it shall be, "*I'm afraid my friends want you Gabriel.*"

DICKENS

"Under favor sir. I don't think they can, sir; they don't know me, sir; I don't think the gentleman has ever seen me, sir."

LEE

"Oh yes they have. We know the man with the sulky face and the grim scowl, that came down the street tonight, throwing his evil looks at children, and grasping his burying spade the tighter. We know the man that struck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry and he could not. We know him, we know him."

DICKENS

"I, I am afraid I must leave you, Sir."

(LEE does not respond.)

DICKENS (cont'd)

Go on go on, continue, continue!

LEE

I, I don't know why, but, I forgot the next line. How could I forget the next line?

DICKENS

"Leave us, leave us," that is the next line, and that is exactly what I shall do. Leave, you innocuous want to be thespian.

(With that, Underscoring ends, the light flickers and the DICKENS is gone.)

LEE

(Paces and rants frantically.)

What the hell is wrong with me? My memory is... I, who can and has recited every line of every story and play he has ever written, finally has the opportunity to show him
(Sobs, then sings ♫)
how well versed I am and what do I do, I forget, I forgot, I forgot, how could I forget?

HOW COULD I FORGET?

According to the ones who are of note.
They thought I knew every word he wrote,
Every play, every book, every metaphor.
That's what they thought, but they were wrong.

My students called me mister Know-it-all.
But Mr. Know-it-all, has just took a fall.
They gave me a last chance to fill his shoes,
That's what I thought, but I was wrong.

How could I forget,
What I practiced everyday?
How could I forget,
What can I say?

I am distraught, forlorn I feel misbegotten.
My imagination makes me I feel so rotten
I try to sleep so that I may run away,
That's what I thought, but I was wrong.

How could I forget,
What I practiced everyday?
How could I forget,
What can I say?

End of ACT I

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT II

Scene 1

Two days later

LEE enters LEONARD'S office
and sits uneasily. There is silence.

LEONARD

So?

LEE

So?

(After a beat.)

LEONARD

Want to talk about it...? Well?

LEE

I think I'm a prime candidate to join your permanent guest on that funny farm. He's been with me the last two days. He's too much, it's too much, the whole damn thing's too

(Looks up.)

much. Why, why are you doing this to me? Haven't I suffered enough?

LEONARD

You may proceed, go on.

LEE

That's why I went to see Madam Zenobia again, I thought she could help.

LEONARD

You have a thing with beards I see.

LEE

Love 'em and wouldn't you know, *He* showed up there too, like who invited him?

LEONARD

I presume you mean...

LEE

Don't play dumb with me, you know who I mean and he's playing tricks with me and my mind. And can you believe they knew each other, like they were old kissing cousins. You should have heard their banter.

LEONARD

Please continue.

LEE

The following day, I'm going over my farewell lesson plan, he shows up and *voila*, like a fool I forget everything. How the hell can I forget everything. I can recite every freakin' sentence of everything he's ever written. And when I asked him about Madam Z, he said he didn't know who I was talking about. How can that be? He was talking to her. I heard him say "*Must you be so vulgar, so crude, so gauche?*" And she said to him,

(Sobs.)

"So's your paunch, you used to be much thinner." I heard them, I really did. You don't believe me, do you?

LEONARD

I'm sure you imagined you did. A moment ago you said you can remember everything Dickens ever wrote, when he's not present and I hope he's not here, is he?

LEE

(Looks around.)

I don't know, do you see him, I never know when he's going to pop up, do you? And as you know I can recite every sentence of every paragraph. Go a head, test me test me.

LEONARD

Since he's nowhere to be seen, how's about the first paragraph of "*The Haunted Man?*"

LEE

"*The Haunted Man...*" Here's my, I hope you like my Sir Lawrence Olivier impression. But, don't expect too much. "*Everybody said so. Far be it from me to assert that what everybody says must be true. Everybody is, often, as likely to be wrong as right. In the general experience, everybody has been wrong so often, and it has been in most instances such a weary, while to find out how wrong, that authority is proved to be fallible. Everybody may sometimes be right; "but that's no rule," as the ghost of Giles Scoggins says in the ballad.*" So, do I pass the test?

LEONARD

How do I know that's what he wrote?

LEE

You don't.

LEONARD

Let's see how good you really are, wise guy. Second paragraph of "Mrs. Gamp."

LEE

Second paragraph of "*Mrs. Gamp, Mrs. Gamp...*" I give you Sir John Gielgud. Hope it's better than my Gielgud. "*Mr. Pecksniff had been to the undertaker, and was now on his way to another office in the train of mourning,-- a female functionary, a nurse, and watcher, and performer of nameless offices about the persons of the dead,--who the undertaker had recommended. Her name was Mrs. Gamp; her residence, in Kings gate Street, High Holborn. So Mr. Pecksniff, in a hackney-cab, was rattling over Holborn's stones, in quest of Mrs. Gamp.*" And that my good man is the second paragraph of "*Mrs. Gamp.*" Even though my interpretation was... do I get an A?

LEONARD

Why do you think that you can remember everything your great, great, great grandfather ever wrote, and I must tell you, that it is quite impressive to be able to recall every sentence by rote and when *He*, as you say appears, you draw a blank.

LEE

I don't know, but I wish I did.

LEONARD

This ghost of yours, must be related to something very psychological, Freudian.

LEE

And this is what I'm paying you \$200 an hour for? To tell me it's something very psychological. I want my money back!

LEONARD

Want to talk about your hallucinations?

LEE

Hallucinations, hallucinations?! I knew you didn't believe me, you think I'm hallucinating, it's all in *my mind*, I'm *toozie bahts*, nuts, *meshugeh*, like *you Jews* say, right? Wrong, I saw him, I spoke to him and so did Madam Zenobia. Ya know you piss
(Rises, about to exit LEE sings ♫ duet with LEONARD.)
 me off. And I hate when you, you keep your eyes closed and say you're listening!

LISTENING MY ASS!

LEE

Listening my ass, you're sleeping!
I talk and you don't give a shit.
You say I'm hallucinating.
If I had the balls I would quit.

LEONARD

You won't quit because you're afraid.
Who else would listen to your crap?
And you could use more than first aid.
It seems your life is one mishap.

Complain, complain, complain,
That's all you ever do.

LEE

The pain the pain the pain,
It's 'cause I talk to you.

I thought that I would find some peace.
But I'm gaga and Looney tunes.
When will this nightmare ever cease.
So long doctor, good afternoon.

LEONARD

Have we forgotten funny far,
How crude how gauche, The Haunted man?
Have you forgotten who you are?
An English sage my fellow man.

Complain, complain, complain,
That's all you ever do.

LEE

The pain the pain the pain,
It's 'cause I talk to you.

End of scene 1

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT II

Scene 2

Later, same day.

MADAM'S parlor. Wearing her beard, SHE is sitting at the table about to pour wine from an empty bottle. Seeing it is empty, she tries the two other empty bottles that are on the table. Loaded, SHE hiccups and screams.

MADAM

WHAT THE HELL IS TAKING YOU SO LONG? MORE VINO PUSSYCAT MORE VINO PUSSYCAT!

(Wearing a beard and swaying, LEE enters with bottle of wine and gives it to MADAM, who pours two glasses.)

LEE

(Sings ♪ - hiccups - sways.)
"Love is lovelier, the hundredth time around." I don't think we should drink any more, do you? I'm getting tipsy, really zonked, smashereenio.

MADAM

(Gives glass of wine.)

Tipsy's good, zonk's good, smashereenio's even better. I love smashereenio. Here, drink this, I want you to get even more smashereenio and hurry up.

LEE

You do, why?

MADAM

(Touches Lee amorously.)

Because, I want to take advantage of you big boy, I want you, oh how I want you.

LEE

(Hiccups.)

You do, why?

MADAM

(Hiccups.)

Because I need your little squiggles, I want it, I must have it!

LEE

You want my what?

MADAM

(Sings ♪)

A LITTLE SPERMY

Your sperm, you know, those little things that swim around,
They think they're going somewhere.
Bumping, where the hell do they think they are going?
And what are you making such a big deal about?
I want one, just a little one, just a little spermy, that's all.

You have millions, they say you have millions or more.
All I need is a couple.
With all the spermies that you have whets the big deal?
You won't even miss them, you won't know they're gone.
I want one, just a little one, just a little spermy, that's all.

Mama, I want to be called mama one more time.
I want to rock her in my arms,
I want to say he has such charms
I want to sing a lullaby,
I want to hear my baby cry.
Mama, I want to be called mama one more time.

You have no idea how lonely my life has been.
It's a sin that's why I drink.
And all the wine in the world doesn't ease my mind.
What I need is someone to warm this hungry soul.
I want one, just a little one, just a little spermy, that's all.

Mama, I want to be called mama one more time.
I want to rock her in my arms,
I want to say he has such charms
I want to sing a lullaby,
I want to hear my baby cry.
Mama, I want to be called mama one more time.

What are you making such a big about? All I want is one, just a little one, just a little spermy, that's all.

LEE

(Incredulous, holds self.)
You want my sperm, my sperm?

MADAM

Just one, you got millions of them, millions.

LEE

(Touches crotch.)
You can't have my sperm, it's out of the question, they're mine.

MADAM

Please, I'm begging you, I haven't had a kid in who knows how long. Got to be over a 2, 300 years. That's why I'm lonely, so lonely. Mama, I want to be called Mama again.

(Trying to divert HER attention HE picks up crystal ball.)

LEE

(Picks up ball.)
Where shall I put your crystal ball, Madam Z?

MADAM

Forget about my crystal ball, will you? And just get over here and give it to me. I WANT IT! I WANT IT RIGHT NOW, SO GIVE IT TO ME, LET ME HAVE IT! LET HER RIP, BOMBS AWAY!

(HE struggles and moves crystal ball near window.)

MADAM (cont'd)

There, that's where you put it? You have to be kidding.

(Again HE picks up crystal ball, struggles and puts it on table.)

MADAM (cont'd)

Over there, you really think so?

(Exasperated, HE wipes brow and picks up ball.)

MADAM (cont'd)

Leave it, leave it, what are you knocking yourself out for? Tell me, are you really in the mood for a little crystal ball, sugar?

LEE

Not really. I think I could go for a little. Yeah, that's what I'm in the mood for. Give me my, I demand my!

MADAM

(Pats chair signaling Lee to sit.)

Your wish is my command, my liege. Put your touches over here and lets get going. Later, we'll get to your little cutie petuties, I love those little cutie petuties.

(SHE takes out pouch and sprinkles sand on table.)

MADAM (cont'd)

(Hiccups.)

Shall we?

LEE

(Hiccups.)

Why not, or how about a little *Abracadabra* or *Oooh, oooh*, or, *Inka binka*?

MADAM

(Reading sand.)

I see no one believes you, what a drag.

LEE

I know not even my shrink, Leonard.

MADAM

How disgusting, and you pay him a \$200, for what, so he won't believe you? And he sleeps, the man sleeps on the job. Why don't you get him some No Doze?

LEE

Even though he doesn't, you believe me, don't you? You saw the ghost of Charles Dickens, didn't you?

(MADAM does not respond, but drinks.)

LEE

Well, didn't you?

MADAM

No comment, I'm not saying a word, unless you give it to me.

LEE

Give you what?!

MADAM

(Coy.)

You know, your cutie petuties.

(Sings 🎵)

LEE

CUTIE PETUTIES

Forget about my cutie petuties,
Leave them out of it will you please?
Cutie petuties are my own beauties.
And *achew* I'm gonna sneeze.

You call cutie petuties your spermy.
I will not give spermies away.
They're not a pet that you call your wormy.
With my cuties you will never play.

Please don't squirm, I must confirm
I intend to keep my sperm, long term.

The millions that I have are truly mine.
Each and every one belongs to me.
I know why you want me to drink all that wine.
Because you want to make whoopee with me.

Please don't squirm, I must confirm
I intend to keep my sperm, long term.

(MADAM feigns tears.)

LEE (cont'd)

Stop crying, stop crying, why are you crying?

MADAM

Because you don't care, you don't care if I become a mother again, do you? Do you know how long it's been?

LEE

2, 300 years?

MADAM

(Sexily offers breast.)

And it's killing me, don't you understand, I love to breast feed. Here, wanna take a swig?

LEE

No, no thank you, I'm really not in the mood.

MADAM

Don't tell me you don't like Oreo's and milk?

LEE

No, no thank you, I'm really a Fig Newton man.

MADAM

(Rises.

-

Sexily offers breast.)

I got Fig Newtons, I got plenty of Fig Newtons, boxes, so, take a swig.

LEE

What about my great, great, great grandfather?

MADAM

What about Charlie?

LEE

He was here, you saw him, you spoke to him, didn't you?

MADAM

What about those cuties?

LEE

Please, you must tell me, he denied ever meeting you.

MADAM

Of course he denied meeting me, because if he would have admitted it, then he would have to admit that he cheated on Catherine and that would make him another Clinton, vulnerable, succumbing to the flesh. Thus he would be a mere mortal and far be it for that egotistical sonofabitch to think, to feel, he wasn't better than everyone in the world, including you, don't you wish you were like him instead of feeling inferior to him.

LEE

Me?

MADAM

That's right, you, even though you have a photographic memory, an IQ of 212, you still feel inferior, not as good as...

LEE

(Sad.)

...Charles Dickens, I've always wanted to be like him.

MADAM

What like him? You want to be him, write as great as him, but unfortunately, that's impossible. You're you and he's, he's dead, finished, gone, maybe not forgotten, but

(Sings ♫)

he's, "*So long, it's been good to know ya.*" He may be immortalized, but he doesn't

(Sings and runs after Lee.)

have those little cuties that you do, I want those cuties! "*Gimme a little kiss, will ya huh? What are ya gonna miss?*"

(SHE tries to envelope LEE, HE pushes her away and running, exits.)

End of Scene 2

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT II

Scene 3

The following day.

LEE is reading and reciting Shakespeare, in his office and appears happy. We hear Underscoring of APPOLOGY.

LEE

(Bows.)

...And that was first scene of, "*King Lear*," and now I shall proceed with the magnificent, "*Hamlet*." I give you the brilliant Richard Burton as Hamlet: "*Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd. Bring with the airs from heaven or blasts from hell, be thy intents wicked or charitable, Thou comest in such a questionable shape that I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet, King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me! Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death, have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre, wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd, hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, to cast thee up again. What may this mean, that thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel revisits thus the glimpses of the moon, making night hideous, and we fools of nature so horridly to shake our disposition with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls? So, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?" Was that Shakespeare the best, or was he the best?*

(Underscoring ends.)

(Lights flicker and outraged, DICKENS appears and sings sort of opera.)

DICKENS

I SHALL SAY IT AGAIN

The best the best!
How dare you insinuate that knave is the best.
Detest, detest!
What he hath written fills me with disinterest.

You jest you jest.
Speak not of English literature I protest.
Hard pressed, hard pressed.
I shall speak not of interest at his inquest

How dare you mention that thief Shakespeare in my presence.
How many ideas and plays did he steal from his fellow countrymen?
I shall say it again,
How many ideas and plays did he steal from his fellow countrymen?

Create, create.
In your heart only I you must say is first rate.
Third rate, third rate,
For with Shakespeare and I you must never equate.

Fly weight, fly weight.
When I think of that that thief, who I must berate.
Primate, primate,
If given the privilege, mutate and castrate.

How dare you mention that thief Shakespeare in my presence.
How many ideas and plays did he steal from his fellow countrymen?
I shall say it again,
How many ideas and plays did he steal from his fellow countrymen?

LEE

(Smiles.)

Steal from his fellow countrymen, huh? I guess he didn't give a hoot about copyright infringement, did he?

DICKENS

Are you trying to be funny? You are not, my good man.

LEE

Well, how about a little, "*OTHELLO?*" For thy pleasure, I give you my man, Iago:

(DICKENS holds his ears as LEE recites, "*OTHELLO.*")

LEE (cont'd)

"O, sir, content you; I follow him to serve my turn upon him: We cannot all be master, not all masters cannot truly follow'd. You shall mark many a duteous and knee-crooking knave, that, doting on his own obsequious bondage, wears out his time, much like his masters, for nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd whip me such honest knaves."

DICKENS

I hope you are through, well, are you through, are you through?

LEE

Just a little, "*Romeo and Juliet*" and I'll be through. I promise. Juliet: "*O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name, or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love. And I'll no longer be a Capulet.*" Is that not gorgeous prose, or is that not gorgeous prose?

DICKENS

I cannot take this a moment longer.

LEE

By the way, how is Cleopatra's asp?

DICKENS

I object to your mundane sense of humor!

LEE

Quote: "*It's not like I have committed the biggest crime of the century? SENTENCE ME! SEND ME TO THE GALLOWS!*" End of my quote.

DICKENS

If I could, I most assuredly would send you to the gallows.

LEE

As my doubting shrink says, "*You are nothing more than a mere apparition, a figment of my vivid imagination.*" Touché Leonard, and did you not say, "*All I do is live vicariously through famous people like you?*" Well, didn't you? And you know what? You're right.

DICKENS

I have been known to say many things.

LEE

Yes my mentor, many famous things, but it is you who denied what Madame Z said, that you had an affair with your wife's sister... Well, did you not? Seems you've drawn

(Ala Jimmy Durante)

one big zippo, *nada*, nothing as I did. My quote again, "*I got a million of them, a million of them.*" I guess I'm a prime candidate for the funny farm, care to join me?

DICKENS

What is a funny farm and what exactly is your problem?

(Underscore is heightened.)

LEE**(Serious.)**

I'll tell what my problem is, gladly. For as long as I can remember, since I was a babe in arms, I admired you, I looked up to you, I wanted to be just like you. Not me, mind you, but you, you. For, as far as my father was concerned, even though I could speak at nine months old, I was never good enough for him. The first word I said was Dickens, not Mama, which pleased him immensely. At two I could read the London Times, and so my Father, your great, great grandson and I would read your brilliant stories and plays, night and day. I was mesmerized, not to say inundated by your genius. As I grew up, instead of playing ball with my friends, what friends? I had no friends. All I had was you, you. To him, to me, you became everything. And so I devoured, I memorized every sentence you ever wrote and ultimately became professor emeritus of English literature, your literature. I never got married, never had a family. You were everything to me, you still truly are and I, nothing more than totally subservient to you and your memory, a non sequitur, a nothing, but, you are only a memory, a manifestation of my immature inadequacy, for I never grew up, I created you, alas, out of sheer necessity, I created you, because without you... And now, at long last, I don't have to look up to you anymore, I've come to realize, that you weren't, aren't better than me. Only in my distorted way of thinking and certainly not better than Shakespeare.

DICKENS

Must you constantly remind me of him? I protest.

LEE

It seems thou doth protest a bit too much. For thy protestation, how's about a little "MacDuff," mister?"

(The DICKENS covers ears and cringes as Underscoring ends.)

DICKENS

I am not your mister and are you through making a mockery of me?

LEE

I don't know, let me think about it?

(Lights flicker and the DICKENS disappears.)

LEE (cont'd)

(Sings 🎵)

AUREVOIR, TOODLE LOO

Aurevoir, aurevoir,
 Hope I never see you again.
 Knew you were more than just a friend
 You've been just a pain in my ass,
 And I thought you had such class.
 To think I wanted to be you.

Aurevoir, aurevoir,
Toodle loo, toodle loo.
Parting is such sweet goodbyes.
I've told myself all those damn lies.
You meant so much to me and more.
But in time I learned the score
To think I wanted to be you.
Toodle loo, toodle loo.

This life that I have wasted.
Hope its not too late.
Honey I haven't tasted.
This man needs a mate.

I'll find a girl and marry.
A home to come home.
A boy and girl I'll carry.
Never will I roam.

Cie la vie, cie la vie.
To think I've wasted all these years for naught.
And all those students that I think I taught.
They idolized, thought I was smart.
Just a fool that didn't trust his heart.
I never learned who I was.

A bee that didn't learn to buzz.
I never learned to be me.
Cie la vie, cie la vie.
This life that I have wasted.

This life that I have wasted.
Hope its not too late.
Honey I haven't tasted.
This man needs a mate.

I'll find a girl and marry.
A home to come home.
A boy and girl I'll carry.
Never will I roam.

End of Scene 3

The GHOST of DICKENS

ACT II

Scene 4

The following day.

**LEONARD'S office, LEE is pacing.
Underscoring of "I CAN'T TAKE IT
ANYMORE."**

LEE

I'm telling you, you, were a 100% right. I guess that's why you get the big bucks.

LEONARD

Right, about what?

LEE

My hallucinations my figments.

LEONARD

And what made you come to that conclusion?

LEE

(Looks up.)

Theoretically, you did, but in reality that's funny, me and reality.

**(Underscoring ends. DICKENS bows as he appears and MADAM Z sashets
sexily. Underscoring of "NOBODY'S PERFECT" throughout.)**

LEE

Oh my God, I don't believe it.

LEONARD

And what don't you believe, Lee?

LEE

They're here. Can't you see them?

LEONARD

Can't I see whom?

LEE

My great, great, great grandfather.

LEONARD

Are you telling me that Charles Dickens is here, in my office, well please introduce me.

LEE

He's standing next to Madam Zenobia, can't you see them, they're over there.

LEONARD

I wish I could, but I'm afraid not Lee.

LEE

(To Madam and Dickens.)

Say something, please say something to him.

MADAM

What would you like me to say Sugar?

LEE

Did you hear her did you hear her?

LEONARD

Did I hear what Lee?

LEE

She said, "*What would you like me to say Sugar?*" She's always coming on to me, like I need or want it.

MADAM

And what about my waterbed, have you forgotten about my waterbed? I want action.

LEE

Will you forget about your waterbed? I hate waterbeds.

LEONARD

I never knew you had such a distaste for waterbeds Lee. Would you like to talk about it?

LEE

I wasn't talking to you I was talking to...

MADAM

...You were talking to me, weren't you pussycat. Now, are you in the mood for a little *cuhtchy cuhtchy, pussycat?* I'm in the mood for a little *cuhtchy cuhtchy*.

LEE

(Loud.)

I'm not in the mood for your waterbed or your *cuhtchy cuhtchy*.

LEONARD

So now it's waterbeds and *cuhtchy cuhtchy*. And just what is *cuhtchy cutchy*?

MADAM

Tell him its *hanky panky*.

LEE

It's *hanky panky*.

LEONARD

I see *cuhtchy cuhtchy* is *hanky panky*. Makes sense.

LEE

Exactly.

LEONARD

And what does your great, great, great grandfather have to say about waterbeds and *cuhtchy cuhtchy*?

LEE

(To Dickens.)

Would you please tell my unbelieving shrink what you think of waterbeds and *cuhtchy cuhtchy*?

DICKENS

So, at last I meet your shrink. He doesn't look that shrunk to me, and as far as waterbeds and as you say *cuhtchy cuhtchy*, I don't believe I've ever heard that word before, but I do say it is rather enchanting. *Cuhtchy, cuhtchy*, yes, I do like the way it sounds.

MADAM

You like the way it sounds, huh? Let's go for a little walk to my waterbed and I'll give a *cuhtchy cuhtchy* that you'll never forget.

DICKENS

Is it anything like *hanky panky* Madam Z.

MADAM

(Pinches Dickens ass.)

The two go hand in hand and you know, for an *alte cocker*, you have a nice *touches*.

DICKENS

And just what is a *touches*?

MADAM

(Offers arm.)

Shall we?

DICKENS

(Takes arm.)

And do you think I'll like your waterbed?

MADAM

Trust me, you'll love it. They all do.

(Hugging, THEY exit as Underscoring ends.)

LEE

They're gone.

LEONARD

They're gone?

LEE

Both of them.

LEONARD

I suppose you mean Charles Dickens and...

LEE

...Madam Zenobia.

LEONARD

Did she have her beard?

LEE

(Sings. ♪)

No, she must have forgotten it, but...

FORNICATING

The nerve, they didn't say goodbye.

It's like they really didn't care.

This life I've lived has been a lie

My soul is merely wash and wear.

This doubt I feel is blowing my mind.

Don't know what or who I should believe.

This topsy turvy world's made me blind.

Who tells the truth and seems most deceive?

My great grandfather and Madam Z
They have blown my mind did it to me.
Could I have been hallucinating?
And Madam Z's fornicating

I've quoted him, knew every word.
She told me what she calls is norm.
And like a fool believed every word.
Feels like I'm lost in a snowstorm.

My great grandfather and Madam Z
They have blown my mind did it to me.
Could I have been hallucinating?
And Madam Z's fornicating
I guess I better say goodbye to them.

LEONARD

Are such good-byes really necessary?

LEE

I suppose not.

LEONARD

How do you feel Lee?

LEE

How do I feel? I don't know, I suppose I feel sort of relieved.

LEONARD

Want to talk about it?

LEE

What's there to say? They didn't even say goodbye, because maybe they weren't supposed to say to say goodbye.

LEONARD

Really?

LEE

Maybe they were as you said a figment of my imagination? You didn't see them and I did. I made the both up, didn't I?

LEONARD

And why would you do such a thing?

LEE

Maybe it was my way of meeting my mentor, my salvation and cleansing my soul, my
(Sings ♪♪)
salvation of him and finally saying, “*So long, it’s been good to know you.*”

LEONARD

Cleansing your soul your salvation, finally saying goodbye, huh?

LEE

My whole life, I not only tried to be like him, I thought I was him. And the reason why I suddenly forgot some of his illustrious verbiage has to be, because my unwilling subconscious was protecting me. It had enough of my horseshit. It was afraid I was suffocating myself and it knew I had to get rid of the ghost of Dickens once and for all. That’s why I had a memory lapse... It was a way of saying to myself, wake up dummy, only Dickens knows every word he ever wrote and Dickens is dead and I don’t, nor can’t,
(Sings ♪♪)
nor do I want to be him. I am a live and I couldn’t be happier. “*I gotta be me I gotta be me.*”

LEONARD

You see when you go to the best what happens?

LEE

And worth every penny, Doctor.

LEONARD

And what about your bearded *cuhtchy cuhtchy*?

LEE

A simple manifestation of an unquenchable need. Because of Him I never got married, didn’t have a girl friend. So, what else was I going to dream up, but a real sexy *hanky panky* with big breasts?

LEONARD

But with a beard?

LEE

(Sings. ♪♪)

Why not *Buhby*?

THANKS TO YOU

LEE

I never said I wasn't freaky, did I?
I never said I was part of the norm.
And thanks to you no longer will this guy cry.
And from now on this guy will weather storm.

LEONARD

Well look at that I believe you have got it.
Once in-awhile I've saved a taunted soul.
And to think you have found no longer lost it.
I hope from now on you'll be on a roll.

(LEE and LEONARD put arms around each other and sing 🎵)

LEE and LEONARD

Thanks to you,
My life is now complete.
A winner who will defeat.
The taming of the shrew.
Thanks to you, thanks to you.

LEE

There is so much I have to thank Dickens for.
My career, his genes that's his D N A.
Now that I have finally learned to keep score.
Madam Zenobia take me away.

LEONARD

I'm so happy that you've found true happiness
Your students, the world craves your intellect.
No longer Dickens represents ugliness.
This genius only deserves our respect.

LEE and LEONARD

Thanks to you,
My life is now complete.
A winner who will defeat.
The taming of the shrew.
Thanks to you, thanks to you.

(LEE and LEONARD hug and the curtain falls.)

The End