

QUEER THEORY  
A Play in two Acts  
By John Fisher

Characters

JEFF, a Queer Theory professor  
JEFFREY, the gender inverse of JEFF  
RENEE, transgendered sister to JEFF and a Gender Studies professor  
DAVIS, a professor from Harvard  
FRANKLIN, a research physician, friend of JEFF's  
CONCEPCION, a university student  
DANNY, another university student

Time

The Present

Place

Berkeley, Harvard, Oxford

Scene One

(A lecture hall. JEFF stands at a podium delivering a lecture to the audience.)

JEFF

Queer is not gay and lesbian. It is not male or female. Queer resists oppositional definitions such as these. Queer emphasizes the body's slipperiness, its resistance to stability, its refusal to knuckle under and be defined. And queer theorists such as myself are not the first to think this. Let's take an example from history, shall we? An example of queer thinking. A lot has been made of the Boy Actresses on the Elizabethan stage. Women, of course, were not allowed to perform in the plays of Shakespeare so boys played the great heroines. Why? The Spaniards of this time let women perform onstage because they couldn't tolerate the idea of boys running about in drag playing women's roles. So why were the English so determined to keep women offstage that they would allow boys to run around in drag partaking of sexual situations with fully grown men. (Pause.) It arises from seventeenth-century anxieties about what might happen to a woman in a sexual situation, especially a public one. The fact is the Elizabethans were barely hanging on to their gender. They believed, basing their beliefs on Aristotle, Galen, Pythagoras, Hippocrates and the rest of that crowd, that men and women shared the same genitalia except that men's was extroverted while women's was introverted. They saw in the penis, in the scrotum the external manifestation of the clitoris, the vagina. Elizabethan anatomy believed that in the womb all feti were female with internalized genitals. But at some point enough heat was generated, or not, to make the scrotum fall thus creating from a female a male, or not. Thus a female was an incomplete male. An uncooked male. An unheated biscuit. A raw, unsavory, incomplete man. This explains Aristotle's contempt for women. A contempt shared by the Elizabethans. Women were unfinished men. But the danger of heat remains. Even after the womb, post birth. A physician reported in this period that a woman who over-exerted herself, who over-heated herself by chasing a pig, actually dropped her scrotum, actually altered her gender. She worked herself up into such a state that she became a man. How is this possible? I must digress briefly. The Elizabethans further believed that a woman must orgasm, must generate semen, just as a man must, to create a baby. Ergo, women's orgasms were as key to procreation as men's. Therefore sex was about mutual orgasms without which a baby could not be created. Thus not just "yes, yes, yes, I'm coming." But "'Yes, yes, yes, I'm coming.' "Me too.'" That's what would make a baby. What happens then in unsatisfactory or simulated sex, as you would have onstage, if the women didn't orgasm? If she didn't release her heat via semen? If she did not dispense her sexual heat in the procreation of a baby? She'd drop her balls. She'd pop her dick. And right there, onstage, you would have created a man. Imagine the great love scene from *Romeo and Juliet* with a man and woman playing the roles. What starts out with a lot of steamy adolescent sex talk between a man and woman would have ended up with the woman overheating and becoming a man. But what would happen to the man? Take this thinking to its logical conclusion and what happens to the man who doesn't orgasm as the woman who doesn't orgasm becomes male. He becomes female. As her balls fall, his retract. As her vagina

pops out forming a pp, his pp beats a hasty retreat forming a vagina. She convexes as he concaves. It's madness. What's the solution? They both have sex onstage to release their heat and maintain their gender. Live hardcore pornography was the only solution. And failing that, because Queen Elizabeth - the Virgin Queen - would never condone onstage copulation, they had to bring on the boys in skirts.

(CONCEPCION, a student sitting in the audience, has raised her hand.)

CONCEPCION

Dr. Webster.

JEFF

Yes, Concepcion.

CONCEPCION

Wouldn't the boy and the man, in this rubric, both get overheated in the seduction scene and turn into women?

JEFF

No. Maybe if the boy was playing boy, but his very gender confusion, the fact that he was got up as a woman, would so confuse the older actor that he couldn't finally settle on a stable lust-object and therefore could not get sufficiently aroused.

CONCEPCION

But what if the older actor was a tranny chaser?

JEFF

A what?

CONCEPCION

What if he was into transsexuals? Shemales. Transgenders

JEFF

Nobody's really into shemales, Concepcion. That's something sick you've picked up on the Internet. Transvestities, transsexuals, transgenders are all freaks. Just because our culture is so pretentious we refuse to recognize that doesn't mean the Elizabethans were so sick and twisted. It's important to remember that surgery to the Elizabethans was still a practical science. It hadn't yet become the creative tool for self-mutilation it has become for us. The Elizabethans hadn't discovered the self-loathing certain deviants in our society take as an inspiration for slicing off their dicks. It's like cutting off an arm or leg, Concepcion. It just wouldn't occur to them. Nobody's really into people who cut off their cocks, Concepcion. Most people just don't get it. They think, rightly, that it's sick. Does that answer your question?

CONCEPCION

I guess.

JEFF

Do you know any transgenders?

CONCEPCION

No.

JEFF

Well I suggest you meet a few. Then you'll understand. Are there any other questions?

DANNY

(Another student in the audience)

Is it true you're going to Harvard?

JEFF

Now who told you that?

DANNY

Gossip.

JEFF

Well, remember gossip is femininizing. It's a little too much heat on your balls. But yes, I am being courted very seriously by Harvard and if the deal's sweet enough I fully intend to go.

DANNY

But what about us?

JEFF

Well, Berkeley is a public school and Harvard is private. And you know what that means kids. (We hear a bell chime.) That's one o'clock. I have office hours till two.

(Blackout.)

Scene Two

(Lights up immediately on CONCEPCION and DANNY talking in the aisle.)

CONCEPCION

He's an arrogant fuck.

DANNY

He's the most popular teacher on campus.

I can't believe what he just said.  
CONCEPCION

About trannies?  
DANNY

About gossip is feminizing.  
CONCEPCION

He doesn't believe in a lot of p.c. bullshit.  
DANNY

You think he's hot.  
CONCEPCION

So what if I do?  
DANNY

He'd probably be really into you.  
CONCEPCION

Jealous?  
DANNY

He fucks anything. So long as it's young. And male.  
CONCEPCION

Is that the gossip?  
DANNY

I just think anyone's who's gay should be a hell of a lot more sympathetic to women and trannies.  
CONCEPCION

Why? Because he's gay?  
DANNY

Yeah.  
CONCEPCION

Freaks should stick together?  
DANNY

I don't consider women freaks.  
CONCEPCION

DANNY

A lot of fags do.

CONCEPCION

Well, that's really sad.

DANNY

I don't.

CONCEPCION

You're not a fag. You're bisexual.

DANNY

I'm probably a fag. Bisexuality's just a phase.

CONCEPCION

I don't think that.

DANNY

Everybody's queer?

CONCEPCION

Yeah, and I bet I can prove it.

DANNY

Really?

CONCEPCION

Yes, everybody's queer.

DANNY

I'll take that bet.

(Blackout. Lights up on...)

Scene Three

(FRANKLIN and DAVIS chatting in another place.)

FRANKLIN

Yes, yes, he's innovative all right.

DAVIS

He did put you down as a reference.

FRANKLIN

And I support him.

DAVIS

You think he's radical?

FRANKLIN

Yes, he has some radical ideas about Renaissance anatomy and he has a no bullshit way of lecturing, But I think that's his style. He likes to stir things up.

DAVIS

It's um... It's a little unusual for a PhD to have an MD recommend him.

FRANKLIN

Well, I'm a researcher more than I am a doctor.

DAVIS

Did you two do research together?

FRANKLIN

He was one of my teachers. He initiated me.

DAVIS

Into what?

FRANKLIN

The expanded reality of queer theory. Into a broader understanding of what the body is capable. The infinity of possibilities.

DAVIS

Sounds more like weird science than queer theory.

FRANKLIN

One of our favorite movies.

DAVIS

Is it sound theory?

FRANKLIN

You're considering him seriously for this appointment.

DAVIS

Yes, very seriously.

FRANKLIN

He's pretty far out there. Harvard will just have to decide how far out it wants to go.

DAVIS

I'm attending his lecture on Wednesday.

FRANKLIN

There are more intimate ways of reviewing his ideas.

DAVIS

Thank you for your recommendation, Doctor.

FRANKLIN

A pleasure.

(Blackout. Lights up on...)

Scene Four

(JEFF's office. A desk and a door upstage. DANNY, naked, sits on the desk facing upstage. He climaxes and JEFF surfaces from between his legs.)

DANNY

Wow. That was... that was really intense.

JEFF

Now, do you want to talk about your paper?

DANNY

Jesus...

JEFF

Your thesis is strong but the supporting sections are pure fiction.

DANNY

Where's my underwear?

JEFF

Here. If you don't have the evidence you should change your thesis.

DANNY

But that's the point I want to make.

JEFF

An essay is not about making a point, it's about proving a point. Your proofs are non-existent.

DANNY

So I should change my thesis?

JEFF

Or manipulate your evidence.

DANNY

Like you do.

JEFF

Like I do?

DANNY

The Elizabethans were afraid of scrota popping out onstage.

JEFF

Put your underpants on.

DANNY

You don't really believe that? About Elizabethan anatomy.

JEFF

Read Greenblatt. Read Orgel. Read Maclean. Read Laqueur...

DANNY

But that's not their conclusion.

JEFF

No, it's mine. A thesis is not where anyone else has started and it's not where anyone else has been, it's where you end up, and it is both surprising and unique.

DANNY

And creative.

JEFF

But not fiction.

DANNY

I have a friend who has a thesis.

JEFF

Well, let's hope he ends up some place surprising and unique.

She. DANNY

Ok. JEFF

And she's hoping for a fellow traveler. DANNY

You know the great thing about this university it doesn't have a non-fraternization code. JEFF

Which means you can screw students. DANNY

Which means I can throw you out of my office when I'm done. That's two. JEFF

(We hear a knock.)

Come in. JEFF

(The door opens. CONCEPCION sticks her head in. She sees DANNY.)

Hey. CONCEPCION

Hey. DANNY

Excuse me. JEFF  
(Exiting to bathroom.)

Came by to test your theory? DANNY

Nobody's all gay. CONCEPCION

He's more than all gay. He's a bottom. DANNY

CONCEPCION

You have a nice penis, Danny.

DANNY

Thank you, Concepcion.

(JEFF reenters drying his hands on a towel.)

JEFF

Thanks for dropping by, Danny.

DANNY

Thank you, Dr. Webster.

JEFF

Don't forget your paper.

DANNY

Thank you, Dr. Webster. (He exits.)

CONCEPCION

Hello.

JEFF

Hello.

CONCEPCION

How are you?

JEFF

Great. How are you?

CONCEPCION

Maybe this isn't the moment.

JEFF

No, I'm free now.

CONCEPCION

I meant, maybe you need to relax. For what I have to say to you.

JEFF

What do you have to say to me?

CONCEPCION

Well...

JEFF

Well...

CONCEPCION

When was the last time you were this close...

JEFF

This close...

CONCEPCION

To a woman.

JEFF

You'd be surprised.

CONCEPCION

I'd like to be.

JEFF

I'm a chivalrous man, Ms. Juarez.

CONCEPCION

Oh, really?

JEFF

It's the nice side of being a chauvinist bastard.

CONCEPCION

Ok...

JEFF

I think...

CONCEPCION

Yes...

JEFF

While it's culturally acceptable to copulate casually with another man...

CONCEPCION

Yes...

JEFF

A woman...

A woman?  
CONCEPCION

A lady...  
JEFF

Yes...  
CONCEPCION

Should have some dinner in her.  
JEFF

So take me...  
CONCEPCION

Yes?  
JEFF

To dinner.  
CONCEPCION

Ok. It'll give me a chance to catch my breath.  
JEFF

(Blackout. Lights up on...)

Scene Five

(DAVIS and DANNY talking in the aisle.)

He gave you my name?  
DANNY

Yes. Do you enjoy his class?  
DAVIS

Yeah, sure. You know, he screws his students.  
DANNY

I didn't know that.  
DAVIS

His male students.  
DANNY

That's not as much of a problem.

DAVIS

It's practically part of the curriculum.

DANNY

If you're cute, I assume.

DAVIS

Well, that helps.

DANNY

(Blackout. Lights up on...)

Scene Six

(JEFF's apartment. There is a couch and a table with phone. A door with a light switch on the wall beside it is upstage. CONCEPCION and JEFF have just entered.)

It's a nice place.

CONCEPCION

Thank you.

JEFF

Dinner was lovely.

CONCEPCION

You were lovely eating it.

JEFF

The clams were delish.

CONCEPCION

So were the mussels.

JEFF

You act so gay in class.

CONCEPCION

And you act like a prick.

JEFF

I'm nervous in your class.

CONCEPCION

Now why would that be?

JEFF

My mother hassles me about the courses I take.

COCNEPCION

She wants you to take business courses.

JEFF

How did you guess?

CONCEPCION

Parents of ethnic students. It's an old story.

JEFF

You really are something.

CONCEPCION

(They kiss.)

Do I kiss like a boy?

CONCEPCION

I don't kiss boys.

JEFF

No?

CONCEPCION

Not on the mouth.

JEFF

Oh.

CONCEPCION

(More kissing. He breaks away.)

I'm feeling sick.

JEFF

Really?

CONCEPCION

JEFF

Look, this isn't working.

CONCEPCION

It seems to be.

JEFF

I just don't believe in it – politically.

CONCEPCION

How about physically?

JEFF

(Holding his stomach)

No, I'm sorry. Maybe if we were both women. Excuse me.

(He exits to bathroom. She smiles and then looks towards bathroom concerned.)

CONCEPCION

Are you all right?

JEFF

Yes, yes I'm fine. Just looking for a Tums.

(JEFFREY, a woman, enters from bathroom dressed exactly like JEFF. Her clothes are a bit big for her.)

JEFFREY

They're around here somewhere.

(On seeing her, CONCEPCION jumps.)

CONCEPCION

Who...?

JEFFREY

What happened to you?

CONCEPCION

What happened to me?

JEFFREY

You look taller.

CONCEPCION

Who the hell are you?

What?  
JEFFREY

Who the hell...  
CONCEPCION

You look gigantic. What happened to you?  
JEFFREY

Don't touch me.  
CONCEPCION

Your hands are huge.  
JEFFREY

Where's...  
CONCEPCION

Come here.  
JEFFREY

I... I...  
CONCEPCION

Come over here.  
JEFFREY

Is he... Is he...  
CONCEPCION

I said come here...  
JEFFREY

Don't order me around.  
CONCEPCION

Where are you going?  
JEFFREY

Where's Dr. Webster?  
CONCEPCION

JEFFREY  
(Sarcastic)

Gee, I don't know. Where is Dr. Webster? You're very oddly proportioned.

CONCEPCION

What are you talking about?

JEFFREY

You're like a foot taller.

CONCEPCION

I... I don't know...

JEFFREY

What's the hell's wrong with you?

CONCEPCION

I... Listen if Dr. Webster has left I'm leaving too.

JEFFREY

Stop acting like such a weirdo.

CONCEPCION

Don't talk to me like that.

JEFFREY

Don't talk to *me* like that.

CONCEPCION

I'm leaving.

JEFFREY

Concepcion-

CONCEPCION

Are you like Dr. Webster's wife or something?

JEFFREY

My wife. What the fuck is going on with my pants?

CONCEPCION

I'm leaving.

JEFFREY

Ahhh!!! What the hell's up with my hair?

CONCEPCION

Your hair.

JEFFREY

What happened to my hair? And why are my clothes so big?

CONCEPCION

Could you stop it? You're really freaking me out. Why is this door locked?

JEFFREY

(Feeling chest)

Ahhhh! What... What the hell have you done to me?

CONCEPCION

Me?

JEFFREY

You... You mutilated me.

CONCEPCION

What?

JEFFREY

What did you do to me?

CONCEPCION

Nothing. I don't even know you.

JEFFREY

What?

CONCEPCION

Could you open this door please?

JEFFREY

No.

CONCEPCION

I want to leave.

JEFFREY

(Grabbing hold of her)

Come here. Now what did you do to me?

CONCEPCION

Let go of me. (The lights go black.) Ahhh!! Turn the lights on.

JEFFREY

I didn't turn them off. You bumped the switch.

COCNEPCION

Turn the lights on! Help! Help!

JEFF

Stop that. Stop yelling.

(Lights up. JEFF is holding CONCEPCION.)

CONCEPCION

What? Where...

JEFF

Calm down.

CONCEPCION

Where's that woman?

JEFF

What woman?

CONCEPCION

The one that tried to rape me.

JEFF

Nobody tried to rape you.

CONCEPCION

Where did you go?

JEFF

What's going on?

CONCEPCION

What do you mean?

JEFF

My clothes fit.

CONCEPCION

Yes.

JEFF

They didn't before.

CONCEPCION

You're very strange.

JEFF

Of course I'm strange. I just lost a foot and then gained it back again.

CONCEPCION

Where's that woman?

JEFF

What is going on?

CONCEPCION

I don't know but you're scaring me.

JEFF

I'm scaring you. You're scaring me.

CONCEPCION

I'm shaking.

JEFF

Stay away from me.

(The phone rings – loud. Both scream. She jumps and grabs him.)

JEFF

It's just the phone.

CONCEPCION

Answer it.

JEFF

It goes to voice mail.

CONCEPCION

It does?

JEFF

I don't answer my phone.

So why do you let it ring?

So I know when I'm getting a call.

But you don't have caller id.

I wouldn't answer it anyway.

Interesting.

That was odd.

Yes.

Very odd.

I... I must be seeing things.

CONCEPCION

Me too.

JEFF

That was weird.

CONCEPCION

It was.

JEFF

Are you on medication?

No. Are you?

Just recreational things.

You want to kiss me again?

I'm not sure that's such a good idea.

I don't know. You were doing pretty good before.

(They kiss and fall romantically behind the sofa. CONCEPCION screams and stands up. JEFFREY stands beside her.)

What's wrong?

JEFFREY



(The lights go out.)

CONCEPCION

Take your hands off me.

JEFF

I'm just trying to turn on the light. There!

(The lights go on. JEFFREY stands in JEFF's place.)

CONCEPCION

Oh, God.

JEFFREY

What?

COCNEPCION

Guess what just happened.

JEFFREY

Oh, shit.

CONCEPCION

Please let me go.

JEFFFREY

You have to stay and help me.

CONCEPCION

Just open the door. Please, Dr. Webster.

JEFFREY

Has this ever happened to you before?

CONCEPCION

I've only had one boyfriend and his gender was very stable.

JEFFREY

(Pleading on her knees)

Help me.

CONCEPCION

I can't.

JEFFREY

I'm begging you.

CONCEPCION

Get off your knees.

JEFFREY

Please help me.

(JEFFREY, on her knees pleading, backs CONCEPCION behind the coach.  
JEFFREY disappears from view.)

CONCEPCION

Oh my God. I saw it happen.

(JEFF stands up behind the coach.)

JEFF

What?

CONCEPCION

I saw it happen.

JEFF

You did?

CONCEPCION

Ah, don't touch me! (She pushes him and he falls behind the couch.) It happened again.

JEFFREY  
(Standing)

I...

CONCEPCION

Your hair grew like Barbie's when you press her tummy.

JEFFREY

That's not all that happened.

CONCEPCION

Oh, oh my...

JEFFREY

This boyfriend of yours...

CONCEPCION

Yes...

JEFFREY

Did his scrotum and testicles retract when you touched him?

CONCEPCION

Dr. Webster, please open the door.

JEFFREY

I'm going to let you leave because I suddenly have a tremendous sympathy for you as a woman and I don't want you to feel trapped.

CONCEPCION

That's very empathetic of you. Please open the door

JEFFREY

But I want to hold onto you.

CONCEPCION

Fine but open the door.

JEFFREY

I'm afraid if I let you go my frank and beans will remain retracted.

CONCEPCION

You'll get used to it.

(The door is open. CONCEPCION exits quickly. JEFFREY stands and makes a tremendous effort. Nothing happens. Blackout. Music. Lights immediately up on JEFFREY talking on the phone to FRANKLIN. JEFFREY is in his apartment. FRANKLIN stands in another place wearing a bathrobe. During the scene DAVIS, also wearing a bathrobe, enters behind FRANKLIN and eavesdrops.)

Scene Seven

JEFFREY

It has something to do with heat.

FRANKLIN

Yes... Yes...

JEFFREY

Heat makes my... Well, it restores my masculinity. Or takes it away.

FRANKLIN

This is incredible. I want to come over. I want to get this down on video.

JEFFREY

I'm not a lab rat.

FRANKLIN

Of course you aren't. But this is phenomenal.

JEFFREY

I'm hanging up.

FRANKLIN

Ok... Ok... I'm sorry. Listen.

Is someone there with you.

Um, yeah. Go back to bed sweetie.

Who's there with you?

The guy from Harvard. He wants to know everything about you.

You called him sweetie.

I'm trying to get you this job.

Oh, God.

He's coming on to your lecture tomorrow.

Oh, Jesus. This isn't happening.

You need to speak to someone you can trust. Personally. Someone sympathetic.

JEFFREY

I thought you were sympathetic.

FRANKLIN

I'm too jaded. All I can think about is the Nobel Prize. Can you talk to your parents?

JEFFREY

Please, they haven't gotten over the fact that I'm gay.

FRANKLIN

Don't you have a brother?

JEFFREY

I have to go.

Jeffrey, ;listen to me. Tomorrow's a very important lecture. You must stabilize your gender.

(She hangs up and rubs her head tensely. Suddenly she begins to groan. Blackout on her. FRANKLIN looks at his phone. DAVIS crosses and holds FRANKLIN. Blackout on them.)

### Scene Eight

(Lights up on JEFF's apartment. JEFF on phone.)

JEFF

(On the phone)

Could I have the Department of Gender Studies? (Pause.) Hello I'm trying to reach Renee Webster. No, I'd like his home number. He's my brother... I mean he's my sister. Yes, *she's* my sister. Well I don't have it. We're not on speaking terms. Well could you please call him and have him call me. Thank you. My number is (415) 456-8928. It's an emergency. (Blackout. Lights up on...)

### Scene Nine

(DAVIS and FRANKLIN still in their embrace.)

I feel like you're keeping things from me.

I've only known you for four hours.

I was straight until tonight.

Congratulations.

I'm very vulnerable.

I need to know everything about Dr. Webster. Everything.

DAVIS

Everything all right?

FRANKLIN

Yes, that was just Jeff. Webster. Dr. Webster.

JEFF

This time of night?

FRANKLIN

Oh, yes, he's, he's onto something. Something big.

DAVIS

Tell me about it.

FRANKLIN

It's um... it's a surprise.

(Cross to...)

Scene Ten

(JEFF's. Lights up on RENEE, a transsexual, and JEFF.)

RENNE

Well, isn't that interesting.

JEFF

You're my brother. You could be a little sympathetic.

RENEE

Could I?

JEFF

Please. This is completely different from what you did to yourself.

RENEE

Is it?

JEFF

Yes, you mutilated your body. I am a victim.

RENEE  
Please don't excite yourself.

JEFF  
I'm not exciting myself-

RENEE  
I don't want your gender to slip.

JEFF  
Henry-

RENEE  
Renee-

JEFF  
Henry-

RENEE  
Renee. I haven't been Henry for ten years.

JEFF  
Oh, Jesus-

RENEE  
You always get his name right.

JEFF  
Henry-

RENEE  
So why exactly am I here?

JEFF  
I don't need your help.

RENEE  
(Fixing her shoe)  
Then why did ya call me?

JEFF  
Oh, please. Please don't do that.

RENEE  
What?

JEFF

All that feminine bullshit of fixing your ankle straps.

RENEE

They're twisted.

JEFF

Please.

RENEE

They are.

JEFF

It's a performance.

RENEE

My ankle straps?

JEFF

You're performing femininity.

RENEE

Performing femininity?

JEFF

Yes, all that primping and adjusting of the clothing.

RENEE

I'm wearing ankle straps. They twist.

JEFF

Please.

RENEE

What am I supposed to do?

JEFF

Wear practical shoes.

RENEE

Practical shoes are ugly.

JEFF

They don't serve as props.

Props? RENE

For your performance. JEFF

They don't flex my calf. RENE

Oh, honestly. JEFF

I have very nice legs in heels. RENE

Jesus- JEFF

RENE  
(Moving in on him)  
Even before the surgery I had very nice legs in heels.

Stop it. JEFF

Didn't I? RENE

Just stop it. JEFF

It's ok. Nobody cares about incest at our age. RENE

Please. JEFF

Come on. RENE

What are you trying to do? JEFF

Heat you up. I want to see your organs retract. RENNE

(Cross to...)

Scene Eleven

(CONCEPCION and DANNY in another place.)

CONCEPCION

It was horrible!

DANNY

Calm down.

CONCEPCION

Scary and horrible and terrifying.

DANNY

Concepcion.

CONCEPCION

He accused me of doing it to him. Of emasculating him. Of making his boobs grow.

DANNY

Concepcion.

(She kisses him wildly. He enjoys it.)

CONCEPCION

Oh, yeah baby. Oh yeah.

(She suddenly pulls back. She stares at him. She feels his chest. She looks at his hair. She puts her hand on his crotch – clinically.)

CONCEPCION

Good. It wasn't me. (She resumes kissing him.)

(Cross to...)

Scene Twelve

(JEFF'S. JEFFREY sits on couch. RENEE looks horrified.)

RENEE

What happened?

Oh, my-  
JEFFREY

Oh, my God! What happened?  
RENNE

I... I...  
JEFFREY

You... What are you?  
RENEE

Henry, please.  
JEFFREY

Renee.  
RENEE

Renee, please.  
JEFFREY

Oh, my God! You... You freak. Get your hands off me.  
RENEE

Renee...  
JEFFREY

Get away from the door.  
RENEE

I'm not standing in front of the door.  
JEFFREY

Get away from the door.  
RENEE

Ok...  
JEFFREY

You're sick. You're a weird sick freak.  
RENEE

I don't have any control-  
JEFFREY

RENEE

Jekyl, Hyde. Jekyl. Hyde.

JEFFREY

You said you wanted to see it.

RENEE

I thought you were faking it. I thought it was a scam.

JEFFREY

Renee-

RENEE

Another one of your academic scams.

JEFFREY

Another one of my...

RENEE

Like when you plagiarized your dissertation-

JEFFREY

I didn't plagiarize my dissertation-

RENEE

Oh please, Greenblatt, Orgel, Laqueur, they all wrote about genital inversion decades before you stole it-

JEFFREY

They didn't contextualize it in a teleological analysis based strictly on Freudian Oedipal subversion and intersexuality discourse-

RENEE

Get your hands off me you sick demented freak!

JEFFREY

Renee...

RENEE

I'm sorry. That was... Uncharitable.

JEFFREY

Henry-

RENEE

Renee-

JEFFREY

Renee, I called you because I thought you might understand.

RENEE

What?

JEFFREY

I thought, if it happened again, as it has, I thought you might understand.

RENNE

Oh, no, no...

JEFFREY

What?

RENEE

No...

JEFFREY

What?

RENEE

Don't you dare...

JEFFREY

What?

RENEE

Don't you dare compare whatever this grotesque sickness is to me.

JEFFREY

I just thought...

RENEE

You sick fuck. I went through twelve years of therapy, two years of living as a women, eight horrific surgeries and two decades of disapproval to win my pumps. To win my right, yes my right, to fiddle with my ankle straps. Don't you dare compare whatever twisted shit you're going through now to my life-long battle against my family, the U.S. government, the sex Nazis, the homofascists, the dykecommies, and every gender slave on this planet to get where I am today. What is this? Drugs? Some kind of perverted experimental surgery? A pact with the Devil? This is sick, sick, sick, primally, ontologically, biblically sick shit!

JEFFREY  
(Offended)

Well.

RENEE  
Get away from that door.

JEFFREY  
No.

RENEE  
I said, get your fiendish, hormonally twisted, psychopathically abnormal, physiologically monstrous ass away from that door.

JEFFREY  
No.

(RENEE removes a heel and holds it as a weapon.)

JEFFREY  
I'm just a girl now. It should be easy to brush me aside as you trample me underfoot.

RENEE  
Don't appeal to me as a woman. The feminists rejected me long ago.

JEFFREY  
I'm not a feminist.

RENEE  
No, you're a sick freak.

JEFFREY  
Yes.

RENEE  
Get away from that door.

JEFFREY  
As one sick freak to another.

RENEE  
Oh. You bitch.

JEFFREY  
How does it feel?

RENEE  
You worm.

JEFFREY  
Finally you're the gender Nazi.

RENEE  
You slug.

JEFFREY  
You get to feel genetically superior.

RENEE  
Filth.

JEFFREY  
You get to feel-

RENEE  
Don't say it-

JEFFREY  
Relatively-

RENEE  
Don't say it-

JEFFREY  
Sequentially-

RENEE  
Don't you dare say it-

JEFFREY  
Essentially-

RENEE  
No, no, no-

JEFFREY  
Normal.

RENEE  
Oh... you... cunt.

JEFFREY  
That word, to me now, is offensive.

(RENEE lights a cigarette.)

RENEE

So what are we going to do?

JEFFREY

Excuse me, I feel my balls dropping.

(Cross to...)

Scene Thirteen

(FRANKLIN's. DAVIS and FRANKLIN are necking.)

DAVIS

If he's up to something, you should tell me about it.

FRANKLIN

I'm sure he'd want me to keep it a secret.

DAVIS

It's not bad is it?

FRANKLIN

Bad is a relative term.

DAVIS

Harvard has standards.

FRANKLIN

Well, I'm sure he will comport to them. In his creative way.

DAVIS

I'll find out tomorrow.

FRANKLIN

Yes, his lecture should be very interesting.

DAVIS

I'd like to have more sex if you're up to it.

(Cross to...)

Scene Fourteen

(JEFF's. JEFF sits on the couch drinking a cocktail. RENEE enters and jumps with fright.)

JEFF

Oh, yes. It happened when you opened the oven.

RENEE

Wha... wha... wha...

JEFF

You'll have to start using the microwave.

RENEE

Ok, how you doing? Better? Stop drinking that. (Takes drink away from him.) Soon we'll have homemade soup and fresh baked bread and I'm even making you my famous apple truffle.

JEFF

I wish you'd stop it.

RENEE

You have to eat.

JEFF

No, I mean I wish you'd stop fussing.

RENEE

I like to fuss.

JEFF

I mean I wish you'd stop fussing in that way.

RENEE

What way?

JEFF

That way. All that movement.

RENEE

That's the way I move.

JEFF

It's artificial.

RENEE

It's my body.

JEFF

It's gratuitous.

RENEE

Jeffrey-

JEFF

Forget it-

RENEE

Jeffrey-

JEFF

I'm sorry-

RENEE

Jeffrey, you seem to have a hard time accepting that this is the way I move because this is how my body's constructed. It's not a performance. It just is. That's why I'm a transgender not a transvestite. I didn't want to have to fake it.

JEFF

Ok.

RENEE

And don't talk to me in that condescending manner. I'm a college professor just like you-

JEFF

Oh, come on-

RENEE

Jeffrey-

JEFF

Please-

RENEE

Jeffrey, City College is an accredited school just like Berkeley-

JEFF

Please, you have a PhD from Yale and you teach at that... that trade school because you're too wrapped up in your own shit to get a proper job.

RENEE

I have a proper job.

Oh, never mind. JEFF

And my own shit is my life- RENEE

Oh really- JEFF

For which I receive no support from my family- RENEE

Oh, oh, and they support me? JEFF

I support you. RENEE

I don't want your support. JEFF

That's your choice. RENEE

I never have. JEFF

I know. RENEE

You are... you are antithetical to me. You're antipodal. You're converse. JEFF

Yes, yes, fine... RENEE

I'm a fag and you're homophobic. How can you support me? JEFF

How am I homophobic? RENEE

Please- JEFF

RENEE

Please stop saying please and tell me where this outrageous comment comes from.

JEFF

You hate fags.

RENEE

I do?

JEFF

You do.

RENEE

And how's that?

JEFF

Because you won't let yourself become one.

RENEE

I won't let myself become one?

JEFF

No. Every famous tranny in the book hates fags. Jan Morris, Renee Richards, Christine Jorgenson. They all deny they're fags and make a big point of declaring they're not homosexual. Even Kate Bornstein, the self-confessed freak, denies she's gay or ever was gay. They all brag about their marriages and their kids and how they're straight-

RENEE

What's your point?

JEFF

You once told me you wanted to feel like a woman. You want to feel what a woman feels when you have sex. When you have sex with a man.

RENEE

Yes.

JEFF

You wanted to feel a man inside you.

RENEE

Yes.

JEFF

Well then why couldn't you roll over and take up the ass like a fag? You're not a woman trapped in man's body. You're a bottom. A bottom trapped in a homophobe's body.

RENEE

Hmmm...

JEFF

You couldn't deal with sex with men because that meant fag so you changed your gender so you could fuck men and remain straight.

RENEE

I see.

JEFF

You think you pass? You think everyone doesn't know you're gay? With that mug and that voice? You're a faggot without a dick. You ever look at the porn sites – trannies are in the fetish category. With the amputees, midgets, small breasted, three testicles, and the bears – you want to know the difference between them and you.? They can't help it.

RENEE

You know, I gave up many male attributes to become what I am today. One of those attributes was cruelty. Cruelty for cruelty's sake. That, I think, is a distinctly masculine characteristic. And clearly, judging from my brother, not the exclusive province of heterosexual males.

JEFF

You said some very cruel things to me earlier. When my sex changed.

RENEE

I felt trapped and confused and scared. As soon as I realized what was happening I regained my composure. You've known about me for twenty years and you've only grown nastier.

JEFF

Renee...

RENEE

I hope this predicament passes or that you adjust positively to your new self.

JEFF

Renee, come on...

RENEE

Good night...

JEFF

Oh, for Christ sake...

RENEE

Goodbye.

JEFF

God damn it, Henry...

RENEE

Did you read *You Just Don't Understand*?

JEFF

What?

RENEE

The book *You Just Don't Understand*. Did you read it? He author teaches at your university.

JEFF

Of course, it was populist crap-

RENEE

Did you understand it?

JEFF

No, yes, frankly, I'm not sure.

RENEE

And what was her point?

(Pause.)

JEFF

Renee, I'm sorry.

RENEE

There, you see. All is forgiven.

(Cross to...)

Scene Fifteen

(Another place. DAVIS, in a trench coat, talks on a phone.)

DAVIS

There's something weird going on out here. Something very... California. I don't know what it is yet, but I'm going to find out. Yes, Mr. Chancellor, I'm adopting the broadest possible investigative techniques on this candidate. No, I left my wife in Boston. I thought she might get in the way. I understand, Mr. Chancellor. We want the hottest queer theorist in the country. Not a charlatan.

(Cross to...)

Scene Sixteen

(JEFF's. JEFFREY sitting back on couch with dinner tray in front of her. RENEE looks startled.)

RENEE

Ahhh... What happened?

JEFFREY

I think it was the soup.

RENEE

Oh, dear. Well...

JEFFREY

Maybe I should stick to cold food.

RENEE

No, you'll get hemorrhoids. I just have to get used to your... mood swings.

JEFFREY

How are you?

RENEE

What?

JEFFREY

How are you?

RENEE

I... I'm in shock.

JEFFREY

Why?

RENEE

You've never asked me that.

JEFFREY

That's a very pretty blouse you have on.

RENEE

This old thing?

JEFFREY

Yes, and I like your pumps.

RENEE

Would you like to borrow them?

JEFFREY

Yes. The soup was delicious. Even if it did make my balls rise.

RENEE

Please...

JEFFREY

Sorry.

RENEE

You're shorter as a woman. We're going to have to dress you in something that can adjust. Maybe a warm-up suit.

JEFFREY

Oh God, the I'll look like, those people at theme parks..

RENEE

The problem is in his clothes you just look like a badly dressed lesbian.

JEFFREY

That's redundant. The bread was delicious.

RENEE

Thank you. I'm sorry but-

JEFFREY

What?

RENEE

I mean, forgive me, but an hour ago you were screaming at me about how I was a surgically self-mutilating homophobe, now you like my bread.

JEFFREY

The thoughts aren't mutually exclusive. But some things are better left unsaid.

(RENEE smiles.)

JEFFREY

Do you think I'm fat?

RENEE

Don't ever ask that question. It means you are. Fat is a state of mind. And don't diet. It's the first sign of defeat. Now, let's get you organized. We have to figure out how we're going to get you through the day. Number one: work.

JEFFREY

Yes, work.

RENEE

Have you told anyone?

JEFFREY

No.

RENEE

Ok, you have to. Everyone. No sense hiding it. The closet is a wicked place.

JEFFREY

I can't.

RENEE

Why not?

JEFFREY

I'm trying to get a job at Harvard. They'd never hire an intersexed.

RENEE

Well, you are an intersexed and if they don't want you it's not a job worth having.

JEFFREY

Renee-

RENEE

I'm sorry, Jeffrey, but it's not.

JEFFREY

Renee...

RENEE

Oh come on...

JEFFREY

Renee, I'm ambitious. You know that about me. And I don't think that's a distinctly male feature. Half my competition is female and they're all hungry for this position. I have an inside track, as a male, and I want this job.

RENEE

Do you have an interview coming up?

JEFFREY

I have an observer coming to my lecture.

RENEE

Who?

JEFFREY

Giles Davis. Do you know him?

RENEE

I know of him. Ok, we'll have to induce a sex change. Before class. We'll have to make sure you're male.

JEFFREY

What if I revert during lecture?

RENEE

Team teaching. We'll say you're sharing the lecture with a noted lesbian who will drop by to make some comments.

JEFFREY

Oh, how is that going to work? Suppose I get caught in some midpoint between the two. What do I do for the transition moments?

RENEE

I'll cover.

(Cross to...)

Scene Seventeen

(Lecture Hall. DANNY and CONCEPCION kissing in the aisle. DAVIS enters.)

DAVIS

Hello Danny.

DANNY

Hello Dr. Davis.

(DAVIS sits in audience. DANNY and CONCEPCION sit in another place. JEFF enters and commences his lecture.)

JEFF

Today we will be talking about monstrosity and its impact in English literature. There are of course two streaks of monstrosity. That which is born and that which is created. Thus Prospero describes Caliban: “A devil, a born devil, on whose nature nurture can never stick.” Caliban is not a monster but a devil – he is evil by birth, not by nurture or postnatal human agency. Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein is very much a monster, human created, and we find Dr. Frankenstein hesitating on the brink of creating him because he knows that that which is created unnaturally is monstrous: (Reading) “When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a human being like myself... but my imagination was too much exalted by the my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as a man. Nor could I consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as an argument of its impracticality. It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being.” Here we see the arrogance of nineteenth century medicine and surgery foisting itself upon the natural processes of creation. Shakespeare’s Prospero is confronted by a natural devil, he would never think to create such a thing, he merely must, in colloquial parlance, “deal with it.” Dr. Frankenstein, at the dawn of what I call “The Surgical Era,” is so arrogantly bored by the possibilities of emergency surgery that he embarks on experimental and creative surgery, surgery as plastic art, surgery as Jackson Pollack spatter painting self-indulgence. And, unlike the Elizabethans’ acceptance of the complexity and therefore respect of the natural in anatomy, the surgical era embarks on the reordering of the natural. And what do people like Dr. Frankenstein and Dr. Jekyll, who both claim to be in the pursuit of human perfection, create in the end? The monstrous. The horrific. It is my claim that we have inherited this obsession with the monstrous and distorted it into the fashioning of the transgendered, Ms. Juarez’s shemales. With all manner of natural devils under the sun, why must our culture fashion the synthetic monstrosity? Don’t we, like Prospero, have enough Calibans to deal with? The retarded, the alzheimered, the oversexed mutilated by disease? (He claps his hands and rubs them together. Something begins happening. He looks panicked.) Here then, to offer a different perspective, is visiting scholar Renne Webster.

(JEFF exits hurriedly as RENEE makes a grand entrance.)

RENEE

(To the audience)

Hard to believe we're brother and sister, isn't it? I mean he's such a snob. Gender is not constructed by surgery. That's obvious. But difference can be released. Transgenders are very confused about their physiology. They don't necessarily believe they are women, they just believe they are in the wrong body. They shed that body and often times come out the other side not women but something else entirely. A third gender some say.

JEFFREY

(Entering)

And you don't believe there is an essential gender.

RENEE

Oh, hello. Here is Dr. Heliotrope, distinguished professor of Rhetoric from the New College of Social and Justice Research in Des Moines.

JEFFREY

I'm from Princeton.

RENEE

No, I think you're from Des Moines. Now you're a hermaphrodite, correct?

JEFFREY

No, I'm a woman.

RENEE

Someone told me you were born with one boob, two ovaries, a testicle and an obscenely large clitoris.

JEFFREY

Excuse me.

RENEE

(To audience)

The intersexed are what Dr. Webster would call devils because they are natural as opposed to monsters, like me, who are man made.

JEFFREY

I am not intersexed.

RENEE

(To audience)

Dr. Heliotrope, with her one boob and penis sized clitoris, is a devil.

JEFFREY

The question stands: you don't believe in an essentialized woman?

RENEE

What would that be? A person who can have babies? Lots of women can't have babies. A person with breasts? Lots of women have no breasts.

JEFFREY

Even Judith Butler recognizes the material body.

RENEE

Yes, but there are an infinite number of types, not two – male and female.

JEFFREY

The transgendered is not one of those types.

RENEE

Why? Because the body is rearranged by request not need. How is a combat amputation more needful? Isn't war a cultural reconfiguration of the body – politics written onto flesh? Combat victims are as much victims of society and politics as transgenders.

JEFFREY

That's pure sophistry. A combat amputation saves a life.

RENEE

As does gender reassignment surgery.

JEFFREY

Only in a post therapeutic and surgery saturated age. The ancients didn't need gender reassignment because it wasn't an option. It's a self-indulgent, capitalist construct. We can afford it therefore it seems our right- (Falls behind podium.)

RENEE

(To audience)

There you see the cost of sublimating desire and mental health. I don't know Dr. Heliotrope's problem but she is clearly suppressing something.

JEFF

(Standing)

The issues are getting clouded. You're letting the discourse drift.

RENEE

Like gender. Gender can drift and slip.

JEFF

We were talking about Caliban and Frankenstein. Stick to the literature. (RENEE kisses JEFF on the lips and he falls behind the podium.)

RENEE

Thus we see that a kiss can be as physically altering as a scalpel. Where once he was standing now he is on the floor.

JEFFREY

(Standing)

Transgenderism is unstable, it's not gender reassignment because it's not stable. The surgeries continue, the hormones must be maintained.

RENEE

And who said natural gender is stable? (Aside to audience, commenting on JEFFREY's clothes.) Clearly fashion sense is not an inbred female trait. (To audience) Hysterectomies, mastectomies, circumcision, all of them remove or alter tropes of gender. (JEFFREY collapses and re-emerges as JEFF.) Does a woman who loses her breasts to cancer surrender her right to woman hood. What about the mother who surrenders her ovaries to cancer, is she no longer a mother? (JEFF has collapsed and re-emerged as JEFFREY.) Stand much? (JEFFREY collapses again.) One might more rightly question the genderation of surgery, a profession historically dominated by men, and its tendency to solve all female problems by hacking away at the female anatomy. (JEFF has re-emerged.) It's the colonization of the female body. Male anatomists define the tropes of femininity – breasts, ovaries – and then male surgeons spend their lives hacking them away. (JEFF has fallen and been replaced by JEFFREY.) It seems only just that transgenders pick up the fallen pieces and recycle them through reassignment surgery – if only to keep a balance of cocks and clits in the world.

CONCEPCION

(Standing up in the audience)

I know what's happening.

RENNE

Yes, dear, what's happening?

CONCEPCION

Dr. Webster is sick. He needs medical help. He shouldn't be here today.

RENEE

Dr. Webster is not sick. Nor is Dr. Heliotrope. Are you dear? They are healthy. They are natural. They are neither devil nor monster. They are learning to stand up for difference. That even the most intellectually twisted soul has the right to express itself regardless of its body's slipperiness, its resistance to stability, its refusal to knuckle under and be defined. For Dr. Webster is Dr. Heliotrope. Both genders in a single package. (RENEE knocks over the podium to reveal there is no JEFF behind it.) And the package is out of

the closet! (RENEE embraces JEFFREY.) Dr. Heliotrope-Webster was right. There is a material body. Just as there is a material river. Or a material weather. And the river flows. And the weather changes. It's not different with us.

DAVIS

(Standing in audience)

And this is exactly what we need at Harvard!

(Blackout.)

Scene Eighteen

(RENEE appears behind the lectern in a spot light. She holds a microphone.)

RENEE

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Queer Theory 101. This is my first course at Harvard and I'd like to start off the semester by expressing myself in my native language: song.

(She sings "Queer Theory," words and lyrics by James Dudek.)

RENEE

*WHEN YOUR EX  
WITH BIG PECS  
CHANGES SEX  
IT'S QUEER THEORY.*

*WHEN HIS CHEST,  
SWELLS WITH BREASTS  
YOU'RE OBSESSED  
WITH QUEER THEORY!*

*NOW YOU'RE SNEAKING A PEAK AT THINGS FEW WOULD  
YOU REMEMBER YOUR GENDER IS FLU-ID  
AND THE BEST LOVER YOU'VE GOT  
IS IN SOME WAYS LACKING A LOT  
QUEER THEORY, QUEER THEORY!*

RENEE

Ladies and gentlemen, my team teacher, Dr. Webster.

(During the following the spot light shifts back and forth between RENEE and JEFF/JEFFREY whichever one is singing at the moment.)

JEFF

*WHEN YOUR CHICK*

*WHO WAS SLICK  
GETS A DICK  
IT'S QUEER THEORY.*

RENEE

*WHEN YOUR MAN  
WHO'S A STAN  
IS NOW A FRAN  
QUEER THEORY.*

JEFFREY

*SO YOU NEED TO READ THOSE WHO KNOW  
TRY SOME BUTLER, FRIEDAN AND FOUCAULT  
BUT IT'S ALL JUST DUSTY OLD TEXT  
IN THE END YOU'RE ALONE AND INTERSEXED.  
QUEER THEORY, QUEER THEORY*

RENEE

*PLEASE DON'T TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK SEX IS,  
OR HOW YOU WISH THAT I COULD BE MORE NORMAL  
I'LL IGNORE THE SOCIAL MORAL NEXUS  
WHAT I FEEL IS FAR BEYOND HORMONAL.*

JEFF

*WHEN YOUR CURVES*

RENEE

*AND YOUR NERVES*

JEFFREY

*START TO SWERVE*

JEFFREY/RENEE

*IT'S QUEER THEORY!*

JEFFREY

*AND NEW HAIR*

RENEE

*GROWS EVERYWHERE*

JEFF

*EVEN THERE!*

RENEE/JEFF

*QUEER THEORY!*

JEFFREY  
*YOU PERUSE WHEN YOU CHOOSE WHERE TO PEE*

RENEE  
*IS THE MEN'S ROOM THE RIGHT ROOM FOR ME?*

JEFF  
*SO YOU JUST BUST THROUGH THE DOOR,*

RENEE  
*A TRANSCENDER OF GENDER ONCE MORE*

RENEE/JEFF  
*QUEER THEORY! QUEER THEORY!*  
*QUEER THEORY! QUEER THEORY!*

(At the end of the song blackout.)

Scene Nineteen

(RENEE and JEFF's office at Harvard. RENEE is removing make-up at a mirror.  
There is also a desk and a phone.)

RENEE  
We were brilliant.

JEFF  
It was humiliating.

RENEE  
Didn't you hear them cheering?

JEFF  
I feel like a circus freak.

RENEE  
Showbiz.

JEFF  
Most professors have an office, we have a dressing room.

RENEE  
A dressing room at Harvard. We're playing The Palace of Academia.

JEFF

And I wish you hadn't outed me as intersexed.

RENEE

Why not?

JEFF

Because now I only pull one salary.

RENEE

Our salaries are generous.

JEFF

For you. I have to shop for two.

RENEE

I don't think you're actually intersexed.

JEFF

What?

RENEE

Well, the intersexed have bits and pieces of both genders, you have all genders contained in one body. We need a new term. *Intrasexed*. Yes, all contained within one unit and all available for the currency of heat. Or maybe we could get rid of the sex all together. *Intragendered*. No, it loses something without the sex. *Intragendersexed*. *Intrasexergen*. *Gintragendergined* – no, that sounds like one of those silly gay cocktails. I think just *intrasexed*-

JEFF

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! I'm sick to death of my gender and my sexuality and my politico-sexual-societal positioning in the language and the uniqueness of my biology and my anatomy and the ontology of my gonads. Jesus Christ, can we please talk about something else? There're wars being fought in distant lands, economies collapsing, seismic catastrophes that bring down cities, revolutions, racial-religious conflicts of potentially holocaustal proportions and all we can talk about, all we care about is our gender and our sex and the position of our genitals. It's madness. Arcane, outrageously petty, insipidly trivial madness.

RENEE

All you ever dreamed of was teaching at Harvard. Well, here you are.

JEFF

Not like this. I never dreamed of it like this.

RENEE

And do you think anyone's ever satisfied with the route they took to celebrity. Richard Burton wanted to be a movie star – you think he liked becoming consort to the cow to do it? No. Did Liza want to have to claw up the wreckage of Judy to get to the top? No. But it made them stars. The point is to enjoy it while you've got it.

JEFF

As an intrasexed?

RENEE

Yes, you're a role model.

JEFF

Jesus.

RENEE

The campus looks up to you.

JEFF

They laugh.

RENEE

They emulate.

JEFF

They don't.

RENEE

They do.

(DAVIS enters dressed as a woman.)

DAVIS

Hello.

RENEE

Dr. Davis.

DAVIS

Trish.

RENEE

Sorry, Trish.

JEFF

Oh, God.

DAVIS  
Do open toes make me look fat?

RENEE/JEFF  
Don't ever ask if you look fat.

DAVIS  
Yes, right. Sorry.

RENEE/JEFF  
Don't ever apologize.

DAVIS  
Yes.

RENEE  
Soprano. Soprano.

DAVIS  
(Higher pitched)  
Yes.

RENEE  
How are the hormone shots?

DAVIS  
Oh, Renee. I don't know how I made it this far in life without them. My face feels like a baby's bottom. Feel.

RENEE  
Ooooo... Nice and soft.

DAVIS  
I can't stop rubbing my cheeks.

RENEE  
I just want to put a diaper on them.

DAVIS  
And I've gotten so kind to the students. They just don't bother me that much anymore.

RENEE  
Life's too short.



RENEE  
Jeffrey.

DAVIS  
She's my wife.

JEFF  
She's your beard.

DAVIS  
Oh, and I haven't shaved in a week.

RENEE  
Can't tell.

DAVIS  
But my ass is still hairy.

RENEE  
You might just be a hairy assed female.

DAVIS  
That happens?

RENEE  
Yes, but you can wax or pluck.

DAVIS  
Which is better?

RENEE  
I always say wax the whiskers, pluck the pubes.

JEFF  
Would you answer my question? When are you going to get rid of your wife?

DAVIS  
I don't intend to.

JEFF  
Then you're a liar. You're a closet case.

DAVIS  
I'm living as a woman.

JEFF

When are you going to have your dick removed?

RENEE

Jeffrey!

JEFF

You're defending *him*? He's mocking *you*.

RENEE

This is rude. Your better half would never say these things.

JEFF

You're living as a woman.

DAVIS

Yes.

JEFF

Which means one day you'll make the change.

DAVIS

Yes, when my therapist says I'm ready.

JEFF

He'll say it. In two years. To the day.

DAVIS

Hopefully.

JEFF

He will. That's what the Harry Benjamin test requires. Two years.

DAVIS

That doesn't mean it will happen.

JEFF

It will. Therapist gets a kick back from the surgeon.

RENEE

I'm not listening to any more of this.

JEFF

Don't worry. He won't go through with it. He's a transvestite, not a transsexual. He likes having that dick under the skirt to remind him of his masculinity. To always remind him of his superiority to women and his difference from the dickless trannies like yourself.

Just like he's straight at Harvard but a fag away from home. His wife reminds him of his superiority to real gay men. Of his entitlement as a straight male American.

DAVIS

(Making an exit)

You can take the professor out of the public school but you can't take the public school out of the professor.

JEFF

(Shouting after him)

And you can pluck the pube off the faggot but you can't erase the faggot with a boob.

RENEE

That one belongs in Bartlett's.

(DANNY, naked, enters.)

DANNY

Hey guys.

JEFF

Hey, Danny.

(JEFF exits to bathroom.)

RENEE

How are your classes?

DANNY

Ok.

RENEE

Good professors?

DANNY

I have two Nobel Prize winners, a Pulitzer Prize winner and a MacArthur Fellow.

RENEE

Wow.

DANNY

Profs are away on book tours. Classes are all taught by graduate students.

JEFFREY

(Entering from bathroom)

Danny, can I loan you a hundred bucks?

Nah, I'm fine.

DANNY

You sure?

JEFFREY

Yeah. Why?

DANNY

I just thought you could use some money to buy clothes.

JEFFREY

Jeffrey.

RENEE

Henry.

JEFFREY

You know Danny's making a statement to the campus about the gender-branding nature of clothing.

RENEE

He's been naked for a month.

JEFFREY

People are beginning to notice.

DANNY

I knew it was a mistake to bring him.

JEFFREY

We didn't bring him. He arrived on his own merits.

RENEE

And our recommendations.

JEFFREY

Jeffrey, honestly.

RENEE

We arrived in Boston like a freak show from California – the belting castrato, the slipping hermaphrodite and the slacker exhibitionist. It's like we're living confirmation of everything the Ivy League has ever thought about west coast education – paranormal

druggies who've never heard of Plato or Socrates they're so warped by hormones, Prozac and show tunes.

RENEE

We are dragging this campus into the new millennium.

JEFFREY

We're a midway attraction – the Queer Theory zoo.

DANNY

I agree. They do treat us like freaks. People keep hitting on me like it's all about sex. They treat me like I'm a slut because I walk around naked.

RENEE

You are kind of a slut.

DANNY

Yes, but there's a theoretical underpinning to my sluttiness.

JEFFREY

Would you two shut up!

DANNY

What's wrong with her?

RENEE

That time of the month.

JEFFREY

You know when I'm a man you say it's a "testosterone outburst." When I'm a woman it's "that time of the month." Both comments are reductively sexist. Maybe I'm just annoyed. Maybe, regardless of my gender, I'm just pissed off. Maybe I'm just tired of being a walking social studies carnival attraction. (Exits.)

RENEE

I'm afraid he's having a rough time of it.

DANNY

I am too. I miss California.

RENEE

Is that all?

DANNY

I miss Concepcion.

Hmmm...

RENEE

I didn't realize it until I got here.

DANNY

Hello.

FRANKLIN  
(Entering)

Dr. Morrison.

DANNY

Franklin, look at you!

RENEE

Am I interrupting?

FRANKLIN

Oh, no, Danny's making a statement. It's nonsexual.

RENEE

Of course.

FRANKLIN

I have a class.

DANNY  
(Standing)

Aren't you going to be cold this winter?

RENEE

I have a scarf. (He exits.)

DANNY

How is Berkeley?

RENEE

Lovely.

FRANKLIN

What brings you east?

RENEE

I'm presenting a paper on Jeff – my theory of what's happened to him.

FRANKLIN

RENEE

Does he know?

FRANKLIN

No, he still won't cooperate.

RENEE

What's your theory?

FRANKLIN

Superfluidity.

RENEE

Superfluidity. Isn't that like a chemistry term?

FRANKLIN

Yes, but it serves as a perfect analogy for queer theory and the ebb and flow of gender and sexuality.

RENEE

Tell me about it.

FRANKLIN

Helium becomes a liquid when it is sufficiently cooled. When it's further cooled, it is able to flow upward like a zero-gravity sphere. The transition temperature is known as the lambda point because a graph of the properties of helium takes a sharp turn at this temperature and resembles the Greek letter lambda ( $\lambda$ ). It's so appropriate, Jeff has discovered the lambda effect. At least, that's my theory.

RENEE

It's all too technical. Too subtle. It has to be something more. I have a theory. A theory of empathy. I think my brother just felt such great empathy for women, such sympathy that he had to become one, at least part of the time.

FRANKLIN

But he talks like he hates women.

RENEE

His love makes him insecure so he falls back on hate. He always loved me best in our family, but he made my life a living hell. And yet we spent all our time together. It was like the Stockholm syndrome. He held me captive and we grew attached. I think it's the same with him and women. He's not straight because he doesn't want to love them. He just wants to be them.

FRANKLIN

And *you* had the sex change.

RENEE

Well, I'm not sure now I wanted to be a woman. I just wanted to feel comfortable in my body. More comfortable. And this is the only other body available. I don't know. You know that feeling in Spring. When the world is so lush, so beautiful. You just feel connected to every bit of it. You could become anyone and that would be all right. The bodies are just shells, you flit about as if you were ultimately shell-less. I think that's the next step for us. I think that must explain sex – the attempt to enter another shell. And there have to be more than two shell types, there have to be as many genders as there are people. And that's what we ultimately want, to experience everyone. Not sexually, that's where the Sixties got it wrong, but habitually.

FRANKLIN

Maybe in death. Maybe that's when we finally escape our shell.

RENEE

The undiscovered country.

FRANKLIN

But will we ever be satisfied?

RENEE

Hmmm...

FRANKLIN

Are you?

RENEE

Satisfied? I'm in bliss.

FRANKLIN

But not satisfied.

RENEE

Oh, I suppose Jeff and I had the same dream growing up, when we realized we were going to be teachers – we would teach at the greatest university on earth.

FRANKLIN

Harvard?

RENEE

Oh, please. Oxford. That would satisfy me. (She sneezes.)

FRANKLIN

Bless you.

RENEE

(Exiting to bathroom)

Excuse me while I get some Kleenex.

FRANKLIN

Why Oxford?

RENEE

It's the greatest. It just is. I wasn't sure until *Brideshead Revisited* – then when I heard Jeremy Irons dulcet tones waxing rhapsodic about that fantasy, that Xanadu, that Valhalla of Academe-

JEFF

(Entering from bathroom – dressed as RENEE)

I just knew it was Oxford for me.

FRANKLIN

Hey, Jeff.

JEFF

(Ignoring him)

So, when I graduated from college I took myself on a European tour. And I went to Sebastian Flyte's College – Christ Church. And I saw the fountain where Antony Blanche sported attitudes and the quad at Magdalen where Charles lived. And Boadlein Library and the Radcliffe Camera and I thought – Oxford, dear Oxford, it is here where I must alight.

FRANKLIN

Jeff, you're not serious.

JEFF

What?

FRANKLIN

You could at least wear falsies.

JEFF

Falsies?

FRANKLIN

And you know Renee is wearing the same outfit today.

JEFF

Franklin, what are you on about?

FRANKLIN

I just thought you should know.

JEFF

Ahhhh!!!

FRANKLIN

What?

JEFF

Where are my breasts!

FRANKLIN

What?

JEFF

Where the hell are my breasts?

FRANKLIN

You don't have breasts.

JEFF

What do you mean I don't have breasts. I paid thousands for my breasts.

FRANKLIN

You have breasts when you're a female.

JEFF

Goddamn it I can question my gender assignment but you can't. I am a female.

FRANKLIN

What?

JEFF

Oh, my hair, my hair. And my (touches his crotch) Ahhhhh!!!! That thing! That thing!

FRANKLIN

What thing!

JEFF

It's back.

FRANKLIN

What the hell are you talking about?

JEFF

What have you done to me?

FRANKLIN

Nothing. I swear.

JEFF

Is this more of that superfluidity. That Lambda Effect. Am I now Lambdaing?

FRANKLIN

Lambdaing?

JEFF

Franklin. Franklin. Calmly tell me. Have I reverted to masculinity?

FRANKLIN

I...

JEFF

Is what happened to Jeff happened to me?

FRANKLIN

I...

JEFF

Have I dropped a new dick?

FRANKLIN

I...

JEFF

There's something grotesque and obscene and rude between my legs. Something I spent half my life getting rid of and now it's back. Don't tell me I'm going to spend my life going through Jeff's sick gender inversions.

FRANKLIN

I'm sorry, I don't know what you're taking about.

JEFF

Franklin, who am I?

FRANKLIN

What?

JEFF

What's my name?

FRANKLIN

Jeff, you're Jeff.

(JEFF runs into bathroom. We hear a cry off-stage. RENEE enters.)

RENEE

I'm Jeff.

FRANKLIN

What?

RENEE

I'm Jeff. I've morphed into Jeff.

FRANKLIN

No you haven't.

RENEE

What?

FRANKLIN

Jeff's in the bathroom.

RENEE

He is?

(RENNE runs into the bathroom.)

RENEE  
(Off)

Ahhhh!

(JEFF enters.)

JEFF

I've reverted.

FRANKLIN

What?

JEFF

I've reverted to Renee.

FRANKLIN  
What?

JEFF  
Stop saying what.

FRANKLIN  
What?

JEFF  
My identity's slipping.

FRANKLIN  
Well then it slipped again.

JEFF  
What? Stop saying that. What do you mean?

FRANKLIN  
You're Jeff.

JEFF  
Again?

FRANKLIN  
Yes.

(JEFF runs into bathroom.)

JEFF  
(Off)  
Ahhhh!!! This is awful. I've become the person I most hate in the world.

FRANKLIN  
You were just saying you loved him.

JEFF  
(Off)  
That was words. Words. Words. Words. This is limbs and hair and, and, and...

FRANKLIN  
(Looking into bathroom)  
Jeff, Renne, Jeff, Renee, Jeff, Renne-

RENEE  
(Entering)

Stop it! Stop it! You boob. My family has some weird chromosome. The double helix is triple and it doesn't twist it loop-di-loops like some customer killing roller coaster at Magic Mountain. (Runs into bathroom. Off.) Oh Gawwwwd. Ah!

DAVIS  
(Entering from bathroom – dressed as RENEE)

I saw it happen. I saw it happen in the mirror.

FRANKLIN

Dr. Davis.

DAVIS  
You know damn well I'm not Dr. Davis. In this wardrobe – he doesn't have the taste. His tits are coming along nicely though. (Crawling on his hands and knees towards FRANKLIN, pleading.) Help me, Franklin, Help me.

(DAVIS disappears behind the desk. JEFFREY surfaces in his place.)

JEFFREY  
Help me! Help me!

FRANKLIN  
I can't help you!

JEFFREY  
You must. Help me.

(The lights go black.)

FRANKLIN  
Turn on the lights.

JEFFREY  
You bumped the switch. Here.

(The lights come back on. DANNY, dressed like RENEE, stands with FRANKLIN.)

FRANKLIN  
Ahhh!!!

What is it? DANNY

You're Danny. FRANKLIN

Danny? DANNY

I think. FRANKLIN

What do you mean? DANNY

I've never seen him dressed. FRANKLIN

How does Danny look in drag? DANNY

Awful. FRANKLIN

You're a scientist. DANNY  
(Pleading on his knees)

Am I? FRANKLIN

Help me. DANNY

No. FRANKLIN

(DANNY has disappeared behind the desk, CONCEPCION – dressed like  
RENEE -surfaces.)

You're Concepcion. FRANKLIN

I am? CONCEPCION

I... FRANKLIN

What? CONCEPCION

I always had a thing for Concepcion. FRANKLIN

Kiss me. CONCEPCION

(They kiss and fall behind the couch. RENEE surfaces.)

I don't believe this is happening. RENEE

I believe it. FRANKLIN

You do? RENEE

Yes, I want to tape it. FRANKLIN

Don't you dare. RENEE

We'll win the Nobel Prize. FRANKLIN

Not before I have my hair done. RENEE

(They struggle and disappear behind the couch. They reappear on opposite sides – FRANKLIN now dressed like RENEE, RENEE like FRANKLIN.)

What happened? RENEE/FRANKLIN

You look like me. RENEE/FRANKLIN

Ahhhhh! RENEE/FRANKLIN

It's catching. RENE

(Blackout.)

What happened to the lights? FRANKLIN

I kicked the cord. RENE

(Lights on. DAVIS, dressed as RENE, and JEFFREY, dressed as FRANKLIN, stand looking at each other.)

Franklin. DAVIS

Renee. JEFFREY

Ok. We can calmly talk about this? DAVIS

Yes. JEFFREY

Some weird shit is going to happen. DAVIS

But we're going to calmly talk about it. JEFFREY

Ok. DAVIS

What are we going to do? JEFFREY

I don't know. DAVIS

Our identities are unstable. JEFFREY

DAVIS

Yes.

JEFFREY

Was any heat or cooling involved in your transformation?

DAVIS

No.

JEFFREY

Nor in mine. So it can't be superfluidity.

(RENEE enters excited. She is dressed like DAVIS.)

RENEE

My tits grew. They grew.

DAVIS

Oh no.

RENEE

(Seeing DAVIS)

Ahhh... Meeeee. Meee... What are you doing over there?

DAVIS

It's Davis.

JEFFREY

Oh, my.

DAVIS

Davis, calm down.

RENEE

Trish.

DAVIS

Trish, calm down. I'm not you. I'm Renee.

RENEE

(Touching her crotch)

Ahhhhh!!! What happened to it? What happened to it? I'm not a transsexual. I'm a transvestite. I want it back.

JEFFREY

Jeff was right.

(JEFF enters and sees JEFFREY.)

	JEFF
Hey. Whoa. How. How are you here?	
	JEFFREY
I'm not who you think I am.	
	JEFF
Who are you?	
	JEFFREY
Franklin.	
	JEFF
Franklin?	
	JEFFREY
I'm having an out of body experience.	
	JEFF
What?	
	JEFFREY
I'm Franklin.	
	DAVIS
I'm Renee.	
	RENEE
I'm distraught.	
	JEFF
That must be Davis.	
	DAVIS
Yep.	
	JEFFREY
Are you Jeff?	
	JEFF
Yes.	

Are you sure? DAVIS

Yes, I'm sure. JEFF

Where am I? This is hell. RENEE

Please calm down. DAVIS

Body snatcher. You body snatcher. RENEE  
(To DAVIS)

Davis- JEFFREY

Trish- RENEE

Trish- JEFFREY

I need my wife. I need Carol. RENEE

Then call her, you big baby. JEFF

(RENEE rushes to phone and dials.)

It's amazing that you haven't slipped. JEFFREY

I've got enough slippage in my life. JEFF

Carol. Carol get down here. I've undergone some hideous transformation. RENEE  
(Into phone)

Excuse me. DAVIS  
(Offended)

RENEE

Get down here quick. Stoughton Hall, Room 202. I need you. (She hangs up.) Oh, my God, where is it? Where is it?

DAVIS

Calm down.

JEFF

I'm simply flabbergasted.

RENEE

You started this.

JEFF

Started what?

RENEE

This identity slippage. (To DAVIS) And you. You thief. You identity thief.

(DANNY enters, dressed as a girl.)

JEFF

Danny.

DANNY

Yes, where is he?

JEFF

Where is who?

DANNY

Danny. I want my Danny. I just crossed the country on a Greyhound Bus and I want my Danny.

DAVIS

You've become your Danny

(CONCEPCION enters and runs to DAVIS.)

CONCEPCION

Honey, are you all right?

DAVIS

I'm probably not who you think I am. Whoever you are.

DANNY

It's me!

CONCEPCION

What?

DAVIS

Are you four foot eleven with lovely dark skin and gently upcurved breasts?

CONCEPCION

No, I'm five ten, pale flesh, with a slightly drooping but generously fulsome bosom.

RENEE

Carol!

DAVIS

(To CONCEPCION)

Your husband is over there.

CONCEPCION

(Crossing to RENEE)

He... He is... Is this the hideous transformation you've undergone, sweetie?

RENEE

Yes, isn't it awful?

DAVIS

How rude.

CONCEPCION

I don't know, uh....

RENEE

Carol, you look terrific.

CONCEPCION

So do you.

RENEE

Maybe, maybe I'm not a transvestite.

CONCEPCION

You know, I always had a thing for girls. I was a dyke in college.

FRANKLIN  
(Entering, naked)

Oh, my God, what's happened to me?

DAVIS

Danny?

FRANKLIN

Yes.

JEFFREY

You're over there.

FRANKLIN  
(Crossing to DANNY)

But, but why am I dressed. (Unbuttoning DANNY's blouse.) Take these clothes off.

DANNY

Oh, Danny. Oh, Danny. Soon, but not here.

JEFF

Folks.

FRANKLIN

I can't stand to look at myself trapped in all this tight polyester.

DANNY

Oh, Danny. Oh, Danny.

JEFF

Folks.

CONCEPCION

Oh, honey... You're so... tall.

RENEE

Oh, baby... You're so small.

JEFF

Folks.

JEFFREY

Well, the identities seem to be at least stabilized in their new homes.

DAVIS

With some confusing developments.

JEFF

Folks, can we focus here? (They all look at him.) We have some things to sort out.

DANNY

Why is yours the only identity that's stable?

FRANKLIN

I don't know why mine is the only identity that's stable.

JEFFREY

I'm not talking to you.

DANNY

Who are you talking to?

DAVIS

I'm talking to Jeff.

JEFFREY

(Pointing to JEFF)

That's Jeff.

CONCEPCION

No, I'm over here.

RENEE

What happened?

FRANKLIN

We're slipping again.

JEFF

Who is who?

DAVIS

I'm Carole.

RENEE

No, I'm Carole.

JEFFREY

No, I'm Carole.

RENEE

Carol's on the move. She just flew across the room.

JEFFREY

Ok, this is Renee speaking. Everyone's going to have identify first themselves and then whom they're talking to before they speak.

CONCEPCION

I don't understand.

DANNY

Ok, for instance: "Renee. Jeff, are you still Jeff?"

JEFF

Oh, I get it.

FRANKLIN

So answer my question.

JEFF

Who are you talking to?

CONCEPCION

Jeff.

DAVIS

Oh, she's Renee now.

DANNY

What?

RENEE

She's Renee now.

CONCEPCION

No, actually I'm not.

JEFFREY

Renee. Folks, can we stick to the formula?

FRANLIN

Who are you?

JEFFREY

Franklin.

DANNY

Renee. Folks, can we stick to the formula?

JEFF

Wait. Where's Renee?

DANNY

Over here.

CONCEPCION

Ok. So what's the formula?

JEFF

I say my name, then the name of the person I'm speaking to, then I speak.

DANNY

Who are you?

JEFF

Concepcion.

DAVIS

Wait. I'm confused.

FRANKLIN

Where's Renee?

JEFF

Over here. Listen, everyone, I'm going to say my name, then the name of the person I'm speaking to, then I'm going to speak. Ok, everyone?

DAVIS/FRANKLIN

Ok.

DANNY

No, everyone. Everyone say ok.

ALL

Ok.

JEFF

Renee. Jeff, where are you?

CONCEPCION

Over here.

DAVIS

Renee. Jeff, no, you're supposed to say: "Jeff. Renee, I'm over here."

FRANKLIN

That's so complicated.

DANNY

Renee. Jeff, that's the formula. So we know whom we're talking to.

JEFF

Yes, yes, fine.

RENEE

"Jeff. Renee. Yes, yes, fine."

CONCEPCION

But I'm Jeff.

DAVIS

Renee. Jeff, I was giving that as an example. I was pretending to be you.

RENEE

Well, I'm confused.

DANNY

Ok, I understand it. I've got what you're after.

FRANKLIN

Renee. Who just spoke?

JEFFREY

Franklin. Renee. Franklin.

DAVIS

Somebody just said three names.

RENEE

No, I was identifying myself Franklin, then addressing Renee, and then answering her question as to who was speaking which was "Franklin."

CONCEPCION

Well that was strange.

JEFFREY

Renee. Franklin, don't forget to always identify yourself when you speak.

DAVIS

Franklin. Renee. Sorry.

(Silence.)

JEFF

Renee what's happening?

RENEE

Franklin, who said that?

DANNY

Davis, was that someone asking a question of Franklin or was that Franklin identifying himself and then asking a question.

CONCEPCION

Franklin. It was Franklin identifying himself and asking a question.

JEFFREY

Was that Franklin who just explained that?

DAVIS

Who just asked that question?

JEFF

People are not identifying themselves.

FRANKLIN

You didn't identify yourself.

RENEE

Who's talking to me?

DANNY

This is insanity.

CONCEPCION

Who said that?

JEFFREY

Listen everyone, my name is Carol Davis. I live with Dr. Giles Davis, Ph.D. of Harvard University. I am speaking to everyone in the room and all I want to say is I can't take another second of this.

JEFF

Everyone, this is Dr. Giles Davis, my name is Trish.

FRANKLIN

Ok, this is Renee. So we can have a productive conversation and somehow unravel this mess please identify yourself and then the person you're speaking to and then speak. Example. Renee. Carol, don't worry we'll get it all straightened out.

(Pause.)

RENEE

This is Carol – 10-4

DANNY

Renee. Carol, no, you have to identify the person you're speaking to.

JEFFREY

Davis. Renee, she's not too bright. She went to Penn.

CONCEPCION

Carol. Giles, you bastard.

DAVIS

Renee. Carol, please don't use first names.

JEFF

Carol. Davis, you bastard.

FRANKLIN

Concepcion. Renee, why does she have to use her first name while he can use his last?

DANNY

Renee. Concepcion, because they're both Davis's, it would be too confusing otherwise.

DAVIS

Concepcion. Renee, why should the woman have to give up the last name?

JEFFREY

Renee. Concepcion, please this is not the moment.

CONCEPCION

Davis. Renee, Carole can use Davis, I'm Trish.

DANNY

Franklin. Davis, who the hell is Trish?

FRANKLIN

Renee. Davis, please don't use Trish, it will only confuse things.

RENEE

Carol. Renee, who the hell put you in charge of this?

FRANKLIN

Jeff. Carol, leave her alone.

JEFF

Davis. Jeff, don't talk to my wife that way.

DAVIS

Jeff. Davis, don't talk to my sister, my brother, don't talk to Renee that way.

JEFFREY

Renee. Jeff, thank you.

CONCEPCION

Davis. Jeff, Renee is a controlling bitch.

DANNY

Jeff. Davis, Renee is my sister, don't talk about her like that.

JEFF

Renee. Davis, Jeff, stop it.

DAVIS

Jeff. Renee, Davis is a bastard.

JEFFREY

Renee. Jeff, Davis is in early hormonal therapy, he's bound to be testy

CONCEPCION

Jeff. Renee, Davis was a bastard long before his tits grew.

DAVIS

Carol. Renee, Davis, Jeff, stop arguing!

JEFF

Danny. Carol, Renee, Davis, Jeff can I say something?

FRANKLIN

Carol-

DANNY

Renee-

JEFFREY

Davis-

FRANKLIN/DANNY/JEFFREY

Danny, shut up!

JEFFREY

Concepcion. Carol, Renee, Davis, don't talk to Danny that way!

DAVIS

Renee. Carol, Davis, Danny, Jeff, Concepcion, can we please stop arguing.

RENEE

Carol. Davis, Danny, Jeff, Concepcion, I have to say that I am sick to death of this Renee bitch bossing us around.

FRANKLIN

Jeff. Carol, I told you to leave my sister alone. (He hits RENEE.)

RENEE

Davis. Jeff, now you're hitting girls.

DANNY

Jeff. Davis, he's a birth male.

CONCEPCION

Davis. Jeff, I meant Carol. You hit Carol you fucker. (She hits DANNY.)

JEFFREY

Concepcion. Davis, you just hit the wrong person. (He hits CONCEPCION.)

CONCEPCION

Danny. Davis, you hit Concepcion again I'll murder you.

DANNY

Davis. Concepcion, Danny, Carole, Renee, Jeff, my name is Trish, not Davis, Trish!

RENEE

Oh my God, I'm back in my body. I'm back in my own body!

CONCEPCION

No, I've moved.

FRANKLIN

Jeff. Renee, you're not using the correct form of address.

JEFF

Renee. Jeff, shut-up squirt. (Hits FRANKLIN.)

FRANKLIN

Trish. Renee, owwww!

DAVIS

Carol. Renee, Davis, can you please stop fighting.

FRANKLIN

Danny. Franklin, I think Jeff dislocated your arm.

CONCEPCION

Franklin. Danny, no I'm fine.

FRANKLIN

Jeff. Franklin, no I think he meant that I dislocated this body's arm.

RENEE

Franklin. Jeff, oh, yes, that happens. I have a bad arm.

FRANKLIN

Renee. Franklin, you shit, tell us what to do with this body – it hurts like hell.

DAVIS

Franklin. Renee, or whoever's in there, you have to pull on it.

FRANKLIN

Concepcion. Franklin, show us how. It kills.

JEFF

Franklin. Whoever's in Franklin's body, give me your hand.

FRANKLIN

Carole. Franklin, it's me.

CONCEPCION

Franklin. Carole, well I'm over here now but give the bad hand to Jeff.

FRANKLIN

Renee. Franklin, to real Jeff?

DANNY

Franklin. Renee, what do you mean real Jeff?

FRANKLIN

Jeff. Franklin, Jeff body or Jeff soul?

DAVIS

Renee. Jeff, can we please not get metaphysical.

FRANKLIN

Listen to me! Listen to me you insane fucks! This body is in pain! It doesn't matter who is who, this body is in pain and we're all going to have to spend some painful time in it if it doesn't get fixed! Can you please, please, please just fix it and stop with all this fucking Renee, Jeff, Carole, Concepcion bullshit you overeducated motherfuckers!

RENEE

Well, I don't think I want to know who said that.

JEFF

It was Franklin's body – that's all that's important. Let's fix it.

FRANKLIN

Hold my arm.

(JEFF takes his bad arm.)

JEFF

Ok.

FRANKLIN

Now three of you take him around the waist.

DANNY

Whose waist?

FRANKLIN

This waist! This body's waist! Franklin's waist! My waist!

DANNY

Ok.

(DANNY, JEFFREY, and CONCEPCION put their arms around FRANKLIN's waist.)

FRANKLIN

On the count of three, everyone pull way from me. One, two, three...

(Everyone pulls. FRANKLIN cries out in pain. He grabs his arms as he falls to the floor. He slowly recovers.)

RENEE

Well, we accomplished something.

JEFFREY

Who said that?

CONCEPCION

It doesn't matter. We are merely flesh and blood. We live to serve these bodies. There is nothing beyond these bodies.

(Pause.)

DAVIS

This is Carole speaking. Who is serving my body? It's at home. It could be full of trash right now.

JEFFREY

This is Concepcion – I don't want just anybody in my body. That's my right.

JEFF

This is Danny speaking. (He holds onto DANNY.) This body is Vegan. If anybody puts any meat or dairy in it I'll kill 'em.

DANNY

If I have to inhabit this thing I'm going to eat whatever I damn well please.

FRANKLIN

I can't tell who's talking! I'm going insane!

RENEE

Stop it! Stop it! Everyone stop it! This is madness.

CONCEPCION

Who's speaking?

RENEE

It doesn't matter who's speaking. It's Renee, but it doesn't matter.

FRANKLIN

It *is* Renee.

RENEE

Yes, dammit, I'm back in my body and I'm going to stay here. Listen to me - we have to cling to our bodies, cling to them. I fought damn hard for mine and I'm not going to drift or slip or slide away from it because I don't really believe in gender and sex and sexuality. I'm not going to let superfluidity or empathy or theory tell me I can't have a home.

JEFF

But then we're identity slaves.

RENEE

Right now we're confusion slaves. I made this body. I thought carefully about how I wanted it to be and I spent a lot of time fashioning it like a sculpture and I'm not going to have it become a motor lodge for all of you. If I am an identity slave I'm a slave to an identity I created. It's like my child and I'm not going to have someone else raising it. If you're not happy with yourselves, if you want to change then change, but this identity theft, this pilferage of persona, this treating of anatomy as a truck stop has got to stop!

CONCEPCION

I agree. I *am* Concepcion and I agree.

DANNY

You *are* Concepcion.

CONCEPCION

Yes.

DANNY

And I'm Danny.

CONCEPCION

Hi Danny.

DANNY

What are you doing here?

CONCEPCION

I came to get you.

DANNY

Get me?

CONCEPCION

Take you back.

DANNY

To Berkeley?

CONCEPCION

Yes. You belong where you can be naked and understood.

DANNY

Just naked and understood?

CONCEPCION

Naked and understood with me.

DANNY

But I'm still bisexual. Maybe even gay.

CONCEPCION

You just haven't met the right girl.

DANNY

I guess not.

JEFF

That's sick twisted shit.

DANNY

Who are you?

CONCEPCION

Jeff. Dr. Webster to you. You're gay. Born gay, die gay. That's the gay way.

CONCEPCION

Then let him find that out for himself Dr. Webster – you homo sapien.

RENEE

Homofascist.

CONCEPCION

Homofascist. (To RENEE) Don't correct me you male chauvinist pig.

RENEE

I'm a female chauvinist pig.

DAVIS

You're a born-male female chauvinist pig.

JEFFREY

He's a born male heterosexual female chauvinist pig.

CONCEPCION

Ignore them Danny.

DANNY

Yes punkin.'

DAVIS

Is Franklin here?

JEFFREY

I'm over here.

DAVIS  
(To FRANKLIN)

Who's this?

FRANKLIN

Carole. I like this penis. I want to keep it.

DAVIS

Carole, you have to leave so I can talk to Franklin.

FRANKLIN

No. Ok. I'm frnaklin.

DAVIS

Franklin, I've been faithful to Carole my whole life. Since we met as Rhodes Scholars at Cambridge. You were my first fling. It threw me for a loop. I overreacted

FRANKLIN

I understand. I'm a scientist. It's my job to encourage experimentation.

DAVIS

I need to go back to Carole. I've committed myself to a life as a heterosexual male. I don't regret the experimentation. But for me it's too late to change.

JEFF

I told you.

RENEE

Silence.

That's ok, Trish.

FRANKLIN

Dr. Davis.

DAVIS

That's ok, Dr. Davis.

FRANKLIN

Thanks, Franklin.

DAVIS

Dr. Morrison.

FRANKLIN

Thanks, Dr. Morrison.

DAVIS

The fact is, the only man I ever loved was Jeff. Dr. Webster.

FRANKLIN

I know.

JEFF

But he never felt the same.

FRANKLIN

No.

JEFF

Daniel.

CONCEPCION

Yeah, Connie.

DANNY

Can we go?

CONCEPCION

Yes. (They exit quickly.)

DANNY

I still don't get who you are.

JEFF  
(To JEFFREY)

JEFFREY

I'm female you. We've separated.

JEFF

Separated?

JEFFREY

Yes, I can't stand living with you. I need space. To be me.

JEFF

I wasn't a very good host, was I?

JEFFREY

You got us to Harvard.

JEFF

We got us to Harvard.

JEFFREY

I've got Carole now, but I'll walk her home. See you two later.

DAVIS

How is Carole?

JEFFREY

She's very upset. About the infidelity.

DAVIS

Carole, I'm sorry.

JEFFREY

Don't speak to me! Don't speak to her. Dr. Davis, it'll be fine.

(JEFFREY links arms with DAVIS and walks him out.)

FRANKLIN

Well, I have my presentation to give.

RENEE

Superfluidity? Or empathy?

FRANKLIN

I don't know. Perhaps neither. The important thing is to present my thesis. Somebody will argue an antithesis. One day there'll be synthesis.

(He exits.)

JEFF

God, he's going to make us more famous than we are already.

RENEE

Isn't it marvelous?

JEFF

I still feel like we've traded on our personal lives to make it as professors.

RENEE

A lot of people do.

JEFF

You talked about Richard Burton and Liza. I didn't want to be a Richard Burton. I wanted to be Laurence Olivier. Pure. Famous for my art.

RENEE

Laurence Olivier had Vivien. That's what got him in the papers. Sex.

JEFF

I wanted to be Foucault or Susan Sontag, Judith Butler, Leo Bersani, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Pure academic. Pure thinker.

RENEE

Oh, please. Foucault was a cross dresser, Sontag's a lesbian, Bersani's a daddy, and the last time Sedgwick was in *The New York Times* it was to talk about her breast cancer. Everyone uses everything they've got.

JEFF

That's a rumor about Sontag.

RENEE

Which she defiantly refuses to talk about every time she's interviewed whether or not she's asked the question.

JEFF

What about Judith Butler?

RENEE

Judith who?

JEFF

Jan Morris was a great writer – long before she came out as a tranny. Why couldn't it have happened before rather than because?

RENEE

It's what you do with it after it happens that counts.

JEFF

It ruins people.

RENEE

It doesn't have to.

JEFF

Richard Burton became a lush.

RENEE

And Liza made *Cabaret*.

JEFF

Then she became a lush.

RENEE

Oh please. You must drive your therapist insane.

JEFF

I don't have a therapist.

RENEE

Get one!

JEFF

Renee-

RENEE

What?

JEFF

When we were little.

RENEE

Yes.

JEFF

Did you hate me?

RENEE

Hate you?

I teased you.

JEFF

Yes.

RENEE

I teased you mercilessly.

JEFF

Yes.

RENEE

I mean, I was so bored growing up. I couldn't think of anything to do with my day but tease you.

JEFF

That's not it.

RENEE

No?

JEFF

No.

RENEE

Then why did I do it?

JEFF

Because mom and dad teased you. That was our family.

RENEE

But I didn't mind their teasing.

JEFF

Yes, yes you did. You hated it.

RENEE

They abused me so I abused you.

JEFF

No, it wasn't abuse. That was just our family.

RENEE

It must have been hell for you.

JEFF

RENEE

When you all noticed me it was hell.

JEFF

But you knew it was all joking.

RENEE

When I was five. I didn't know what it was.

JEFF

I'm sorry.

RENEE

You at least were the youngest. You were just doing what you saw everyone else doing.

JEFF

But I was so persistent.

RENEE

Yeah, you won the quantity award but quality abuse always came from dad. When dad did it... Oh, God. Remember what he did with my middle name?

JEFF

What?

RENEE

You remember my middle name?

JEFF

Cotton.

RENEE

Yeah, so he started calling me cotton balls.

JEFF

I remember that. I could never figure out why that bugged you so much.

RENEE

Please. From the moment I found out they had a name I hated the sight of them. From that moment. And then my father starts calling me cotton balls. I freaked out. I thought he was on to me.

JEFF

I'm sure he had no idea.

RENEE

Maybe not. But he knew it bugged me. That was enough for him. He made it my nickname.

JEFF

He changed it.

RENEE

Yeah, to c-balls. I thought it was an instruction to everyone to look at mine. “Hey, see balls! See balls!” Just thinking about it makes me want to slap him.

(JEFF holds RENEE’s hand.)

JEFF

You’re a terrific teacher.

RENEE

Are we bonding?

JEFF

The Webster children.

RENEE

I think... I think Harvard’s your school.

JEFF

You thinking of going home.

RENEE

Mmmmm.... My spiritual home. Now I’ve got the leverage.

(Blackout. We hear a boy’s choir singing triumphantly. Lights up on RENEE wearing a cap and gown and delivering a lecture.)

RENEE

I’ve learned not to be a gender or identity slave. I might not know always who I am. What sex, what gender, what name, what ethnicity. But I look at my clothes and I do know – I’m a professor at Oxford. And whatever my identity, my duty is to teach you blokes what it is to be queer. What it is to be different. My methodology is queer. Hit it! (Reprise of “Queer Theory” with entire cast leading into the bows.)

END OF PLAY