

DR. SMYRICHINSKY'S BROTHER

A Play
In two acts

By Dennis Foon

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For Ralph Weiss, one hell of a dentist.

THE CHARACTERS

MRS. M. BENDER

ERNEST HOWARD, M.D.

EDITH HOWARD, L.L.B.

JACK SMITH, D.D.S.

DR. SMYRICHINSKY'S BROTHER was first given a public staged reading by the Playwrights Workshop in Montreal in May, 1982. This revised text was given a public staged reading by the New Play Centre in Vancouver in October, 1982.

This play takes place in a variety of locales: a park, a hospital, an apartment and others.

A naturalistic representation of these locations is not intended. There are instances where the realism of the scene (for example, Edith's kitchen), might call for a literal portrayal. In these instances I would suggest that the setting then provide only the essential elements necessary to support the situation.

The play is divided into fifteen parts. The scenes are meant to flow into one another as much as possible without a break in the action until the conclusion of the first act.

SMYRICHINSKY IS PRONOUNCED: "SMEAR-A-CHIN--SKEE"

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I

MRS. BENDER, A WOMAN OF FIFTY, IN HER OFFICE. SHE IS IN THE MIDST OF A MEDITATIVE MARTIAL ARTS EXERCISE. HER STEALTHY MOTIONS APPEAR COMPLETELY OUT OF PLACE FOR A WOMAN OF HER AGE AND APPEARANCE.

SHE GOES TO HER HEAVY OAK DESK AND PLACES HER PALMS DOWN ON ITS TOP SURFACE.

SHE BEGINS CONCENTRATING ON THE LARGE OBJECT.

AFTER A FEW MOMENTS THE DESK TREMBLES VERY SLIGHTLY, PERHAPS RISES HALF AN INCH. IT MAY OR MAY NOT BE HAPPENING.

SHE RELAXES. REACHES INTO THE DESK, TAKES OUT A BOTTLE OF GIN, POURS THREE OUNCES STRAIGHT INTO A GLASS AND DOWNS IT IN A-GULP.

II

EDITH'S APARTMENT

ERNEST: She was small. Incredibly small for someone who appeared to be so large. Her eyes were black like a squirrel's. There she was--sitting in my chair. No one ever sits in my chair.

EDITH: I have a chair like that.

ERNEST: No you don't. She sat there in my chair, the therapist's chairs five or six minutes in total silence.

EDITH: Yes?

ERNEST: I laid down on the patient's couch and looked at the ceiling. She said, "I am looking for Ralph Sha--shamansky Where is he?"

EDITH: So?

ERNEST: I giggled. Because I noticed a hole in the ceiling. I mean, I've been interpreting my patients' dreams, images and fantasies; their cuts, their open wounds--and it wasn't them--it was this goddamned hole in the ceiling!

EDITH: Are you crying?

ERNEST: I am not crying.

EDITH: You're jealous.

ERNEST: I am not jealous.

EDITH: You're really jealous. You're desperate because I found perfect happiness and you haven't.

ERNEST: No, no, no. I'm glad you've found happiness. You've paid your dues. God only knows how long you've been in existential crisis. I think it's a fucking miracle you've found a perfect moron to love.

EDITH: Stop it! Stop it! All my life you've goaded me into being analytical, into exploiting my my intellect, into ascending the male mountain and out-aggressing, out-manuvering, out accomplishing all those wimps with the wittle wee wees and I did! You gave me my brain, Ernest. What-a gift. All it's ever done - is stick we with a high tech law practice, more clients that I can stand and a shitload of anxiety. God I hate the thought process. He's a dentist.

ERNEST: What?

EDITH: A dentist. He's going to save me just like he saved my teeth. That's logical, don't you think?

ERNEST: A dentist?

EDITH: He's going to retire my brain.

ERNEST: Really?

EDITH: He promised. I'm throwing in the towel, Ernest, no more!

ERNEST: You think—if we asked nicely—he might be willing to retire mine too?

EDITH: Why do you always want everything I've got? I find the perfect insipid man and now you want to take him away from me. Why don't you just go back to being depressed.

ERNEST: It's too depressing- to be depressed by myself.

EDITH: So don't be depressed! Be happy! Your sister is in love with a perfect moron! Ernest, look at me, I'm just like Doris Day!

ERNEST: I suppose he's a genius in bed.

EDITH SNORTS. KNOCK ON DOOR. JACK ENTERS CARRYING THREE BAGS OF GROCERIES THAT HE CAN BARELY HOLD.

ERNEST: Let me guess: Jack!

JACK: Ernie? Can I call you that?

ERNEST: Ernie? Ernie? Yes. Yes'

JACK: He looks just like you, Edie. You're like twins.

EDITH: Oh!

JACK: Yeah, it's the upper lip. You've got the same upper lip.
(TO ERNEST:) Open your. mouth. Wider. Oh, look at those molars. Amazing. OK, now bite down. Incredible! Phenomonal! You have the exact same bite! Same molars, same bite! I've only seen that kind of occlusion with identical twins before, not just with a brother and sister. Terrific!

ERNEST: He likes my teeth.

JACK: I love your teeth. But you need to brush harder on the inside of your top molars ... What a day! Three root canals, two bridges, an abscess, and four fillings. Look at these hands, Baby, these are genius hands.
EDITH SUCKS AND BITES HIS FINGERS HUNGRILY.
Oh! Don't teeth on the merchandise, they're insured for a million. Oh, and baby--

EDITH: Yes, Big Boy?

JACK: Oh, Christ, I'll tell you later, dinner is melting: Look, I didn't know what you eat so I just bought everything so you could choose.

ERNEST: That's very thoughtful of you, Jack...Edith, he's incredible.

EDITH: You don't know.

JACK: This is the whole frozen food section at the supermarket. What'll it be? Lobster Newburg, Shrimp Newburg Deep Fried Scallops, escalloped cod. Flounder stuffed with shrimp, trout stuffed with crab or Oysters Rockefeller?

ERNEST: Is that the appetizer or main course?

JACK: Whatever you like, it's up to you.

ERNEST: Oh, Edith, where did you find him, I want one too.

EDITH: He likes you Jack.

JACK: Well, it's nice to meet professionals in other fields. So what'll it be?

ERNEST: My god, too many choices--I'm panicking!

JACK: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you...

EDITH: He's not upset, he's excited--

ERNEST: What variety, what choice--I love him!

EDITH: He loves you, Jack.

JACK: Would you like a drink?

ERNEST: Quickly.

JACK: Brandy Alexander, Bloody Caesar, Tequila Sunrise, Pifia Colada or Mai Tai?

ERNEST: All of them. In one glass. Now.

JACK: Really?

ERNEST: Yes! Put it in big bowl if you don't have room.

JACK: Is he putting me on?

EDITH: He doesn't know how.

JACK: Oh, damn, I forgot the ice.

ERNEST: Screw the ice, I hate ice! I drink my drinks Hot!

JACK: Honey, have you got a pot or something?

EDITH: Just under the stove, Baby.

JACK: Christ, this is terrible!

EDITH: Oh, honey, what is it?

JACK: I don't know how you can stand it. I've got to get you a microwave.

EDITH: He's so generous!

ERNEST: And resourceful!

JACK: Okay, while it's heating up, you have to choose your vegetables. Broccoli with cheese sauce or au gratin?

ERNEST: I'm allergic to broccoli.

JACK: No problem--how about brussel sprouts in seasoned butter sauce?

ERNEST: They make my tongue swell.

JACK: Green Beans Almondine?

ERNEST: Hives.

JACK: What's with your brother, Edie, doesn't he like vegetables?

EDITH: His former wife was a vegetarian.

JACK: Oh jesus! Me and My Big Mouth. Ernie, I'm so sorry, I'm really sorry.

ERNEST: Forget it.

JACK: Tonight we stick to meat. Here's your drink.

ERNEST: Delicious.

JACK: Is there enough Tabasco in it?

ERNEST: Yes.. A perfect Daquiri. More.

JACK: Gosh, that's an interesting drink. You play Squash?

ERNEST: What?

JACK: You should try Squash. For all your problems.

ERNEST: My back.

JACK: Oh, that's rough. Nothing like Squash to clear the head. Everyday, six in the morning, rain or shine. Fantastic. But poor Ernie, sick as a dog, can't exercise. Can you jog? Oh, poor guy! Thank God I've got my health!

ERNEST: Just an accident of birth.

JACK: Exactly! Oh, it's good to finally meet someone who can say something like that and you know it's the truth because- he's qualified to say it. Isn't it nice to know what you're talking about?

ERNEST: You have no idea.

JACK: I know. Look at-you two: You're famous, you're rich- you're fantastic.

ERNEST: Well...

JACK: And humble too. Jesus, Edie, your brother is at least as deep as you, if not deeper.

EDITH: Oh, he's deeper, Jack.

JACK- Oh, I figured. I figured. God, I'm lucky. You see, Ernie, I've always been a bit of a loner kind of person, never really had time to make friends or anything. But now, I've made it. I don't have to worry about money and security anymore. I've got everything but people. So your sister is helping- me make up for lost time. She's the greatest thing that's ever happened to me.

ERNEST: Really.

JACK: It's true, what can I tell you? And now, it is such a pleasure to meet you, her only brother--and to know just how close we are going to be.

ERNEST: In just what sense do you mean?

JACK: Don't you know?

ERNEST: I haven't the faintest idea.

EDITH: I was waiting for you, Jackie. He doesn't know anything.

JACK: Oh. God, I'm embarrassed. I didn't realize she hadn't told you.

ERNEST: Told me?

JACK: That Edith and me, we're going to...

EDITH: Get married, Ernest.

ERNEST: Jesus Christ.

JACK: You're upset. He's upset, Edith.

ERNEST: No I am not.

JACK: Oh, good. I'd feel very bad if I thought you didn't approve.

ERNEST: Edith, your description did not do this man justice. I am very, very impressed.

EDITH: Then you must know what Jack wants from you.

ERNEST: What! ?

EDITH: Your heart-felt blessing.

ERNEST: From me? Really?

EDITH: Yes.

ERNEST: Oh! yes, yes, of course., Down on your knees. Quickly. That's good., ' BOOM! Stand up.

JACK: Is that all there is to it?

ERNEST: It's all in the wrists.

JACK: Really.

ERNEST: Voila.

JACK: Thank you. Really. Thank you.

ERNEST: It was nothing.

JACK: You're a good man. I knew he'd be. Can we have a toast?

EDITH: Yes, here's the champagne. Open it, Jackie.

JACK: Yes, okay!

JACK: Oh Christ, it's flat.

EDITH: Let's drink it.

JACK: But it didn't pop.

EDITH: Who cares, I want to toast.

ERNEST: To a marriage made in heaven.

JACK: You mean you'll drink this stuff?

EDI@FH: Isn't he scrumptious!

JACK: God, don't think I'm a snob, I don't care if it's bubbly or not.

ERNEST: Of course not.

EDITH: We like drinking it because it's terrible.

JACK: What?

EDITH: Then we know that we can do things that we don't like doing even though we know we don't like it and it gets us sick.

ERNEST: But it does get us drunk.

JACK: I don't get it.

EDITH: That's it: That's it!

JACK: What?

EDITH: You shouldn't get it, it doesn't make sense, it's just bullshit.

JACK: Oh, now I get it.

EDITH: Now do you see why I love him?

ERNEST: Yes.

JACK: You must really think I'm stupid.

EDITH: No, Jackie, you're not stupid.

JACK: I've worked hard all my life.

EDITH: Yes, and you know everything there is to know about teeth.

JACK: Yes.

ERNEST: Jack, don't misinterpret us. We are jaded, stunted people, -who have missed the world's beauty and simplicity. My wife left me because I lived inside my mind.

JACK: You don't have to tell me --about that.

ERNEST: I want to. I want to tell you everything because you bring such a fresh, pure, atmosphere. Don't misunderstand. I respect and admire you very, very much.

JACK: Thank you.

ERNEST: Now then: Cheers.

JACK: To my adorable genius wife-to-be.

EDITH: To my delicious fiancée whose body I love.

JACK: Thanks baby. And one last one: To my best man, the best in the world.

ERNEST: Who?

JACK: You.

ERNEST: What?

JACK: I'd like you to stand up for me, Ernie. I've been thinking about it a long time.

ERNEST: But surely you have a friend...

JACK: No, no, not me. I told you already--never had time. You've got the credentials. You're a pro, the man for the job. I'd be very happy to have you as my best man.

ERNEST: But we've just met.

JACK: I've been sizing you up. You seem alright to me. You're qualified.

EDITH: What do you say?

ERNEST: To think that all these years of training and practice were to prepare me for this. Do you require an immediate response?

JACK: If possible.

ERNEST: Yes! I will gladly accept this... tribute to our relationship, Dr. Smith.

JACK: Thank you Dr. Howard.

ERNEST: You're welcome.

JACK: Okay then, just sit down over here, together, that's right--leave a space for me.

HE SETS UP AN INSTANT CAMERA.

I just got this, isn't it a beaut? They're a steal too, the film costs more than the camera. All ready? It's got a five second timer and the pictures instant. Okay the flash is set, the focus--everybody ready?

BOTH: Yes!

JACK: Push the button and here I come.

HE DOES AND RUSHES TO SIT WITH THEM ON THE COUCH.

JACK: Smile!

THERE IS A LONG PAUSE.

JACK: It didn't work. I don't believe it, Goddamnit! How can you have memories when your camera doesn't work?

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

EDITH: I'll get it. Coming!

SHE OPENS THE DOOR. MRS. BENDER TAKES ONE STEP IN. LONG PAUSE. BENDER LOOKS EACH INDIVIDUAL IN THE EYE.

BENDER: I would like to speak with Mr. Ralph Smyrichinsky.

EDITH: Who?

ERNEST: It's her!

EDITH: Who?

BENDER: (TO JACK:) Are you Ralph Smyrichinsky?

JACK: No.

ERNEST: Are you following me?

BENDER: No, I am not.

ERNEST: Phone the police, Edith.

BENDER: I am the police.

JACK: What?

EDITH: Would you please identify yourself-

BENDER: Certainly. I am Mrs. M. Bender, Passport Office Investigator. I will not detain you any longer. But do take my card. If you happen to see the man I am looking for, have him come to me. Mr. Ralph Smyrichinsky is in deep water.

SHE EXITS. PAUSE.

EDITH: What was that?

ERNEST: She's the one I was telling you about. And that was the Slavic name she mentioned in my office: Smyrichinsky.

JACK: (PRONOUNCING IT CORRECTLY:) Smyrichinsky.

ERNEST: I didn't realize you were a linguist.

JACK: I'm not. That used to be my name.

EDITH: What!

JACK: I told you, honey. My name was changed to Smith.

EDITH: You didn't tell me it used to be Ralph, for Christ's sake.

JACK: It wasn't. My name's always been Jack. It was just my last name.

ERNEST: Why would anyone change their name to Smith when they had a beautiful name like Smyrichinsky.

JACK: Smith is easier to spell.

ERNEST: I always miss the obvious.

EDITH: Why is the Passport Office looking for you?

JACK: They're not looking for me, they're looking for Ralph Smyrichinsky. I never heard of the guy.

EDITH: How long have they been making inquiries?

JACK: Ever since I went in for my Passport I've getting phone calls. They go, "are you Ralph Smyrichinsky?" And I go, "No, I'm Jack Smith, DDS." And they hang up. But it was today they said they were holding my passport until they located this Ralph Smyrichinsky.

EDITH: You're being investigated, Jack.

JACK: Why would anybody want to investigate me?

EDITH: I have a headache.

JACK-- What am I going to do?

ERNEST: Must be a mistake.

JACK: This could screw our honeymoon.

EDITH: I'm nauseous.

JACK: Put your head between your legs, baby.

EDITH: I'm going to throw up.

JACK: Go on, lay down. I'll put your feet up.

EDITH: Everything was going to be so simple.

JACK: I'll go talk to her. I'll straighten her out.

ERNEST: I'm sure you will.

JACK: No problem, I'll do it, honey. I'll do it. JACK EXITS.

EDITH: I'm hungry.

ERNEST: Me too.

III.

BENDER'S OFFICE.

BENDER: Would you like a glass of water?

JACK: Yes, please.

BENDER: Cold or hot?

JACK: Cold, please.

BENDER: Did I show you the picture of my husband, Doctor?

JACK: No, you didn't.

BENDER: Here he is.

JACK: That's a nice shirt.

BENDER: He was a magnificent dresser. He had a total understanding of life ... and death.

JACK: He's not alive anymore?

BENDER: I do not allow smoking in here, Doctor.

JACK: I don't smoke.

BENDER: My husband was a very precise mano. As a dental practitioner, you would also highly regard preciseness in all things, would you not, Dr. Smith?

JACK: I've seen some pretty lousy dentists.

BENDER: Precise effort demands precise knowledge.

JACK: Four years pre-dentistry, four years Dental School.

BENDER: Understanding has nothing to do with schooling or training.

JACK: Eight years private practice.

BENDER: And Practice is meaningless. Behind every situation lies a series of facts. Behind the facts is the void. Reveal the void, and you destroy the facts. Do you follow my logic, Doctor Smith?

JACK: (LOST.) Oh yes, totally.

BENDER: And you are Ralph Smyrichinsky.

JACK: No, no. What I've been trying to say is my original last name is Smyrichinsky. I changed it to Smith. My first name's always been Jack. I never heard of Ralph Smyrichinsky.

BENDER: Then why do I have that name in your file?

JACK: Because somebody goofed up.

BENDER: No human error is possible because no human being touches those files. They are handled by the A2000. The mathematical probability is 200,000,000 to one that you are Ralph Smyrichinsky.

JACK: There must be a mistake.

BENDER: Remember what happened to Barnikov, the Balkan Chessmaster. Checkmated in four moves fifteen consecutive games by the A2000. When they found the poor man he was dead by a Queen's Knight in his own hand. Are you certain you have an airtight case?

JACK: I only have the truth.

BENDER: I'd say ten years. Perhaps fifteen.

JACK: What?

BENDER: Passport fraud is a federal offense, Doctor.

IV

A RESTAURANT.

JACK: Waiter--waiter! At this rate you'll be late for court for sure.

EDITH: I don't care.

JACK: What do you mean you don't care. You've got somebody to defend. Of course you care.

EDITH: I'm happy here with you. If I'm not there they'll just send my client home so they can play doctor.

JACK: The judge and crown prosecutor?

EDITH: Playing with each other's privates is a hell of a lot less frustrating than a day in court.

EDITH BEGINS UNDOING JACKS ZIPPER.

JACK: Waiter!

EDITH: Jack?

JACK: Yeah?

EDITH: Are you a simple, pure person?

JACK: What do you think?

EDITH: You're innocent. Primitive. The tropics. Let's do it.

JACK: Right now?

EDITH: Right here.

JACK: What about all the people?

EDITH: We're paying for the right to sit at this table.

JACK: But it's indecent.

EDITH: Let them stop us. We'll sue.

JACK: Let's wait till after work. Edith, stop it!

EDITH: You're aborigine. Totally pure. Right now.

JACK: Oh Jesus, my zipper's broken.

EDITH: Now.

JACK: Waiter--excuse me a second, will you--waiter! Tell me something, OK? These people sat down at least five minutes after us and they're already at the salad bar. Our table hasn't even been set yet. Now are you going to take our order or do you want me to go into the kitchen and get what we want?

Life is not easy, you know what I mean?

V.

THE HOSPITAL

ER,NEST:

Welcome to the psychiatry wing of the hospital. While you're in this phase of your rotations with the school, I'll be your advisor. I suppose several questions are running through your minds regarding this specialty, the main one being now much money can be made. Well, don't get your hopes up because they've socialized psychiatry as well. Now perhaps a few words regarding the specialty itself are in order. If you find them depressing just watch the happy glint in my eyes for encouragement, The key to this whole can of worms is that psychotherapy is repair work. That is the thing to remember. A psychotherapist should not anticipate gigantic metamorphoses equaling a great psychological rebirth. People are like motor cars. Some are built with finer materials and some with less, but none of them are ever the same after they come out of the collision shop. Why the long faces? Remember--the unexamined life is not worth living. If you can buy Socrates, you'll do fine. If not, just keep in mind that next month is a new rotation--obstetrics: you'll start from scratch!

VI

EDITH'S APARTMENT

BENDER: I have a few questions to ask you regarding the Ralph Smyrichinsky case.

EDITH: This is a bad time.

BENDER: I know. I would have come sooner but I was unavoidably detained.

BENDER WALKS INTO THE APARTMENT PAST EDITH

The driver of the car in front of me ran into a tree in an attempt to avoid striking a small French poodle.

EDITH: Was he hurt?

BENDER: Oh yes. Killed.

EDITH: The driver?

BENDER: The poodle.

EDITH: What?

BENDER: He bled profusely from the nose and dropped dead away. It was a very rare tree. A Blossoming Plum from the Golen Heights. How long have- you known him, Miss Howard?

EDITH: The poodle?

BENDER: Dr. Smith.

EDITH: One year.

BENDER: Intimately?

EDITH: Why are you asking me that?

BENDER: May I have some hot water, please.

EDITH: Hot water?

BENDER: Clears the palate.

EDITH: Do you want anything with it?

BENDER: Just place it in a teapot beside two cups on a tray bring it all here and sit down.

EDITH PAUSES, THEN DOES.

You have a beautiful apartment. It is quite handsome and tasteful. It is clean and the carpets are well shampooed.

EDITH: Thank you.

KNOCK ON DOOR. EDITH GOES TO IT. JACK ENTERS.

JACK: Hi honey ... What are you doing here?

BENDER: Would you like something hot to drink,

JACK: ...Sure. Do you have any cookies?

EDITH: I'll check.

JACK: This Stuff is totally clear. Is it Chinese?

BENDER: Quite possibly.

JACK: Hm. Milk and sugar please. (TASTES AGAIN.) Um, good. Where do you get this stuff, Edie?

EDITH: Ask Mrs. Bender.

BENDER: Dr. Smith, Birth records state that you had a brother,

JACK: What?

BENDER: Born of the same parents three years after 1.@U.

JACK: But I'm an only child.

BENDER: His name was Ralph Smyrichinsky.

JACK: Look, Mrs. Bender, I think I can straighten this out. You see, It's like this: the computer's got the Smyrichinkys confused with the Smyrinskys. They lived in the duplex two doors. We used to always get their mail.

BENDER: The Smyrinskys had two girls: Sara and Rachel.
Your family had two boys: Jack and Ralph.
The Passport Office is under the impression that you died
some time ago.

JACK: They think that I am dead?

BENDER: And that Ralph Smyrichinsky is alive.
Although I am quite convinced that he died when he was very
young and that you, in fact, are still alive.

JACK: That's what I think too.

BENDER: Unfortunately, Doctor, your passport will not be forthcoming
until this matter is clarified.

JAC-@: But I do not have a brother.

BENDER: Yes you do. According to the files and documents and
records.

JACK: You mean if the files and documents and records say I had a
brother, then I did, whether I did or not?

BENDER: The books say you did.

JACK: Look, if I had a brother, held be over here now visiting.
I'd be out on the squash courts with him, we'd organize
poker games, eat salami together at Leon's. But I don't
have a brother. If I did, I would introduce you.

EDITH: We are not going to answer anymore of your questions, Mrs.
Bender.

BENDER: May I ask why?

EDITH: Because we are under no obligation to do so.

BENDER: Very well. I will duly record your justification for this reticence prior to forwarding the file.
Good day.

JACK: Forwarding the file?

EDITH: Forward it to who?

BENDER: The Proper Authorities.

EDITH: On what grounds?

BENDER: Suspicion of passport fraud.

JACK: But I didn't do anything.

EDITH: Don't worry, Jackie, it's just procedure.

JACK: Just tell them not to come during office hours, OK? Cops are always trying to sponge free toothbrushes.

BENDER: You needn't be concerned for a while.

JACK: For how long?

BENDER: Perhaps a year.

JACK: A whole year?

BENDER: Sometimes two.

JACK: But we're going around the world next week.

BENDER: Really? Cooperate and we attempt to settle it now. Refuse, and I refer the case. It is completely up to you.

EDITH: You bitch.

BENDER: Now if you do not mind, Dr. Smith, I have a few questions for you. Roll up your sleeves.

JACK: What?

BENDER: This is my special polygraph. It gives me the edge I need.

JACK: Wait a minute.

EDITH: Are you afraid to do it?

JACK: No way! Will it hurt?

EDITH: No, baby ... unless you're afraid.

JACK: I'm not afraid.

EDITH: Well if you've got nothing to afraid of, do it, Jackie. Do it for the machine.

JACK: Right now?

EDITH: It's now or never.

JACK: How.

EDITH: It's always a little scary the first time. Do your stuff.

JACK: I've always been a cooperative person.

BENDER: Is your name Dr. Jack Smith?

JACK: Of course. Yes.

BENDER: I thought your true name was Jack Smyrichinsky.

JACK: That's my original name, yes. I had it legally changed.

BENDER: Doctor, is your shirt red?

JACK: What does that have to do with anything?

BENDER: Are your shoes brown?

JACK: Yes.

BENDER: Did your brother have black hair?

JACK: What?

BENDER: Did your brother have black hair?

JACK: I can't answer that.

BENDER: Why not?

JACK: Because I didn't have a brother.

BENDER: Are you sure?

JACK: Sure I'm sure.

BENDER: Did your brother have green eyes?

JACK: Come on.

BENDER: Was he smaller or bigger than you?

JACK: I don't know.

BENDER: Did he have a dark-complexion?

JACK: I told you, I don't know.

BENDER: Were you present at his death?

JACK: No!

BENDER: Why are you shouting, Doctor?

JACK: Because I'm frustrated. I lose my temper when I'm frustrated.

BENDER: Do you often lose your temper?

JACK: No.

BENDER: I heard you yelling at a waiter yesterday.

EDITH: You were there?

BENDER: Routine.

JACK: I was yelling for service.

BENDER: You lost your temper.

JACK: I couldn't help it.

BENDER: Do you lose your temper all the time, Dr. Smyrichinsky?

JACK: Smith. Smith.

BENDER: What did your temper do to your brother?-

JACK: My temper didn't do anything to my brother.

BENDER: Then where is he?

JACK: How many times do you want me to tell you?

BENDER: I just want the truth.

JACK: I don't know where he is.

BENDER: Where who is?

JACK: My brother.

BENDER: Who?

JACK: My brother.

BENDER: Who?

JACK: My brother, Ralph Smyrichinsky!

PAUSE.

I didn't mean it. I didn't mean it like that

BENDER: Like what?

JACK: Saying it that way. Saying it like it sounded like I had a brother.

EDITH: A slip of the tongue?

JACK: Yeah. That's right. But the machine, your machine could tell the truth--what did it say?

BENDER: Nothing, Dr. Smyrichintky. Nothing at all.

EDITH: I think you'd better go now, Mrs. Bender.

JACK: I don't have a brother. I never had one.

EDITH: We all heard what you said, Jack. Now I think you had better just shut up.

JACK: But I know the truth. I know what I remember.

EDITH: Shut up.

JACK: ... What happens to me now?

BENDER: So much depends on you, Dr. Smyrichinsky.

JACK: Smith. It is a legal change. I am Dr. Smith.

BENDER: I understand. All the very best to you both. Good day, Doctor. Good day, Miss Howard.

BENDER EXITS.

PAUSE.

EDITH: Who's taller, you or me?

JACK: How come you don't believe me?

EDITH: Who's taller?

JACK: ... Me. I'm not lying, you know.

EDITH: Are you sure?

JACK: Yes.

EDITH: By how much?

JACK: ... By how much taller?

EDITH: Yes.

JACK: ... By a half inch, maybe an inch.

EDITH: (VEHEMENTLY.) Bullshit.

JACK: What ?

EDITH: Stone bullshit.

JACK: It's a guess. I'm just guessing.

EDITH: Liar!

JACK: Maybe I'm wrong.

EDITH: I'm taller than you.

JACK: You could be right.

EDITH: By at least half an inch.

JACK: We'll have to get a ruler or something. Mark it off against the wall.

EDITH: Get me something to throw up in.

JACK: Sit down. Take deep breaths. Now just hold on.

JACK QUICKLY GRABS THE COOKIE BAG. HE BEGINS TO HAND IT TO EDITH, STOPS, LOOKS IN THE BAG. TAKES OUT A COOKIE AND EATS IT. HANDS THE BAG TO EDITH.

EDITH: You've got terrible depth perception. How can you drill teeth?

JACK: You asked me who was taller, honey, I took a guess. I'm judging by my head - how big's a head? I don't know, I see it only in mirrors, I never really get to look at it. You never do ever get to see your own head. You want an exact measure I'll get it for you, no problem. There are some very good measuring devices, very precise and good. I'll get one if you want. I'll get one tomorrow. I'll get one right now.

EDITH LOOKS UP AT HIM FROM THE BAG. PAUSE.

VII. ERNEST SPEAKS INTO A DICTAPHONE

ERNEST: Mrs. Patrick, this is a letter to my son. You'll find the address in my blue directory ... Dear Curt (that's with a C, Mrs. Patrick) Dear Curt: You may not hear from me for a while. I am planning an extended trip abroad in an attempt to gain a new perspective. I'll send you a postcard as soon as I : attain enlightenment. In the meantime, Curt; with puberty comes the secondary sexual characteristics. Your voice will drop from tenor to baritone, your downy cheeks will give way to stubble. Your penis, once the simple valve eliminating urine, will now metamorphosise into a mysterious instrument of pain and pleasure. Some master the sensations it brings, most become a slave to it. I've spent my entire life striving to understand its effect on myself and others and have come to the conclusion it's a complete waste of time.

New paragraph ...

I am enclosing a check of fifty dollars to serve as your birthday present. Perhaps you might like to spend it on some new bats and balls. Love, Dad-.

And Mrs. Patrick, will you please call building maintenance and find out why the hell that hole is still in the ceiling?

BENDER: Do you wish you could be reborn, Doctor?

ERNEST: How did you get in here?

BENDER: Do you miss your wife very much?

ERNEST: That door is double-locked.

BENDER: Did she need repair work--or you?

ERNEST: Why don't you get out of here?

BENDER: It is becoming obvious that you are losing your professional veneer of detachment, Dr. Howard.

ERNEST: What makes you think that?

BENDER: You are a very transparent man. You wear
your angst on your sleeve.

ERNEST: That is malicious speculation.

BENDER: The more one lets go of things, Doctor, the clearer
they become. But you seem to be gripping everything
more tightly. Why don't you let go?

ERNEST: Just what do you want from me?

ERNEST TURNS. BENDER HAS ALREADY GONE. PAUSE.

EDITH'S APARTMENT

EDITH: I'm so tired. I can't believe how tired I am all the
time.

ERNEST: You should get more sleep.

EDITH: I sleep all the time.

ERNEST: Even when you're working?

EDITH: Particularly when I'm working.

ERNEST: I'm always sleeping too.

EDITH: Even when you're working?

ERNEST: When I go to work.

EDITH: What have you been doing?

ERNEST: Going to the zoo. Contemplating Polar Bears.

EDITH: They're always sleeping too.

ERNEST: Misery loves company.

EDITH: But they have a killer instinct. You don't.

ERNEST: That's because half my teeth have been capped by people like Jack.

EDITH: I want to have all my caps pulled off so that just the little points will show.

ERNEST: You'd have to stop eating steak.

EDITH: I'd drink it. What a stupid repetitious function. I'm so sick of chewing. Why is Jack such a liar?

ERNEST: Jack isn't a liar.

EDITH: He's a big fat liar.

ERNEST: Jack is not fat.

EDITH: I thought he was a simple person.

ERNEST: He is.

EDITH: He has a past. A big ugly past.

ERNEST: No he doesn't.

EDITH: He's full of mysteries.

ERNEST: There's only one thing Jack is full of.

EDITH: I heard what he said. It was a Freudian Slip. And you know what that means

ERNEST: He said he had a brother. That could mean a thousand things.

EDITH: He's hiding himself from me.

ERNEST: Could that be wishful thinking?

EDITH: No it's not, I want him simple, but he's lying to me, telling millions of lies!

ERNEST: Edith, listen to me: Jack was a jerk before he made that slip and he remains a jerk today. People don't become intriguing overnight. It takes a lot of hard work, a big dose of trauma to develop an interesting neurosis. Believe me, that's not Jack.

EDITH: That is Jack. He's pulling something on me.

ERNEST: Maybe you're hoping he is because you could never be happy with someone like him.

EDITH: You wanted someone like him too.

ERNEST: I thought I did but I already get enough sleep. You're constructing a baroque mechanism to rid yourself of that blowhard. But you don't have to work yourself up. Just drop him. Believe me, tomorrow he'll be doing the same thing, filling teeth, people's ears, and his pockets.

EDITH: I wanted to do the simple thing.

ERNEST: You did. Now do a simpler thing.

EDITH: it's not that easy.

ERNEST: Of course it's easy, he's just one person.

EDITH: But there's two.

ERNEST: You mean his legendary brother?

EDITH: No, his child.

ERNEST: What child?

EDITH: The one inside me.. another Jack.

ERNEST: (FULL OF DESPAIR) Another one?

IX

JACK: Edith, Edith! I have a picture to show you.

EDITH: A picture of what?

JACK: Look.

EDITH: A dog? A poodle.

JACK: Do you like poodles?

EDITH: Poodles?

JACK: Toy poodles. Do you like them?

EDITH: Depends on the haircut.

JACK: Do you like this one?

EDITH: I guess.

JACK: it's yours.

EDITH: What do I want with a picture of a poodle?

JACK: Not the picture, the poodle.

EDITH: I don't want a poodle.

JACK: Rather have a collie?

EDITH: No.

JACK: A shnauser?

EDITH: I don't want a dog.

JACK: Why not?

EDITH: I don't have a place to keep it.

JACK: You do now. I bought you a house.

EDITH: A house?

JACK: A house.

EDITH: I don't need a house.

JACK: You'll look great in it.

EDITH: How can a house make me look great?

JACK: Because it's gcteverything. And when a place has everything, you can't help but look great.

EDITH: Why didn't you tell me?

JACK: For the surprise. I got a great deal on it. The root canal referral Plotkin sent me. A nearly bankrupt builder. Thirty five houses in the unit and we'll be the only people living there. It'll be great! And what a deal. Wall to wall shag, built in vaccuum cleaners. Three fireplaces, two baths and a half, the kitchen's got every appliance you can think of--even a built in Cuisinart.

EDITH: Why did you change your name?

JACK: Who gives a shit about my name. I just bought you a house.

EDITH: Smyrichinsky to Smith. Why?

JACK: Guess how much it cost.

EDITH: Were you running from something?

JACK: Of course not. Look, we can talk about that later. Guess how much.

EDITH: Two million dollars.

JACK: No, seriously.

EDITH: Five million dollars.

JACK: OK, OK. Two hundred sixty thousand. But it's worth twice that. Birch trees on the front lawn, bark that peels. They make canoes out of them.

EDITH: Marble figurines?

JACK: No, do you want them?

EDITH: Fish pond?

JACK: Didn't think of that.

EDITH: Stock it with trout, Chinese carp. Squid and electric eels.

JACK: You want a salt water pond?

EDITH: A totem pole. A mausoleum.

JACK: You'd have to get a special license for one of those.

EDITH: Ask Bender. A fallout shelter.

JACK: No problem.

EDITH: Lead walls.

JACK: I want to give you everything.

EDITH: A temple. A golden sphinx.

JACK: I don't know if I can afford all that.

EDITH: Of course you can.- You'll find the money.

JACK: You really want it?

EDITH: Double mortgage the Xray machine. Sign over the drill.

JACK: I think you should relax, honey.

EDITH: Do you really love me?

JACK: You know I really love you, baby.

EDITH: Then why did you change your name?

X.

THE ZOO.

ERNEST: Long, long neck holding up a very small stupid head. Cantalope eyes just stare while they chew their cuds. Do you ever feel like a giraffe, Jack?

JACK: Giraffes don't have to worry. I'm starting to sweat. A wholesale dentist-shop opened next door to me. For twenty bucks they give an examination ' cleaning, X-Ray and souvenir toothbrush. How can I hold on to my patients against prices like that?

ERNEST: My office is now sandwiched between a scientologist and at EST group.

JACK: You can't clean teeth on an assembly line.

ERNEST: Maybe your kind of attention is too expensive.

JACK: I don't make the rates. The rates are standard. I didn't go to school eight years to question the standard rates! PAUSE What's wrong with Edith?

ERNEST: Is she sick?

JACK: She's all tied up in knots. She talks in puzzles. We don't communicate anymore.

ERNEST: You mean there was a time when you two could communicate?

JACK: Sure, about everything. But I've never seen her like this. What's with her?

ERNEST: You really don't know?

JACK: No. That's why I'm asking.

ERNEST: Jack, ever since my sister was a little girl, she has loved new dresses. She'd cry and cry for my stepfather to buy her a new dress until he would finally break down and buy her one. She would step out of the car beaming, bright new dress, biting bottom lip, a princess. She would come running to us in total rapture. As my mother and I admired this bright, flawless, impeccable moment, she would dash up the porch stairs, look into the mirror and suddenly she would freeze. For by the sleeve or under the waist she would notice a mark or a wrinkle, a loose thread. Slowly, deliberately, she would take the dress off, leave it lying like a shedded skin clumped on the floor, run to her room and lock herself in. Edith would never touch that dress again.

JACK: Are you comparing me to a dress?

ERNEST: Your image is soiled.

JACK: There was a little mistake. I just want to get through to her. I love her. I can take care of her, give her anything she wants. Ernie, tell me, what does she want? What does she want?

ERNEST: A full grown virgin giraffe.

JACK: How can you tell if it's a virgins?

ERNEST: That is a problem.

JACK: I'd have to break its neck to get it into the living room.

XI. MRS BENDER'S OFFICE.

JACK: You think this was my brother?

BENDER: Look at the dates. The address. The names of the parents. They all confirm *hat you have such trouble accepting. You had a brother. He died at the age of two.

JACK: That's gotta be bullshit ... cause of death, drowning. Ralph Smyrichinsky.

BENDER: Try to remember. Do you see a face?

JACK: I don't see anything.

BENDER: Concentrate.

JACK: No.

BENDER: More.

JACK: Nothing.

BENDER: I see.

JACK-. If I had a brother when I was five I'd remember.

BENDER: It was a long time ago.

JACK: Okay, but don't you think it's odd for a person to forget they ever had a brother? I can understand forgetting a pet turtle when you're growing up - but a brother?

BENDER: Things can happen.

JACK: Like what? It'd have to be pretty good, cause I've got a memory like a leghold trap. I had to memorize millions of things to get through dental school and I aced right through it.

BENDER: There are different kinds of knowledge, Doctor. Many things are possible.

JACK: Alright, alright. But this isn't the Twilight Zone. This stuff says I have a brother who died. And I say there's no way I could forget something like that.

BENDER: But you did.

JACK: No.

BENDER: Do you believe these documents are counterfeit?

JACK: No.

BENDER: Then it appears, Doctor, that there is a gap in your memory.

JACK: ... I guess so.. okay ... so I forgot. But now what do I do? Edith can't stand me, she thinks I'm a liar.

BENDER: Dr. Smith your proper passport to be issued within a few days. Would that help your fiancee?

JACK: It sure would. That would be great i--even if I forgot that I had a little brother who died--she should be satisfied with that. Thank you very, very much, Mrs. Bender.

BENDER: You are very welcome, Doctor.

JACK: Life is so funny. I could have had a brother right here and now. I would have liked that, you know. He'd be a couple of years younger than me. probably look just like me. But it's all a big blank.

BENDER: It's that way for many reasons.

JACK: What do you think my reason was?

BENDER: Don't you know?

JACK: No.

BENDER: Think, Doctor. You have forgotten your brother. Your brother is dead.

JACK: Yes, so ... what are you driving at?

BENDER: Think.

JACK: He's dead, okay, he's dead. It's out of my mind. I don't know about this--don't look at me like that--it's not like I killed him or something...

PAUSE.

Oh no ... you don't mean ... really?

PAUSE.

BENDER: ... I'm sorry, Doctor.

JACK: Oh my God. So that's why I forgot. Why? Why? Why did I do it to him?

BENDER: I only find facts. Here is the Police Report.

JACK: ...A pool I drowned him in a little plastic wading pool. I drowned Ralph Smyrichinsky.

BENDER: Now do you remember? Do you see his pale, pleading eyes?

JACK: No, no, I don't remember! I'm not the kind of guy who goes around killing his relatives. I wouldn't hurt my brother. I just love him.

BENDER: I'm sorry.

JACK: I'm a regular type of person. I never hurt anybody. Why would I kill my own brother?

BENDER: I don't know.

JACK: I would have loved him. He'd be my friend.

BENDER HANDS JACK A TISSUE. HE WIPES HIS EYES.

Where did you get this police report?

BENDER: From the same basic sources I received the Coroner's Report and these newspaper clippings.

JACK: It was in all the papers?

BENDER: Many papers, yes.

JACK: So everybody knew it but me? How come I'm always the last person to find-out about everything? I didn't even know I had a little brother and now I find out I killed--him. Nobody tells me anything.

BENDER: Of course not, Doctor, because you and your family emotionally conspired together to completely erase the incident.

JACK: But I'm not a killer. I'm not that type of guy.

BENDER: Precisely the reason you do not remember.

JACK: You mean since I don't remember, I must have done it?

BENDER NODS YES.

JACK: Then I'm a different person than I always thought I was. I'm not me.

BENDER SMILES

JACK: Well that's a real kick in the ass.

XII

ACT TWO

EDITH'S APARTMENT, TWO WEEKS LATER.

THE APARTMENT IS OVERUN WITH MATERNITY PREPARATIONS. BABY BATH, CRIB, ASSORTED NURSERY TOYS. BURL IVES SINGS "LITTLE WHITE DUCK" EDITH IS WEARING A MATERNITY DRESS AND LOOKS TEN MONTHS PREGNANT. SHE IS PRACTICING WALKING WITH THE HUGE LOAD. THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

EDITH: Just a minute!

SHE TURNS OFF THE MUSIC. SHE REMOVES THE PILLOW FROM UNDERNEATH HER DRESS. OPENS THE DOOR. IT' S JACK. HE IS CARRYING A TANK OF COMPRESSED GASS.

EDITH: Jackie! Jackie!

EDITH: Come in, Babe, come in, I've been worried sick about you! Two weeks and nobody knew where you were..,

EDITH: Baby, it's not like you, I missed you so much..

EDITH: Oh, I know I've been such a bitch and I'm sorry. I can understand why you'd want to stay away from me ... I've been terrible.. do you forgive me?

JACK: Oh, sure. Of course.

THEY EMBRACE.

EDITH: You're cute, you know that?

JACK: Really?

EDITH: You have a couple of moles you should have cut out but they're not hereditary.

JACK: What difference does that make?

EDITH: The moles?

JACK: The hereditary.

EDITH: That means I won't catch them.

JACK: You mean contagious.

EDITH: Right. Contagious.

JACK: Hereditary means you pass them on genetically. To your children.

EDITH: I mean contagious.

JACK: Some moles are contagious.

EDITH: Are yours?

JACK: Probably.

EDITH: I don't care. I love you. I'm sorry for being a walking shitbag of neurosis.

JACK: That's okay.

EDITH: How do you like all the new stuff?

JACK: What stuff?

EDITH: All this stuff.

JACK: (LOOKING AROUND FOR THE FIRST TIME:) Oh. Somebody having a baby shower?

EDITH: Uh huh.

JACK: Who?

EDITH: Me.

JACK: What?

EDITH- Jackie, we're having a baby! We did it! We're procreators! We're Pro-Lifers! We're not sterile!

JACK: No kidding.

EDITH: Aren't you happy?

JACK: Yeah. Yeah.

EDITH: Aren't you?

JACK: I'm thrilled. Really. I'm a Dad!

EDITH: Hug me!

JACK: Yes!

EDITH: Jack?

JACK: Uh huh.

EDITH: Can I show you all the stuff?

JACK: Sure.

EDITH: Do you like the dress? It doesn't fit yet but I'm going to grow into it.

JACK: It's nice.

EDITH: Here's the crib. Do you like the mobile?

JACK: Giraffes ... great.

EDITH: See the plastic sheet on the mattress? And the bumper pad? They think of everything. And here's the jolly jumper. Here's the changing table and I bought a case of pampers. And five dozen regular diapers too. And here's the diaper pails. Locking tops. Aren't they great?

JACK: Wonderful.

EDITH: And here's the baby bath. It even has a little ramp to help him keep his head up. I mean, I'm only four months pregnant but it's good to be prepared, isn't it?

JACK: Oh yeah.

EDITH: I'm glad you like the diaper pails. And there's another thing I have to show you... See--it's a little practice baby doll. Do you like it?

JACK: It's little Jack!

EDITH: Support his head. That's right, hold it up on your shoulder. He can't hold it up himself, you know. Oh, you look cute. Jackie, I love it -- I feel so- so Boring. Could you tell?

JACK: Yeah.

EDITH: Great! Now help me wash the baby.

JACK: What?

EDITH: Come on, I've already got the water in the tub. Come on, Jackie!

JACK: But I don't know how...

EDITH: Of course you don't, that's why I bought the practice baby. Now help me take off his nightie.

JACK: Are you sure he needs a bath?

EDITH: He's been pooping his diapers all day long! Do you want your son to have a smelly bum?

JACK: No.

EDITH: Then put him in the water.

JACK: What?

EDITH: Put him in the water. And hold on to him tight in case he struggles.

JACK: No!

EDITH: Well don't let his head go under the water.

JACK: Oh nooo!

EDITH: Jackie, what's wrong? Jackie, you're shaking.

JACK BACKS OUT OF THE ROOM TO THE DOOR.

EDITH: Jackie, we still have to dry him.

JACK EXITS.

EDITH: You want your son to catch pneumonia?

XIII. THE HIPPO POOL

JAICK: I think there's something wrong with me. I'm leaking.

ERNEST: Leaking?

JACK: I can-It explain it. I've never felt anything like this. There's something coming out of me.

ERNEST: Blood?

JACK: No. Something else. I discovered it today in the bath. I heard a dripping sound.

ERNEST: A hole!

JACK: That's what I thought.

ERNEST: My god ... have you ever seen the ceiling in my office?

JACK: No.

ERNEST: Good...Then it must have been your tap.

JACK: I felt it with my toe but the faucet was dry. I kept looking and looking. The ceiling, the floor. Looked for cracks in the wall, in the tub ... And then I saw it. A little line of bubbles seeping out of my side, floating in a straight line to the surface. It wasn't the tap that was leaking. It was me.

ERNEST: That's ridiculous, Jack.

JACK: I saw them. I saw the bubbles.

ERNEST: That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

JACK: I'm not making it up.

ERNEST: Bubbles come out of your mouth when you're drowning or out of your rectum when you fart. There is no hole in you. You're having stupid dreams.

JACK: Then what's it mean! - You interpret dreams.

ERNEST: Not anymore. Now I'd rather judge them. I'm a firm believer that the better the person, the better the dreams. And quite frankly, Jack, your dreams suck.

JACK: I'm sorry to hear-you say that.

ERNEST: You have an adolescent anxiety attack because you find out you're about to become a father. And you want my interpretation.? You're exactly the kind of self-absorbed half-wit I quit my practice to avoid.

JACK: You hate me.

ERNEST: You have tainted the impeccable bloodline of my ancestors with mediocrity.

JACK: I guess this means you've decided not to be best man.

ERNEST: I suppose one might come to that conclusion.

JACK: Well you don't have to worry. You won't have to bother with me much longer.

ERNEST: In what sense do you mean?

JACK: I won't be here. You can say whoever you want was the father. You can be the father for all I care.

ERNEST: Have I actually frightened you away?

JACK: Let's just say it might be dangerous for me to stay.

ERNEST: Don't force me to use my imagination.

JACK: I spoke to Mrs. Bender. She told me about my brother.

ERNEST: The imaginary brother?

JACK: The brother brother.

ERNEST: I see.

JACK: She has proof.

ERNEST: Where is he?

JACK: He's dead.

ERNEST: And you forgot him?

JACK: I lost him in my mind.

ERNEST: Do you know why?

JACK: Everyone loses things. I lost my brother.

ERNEST: You must admit that's a difficult trick.

JACK: She proved it to me. He was real. He was real.

ERNEST: I'm glad for you, Jack. Into your open arms has fallen
the Companion you have always sought to replace: your
roommate, your playmate, your own little brother.

JACK: I killed him.

ERNEST: What?

JACK: I drowned him in a pool. I held him under the water and
he died.

ERNEST: I don't understand.

JACK: He's dead. I killed him. He was a little tiny boy and I put his head under the water with my hands.

ERENST: You didn't do that.

JACK: I did. She told me.

ERNEST: That could not be true.

JACK: I was in the newspapers.

FRNEST: (WITH DISDAIN.) Newspapers!

JACK: And psychiatric journals.

ERNEST: (LISTENING) Well.

JACK: I did it. I did.

ERNEST: How old were you?

JACK: Five. He was two.

ERNEST: No. That's screen amnesia, Jack. You're not the kind of person it happens to.

JACK: Are you sure?

ERNEST: Of course. A killer-amnesiac is something special, case-history material. Not a near non-entity, not a pale imitation of a vibrant, interesting, psychotic.

JACK: Then why did it happen to me?

ERNEST: It didn't. You see, a true screen amnesiac is a bit compulsive, submerges himself in his work to escape terrible urges and memories. He would seek love and reinforcement in an unconscious attempt to escape his guilt. But there is always a clue, some slip of behavior that gives him away. An activity that betrays a sadistic side, a need to hurt others in his life or occupation.

JACK: Like dentistry.

ERNEST: Like dentistry.

PAUSE.

JACK: Do you think I did it?

ERNEST: ... Of course. Your every speech, your every action confirms it. The way you pick at people's teeth and cut into their gums. Filling their mouths full of instruments until they gag on their own saliva. Grinding and drilling and injecting while they wince or groan with pain and the whole time you stuff their mouths more full with devices as you drill closer and closer to the nerves.

JACK: You can see why I don't want to be near the baby? I can't trust myself, Who knows what I'd do? I'm scared, Ernie. I'm really scared.

ERNEST: I am too, Jack. I am too.

XIV

ERNEST: What do you want from me?

BENDER: Trust me. I was once full of despair like you.

ERNEST: Really?

BENDER: Everything I believed in disappeared.

ERNEST: What?

BENDER: my husband's abilities of concentration gave him physical powers few people can imagine. He taught me everything about myself and the world. And one day he vanished.

ERNEST: Into thin air?

BENDER: I was ecstatic. He had achieved his goal, attained complete control over the world of senses. My feeling of elation lasted for months. Until a police inspector came to my door.

ERNEST: They found his body?

BENDER: No, his other wives. You see, three other families had reported missing fathers. They were all the same man.

ERNEST: Four different families in the same city?

BENDER: Four houses, four wives, '8 cars and sixteen children

ERNEST: Prolific bastard.

BENDER: I couldn't stop weeping. He was my partner, my lover, my teacher and he had completely abandoned me. I sat for days just staring at our rare Persian rug... Then I went to the amusement park and bought a ticket from the Ferris Wheel. Up, up the giant wheel, above the bobbing balloons, the faceless crowds, the freak shows, three hundred feet above that shrieking oblivious sea: there at the top of the great wheel, I leapt.

ERNEST: And lived.

BENDER: My belt became attached to a bolt as I fell. It held me there until the wheel dropped me gently to the ground. No one even noticed what had happened. And then I grasped my husband's final message-- his.. last gift -- the breath of life!

ERNEST: What?

BENDER: To be attached to life is to be a slave to it. We have to stop clinging to people, to emotions, to ideas. No more assumptions, no more preconceptions—then you can live in freedom. Then you can truly love.

ERNEST: I see.

BENDER: Do you want to let go of the world?

ERNEST: In exactly what sense do you mean?

BENDER: I can teach you to see it in a completely different way.

ERNEST: That's nice.

BENDER: Take this needle and pierce it through my hand.

ERNEST: What?

HE DOES.

BENDER: Come with me. I'll teach you to love. To change the world.

ERNEST: I don't know if I can, I ...

BENDER: come with me. SHE TAKES THE NEEDLE OUT OF HER HAND. AND HANDS IT TO ERNEST. Love with me.

ERNEST: Oh, I didn't realize what time it was, I have to go to the zoo...my patients ... excuse me ... please.

ERNEST QUICKLY AND CLUMSILY EXITS WITH THE NEEDLE.

BENDER SMILES.

XV. EDITH'S APARTMENT.

EDITH: Yoilre getting cold feet.

JACK: I'm getting cold everything.

EDITH: Youte backing out.

JACK: I doaknow what I'm doing.

EDITH: You'd better think fast.

JACK: I kave been thinking ... I took out lots of insurance.

EDITH: Insurance?

JACK: You're the beneficiary.

EDITH: For what?

JACK: Everything. I signed the house over to you.

EDITH: Are you planning on being hit by a car?

JACK: Lots of dentists do it, ask your brother. You can only hurt so many people before the hurt catches tLp with you. But you can't take back all the pain, so you're stuck with it. And one day it all builds up and you have a sour feeling in your stomach that you taste in your mouth. You try to gargle it away but it won't go. It's there and either you live with it or you die.

EDITH: Jack, you're forgetting something important.

JACK: What?

EDITH: Simpletons don't commit suicide, You idiot. You have to live with that.

JACK: I can't. I'm a bringer of pain.

EDITH: You're a fixer of holes.

JACK: I hurt 'them.

EDITH: They pay you to hurt them.

JACK: I spoke to Mrs. Bender ... my brother was real. I feel him. He looked just like me as a kid, except he didn't have big ears...And I killed him.

EDITH: That's ridiculous.

JACK: I was five, he was two. I drowned him in a little plastic pool, We must have been playing submarine I used to play that all the time.

EDITH: Really?

JACK: Yeah.

EDITH: But you're not the kind of person who kills children.

JACK: I make them cry when I drill their teeth, why can't I kill them.)

EDITH: Because it's not like you.

JACK: Sure it's like me, I'm a normal person--normal people kill other normal people all the time. It's a perfectly normal activity. Look at these hands. Look.

EDITH: They're pudgy.

JACK: These pudgy hands killed a little boy. All the kids I work on know it. They start screaming the minute they enter the office. I used to think it was the drill or the shots but now I know it's more than that. Children are pure. They can see through you. One look at me and they know their lives are in danger-.

EDITH: I don't"-b@livve it.

JACK: Your brother calls my condition a screen amnesia, forgetting a piece of your past.

EDITH: Ernest thinks its true?

JACK: He says I'm the kind of persoh who could do that sort of thing. I'm a guy who stopped drowning babies when he started drilling teeth.

EDITH: Then you really did have a brother and you killed him.

JACK: ...I'm sorry,

EDITH: Oh, that's alright ... You can't help it if you're a homicidal maniac.

JACK: Edith, believe me, I would have told you if I knew!

KNOCK ON DOOR. THEY MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO ANSWER IT. THE KNOCKING CONTINUES. FTLNALLY ERNEST ENTERS.

ERNEST: Hello. The door was open so I let myself in. (JACK AND EDITH SIT SILENTLY.) I hope you don't mind... if this-is a bad time, just let me know and I'll ... the fact is, I had to come here now. There just isn't anywhere else to go. Can I get either of you a drink?

EDITH: ... No.

ERNEST: Something hot?

JACK: Not coffee or tea.

ERNEST: Water?

EDITH: Hot.

ERNEST: Hot water alright, Jack?

JACK: Sure.

ERNEST: (PREPARING THE WATER.) I've been out walking. Went to the zoo. One of the few joys left to me is contemplating the faces of animals, letting their vapid eyes absorb all my troubles. But today I was not going to take any chances. I went to the children's zoo to watch the cows. And something odd happened. I found a nice heifer, brown and white, relatively clean. Chewing its cud in total ignorant bliss. I took my usual position, a kind of half lean against the fence that allows me to cently drift into the animalls gaze and still give the appearance of normalcy to the bypasser. I shifted into place, weight evenly distributed, and stared into the eyes of that gentle cow. And that's when it happened. our stares caught and I could see something in its eyes that I never saw before. Incredible hatred and anger. In a cow. Not the kind of animosity that makes you fear for your life and run--the kind that sits inside and grows and grows and the larger it gets the more peaceful and serene the outward appearance seems. My own rage and confusions miniscule compared to that young cow's. I could feel her complexity overwhelm me. I panicked. I tried to walk away but I was incapable of breaking her gaze. Our eyes were locked. She was holding me against my will, my freedom was at her whim. I could feel myself being filled with the poison of a mental degeneracy compiled over the ages. A poison, I had never touched upon, never suspected. Oh, cows are bitter beasts. And then, she moed, let me break away. I stumbled at first, nearly falling over the children who were fingering her boney legs. Then, moving away from the crowd I started walking fast, then faster, now nearly running. I glimpsed at the other animals: the sheep, the ducks, even my beloved squirrels. And to my unblinking horror, I glanced at their eyes and saw that they were exactly the same. They all were filled with such power and such psychic anguish that just a touch of it could crumble any homo sapien's mind.

ERNEST: (CONTINUED) And what pain--trapped to the earth,
clinging to life--

JACK: I don't get it.

EDITH: He's talking about animals, Jack.

ERNEST: I'm not talking about animals--I'm talking about me!
About all of us! She was right! That was my first
lesson. I looked at them without assumptions and saw
the world in a completely different way. I could See!

JACK: See what?

ERNEST: No more preconceptions. Let go of the world.

EDITH: Ernest, what is it?

ERNEST: Love!

HE EXITS.

JACK: What's with him?

EDITH: I guess he got lucky.

JACK: ... What about us?

EDITH: We're not so lucky.

JACK: The baby...you keep him. I'll pay for everything.

EDITH: Great.

JACK: You know I can't be around it. Can't take the risk.

EDITH: Oh right. Of course.

JACK: I've lost everything. I can't practice anymore. I
could never give someone a local anesthetic again
without getting vertigo. I'm leaving everything for you
and the baby.

EDITH: Terrific! Men spent centuries designing a structure to stick women into and I was finally going to take advantage of it. And now I'm goddamned single parent.

JACK: I'd stay with you if I could.

EDITH: I wanted to assert my assert my historical prerogative, I wanted to be a mindless housewife and now it's blown up in my face. @Sure you want to buy a microwave-so you can throw the baby in it!

JACK: I didn't know. @Really!

EDITH: You are sick. You're sicker than you think and I've got your next victim right here. It's not fair!

JACK: How are-@we going to get out of this?

EDITH: The only way out is to get it out. Bring me a coat hanger.

JACK: Wait--wait--isn't it too late for that?

EDITH: Nothing's impossible.

JACK: No! Put it up for adoption.

EDITH: She'll find me in twenty years. They all do these days. And what are you going to do?

JACK: Kill myself.

EDITH: What? Kill yourself? Not without me.

JACK: Really? I didn't think you'd want to. I was kind of scared to ask.

EDITH: How do you want to do it?

JACK HOLDS UP A BALLOON.

EDITH: Balloons?

JACK FILLS UP TWO BALLOONS WITH GAS FROM THE TANK. THEY BOTH BREATHE IN THE GAS FROM THE BALLOONS.

JACK: We just keep breathing it until we freeze our lungs.

EDITH: What is this?

JACK: Nitrous Oxide.

BENDER: Are you requesting some insight into my methodology?

EDITH: Yes, I am.

BENDER:Ever since I lost my-husband I have been training myself to touch the world ever so lightly, to become nearly invisible. And in that guise to make others see the folly of opinions and attachments, of lifestyles and expectations.

BENDER: People knew so little about themselves-- it makes them very vulnerable. With just a little extra information I can turn- their lives around.

JACK: You mean when the Passport Office gives you an assignment you give people you are investigating more information than is required for the case?

BENDER: Yes.

JACK: But it can change someone's life.

BENDER: You might say that I am an enthusiastic worker.

EDITH: But there must be some people who don't have something in their past that can shake them up.

BENDER: In that case I invent it.

JACK: Invent it?

BENDER: There is as much truth to fiction as fact if we believe it. It is the person's response that can never lie.

JACK: Did I really have a brother? Did I kill him?

BENDER: What do you think, Doctor?

EDITH: All of us are going crazy from hearing these things about Jack. You're not leaving here until you tell us whether it's an invention or not.

BENDER: And if it is a lie will the lesson remain? Can you ever go back to the life you had before?

JACK: Did he live or not?

BENDER: That is for you to decide.

EDITH: We don't want to decide. Tell us.

BENDER: I introduced a problem into your lives. The weaknesses it reveals are undeniable.

JACK: So does that mean it's a lie?

BENDER: It doesn't matter.

JACK: Of course it matters, goddamnit! Am I supposed to be happy or sad?

BENDER: You're free.

EDITH: I want to know the truth.

JACK: Me too.

BENDER: I've told you the Truth. Now it's up to you to find it. Goodbye.

ERNEST: (ENTERING) There you are!

EDITH: You're not leaving here until you tell us.

JACK: That's right. Don't you try to go.

EDITH: We'll sue! Tell us!

BENDER: I've told you all you need to know.

JACK: Tell us!

JACK GRABS HER ARM. BENDER SMILES. SHE MAKES A BARELY DETECTABLE MOVEMENT WITH THAT ARM. JACK FLIES BACKWARDS AND DOES TWO SOMERSAULTS.

EDITH: Jackie! Are you alright?

JACK: I think so.

ERNEST: Isn't she amazing?

EDITH: Assault! That's assault! You assaulted our lives!

ERNEST: No, he assaulted her. Keep your hands to yourself, Jack. Are you alright?

BENDER: Sublime.

ERNEST AND BENDER LOOK INTENTLY AT EACH OTHER. ERNEST TAKES THE NEEDLE AND PUTS IT THROUGH HIS PALM.

JACK: Jesus Chris.

EDITH: Ernest! That's disgusting!

ERNEST: Shall we go, my sweet?

BENDER: There is nothing more for us to do here. The rest is up to them.

ERNEST: Goodbye.

EDITH: Where are you going?

ERNEST: Into the void.

EDITH: You're crazy!

ERNEST: I'm finally sane.

BENDER: Well then.

EDITH: When will I see you?

ERNEST: Can't say. Send you a postcard.

EDITH: From the void?

ERNEST: Sure, why not? Bye, Jack.

JACK: Bye Ernie.

ERNEST: Don't look so glum. You'll figure it out.

JACK: Really?

ERNEST: Goodbye, Edith. Goodluck with everything.

EDITH: Don't go.

ERNEST: Sorry. I have to. Now Jack, look after her, alright?

JACK: You can count on me.

ERNEST: Bye bye.

BENDER AND ERNEST EXIT.

EDITH: You come back here. Come back!

PAUSE.

JACK: They're gone.

EDITH: Gone.

JACK: I don't think I understand what happened. Do you?

EDITH: No.

JACK: If I really killed my brother, I'm a different person than I thought I was. I'm a killer amnesiac. I could kill again. I could kill my own child. I could kill you. Everything I am is a lie. There's nothing left to live for: I'll kill myself. On the other hand, If I didn't kill my brother, I didn't kill my brother. I'm just like I was again. I could marry you, have the baby, my practice, go around the world, be happy just like before.

EDITH: But what if you did?

JACK: Then I'm in really deep shit. Do you think it's true?

EDITH: I don't know.

JACK: I don't think it's true. I think it's true. I don't know, goddamnit! Am I or aren't I?

EDITH: You look the same.

JACK: That's true. That's really true. Either way, I look the same. That makes sense. Why does that make sense?

EDITH: And you sound the same.

JACK: That's true too, that's really true too. Whether I'm a homicidal maniac or a normal human being, I look and sound the same. Hey. That's amazing.

EDITH: Maybe...

JACK: Maybe what?

EDITH: Maybe they're right...maybe it doesn't matter.

JACK: It doesn't matter if it's true or not?

EDITH: You may not be the same, but you're still the same

JACK: Yeah, but then I'm not who I thought I was, who you thought I was.

EDITH: But what if it doesn't matter?

JACK: Of course it matters! If I'm not who I think I am, who am I?

EDITH: I don't know.

JACK: If I'm not who I am, I could be anything, anybody, nothing, nobody!

EDITH: Right.

JACK: ...Now that is really weird.

EDITH: ...Yeah.

JACK: That means I can be whatever I want to be, because I'm not me anyway. I'm just whatever I want to be. Are you whatever you want to be?

EDITH: I guess so.

JACK: Jeez. I sort of feel better. I feel a lot better. I feel like a big load just lifted off me. How do you feel?

EDITH: I feel ... okay. Really okay. What an incredible feeling.

JACK: I love it.

EDITH: It's like being invisible. You can see me, and I can see me but in a way, I'm not really here.

JACK: That's right. You're not. I'm not here either.

EDITH: We're invisible!

JACK: That's right We're invisible!

EDITH: It's up to us! We can do anything!

JACK: You want to try it?

EDITH: You mean ... disappear?

JACK: Yes, yes--you want to try it?

EDITH: Just like that?

JACK: Yeah, why not?

EDITH: Yes, yes yes! Why not!

JACK: Ready?

EDITH: Ready.

JACK: Really?

EDITH: Really.

JACK: Okay then.

EDITH: On your mark

JACK: Get set.

EDITH: Now you see me...

JACK: Now you don't!

THEY BOTH STEP OFFSTAGE. SLIGHT PAUSE. JACK STICKS HIS HEAD BACK IN.

JACK: Gone? Gone! What an act! Here today, gone tomorrow. Impossible! I love it!

AND HE'S GONE.

THE END.

On the rest of the story of DR. S's BROTHER

What happens next to Jack and Edith, Ernest and Bender?

I think there are a number of possibilities:

- 1) They all actually disappear.
- 2) Just Ernest and Bender disappear. Edith and Jack return to the room and do one or more of the following:
 - a) Realize their basic incomparability and choose to split up.
 - b) Realize their basic incomparability and choose to stay together.
 - c) Edith either has an illegal abortion or
 - d) Has the baby
 - e) Edith goes on to become even more famous in her legal career, eventually becoming the Conservative MP for the Shaughnessey riding.
 - f) Jack becomes a millionaire several times over through franchizing his Minute-Fill Dental Clinics throughout Canada and the United States.
- 3) In the event that none of them disappear, any of the above may still occur. In this event, Ernest and Bender complete their sensational honeymoon and return to live and work in Kitsilano, where they open a Spiritual/Sexual Healing Clinic with phenomenal success. This clinic later merges with Jack's cheap dental offices and these remarkable, affordable Spirit/Sex and Tooth Renewal Centres take the Western World by storm with chains in sixteen countries and four occupied terri tori es.
- 4) Notwithstanding the above, Jack, Edith, Ernest and Bender all beat the odds that vanquish so many of us poor souls by living happily ever after, forever and ever, Amen.