

Rot 'N Grub
By Hannah Linser-Wilder

Scene One

(In darkness, the song "Short Change Hero" by The Heavy plays. A projection shows the following:) It is the year 2030. The world as it once was is over, and the survivors of the apocalypse now live in relative peace, confident in their dominion. That confidence is about to be shattered. An insidious new threat has arisen, and soon the fate of all will lie in the hands of two unlikely heroes...*(Lights up at 1:25 in the song. The audience can see, now for the first time, our heroes, ROT and GRUB. They are two zombies sitting in lawn chairs in front of a decaying trailer park. GRUB is eating a chicken while ROT is slurping brains out of a human skull through a wide bamboo straw. Initially there is silence between the two of them, but the silence is broken by a long loud slurping sound, courtesy of ROT.)*

GRUB: Dude, Rot! I'm sorry, but that is disgusting!

ROT: What?

GRUB: Just...that sound. Don't you have any manners?

ROT: *(Laughing)* You're joking right? Look at yourself, you're covered in nasty chicken feathers. I don't know how you can even stand to eat those things. They're so messy. *(Taking another slurp)*

GRUB: *(Grimacing)* Well, it's better than the alternative...Anyway, it's your turn. It's six to two, me.

ROT: *(Closing eyes thinking)* Uhhhh, okay...give me a second.....Okay I've got one.

GRUB: Go for it.

ROT: *(With closed eyes, almost trance like)* There's a pool of cloudy white liquid, and in it little golden squares...floating...It's morning...I can see the image of a man in a blue coat and a hat—

GRUB: Stop! I've got it. Captain Crunch. It's Captain Crunch cereal!

ROT: Oh yeah! That's right! I remember now, yeah! A well earned point. Seven to two, you!

GRUB: *(Both are laughing)* I think this is the third time you've brought up a cereal memory! What is it with you and cereal?

ROT: Don't ask me! I must have really liked cereal back then.

GRUB: Neither one of us can remember our names, who we were, how we turned, or any of **those** details, but we both remember Captain Crunch?

ROT: I know. What is that about? Okay, Grub, your turn.

GRUB: (*Closing eyes*) Alright...let's see. There is something...It's round and wide on the bottom, big enough that I have to rest it on my lap. One end is long and thin and I hold that side up like this. (*holds an invisible guitar*) There are long strings... When you touch them...I remember...sound...It's hard to describe...but I remember feeling...The feeling is stronger than the image...It makes me feel (*struggling for the words*)...comforted. (*Opens eyes and looks to ROT hopefully.*)

ROT: (*There's a momentary silence broken by the sound of a slurp from ROT*) Uhhh...I don't know. Nothing comes to mind. I suck at this game.

GRUB: That's a shame. As much as I like beating you, I was actually kind of hoping you could help me remember that one.

ROT: Sorry, Grub, I just can't stop thinking about Captain Crunch.

GRUB: Ahhh yes! Captain Crunch! Wasn't there some phrase that went along with it?

ROT: (*Inspired*) Crunchitize me Captain! I should totally get a point for that!

GRUB: (*Laughing*) Well, since the only way you seem to have a chance at beating me is through cereal related memories, I'll allow it.

ROT: Thank you.

GRUB: Rot, I have to say, I think your subconscious may be trying to tell you something with all this cereal stuff.

ROT: Oh really? (*Takes another big slurp*)

GRUB: Yes. I think Rot, the noisiest slurper of human brains in the world, may actually miss a time when we could eat other things besides meat.

ROT: No! Don't project your weird dietary preferences onto me, feather face.

GRUB: (*Picking a feather off of its skin*) I'm just saying, you seem to be pretty stuck on Captain Crunch for someone who won't eat anything but **human** meat.

ROT: Look, I know you have some sort of weird problem with eating humans, but don't get all high and mighty with me. I'm just being practical. Zombies have to eat meat, humans kill zombies, zombies need to protect themselves from humans. Therefore, if I eat humans I'm killing two birds with one stone. If you would just try it, you would realize it's not that big of a deal.

GRUB: I know... I just can't bring myself to kill a human since I used to be one.

ROT: Yeah but, Grub, we're **not** human anymore.

GRUB: It just seems like there must be another way. I mean we can eat any kind of meat we want, and there are plenty of other animals through the woods and in the old pastures (*gesturing with the chicken*) so eating humans just seems...barbaric—

ROT: Barbaric? Grub, come on? Have you seen the way those things act?!

GRUB: Well, can you blame them? I mean look at us!

ROT: I don't know what you're implying—

GRUB: And it doesn't help that they can't understand a word we say. If we could just talk to each other...I don't know, maybe things would be different.

ROT: (*In a patronizing tone, patting GRUB on the head*) Oh, precious, innocent, little Grubby, you sweet summer child.

GRUB: Don't call me that. You know I hate it when you call me Grubby.

ROT: I know, but I love how it gets you all riled up. (*Poking him/her teasingly*)

GRUB: Dude, cut it out. (*GRUB crosses away from ROT to the opposite side of the stage*) I'm not the only one who feels this way, you know.

ROT: About being called Grubby?

GRUB: No, about the humans.

ROT: Oh really?

GRUB: Yeah, I was talking to Squish and Flay about it and they both agreed that—

ROT: *(Interrupting)* Squish and Flay? Those two brainless idiots would lose their heads if they weren't attached.

GRUB: I'm just saying—

GRUB is suddenly interrupted by the sight of a human stumbling in from upstage behind the trailer. S/he stops and suddenly realizes that s/he is surrounded by two zombies. S/he attempts to run at first, but the two are blocking her exit. The human starts screaming at the zombies in complete gibberish. S/he is dirty, terrified, holding a spear, and nearly feral looking.

ROT: Oh perfect! Grub, one of your friends is here!

GRUB: That's not funny, Rot. Look, s/he's terrified.

ROT: Well I guess we should put it out of its misery then. *(Takes a step closer to the human)*

GRUB: Wait, wait! Just wait a second! *(The human turns and point's its spear at GRUB)*

ROT: *(Sarcastically)* Oh here we go!

GRUB: *(To ROT)* Just hold on! *(GRUB holds up arms in classic zombie fashion and begins staggering slowly toward the human)* It's okay. We don't want to hurt you. We mean no harm. Zombie is friend. *(Even though the point is to calm the human down, all the human sees is a zombie hungry for brains staggering towards him/her. The human attacks GRUB with the spear and slices its shoulder.)*

ROT: Oh for god's sake, would you just kill it already!

GRUB: *(To ROT)* I'm fine. It just hit my shoulder! *(The human lunges at GRUB who dodges this time and continues to try and calm the human saying "it's alright, you're fine" etc)*

ROT: (*Speaking over GRUB*) It's not fine, Grub! What if it stabs you in the head?! You're being stupid. Just kill it! If you don't, I'm gonna do it! (*The human has backed GRUB up against the trailer and tries to stab him/her through the eye, but misses, stabbing the wall next to GRUB'S head*) That's it! (*ROT lunges for the human, tackling it to the ground and biting a huge chunk off of its neck*)

GRUB: (*Stares at first in shock and then after a minute of silence, disappointedly*) You didn't have to do that.

ROT: (*Standing up, indignantly*) No, actually, Grub, I did!

GRUB: If you would have just been patient—

ROT: Are you kidding!! It could have stabbed you in the head!

GRUB: S/he had really bad aim—

ROT: I saved your life! A thank you would be nice!

GRUB: Well, I just—

ROT: (*In the peak of his/her frustration*) Look, I know you have a soft spot for these things, but regardless of your ridiculous moral code, you are my best friend and I'm not gonna just sit here and watch you be killed by some walking meat bag because of your idiotic principles!!

GRUB: (*After an awkward pause*) You're right. I'm sorry. Thank you.

ROT: (*After taking a deep breath*) It's fine. (*Giving GRUB a playful shove*) Don't worry, Grubby, I'll always be here to protect you from the big bad humans.

GRUB: (*Laughs, mildly embarrassed*) So what are we going to do with her/him?

ROT: (*Looking at the body*) Well, it looks like I left the spinal column intact, soooo...wait till it turns and then introduce it to everyone else?

GRUB: (*Sitting back down*) Sounds like a plan.

ROT: (*Sitting down as well*) Alright then. (*Picks up the head and takes another slurp*) So who's turn was it?

Blackout. The song "Short Change Hero" resumes at the chorus and plays through the set change.

Scene Two

Lights up on the trailer park picnic area which has become a popular zombie community hangout spot. OOZE, an older and much more decayed zombie, is playing some version of horseshoes with two younger zombies SQUISH and FLAY. In this version of the game, they use a femur bone sticking out of the ground and human jaw bones as the horseshoes. The set consists of a picnic table, a sandbox (with the femur bone), and an old rusty wagon. In the back, the two trailer set pieces are partially out of both wings with the exteriors facing the audience. OOZE is sitting at one of the picnic tables. SQUISH is about to throw the jawbone as OOZE speaks.

OOZE: Careful, careful. Keep your eye on the femur. (*SQUISH tosses the jaw bone missing the target*) Oh! Far right! Pathetic.

FLAY: Don't worry, Squish. You'll get it next time. Now let me try. I think I'm actually starting to get the hang of this.

After a big build up FLAY throws the jaw and it lands even farther away than SQUISH'S. OOZE laughs uncontrollably.

OOZE: Flay, you understand how this game works right? The goal is to get *closest* to the femur.

SQUISH: It's okay, buddy. You're doing great!

FLAY: Aww, no you're doing great!

SQUISH: No you're doing great!

This back and forth continues for a minute until OOZE has had enough and interrupts them.

OOZE: No, no, no! Neither of you are doing great! You both suck at this game. Here, let me show you how it's done. (*S/he attempts to rise from his/her seat, but struggles to do so*)

FLAY: No, no, don't get up!

SQUISH: We'll get them, don't worry!

FLAY and SQUISH both scurry forward picking up the jaw bones and bringing them subserviently toward OOZE. They stand beside OOZE, watching reverently.

OOZE: Thank you. Now, watch and learn.

OOZE raises his/her arm, with great focus, then reels back and throws. However, as s/he throws, OOZE'S hand becomes detached. It flies away, attached to the jaw bone. OOZE holds up his/her arm (now sans hand) in front of his/her face and screams. SQUISH and FLAY look at the arm and scream, then look at each other.

OOZE: *(In a panic)* Well, don't just stand there, help me!

SQUISH/FLAY: Sorry, sorry! Hold still. We've got you. Don't worry, etc.

OOZE attempts to stand and the others try to help him/her up. OOZE takes one step forward, and his/her leg cracks off at the knee and falls to the ground. The three zombies crumple to the ground. There is a pause while they all look at each other, realizing what just happened. Then FLAY slowly holds up the leg in disbelief. The three look at it, all scream, and pandemonium ensues. In a panic, FLAY tosses the leg stage right.

OOZE: What are you doing?! Go get that! Get my hand! Help me!

With a flurry of apologies, FLAY rushes over to retrieve the leg. Meanwhile, SQUISH hurries to the sand box to retrieve the hand. SQUISH picks it up, realizes that it is still gripping the jaw bone, and struggles to detach them from one another. At the same time, FLAY picks up the leg, turns and notices that SQUISH is struggling, and runs over to help him/her. OOZE meanwhile is rolling around on the floor shouting at the other two. FLAY reaches SQUISH in the sand box and drops the leg to help with detaching the hand. Finally, getting their attention OOZE yells:

OOZE: Hey! What are you doing?!

Both stop and look at OOZE.

SQUISH: *Slightly confused* We were...

FLAY: Trying to detach the hand from the...

OOZE: It doesn't matter! Did you both forget that the hand is supposed to be **attached** to me!

With a second flurry of apologies, both drop the hand and run towards OOZE. They grab him/her and start dragging him/her towards the sandbox.

OOZE: No, stop! Are you trying to break me in half?! Just bring them to me!

The two drop OOZE on the ground a little too roughly and scurry to retrieve the various limbs from the sandbox. They then sit down on either side of OOZE and proceed to reattach the limbs by a various number of means including breathing on the stump and twisting them together. At one point FLAY begins openly weeping.

SQUISH: Flay, use your tears!!

FLAY starts to cry on the hand.

OOZE: What?! No! What do you think this is? Some fairytale where your tears have magical healing powers? Maybe “true love’s first kiss” will do the trick instead!

SQUISH: Oh, good idea! (*Puckering up to kiss the disembodied leg*)

OOZE: No, I was joking you imbecile!

FLAY: I’ve got it! (*Jamming a stick inside the hand and then grabbing OOZE’S wrist, s/he is about to jam the stick into OOZE’S wrist*)

OOZE: No!!! God, No! Just stop!

All three of them sit there in silence for a second. At that moment GRUB, ROT, and the newly turned SNAPPY enter the scene. SNAPPY is clearly the human that ROT bit in the previous scene with a little zombie makeup added and a bite wound appliance on his/her neck.

OOZE: Oh thank God! Finally someone with a brain! Please save me from these two idiots.

SQUISH: (*Slightly hurt*) We were just trying to help.

OOZE: Right, please save me from the **help** of these two idiots.

ROT: What is going on? *Rushing to OOZE.* Ooze, what happened to you?

In the next section, FLAY and SQUISH should overlap each other like they are telling the story together.

SQUISH: It was crazy!

FLAY: Squish and I were just playing bone toss...

SQUISH: Flay was doing really well...

FLAY: Squish was doing better than me...

SQUISH: (*Turning to FLAY*) Well I would say that, while I may have had better accuracy, you really showed some strength...

FLAY: Oh stop, what good is strength if you can't be accurate?

ROT: (*Realizing they are losing focus*) What happened?!

OOZE: My hand fell off. And then my leg.

GRUB: Just like that?!

OOZE: Just like that.

ROT: Have you eaten today? Did you hit it on something?

GRUB: Are you feeling okay?

OOZE: Yes, no, and yes! I don't know what happened, everything was fine, then I went to throw the jaw bone and my hand went with it. Next thing I knew, my leg snapped off and I was at the mercy of Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum.

SQUISH: No **we** were here, remember?

FLAY: Oh no! S/he's losing her/his mind too!

OOZE: No! It's an old saying, just something I remember from before- you know what, forget it! My mind is fine. The point is, I didn't do anything differently. It just happened.

There is a brief awkward pause. Everyone is thinking about what just happened, unsure of what to say. SNAPPY, who has been standing slightly apart from the group and shifting around nervously, breaks the silence.

SNAPPY: Um...hi, I don't mean to be rude, but you guys said there would be some food around here.

ROT: Oh right! Sorry, everyone, this is Snappy.

OOZE/FLAY/SQUISH: Hi Snappy/Welcome/Nice to meet you.

GRUB: We're calling him/her that because s/he nearly bit my hand off when s/he woke up.

SNAPPY: Yeah, *(laughing nervously)* and I'm still pretty hungry.

OOZE: Well Snappy, I would say congratulations on achieving a higher level of existence, but at this point I'm not so sure if that's accurate. *(Picks up hand or leg and drops it limply on the ground)*

GRUB: Is there something we can do for you? I can help you limp over to a seat or something.

OOZE: No I'm afraid I may break my other leg if I try to walk on it. I'll tell you what, Rot, grab the new kid something to eat out of the fridge. I think there's still some limbs left from the last hunt, and put these in there while you're at it. *(Hands ROT the hand and leg, then ROT crosses upstage towards the trailer and exits)*

SNAPPY: Fridge?

FLAY: It keeps things nice and chilly.

SQUISH: So they don't get all squishy and gross, like me! *(S/he laughs at his/her own joke. FLAY also starts cracking up and pokes SQUISH in the belly. Everyone else is visibly annoyed.)*

FLAY: Cause it's squishy, like Squish, that's you, that's your name.

GRUB: *(To SNAPPY)* I didn't remember what it was called when I turned either, but it's something we—I mean—it's something the humans used when they lived here.

OOZE: Yeah, I'll never forget stumbling on this place. It was a long time ago now, but it feels like yesterday. Me and some of the older guys were out hunting, and we ended up here. There was a pack of humans living here at the time, but there were more of us than there were of them. And afterwards there were even more of us than before, if you know what I mean. (*SNAPPY shakes its head*)

GRUB: (*Awkwardly*) S/he means that they ended up turning several of the humans that they found.

OOZE: And good old Grub here was one of them, weren't you Grubby? Him/her and his/her buddy Rot.

GRUB: That's what they tell me; although, I can't remember much about it.

OOZE: Anyway, the humans had a pretty sweet setup. They had shelter, plenty of space to relax, and a working generator. Don't know why, but I remember how to refuel a generator from before. (*Proudly*) I think Loam was pretty butthurt that I was the one to figure it out-

SNAPPY: Loam?

OOZE: S/he's our resident genius. Not a great conversationalist, and definitely not as charming as your's truly, but if you've got a problem, Loam will figure out how to solve it. Anyway, once we took care of the humans, we settled in, and we've been here ever since.

GRUB: (*Changing the subject*) So what are we going to do with you if you can't walk? You can't just sit there forever.

SQUISH: We could pull you around with us!

FLAY: Ooh good idea! I could grab your one good leg—

SQUISH: And I could grab your arm—

FLAY: And we could just pull you around!

SQUISH: (*Thrilled by this idea*) And then we'd always be together!

They both move to grab OOZE as they described. OOZE shoots a terrified glance at GRUB.

GRUB: Or! We could not do that...*(Looks around desperately for some other alternative)* But! I think you're onto something Flay—

OOZE: *(Horried)* Excuse me?!

GRUB: *(Walking to the wagon)* We could pull you around in this!

FLAY/SQUISH: Oooh yes/ Great idea! I can pull it around! *(Noticing that they both said this at the same time, they turn to each other)*

FLAY: You should pull it, Squish.

SQUISH: No you're stronger than me, you should pull it.

FLAY: But you said it first, you should pull it.

As this exchange is going on GRUB wheels the wagon over to OOZE and starts to try and help him/her into the wagon.

GRUB: What if we figure out who's going to pull the wagon **after** we put Ooze in it?

With a flurry of apologies, SQUISH and FLAY rush to assist GRUB. At this moment ROT reenters with a human arm. SNAPPY scurries over and begins devouring the arm.

ROT: I see we've made lots of progress here.

SQUISH: It was all thanks to Flay's brilliant idea!

FLAY: And now we can take you everywhere with us!

At this point they have situated OOZE in the wagon. FLAY and SQUISH both grasp the handle together and begin to pull OOZE around playfully. OOZE stares at the others desperately. Just then, a large group of zombies, led by BONECRUSHER, enters the scene. Among them are KNAWS, DRIP, and LOAM. They have just returned from a hunting expedition and are carrying several disembodied appendages but notably no leg. At the sight of BONECRUSHER, FLAY and SQUISH stop pulling OOZE and become timid.

DRIP: (*Holding a human head*) Did you hear the sound it made when Bonecrusher grabbed it by the hair? It was like “Ahhhhhhh!” (*DRIP imitates a human screaming in a comical way and shakes the head around*)

BONECRUSHER: It knew it was done from the moment it saw me coming.

KNAWS: That was a great hunt.

DRIP: Yeah, you ate so much, Knaws, I’m surprised you even made it back to camp. (*The group snickers*)

BONECRUSHER: (*Noticing the others*) And what is going on here?

DRIP: Are you all having a play date while the **real** zombies are out hunting for your dinner? (*The others snicker*)

OOZE: Ha ha, laugh it up now, cause you won’t be laughing once you start falling apart and have to be wheeled around by a couple of morons!

BONECRUSHER: What are you talking about?

OOZE: (*Holding up its stump of an arm*) I’m talking about this!

DRIP: What happened? Did a human attack you or something? Can’t defend yourself anymore, is that it?

OOZE: (*Irritably*) No, that’s the thing. It just fell off, and then so did my leg!

There is concerned hubbub through the crowd. LOAM comes forward from the group and goes to examine OOZE. LOAM carries him/herself with an air of emotional detachment. To him/her, life is something to be analyzed not felt.

BONECRUSHER: That doesn’t make sense. What did you really do to it? Tell the truth!

OOZE: I am telling the truth!

SQUISH/FLAY: It’s true/we were there/it just flew off...

BONECRUSHER: Loam, how does it look to you?

LOAM: Well, the flesh around the wrist seems to be discolored. Possibly more rotten than the rest of the body. *(Smells the stump)* Definitely more rotten. Ooze, exactly how long has it been since you turned?

OOZE: Well, I don't know exactly, but I know I've been around longer than most of you. Even you Bonecrusher, so you should show a little more respect for your elders!

LOAM: Hmm. *(Standing and looking around, LOAM notices SNAPPY)* You, you're new, correct?

SNAPPY: *Nervously.* Yeah, uh, hi everyone, I'm Snappy, I guess...

LOAM: Come here, Snappy. *(Inspects the two of them next to each other)* I was concerned this might happen. *(Concerned hubbub from the crowd follows)*

OOZE: What might happen? Do you understand this?

LOAM: Possibly. *(As if addressing a classroom)* Compare these two: one a freshly turned zombie, and the other possibly the oldest of us all. Do any of you notice the differences between them?

DRIP: *(Raising its hand)* Oh! That one's in a wagon!

LOAM: *Irritated.* Yes. Anything else?

KNAWS: Ooze is a different color.

SQUISH: And s/he's stinkier. *(OOZE shoots SQUISH a look, and SQUISH mouths "Sorry")*

FLAY: And s/he's missing a hand and a leg!

LOAM: Correct, all of that is to say that Ooze is in a significantly later stage of decay than Snappy here. I am sure many of you have noticed that after we are turned, our bodies slowly begin to change. *(Many group members shrug and look around uncertainly. LOAM senses that they aren't getting it)* Consider how our food changes over time if left out in the elements. It eventually starts to smell, changes its hue, attracts bugs, ect? *(The crowd nods)* Have you not noticed that the same process appears to be happening to us over time? *(The crowd is beginning to understand)* It appears that we, too, are decaying just like the humans that we kill. I have

suspected that this might become an issue for some time now, but it seems that our expiration date may be upon us sooner than I anticipated.

The crowd breaks out into a panicked hubbub.

BONECRUSHER: Calm down, calm down! What do you mean by “expiration date?” That sounds a little dramatic for some extra stink and bugs.

LOAM: Those things are merely symptoms of the real problem. What do you plan to do when our limbs begin falling off, just like Ooze’s?

DRIP: Well they seem to have found a way to deal with it.

LOAM: For now, but what will happen when Squish and Flay’s arms detach and they can no longer pull the wagon? (*SQUISH and FLAY grab each other in fear*) None of us are immune to the effects of time. What do you suppose will become of us when we are no longer able to hunt? The startling truth is that we will all starve.

This sends the crowd into a complete panic.

BONECRUSHER: Calm down, calm down, I said calm down! Now there must be something we can do to fix this. Loam?

LOAM: Well, I can not say for sure...however, there may be a way to slow down the deterioration process...

KNAWS: What about reattaching the hand and the leg?

LOAM: I could attempt it, but it is unlikely to be successful since the flesh has already deteriorated greatly.

DRIP: Oh, oh! What if we used a new hand and leg?!

LOAM: Perhaps...I suppose I could try it...

DRIP: Great! Did anyone bring back a hand or leg from today’s hunt?

The crowd starts comparing the body parts they are holding.

KNAWS: Ooh, I've got one! (*S/he tosses a hand to LOAM who holds it up to OOZE'S arm*)

OOZE: I don't need two right hands, but thanks anyway.

BONECRUSHER: Does anyone have a leg or a **left** hand. (*The group shakes their heads*)

KNAWS: Come on, you know leg meat is the best, so succulent, and juicy! We always eat those first. (*GRUB suppresses a gag*)

BONECRUSHER: Well you know what that means! We'll just have to go out and get some more! (*DRIP and some of the others start to get hyped*)

GRUB: (*Speaking up for the first time since the group entered*) But you just killed a bunch of humans...(*The group quiets till everyone is focused on GRUB. BONECRUSHER steps towards GRUB menacingly*)

BONECRUSHER: Do you have a problem with that? Pipsqueek?

GRUB: (*Quickly backtracking*) No, I mean, there may not be anymore in the area right now, and besides, Loam said it may not even work so it just seems...

DRIP: We could check out that big grey building we passed two days ago. Remember, Bonecruncher, you said you thought some humans may be hiding out in there?

BONECRUNCHER: (*Still eyeing GRUB suspiciously*) You're right, Drip. I did say that. (*Turning to the rest and rallying them*) We will raid the building tonight. As Loam said, we are fighting a battle against time itself so we cannot afford to hesitate or show weakness. (*To SQUISH and FLAY*) You two will stay here to watch over the cripple. Anyone else interested in helping save ourselves from inevitable demise, join me in the hunt! (*A great cheer goes up from the hoard. Looking directly at GRUB for the next line*) But if you're too scared, feel free to stay here while we take care of the heavy lifting for you.

Led by BONECRUSHER, everyone but SQUISH, FLAY, OOZE, ROT and GRUB exit stage right. SQUISH and FLAY exit upstage left pulling OOZE in the wagon. ROT begins to exit stage right in pursuit of BONECRUSHER'S hoard, but GRUB stops him/her.

GRUB: Wait, you're not going with them are you?

ROT: I mean, yeah. Didn't you hear what Loam said? This is serious. I want to help.

GRUB: Yeah, but Loam said that s/he doesn't even know if trying to attach fresh body parts will work.

ROT: Well, we at least have to try. Besides, are you really not going to come along after the way Bonecrusher called you out just now?

GRUB: *(Slightly embarrassed)* I don't think s/he was calling me out specifically... Besides, s/he's such a jerk. Why would you listen to him/her anyway?

ROT: Because at least s/he's doing something! *(Delicately)* Look, I know you don't believe in killing humans, but this is about our survival. Sooner or later you're going to have to embrace who you are, Grub. You're not a human anymore, you're a zombie! Now, I'm going with or without you, but I would much rather fight for our future by your side. What do you say?

GRUB: *(Reluctantly)* Fine. I'll go along.

ROT: *(Patting him/her on the back)* Alright, that's more like it. Now, let's get going. We gotta catch up to everyone else. *(Exits quickly stage right. GRUB begins to follow, pauses looking back towards stage left, and then turns back stage right and exits. The song "Heavy for You" begins, and lights fade. The song should continue into the next song to underscore the fight)*

Scene Three

Lights up on the exterior of an abandoned factory. It is night. Upstage there is a chain link fence with a break towards the center. Several humans are keeping watch downstage of the fence. One guards the break and the others are spread out downstage. The guard near the break stops their watch momentarily to light a cigarette, and during this moment BONECRUSHER and the hoard creep up without them noticing. BONECRUSHER first stealthily takes out the guard at the fence, and then, like a well-oiled machine, BONECRUSHER and several others stealthily kill the majority of the humans on guard. When there is only one left, SNAPPY begins staggering forward and moaning with arms outstretched towards the last human.

DRIP: Shut up, Snappy!

SNAPPY: What?!

KNAWS: That's not how zombies fight!

The last human, who was previously nodding off at his/her post, groggily wakes up, and calls out in gibberish.

BONECRUSHER: Here we go!

More humans enter as reinforcements from inside the building, carrying a plethora of improvised weapons but no guns. Now the fight turns into an all out brawl. Everyone participates in the fight except GRUB who actively tries to avoid the fighting. Once all the humans have been killed, the music fades out.

BONECRUSHER: That's what I'm talking about!

DRIP: Yeah! Who ever said there were no more humans in the area?

BONECRUSHER: Did everyone make sure to finish the job? We're not trying to turn anyone.

LOAM: Ensure that the spinal cord is destroyed.

SNAPPY: Oh I get it! Crack-a-da-back!

DRIP: Yeah we need em' dead, dead...*(Notices one of the bodies starting to move and snaps its neck)* ...dead.

BONECRUSHER: Loam, what's the haul?

LOAM:*(Note, the number of humans can change depending on the size of the cast, as long as there are more humans than zombies)* Eleven altogether. *(Notices KNAWS chewing on one of the bodies in the corner)* Correction, ten point five. *(Complaints and groans are let out by the group)*

DRIP: Knaws, we're supposed to be taking these back to camp, remember?!

KNAWS: Sorry...I just thought...maybe I could just have this one...

LOAM: It is best that we have as many samples to work with as possible. We are all decaying, and any one of us could need a new appendage at any time.

BONECRUSHER: Before anyone else gets hungry, let's haul these bodies back. *(They start to grab the bodies, but struggle with carrying them)*

KNAWS: I can't do it! I need to eat something.

BONECRUSHER: No! What are we, puny humans? No! We are strong, powerful, bloodthirsty zombies who will stop at nothing to protect our kind. Now pull yourselves together and pull those bodies! (*They try again, but it isn't working*)

LOAM: (*Giving up*) This is futile.

KNAWS: Yeah, I'm tired.

DRIP: What is wrong with all of you? If Bonecrusher says pull, you should all say how hard. Now come on!

ROT: Um...I'm not trying to cause dissent, but there must be an easier way to do this.

BONECRUSHER: Oh, and I suppose you and your shrimpy friend are ready to scamper on home now. Is that it? Pathetic.

ROT: Actually, no. Unlike my friend, I am fully invested in this mission. I just think there may be a more efficient way to deal with this.

BONECRUSHER: Go on.

ROT: Well, we only need some parts of these bodies, right? I mean, I assume we have no intention of replacing our own heads?

LOAM: S/He is right, I can really only see use for the appendages.

ROT: So why should we carry everything back? Let's just take what we need.

KNAWS: Does that mean I can snack on the rest?

BONECRUSHER: (*Nodding, slowly getting on board*) Alright, that's not a bad idea. (*Stepping towards ROT*) What's your name?

ROT: Rot...uh...sir.

BONECRUSHER: Uh huh. Well, Rot, it seems I may have underestimated you. Looks like we're in need of my favorite pastime!

DRIP: Crushing bones!!!

BONECRUSHER: Let's bust em' up, boys!

DRIP and BONECRUSHER hype up the other zombies. Meanwhile GRUB begins slowly backing away from the imminent blood bath. BONECRUSHER kneels down and in one movement clearly tears away one human's arm. The others let out woops and shout, and move to begin tearing apart the other bodies. Isolated in a spot, GRUB stifles the urge to vomit, and runs off stage. We hear the sounds of ripping and tearing as s/he runs away. ROT looks around and notices that GRUB is nowhere to be seen. Lights go down on the scene. "Nobody's Hero" plays through the scene change. Lights stay up on GRUB as s/he crosses through the audience trying to get as far away from the scene as possible.

Scene Four

GRUB renters stage alone. S/he has made it inside the factory. It is dark and desolate. Once s/he can tell that s/he is alone, s/he stops to catch his/her breath and let his/her stomach settle. After a moment, a Raggedy Anne Doll catches his/her eye downstage. S/he moves to the object, picks it up, and sits down.

GRUB: Hmm, how did you get here? I remember something like you from before. But it didn't look as human, more like a small fuzzy animal. What poor human did you once belong to? Are they still out there looking for you somewhere...or are they one of us now, with nothing but a partial memory of you?

As GRUB is talking, THE HUMAN approaches from behind. GRUB doesn't notice. THE HUMAN carries a baseball bat with barbed wire wrapped around it. When s/he is directly behind GRUB, s/he raises it, about to swing, but takes one final step which makes a crunching sound, startling GRUB who darts to the side just in time as s/he swings. THE HUMAN and GRUB begin to fight.

GRUB: Woah! Stop! (*THE HUMAN swings again.*) I don't want to hurt you! (*THE HUMAN swings again.*) Please stop! (*THE HUMAN swings one more time and GRUB manages to grab him/her and disarm him/her*) Calm down! I don't want to hurt you! (*THE HUMAN can't understand any of it. THE HUMAN picks up a piece of scrap metal and begins swinging it at GRUB*) Oh no, not this again. (*GRUB dodges the blows and eventually grabs his/her own scrap metal to defend his/herself. Finally, after a lot of struggle, GRUB knocks the human unconscious. After THE HUMAN falls GRUB drops the scrap metal.*) I'm sorry. (*Right after this occurs, ROT enters the room.*)

ROT: There you are! Did you get lost or something—(*seeing the human*) Woah!

GRUB: S/he just came out of nowhere.

ROT: (*Playfully*) Aww, my sweet little Grubby is all grown up. I'm so proud of you. Do you want to take the head home as a trophy commemorating your first kill?

GRUB: No! S/he's not dead. At least, I hope s/he's not dead. (*Raises THE HUMAN'S hand. It falls to the floor and THE HUMAN lets out a moan*) No, just knocked out.

ROT: (*Rolling his/her eyes*) Figures, I guess I got all excited for nothing. Well, do you need me to finish the job for you then?

GRUB: No! You've already killed enough for one day! We can leave now while s/he's passed out.

ROT: Well, if it was here with the rest of them, all its friends are dead now, soooo don't you think we'd be doing it a favor if we just put it out of its misery?

GRUB: God! No! What's wrong with you? You're starting to sound just like your douchebag friend out there.

ROT: Bonecrusher's not my friend...

GRUB: Oh sure, then what was all that crap about before? "Uh Mr. Bonecrusher Sir, I don't mean to cause dissent here, but uh unlike my wussy friend, I am completely ready to do whatever you say, even if it's rash, violent, and unnecessary, Sir yes sir!"

ROT: I was just trying to help.

GRUB: Yeah, you were trying to help yourself get in good with Mr. "let's bust em' up boys!"

ROT: Look, I already told you, I'm just trying to find a solution to the problem we are all facing, and unless you think your buddy there (*gesturing to THE HUMAN*) is gonna help us, Bonecrusher's way seems to be the best shot we have. (*GRUB seems to have an idea and looks at THE HUMAN*) Let's go then I guess. If you don't want to kill this thing, we might as well get back to the others so we can be of some use. (*Starts to leave*)

GRUB: Wait! You might have an idea there...

ROT: What? Getting our hands dirty so that we can actually help? Yeah, that's what I've been saying the whole time-

GRUB: No. I mean—what you said about her/him. (*Gesturing to THE HUMAN*)

ROT: What?

GRUB: About him/her being able to help us, maybe s/he can.

ROT: Grub, I was being sarcastic—

GRUB: No, I mean think about it for a second! I know you and all the others think that we are so superior to them and that they are just a nuisance and a potential meal, but think about it. What do the humans have that we don't?

ROT: I don't know, living flesh?

GRUB: Well yeah, but what else? (*ROT shrugs*) They still have all their memories. They have knowledge! I mean look around you. Who do you think built all this stuff? It must have had a purpose at some point, right? We can't remember what it is or what it's for, but I bet I know who can: the humans!

ROT: Okay sure, but what does that have to do with what is happening to us? They don't know anything about what it's like to be a zombie.

GRUB: Well sure, but maybe they know something that could help us. After all, we don't know what we don't know.

ROT: What?

GRUB: We don't know what we don't know.

ROT: You're losing me.

GRUB: We don't know what we—nevermind. My point is, they have so much knowledge and history that they must know something that can help with our situation.

ROT: (*Nodding*) Okay, that may be true, but it doesn't matter because we can't understand them.

GRUB: We can't understand them **yet**, but maybe we could learn.

ROT: (*Laughing*) And how do you propose we do that? They're like wild animals that want to kill us. They aren't gonna just sit still for a lesson on how to speak zombie!

GRUB: Not voluntarily, but if we could make one sit still...(*looks over his/her shoulder at THE HUMAN*)

ROT: Oh no, no, no! I see where you're going with this now. Grub, I love you, but I am not going to help you keep this human as a pet.

GRUB: Why not? A minute ago you were eager to help Bonecrusher with his/her disgusting plan, but now you don't want to help your best friend?

ROT: No, it's not that, it's just—this is ridiculous!

GRUB: Why? How is this more ridiculous than trying to transplant body parts without any knowledge of how to do it?

ROT: I don't know...

GRUB: Please, Rot, I just know this is the answer. If we could learn to communicate, think about what we could learn from them. It'd be like getting our lives back—I mean, getting our **human** lives back, or at least getting close.

ROT: (*Slightly hurt*) What's so wrong with the life you have now?

GRUB: Nothing, I just feel like there's so much about who we are that we can't remember. The key to our survival is in the past somewhere. I'm sure of it!

ROT: I don't know...What if the others find out?

GRUB: They won't find out. I can keep her/him hidden somewhere safe. If you'll just help me get him/her back to camp, I can take care of her/him after that. Please, Rot, I need you to trust me. (*ROT is silently thinking. GRUB goes over to the human, sits it upright, and puppets it to say the next line in a silly voice*) Listen to her/him Rot, s/he's got some pretty good ideas. (*As GRUB*) Oh, thank you. It's so nice to be talking to you like this. (*In the human voice*) I know! And to think, before you came along all we did was try to kill each other, and now we're best friends!

(As GRUB) Now hold up. We are good friends, but my best friend will always be my buddy Rot, because s/he helped me when I needed her/him most. (In the human voice) You're right, thanks Rot. Because of you, all the humans and zombies lived together happily ever after. Yaaaaaay!

ROT: (Finally breaking) Okay! I'll help you, but only if you'll promise to never do... whatever that was ever again.

GRUB: Yes! I promise. Thank you, thank you, thank you so much!

ROT: And don't forget this the next time you accuse me of buddying up to Bonecrusher.

GRUB: I won't. Now let's haul her/him back to camp before s/he wakes up.

GRUB and ROT hoist THE HUMAN on to its feet and carry it off stage left. As the scene change begins, lights come up on the hunting party moving through the house.

BONECRUSHER: (Carrying several arms and a human head) Left, left, left, right, left. Left, left, left, right left. Come on, pick up the pace boys!

DRIP: Yeah, pick up the pace!

KNAWS: (As an aside to the zombie next to him/her) I thought we were only supposed to be bringing back arms and legs?

BONECRUSHER: (Overhearing) That is correct. However, I never leave a hunt without a trophy, and unlike most of you worms, I am strong enough to carry it back along with what we came for. Now stop griping and pick up the pace!

DRIP: Yeah! Shut it, Knaws! Speaking of worms, has anyone seen Rot and his/her grubby little friend? (This group responds with various "no/I don't know/ they left ect." Drip is delighted) Looks like they bailed on us!

BONECRUSHER: Quiet, Drip! Speed it up!

DRIP: Sorry boss.

BONECRUSHER: Left, left, left, right, left! Left, left, left, right, left! (Continues until they exit)

Scene Five

Lights up on the interior side of GRUB'S trailer. GRUB and ROT are in what appears to once have been a nursery. There is an old crib turned upside down with an old bookshelf, TV, chairs, and mounds of toys piled on top of it. THE HUMAN is underneath the crib as if in a makeshift cage. ROT and GRUB are piling the last couple of objects on top of the crib when the scene begins. GRUB is humming "You've Got a Friend in Me."

ROT: What are you humming?

GRUB: I don't know... Anyway, that should be heavy enough to keep him/her from being able to turn the cage over.

ROT: I guess. I mean, **you** were able to beat it up, so it must not be very strong.

GRUB: (*Teasing*) Careful or you'll be next. I'm a fighter now like your bestie. (*In a macho voice*) I'll bust up your bones.

ROT: Hey, what'd I say about that?

GRUB: I'm just kidding. Besides, we can stay here and watch her/him to make sure s/he doesn't get out until...

ROT: Wait, what do you mean we? Are you telling me you expect both of us to sit in this trailer with it until it can miraculously talk?

GRUB: No, we can do it in shifts—(*Sensing protest from ROT*) I mean, **I** will stay with him/her most of the time. If you can bring me food, I can stay here as much as possible.

ROT: (*Shaking his/her head uncertainly*) Okay...

GRUB: It'll be fine! You can go out and check in with the others while I'm here, and if they ask about me, just make something up.

ROT: (*Mischievously*) Oh, I can do that.

GRUB: (*Noticing that THE HUMAN is starting to stir*) Quiet, I think s/he's waking up. (*Bends down and slowly speaks to THE HUMAN*) Hello, hello?

THE HUMAN opens his/her eyes and, seeing GRUB, begins to panic.

GRUB: It's okay, it's okay. I'm not going to hurt you. You're fine. Calm down.

GRUB continues to calm THE HUMAN. Eventually THE HUMAN realizes that s/he may actually be relatively safe or at least that there is no point in trying to get out of the cage. S/he stops moving and stares at GRUB, breathing heavily.

GRUB: There you go. Deep breaths. See, we aren't trying to hurt you. It's going to be okay.

ROT: You know it can't understand you, right?

GRUB: *(Holding up a hand to silence ROT)* I know you can't understand me, but you'll get there. I know this is scary and sucks right now, but someday this will all be worth it. My name is Grub. Can you say Grub? Gruuub. *(THE HUMAN is silent)* Grub. Try to say it. Grub. Come on, you can do it. Guuuurrrruuuubbbbb.

ROT: *(Becoming impatient)* Well, Gruuuuuuub, it doesn't seem to be working.

THE HUMAN: *Pleadingly speaks in gibberish.*

GRUB: Quite! Listen s/he's saying something!

THE HUMAN: *Gibberish, her/his inflection makes it clear s/he is saying something along the lines of "where am I, please let me go, etc..."*

ROT: It's just speaking gibberish.

GRUB: Quiet! *(Leaning in towards THE HUMAN and listening intently)* What? Say that again?

THE HUMAN: *Repeats gibberish.*

GRUB does his/her best to imitate the nonsense phrase that the human is saying. THE HUMAN abruptly stops speaking, completely shocked by the fact that GRUB is mimicking her/him.

THE HUMAN: *Repeats gibberish.*

GRUB: *Repeats gibberish.*

THE HUMAN: *Repeats gibberish.*

GRUB: *Repeats gibberish.*

ROT: Great! Now neither of you makes any sense! What is the point of this, Grub?

GRUB: *(To ROT)* Be patient, maybe if I can get him/her to understand that I am listening, s/he'll listen to me. *(To THE HUMAN)* Ggg-rrr-uuu-bbb. Ggg-rrr-uuu-bbb. Ggg-rrr-uuu-bbb.

There is a moment of silence as GRUB waits for something to happen.

THE HUMAN: Grrrb?

GRUB: Yes! Again! Ggg-rrr-uuu-bbb.

THE HUMAN: Grrrb.

GRUB: Gruuuuuub.

THE HUMAN: Gruuuuuub.

GRUB: Yes! Grub! That's me. *(Pointing at his/her own chest)* Grub, Grub, Grub!

THE HUMAN: *(Pointing hesitantly at GRUB)* Grub.

GRUB: *(Jumping up which startles THE HUMAN)* Yes! Grub! That's me! *(To ROT)* See! It's working! In no time we'll be having full conversations together!

ROT: *(Still skeptical but starting to come around)* I'm betting it will take a little longer than you think, buddy, but you may be on to something. I'll give you that.

GRUB: Yes! Thank you! *(Turning back to THE HUMAN)* Now this is my best friend, Rot. Can you say Rot?

THE HUMAN: Grrrb

ROT: Yeah, like I said, this is gonna take a while.

GRUB: *(Casually)* Oh, well you don't have to stay. I think I've got it covered now.

ROT: *(Taken aback and slightly offended)* Oh, I mean—I didn't mean—do you want me to leave?

GRUB: No, you can stay if you want, but like you said, this is going to take a while and there's no need for us both to be here.

ROT: *(Awkwardly)* Oh...well...in that case, I guess I could go check on the others and make sure they aren't wondering where we are.

GRUB: *(Dismissively turning back to THE HUMAN)* Sure, yeah, that would be great.

ROT: Okay...well...I guess I'll go then...

ROT waits for a second watching GRUB, hoping s/he'll ask him/her to stay. Realizing GRUB is fully engrossed in what s/he's doing, ROT finally turns to leave.

ROT Okay, bye...

GRUB: *(Without turning around)* Bye.

ROT: I'll see you later...

GRUB: Later. *(ROT is about to leave when GRUB suddenly thinks of something)* Actually, Rot, wait!

ROT: *(Turning eagerly)* Yes?!

GRUB: While you're gone, can you pick up some supplies for me?

ROT: *(Disappointedly)* Oh—sure. Like what?

GRUB: Well, let's see. I'll need a bottle for water, human food, obviously, some blankets and pillows to make her/him comfortable—Oh! That reminds me! *(Crosses back to THE HUMAN and gives it the doll from the factory)* This is for you. I found it where we met, and I thought maybe it was yours or that you'd like to have it. *(THE HUMAN hesitantly picks up the doll and holds it slightly confused)* S/he likes it!

ROT: Anything else I can get for you?

GRUB: (*Reabsorbed by his/her interactions with THE HUMAN*) Nah, that should be good. Thanks, you're the best.

ROT: Yeah— (*ROT exits*)

Lights slowly begin to fade out.

GRUB: Again, Gruuuub

THE HUMAN: Gruuub

GRUB: Grub

THE HUMAN: Grub

GRUB: Now what is your name?

THE HUMAN: Grub

GRUB: I sincerely doubt that. What's your name?

THE HUMAN: Grub?

GRUB: Okay...

Blackout.

Scene Six

Lights up. SQUISH and FLAY are standing at the edge of the stage with OOZE in the wagon facing the orchestra pit. The only other set piece is a picnic table up stage right of them.

FLAY: What if I stand behind and push, and you sit on Ooze's lap?

SQUISH: But then you don't get to ride along!

FLAY: We could take turns.

OOZE: No! No one is pushing me down this God-forsaken hill!

SQUISH: You're right, Ooze, we should be able to figure out a way to both ride.

OOZE: No, that's not what I—

FLAY: Oh! What if I give it a big push and then I jump on Ooze's back?!

SQUISH: Or! What if we both push and then we jump in on either side?!

FLAY: Yeah! That could work!

OOZE: No it can not!

SQUISH: Yeah, you're right, I might not be fast enough.

FLAY: Oh! I've got it! What if we both lay on our stomachs, like this, and we scootch the wagon over the hill with our hands.

SQUISH: Yes! That's it!

They both start to squeeze into the wagon on either side of OOZE who vehemently protests. Just as they are about to push off, the group of scavengers, led by BONECRUSHER, enters stage right.

OOZE: Oh thank God!

DRIP: There you are! We have been looking everywhere for you three! What are you doing?

SQUISH: Nothing!

FLAY: We weren't about to roll down this hill really fast with Ooze in his/her wagon if that's what you were thinking.

OOZE: They were about to get me killed. That's what they were doing!

SQUISH: *(Slightly under his/her breath)* No, we were going to roll down the hill really fast, remember? *(SQUISH and FLAY shake their heads and give each other a pitying look)*

BONECRUSHER: Looks like we need a babysitter for your babysitters, huh Old-timer? *(His/her cronies snicker)*

FLAY: (*Timidly to SQUISH*) What does s/he mean?

SQUISH: I don't know. I thought we were doing a good job—

FLAY: **You** were doing a great job—

SQUISH: No, **you** were doing a greater job—

FLAY: Well **you** were doing the greatest job—

DRIP: S/He's saying you **both** were doing a terrible job! You were probably too busy playing around, patting each other on the back, and sucking on each other's toes or whatever you creeps do all day. (*Seeking approval*) Right, Bonecrusher?

SQUISH: (*Beginning to blubber and trying unsuccessfully to hold back tears*) We—don't—suck on toes. (*Bursts into sobs*)

FLAY: (*Comforting SQUISH*) It's okay, don't cry. Shhh, (*Innocently*) I'll suck on your toes if that's what you want? (*Another loud sob from SQUISH*)

DRIP: See!

LOAM: (*Intervening*) It is fine, Flay, I am sure you and Squish don't—suck on each other's—or if you do I'm sure it's—nevermind. I am sure you did a satisfactory job caring for Ooze while we were gone. Now, let us attend to the matter at hand.

DRIP: (*Picking up on the pun and nudging BONECRUSHER who is unamused*) At hand, get it? At **hand**? It's funny 'cause s/he lost a— (*BONECRUSHER shoots DRIP an impatient look. DRIP notices that s/he isn't amused and looks down dejectedly*) ...hand.

BONECRUSHER: Yes, let's focus on what we've come to do. Boys, can someone give me a hand? (*This should not be played as a joke*)

DRIP: (*Laughing again*) Good one, boss, give me a—(*Another zombie gives BONECRUSHER a human hand and BONECRUSHER walks away, completely ignoring DRIP who awkwardly trails off*)

BONECRUSHER: Alright, Loam, see what you can do with this?

LOAM: (*Taking the hand and holding it up to OOZE's stump*) Well, it appears to be the correct size. If I can discover a way to attach it securely, perhaps the flesh would fuse back together and it could become functional. However, this is only conjecture.

As LOAM is talking, ROT enters the scene from upstage left.

DRIP: Well, look what we have here. Decided to rejoin us now that the hard work is over, huh? (*To BONECRUSHER*) I saw him/her! S/he and his/her little friend ran away as soon as we started the heavy lifting. But I was there, remember how I helped you carry all these body parts back? I was there the whole time, remember?

BONECRUSHER: (*Stepping forward*) Drip has a point, Rot. Where were you? What happened to your dedication to our mission?

DRIP: Yeah, where were you, coward?

ROT: (*Nervously*) Yes, I did leave the group, but it was only because I saw my friend Grub run away.

DRIP: See!

ROT: But! I had to. Grub has a—a condition...uh—s/he—s/he's very weak, you know, it's kind of pathetic. The truth is that—s/he got scared when s/he saw all the blood and ran away, and s/he needs me to look out for him/her sometimes because s/he can't defend her/himself, so I ran after her/him, and it's a good thing I did because I found him/her passed out just inside the building!

KNAWS: Passed out? Was s/he attacked or something?

ROT: No, just freaked out because of all the blood I guess. Sometimes when s/he gets too excited s/he passes out. I don't know why, but that's what I mean by her/his "condition." So anyway, I had to haul him/her back to camp all by myself, and that's why it took so long for me to get here.

LOAM: Where is your friend now?

ROT: Just in one of the old trailers.

LOAM: Perhaps I should go examine him/her.

ROT: No! I mean—S/he's resting now. S/he'll be fine, this just happens from time to time. It's not a big deal.

BONECRUSHER: Pathetic. A zombie who faints at the sight of blood. What a disgrace!

ROT: *(Relieved that they are buying it)* Yeah, I know! That's why we call him/her Grub, because s/he's just a wimpy little worm. Haha.

BONECRUSHER: Ha, a wimpy worm. That's a good one. *(DRIP is visibly upset by this)*
 Alright, well I'm glad you're back, but I think you should stop spending so much time with that pathetic friend of yours. You'll be of more use helping us.

ROT: Ha, yeah tell me about it.

BONECRUSHER: Now, Loam, how will you go about attaching these? *(Gestures to Ooze's hand and stump)*

LOAM: I don't quite know. *(Getting excited about the potential of so much experimentation)* It will be a lot of trial and error, and I will need a variety of tools. I do not remember much about human medicine, but I do know that there should be a plethora of equipment at the old hospital.

DRIP: The what?

LOAM: The large building with the red cross on the front. I will scavenge whatever I can, and return. Hopefully something will prove useful.

BONECRUSHER: Good. And, Rot, go with Loam in case you have any more helpful ideas while you're out.

ROT: Will do! Thank you, sir!

LOAM and ROT exit.

DRIP: *(Mockingly)* "Will do, thank you sir." What a suck up.

Lights up inside the trailer. It is night and THE HUMAN is sleeping in the cage. GRUB is sitting on the floor nervously looking back and forth between THE HUMAN and the door. ROT enters, after a minute, carrying bags full of supplies.

GRUB: Thank God! You were gone all day!! I don't remember how often humans eat, but s/he's got to be starving!

ROT: First off, you're welcome. Secondly, I came back as soon as I could. You don't want me attracting the attention of the others do you?

GRUB: Of course not—

ROT: Well you're not the only one having me run errands for them. I've been all over the place picking up supplies for Bonecrusher.

GURB: Oh...well...sorry. I didn't mean to freak out. I've just been worried.

ROT: It's fine. I went to one of the old houses that we raided forever ago. The humans who were hiding there stockpiled all sorts of goodies.

GRUB: Thanks.

ROT: I've got pillows, blankets, a bucket for water, and then all this is food, or at least I think it is. (*Hands GRUB the bags*)

GRUB: You think it is?

ROT: Well I don't exactly remember what humans eat, so I started with things I recognized and just grabbed a bunch of stuff around it. (*As ROT speaks, GRUB starts pulling things out of the bag. S/he removes two cans of food. The third item is a box of Captain Crunch*)

GRUB: No way! Captain Crunch! A delicacy!

ROT: Yeah, I was pretty excited about that one.

GRUB: This is great, thank you! (*Pulls out tide pods or something else that looks like food but is inedible*) I don't know about this.

ROT: Well there's only one way to find out. (*Gestures toward THE HUMAN*).

GRUB: True. (*Takes a can of food and kneels down next to the cage, gently*) Hey there, wake up. I've got something for you. (*THE HUMAN begins to stir. When s/he eventually opens her eyes*

and sees the can, s/he quickly grabs it from GRUB, opens it, and starts devouring the contents)
 Jeeze, you were hungry alright.

ROT: How's this been going by the way?

GRUB: Umm, it's good—you know, slow, but good. S/he did seem to get really tired after a while and fell asleep, as you saw, probably because s/he hadn't eaten in so long. But, overall it's been good.

ROT: Has it learned any new words?

GRUB: Yeah...s/he's gotten pretty good at saying "cage" and "chair"....

ROT: And?

GRUB: Well, that's pretty much it. It's just, I don't really have a lot to work with in here. Plus, I don't even remember what most of this stuff is. I mean, like, what is this? (*Holds up a random prop—use something from your storage that is unrecognizable*) How can I teach her/him what this is called if we don't even have a name for it?

ROT: (*Slightly self-satisfied*) So this whole "let's figure out how to speak with humans" thing is more difficult than you expected? Hmm. Well if you want to set it loose, you'd better do it now. It's dark, so s/he could probably escape unnoticed.

GRUB: I'm not giving up! I'm still figuring out how to do this, I'm just...at a loss right now. (*Sitting down defeated*)

ROT: (*Sits down next to GRUB, trying to be supportive*) Well then, I'm sure you'll figure something out. Besides, you have more memories than any other zombie I know. No one is more prepared to do this than you.

GRUB: Thanks. I don't know though, maybe you're right. If my memories aren't enough to make this work, maybe it's impossible.

ROT: That's not really what I meant, but maybe. I mean—how do humans do this?

GRUB: What do you mean?

ROT: Like, teach each other things. Are they just born with knowledge or do they learn it?

GRUB: Well—I don't know, but I feel like I do remember learning things.

ROT: Well, pretend you're playing the game. What do you remember?

GRUB: (*Closing hi/her eyes*) Okay, I remember...there's a woman, she's leaning over me, I'm sitting in her lap. Her hair tickles my face...she keeps speaking to me slowly...her hand traces lines and symbols as she speaks. The symbols mean something. There are pictures, a room, a creature with tall pointy ears like this, it's wearing blue and white striped clothing, the moon...Good night...Good night moon! (*Turns to ROT excitedly then gets up and starts shuffling through everything piled on and around the crib*)

ROT: Uh...good night what? What does a moon and some weird pointy eared monster have to do with how humans learn?

GRUB: It's "Goodnight Moon!" I remember it, and better yet, I've seen it here! (*Finding the book*) This is it! I remember, look!

ROT: Oh yeah, there is a long eared monster.

GRUB: No, I mean, this is the key! I don't remember what the creature is called, but I remember the moon! These are what humans use to teach their young, and there's so many of them here! I don't know what these scribbly symbols are at the bottom, but I'm sure there are all sorts of other pictures I can remember, and maybe more will come back to me! Rot, this is it!

ROT: Good, I don't really understand, but that's good I guess!

GRUB: Let's see if it works. Mooooooon, mooooooon, see this picture here this is the mooooooon.

THE HUMAN: Mooooooon.

GRUB: Close, but not quite. Say moooo-N.

THE HUMAN: Mooooooon.

GRUB: Yes! Very good! *Gives THE HUMAN a piece of Captain Crunch as a treat.* Thank you, Rot, and now we have a lot of work to do.

ROT: Yeah, we **all** have a lot to do.

Lights go down on GRUB. The song "How You Like Me Now" starts and plays under the next sequence, which will alternate back and forth between OOZE and GRUB. The next few exchanges are done through the use of props and pantomime.

Lights up downstage right on OOZE, LOAM, BONECRUSHER, and the rest of the zombie ensemble. LOAM is kneeling next to OOZE. FLAY holds a bag of medical supplies. LOAM asks and points for something specific. SQUISH pulls out several items that are incorrect. LOAM, becoming frustrated points, gesturing for a specific object. SQUISH holds up a roll of duct tape, LOAM signals to hand it over. LOAM pulls out a length of tape.

Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB.

GRUB is showing THE HUMAN pictures in Goodnight Moon. GRUB points at a picture of a cow, and the human attempts to name it. GRUB points again, shaking his/her head, and after a few more attempts THE HUMAN correctly names it. GRUB nods enthusiastically and rewards this with a piece of Captain Crunch.

Lights down on GRUB back up on OOZE.

During the blackout LOAM duct-taped a new hand to OOZE'S stump. OOZE now raises it to show the others. At the sight of OOZE'S reattached limb, FLAY excitedly shakes OOZE'S hand, ripping it off. LOAM peels a section of OOZE'S skin from his/her stump and hold it up in front of the audience

Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB.

GRUB picks up a new book that is clearly about the weather. First s/he points to a picture of the moon, and then to a picture of the sun. THE HUMAN struggles a little bit with this switch, but gets it relatively quickly and is awarded with Captain Crunch.

Lights down on GRUB up on OOZE.

LOAM holds out his hand to SQUISH like a doctor to a nurse, and FLAY holds up a stuffed "Get Well" bear. SQUISH grabs at it and hugs it, then hands it to FLAY to hug—all while LOAM is getting more and more impatient. DRIP grabs the bear and rips its arm off (to the dismay of F & S) while ROT gives Loam what he needed (bandage). BONECRUSHER shoves DRIP and gestures approvingly at ROT.

Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB.

GRUB points to a picture of the sun in the book. THE HUMAN repeats it back successfully. GRUB points tracing the path of the sun in the sky, coming up in the east and setting in the west. Then s/he goes to the door of the trailer, opening it slightly, and points at the sun. S/He fans him/herself noting that it is hot outside. THE HUMAN points to the sun repeating what GRUB said and fans him/herself. GRUB rewards with Captain Crunch.

Lights down on GRUB up on OOZE. Music fades under the dialogue. Ideally it should fade out just before 1:00 in the song.

LOAM: Scalpel. (*SQUISH hands LOAM a bloody wig*) I said **scalpel** not scalp.

ROT: Here you go, Loam. (*Hands LOAM the scalpel*)

KNAWS: (*Laying on the ground*) I'm getting hungry, this is taking forever.

SNAPPY: It's been two days since we've eaten. We're all hungry.

DRIP: Are you sure you know what you're doing?

LOAM: No, (*losing patience with DRIP*) I told you I **don't** know what I'm doing. That is precisely why it takes time. I need to be able to experiment with various options in order to find the right solution, but I don't expect someone of **your** intelligence to understand the nuances of scientific exploration.

DRIP: (*Getting physically aggressive*) You'd better watch what you say smartass.

ROT: (*Deescalating*) Clearly, you don't need all of us here to help with this, so maybe some of you (*to DRIP*) should go hunt for some food and Loam can stay to focus on his/her work. I can go and gather more supplies in the meantime.

BONECRUSHER: Excellent idea, my clever friend. It's a good thing someone is making plans with the whole group in mind. (*shoots a derisive glance at DRIP*) We will go hunting, and Rot will scavenge for supplies. Then we will meet back here tomorrow morning.

All exit except for OOZE, LOAM, FLAY and SQUISH. DRIP shoots ROT a hateful look as s/he exits.

OOZE: (*Gesturing to FLAY and SQUISH*) Great, well thank god they left the two most capable of the group here to help us.

Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB. GRUB holds the book about the weather

GRUB: When the **sun** is gone, and the **moon** is up. That is **night**. (*Goes to the door and opens it*) See how it's dark? Try saying **night**. NIIIIIIIGHTTTT.

THE HUMAN: Niiiiight.

GRUB: At **night** it is **cold** (*Pantomimes being cold*)

THE HUMAN: NIIIIII SSS Cooooole. (*Pantomimes being cold*)

GRUB: Great! (*Gives THE HUMAN Captain Crunch. Before eating it, THE HUMAN says something in gibberish in the exact cadence of "Crunchatize me Captain." GRUB recognizes it. There is a moment of silence*) Wait, say that again. (*THE HUMAN hesitantly repeats*) Crunchatize me Captain? Are you saying Crunchatize me Captain?

THE HUMAN repeats itself. It seems to recognize that they are both saying the same thing in their respective languages based on the cadence and inflection of the phrase. THE HUMAN begins gesturing towards the cereal box. GRUB tentatively holds the box up to the cage. THE HUMAN points at the box as it slowly repeats the slogan. It is clearly reading it off the box.

GRUB: (*Doing it's best to repeat the slogan in THE HUMAN'S language*) Wait, is that what these symbols mean? Do they represent words in your language? (*Pointing at the words on the box*) Crunchatize me Captain? Is that what this says? (*THE HUMAN begins nodding enthusiastically*)

The next two sections use pantomime again. The version of "How You Like Me Now" with lyrics starts at 1:00 in the song.

Lights down on GRUB up on OOZE.

FLAY is still in the corner messing with the teddy bear. SQUISH is blowing up a latex glove. S/He lets out some of the air making a squeaky sound. LOAM is inspecting a different glove. The hunting party renters and SQUISH lets the glove go causing it to fly across the stage.

Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB.

THE HUMAN is holding the book again and is pointing at the moon and pretending to be cold. GRUB repeats what THE HUMAN says. Then GRUB takes the book and speaks and THE HUMAN repeats back. They are now clearly teaching each other. ROT enters, dropping a case of plastic water bottles on the ground. S/he looks exhausted. GRUB excitedly tries to show ROT what THE HUMAN has learned, but ROT just shakes his/her head and walks away.

Lights down on GRUB up on OOZE. OOZE is chewing on some mysterious piece of meat. Music fades. LOAM has put a glove on the hand and is attempting to attach it to OOZE by tightening the opening over OOZE's wrist.

DRIP: I'm surprised Rot isn't back yet. How long does it take to just grab some supplies, right Bonecrusher?

BONECRUSHER: I'm sure s/he's being very thorough. Hard work takes time. Isn't that right, Loam?

LOAM: That is absolutely correct.

ROT reenters up stage.

DRIP: Well it's about time!

ROT: Sorry, the hospital is a big building and I wanted to make sure I was being thorough.

DRIP: Well—you—*(Shoots a glance at BONECRUSHER, then makes an exasperated sound and storms away from ROT)*

FLAY: Done! *(FLAY holds up the teddy bear victoriously. The arm is now reattached)* I think I will name him Squish Jr in honor of you!

SQUISH: No we should name it Flay Jr. in honor of you!

DRIP: *(Snatches the teddy bear)* Is this what you've been doing the whole time?! How bout we name it trash so you two can focus! *(Moves to rip it again)*

LOAM: Wait! Give me that!

DRIP: Why, so you can name it **Loam** Jr?

ROT: Just give it to him/her, Drip.

BONECRUSHER: Listen to Rot! (*Smacks DRIP upside of the head. DRIP hands the bear to LOAM reluctantly*)

LOAM: Flay, you reattached the arm? How did you accomplish this?

FLAY: Oh, it wasn't that hard, I just took this and this (*holding up a needle and thread*) and I went like this (*pantomimes stitching*) and that was it! I think it used to be called sewing. Now Squish Jr. is as good as new!

LOAM: Flay, somehow, against all conceivable odds, I believe **you** have managed to discover something... useful! (*In shock and slight disappointment that s/he didn't figure it out*).

OOZE: Flay, you brilliant savant! (*To LOAM*) Sew me up doc!

LOAM: (*Looking through the supplies.*) There is still one problem. It will take much more of this... substance (*inspecting the thread*) to attach a hand and leg than it did to mend this doll. I should have enough to secure the hand, but I'll need more—

FLAY and SQUISH continue looking through the bag for their next toy, and pull out a defibrillator.

ROT: I'll go! I'm getting to know the hospital pretty well. I'm sure I'll be able to find plenty.

BONECRUSHER: Good idea. (*ROT exists*)

DRIP: (*Calling after ROT*) And maybe don't be so "thorough" this time.

LOAM: (*Beginning to sew the hand*) I should be able to secure the hand in this manner, but it will take some time for the flesh to fuse together and reanimate, **if** that's even possible.

SNAPPY: Maybe there's some way to shock it back to life or something.

Just at this moment, FLAY shocks SQUISH with the defibrillator which sends him/her jerking backwards. SQUISH lays there motionless for a second and then sits up quickly.

SQUISH: Woooohooo! Let's do that again!

LOAM and OOZE look at each other knowingly.

Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB.

GRUB: *(Holding up the weather book)* I think we've learned plenty from this book *(Pantomiming each word in the next sentence)* What do you want to read next? *(THE HUMAN points towards a backpack laying in the corner of the room. Picking up the backpack)* Of course! You had this on you when I found you. Let's see what we've got here *(Begins pulling out items from the satchel, eventually s/he removes an atlas)* Hmm, this looks promising. *(Flips through a couple pages)* Oh, I don't recognize any of these pictures. *(THE HUMAN Gestures for the atlas. Handing it over)* Here.

THE HUMAN: *Opens to a map of Florida. Begins speaking in gibberish, pointing at the map, then pointing at the ground.*

GRUB: I don't understand. What is that a picture of?

THE HUMAN: *(Pointing at the ground again, and gesturing all around him/her)* Grub *(pointing at him, then at the ground again)*

GRUB: Yes, I'm glad you remember my name, but I still don't get it. Is that the ground? I don't understand.

ROT enters the trailer, with a new bag of canned goods.

ROT: How goes the impossible dream?

GRUB: It's going. S/he's been trying to show me this book, but I don't understand the pictures.

ROT: *(Stepping closer)* Actually, I think I remember something like that.

GRUB: You do?! What is it!? Try to remember!

ROT: *(Eyes closed)* Ummmm, it's something about...Uh...travel...I remember going places I'd never been before...I was looking at one of these...It's...A map?

GRUB: A Map?

ROT: Yeah, as far as I remember, these represent places, and you can find your way from place to place using them.

GRUB: A map! That makes sense. That's why s/he kept pointing at the ground! This map must be where we are! *(Turning back to THE HUMAN)* Is this where we are? *(Points at the map and then at the ground. Pantomimes the next section)* So if we walk this way for long enough, we'll go away from this spot on the map. *(Traces a path away from the point on the map s/he was pointing at. THE HUMAN seems to see that GRUB understands and begins nodding enthusiastically)* Amazing! See, Rot, s/he's smarter than you thought! *(reaching into the box of Captain Crunch)* Oh shoot, I'm all out. Can you find me some more Captain Crunch for her/him?

ROT: *(Dejected)* I just brought you food-

GRUB: *(Looking in the bag)* Yeah but this is all so basic *(Holds up two cans)* S/he deserves a treat! *(To THE HUMAN in a patronizing voice)* Don't you?! Yes you do!

ROT: *(Exhausted)* I guess I can see what I—

GRUB: Great, thanks!

ROT exits the trailer. Lights down on GRUB up on OOZE. LOAM is holding the defibrillator up to OOZE's now fully attached hand.

LOAM: Okay, now remember, we do not know if this will be effective. So do not get overly excited. Snappy, are you ready?

SNAPPY: I'm ready.

LOAM: Ooze, are you ready?

OOZE: As ready as I'll ever be.

LOAM: One, two—

ROT: *(Re-entering)* I'm back!

LOAM: Three!

SNAPPY triggers the defibrillator. LOAM's new hand shoots up in the air and begins wiggling around wildly.

OOZE: It's working! Do it again!

LOAM: One, two, three!

This time the zap causes the arm on the opposite side of OOZE's body to go flying.

OOZE: *(Holding up the new hand and moving it)* It worked!

ROT: *(Picking up the detached arm)* Well, sort of.

OOZE: *(Noticing the missing arm)* Damn! Well at least I've still got one good hand. *(Hold up the new hand, which has stopped moving)* No! It was working for a minute there!

SNAPPY: Oh god! We're just making it worse!

KNAWS: I feel faint.

LOAM: *(Defeated)* Set backs are to be expected, at least we have made some progress—

DRIP: What progress? You need to get it together, Loam! We're running out of time! Any one of us could be next! *(The group breaks out into panicked hubbub.)*

LOAM: I am growing tired of your lack of respect for the scientific process— *(ROT, sensing tensions rising, moves between LOAM and DRIP to try and intervene)*

DRIP: And I am "growing tired" of you thinking you're so much smarter than everyone else.

LOAM: I can't help if that's the truth.

DRIP: That's it!

ROT: Drip, stop it!

DRIP goes to punch LOAM in the face but ROT steps in between them just in time and ends up taking the blow

BONECRUSHER: Enough! I have never seen such a pathetic display of faithlessness in all my life! Are we puny humans doomed to an inescapable fate? No! We are zombies! We are fighting a war against time itself, and we will win! Drip, apologize to Rot for what you just did!

DRIP: *(Petulantly)* Sorry.

BONECRUSHER: Now, let's get that arm in the fridge in case we need it later, and get back to work!

ROT: *(Weakly from the ground)* I'll take it.

DRIP: *(Under his/her breath)* Of course you will.

ROT begins to exit. After a second DRIP follows behind. Lights down on OOZE up on GRUB. During the next sequence all the zombies exit stage right during the blackout except for ROT, GRUB, and DRIP.

THE HUMAN: *(Pointing at the top of the map and pantomiming cold)* Cooooode. *(Pointing at the bottom of the map and pantomiming hot)* Hot

GRUB: *(Pointing at each section of the map and repeating)* Hot, cold. So are you saying there are different places on this map that are more hot and more cold than it is here?

Suddenly ROT bursts into the trailer. DRIP stealthily approaches the trailer and listens to their conversation from the outside.

GRUB: Hey! Did you get more Captain Crunch?

ROT: No! There was no time for that! Please tell me you've made some **real** progress.

GRUB: *(Offended)* Well, I'd say we've made plenty of progress. Look, I think s/he's trying to tell me that there are some places on this map that are hot and some that are cold.

ROT: How is that helpful? It's been three days since we schlepped this waste of space up here, and this is all you have to show for it? Who cares about hot and cold?! Ooze is out there falling to pieces, Loam and Drip are at each other's throats, I got punched in the face-

GRUB: You what?

ROT: Forget it! You wouldn't understand because you're too busy talking about the weather with your pet!

GRUB: You were the one that said this would take time—

ROT: Well, this is too much time! Why don't you ask it about something actually relevant to our problem?! (*Getting up close to the cage and taking the arm out of the sack*) Here! How do we attach an arm?! Tell me how to reattach an arm!

GRUB: Stop it! You're scaring her/him!

ROT: See this is useless! You're wasting time!

GRUB: What is going on with you? Why are you so upset?

ROT: Oh no reason, I guess it's just because we're facing the impending doom of our kind, and I'm busy trying to appease both a violent sociopath and my best friend who is too obsessed with his/her pet **human** to even feed him/herself! (*Turns and storms out of the trailer*)

Lights down on GRUB, but the area downstage of the trailer remains lit. As ROT is walking through this area, DRIP emerges from the shadows.

DRIP: Well, well, well. I may be mistaken, but I thought the trailer with the fridge was farther that way. What could possibly lead you here? Could the great, trustworthy Rot be up to something, or is s/he just being "**thorough?**"

ROT: (*Trying not to panic*) Haha, I guess I got distracted and lost my way. You're right; this isn't the trailer with the fridge, so I'll just be on my way—

DRIP: Oh no, not so fast. I thought I may have heard you talking to someone in there, but that can't be. You're so **dedicated** to our mission. I'm sure you wouldn't let yourself get sidetracked or waste time with somebody else.

ROT: I wasn't talking to anyone. You must have misheard.

DRIP: Oh really? Because I could have sworn I heard the voice of your pathetic little friend, Worm.

ROT: Her/His name's Grub.

DRIP: Aha! So you were talking to Grub!

ROT: No, I just meant you got the name wrong.

DRIP: Oh, my mistake. Then I guess there's no reason I shouldn't just have a little peek inside of this trailer—

ROT: No! *(In an emphatic whisper)* Okay fine, yes, I was talking to Grub—

DRIP: I knew it!

ROT: But, I swear, I **am** dedicated to Bonecrusher's mission. I just wanted to make sure my friend is doing okay.

DRIP: Interesting. Well, I guess that's fair. *(ROT turns to leave)* But there's one more thing I don't understand. Why is your buddy holed up in a trailer that's so far away from the rest of camp? Could s/he be hiding something? A hoard of weapons? A magical unicorn? *(Pause)* A human? *(ROT looks pointedly at DRIP. Suddenly DRIP drops the pretense and grabs ROT threateningly. Speaking in a low but menacing volume)* Look, I don't care what your buddy is up to in there, but I know that if Bonecrusher finds out s/he's keeping a human as a pet, s/he would crush that human, and probably your buddy too! Heck, I wouldn't be surprised if s/he snapped your neck as well just for helping! *(Pleased with his/herself s/he pauses for dramatic effect)*

ROT: What do you want, Drip?

DRIP: It's not what I want, it's what I don't want—from you...to be here...what I don't want is from you not to be here. *(S/he's trying to sound cool, but it's just coming out wrong)* What I—I want you gone, okay? That's it. I want you gone.

ROT: What do you mean?

DRIP: I don't like you. You think you're some hero just cause you run a bunch of errands and can take a punch for that jerk, Loam, but you're nothing! Bonecrusher may be falling for your

little show, but you're clearly not everything s/he thinks you are. I'm obviously meant to be Bonecrusher's number two, not you! So I want you gone.

ROT: Where am I supposed to go?

DRIP: Don't know, don't care! Just pick a direction, start walking, and don't turn around.

ROT: But this is my home. I've lived here my whole life. I can't go off and live somewhere else all alone—

DRIP: That sounds like a personal problem! Look, I'll make it simple for you. You either go and never show your rotten face around here again, or I tell Bonecrusher about your friend's little pet, and it's bye bye to both of you. It's your choice. (*Whispering*) Think it over.

DRIP Exits leaving ROT alone on stage. ROT stands there processing what just happened, glances back at the trailer, and eventually after a deep breath, reenters the trailer. THE HUMAN is asleep in the cage. There is an awkward silence before ROT speaks.

ROT: Hey, I'm sorry I freaked out a minute ago. I'm just under a lot of stress right now.

GRUB: (*Not looking at ROT*) It's fine.

ROT: It's just difficult playing both sides, you know?

GRUB: Sure.

ROT: And it just kind of feels sometimes like you don't really appreciate my help—

GRUB: Of course I do—

ROT: Or value my opinion—

GRUB: Of course I value your opinion—

ROT: Do you? Because it feels recently like you just value being able to tell me what to do regardless of what I think.

GRUB: That's not true.

ROT: Yes it is, Grub. All I am to you anymore is someone to run your errands.

GRUB: No, I care what you think—

ROT: Okay, well you want to know what I think? I think you need to let the human go.

GRUB: What?

ROT: Let her/him go. At the rate you're going, you're never going to learn anything worthwhile.

GRUB: You don't know that. Who knows what information will be helpful in the long run. You just need to have patience.

ROT: No, Grub! I've **had** patience, you need a hard dose of reality, and since I'm the only one stupid enough to put up with you, I guess I have to make you see the truth.

GRUB: I thought you trusted me...

ROT: I thought I did too, but now you need to trust **me**. Get rid of it.

GRUB: (*Shaking his/her head*) I can't believe you.

ROT: **That's** exactly your problem! You don't believe in me, you don't believe in Bonecrusher, you don't believe in Loam, you don't believe in anyone but these stupid humans! You're so obsessed with the past that you've completely lost sight of our future. The age of humans is over, Grub! Accept it! You need to trust your own kind for once in your life!

GRUB: Didn't you just say that things are falling apart out there? Maybe you trust zombies too much. Ever think of that?! At least I'm making some progress here.

ROT: (*Scoffing*) Progress, please. You're more delusional than I thought if you think **this** (*gesturing towards the cage*) is progress.

GRUB: What's that supposed to mean?

ROT: Do you really think you're doing the right thing here?! You're the one who is so obsessed with humans. How does this feel okay to you? (*Pointing at the cage*)

GRUB: What are you talking about?

ROT: How is living in a cage, cramped up, and being treated like an animal any better than being free to fend off zombies on her/his own? Look at her/him! Do you think s/he's your friend? Do you think s/he would even hesitate to kill you if s/he had the chance? S/he's just your prisoner, and you've deluded yourself into thinking what you're doing is somehow right.

GRUB: I know this isn't ideal for her/him, but I just need more time—

ROT: How much more time?! Until someone discovers your secret and kills her/him?

GRUB: No one is going to find out—

ROT:(*With a sarcastic laugh*) And what if they do?

GRUB: That's a risk I'm willing to take.

ROT: (*Pause as ROT tries to calm down*) Grub, please, I'm asking as your best friend. Please, trust me. Please, let him/her go.

GRUB: If you were really my friend, you wouldn't be asking me that.

ROT: Fine. (*Under his/her breath*) Then you've left me no choice.

GRUB: No choice to do what?

ROT: Just—don't expect me to run your errands anymore.

GRUB: Fine, I'll find food for her/him myself.

ROT: Fine! (*Exits slamming the door behind him*)

GRUB: Fine!

Blackout. "Doing Fine" starts somewhere around 2:40 in the song.

Scene Seven

Lights up. It is day outside the trailer. GRUB approaches from downstage right with a bag of food. S/he looks around to make sure s/he is unseen before entering the trailer.

GRUB: (*Noticing that THE HUMAN is still in the cage*) Oh thank god, I was worried you may have gotten out while I was away.

THE HUMAN: (*Groggily*) Where am I? What's going on?

GRUB: (*Dropping the bag and running to the cage*) Oh my God! You can talk! I knew it would work! Admittedly, I didn't think it would happen so quickly, but the point is I was right!

THE HUMAN: Who are you? Why am I here? (*Grabs the cage exposing his/her wrist*)

GRUB: Don't you remember me? It's Grub! Remember? Grrruuuuuub. Wait—(*looking closer and noticing the bite mark on THE HUMAN's wrist*) No, no, no! Who did this? Who did this?!

THE HUMAN: Did what?

GRUB: You're not a human any more, you've been turned. Damn it! We were making such progress! Who would do something like this?! (*Suddenly realizing and storming out of the trailer*)

THE HUMAN: Wait! Don't leave me in here! (*Lights go down on the interior of the trailer*)

GRUB: (*Yelling*) Rot! Rot! I know you did this!

BONECRUSHER: (*Emerging from behind the trailer*) What makes you so sure?

GRUB: (*Terrified*) Bonecrusher—how did you ...?

BONECRUSHER: Don't misunderstand, your friend Rot did us all the great service of bringing your scheme to my attention. (*ROT emerges ashamedly from behind the trailer*) But I took it upon myself to bring the human into our higher form of existence, so really if you think about it, I did your little pet a favor. Now, don't get me wrong, I am not in the habit of doing favors without reason. If it were up to me, I would have crushed you just like that, but your friend assured me that you don't mean any harm, and that you just need a little extra guidance. So let me educate you. (*Grabbing his/her by the throat*) Did you ever once consider the possible repercussions of a rogue human loose in our camp? Are you trying to sabotage everything we have been working for?!

GRUB: No sir.

BONECRUSHER: Consider this your last warning. Step out of line once more, and you will not escape so easily. We are in a fight for our lives, and I will not let some irresponsible worm destroy our one chance at survival. Do you understand me?!

GRUB: Yes sir.

BONECRUSHER: Good.

BONECRUSHER releases GRUB and wipes her/his hand off in disgust before exiting. ROT and GRUB are left alone together. They stare at each other in silence for a moment. Then ROT turns to leave.

GRUB: Yeah, go ahead and leave. Just follow your master on back to the hole you crawled out of.

ROT: *(In a low shame filled voice)* You didn't leave me a choice.

GRUB: Oh right! I guess I forced you to spill the beans to your new psycho boy/girlfriend!

ROT: They were going to find out. I just wanted to make sure it came from me and not from—someone else. Besides it was dangerous having it in there! What if some of its friends came looking for it, or it got out and ransacked the place?

GRUB: You don't really believe that. You know I had the situation under control. You just wanted to buddy up to Bonecrusher. And what better way than by screwing over your ex-best friend.

ROT: *(On the verge of tears)* I didn't want to—You **are** my best friend.

GRUB: Wait, that's what this is about isn't it? You're jealous!

ROT: What?

GRUB: You've been jealous this whole time! That's why you wanted me to get rid of her/him, because you were just jealous!

ROT: Why would I be jealous of a human?!

GRUB: I don't know! You tell me!

ROT: You have no idea what you're talking about, did you ever stop to consider that your actions might have consequences—

GRUB: No, you know what? Save it! You've been trying to get rid of her/him from the very beginning, so you just tattled to get her/him out of the way. You're so unbelievably selfish!

ROT: Selfish! Are you kidding me?! I have bent over backwards to help you with your little project! You are the one who has been selfish. Everyone else in camp has been working together to solve this problem except you! You think you're so smart, but you're really just full of it! I don't need you, and I'm not jealous. You are the one that needs me, but guess what? I'm done! I'm going to spend my time with those who actually appreciate my help from now on.

GRUB: Great! I think that's for the best.

ROT: Great. Good bye then.

GRUB: Good bye, and good riddance.

ROT storms off after BONCRUSHER. "Stuck" starts. Blackout and curtain. END of ACT 1.

Scene Eight

In the blackout, "Blood Love Dirt Stop" begins playing. The curtain raises, and we see GRUB sitting alone in the lawn chair from Scene 1. S/he is holding a chicken leg in exactly the same position as the first scene, only this time the chair next to him/her is empty. GRUB glances wistfully at the empty chair, and then back out towards the audience. THE HUMAN enters stage left carrying the remains of a chicken.

THE HUMAN: There you are! I lost track of you at the old coop. One minute I was grabbing a chicken just like you taught me, the next you were gone. What happened?

GRUB: Sorry, I just needed some alone time.

THE HUMAN: Oh, I see. Alone time is important. (*S/he sits down in the empty chair, which clearly bothers GRUB*) I don't understand why nobody else likes these. (*Taking a bite of chicken*) I agree with you that they're a much more sustainable source of food, and delicious!

GRUB: Yeah, I'm glad you feel that way.

THE HUMAN: You're not eating.

GRUB: I'm not very hungry.

THE HUMAN: What were you thinking about?

GRUB: Nothing, just old memories.

THE HUMAN: You mean like memories from when you were human? I remember a few things too, but they're foggy.

GRUB: No. Just from—nevermind.

THE HUMAN: Listen, you know how everybody around here has a name? Like you're Grub, obviously, and there's Knaws, and Drip, and Rot—

GRUB: What's your point?

THE HUMAN: Well I was thinking, I don't have a name yet, so maybe you could help me come up with one.

GRUB: What exactly did you have in mind?

THE HUMAN: Hmmm, I don't know. Something that describes me, maybe Chicken-eater, or Friend-of-Grub.

GRUB: Those don't sound like zombie names.

THE HUMAN: Yeah, that's true. All your names are kind of nasty.

GRUB: What about Foul?

THE HUMAN: Are you trying to tell me that I smell?

GRUB: No, I mean—it sounds like a zombie name, but it also is kind of a pun. You know because you eat chickens, otherwise known as fowl. Get it? *(S/he doesn't get it)* Nevermind.

FOUL: No, I like it. Foul. I like it because you came up with it. *(S/he takes a bite)*

SQUISH and FLAY enter from stage right. They are holding hands and clearly very upset over something.

FOUL: (*Darting up*) Hello! I don't believe we've met yet! I'm Foul! And you are?

SQUISH: This is Flay.

FLAY: This is Squish.

SQUISH/FLAY: Excuse us.

They continue walking away. GRUB notices that there is clearly something wrong and stands up.

GRUB: Hey, is everything okay, you two? You seem...off.

SQUISH: (*Holding back tears*) Everything (*sniff*) is fine. (*They turn and continue*)

GRUB: Are you sure, because you don't seem fine. (*Walking towards them*) I haven't been at camp recently, so I don't know much about what's going on. How's Ooze?

Both SQUISH and FLAY burst into tears at the mention of OOZE's name.

SQUISH: S/he doesn't know.

FLAY: S/he doesn't know.

SQUISH: You should tell him/her.

FLAY: No, you should tell him/her.

GRUB: Tell me what? What happened? Is Ooze dead?

FLAY: Dead? No.

SQUISH: Not dead. (*They both spiral into sobs again*)

GRUB: Calm down. Take a deep breath. (*They both breath in deeply and hold their breath for a little too long. Realizing they don't understand*) And let it out! Now, tell me what's going on.

SQUISH: *(The following monologue should be delivered like one giant weepy run-on sentence. Think of Chunk's confession from The Goonies)* Loam was trying to stick on Oozes hand, and s/he tried some silver sticky stuff, but then I ripped it off, and then s/he asked for the fluffy stuff, and then Drip killed Flay Jr, but Flay put him back together, then Loam sewed on the hand just like Flay fixed Flay Jr, and Flay shocked me with the zappy pack, and so they used the zappy pack to shock Ooze's arm, but then his/her arm went woosh *(makes a flying movement)* and so they sewed back on another arm, and then they used the zappy pack again, and then *(sniff sniff)* and then—*(They both break down into sobs again holding each other)*

GRUB: And then what?! What happened after that?

SQUISH: I don't wanna say it.

FLAY: S/he doesn't want to say it!

GRUB: Okay, fine. Then can you take me to where Ooze is, and I will see for myself?

They look at each other, then at GRUB and nod. FLAY tenderly extends his/her hand to GRUB and they begin leading GRUB and FOUL off stage. Blackout "What don't Kill You" starts playing.

Scene Nine

The following scene occurs on the apron of the stage in isolated light while the scene change occurs upstage. LOAM is sitting at a picnic table with various human limbs, some medical equipment, electrical wiring, and the defibrillator. LOAM holds an arm, inspecting it closely. ROT crosses downstage of the table.

LOAM: Rot!

ROT: Oh, hey, Loam. *(Half heartedly)* How are the experiments going?

LOAM: See for yourself! *(Sets down the arm, and it begins to slowly crawl across the table)*

ROTL Woah! It's moving! You did it!

LOAM: Yes, *(holding up a syringe)* I injected a sample of Ooze's bodily fluids and then used this *(gesturing towards the defibrillator)* to send a current through the transplant. It seems to be sustaining independent movement which is extremely promising. I do not know yet if the

transplants will cooperate with one another once reassembled and attached to the host, but I would say we are nearing a solution.

ROT: (*Attempting positivity, but with an air of exhaustion*) That's great!

LOAM: It is unfortunate what happened to Ooze, but I have been much more productive without the entirety of camp breathing down my neck.

ROT: Well, in that case I guess I should be going.

LOAM: Sorry- I didn't mean to offend you. I seem to have that effect on people quite often.

ROT: No, it's okay I just meant... Bonecrusher is expecting me-

LOAM: Rot... I have been meaning to thank you.

ROT: Oh, don't worry about it. Drip's just a jerk.

LOAM: Yes, but you did not have to defend me, and yet you did anyway. You are a good friend, Rot.

ROT: (*This hurts ROT immensely*) Recently, I've been feeling like a pretty crappy friend.

LOAM: I don't agree with that assessment at all. You have been an invaluable asset to me with my work.

ROT: (*Surprised by this*) I don't see how-

LOAM: There are several reasons. In addition to absorbing the aggression of that imbecile Drip, you have been the most willing to gather supplies-

ROT: (*Guiltily*) Well.... I had...other reasons for that-

LOAM: Even so, you possess a certain (*struggling to find the word*) patience for the incompetence of others that I unfortunately do not possess. I- (*it's difficult to admit*) **need** someone like you around to mediate between myself and those who refuse to see the value in my work.

ROT: (*Taken aback*) You don't really need **me**. What about Bonecrusher?

LOAM: I suspect Bonecrusher may only be interested in my work because it has required bloodshed thus far.

BONECRUSHER enters suddenly.

BONECRUSHER: Rot! There you are, those humans aren't going to hunt themselves. Let's get going.

ROT: Sorry, I'm coming. I'll see you later, Loam.

LOAM: *(Awkwardly)* See you later also, Rot.

Scene Ten

Lights up. We see the interior of a trailer on stage right. It contains an old kitchenette and a fridge. Leading GRUB by the hand, SQUISH and FLAY enter the trailer with FOUL trailing behind. They point towards the fridge. The sound of the generator can be heard humming in the background.

GRUB: In here? Ooze is in here?

Pointing toward the fridge, FLAY and SQUISH nod solemnly. Nervously GRUB grabs the handle and flings the fridge open. Inside, OOZE'S head is sitting on a shelf surrounded by numerous other body parts. OOZE is startled and screams, the others scream in return.

OOZE: Jeeze, you almost gave me a heart attack! Just kidding, it's not like I have one of those anymore.

GRUB: Ooze, you're—you're—you're just a head.

OOZE: Yeah, no duh!

GRUB: How—how did this happen?

SQUISH: I told you, *(launching into the monologue)* Loam was trying to stick on Oozes hand, and s/he tried some silver sticky stuff, but then I ripped it off—

GRUB: I know, I know, thank you, Squish. I just want to hear it from Ooze's perspective.

OOZE: Well what can I say? Loam was trying to shock some life back into my new limbs, and pop.

GRUB: My God. I'm sorry Ooze. How are you doing?

OOZE: (*Sarcastically*) Oh just dandy. I really love staring into darkness all day with no one to talk to. You know it's bad when these two coming to check on you is the highlight of your day.

FLAY: Aww, Ooze, it's the highlight of our day too.

GRUB: That's just awful. How long have you been in here?

OOZE: How should I know. It's always night in this frozen prison.

SQUISH: It has been exactly twelve—

FLAY: And a half—

SQUISH: Days since, (*sniff*) since- (*again they begin to cry*)

OOZE: Oh stop! I'm not dead—yet. Loam's working on a way to put me back together, but s/he said s/he doesn't want to take any more risks until s/he knows more about what s/he's doing, so I could be in here awhile.

GRUB: Well, is there anything we can do for you to make you more comfortable?

OOZE: I am a little hungry. Did you two bring me some food like you said you would?

GRUB: It looks like you're surrounded by food. (*Gesturing towards the other limbs*)

OOZE: Those used to be attached to me! (*Something dawns on GRUB*) What do you think I am, some kind of monster?! Now, Flay, did you bring me a nice eyeball to suck on or maybe a delicious kidney?

FLAY: No we—

SQUISH: We were going to—

FLAY: But then—

SQUISH: We saw Grub—

FLAY: S/he asked to see you—

SQUISH: So we, we—

SQUISH/FLAY: We're sorry!

FOUL: It's okay! Here, you can have some of my lunch. (*Stepping in and holding out the chicken. GRUB meanwhile picks up a hand from the bottom shelf, and examines it*)

OOZE: Who are you and what is that?

FOUL: Foul, and this is—

OOZE: Also foul. Well, looks like it's either that or I eat myself, so bring it over here. (*FOUL holds up the chicken and OOZE takes a couple of bites*)

FOUL: Fascinating...

OOZE: What? What?! Why are you looking at me like that?

FOUL: You're just a head, so where does it go?

OOZE: Don't worry about it kid, it's called suspension of disbelief. Pfff, pffff, ugh I got a feather in my mouth. (*FOUL helps pick it out*) Much better, thank you.

FOUL: Don't you want anymore?

OOZE: Nah, I'm just a head remember? I don't need much.

GRUB: Ooze, you said all these were your body parts, right?

OOZE: Yup, this fridge has just become a chilly altar to my sad disembodied limbs.

GRUB: They were decaying, that's why Loam said they fell off?

OOZE: Yeah.

GRUB: But look at this, no further signs of decay, no bugs, it barely even smells anymore.

OOZE: Yeah, (*patronizingly*) that's why I'm in here. The fridge keeps things cold, and somehow it stops them from getting old and gross. Unfortunately, I was already old and gross before they put me in here, so it didn't do me much good, now did it?

GRUB: That's it! Why didn't I think of it before!? If we could all go somewhere that was just like a giant fridge, maybe that would stop us from decaying!

OOZE: Oh yeah, by all means feel free to share my fridge, but I think you might have to lose a couple of limbs in order to squeeze in.

GRUB: No, not a literal fridge, but some place **like** a fridge! We need to go somewhere that is cold!

OOZE: Sure that would be great if there was such a place—

GRUB: But there is!

OOZE: And how do you know that?

GRUB: Because s/he told me. (*Pointing to FOUL*)

THE HUMAN: Me? I never told you that.

GRUB: Yes you did. You told me when you—when you were human. You showed me a map, and you said that there are places on that map that are hot (*pantomimes being hot*) and places that are cold (*pantomimes being cold.*) Don't you remember? We need to find the place that is cold!

FOUL: I—I can't remember—

GRUB: Sure you can! Close your eyes. Now try, try to remember.

FOUL: I'm sorry, Grub, but I just can't.

GRUB: It's okay, I know it's difficult, but I know you can do this. Maybe you just need something to help you remember, like the map!

FOUL: But where is it?

GRUB: Back in the trailer where I kept—where we met. It should be there along with all your old belongings. Let's go! *(They turn to leave)*

OOZE: That's great, I'll just be here if you need me. Don't worry about old Ooze, I'll be just fine—*(The door to the fridge shuts mid-sentence)*

Blackout.

Scene Eleven

While a scene change occurs on stage, BONECRUSHER, ROT, DRIP, and the hunting party enter through the house. BONECRUSHER is leading the party with ROT by his/her side. DRIP is walking close behind.

KNAWS: Where are all the humans today? It feels like we've been walking forever.

DRIP: Shut up Knaws! If Bonecrusher wants to walk all day looking for humans, then that's what we'll do. Right, Bonecrusher?

BONECRUSHER: Drip! Back up! You stepped on my heel! Are you trying to sabotage this mission?!

DRIP: So sorry, sir.

BONECRUSHER: Rot, where do you suggest we search next? The humans in this area have clearly wised up to our hunting prowess. We need a new plan of attack.

ROT: Uh, um. I don't know. We are in the forest, so maybe we should hunt some of those tall brown animals with the big ears instead.

DRIP: Hunt animals? Are you joking! You sound like your wimpy friend!

ROT: *(Quietly)* S/he's not my friend any more.

BONECRUSHER: Hmm, could be an interesting challenge. I have begun to grow bored of the pathetic screams of humans as I rip them apart from limb to limb. I would like to know the sound that those other creatures make when you tear their windpipes from their throats.

ROT: (*Appalled*)Yeah...

BONECRUSHER: And some of them have those large pointy white bones that protrude out of their heads like this. (*Pantomimes antlers*) They could be used for disemboweling humans! Ah! Once again, Rot, you are full of innovations. (*Slapping him/her on the back hard*) These creatures could revolutionize the way we hunt the humans!

ROT: (*Feigning enthusiasm*) Oh good.

DRIP: You know, maybe Rot should stay at camp next time we go hunting, to help Loam with his/her experiments since Rot's so clever.

BONECRUSHER: Nah, I like having someone with intelligence by my side when we're on the hunt. (*Aside to ROT*) Besides, harvesting the humans is the fun part, am I right?

ROT: (*Uncomfortably*) Yeah, totally....(*Suddenly the sound of a guitar is heard*) Quiet, do you all hear that? (*Lights come up on a small tent down stage. There is a light on inside the tent*) Hey, look! What's that up there?

BONECRUSHER: (*Quietly*) Get into position, boys. I'll take the lead. (*The group stealthily surrounds the tent. BONECRUSHER approaches the entrance and rips open the tent flap.*) Surprise! Hahaha!

BONECRUSHER pulls out the FIRST HUMAN by the leg. S/he is screaming and reaching behind with one hand. With the other s/he grabs for a gun. A SECOND HUMAN emerges from the tent grasping for the FIRST HUMAN'S hand and screaming. The FIRST HUMAN shoots the gun wildly at BONECRUSHER and graze's his/her shoulder.

BONECRUSHER: Ooh you think you're clever don't you. (*Grabs the FIRST HUMAN by the wrist and breaks it. FIRST HUMAN drops the gun*) But your pathetic human weapons are no match for me. (*Bites THE FIRST HUMAN on the neck and then snaps its neck for good measure. The SECOND HUMAN screams in horror, and notices all the other zombies. After a moment of panic s/he runs off stage*) Well what are you waiting for? Does this pipsqueak look like enough to feed us all? After it!

The group lets out a collective shout and they exit in pursuit of the SECOND HUMAN. ROT is about to follow hesitantly but something in the tent catches his/her eye. S/he approaches it and pulls out an old guitar.

BONECRUSHER: Are you coming Rot?

ROT: Yes, It's just—

BONECRUSHER: What is that some kind of human weapon?

ROT: No, I think this is what we heard before. *(Strums it)* But—it seems familiar somehow *(Remembering)* I think—I think my fr—I think Grub told me about something like this once.

BONECRUSHER: *(Scoffing)* Oh, Grub, well then it's probably useless. Let's go, we've got more important things to do than play with human toys. *(Exits)*

ROT: I'm right behind you. *(Looks at the SECOND HUMAN with new found pity and guilt. Then notices the gun, and picks it up. S/he glances towards where BONECRUSHER exited and then back at the gun.)*

Blackout.

Scene Twelve

The trailer from Act 1 is on stage left. It looks similar except that the cage has tipped over. GRUB, FOUL, SQUISH, and FLAY enter through the door.

GRUB: *(Nervously)* Is this place bringing back any memories, Foul?

FOUL: Well I definitely remember waking up in here, feeling very confused, and then meeting you.

GRUB: Right, okay this may not be as simple as I thought. Now where is that bag? *(Begins looking around)*

FLAY: Wow, did you live here when you were human, Foul?

FOUL: I'm really not sure....

SQUISH: Oh my goodness, Flay, look at this! *(Holds up a stuffed animal)*

FLAY: Oh it's so cute, and look at this! *(Holds up a different toy)*

SQUISH: But these belong to Foul...*(They both direct a puppy dog look at FOUL)*

FOUL: Don't look at me. None of this is mine, at least not any more. It's yours as far as I'm concerned. *(Both SQUISH and FLAY let out a squeal of delight and sit down to begin playing with the toys)* Hey, Grub...how exactly did you say we met again?

GRUB: I met you here, you just described it a minute ago. *(Trying to evade the question)* Now, do you see a brown bag anywhere?

FOUL: Grub, that doesn't make sense. You said before that I showed you this...map or whatever you called it, when I was human. How did you know me back then?

GRUB: Ummm...It's complicated...

FOUL: *(Nervously)* You can tell me. I won't get mad whatever it is. I promise.

GRUB: *(Sighing and sitting)* Well I don't know about that. *(Taking a deep breath)* Okay, here it is: I was the one who brought you here. I wanted to see if I could figure out how to talk to you, so I sat in here with you day and night, feeding you canned food and Captain Crunch—

FOUL: What's Captain Crunch?

GRUB: It's a cereal that—nevermind, it doesn't matter. The point is that I thought maybe I could learn something from you, something that could save us. I tried to make you as comfortable as possible, but ultimately I failed to protect you, and now, if we can't figure out how to get to the cold, then it may have all been for nothing. I'm—really sorry. *(Getting emotional, this is about more than his/her relationship with FOUL)* I'm sorry I was so focused on what I thought was right that I let you suffer. I used you. I **was** selfish. I didn't listen- I pushed away the only person who ever really cared about me, and for what? I'm a bad friend, *(Remembering that s/he's talking to FOUL and not ROT)* so... I totally understand if you hate me now.

FOUL: *(Clearly not knowing how to process this information)* I—I don't know what to think, but I don't hate you. Maybe I should be sad about the life I left behind, but I'm mostly just excited about the life I have now, and if it turns out that I helped you find a way to save us, then I think it was worth it.

GRUB: Thanks. I hope that's true.

FOUL: Let's make it true. (*Looking around*) If we could just find that bag—

FLAY: Look, Squish, we can carry our favorite buddy around with us all the time in this! (*Holds up the bag*)

GRUB: The bag! Flay, I need that! (*FLAY hands it over*)

SQUISH: (*Holding up two different toys*) Do you want Flay Jr. Jr. to carry inside or you could have Flay Jr. Jr. Jr.

GRUB: (*Emptying the contents of the bag onto the floor*) No thank you. (*Picking up the atlas*) Okay now here's the map. You said that this is where we are, here is hot, and here is cold. Now, the question is, how do we get here?

FOUL: I—don't—I don't remember. I've never seen this before.

GRUB: Yes you have! You showed it to me! Try to remember!

FOUL: I—these symbols—I don't know what they mean. I don't know if I can do this Grub—

GRUB: (*Frantically*) Yes, you have to! (*Taking a beat*) Okay, sorry, let's calm down. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. I used to play this game with—I used to play this game with my friend Rot where we'd try to help each other remember things from before. Just pretend it's a game. Now, think about traveling. Do you see anything? Anything at all?

FOUL: There is something...but it's super foggy...

GRUB: Focus on it! What do you see? Shapes, colors, anything?

FOUL: It's something...I'm holding something...it's smooth and round...small...it has symbols on it...

GRUB: It's not the map?

FOUL: No, not the map...smaller. I can hold it in the palm of my hand...

GRUB: (*Starts fumbling through the other items that were in the bag*) Something else, something else...(*finds a compass*) This! Round, smooth, small, there's symbols on its face. Foul, look, is this what you remember?

FOUL: Yes! That's it!

GRUB: And how do we use it? (*Hands it to FOUL*)

FOUL: Uh...I—

GRUB: Wait a second, those symbols. I've seen them before. Look, right here on the map! There they are, the four symbols (*traces and N E S and W in the air*) and there's even a little arrow like the one in the middle of this (*referring to the compass*).

FOUL: But wait, Grub, look. The arrow on this one is moving. (*S/he stands and begins turning around looking at the compass*)

GRUB: So how does it work? What does this have to do with the map?

FOUL: I remember...there's a phrase...I remember...(*turning as s/he speaks*) Never eat soggy wheat. (*S/he begins laughing*)

GRUB: Never eat what? Does everything relate back to cereal?!

FOUL: No it has nothing to do with that! Never eat soggy wheat! I remember now! This is a—a—a compass! And each symbol represents a direction. The phrase "never eat soggy wheat" was supposed to help us remember the order of the directions. I can't seem to recall their actual names, but I do remember that the arrow always points towards whatever “never” stands for: this one. (*Points towards the compass*)

GRUB: So then how does that help us find this place? (*Pointing at the map*)

FOUL: It's simple! Look, the symbols here at the bottom of the map, never eat soggy wheat, this way must be the Never direction. So if we take this and we walk towards the arrow when it points to Never, sooner or later, we'll get there!

GRUB: Yes! You've done it! (*Hugs FOUL*) This is the answer we've needed all along!

FOUL: Well, what are we waiting for. Let's go! Grab whatever you want to take with us and let's head towards Never! (*Begins to move towards the door*)

GRUB: Wait, we can't just up and leave.

FOUL: Why not?

GRUB: We need to tell—the others. I started this wanting to saving our kind, and if I don't share this information, I'm not helping anyone but us.

FOUL: Good point. Besides, it'll be safer to travel with a big group anyway. Okay, go round up everyone so we can tell them what we're doing and I'll gather supplies for the trip. (*GRUB hesitates to leave*) What's wrong?

GRUB: I don't think they'll listen to me.

FOUL: Of course they will! Why wouldn't they listen to you?

GRUB: Because, everyone else in camp just thinks I'm like this pathetic worm. Most of them have no idea who you really are, and the ones that do...well let's just say that we're not on great terms right now. It would be difficult to get them to even listen to me, let alone trust my opinion.

FOUL: But it's not just you, the three of us have your back with this. Right guys? (*To SQUISH and FLAY who are in a ridiculous and compromising position*) Okay, I see your point. We need someone that everyone respects to back us up on this.

GRUB: Ooze! Ooze knows better than anyone that being in the cold will work! If s/he backs me up, maybe we actually stand a chance at convincing everyone.

FOUL: Good call. Okay new plan, you go grab Ooze, I'll take Squish and Flay to gather supplies for the journey. Then we'll meet at base camp for the big announcement.

GRUB: (*After a big breath*) Okay. Let's do it.

Blackout. "Can't Play Dead" begins at 0:42. Note, at 1:12 we will have to censor the song if we use this section.

Scene Thirteen

Lights up on Ooze's trailer stage right. GRUB rushes into the trailer.

GRUB: Ooze! I'm back! (*Opens up the fridge*)

OOZE: Oh look who it is! Did you find the giant mythical fridge that you and your buddy were blabbing on about?

GRUB: In a way, yeah!

OOZE: Then what are you still doing here?

GRUB: Well, you see, I'm not sure that everyone will listen to me, but I do know someone they will listen to— *(Note: feel free to allow the actor playing OOZE to mention other people that "everyone trusts" for this bit)*

OOZE: Bill Nye.

GRUB: Who?

OOZE: The Science Guy

GRUB: What?

OOZE: Jesus Christ.

GRUB: Jesus Who?

OOZE: Tom Hanks.

GRUB: No, I don't know who those people are. Anyway—it doesn't matter. I meant you. Everyone respects you. They'll listen to what you have to say.

OOZE: *(Sincerely flattered)* Oh—well I guess since you put it that way, I am kind of like a zombie Tom Hanks in my own right.

GRUB: Sure, whatever you say. The point is, You can explain to everyone from first hand experience how the cold has stopped you from decaying. Then I can tell them how, with Foul's help, we've discovered a place that is cold like a giant fridge!

OOZE: I'll believe it when I see it, but hey, if it'll get me out of this ice box then I'll say whatever you want. Wait—you are going to take me with you on this little adventure, right?

GRUB: Of course. (*Teasingly*) Squish and Flay will need someone to take care of during the journey.

Just then BONECRUSHER and ROT enter the trailer with some souvenirs from their hunt.

BONECRUSHER: Well, well, well, what are you up to now little worm?

GRUB: Nothing I—I mean... (*Looks at ROT and takes a big breath*) Yes, Bonecrusher, as a matter of fact, I am up to something.

BONECRUSHER: Oh really? (*Stepping forward menacingly*)

GRUB: Yes, you see, thanks to all the work I did with the human in my trailer, I've discovered how to save us all. And even though you tried to interfere, I've decided to share my discovery with everyone, even you.

BONECRUSHER: And what exactly is this discovery?

GRUB: Well...we all need to be able to go someplace that is cold, like this fridge, and now I know how to get there.

BONECRUSHER: Oh really, you expect our entire clan to uproot and follow you blindly just based on your word?

GRUB: No, I don't. But I've got Ooze on my side. S/he's the only one who actually knows what it's like so far to lose limbs, and s/he'll tell anyone who asks that the cold will stop the decaying process in its tracks!

OOZE: S/he's right, Bonecrusher. I appreciate everything you and Loam have done to try and put me back together, but it may be time to let someone else take the lead.

BONECRUSHER: Hmm, (*Leans into the fridge during the next line and picks up OOZE's head. Holds it facing away from the audience on the next line*) I'm sorry Ooze. I didn't quite understand what you just said. What was that about letting someone else take the lead?

OOZE: (*Trying desperately to backtrack*) I mean—I didn't mean someone else as in someone other than you, I just meant someone else like in a metaphorical sense, kind of like the royal we, have you ever heard of the royal we, I never quite understood the saying myself, but it sounds funny when you say that phrase out of context, royal we, haha, isn't it funny, Bonecrusher, kind

of like a royal—*(With one hand BONECRUSHER crushes OOZE's skull in front of the audience. There is a moment of silence as GRUB and ROT watch in horror)*

GRUB: *(Stunned and nearing tears)* You're a monster.

BONECRUSHER: *(Laughing)* Wake up, Worm! We're all monsters! Your problem is that you can't seem to remember that fact. You honestly thought that you, a pathetic, human-loving weakling, could lead the clan? *(Grabbing GRUB by the throat)* You see, you forgot about one important problem with your little plan: me. *(Throws GRUB out of the trailer. The next section of the monologue is punctuated by BONECRUSHER continuously beating up GRUB. Each sentence is followed by an attack. While this is happening, ROT initially looks away, then becomes upset and tries to get up the nerve to intervene.)* Did you really expect me to just stand aside and let you lead everyone towards potential destruction? *(Hit)* You couldn't protect that human, how do you expect to protect the whole clan? *(Hit)* I warned you once before, but this is the final straw! *(Hit)* No one respects you, not even the only friend you once had. *(Hit)* Now s/he's with me. *(Hit)* How does that make you feel, you sniveling PIECE OF WASTE!?! *(Hit; GRUB is now completely limp.)* You should have listened to me the first time you stepped out of line, but some worms just deserve to be crushed. *(BONECRUSHER is about to deliver the killing blow when ROT pulls out the gun s/he found at the human's camp and shoots BONECRUSHER in the head. S/he falls to the ground, immediately dead. ROT rushes to GRUB and holds him/her. Blackout.)*

Scene Fourteen

Lights up on the trailer park picnic area (from Scene 2). All the zombies except ROT and GRUB are milling around waiting for something to happen.

KNAWS: Where are they? I'm getting hungry.

SNAPPY: Knaws, you literally just ate.

FOUL: Just be patient, everybody, they should be here any minute. I promise it will be worth the wait.

DRIP: How could anything that grubby worm has to say be worth waiting to hear?

FOUL: You'll just have to trust me. You're going to want to hear this. *(ROT and GRUB enter from upstage left. ROT is helping GRUB walk)* Oh here they come! Wait—Grub! Are you okay, what happened?! Let me help you.

GRUB: It's alright, Foul. Rot's got me.

FOUL: Oh—okay...Gather round everyone! *(To GRUB)* Where is Ooze?

GRUB: *(Mournfully)* Ooze is dead. *(A hush falls over the crowd. It is broken by SQUISH)*

SQUISH: *(Timidly)* What did you say about Ooze?

GRUB: *(With a meaningful look to ROT, who gives a supportive nod, GRUB makes his/her way on top of the picnic table. ROT helps support him/her)* Everyone, I—We have some very tragic news. Ooze is dead. *(There is a big reaction from the crowd)*

LOAM: But that can't be. S/he should have been fine in the fridge. I thought I had more time—

GRUB: You're right, s/he was doing fine in the fridge, but the truth is... that s/he was murdered. *(Another big reaction from the crowd)*

DRIP: Murdered!? That's insane! Zombies don't kill other zombies, that's what humans do! Where's Bonecrusher, s/he'll do something about this!

GRUB: Well, you see, that's the thing. Bonecrusher murdered Ooze. *(Reaction from the crowd)*

DRIP: No! S/he wouldn't do something like that! S/he's lying! Why should we believe you?! Where is Bonecrusher anyway? Let's hear what s/he has to say.

GRUB: *(Delicately)* S/he's dead too...*(An eruption from the crowd)*

DRIP: WHAT?! Murderer! I bet you killed them both!

ROT: No! Shut up all of you and just listen! Bonecrusher was a monster! S/he killed Ooze, and was about to kill Grub just to hide the truth, but I couldn't let that happen, so...I killed Bonecrusher. *(Reaction from the crowd)* I did it to protect my best friend. You can do whatever you want to me, but don't blame Grub. So here I am! Kill me, punish me, banish me, but when you're done, please just listen to Grub. *(There's a silence and a stillness)*

DRIP: Well what are you all waiting for? You heard him/her! S/he killed Bonecrusher! Get him/her! *(No one moves. Then there is some chatter amongst the group under the next few lines)*

SNAPPY: I don't know, if Bonecrusher killed Ooze it sounds like s/he deserved what s/he got.

KAWS: Seems like s/he was out of control. Rot did us a favor.

FOUL: Bonecrusher always seemed like a jerk to me.

DRIP: Are you kidding me?!!

LOAM: I believe it would be wise to listen to what Grub has to say. *(They all quiet down and turn their attention to GRUB. DRIP lets out a sound of frustration, storms away from the group, and stands in the corner sulking)*

ROT: Go ahead Grub.

GRUB: Thanks. *(Taking a big breath)* Back when our dearly departed Ooze first started losing limbs, I found Foul. Of course, at the time, s/he was a human. *(Gasp from the crowd)* I thought that if I could learn to talk to her/him, maybe s/he would teach me something that could save us. It was a difficult and tedious process, but Rot helped me the whole way, and I slowly made progress. Through our work, I learned that there is a place far away from here that is cold, like a fridge. Now I know what you're thinking, why does this matter? At first, I didn't realize it was important either, but then our dear friend Ooze helped me see that the cold keeps us from falling apart, so if we can find the place that Foul told me about, we won't have to worry about decaying anymore!

KNAWS: But how do we get there?

FOUL: With this! *(Holds up the compass)* This is how humans figured out which direction they were going. With the help of this device, I believe we can find our way to the cold!

Hubbub erupts in the group. SNAPPY raises his/her hand.

GRUB: Yes?

SNAPPY: What about everything Loam has done with transplanting? Are you saying we just give up?

GRUB: Well...No...I mean kind of...If we make it to the cold, we shouldn't need to replace our limbs anymore.

DRIP: “**If** we make it.” Do you even have any idea how far away this place is? How do you know we can get there?

GRUB: Well...I don't really...but it's worth a try.

KNAWS: And what about food? How do we know if there will be humans there, or any meat for that matter? We could starve on the way!

GRUB: I—don't know...

DRIP: It seems like there is a lot of stuff you don't know!

GRUB: Well yeah, but that's the problem isn't it?! We don't know what we don't know. (*There's a rumble of confusion*)

KNAWS: What?

GRUB: We don't know what we—it doesn't matter. The point is, I know this is our home and it feels safe, but if we stay here we're really just waiting to die. This is the best shot we have, so I think we should take it.

SQUISH: I don't want to wait here to die.

FLAY: That sounds scary!

FOUL: It is scary, which is why this is our best hope.

KNAWS: I don't know. I think leaving sounds much scarier.

GRUB: Look, this whole situation is scary. Change is always scary, but look at us. Change made us who we are! You were all humans once, and changing is what brought us all together. Don't forget that. Sometimes change is the best hope for the future. Now, I can't force anyone to leave, but I think it's what's best for all of us, so who's coming with me?

After some hesitation, about half the group raises their hands including SQUISH, FLAY, and FOUL.

DRIP: And how many of you want to stay? (*The other half of the group raises their hands. This includes DRIP and LOAM. Notably, ROT doesn't raise his/her hand with either group*)

GRUB: Loam? I thought out of everyone you would see why we need to do this.

LOAM: Grub, you make a very compelling argument; however, I feel I am just not ready to abandon my studies quite yet. While I haven't perfected the art of transplantation, I have made significant progress, and I do believe it may, in fact, be possible. It would be a shame for me to leave a viable option when I know I have the necessary supplies and subjects at my disposal right here. However, I do not wish to discourage you or anyone else from leaving. I believe there once was an old saying, "there is more than one way to skin a cat."

DRIP: What the hell is a cat?!

LOAM: That is not relevant. The saying means that there are many successful ways to achieve the same desired outcome. It very well may be that both our methods are effective in their own right. There is nothing wrong with a little experimentation.

GRUB: (*Slightly disappointed*) I see. I wish we could all stay together, but I understand what you mean, Loam.

ROT: (*Hesitantly*) Grub, this is a lot for everyone to think about. Both you and Loam make good points. I think maybe we should all take some time to decide what we want to do. Also, you need to rest before you go on any kind of journey.

GRUB: Good point. Okay, that settles it. Take tonight to think it over and then we'll leave tomorrow with whoever decides to join us.

Blackout. "Burn Bright" plays through the blackout.

Scene Fifteen

Lights up on the two lawn chairs outside of the trailer from Scene 1. GRUB is packing a bag. FOUL, SQUISH, and FLAY enter from stage left. FLAY and SQUISH are both carrying ridiculously large bags.

FOUL: You ready to go, Grub?

GRUB: Almost, just have a few more things to tidy up here. You guys sure look...prepared.

SQUISH: Yes! We are bringing Flay Jr.

FLAY: And Squish Jr.

SQUISH: And Flay Jr Jr.

FLAY: And Squish Jr. Jr.

SQUISH: And Flay Jr Jr Jr—

FOUL: Wait, are those bags just full of toys?

FLAY/SQUISH: *(Both look at each other then back at FOUL)* No...

FOUL: *(Exasperated)* Guys, you can't just bring toys. We need to be able to carry supplies too.

FLAY/SQUISH: But, but/we can't just leave them! They'll be lonely here! *(They both start to get weepy)*

FOUL: Come on you two, we're about to go on a big adventure. Don't you want to go on an adventure?

FLAY/SQUISH: Yes...

FOUL: Well, adventures don't come easy. We'll all have to make sacrifices along the way. Do you think you can do that? *(FLAY/SQUISH look at each other as if to confer, then they look at FOUL and nod solemnly)* Thank you. Now, I think it would be okay to choose one very special toy to take along.

FLAY: Well I think you should choose, Squish.

SQUISH: No, you should choose.

FLAY: No you should choose—

FOUL: Or maybe you can each take one. *(SQUISH and FLAY celebrate and begin to exit, discussing which toys to take. FOUL indicates SQUISH and FLAY)* I'll go sort that out. Meet us at base camp when you're ready, okay?

GRUB: Sounds good. I'll be there soon.

FOUL, SQUISH, and FLAY exit stage right. GRUB folds up one of the lawn chairs then takes a second to stare wistfully at the other. After a moment, ROT enters hesitantly from stage left.

GRUB: There you are! I was starting to worry you weren't coming.

ROT: *(Evasively)* Yeah, haha. How are you feeling today?

GRUB: Good! Thankfully, I don't think Bonecrusher did any real damage. I feel like I could walk all the way to the cold in one day!

ROT: Well, I think it may take a little longer than that, but who knows, maybe you're right. *(Looking at the chairs)* Man, there's lots of memories here in these two chairs, huh?

GRUB: Well, if I'm not mistaken, I was normally the one with the memories, aside from the occasional cereal brand.

ROT: *(Chuckling)* No, I meant of you and me. Not all our important memories come from before.

GRUB: *(Stopping what s/he's doing)* Yeah. My most important memories are all with you.

ROT: *(Tearing up and looking away)* Grub, there's something I need to tell you.

GRUB: I know. You don't need to say you're sorry. We're both sorry, we both messed up in our own way. I know you were just trying to protect me, and you were right, I was being selfish, but none of that matters anymore. The important thing is that we're friends again.

ROT: No, it's not that. I mean—I am sorry, and I know you are too, but it's just that...

GRUB: What?

ROT: I can't come with you.

GRUB: What?

ROT: I can't come with you to the cold. I need to stay here.

GRUB: No, you have to—I need you—

ROT: You don't need me anymore, Grub.

GRUB: I do need you! If this is about Foul, s/he could never replace you! S/he's nice and all, but you're my best friend. You will **always** be my best friend!

ROT: No, I know—what I'm trying to say is you don't need me to be able to do this. You don't need Foul, you don't need Flay or Squish, but they need you. This is important, and you can do this with or without me.

GRUB: But, I don't understand. Why can't you come with us?

ROT: My place is here, and even though Bonecrusher was a monster, I still believe in what s/he and Loam were trying to do. I can't leave Drip in charge of everyone else who feels the same. They need me here.

GRUB: What about Loam? S/he'll take good care of them all.

ROT: Loam's not a leader. S/he's brilliant, but s/he doesn't deal well with others. (*Realizing this for the first time*) Somehow, I think I'm the only one who can keep this dysfunctional family together.

GRUB: But Rot, I'm scared to do this without you—

ROT: I'm scared too, but we have to both be strong.

GRUB: But I'm not strong—

ROT: Grub you're the strongest person I've ever met. You've always known exactly who you are, and you never let me or anyone else change you. I always admired that, and that's why I know I have to stay here. This is who I am.

GRUB: (*They embrace*) But I don't know if I can be me without you.

ROT: Of course you can. Even if we're not together, we'll always have our memories, and I'll always love you.

GRUB: I'll always love you too.

ROT: *(Pulling out of the embrace)* Besides, I have something to help you remember me. *(S/He walks behind the trailer and returns with the guitar)*

GRUB: Oh my god. It's a—a—*(remembering)* a guitar. From my memory.

ROT: I found it for you. I know it's a bit large to carry on your journey, but I figured you could make Squish or Flay do the heavy lifting.

GRUB: *(Sitting down)* It's just like I remember! You hold it like this, you put your fingers here. And—*(S/he slowly begins to play, it's a melancholy but beautiful song. ROT sits next to GRUB as s/he plays. The lights dim until there's just one spotlight focused on the two of them)* Thank you, Rot.

ROT: Sure thing, Grubby.

Curtain