

The Wheel

Book, Music, and Lyrics by

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## The Wheel

### Character Breakdown

STEVEN - The head engineer at Binning's Inclined Planes. His goal is to be a successful inventor.

RUDNICK – An evil, jolly man who owns Inclined Planes Inc., the largest inclined plane manufacturer in the world. His goal his global domination.

GERTIE - The tough but nurturing owner of Binning's Inclined Planes. She's been running the business alone since her husband, Paul, died a couple of years ago.

JOHNNY – An evil, teenaged go-getter who idolizes Rudnick.

DOTTIE – A brassy, bawdy secretary at Binning's Inclined Planes.

PEGGY – A quiet, shy secretary at Binning's who has a crush on Steven.

MARVIN – A geeky engineer at Binning's who has a crush on Peggy.

OG – A security guard for Inclined Planes Inc.

UGH – A security guard for Inclined Planes Inc.

FRANCIS – A big, dumb lug of a security guard for Inclined Planes Inc.

CHORUS – and various other small parts.

Two Acts, 12 scenes

Approximate running time: 105 minutes

The Wheel can easily be performed with as few as 8 actors if DOTTIE and GERTIE also take the roles of OG and UGH, and actors play chorus members and other small parts as needed.

Act I  
Scene 1  
Approximately 40,000 B.C.

(As the curtain opens, a group of men in classic caveman garb do a ceremonial dance on the stage and chant. When the music changes, lights come up on an office. The office design is circa 1950, but with appropriate stone décor. STEVE, an inventor in his late 40s/early 50s, enters the office. He briefly examines some blueprints and a model of an inclined plane on his desk. Shortly after, GERTIE, an older woman and STEVE'S boss, enters.)

GERTIE

Hey Steve, could you go outside and tell the guys to come back in here? I've got to talk with them.

STEVE

Yeah, I'll be right out. I'm just having trouble with the final touches on these plans.

GERTIE

I'm sure they're fine.

STEVE

Fine never got anybody anywhere.

GERTIE

No, but it's kept them where they are. See you in a few minutes.

STEVE

Yeah . . .

(He continues to look at the plans, and turns away disappointed.)

Cue Track –  
40,000 B.C.

**WHY IS IT THAT I WAS BORN  
ON THIS MODERN AGE'S MORN  
WHEN AMENITIES HAVE MADE LIFE A BREEZE,  
BUT ALL THE GOOD IDEAS ARE GONE**

**WHEN NOT ALL THAT LONG AGO  
THERE WAS STILL SO MUCH TO KNOW  
AND INVENTORS THRIVED IN SOCIETY  
BUT I'M STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.**

(STEVE exits his office and wanders into the main office of Binning's Inclined Planes, again circa 1950 with stone décor. PEGGY and DOTTIE, two of the office's secretaries, sit at their desks. PEGGY is mousy and in her early-to-mid 20s, and DOTTIE is in her late 30s to late 40s.

DOTTIE

Going to get the boys?

STEVE

That's the plan.

DOTTIE

Tell 'em hi from me.

STEVE

Always do.

(He continues on.)

DOTTIE

(To Peggy) Mmm. I will never get tired of looking at that man.

PEGGY

Did you two ever?

DOTTIE

Us? No. I don't think Steve's ever had more than a passing attraction to anything other than next year's model. And I'm not talking women. What about you and what's his name?

PEGGY

I'm sure he's not interested.

DOTTIE

Why don't you ask? What's the worst that could happen?

PEGGY

He could brush me off, completely shattering my confidence and triggering a long, downward spiral into self-loathing and depression, ultimately leaving me alone and unhappy until the day of my uneventful, pitiful death.

DOTTIE

Yeah, that would be pretty bad. (Pause) Or you could trip getting out of your chair and break your ankle or something.

PEGGY

Also true.

STEVE  
THIS PICTURE JUST ISN'T RIGHT  
MY FUTURE HAD BEEN SO BRIGHT  
WITH THE THINGS I DID AS AN EAGER KID  
THERE'S NO TELLING JUST HOW FAR I WOULD GO

BUT SO FAR AS I HAVE ASSESSED  
MY WORK'S BEEN SUB-PAR AT BEST  
FULL OF BAD AD HOC MEDIOCRITY  
'CAUSE I'M STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.

(STEVE exits the main office and walks over to the group of dancing men.)

WHY CAN'T I JUST THINK OF ONE  
GREAT THING THAT HAS NOT BEEN DONE  
I'VE DONE NOTHING HERE, IT SEEMS CLEAR TO ME  
THAT I'M STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.

LOOK AT THE MAN WHOM THEY MOST ADMIRE  
INVENTING'S ONE-HIT WONDER, A LUCKY RAT  
WHO RUBBED TWO STICKS TOGETHER AND, BOOM, HE GOT FIRE  
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK I COULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT

BUT I CAME TO THIS WORLD TOO LATE  
FOR MY WORK TO PROLIFERATE  
JUST SOME TWO-BIT JERK WORKING R AND D  
I'M STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C

STEVE  
(Spoken) Hey guys, Gertie wants us back in the office.

(MARVIN, a rather nerdy man in his 20s, walks over to STEVE as the rest of the group starts to head inside.)

MARVIN  
Did you see that, Steve? It's going to be a great Fire Day  
celebration this year. You sure you don't want to be in the  
ceremony?

STEVE  
No thanks, Marvin, I think I'll pass.

MARVIN  
Your loss.

STEVE  
Just don't want to upstage you, Marv.

(GERTIE stands in the main office.)

GERTIE  
THIS WORLD'S SUCH A CORPORATE PLACE  
I MISS THE FAMILIAR FACE  
OF THE MOM OR POP IN THE CORNER SHOP  
WHEN A SMILE GREETED PATRONS HELLO

PEGGY AND DOTTIE  
WHERE HAVE ALL THE GOOD GUYS BEEN  
WHY COULDN'T WE LIVE BACK THEN  
WHEN A MAN WAS A MAN, AND HE SHOWED CHIVALRY  
BUT NOW WE'RE STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.

(The MEN from outside enter, along with other EMPLOYEES.)

CHORUS  
DRIFTING APART EVER SINCE PANGEA  
OUR ONCE UNITED CULTURE IS FADING FAST  
WHY WOULD IT HURT TO FLIRT WITH THE NOVEL IDEA  
OF A WORLD WHERE NICE GUYS NEVER FINISH LAST

BUT THAT'S JUST A LAVISH DREAM  
WHEN AVARICE REIGNS SUPREME  
WHEN THE KIND HEARTS FALL, AND WE ALL AGREE  
THAT WE'RE STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.

EACH DAY'S FULL OF DREAD AND PAIN  
THIS WORLD'S GOING DOWN THE DRAIN  
'CAUSE THE PLANET AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE  
WE'RE STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.

THERE WAS A TIME OF DECENCY  
BEFORE THIS TORRENT OF GREED BEGAN  
WHERE THE RICH IN SPIRIT FLOURISHED AND HE WHO STILL  
HAD HIS HEALTH WAS A WEALTHY MAN

BUT NOW, NOTHING HONEST PAYS  
WE LONG FOR THE GOOD 'OL DAYS  
WHEN THE LIVING HERE WAS EASY AND FREE

BUT NOW WE'RE STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND  
B.C.  
B.C.  
B.C.  
WE'RE STUCK IN FORTY-THOUSAND B.C.

GERTIE  
Thanks for getting here so quickly, everybody--I know you're all preparing for the big Fire Day celebration. I called this meeting to respond to some of the rumors that have been floating around the office. Now there are some people out there claiming that this company is in trouble . . . that we're losing market share . . . that this company won't be around much longer. And do you know what I have to

GERTIE (CONT.)

say about those rumors? Yeah, I'm sorry, they're true.

(EMPLOYEES grumble.)

I know, I know. We work hard here, we do, but times have changed. You know, I'll put our inclined planes up against any other inclined planes in the world, but a small company like ours simply doesn't have the economies of scale and financial leverage that a company like Inclined Planes Incorporated has. And so--and now this is hush-hush, just between you, me, and the granite--I'll be dissolving the company shortly after the end of this quarter. I'm sorry, but money's pouring out of here faster than wine from a cask at a sorority-house engagement party, and it's putting a dent in my soon-to-be cushy retirement. That's the bottom line, literally and figuratively. Now I'm telling you this because I care about you, and I want to be honest with you, but that doesn't mean I want to see you slacking off in the next couple of weeks. You still work for me for a little while longer; let's go out on a roll. Thanks.

(GERTIE exits.)

MARVIN

(To Steve) What are we going to do?

STEVE

I don't know. I never thought this would happen. I mean, I knew things were bad, but I didn't think Gert would just close up shop like this. This has been her life for thirty years. I know it hasn't been the same for her since Paul died, but still, how do you just give something like that up?

MARVIN

Quickly. Given our finances, I'd do it quickly.

PEGGY

(To Dottie) I was finally starting to feel like I fit in here.

DOTTIE

And I finally got enough dirt on Phyllis to wipe that smug little smirk off her face for a long time. This was going to be a good year.

PEGGY

Well, what are you going to do?

DOTTIE

Oh, I don't know. I've got a little saved up. I'll probably take a few months off, go on a major bender, break a few guys' hearts.

PEGGY

Lucky guys.

DOTTIE

Very.

PEGGY

There are times I wish I could be more like you.

DOTTIE

Now why in the world would you want that?

PEGGY

I don't know. You just. . .you're so open to life. You're not scared of what's going to happen next, you're not worried about finding the right guy. I'm stuck here fawning over someone I barely know, and I can't even get up the nerve to talk with him.

DOTTIE

There's nothing wrong with that. Look, fact is, I want to find the right guy, but I know what I want, I know what's out there, and I know he's a rare breed. So, I spend my time having fun with all the wrong guys. No harm, no foul.

PEGGY

Why such high standards?

DOTTIE

It's not that.

PEGGY

I can help you, Dot. I know a lot of guys your age. . .

DOTTIE

Oookay! You can stop right there, Missy. First of all, I'm not quite sure what the whole "guys my age" thing means, and second of all, you can't help with this.



PEGGY

I understand, Dot. You're all tough on the outside, but I know the pain you must be going through. Maybe it's about time you let somebody in here (touching Dottie's chest).

DOTTIE

Do that again, hon, and I guarantee you I won't be the one going through pain.

PEGGY

Why won't you let me help you?

DOTTIE

Because it would be a tremendous waste of your time. Look, I have a thing. . .for a certain kind of guy. . .a certain kind of. . . large. . .virile. . .secluded. . .guy.

PEGGY

(Under her breath) You've got a Neanderthal fetish?

DOTTIE

My mom was always picking up these tabloids in the stores, and I remember seeing these pictures when I was growing up and thinking, "Yes. Yes, this would be good".

PEGGY

I guess that explains why you haven't found him yet.

DOTTIE

Like I said, he's going to be extremely hard to find.

PEGGY

Impossible.

DOTTIE

Extreereemely hard.

PEGGY

(Sighs) Dottie, you know they're extinct, right?

DOTTIE

(Defensively) That's a matter of public debate and a vicious rumor. There's plenty of proof that they exist.

(She hurries to her desk, grabs a magazine, and opens to a page)

PEGGY

The tabloid pictures?

DOTTIE

It's not just tabloids anymore. This is semi-legitimate journalism here. (Quoting magazine) "Neanderthal sighting reported in Sahara Forest--Stonequarry University to study surrounding area for signs of hovel." And that was just last week. Here, take a look at the picture.

PEGGY

That's a drawing.

DOTTIE

It's a composite of witness accounts of actual sightings.

PEGGY

It looks like an eight-year-old drew it.

DOTTIE

**HAVE YOU SEEN THEM AROUND?  
THERE ARE STILL A FEW OF 'EM  
THOUGH THEY'RE NEARLY EXTINCT,  
THEIR PHYSIQUE IS DISTINCT  
AND I'M HOPING TO SPOT ONE SOON**

**WAITING THERE TO BE FOUND  
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT I'D LOVE 'EM  
ALWAYS THERE TO TAKE CHARGE  
AND A BODY SO LARGE  
HEAVEN'S SAKE, IT WOULD MAKE ME SWOON  
I'M NOT SAYIN' IT'S GONNA HAPPEN  
BUT IF I COULD, THEN I THINK THAT I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE IT A TRY  
SO HANDSOME, THEY SAY, BIG AND STRAPPIN'  
SUCH A MUSCULAR FIND, AND SO ONE-OF-A-KIND  
THAT I'VE ALREADY MADE UP A MIND**

DOTTIE

**THAT I WANT A NEANDERTHAL**

**I WANT A NEANDERTHAL**

PEGGY

**YOU WANT A NEANDERTHAL**

DOTTIE

**'CAUSE IT'S REALLY ALRIGHT IF HE'S NOT VERY BRIGHT  
WHEN HE'S SPORTIN' THAT KIND OF BOD**

DOTTIE

**YEAH, I WANT A NEANDERTHAL**

**I WANT A NEANDERTHAL**

PEGGY

**YOU WANT A NEANDERTHAL**

DOTTIE  
I DON'T NEED CLEVER BANTER AS LONG AS I CAN'T PUT MY  
FINGERS AROUND HIS QUAD.

BUT NOW, DON'T GET ME WRONG  
NICER GUYS ARE APPEALING  
ALWAYS THERE TO PROVIDE YOU THEIR  
SENSITIVE SIDE  
AND CONSOLE YOU WHEN YOU'RE UPSET

SO IT'S BURLY AND STRONG  
VERSUS "HOW ARE YOU FEELING"  
AND IN THE VAST MULTITUDE  
OF NICE GUYS I'VE PURSUED  
NOT A ONE'S SATISFIED ME YET

FOR ONCE, I'D LIKE SOMEONE WHO'S HANDY  
A MAN COMF'TERBLE AND COOL  
WHO KNOWS HIS WAY 'ROUND A TOOL

AND A LUSCIOUS PIECE OF EYE CANDY  
SO I CAN'T NOW DENY THAT IT'S HIGH TIME THAT I  
SAY GOODBYE TO THE SENSITIVE GUY

DOTTIE  
'CAUSE I WANT A NEANDERTHAL  
I WANT A NEANDERTHAL

PEGGY  
YOU WANT A NEANDERTHAL

DOTTIE  
WHEN MY WALL PAINT IS CHIPPING AND FAUCET IS DRIPPING  
HE'LL FIX THEM AND MAKE THEM NEW

DOTTIE  
YEAH I WANT A NEANDERTHAL

DOTTIE  
I WANT A NEANDERTHAL

PEGGY  
YOU WANT A NEANDERTHAL

DOTTIE  
FOR THE BACON HE BRINGS, AND FOR ALL OF THINGS  
THAT A MAN WHO'S A MAN SHOULD DO

PEGGY  
OH I DON'T KNOW  
I THINK A SENSITIVE GUY  
HAS ALL THE QUALITIES I DESIRE  
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO MEET A MAN WHO'S PASSIONATE,  
SWEET, AND SMART  
WHO CAN LOOK INTO MY HEART  
AND THERE'D BE NOTHING TO HIDE  
'CAUSE HE'D FEEL SAFE TO CONFIDE IN ME  
AND I THINK HE IS STANDING OVER THERE

PEGGY (CONT.)  
COMPLETELY UNAWARE  
OF HOW I FEEL

DOTTIE  
OH PEGGY, IT MAY BE TRUE THAT THOSE GUYS WORK FOR YOU  
BUT I NEED A MORE POWERFUL STEED

(The other SECRETARIES have gathered around to listen to the conversation.)

DOTTIE  
YEAH I WANT A NEANDERTHAL

PEGGY  
YOU WANT A NEANDERTHAL

SECRETARIES  
SHE WANTS A NEANDERTHAL

DOTTIE  
HAIR SO CURLY AND LONG, HE'S SO BURLY AND STRONG  
HE CAN PICK ME UP O'ER HIS HEAD

DOTTIE  
OH I WANT A NEANDERTHAL

PEGGY  
YOU WANT A NEANDERTHAL

SECRETARIES  
SHE WANTS A

NEANDERTHAL  
WOMEN

DOTTIE AND PEGGY  
ACT NOW WHILE YOU CAN BEFORE EV'RY ONE OF 'EM'S DEAD

DOTTIE  
FOOTSTEPS SHAKING THE GROUND  
AND HE'S BUILT LIKE A STEER  
A SIZE-SEVENTEEN SHOE  
SUCH A BAD LITTLE SEED

PEGGY  
MARVIN, PLEASE TURN AROUND  
HERE I AM OVER HERE  
WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO  
WE BOTH KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

DOTTIE AND PEGGY  
NEANDERTHAL  
SHOULD YOU EVER ENDEAVOR TO SEARCH AND ARE CLEVER  
ENOUGH TO SUCCEED, THEN INDEED, HEED THIS CALL  
THERE'S A WOMAN WHO'D GIVE UP WHATEVER  
TO FOREVER HAVE A NEANDERTHAL.

(STEVE stands with GERTIE on the other side of the room.)

GERTIE

Look, I'm really sorry.

STEVE

No, it's me who should be sorry. I feel like there's more I could have done. I just can't seem to break through lately.

GERTIE

You did your best, Steven, much more than I would expect from anyone else. Your "Implana" design is considered a classic.

STEVE

I never got it right. It can be better.

GERTIE

It'll have to be with someone else then. You have any idea what you might do?

STEVE

Not yet. You?

GERTIE

Oh, I'm done. I've got a nice little nest egg set aside, this money pit notwithstanding. You know, back when Paul bought this place I thought he was nuts. What a heap. But we did it. Thirty years here. You can't fight the times, and they're saying it's time to move on and spend the next thirty years on the beach. Hey, if you're looking for a job, you can always work for Inclined Planes Incorporated.

STEVE

(Incredulous look at first, then a slight chuckle, then into full laughter.) I thought you were serious for a second.

(Both continue laughing hard into Blackout.)

Act I  
Scene 2  
Inclined Planes, Inc.

(A group of MEN sit around a stone table in a boardroom at Inclined Planes Inc. The president of the company, RUDNICK, sits at the head of the table, laughing.)

RUDNICK

Gentlemen, as you just heard from Mr. McGuillicuddy, earnings are up again this quarter. I believe congratulations are in order.

MEN

Congratulations, Mr. Rudnick.

RUDNICK

Thank you. I've also been informed that our chief—and only—competitor, Binning's Inclined Planes, is not much longer for this corporate world. It was a good fight, but only because we won. With them out of the way, we'll be able to capture the remaining five percent of the inclined plane market, finally realizing the vision of our great founder. . .

(The MEN in the room bow their heads as RUDNICK motions to a portrait on the wall.)

. . . Jim Mancratzenfield.

MEN

Hear, hear!

RUDNICK

With a monopoly on the market, we'll be able to price higher, produce cheaper, and expand into new frontiers. The goal, eventual domination of all global markets, is certainly one step closer to realization. Once again, congratulations are in order.

MEN

Congratulations, Mr. Rudnick.

(A buzz on the intercom from GIRL #1, RUDNICK'S secretary. RUDNICK answers.)

RUDNICK

Yes, girl?

GIRL #1

Sir, the winner of the “meet Robert J. Rudnick” contest is here.

RUDNICK

Is that today?

GIRL #1

Yes, sir.

RUDNICK

Well, by all means, send him in.

(GIRL #1 enters escorting JOHNNY, an evil teenaged go-getter)

GIRL #1

(To Rudnick) Here you go, sir, Johnny Brisco, winner of the “meet Robert J. Rudnick” contest.

RUDNICK

Thank you, girl, you can go.

(GIRL #1 exits)

So, Johnny, you’re the lucky kid who gets to meet me.

JOHNNY

Yes sir.

RUDNICK

I understand your essay was far and away the most disturbing of all those received.

JOHNNY

I try my best, sir.

RUDNICK

Well I, too, Johnny, also try my best. And as winner of this contest, you get to spend the day with me . . . see how I work. You’re a lucky boy, Johnny. Congratulations are in order.

MEN

Congratulations, Mr. Rudnick.

RUDNICK

You see, Johnny, that's the problem with yes men, not too bright, and the ones who are . . . too scared to speak up, but that's how we like 'em, right Johnny?

JOHNNY

Right, Mr. Rudnick.

RUDNICK

(To the men) This kid . . . I like this kid already. Don't I, Johnson?

JOHNSON

Yes, Mr. Rudnick.

RUDNICK

Beautiful. Well, men, that's about all from here. One last order of business . . . it, of course, being Tuesday, means that one of you gets fired. This week I'll choose . . . mmm . . . aw hell, Johnny, it's your day, why don't you pick one?

JOHNNY

Mmm . . . him.

RUDNICK

Good choice. You, what's your name?

ROBERT RUDNICK JR.

Uh. . .Robert J. Rudnick Jr.. . .dad.

RUDNICK

I thought you looked familiar. My eyes, my nose, my devilish good looks. But you know one thing we don't have in common son?

ROBERT RUDNICK JR.

What?

RUDNICK

Employment at this company. You're fired.

(ROBERT RUDNICK JR. starts to leave)

Wait, son, come back! You think I'd actually fire you?

(ROBERT RUDNICK JR. smiles in relief)



RUDNICK (CONT.)

Of course I would. I would have thought you'd know your own father a little better. Pack up your things, you're out of here.

(ROBERT RUDNICK JR. exits.)

Johnny, lesson number one, you can't like anybody.

(JOHNNY takes out a pen and small notepad and starts writing)

Even you, Johnny. I say that I like you, but what that really means is that I hate you a little bit less than everybody else. And I hate everybody, Johnny.

JOHNNY

Genius, sir.

RUDNICK

Cue Track – I  
Hate Everybody

WHEN I AM INTRODUCED TO A MAN I'VE NEVER MET  
THERE'S NOT A PRAYER IN THE AIR THAT I'LL LIKE HIM,  
'CAUSE I'VE YET  
TO MEET A MAN WHO DOES NOT BRING ABOUT MY PURE DISDAIN  
AND ALL INTENT TO MAKE THIS GENT SURPASS MY MALCONTENT  
WILL BE IN VAIN  
DON'T EVEN TRY, I KNOW THE OUTCOME'S PREORDAINED  
'CAUSE SLAP ME, AND CALL ME NUTTY,  
BUT I HATE EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD

NO I CAN'T STAND ANY MAN ON THE PLANET WHO'S NOT ME  
AND THAT'S THE THING THAT HAS MADE ME KING OF INDUSTRY  
BECAUSE ALTHOUGH A FOE MAY BE JUST AS SMART AS I,  
HE FOLDS 'CAUSE HE KNOWS THERE'S NO STUNT BELOW MY MORALS,  
NOTHING I WON'T TRY  
AND COWARDS COWER, STRONG MEN BEG AND PLEAD, AND EVEN  
HARD ASSES TURN TO PUTTY  
'CAUSE I HATE EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD

YES ALL YOU LOSERS MAKE ME ILL  
AND THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I'M COMPELLED TO  
LEAVE YOU JERKS FOR GOOD UNTIL, I STOP AND THINK  
AND THEN I'M DRAWN BACK BY THE LURE  
OF MAKING SURE THAT YOUR JOBS STINK

THE REASON I CAN DEBATE AND NEGOTIATE WITH EASE  
IS RIVALS DROP TO MY MISANTHROPIC TENDENCIES  
FOR JUST THE THREAT THAT I'M OUT TO GET THEM IS ENOUGH  
AND I'VE ENJOYED THE MESSY FALL OF ALL WHO'VE HAD THE GALL  
TO CALL MY BLUFF  
THE BUSINESS WORLD IS CUTTHROAT, EV'RY DAY'S A WAR  
AND I MAKE IT EXTRA BLOODY,  
'CAUSE I HATE EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD

RUDNICK (CONT.)

(Spoken) Take this bridge, Johnson!

JOHNSON

(Attempting to make something up on the spot)

**UM, HE IS MY BOSS, AND I LIKE WORKING FOR HIM, CAUSE HE IS GOOD. YEAH.**

RUDNICK

(Sarcastically) Yeah. That was great Johnson. Good job. Got me right here. (disgusted sigh)

**I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN STAND YOURSELVES  
YOU'RE FIRED MCGUILLICUDY**

(Yelled) Why?

MEN

**'CAUSE HE HATES EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD**

RUDNICK

**IT'S TRUE, NO IFS, NO ANDS, OR BUTS,  
IF YOU EXIST, I HATE YOUR GUTS  
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT YOU SAY,  
I'M GONNA LOATHE YOU ANYWAY  
YOUR ARM'S A TWIG, YOUR HEAD'S TOO BIG  
YOUR KID'S A DWEEB, YOUR WIFE'S A PIG  
I HATE THAT GUY, I HATE YOUR TIE  
I WISH YOU'D JUST FALL DOWN AND DIE**

**IN LIFE I'VE FOUND MY PROPER PLACE  
IS HATING ALL THE HUMAN RACE  
YES, I HATE YOU, AND I HATE YOU**

EMPLOYEE

**DO YOU HATE ME?**

RUDNICK

**I HATE YOU, TOO**

**I'D HATE YOU IF YOU SAVED MY LIFE  
I'D HATE YOU IF YOU WERE MY WIFE  
I WOULD NOT LIKE YOU HERE OR THERE  
I WOULD NOT LIKE YOU ANYWHERE**

**I'VE NEVER MET A MAN I DIDN'T SPITE**

MEN

**YES HE'S THE MEANEST BASTARD ALIVE IN THE WORLD TODAY  
UNBRIDLED MASTER OF DASTARDLY DEEDS AND UNFAIR PLAY  
THE THOUGHT OF GETTING ASTRIDE OF HIS GOOD SIDE IS INSANE**

RUDNICK  
BUT EVEN SO, I KNOW THE NUMBER GROWS  
OF THOSE WHO FALSELY ASCERTAIN

RUDNICK  
THAT IF

MEN  
THAT IF THEY KISS HIS ASS THEN HE WILL  
TREAT THEM WELL

RUDNICK  
THEY SHOULD REALIZE THEY DON'T HAVE A CHANCE IN HELL  
'CAUSE I'VE MADE A LIFE-LONG STUDY  
OF MAKING YOUR LIVES CRUDDY  
'CAUSE I HATE EVERYBODY

MEN  
YES HE HATES EVERYBODY

RUDNICK  
YES I HATE EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD

MEN  
YES HE HATES EVERYBODY IN THE  
WORLD, WORLD, WORLD

Act I  
Scene 3  
Binning's Inclined Planes

CHORUS  
FIRE DAY IS ALMOST HERE,  
TIME FOR JOY AND TIME FOR CHEER.  
SUCH A WOND'ROUS TIME OF YEAR,  
IT'S FIRE DAY.

(PEGGY is sitting at her desk as MARVIN walks by)

MARVIN  
Hi Peggy, how's it going?

PEGGY  
(Flustered at seeing MARVIN) Oh, fine. Busy.

MARVIN  
Yeah. Are you coming to the ceremony tomorrow?

PEGGY  
Of course.

MARVIN  
Because the guys and me are doing something for it.

PEGGY

Yeah, I know, you've been practicing very hard.

MARVIN

Yeah, and we just wanted to make sure you were going to be there.

PEGGY

I wouldn't miss it.

MARVIN

Great. Well, I'll talk to you later.

(STEVE walks by on his way to his office.)

Steve are . . .

STEVE

Still not going, Marvin.

MARVIN

Oh, but Steve . . .

(STEVE shuts the door to his office, leaving MARVIN outside. MARVIN sees another employee.)

Gladys, are you going to be at the ceremony?

CHORUS

**FIRE DAY IS HERE AT LAST,  
HURRY 'CAUSE IT'S GOING FAST.  
LAUGH AND SING, AND SOON, IT'S PASSED,  
IT'S FIRE DAY**

DOTTIE

(To loin-cloth-wearing employee) Great job out there, Peter.  
You too, Ricky, looking good.

MARVIN

(Approaching Dottie) Did you like the dance?

DOTTIE

You kidding? Men in loin cloths, what could be better?  
How did you like it?

MARVIN

What do you mean?

DOTTIE

How did you like the show?

MARVIN

I was in it.

DOTTIE

Oh, right, right. Yeah, oh, you were great out there, too, Melvin.

MARVIN

Marvin.

DOTTIE

Right. . .Marvin. Great job out there.

MARVIN

(A little dejected) Thanks. Hey, do you know if Peggy saw the show?

DOTTIE

Yeah, she liked it.

MARVIN

Really, I thought she would. She didn't mention me, by any chance, did she?

(GERTIE approaches DOTTIE and MARVIN)

GERTIE

Hey, Dottie, have you seen Steve around here?

DOTTIE

I think he's in his office, he's been locked in there all day. Inventor envy.

GERTIE

Oh, right, the Fire Day thing. Well, tell him if he doesn't come out soon, I'm going to yank him out. I don't want anybody sulking on the last Fire Day this office is going to see.

DOTTIE

I'll go talk to him.

(She leaves)

GERTIE

(To Marvin) So, are you one of Dottie's friends?

MARVIN

I work here, ma'am.

GERTIE

Oh, right. Chuck, right?

MARVIN

Yeah.

CHORUS

**ALL HAIL FIRE DAY  
TIME FOR THE YOUNG AND OLD TO PLAY.  
SADNESS AND GLOOM HAVE GONE AWAY,  
IT'S FIRE DAY.  
IT'S FIRE DAY.**

DOTTIE

(Knocking on Steve's door) Steve? Hon, there's food out here if you're hungry.

STEVE

Thanks Dot, but I'm just not in the mood.

DOTTIE

(Not believing him) Yeah, sure. Gertie wants you out here. She says to stop sulking.

STEVE

She should try it sometime. It can be quite nice.

(PEGGY comes up to DOTTIE.)

PEGGY

Is he in there?

DOTTIE

Yeah, but he's sulking.

PEGGY

Oh, right. Inventor envy. Gotcha.

STEVE

Fire day. What has fire ever gotten us? So we can cook food, big deal. I could live on nuts and berries. Oh, but Steve,

STEVE (CONT.)

fire's so great, greatest invention of all time. Yeah, smart guy. I wonder what will happen if I rub two sticks together? Oh, I'll become world famous and be the envy of my peers. Dammit.

**WHEN I'M GONE, WHEN I'M THROUGH,  
WILL IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE I'M DOING  
THE THINGS THAT I DO?  
WILL IT ALL BE A WASTE?  
NEVER KNOWN, NEVER MISSED.  
NOT A SINGULAR LASTING IMPRESSION  
TO SHOW I EXIST.  
ANY TRACE SOON ERASED.  
AND I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT'S DRIVING ME—  
MY LIMITED TIME'S RUNNING OUT.**

**WE ARE HERE, THEN WE'RE NOT  
IF WE'RE LUCKY A HANDFUL OF DECADES ARE ALL THAT  
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE CHARGE IF WE WANT TO HAVE  
SOMETHING TO SHOW,  
OR WHO WILL KNOW? WHO WILL KNOW?**

**WHAT'S THE POINT OF IT ALL?  
ALL THESE MINOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS VANISH THE SECOND  
I FALL, AND I FORCE MYSELF UP, BUT I'M STARTING TO SLOW.  
AND WHO WILL KNOW? WHO WILL KNOW?**

**BECAUSE DEATH'S AN INCURABLE MALADY  
A BLACK TIDE THAT WE NEVER CAN STEM.  
BUT IDEAS HAVE UNIQUE IMMORTALITY.  
WE CAN TRY TO CHEAT DYING THROUGH THEM.**

**THEY ARE PURE, THEY LIVE ON.  
TRULY GREAT ONES CAN THRIVE EVEN CENTURIES AFTER  
WE'RE GONE WHEN WE'RE GONE--BUT OUR LEGACIES,  
THEY CAN STILL GROW  
WHEN THEY KNOW, WHEN THEY KNOW.**

(STEVE knocks a paperweight off his desk that starts rolling along the ground.  
An idea hits him.)

**ALL THE NIGHTS, ALL THE YEARS  
WORKING TIRELESSLY, THEN IN ONE BRILLIANT FLASH,  
IT APPEARS THAT MY LIFE MAY NOT BE SUCH A WASTE  
AFTER ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH, I CAN FINALLY TASTE  
IT MAY TAKE ALL I'VE GOT, BUT I'LL NOT BE JUST  
GONE WHEN I GO. SOON THEY'LL KNOW.  
SOON THEY'LL KNOW. SOON THEY'LL KNOW.**

CHORUS

**FIRE DAY IS, SADLY, DONE,  
BUT NO CRYING ANYONE,  
PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR HAVE BEGUN,**

CHORUS

**IT'S FIRE DAY.  
IT'S FIRE DAY.  
IT'S FIRE DAY.  
IT'S FIRE DAY.  
IT'S FIRE DAY.**

STEVE

It's done.

PEGGY

Geez, Steve, did you sleep in there?

STEVE

I'm not sure, the whole night was kind of a blur. You've got to see this.

GERTIE

What is it? Wow, you stink.

STEVE

It's . . . let me show you.

GERTIE

OK.

STEVE

I'll be right out. You get everybody together.

DOTTIE

(To Peggy) Just so you know, this whole thing is usually pretty sad.

PEGGY

How so?

DOTTIE

Well you see, the thing about Steve is . . . well, he's always trying to do something revolutionary. And each year about this time he gets all depressed about being an unknown inventor, and each year he comes up with an idea and convinces himself that it's the next great thing. Usually, it's just some doodad added onto one of our planes.

GERTIE

Last year he made the base thicker and called it a new safety feature.



DOTTIE

Don't get me wrong, some of his ideas are pretty good,

GERTIE

They've kept this company going.

DOTTIE

But, well . . .

GERTIE

It's not like the guy's inventing fire or anything.

(STEVE enters carrying something under a cloth)

STEVE

Is everybody here?

GERTIE

They're all yours.

STEVE

Cue Track –  
The Wheel

**THANK YOU FOR COMING  
I THINK YOU'LL LIKE WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE  
WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SHOW YOU  
COULD AFFECT SOCIETY  
AN INVENTION THAT COULD CHANGE THE WORLD  
THAT COULD SAVE THIS COMPANY**

CHORUS

**ALL YOUR SPEECHES START OUT THIS WAY**

STEVE

**BUT THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THIS ONE'S DIFFERENT**

(STEVE holds up an object and removes the cloth to reveal the blueprints for a wheel.)

CHORUS

**WHAT IS IT**

STEVE

**A SIMPLE LITTLE MACHINE, MUCH LIKE THE INCLINED PLANE**

CHORUS

**WHAT'S ITS NAME**

STEVE

**I CALL IT  
THE WORKER'S HELPER FOR ENGAGING EASY LOCOMOTION**

**CHORUS**  
**THE WORKER'S HELPER FOR ENGAGING EASY LOCOMOTION**

**STEVE**  
**IN SHORT, THE W. H. E. E. L. WHEEL**

(STEVE removes a cloth from an object to reveal a simple cart resembling a wheelbarrow.)

**STEVE**  
(Spoken) See those boulders over there? Eight of them. A hundred pounds each. Load 'em on.

(A couple of EMPLOYEES lift the boulders onto the cart.)

Now watch.

(STEVE starts pushing the cart.)

**CHORUS**  
**MRS. BINNING, THE WHEEL IS SPINNING**  
**AND IT'S MOVING THE LOAD ALONG**  
**STILL AVAILING, IT ISN'T FAILING**  
**WEIGHTED DOWN, BUT IT'S GOING STRONG**

**EVER CHURNING, THE WHEEL IS TURNING**  
**HALFWAY THERE, BUT A WAYS TO GO**  
**FINISH IT, COME ON WHEEL, DON'T QUIT NOW**  
**FIND THE POWER TO MAKE IT SO**

**HALLELUIA, IT'S COMIN' TO 'YA**  
**COME ON WHEEL, JUST A LITTLE MORE**  
**AND IT'S CLEAR NOW, THE WHEEL IS HERE NOW**  
**IT'S THE MIRACLE WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR**

**GERTIE**  
**WELL, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MY EYES**  
**A GUY LIKE YOU WITH A LOAD THAT SIZE**  
**THIS LITTLE WHEEL'S AN AMAZING THING**  
**JUST LOOK AT IT**

**CHORUS**  
**LOOK AT IT**

**GERTIE**  
**IT'S REVOLVIN'**  
**WHOA, IT REVOLVIN'**  
**EVER CHURNING**  
**WHOA, EVER CHURNING**

**STILL AVAILING**  
**WHOA, NEVER FAILING**

**CHORUS**  
**IT'S REVOLVING, THE WHEEL'S REVOLVING**  
**AND IT'S SOLVING OUR WORKING WOES**  
**EVER CHURNING, THE WHEEL KEEPS TURNING**  
**NO ONE KNOWS JUST HOW LONG IT GOES**

**STILL AVAILING, IT ISN'T FAILING**  
**YEAH IT WORKS, BUT NO ONE KNOWS HOW**

GERTIE (CONT.)  
HALLELUIAH  
WHOA, HALLELUIAH

CHORUS (CONT.)  
HALLELUIAH, IT'S COMIN' TO 'YA  
MASS PRODUCTION IS STARTING NOW

GERTIE  
REARRANGE OUR PRODUCTION LINES TO TAKE ON THIS JOB  
AND WE'LL NEED TO REORDER SOME SUPPLIES  
GO ADDRESS TO THE PRESS A MESSAGE  
MEANT TO ENTAIL  
THAT WE'LL BE UNVEILING A BIG SURPRISE

GERTIE  
IT'S AMAZING  
WHOA, IT'S AMAZING  
THANK YOU STEVEN  
WHOA, THANK YOU STEVEN

CHORUS  
IT'S AMAZING, THE WHEEL'S AMAZING  
AND IT'S BLAZING A NEW FRONTIER  
THANK YOU STEVEN, FOR YOUR CONCEIVIN'  
OF THIS GREAT NEW INVENTION HERE

ALL  
THIS SIMPLE THING HAS A CHANCE TO BE  
THE GREATEST FIND IN PREHISTORY  
AND WE'RE THE ONES THAT WILL MAKE THIS VISION REAL  
SO REAL, SURREAL

THEY'LL BE REELIN' WHEN WE REVEAL THE WHEEL

Act I  
Scene 4  
Inclined Planes Incorporated

(RUDNICK sits in a chair while a SCULPTOR carves his face into stone. The carved head looks like an Easter Island head. JOHNNY looks on.)

RUDNICK  
No, no, no. That doesn't look like me at all. You know, this is about the four-hundredth time that I've asked you for this (pointing to his own face), and you've given me this. (pointing to sculpture). Does this (face) look like this? (sculpture) Has this ever looked like this? Johnny.

JOHNNY  
(To sculptor) You're fired.

(RUDNICK makes motion indicating "more")

You no-talent hack.

RUDNICK

Well done, Johnny. Personally, I'd have gone with "slack-jawed trash monger", but yours cut nicely to the chase.  
Johnson!

(JOHNSON enters.)

JOHNSON

Yes, sir?

RUDNICK

Get this thing out of here.

JOHNSON

We're running out of room in the warehouse, sir.

RUDNICK

Well just dump the lot of 'em on one of those islands we acquired in the Chesapeake takeover. I need them out of here now.

JOHNSON

Yes, sir.

RUDNICK

Oh, and Johnson.

JOHNSON

Fired, sir?

RUDNICK

No, that's not what I was going to say. But good idea. Unfortunately, it's the last one you'll have for this company. Johnny?

JOHNNY

It's your turn, sir.

RUDNICK

Oh, right. Johnson, you're fired.

(JOHNSON leaves)

Now, where were we?

JOHNNY

Lesson fifty-three, sir.

RUDNICK

Right. Lesson fifty-three is . . . a bird in the hand is worth somewhere between one-and-a-half to three pigs in the Outer Peondack Finger Islands, depending on the going exchange rate at the time.

JOHNNY

Um, I thought that was lesson twenty-four, sir. And at the time, you told me that the going exchange rate was somewhere between two and five fatted calves, which frankly sounds like a much better deal.

RUDNICK

Hyperinflation. . .it's tearing the Peondackian economy apart as we speak! (Beat) Aw, I'm just messin' with you, Johnny. I've been making this whole thing up as I went along. Goes to show that you can't trust anybody. There's a lesson in that, I guarantee you.

JOHNNY

Sir, if you don't mind my asking, who's that on the wall?

RUDNICK

That, Johnny, is one of the few geniuses of our time--Jim Mancratzenfield, now that's Mr. Mancratzenfield to you. He founded this company through his own evil blood, evil sweat, and evil tears. It was his dream to one day corner the market on inclined planes. It was a small dream, perhaps, but certainly an admirable one. And we're almost there, Johnny. He would be proud.

JOHNNY

Did you trust him, sir?

RUDNICK

Not as far as I could throw him, Johnny, and Jim was a big man.

(GIRL #2 enters)

GIRL #2

Sir, one of the men just got this over the wire.

RUDNICK

Thanks, girl.

(GIRL #2 exits. RUDNICK opens the letter.)

RUDNICK (CONT.)

Oh, this can't be good.

JOHNNY

What's the problem, sir?

RUDNICK

Our competition just issued a press release announcing, quote, "The future of simple machines". They're exiting the inclined plane business. (Quoting) "This revolutionary new invention will be unveiled at a press conference at the Old Rock Hotel this afternoon at 2 PM. Tell me, Johnny, are you averse to stealing?"

JOHNNY

Not any more averse than I am to, say, killing puppies.

RUDNICK

You go through a lot of puppies Johnny?

JOHNNY

As many as possible, sir.

RUDNICK

Good to hear, Johnny, good to hear.

Act I

Scene 5

Binning's Inclined Planes

GERTIE

(To Steve) Everything set?

STEVE

Yeah, we're all loaded up. We're leaving in ten minutes.

GERTIE

Alright. (Pause) Hey, this is going to be big, isn't it?

(STEVE nods)

Let's go get 'em.

(GERTIE and STEVE exit. PEGGY and DOTTIE sit at their desks as MARVIN works at another desk.)

DOTTIE

There he is. Say something.

PEGGY

No, he's busy.

DOTTIE

He was asking about you, you know. I think he likes you.

PEGGY

(Sarcastically) Right.

DOTTIE

I'm not kidding. You know, we're out of here in a couple of weeks. If you want to get to know him, you're running out of time. I'm going outside. I'll meet you out there.

PEGGY

OK, I'll be out in a second. (To herself). OK, Pegs, just talk to him. Say hi. He'll say hi. Then you'll talk for a little while, and you can tell him how you feel. Then you'll fall and break your ankle or something. Simple.

(Music starts. PEGGY slowly walks toward MARVIN, and then chickens out and runs back to her desk. She tries again, this time getting closer. Once again, she chickens out. As she reaches her desk the second time, the lights change.)

**HEY THERE, MAN, I WAS WONDERIN'  
HAVE YOU BEEN THINKIN' OF ME  
I KNOW I'VE BEEN THINKIN' OF YOU  
EV'RY SECOND MY MIND CAN SEE FIT TO PRY FREE  
WELL I'M HERE FOR THE TAKING  
BUT TAKING ME'S ALL UP TO YOU  
BUT I'M MAKIN' IT EASY, NO WORRIES, NO GAMES, NO REJECTION  
ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO IS JUST**

**CLUB ME NOW,  
YEAH JUST CLUB ME NOW,  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW, 'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE**

**THOUGH YOU MAY THINK ME FORWARD,  
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING YET  
BUT JUST GRAB THAT CLUB AND I PROMISE  
YOU'LL SEE JUST HOW FORWARD MY FORWARD CAN GET  
HAVE I GOT YOUR ATTENTION  
THE TENSION BETWEEN US IS THICK**

PEGGY (CONT.)

BUT THIS PALPABLE AIR OF UNEASE  
CAN BE GONE IN A BREEZE  
ALL YOU NEED IS THAT STICK SO JUST

CLUB ME NOW  
YEAH JUST CLUB ME NOW  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW, 'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

THERE'S NO NEED TO IMPRESS,  
I ALREADY KNOW WHO YOU ARE  
THERE'S NO NEED TO CARESS MY EGO  
WITH SOME LINE MEANT TO GO TO MY HEAD,  
LIKE I SAID, I ALREADY NOTICED YOU  
THERE'S NO NEED TO ACT GLIB  
WITH GENTLE GIBINGS AND GAMES  
YOU DON'T NEED TO FLAUNT, OR FLAG ME,  
DON'T NEED TO TAUNT OR TAG ME,  
JUST CLUB ME, BAG ME, DRAG ME BACK TO YOUR ABODE

CLUB ME NOW  
YEAH JUST CLUB ME NOW

PEGGY

I WANT YOU TO CLUB ME  
I NEED YOU TO CLUB ME NOW  
YEAH JUST  
CLUB ME NOW,  
'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

WOMEN

CLUB ME NOW,  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW  
YEAH JUST  
CLUB ME NOW,  
'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

PEGGY

WELL I'VE MADE YOU AN OFFER  
AND THAT'S ABOUT ALL I CAN DO  
NOW YOUR CHANCE TO ACCEPT OR TO SCOFF AT THE OFFER  
I OFFER'S MY OFFER TO YOU  
THERE IT STANDS ON THE TABLE  
I PROMISE THAT I WILL MAKE GOOD  
AND NOW YOU CAN MAKE IT ALL REAL  
HELP ME CLOSE OUT THIS DEAL  
WRAP YOUR HANDS 'ROUND THAT WOOD AND JUST

CLUB ME NOW,  
YEAH JUST CLUB ME NOW,  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW 'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

PEGGY

I WANT YOU TO CLUB ME  
I NEED YOU TO CLUB ME NOW  
YEAH JUST  
CLUB ME NOW,  
'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW

WOMEN

CLUB ME NOW,  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW  
YEAH JUST  
CLUB ME NOW,  
'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW



PEGGY (CONT.)  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

OH WON'T YOU JUST CLUB ME NOW,  
YEAH JUST CLUB ME NOW,

WOMEN (CONT.)  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

CLUB ME NOW,  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW

PEGGY  
UH JUST CLUB ME NOW 'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW  
I CAN GO ON WITHOUT YOUR LOVE

(PEGGY walks back to her desk, and plops her head down on it as the lights shift back to normal.)

MARVIN  
Hey, are you feeling OK?

PEGGY  
Oh! Yeah, I'm fine. I'm just . . . I'm just excited  
about this whole wheel thing, you know?

MARVIN  
Yeah.

PEGGY  
Steve is so talented. You know him pretty well, right?

MARVIN  
Well, we work together. He's great, you know?

PEGGY  
He really is great, isn't he?

MARVIN  
(A little dejected) Yeah, he's great. Oh, hey, everybody's  
leaving, you'd better get out there. I wouldn't miss this.

(GERTIE enters)

GERTIE  
OK, let's go. The slab is heading out, we don't want to be late.

(The last couple of EMPLOYEES start flowing out of the office. GERTIE stops  
MARVIN.)

Hey, Chuck, right? Look, we need you to keep an eye on  
things here, OK? Thanks.

MARVIN

But . . . yeah, OK.

GERTIE

OK, let's go, let's go, let's go.

(Everybody exits except for MARVIN, and the lights go out in the office. After a beat, MARVIN flips on a desk lamp.)

MARVIN

Cue Track –  
Marvin

**SO HERE I AM  
AND THERE THEY WENT  
ALONE AGAIN, AND LEFT BEHIND  
YOU'D THINK I'D GET BENT OUT OF SHAPE  
BUT YOU'D BE WRONG,  
'CAUSE THAT'S NOT ME  
I DO THE THINGS THAT NO ONE WANTS,  
AND TAKE THEM ON MOST EAGERLY  
WHEN THERE'S A JOB THAT MUST BE DONE  
UNDER THE GUN, NO FUN, WHERE DO THEY RUN?  
THEY COME TO INDISPENSABLE, COMPREHENSIBLE,  
SENSIBLE MARVIN  
THE MAN WHO WON'T LET YOU DOWN**

**I MAY NOT BE A WELL-LIKED GUY  
BUT SOON THEY'LL SEE, AND IF I TRY, I KNOW THAT  
I CAN WIN THEIR HEARTS.  
I DON'T HAVE GRACE, I DON'T HAVE WIT,  
A HANDSOME FACE, GOOD MANNERS, STYLE, OR MONEY  
COME TO THINK OF IT**

**BUT I'VE GOT MOXY LEFT TO SPARE  
AND DECENT HAIR, SO THERE, NOT THAT I CARE  
I'M ONLY ALWAYS VIABLE, OLD RELIABLE, PLIABLE MARVIN,  
THE MAN WHO WON'T LET YOU DOWN.**

**I'M WHO THEY CALL  
WHEN THEY NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN TAKE ON THEIR PROBLEMS.  
I'M THEIR JACK-OF-ALL TRADES.  
I DO IT ALL  
FROM THE LIGHT CLEANING TO THE EIGHT-HUNDRED-TEN PAGE  
REPORT ON THE TRENDS IN OUR TOP-SELLING GRADES.**

(Spoken) That took a long time. You know what the conclusion was? "A larger study is needed to fully express and predict the conditions under which a targeted consumer will purchase a given inclined plane. Recommendation is for a doubling of the sample size and complete reworking of the original study design." I'm on page three. (Pause) It would be nice to be noticed. You know what would be nice? A thank you. A "thanks, Marvin, you really bailed us out there", or a "couldn't have done it without you, Marvin ol'

MARVIN (CONT.)  
pal". (Pause) Hey guys, I just cleaned out the stock room.

(A MAN enters.)

MAN  
Hey, thanks, big guy!

MARVIN  
Yeah, and I filed all of those commission reports for you.

(MAN #2 enters.)

MAN #2  
Thanks, buddy! You're the best!

(A CHORUS starts entering.)

MARVIN  
I edited that copy, finished those blueprints, fed Freddy  
McTurtle, and guess who brought muffins!

(CHORUS heads to congratulate MARVIN, cheering him on.)

**I'VE GOT IT ALL, OR SOON I WILL  
I'LL JUST STAND TALL, AND CLIMB THAT HILL, YOU SEE,  
UNTIL I WIN THEIR HEARTS  
IT MAY BE ROUGH, BUT EVEN SO,  
I MUST HANG TOUGH, 'CAUSE SURE ENOUGH  
AS I HAVE BREATH, I ALSO KNOW**

**CHORUS  
YOU'RE GONNA BE OUR FRIEND SOMEDAY**

**MARVIN  
WILL I BE GREY? I MAY. BUT, HEY, THAT'S OK**

**CHORUS  
BECAUSE HE'S UNOFFENDABLE, OPEN-ENDABLE,  
BENDABLE MELVIN  
YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN**

**MARVIN  
BUT AM I GOOD?**

**CHORUS  
EXCELLENT QUESTION, MELVIN**

MARVIN  
THANK YOU, I THOUGHT SO

(Spoken) (To Chorus) Hey guys, it's Marvin.

CHORUS  
BUT ARE YOU GOOD?

MARVIN  
WHAT GOOD CAN IT DO IF NO ONE NOTICES WHAT YOU DO?  
HOW GOOD CAN IT BE IF NO ONE NOTICES THAT IT'S YOU  
WHO'S ALWAYS THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO  
NOTICE THE PEOPLE WHO NEED TO BE NOTICED?  
DO THEY KNOW THAT I'D LIKE TO BE NOTICED, TOO?

(MARVIN sees the schematics for the wheel sitting on a desk.)

(Spoken) "Schematics for the Worker's Helper for Engaging  
Easy Locomotion". That's odd. Why doesn't Steve have  
these with him?

CHORUS MEMBER #1  
Hey, Mel, maybe he forgot 'em!

MARVIN  
You think?

CHORUS MEMBER #2  
They could probably use those plans at the press conference!

MARVIN  
You're probably right!

CHORUS MEMBER #3  
Hey, everybody! Three cheers for the guy who's gonna  
come through for us again!

CHORUS  
HIP, HIP, HOORAY!  
HIP, HIP, HOORAY!  
HIP, HIP, HOORAY!  
WELL MELVIN'S SMART

MARVIN  
(Spoken) That's Marvin!

CHORUS  
AND ON HIS GAME  
TWO-THOUSAND POUNDS OF HEART COMPRESSED

CHORUS (CONT.)  
INTO A LESS IMPRESSIVE FRAME  
WELL MELVIN'S NICE

MARVIN  
(Spoken) Still Marvin!

CHORUS  
AND ALWAYS GOOD  
HE TAKES INSANELY MORE ABUSE  
THAN ANY NORMAL HUMAN SHOULD

MARVIN  
I'M THEIR WHITE-COLLAR CAVALIER

CHORUS  
SO HAVE NO FEAR, HE'S HERE, OUR MANHANDLED MAN OF THE YEAR.  
WE'RE TALKIN' UNFANTASTICAL, NONBOMBASTICAL, SPASTICAL

(MARVIN cuts off the CHORUS and starts to mouth the word "Marvin".)

CHORUS  
MAR. . .

(MARVIN turns to the audience and smiles.)

. . .VELOUS MELVIN  
YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN.  
NO, YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN.

CHORUS AND MARVIN  
NO, YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN.

Act I  
Scene 6  
Press Conference

(STEVE and GERTIE make final preparations as MEMBERS OF THE PRESS get settled. A cloth-covered case sits on the platform. GERTIE stands up to the podium.)

GERTIE  
Hello. As you know, we don't do this very often. We never really believed in press conferences, "always let your product do the talking", my husband said. I suppose without these things you guys'd be pretty much out of a job.

(Chuckles a little and waits for a response. There isn't one.)

GERTIE (CONT.)

Right. Well, then, the reason we called this conference is that we think we've got something special here, and we wanted to let everybody know. This thing is gonna knock your socks off. It's gonna be hotter than two young newlyweds making sweet, sweet love under a bearskin blanket in the middle of August. And here to introduce this new invention is our head engineer and inventor extraordinaire, Steven Barrows.

STEVE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MEMBERS OF THE PRESS I WELCOME YOU  
AND I URGE YOU TO TAKE A MOMENT FROM YOUR DAY  
TO REMEMBER THIS WORLD JUST THE WAY IT IS NOW  
'CAUSE IN A MOMENT OR TWO  
SHORTLY AFTER ALL THAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY  
A PIECE OF STONE'S GONNA CHANGE THE WORLD  
A LITTLE PIECE OF GRANITE NOTHING MORE  
A SIMPLE LITTLE THING THAT I CALL THE WHEEL  
PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR WHAT LIES IN STORE

STEVE

IT'S AMAZING  
WHOA, IT'S AMAZING  
HALLELUIAH  
WHOA, HALLELUIAH  
IT'LL CHANGE US  
WHOA, IT'LL CHANGE US  
AN INVENTION  
THAT'S CHANGING CONVENTION

EMPLOYEES

IT'S AMAZING, THE WHEEL'S AMAZING  
AND IT'S BLAZING A NEW FRONTIER  
HALLELUIAH, IT'S COMIN' TO 'YA  
TELL THE PUBLIC, THE WHEEL IS HERE  
IT'LL CHANGE US, THE WHEEL WILL CHANGE US  
HOW WE THINK, HOW WE ACT, AND FEEL  
AN INVENTION TO CHANGE CONVENTION  
DID WE MENTION IT'S CALLED THE WHEEL

STEVE

WELL HOLD ON TO YOUR HATS AND HAVE A SEAT IF YOU MUST  
BUT STAY CALM, NOW, FOR EVERYTHING YOU'RE WORTH  
'CAUSE YOU CAN'T BE PREPARED FOR WHAT IS UNDER THIS CLOTH  
IT'S A WONDROUS THING, AND JUST LIKE THE EARTH

STEVE

IT'S REVOLVIN'  
WHOA, IT'S REVOLVIN'  
WE'RE EVOLVIN'  
YEAH, WE'RE EVOLVIN'

EMPLOYEES

IT'S REVOLVIN', THE WHEEL'S REVOLVIN'  
AND IT'S SOLVIN' OUR WORKIN' WOES  
WE'RE EVOLVIN', THE WORLD'S EVOLVIN'  
BRAIN'S THE SAME, BUT THE CONSCIOUS GROWS

PRESS MEMBER

SHOW IT TO US  
COME ON, SHOW IT TO US  
LET US SEE IT  
COME ON, LET US SEE IT

PRESS

SHOW IT TO US, WE'VE LET YOU WOO US  
SHOW IT TO US, STOP PLAYING GAMES  
LET US SEE IT, WE NEED TO SEE IT  
COULD IT BE THAT IT'S WHAT HE CLAIMS

STEVE

AND THUS WITH NO MORE UNDUE DELAY  
I GIVE THIS GIFT UNTO YOU THIS DAY

STEVE (CONT.)  
**IT IS MY HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO REVEAL, REVEAL  
THE WHEEL**

(STEVE removes the cloth, but the case is empty. Gasps are heard from the crowd. STEVE is in shock.)

GERTIE

Where is it?

PRESS MEMBER

Hey, what's the deal?

(Similar sentiments are echoed in the crowd.)

GERTIE

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry, but it seems as though something has happened to our new invention, I'm sure it will be sorted out shortly.

(The PRESS start to leave.)

No, please stick around. I'm sure this will be cleared up soon. (To employees) It's Rudnick.

STEVE

It's gone.

GERTIE

We'll get it back.

STEVE

How? We didn't patent it. All Rudnick has to do is call his own press conference and show the prototype.

(MARVIN comes running in carrying a set of blueprints in his hands.)

MARVIN

I'm sorry I left the building, but I thought you might need these.

GERTIE

What are they?

MARVIN

Schematics for the wheel.

STEVE

There is no wheel.

PEGGY

Is this the only set?

STEVE

Yes.

PEGGY

Well, he can't build another one without these.

STEVE

Are you kidding? He's got the best people in the world working for him. He'll be able to reverse engineer that thing in a week. Without the prototype, we're sunk. I thought I had it.

GERTIE

(To Peggy) We'll build another one.

PEGGY

Is there time?

STEVE

(To himself)

**I SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING  
WHY WAS I SO NAÏVE  
THE MOMENT LIFE CAN GET YOU DOWN  
IS THE MOMENT YOU BELIEVE  
THAT THINGS ARE GOOD  
THAT'S THE MOMENT THINGS GET RIPPED AWAY  
AND THEY TELL ME JUST TO LET IT GO AND FIGHT ANOTHER DAY**

(Now to everyone)

**THAT DAY IS NOW  
THERE COMES A TIME WHEN IT'S NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE  
TO SHRUG THINGS OFF WITH BUT A FROWN  
THERE COMES A TIME WHEN IT'S TIME  
TO THROW THE GAUNTLET DOWN**

**AND SAY, NO MORE  
MY TIME IS NOW  
THAT WHEEL IS MINE  
I WILL WIN IT BACK SOMEHOW  
I'VE LONG BEEN MIRED,  
AND I'M SICK AND TIRED  
OF TAKING FLAK,  
I'M FIGHTING BACK**



STEVE (CONT.)

THEY'VE HELD ME DOWN  
DID I RESIST  
NO, NO NOT ONCE  
THINK OF ALL THE CHANCES MISSED  
MAKE THEM AWARE  
THAT THEY'D BEST PREPARE  
FOR MY ATTACK  
I'M FIGHTING BACK

I CAN'T ACCEPT ALL THEIR BARBS AND LIES  
THEIR GREAT ABUSE OF FREE ENTERPRISE  
I WILL AVENGE ALL THE WRONGS THEY'VE DONE  
ATTACKS ON ME ARE A TAX ON EV'RYONE

STEVE

NOW SHOUT THESE WORDS  
ACROSS THE LANDS  
I SHALL RETURN  
WITH THE WHEEL WITHIN MY HANDS  
THOUGH HIGH AND WIDELY  
AGAINST MY SIDE  
THE ODDS MAY STACK  
I'M FIGHTING BACK

CHORUS

YELL OUT FROM THE TOP OF EV'RY ROOF  
SO THEY KNOW EXACTLY HOW WE FEEL  
OFFER OUR CONFIDENCE AS PROOF  
THAT HE'LL BE RETURNING WITH THE WHEEL  
THOUGH CHANCES FOR VICTORY ARE NIL  
SHOUT OUT FROM THE TOP OF EV'RY HILL  
THEY'D BETTER PREPARE FOR HIS ATTACK  
YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE HE'S FIGHTING BACK

CHORUS

HE'S FIGHTING BACK IN THE NAME OF ALL  
WHOM THEY HAVE PUSHED UP AGAINST THE WALL  
HE WILL AVENGE ALL THE WRONGS THEY'VE DONE  
ATTACKS ON HIM ARE A TAX ON EV'RYONE

STEVE

I'LL TAKE NO MORE  
MY TIME IS NOW  
THAT WHEEL IS MINE  
I WILL WIN IT BACK SOMEHOW  
THEY'LL FEEL MY WRATH  
FOR ALTHOUGH THE PATH  
AHEAD IS BLACK  
I'M FIGHTING BACK

CHORUS

THERE'S ONLY SO FAR THAT YOU CAN  
PUSH BEFORE REACTION'S IMMINENT  
AND THEN YOU CAN'T PUSH US ANY MORE  
THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH THAT YOU CAN  
TAKE BEFORE IT'S PLAINLY EVIDENT  
THAT WE'RE COMIN' KNOCKIN' ON YOUR  
DOOR  
WE'RE GIVING OUT ALL THAT WE CAN  
GIVE  
SO WE'LL BE ALLOWED THE CHANCE TO  
LIVE  
WITHOUT BEING PLACED UPON THE RACK  
YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE HE'S FIGHTING BACK

MARVIN

(To himself)  
NOW HERE'S MY CHANCE, FOR WITHOUT A DOUBT  
SHE'LL LIKE ME MORE, IF I HELP HIM OUT  
IF I SEEM STRONG, THEN SHE'LL NOTICE ME

MARVIN (CONT.)

THAT'S ALL I NEED  
(To Steven)  
BUT STEVEN NOT ON YOUR OWN  
DON'T GO IT ALONE  
THERE'S TOO MUCH TO DO  
I'M GOING WITH YOU

PEGGY

IF HE'S GOING, WELL, THEN I AM GOING, TOO

STEVE, PEGGY, AND MARVIN

WE'RE FIGHTING BACK

BY ALL THINGS GRAND

AT BATTLE'S END

OUR TRIUMVIRATE WILL STAND

MAKE THEM AWARE

THAT THEY'D BEST PREPARE

FOR OUR ATTACK

WE'RE FIGHTING BACK

CHORUS

THE POWER OF THREE WILL COME TO  
BEAR UPON YOUR VAIN MONSTROCITIES  
AND THEN REST ASSURED YOU WILL FEEL  
BEFORE YOU

THE BATTLE'S TOLLS INFLECTED BY  
THRICE, THE GOING PRICE FOR ALL YOUR  
PLAIN ATROCITIES

AND THERE IS NO CHANCE TO APPEAL  
AND YOU SHOULD BE

WELL AWARE THAT YOU SHOULD BE  
READY FOR THE END

FOR THEY'VE COME TO FIGHT THE FOE,  
MY FRIEND

YOUR FUTURE AHEAD IS LOOKING BLACK  
START WATCHING YOUR BACK, THEY'RE  
FIGHTING BACK

ALL

MAKE THEM AWARE  
THAT THEY'D BEST PREPARE  
FOR OUR ATTACK  
WE'RE FIGHTING BACK  
WE'RE FIGHTING BACK  
WE'RE FIGHTING BACK.

Act II  
Scene 1  
Binning's Inclined Planes

(STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN prepare to leave as other EMPLOYEES look on.)

GERTIE

You set to go?

STEVE

All set. Wish us luck.

GERTIE

Good luck. Hey Steve, I just want to make sure you're not doing this on account of me. I told you, I'm about ready to call it quits anyway.

STEVE

I'd be lying if I said I weren't doing it for myself.

GERTIE

Good, that's excellent. (Pause) But you are doing it a little bit for me, aren't you?

STEVE

Of course.

GERTIE

(Excitedly) Alright! You go find Rudnick and give him one for me.

STEVE

Will do.

(DOTTIE is talking to PEGGY in another part of the office.)

DOTTIE

I want to go on record as saying that this is absolutely nuts.

PEGGY

What happened to "If you want to get to know him, you're running out of time?"

DOTTIE

I meant ask him out for a drink, not commit felonies.

PEGGY

This is probably worth at least three or four regular dates, right?

DOTTIE

(Sighs) Do you have everything?

PEGGY

I hope so.

DOTTIE

(Pulling some sandwiches out of Peggy's bag) What is this?

PEGGY

Sandwiches. What? I thought we might get hungry. (Pause) My mother always taught me that the best way to a man is through his stomach.

DOTTIE

That would be the second best way, dear, unless your father was a eunuch.

PEGGY

I don't get it.

DOTTIE

Neither did your father, apparently, but at least he didn't go hungry.

STEVE

Are we ready?

MARVIN

I think so.

PEGGY

I am.

STEVE

Here we go, then.

(STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN start out.)

GERTIE

Good luck, guys! We'll be waiting for you!

DOTTIE

Come back in one piece!

(STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN exit.)

GERTIE

Well, that was fun. They're going to fail miserably right?

DOTTIE

Was Peggy's father an incredibly frustrated man?

GERTIE

(To everybody)

Cue Track –  
We're Going  
Under

**PACK EVERYTHING UP, LET'S GO  
WE GOTTA CLEAR THIS PLACE OUT  
AND THERE'S A LOT OF WORK AHEAD  
YOU'RE MOVIN' AROUND TOO SLOW  
LET'S GET A MOVE ON PEOPLE  
DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I JUST SAID**

**NOW DON'T GIVE ME THOSE ASTONISHED FACES  
YOU ALL KNEW THAT THIS WAS DUE TO HAPPEN SOON  
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO SO  
MOVE THOSE BOXES OFF THE STOCKROOM SHELVES  
TAKE THOSE POSTERS OFF THE DOOR  
STOP COMPILING NEXT WEEK'S AD REPORTS  
WE WON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE**

**IT'S BEEN FUN, BUT NOW OUR RUN HAS ENDED  
I'D INTEND TO DEAL WITH THAT SOMEHOW**

**AND STOP READING MAIL, STOP MAKING CALLS  
RIP OUT THE PHONE AND CLEAR OFF THE WALLS  
AND DON'T STOP TO WONDER WHY WE'RE GOIN' UNDER  
THAT'S JUST THE CASE AND YOU CAN'T ERASE IT NOW.**

DOTTIE

**TURN PAPERWORK IN RIGHT HERE  
I'LL GET A PILE STARTED  
PUT ALL YOUR FILES NEXT TO ME  
IF A NECKLACE SHOULD APPEAR  
PLEASE NOTIFY ME OF IT  
I LOST IT BACK IN '63**

GERTIE

**I SUPPOSE THAT IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR STAPLERS  
THEN YOU MAY**

EMPLOYEE

**OH THAT'S OK THEY NEVER WORKED RIGHT ANYWAY**

**DOTTIE AND GERTIE  
AND PLACE YOUR NAMEPLATES ON THE COUNTERTOP  
AND TURN IN YOUR WASHROOM KEY  
DRIVE AND PROWESS SHOULD ALLOW US TO  
EXIT EXPEDITIOUSLY**

**GERTIE  
YOU'VE ALL HEARD THE SAYING "TIME IS MONEY"  
WELL THE LESS WE STAY, THE LESS WE LOSE**

**SO BOX UP THE TAPE, TAPE UP THE BOX  
TAKE DOWN THE PLAQUES AND PACK UP THE CLOCKS  
STOP READING MAIL, STOP TAKING CALLS  
RIP OUT THE PHONE AND CLEAR OFF THE WALLS  
AND DON'T STOP TO WONDER WHY WE'RE GOIN' UNDER  
JUST SAY IT'S CHANCE, IT'S A HEALTHY STANCE TO CHOOSE**

(Music break as EMPLOYEES clean out the office)

**AND DON'T FRET IF YOU'VE GOT MOUTHS TO FEED  
OR A LOT OF BILLS TO PAY  
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT NEXT MONTH'S RENT  
THERE'S NO REASON TO DISMAY**

**ALL  
SAY HELLO TO MR. UNEMPLOYMENT  
TAKE YOUR OUTSTRETCHED PALM AND SHAKE HIS HAND**

**GERTIE  
THEN KICK UP YOUR FEET, BREAK OUT THE WINE  
ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS STAND IN LINE  
AND AIN'T IT A WONDER THAT WE'RE GOIN' UNDER  
SIX MONTHS OF FUN WITH A SUMMER ON THE SAND**

**PACK EVERYTHING UP, LET'S GO  
YES, THAT'S THE TICKET PEOPLE  
FEEL THE EXCITEMENT IN YOUR VEINS  
TELL EV'RYONE THAT YOU KNOW  
THIS WAS THE LAST HURRAH  
OF PAUL BINNING'S HONEST INCLINED PLANES  
YOU HAVE DONE ME PROUD YET ONCE AGAIN  
AND IN WHATEVER FIELD YOU MAY PROGRESS  
I'M SURE YOU'LL MEET WITH GREAT SUCCESS**

**AND IF YOU NEED A REFERENCE TALK TO ME  
FOR I PROMISE YOU I WOULD  
HIRE EACH AND EV'RY ONE OF YOU  
IN A SECOND IF I COULD  
DON'T CONFUSE MY HASTE FOR LACK OF CARING**

**CHORUS  
WE ALL UNDERSTAND, WE'LL MISS YOU TOO**

GERTIE  
NOW STOP READING MAIL,  
STOP TAKING CALLS

GERTIE  
RIP OUT THE PHONE  
AND CLEAR OFF THE WALLS  
BOX UP THE TAPE, TAPE UP THE BOX  
TAKE DOWN THE PLAQUES AND  
PACK UP THE CLOCKS  
THEN KICK UP YOUR FEET,  
BREAK OUT THE WINE  
ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS STAND IN LINE  
CLOSE NOW TO CLEAR, WE'RE IN THE FLOW  
  
GO, GO, GO

CHORUS  
STOP READING MAIL, STOP  
TAKING CALLS, RIP OUT  
THE PHONE AND CLEAR OFF  
THE WALLS, BOX UP THE  
TAPE, TAPE UP THE BOX  
TAKE DOWN THE PLAQUES  
AND PACK UP THE CLOCKS,  
THEN KICK UP YOUR FEET,  
BREAK OUT THE WINE, ALL  
YOU GOTTA DO IS STAND IN  
LINE

GERTIE  
AND DON'T STOP TO WONDER  
WHY WE'RE GOIN' UNDER  
WE COULDN'T SELL, AND SO SAY "OH WELL  
IT'S TRUE,

ALL  
WE'RE THROUGH"  
THEN SAY GOODBYE  
GO AND TRY TO START ANEW.

Act II  
Scene 2  
Inclined Planes Incorporated

(RUDNICK sits in the board room with his EMPLOYEES and the wheel.)

RUDNICK  
IT'S AMAZIN'  
WHOA, IT'S AMAZIN'  
AND WE STOLE IT  
WHOA, WE CONTROL IT

EMPLOYEES  
IT'S AMAZIN' THE WHEEL'S AMAZIN'  
AND IT'S BLAZIN' A NEW FRONTIER  
AND WE STOLE IT, NOW WE CONTROL IT  
SOMEONE ROLL IT TO OVER HERE

RUDNICK  
MR. WHEEL MEET THE MAN WHO'S GONNA MAKE YOU A STAR  
IT'S THE START OF A WONDERFUL ROMANCE  
INCLINED PLANES AND THE WHEEL WILL REEL THE CUSTOMERS IN  
AND COMPETITION WON'T STAND A CHANCE

RUDNICK  
IT'S REVOLVIN'  
WHOA IT REVOLVIN'  
IT WILL ENDOW US  
WITH ALL THE PROWESS

EMPLOYEES  
IT'S REVOLVIN', THE WHEEL'S REVOLVIN'  
AND IT'S SOLVIN' OUR BUSINESS WOES  
WILL ENDOW US WITH ALL THE PROWESS  
TO ALLOW US TO CRUSH OUR FOES.

RUDNICK

Gentlemen, congratulations are in order.

EMPLOYEES

Congratulations, Mr. Rudnick.

RUDNICK

Thank you, thank you. However, although this is a beautiful turn of events for us, all is not well. For some reason, the schematics for the wheel were not being transported with the wheel itself, and as such . . . we don't have them. However, a team of my top men are coming in tomorrow to start working non-stop until we get this thing reverse-engineered.

(MAN #1 enters)

MAN #1

Sir, your guests are here.

RUDNICK

Thank you, girl, you can send them in.

(MAN #1 exits)

Gentlemen, I'm about to introduce you to my top three security officers, brought in from across the land for the express purpose of protecting the wheel until our engineers can get at it.

(Two men, OG and UGH, enter, carrying large clubs.)

Ah, here they are now, uh, minus one, apparently.  
(Using intercom), Girl?

MAN #1

He just entered the building, sir.

RUDNICK

Send him in when he gets upstairs. (To employees)  
Gentlemen, I'd like you to meet Og and Ugh. (Introducing the two to each other). Ugh, Og. Og, Ugh.

UGH

(Shaking hands with OG and repeating his name.) Og.

OG

Ugh.



(A third guard, FRANCIS, runs in, also brandishing a club.)

FRANCIS

Sorry I'm late, sir, I had trouble finding the building.

RUDNICK

And this one, (shooting a glance at FRANCIS) from our head office—here—is Francis.

(The OG, UGH, AND FRANCIS (aka the GUARDS) shake hands and introduce each other.)

(To the guards) Gentlemen, I trust you know what you need to do.

OG AND UGH

Yes, sir.

FRANCIS

(A half-beat late) Yes, sir.

RUDNICK

(Hands them the wheel) Then here you are. I'll be checking in later.

(GUARDS exit)

(To employees) As for us, gentlemen, we are adjourned. Oh, and Porter, you're fired.

JOHNNY

Sir, how can you afford to keep. . .

RUDNICK

Shut up, Johnny.

Act II

Scene 3

Somewhere at Inclined Planes Inc.

(STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN sneak their way through the hallways of Inclined Planes Inc.)

PEGGY

Haven't we been this way already?

STEVE

I'm not sure, all these hallways look the same. Wait! I think there's something over here.

(STEVE, PEGGY and MARVIN arrive at the spot where the wheel is being guarded. UGH, OG, and FRANCIS stand guard.)

Great. I was hoping he wouldn't have security out this fast.

PEGGY

What do we do?

STEVE

Well, we can't take them.

(MARVIN is eating a sandwich)

What are you eating?

MARVIN

A sandwich, I made some for everybody. Want one?

PEGGY

Hey, I made some, too. What kind are yours?

MARVIN

Egg salad.

PEGGY

I've got roast beef.

STEVE

Really? Sandwiches?

PEGGY

Sorry.

STEVE

Hey wait. Peggy, what's the best way to a man's heart?

PEGGY

Well, I always heard it was through his stomach, but Dottie says that's only the second best way.

STEVE

(Thinking) Yeah . . . yeah, she's right. Never really thought about that phrase much. Well, I guess sandwiches will have to do. (To Marvin) Give me one of those.

(MARVIN gives the sandwich to STEVE, who proceeds to throw a few pieces of egg salad in the GUARDS' direction. FRANCIS starts to smell the food first.)

FRANCIS

GETTING HUNGRY  
VERY HUNGRY (Pause)  
THERE'S NO WORD THAT  
RHYMES WITH HUNGRY

Cue Track –  
Break Time

FRANCIS  
GETTING HUNGRY  
VERY HUNGRY  
THERE'S NO WORD THAT  
RHYMES WITH HUNGRY

UGH  
I'M GETTING HUNGRY  
SO VERY HUNGRY

OG  
HUNGER SO HARD  
TO QUELL, IS THAT  
FOOD I SMELL

OG  
I BELIEVE SOME CONSTERNATION  
HAS COME OVER ME  
TO ACHIEVE ITS QUICK CESSATION  
IS A QUANDARY  
I'M FEELIN' HUNGRY,  
BUT BREAK IS HOURS AWAY

UGH AND FRANCIS  
I BELIEVE  
OVER ME  
TO ACHIEVE  
QUANDARY  
HUNGER SO HARD TO  
QUELL IS THAT FOOD  
I SMELL  
I HAVEN'T HAD A LOT  
TO EAT TODAY

BUT I DARE NOT LEAVE THE AREA  
TO GRAB A BITE  
FOR I MUST ENSURE SECURITY  
REMAINS QUITE TIGHT

BUT I DARE  
GRAB A BITE  
FOR I MUST  
REMAINS QUITE TIGHT

OG, UGH, AND FRANCIS

BUT I THINK I'VE SEEN A VENDING MACHINE  
SOMEWHERE IN THE BACK  
SO PERHAPS I'LL TAKE A BREAK FOR A SNACK

OG  
IT'S ABSURD TO PUT THIS  
BURDEN ON US EV'RY NIGHT  
TO EXPECT US TO PROTECT THEM  
WITH NO BREAK IN SIGHT  
HAVE THEY NO KNOWLEDGE  
OF WHAT THEY'RE PUTTING US THROUGH

UGH AND FRANCIS  
IT'S ABSURD  
EV'RY NIGHT  
TO EXPECT  
BREAK IN SIGHT  
WHY DO THEY DO HALF  
HALF THE THINGS THEY DO  
THOSE GUYS IN  
MANAGEMENT DON'T HAVE  
A CLUE

OG (CONT.)  
UNDERSTAND, IT'S NOT A  
HEFTY DEMAND TO IMPLORE  
WE'RE ABUZZ BECAUSE THE  
ONLY THING WE'RE ASKING FOR

UGH AND FRANCIS (CONT.)  
UNDERSTAND  
TO IMPLORE  
WE'RE ABUZZ  
ASKING FOR

OG, UGH, AND FRANCIS  
IS A NICE, DISCREET TEN MINUTES TO EAT, BUT WE DON'T GET JACK  
SO I THINK I'LL TAKE A BREAK FOR A SNACK

HOW DO THEY EXPECT THEIR GUARDS TO GIVE A HUNDRED PERCENT  
WHEN TO RAID THE COMMISSARY'S OUR PRIMARY INTENT  
AND IT JUST AIN'T RIGHT WHEN WE LONG TO SEE  
A BIG, LASCIVIOUS, THEFT

FRANCIS  
'CAUSE THAT'S A B. L. T.

OG  
I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M  
CONFLICTED WITH A SENSE OF FEAR  
IN THE LARGE AMOUNT OF TIME  
THAT I'VE BEEN WORKING HERE  
IT SEEMS NOBODY  
HAS EVER BROKEN IN YET

UGH AND FRANCIS  
I DON'T KNOW  
SENSE OF FEAR  
IN THE LARGE  
WORKING HERE  
I'VE NEVER SEEN OR HAD  
TO INTERVENE  
A QUIET EV'NING IS A REAL  
SAFE BET

IF I'M OUT TO GRAB SOME  
NOURISHMENT FOR FIVE TO TEN  
THERE'S NO DOUBT WITHIN MY  
MIND IT'LL BE FINE 'TILL THEN

IF I'M OUT  
FIVE TO TEN  
THERE'S NO DOUBT  
FINE 'TILL THEN

OG, UGH, AND FRANCIS  
FOR I FEEL IT'S REAL UNLIKELY THAT WE'LL COME UNDER ATTACK  
AND I THINK I'LL TAKE A BREAK FOR A SNACK

BUT I CAN'T DESERT THE POST I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED TO DEFEND  
'CAUSE ALTHOUGH SLIM,  
THE CHANCE FOR INFILTRATION STILL EXISTS AND  
I KNOW THEY'LL FIRE ME IF I DROP THE BALL  
AND IF I DON'T HAVE A JOB,

FRANCIS  
I GOT NO FOOD AT ALL

OG  
OH WHY MUST I BE FACED  
WITH A CHOICE SO UNKIND  
I'LL GO BECAUSE I KNOW  
THAT I MUST BEAR IN MIND

UGH AND FRANCIS  
OH WHY  
SO UNKIND  
I'LL GO  
BEAR IN MIND

**OG, UGH, AND FRANCIS  
THAT THE OTHER TWO WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO  
UNTIL I GET BACK  
SO I THINK I'LL TAKE A BREAK FOR A SNACK**

(OG, UGH, and FRANCIS start to sneak off, and as they do, STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN start to sneak towards the wheel. As STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN are almost there, the GUARDS run back towards the wheel, forcing STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN back into hiding.)

**BUT I CAN'T DESERT THE POST I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED TO DEFEND  
'CAUSE ALTHOUGH SLIM,  
THE CHANCE FOR INFILTRATION STILL EXISTS AND  
I KNOW THEY'LL FIRE ME IF I DROP THE BALL  
AND IF I DON'T HAVE A JOB, I GOT NO FOOD AT ALL**

**OH WHY MUST I BE FACED WITH A CHOICE SO UNKIND  
I'LL GO BECAUSE I KNOW THAT I MUST BEAR IN MIND  
THAT THE OTHER TWO WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO  
UNTIL I GET BACK**

**OG  
SO I THINK I'LL  
TAKE A BREAK**

**UGH**

**FRANCIS  
SO I THINK**

**YES, I THINK I'LL  
TAKE A BREAK  
FOR A SNACK**

**I THINK I'LL BREAK  
FOR A SNACK**

**YES, I THINK I'LL  
TAKE A BREAK  
FOR A SNACK  
YES, I THINK I'LL  
TAKE A BREAK  
FOR A SNACK**

(The GUARDS start to leave again. After the GUARDS are gone and the music stops, STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN come out of hiding.)

**PEGGY**

We've got it.

**STEVE**

Yeah, we do. We actually do. Thanks.

**MARVIN**

What do we do now?

**STEVE**

We leave.

(RUDNICK enters with JOHNNY. RUDNICK carries a gun-looking slingshot.)

RUDNICK

Wrong, that's what you would do, if I weren't here to stop you. Now, if you'll kindly step to the side, I'll be taking the wheel and putting it someplace safe. Johnny?

JOHNNY

Yes, sir?

RUDNICK

I trust you know how to use one of these.

(RUDNICK hands JOHNNY the slingshot. The GUARDS return with food in their hands, but as they see what's occurring, they quickly turn around and walk offstage.)

JOHNNY

You bet, sir.

RUDNICK

Good. If any of these three move, use it. I'm going to find out what happened to my guards.

(A thunderclap is heard.)

Ooh, a thunderstorm. I do love a good thunderstorm. Johnny, join me in my office as soon as the guards return.

(RUDNICK leaves with the wheel.)

JOHNNY

Yes, sir. (To Steve, Peggy, and Marvin) Alright, who here would like a grand tour of the company dungeon? Anyone? (Raising slingshot) Anyone?

(STEVE, MARVIN, and PEGGY raise their hands.)

That's what I thought. Quite a fascinating history, actually, the company dungeon was built over four-hundred years ago during the neo-java war, as a deterrent . . .

Act II  
Scene 4  
Inclined Planes Inc. holding cell

(STEVE, PEGGY, and MARVIN are behind bars. A half-hour or so has passed, and the GUARDS and JOHNNY stand watch. The GUARDS have lots of food with them.)

JOHNNY

. . . where it is widely used today to interrogate and detain company traitors, underperforming employees, and members of the competition, the category under which you now find yourselves captive.

STEVE

Fascinating.

JOHNNY

Well, I'm off to see Mr. Rudnick. (To the guards) Don't let these guys get out.

OG AND UGH

Yes, sir.

FRANCIS

Yes, sir.

JOHNNY

Now, we've gotten you all the food you could possibly want. Has everybody gone to the bathroom?

(OG and UGH look at FRANCIS.)

FRANCIS

I'm not five.

JOHNNY

(To OG and UGH) Keep an eye on him, too, please. I'll be back in a little while.

(JOHNNY leaves.)

PEGGY

(To Steve) I'm sorry you lost your wheel. (Pause) Life will go on.

STEVE

I don't doubt that it will. That's kind of the problem, isn't it? I just wanted to make an impression.

PEGGY

But people will still use your invention, and so what if they don't know that you invented it? We'll know.

MARVIN

It's what you do that makes you great, not whether people recognize it.

STEVE

Oh what, did you get that off of a calendar or something? Look at history, who do people remember? Peggy, who invented fire?

PEGGY

Uh. . .Joseph Grunter.

STEVE

Marvin, who invented sliced bread?

MARVIN

The Port Brothers, Lewis and Gilbert.

STEVE

The inclined plane?

MARVIN AND PEGGY

Dr. Ronald Amp

STEVE

These are the people that have made this world great, that have made a contribution to society. And they're remembered, they're revered. People celebrate holidays around them. Kids learn their names in school. Their legacies will live on in their inventions long after we're dead. Who wouldn't want to leave a piece of themselves behind like that, to be a part of the of this world after you're gone? (Pause) You're right, it shouldn't matter, but it does. To me it does. I shouldn't have dragged you guys into this. It was more about me and my failures than it was about the company. It's not fair to you. I'm really sorry.



PEGGY

You didn't drag us into this, Steve. We made the choice to come here. What you've done is amazing. You deserve the credit for it and Binning's should be the company that sells it. Rudnick certainly doesn't deserve to have it. What we're doing is right, even if you think your motivation's wrong.

STEVE

Well at any rate, I appreciate your coming; you were clearly in this for the right reasons.

PEGGY

Right. Or...not.

(STEVE gives PEGGY a puzzled look. PEGGY nods in MARVIN's direction as MARVIN forelornly gazes out of the cell.)

STEVE

Ah.

PEGGY

Yeah.

(STEVE motions for PEGGY to talk to MARVIN. PEGGY starts singing with the intention of having MARVIN hear her.)

Cue Track – I  
Know a Guy

**I KNOW A GUY  
HE'S A LITTLE BIT DIFF'RENT.  
BUT DIFF'RENT GOOD  
AT LEAST, I THINK  
AND I THINK I SHOULD  
GO GRAB THAT DRINK  
WITH A GUY WHO CAN CHEER ME  
AND MAYBE HEAR ME  
AND WHO MIGHT LIVE HIS DAYS TO GIVE  
ME A WONDERFUL LIFE**

STEVE

**I KNOW A GUY  
HE'S A LOTTA BIT SPECIAL.  
ECCENTRIC, YES,  
I MUST CONFESS,  
BUY NICER THAN  
I CAN EXPRESS  
AND ALTHOUGH THERE ARE DAYS HE  
CAN DRIVE ME CRAZY,  
I KNOW HIM WELL AND I CAN TELL  
HE'S A HELL OF A GUY**

LISA  
I KNOW THIS GUY  
HE'S A LITTLE BIT QUIRKY.  
BUT AREN'T WE ALL  
IN OUR OWN WAY,  
SO WHAT THE HEY?  
I GUESS, OKAY.  
AND I'M GLAD THAT I KNOW THIS  
I'D HATE TO BLOW THIS  
'CAUSE HERE'S A CHANCE FOR SOME ROMANCE  
IN MY PITIFUL LIFE.

STEVE  
HE CAN BE CHARMING  
SOMETIMES DISARMING  
NEVER ALARMING  
NOT FOR STRONG ARMING  
WOULD PREVENT HARMING  
YOU AT ALL COSTS

MARVIN  
I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS GUY IS,  
BUT I'M NOT LIKING THIS ONE BIT  
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT STEVEN  
IS PUSHING HER TO SOMEONE ELSE.  
THIS WAS MY CHANCE  
HOW CAN'T HE KNOW?

IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME, NOBODY NOTICES HOW I FEEL  
NOW STEVEN HAS GUARANTEED MY LONLINESS BECAUSE SHE'LL  
BE INTO THIS OTHER GUY  
AND WHO IS THIS GUY? WHY DID HE HAVE TO CHOOSE HER?  
MY ONE SHRED OF HOPE IS HE SOUNDS LIKE A LOSER.

PEGGY I LOVE YOU  
I LOVE YOU, AND CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU.  
I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS OTHER GUY IS, BUT I PROMISE YOU  
IF YOU GIVE ME A CHANCE, I WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY.

IF IT WERE YOU AND I, A DAY WOULD NOT GO BY  
WHERE I'D NOT TELL YOU OF MY NEVER-ENDING LOVE  
YOU MEAN THE WORLD TO ME. I'D GIVE MY LIFE TO SEE  
YOUR EV'RY DREAM COME TRUE, 'CAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU.

I'VE TRIED TO BLOCK YOU OUT, A HOPELESS CAUSE, IT SEEMS.  
MY DAYS ARE FILLED WITH DOUBT, YOUR VISION HAUNTS MY DREAMS  
BUT, THEN, HOW WOULD YOU KNOW, UNLESS I TOLD YOU SO  
SOMEDAY I WILL

TODAY I WILL  
RIGHT NOW TODAY  
I'LL FIN'LLY TELL YOU HOW I FEEL

(MARVIN tries to muster up the courage to say something, but fails and immediately sits down.)

STEVE  
I KNOW A GUY  
HE'S A LITTLE BIT BASHFUL  
AND IN THIS CASE  
IT MIGHT BEHOOVE  
YOU TO BE FIRST  
TO MAKE A MOVE  
HE'S A LITTLE BIT TIMID

LISA  
HE IS INSIGHTFUL  
NEVER BEEN SPITEFUL  
COULD BE DELIGHTFUL  
WITH OUR FIRST NIGHT FULL  
OF

MARVIN  
PEGGY I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU,  
I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU.  
I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS OTHER GUY IS, BUT I PROMISE YOU,  
IF YOU GIVE ME A CHANCE, I WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY.

STEVE  
I KNOW A GUY  
HE'S A LITTLE THICK-HEADED  
I MEAN, COME ON,  
YOU'RE TELLING ME  
YOU THOUGHT THIS GUY...  
ALRIGHT, I SEE.

PEGGY  
LET ME MAKE THIS SEEMS CLEARER,  
LOOK IN THE MIRROR.  
YOU'LL SEE THIS GUY THAT HE AND I  
HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT.

LISA  
IT MAY BE STRANGE,  
AND A LITTLE BIT AWKWARD.  
BUT WE'LL LAY LOW,  
AND I'LL GO SLOW,  
AND GET TO KNOW  
MY NOUVEAUX BEAU.  
AND I KNOW THAT IT'S SURELY  
STILL VERY EARLY,  
AND EVEN YET,

STEVE  
THAT WAS AMUSING  
NOT SO CONFUSING  
DON'T GO ACCUSING  
ME OF ABUSING  
HIM BY MY USING  
SOME SUBTLETY

MARVIN  
WAIT, YOU MEAN  
IT'S ME. I MEAN  
OF COURSE IT'S  
ME. YOU THINK I  
THOUGHT YOU WERE  
THINKING OF SOME  
OTHER GUY, THAT'S  
CRAZY. I KNEW IT  
ALL ALONG.

STEVEN, LISA, AND MARVIN  
I'D HAVE TO BET ON THIS GOING QUITE WELL

AT LEAST SOMEDAY  
WHEN THEY LET US OUT OF THIS CELL.

MARVIN  
(To guards) Hey, you aren't planning on killing us, are you?

OG  
Kill? Oh no, that ain't like Mr. Rudnick at all.

UGH

Yeah, he's more of the let-you-wallow-in-your-own-disappointment-until-it-eats-you-up-inside kind of guy.

MARVIN

That's a relief.

OG

No, my guess is he'll hold you here until they get that new thing figured out, then he'll let you go.

MARVIN

Why not just let us go now?

OG

Yeah, good one.

PEGGY

(Looking at Francis) Hey.

FRANCIS

Huh?

PEGGY

Yeah you, come here for a second.

(FRANCIS walks over.)

(Looking at him) Hey, you're not by any chance  
(whispering) a Neanderthal (normal voice), are you?

FRANCIS

Only on my mother's side.

PEGGY

So they do exist.

FRANCIS

(Looks at himself) I guess.

PEGGY

I know someone who I think would really like you.

FRANCIS

Really?

Yeah. PEGGY

What's she like? FRANCIS

What, you're picky? PEGGY

Hey, I don't need your charity, I do OK. FRANCIS

She's . . . well. . . PEGGY

Is she nice? FRANCIS

(Pause) In her way. PEGGY

Funny? FRANCIS

Definitely funny. PEGGY

You got some sort of picture? I'm not prejudgemental or anything, it's just, you know. FRANCIS

Sorry, I don't have a picture on me. I can. . . ough . . . draw you a composite . . . based on what we say. . . she looks like. (To Steve and Marvin) Hey guys, help me draw a picture of Dot for (to Francis) what's your name? PEGGY

Francis. FRANCIS

Huh? How's this going to help? STEVE

Oh, I'm sorry, are you busy with something else? PEGGY

STEVE

Point taken.

PEGGY

(To Francis) You got any paper? Pencil?

FRANCIS

Uh. . .(looking around) I've got a stick.

PEGGY

Stick'll work.

(PEGGY starts drawing a picture on the ground with the stick, and is frequently corrected by STEVE and MARVIN, until they come up with a picture which they think is OK.)

(To Francis) Here.

FRANCIS

Looks like an eight-year-old drew it.

PEGGY

We're not really artists by trade.

FRANCIS

I don't know. I'm not really in the market right now. I'm trying to focus on my career.

PEGGY

(Thinks for a bit) Hey this girl—Dottie—and I. . .we're really good friends. I know way, way too much about her, and I can almost guarantee you that if you let us out of here, and I tell her all about how you saved us, she's going to (Whispers in Francis's ear.) And she'll actually like it.

FRANCIS

That's tabloid stuff.

PEGGY

Cross my heart. I've heard about it more times than I care to remember.

FRANCIS

Hmph. This job does seem to be limited in its prospects for upward mobility. You promise me you're telling the truth about your friend.

PEGGY

I didn't even know about half of that stuff until I met her.

FRANCIS

You've got a deal.

(FRANCIS opens the door.)

OG

Hey, what are you doing?

FRANCIS

I'm tendering my resignation.

(A battle breaks out between FRANCIS and the other two GUARDS. FRANCIS finishes them both off easily.)

STEVE

Best way to a man.

MARVIN

That Dottie's a smart woman.

PEGGY

Thank you, Francis. She's going to hear all about this.

(MARVIN picks up one of the fallen guard's clubs and turns around, accidentally clubbing PEGGY on the head, knocking her to the ground.)

MARVIN

Peggy! Are you OK? I'm so sorry.

(PEGGY sits up and looks at MARVIN.)

PEGGY

I'm fine, Marvin. Never better.

(The two gaze at each other.)

STEVE

Hey, guys, what's going on here? (Pause) Guys? (Pause)  
Alright, break it up. We've still got work to do.

MARVIN

Uh, how about if you go on ahead? Francis, you stand guard here, and, uh, Peg and I will go to the left.

STEVE

Well, thanks for the help, guys. I'm off to go get killed now, have fun without me.

(STEVE starts to exit.)

FRANCIS

If you see Mr. Rudnick, tell him I'm giving my two-weeks' notice.

STEVE

Sure thing, Francis.

(STEVE exits.)

Act II

Scene 5

Rudnick's office

(RUDNICK stands at a large window, watching the storm and laughing quietly to himself. The wheel sits on a podium in the office. JOHNNY enters.)

JOHNNY

Mr. Rudnick?

RUDNICK

Johnny, come here. I want you to take a look at this. A thunderstorm and a big window, last bastion of sanity for the evil. Take a look, Johnny. See all of those people out there? Those are people you control, and they're all getting stormed on. Kind of a metaphor for life. Beautiful. Everything OK in the dungeon?

JOHNNY

Yes, sir. They're locked up tight.

RUDNICK

Good work, Johnny. Now why don't you run back there and keep an eye on things for me.

JOHNNY

Yes, sir.

(JOHNNY exits. RUDNICK picks up a picture frame from his desk.)



RUDNICK

“Yes, sir”. I remember when I used to say that to you, Jim. He’s a lot like I was, isn’t he? And I suppose now I’m a lot like you were, not quite as evil, I’d never claim that. You were the man, Jim. (Sighs) Oh, but you’d love what I have going here. We’re going to do it, Jim. Corner the market, and then, who knows? Just like you wanted. Inclined Planes Incorporated. What’s with that name? Couldn’t think of something snazzier? Oh, well, doesn’t matter now. We’re almost there, Jim. Yes, sir.

Cue Track –  
Mr.  
Mancratzenfield

**A LONG TIME AGO, WHEN I FIRST STARTED HERE  
AS AN INTERN STILL VIBRANT AND YOUNG  
THE NAME JIM MANCRATZENFIELD GARNERED SUCH FEAR  
THAT IT RARELY CROSSED ANYONE’S TONGUE**

**BUT THEY HAD NO IDEA OF THE POWER HE POSSESSED,  
THOUGH THEY KNEW HE WAS SPITEFUL AND MEAN  
NOBODY BUT I TOOK SUCH KEEN INTEREST  
IN THE EVILEST MIND THAT THE WORLD’S EVER SEEN**

**HOW SOON THE DETAILS OF ONE’S MEMORIES FADE  
WHEN A MAN’S NOT A MAN BUT A GHOST  
BUT I’LL NEVER FORGET HE WHO TAUGHT ME THIS TRADE,  
AND SO HERE’S TO THE MAN WHOM I STILL RESPECT MOST**

**MR. MANCRATZENFIELD  
HOW COULD I EVER TRY TO DECRY YOUR WORLDLY VIEW  
I CLAIM TO BE EVIL, BUT YOU WERE THE KING  
THE BEST MASTERMINDIN’ IS WHAT ONE COULD FIND IN  
MR. MANCRATZENFIELD  
NOT A SOUL IN THE WHOLE WORLD COULD OUTDO YOU  
FOR NONE WERE ARTISTIC AT BEING SADISTIC  
EXCEPT FOR THAT MYSTIC MR. MANCRATZENFIELD**

**WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND A TROUBLESOME, MEAN, BUT  
IMPRESSIONABLE LAD  
THERE WERE NO ROLE MODELS FOR  
A KID WHO LIKED TO BE BAD**

**BUT THEN I HEARD OF A MAN WHOM THEY SAID WAS SO  
RUTHLESS AND COLD  
HIS DEVLISH SCHEMES WERE SO LARGE  
HE COULD CHARGE YOU TO WATCH THEM UNFOLD, THAT VERY DAY  
I VOWED THAT I WOULD ONE DAY WORK FOR THE MAN  
WHOSE PLANS PUT OTHER MEN TO SHAME  
WHILE I BIDED MY TIME, I WAS LEARNING THE RULES  
OF THE CORPORATE GAME  
AND WHEN THE TIME CAME, I  
GRABBED SOME MONEY, PACKED UP MY THINGS  
AND SLOWLY SHUFFLED OUT THE DOOR  
STILL UNSURE IF THE STORIES I’D HEARD OF YOUR  
GLORIOUS WARRING WERE JUST URBAN LORE**

RUDNICK (CONT.)  
BUT WHEN I WALKED INTO THIS PLACE  
A SMILE FLASHED 'CROSS MY FACE, BECAUSE

MR. MANCRATZENFIELD  
WORKED THE ROOM WITH SUCH FLARE  
I COULD BARELY STARE IN AWE  
A MAN WHO LACKED VIRTUES, A MASTER OF LIES  
NO FRAUD, THIEF, OR VANDAL  
COULD E'ER HOLD A CANDLE TO  
MR. MANCRATZENFIELD  
EVERY SCHEME THAT HE'D DREAM WORKED WITHOUT A FLAW  
AND THOUGH I'M NOW THRIVING,  
I'LL NEVER STOP STRIVING  
TO MATCH THAT CONNIVING MR. MANCRATZENFIELD

(RUDNICK dances with the picture frame, and hums along.)

NO MAN WAS MORE VICIOUS, NO MIND MORE MALICIOUS  
MR. MANCRATZENFIELD

(Spoken) Ah, Jim. I remember the time you advised two  
of your associate corporations to attempt hostile takeovers  
of each other. We laughed and laughed. It was genius,  
Jim, pure, evil genius.

AT TIMES LIKE THESE WHEN MY MIND STARTS TO WANDER  
I PONDER JUST HOW GOOD WE COULD HAVE BEEN  
I REMEMBER THE DAYS WE WOULD RANDOMLY RUIN  
A BUSINESS AND THEN, WE'D DO IT AGAIN, AND  
OUR EMPLOYEES BOWED AT OUR FEET  
WHenever WE WERE PASSING BY  
AND IT'S REALLY A SHAME AND TOO BAD THAT YOU HAD TO GO  
DO SOMETHING STUPID, AND DIE

SHOT, STABBED, AND STRANGLING FROM BEHIND  
NOW WHO COULD BE SO UNKIND

(RUDNICK whistles sheepishly, then starts to laugh.)

MR. MANCRATZENFIELD  
YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW THERE'S NO ONE  
I'M MORE INDEBTED TO  
MY CHILDHOOD HERO, MY MENTOR, AND FRIEND  
NO PLAN I COULD MUSTER COULD HOLD HALF THE LUSTER  
OF ONE FROM YOU, MR. MANCRATZENFIELD  
BUT HEY JIM, JIMMY THIS ONE'S FOR YOU  
AND I KNOW YOU'RE LOVIN' IT UP THERE  
'CAUSE NO ONE ADMIRING A PLAN SO INSPIRED  
MORE THAN THAT JADED, HATED, UNDERRATED  
INGENIOUS, MISCHIEV-I-OUS  
AH, YOU WERE BRILLIANT  
AND NOBODY UNDER MY DOMINION

RUDNICK (CONT.)  
**COULD EVER LOWER MY OPINION  
OF THAT BAD, MAD  
MR. MANCRATZENFIELD**

(RUDNICK places the picture back on his desk, sits in his chair, and turns the chair around so that he can continue watching the storm. Shortly after, STEVE sneaks into the room. Thinking no one is around, he tries to grab the wheel.)

I don't think so.

(RUDNICK turns around.)

Nice try, though. (Pause) Speechless? (Pause) I can tell by your lack of speech that you're speechless. Look, I was content to let you wallow in your own disappointment until it ate you up inside. Hell, I'd have preferred it. That's just the kind of guy I am. But now I'm going to have to get somebody to come up here to kill you, and frankly, the paperwork on that is just atrocious.

STEVE

Yeah, I should have known I wouldn't be able to outsmart a guy like you. I mean, you're legendary.

RUDNICK

Oh, please, Steve. Try to trick the evil guy by complimenting him? That's the oldest trick in the large series of stone tablets describing tricks. I'm surprised you'd think I'd fall for that. Frankly, I'm a little hurt.

STEVE

You're right. I should have known better. So you're really going to kill me?

RUDNICK

Only second-hand. Cleaner that way.

STEVE

What if I offered to work for you?

RUDNICK

Interesting.

STEVE

We'd make a great team. You wouldn't have to hire those engineers. You'd save a fortune. Plus, who knows the wheel

STEVE (CONT.)

better than I do. We'll be years ahead of any competition. Binning's is done for, anyway. Come on, you and me.

RUDNICK

I think you're on to something, Barrows.

STEVE

Really?

RUDNICK

Yeah. I can see it now. No competition. Total domination of global markets. A vice-like grip on the production of simple machines everywhere. (Getting sickeningly sweet) Two wheels in every garage and a swimming pool in every back yard, please Barrows, I know the "team up with the evil guy and then turn against him trick", too. I tire of these games, I'm just gonna shoot you myself.

(RUDNICK pulls a slingshot out of his desk.)

I've been delegating too much lately, anyway. Makes you soft.

STEVE

Well how would I go about tricking you?

RUDNICK

I don't know; it's probably pretty tough.

STEVE

It would probably take a pretty masterful plan.

RUDNICK

I suppose it would.

STEVE

Not that you'd know anything about that.

RUDNICK

Look, I don't need to put up with your petty insults. How many evil empires do you have? How many? None? Then I'll decline giving merit to your opinions on the matter.

STEVE

Your plans are horrible.

RUDNICK

I beg your pardon.

STEVE

You heard me. This plan to steal the wheel from us was at the very least uninspired, and at the worst a first-class display of no-talent hackery.

RUDNICK

Hey, that hurts. (To himself) I'll have to give Johnny a raise. (To Steve) And what exactly do you find so uninspiring about my plan?

STEVE

**WELL IT'S NOT SO MUCH AN EVIL PLAN  
YOU JUST SNEAKED AROUND, STOLE THE WHEEL, AND RAN  
THAT NOT EVIL, THAT'S JUST THIEVERY, THROUGH AND THROUGH  
I WOULD HAVE NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU'D HAVE  
STOOPE TO THAT  
MR. IRON FIST, MR. AUTOCRAT  
I GUESS THAT I JUST WOULD'VE EXPECTED MORE FROM YOU**

RUDNICK

**WELL TELL ME STEVEN, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE  
IF YOU WERE ME, THEN WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE**

STEVEN

**I'D CHANGE MY WAYS AND GIVE OL' STEVE MY GUN**

RUDNICK

**PLEASE HUMOR ME, NOW WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE**

STEVEN

**I DON'T KNOW, I'D PLAY IT UP SOME MORE  
I THINK YOUR PLAN'S TOO SIMPLE AT IT'S CORE  
IT NEEDS SOME SPUNK, SOME ENERGY, YOU KNOW,  
A LITTLE MORE PIZZAZZ  
YOUR PLAN HAD SO LITTLE RISK**

RUDNICK

**THAT'S RIGHT, AND IF THERE ISN'T RISK  
YOU NEVER LOSE THE FIGHT  
AND A MINIMAL RISK IS WHAT A PLAN THAT'S PERFECT HAS**

**NOW STEVEN, YES, MY PLAN WAS A SIMPLE ONE  
BUT WHEN EVERYTHING WAS FINALLY SAID AND DONE  
IT WORKED, AND THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING  
YOU DON'T NEED TO PUT ON A GREAT BIG SHOW**

RUDNICK (CONT.)

TO BE EVIL, THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO KNOW  
AND TO WEIGH OUT THE POWER THAT CERTAIN ACTIONS BRING

FOR ME TO HAVE THAT POWER DOWN THE LINE  
I HAD TO MAKE QUITE SURE THE WHEEL WAS MINE  
SO WHY TAKE RISKS ON PLANS THAT WILL IMPRESS  
MORE TIMES THAN NOT, THEY CAUSE AN AWFUL MESS

RUDNICK AND STEVE

BECAUSE YOU SEE, WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE  
THE PERFECT PLAN CAN BE A SIMPLE ONE

STEVE

YEAH, I THINK I SEE YOUR POINT

RUDNICK

ALRIGHT

STEVE

BUT A MAN OF YOUR MALEVOLENCIOUS MIGHT  
COULD HAVE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING MEANER, MUCH MORE VILE  
I THINK IT WAS TOO NICE

RUDNICK

YOU DO

STEVE

YEAH

RUDNICK

HUH, 'CAUSE YOU KNOW, I KIND OF THOUGHT THAT TOO  
BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO GO THAT EXTRA MILE

SEE, IN A PERFECT PLAN, I GET THE WHEEL  
WITHOUT TAKING RISKS, BUT TO MAKE YOU FEEL MUCH WORSE  
IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT THAT I SUCCEED  
BUT A PLAN LIKE THAT TAKES TIME, YOU SEE  
TIME I DIDN'T HAVE, TO WEAVE A TAPESTRY  
OF INTRIGUE, LYING, JEALOUSLY, AND GREED

BUT WITH SOME TIME, I COULD HAVE MADE A PLAN  
SO CRUEL IT WOULD HAVE BROKEN ANY MAN

STEVE

BUT CAN YOU TELL ME JUST WHAT I MIGHT HAVE FACED  
HAD YOU NOT BEEN IN SUCH A STATE OF HASTE

RUDNICK

(Spoken) Oh, I don't know. It takes time. You have to find out what everybody wants, what their weaknesses are. Then you can start manipulating them. And the beautiful thing is that they never see it coming. People let egos blind them,

RUDNICK (CONT.)

they let hate blind them, they let love blind them, and you have to play off of that. Then you can lead those blind fools wherever it is you want them to go. And when everything falls apart for them, the only people they have to blame are themselves.

**A PLAN IS BETTER WHENEVER IT'S THE CASE  
IT'S THEIR OWN FAULT THAT THEY DESCEND FROM GRACE  
SO TIE THAT IN WITH LITTLE RISK INVOLVED  
AND THEN THAT'S IT, THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN SOLVED  
IF YOU'D BEEN BROKEN BY JEALOUSY AND GREED  
WELL THAT WOULD BE A PERFECT PLAN INDEED**

**RUDNICK  
IF YOU'D BEEN BROKEN  
BY JEALOUSY AND GREED  
WELL THAT WOULD BE A  
PERFECT PLAN INDEED**

**STEVE  
IF I'D BEEN BROKEN  
BY JEALOUSY AND GREED  
WELL THAT WOULD BE A  
PERFECT PLAN INDEED**

STEVE

**BUT HOW**

RUDNICK

**YES HOW, THAT'S THE QUESTION ISN'T IT  
WANT TO GIVE IT A SHOT**

STEVE

**YEAH  
GIVE ME A MINUTE, OK HERE GOES**

**YOU SEND A GUY OVER TO COME AND TALK TO ME  
WHO SAYS HE'LL BUY THE WHEEL FOR A ONE-TIME FEE  
AND HE'S GOT A LUCRATIVE CONTRACT IN HIS HAND  
AND I'M SO QUICK TO SIGN, I DON'T BOTHER TO  
READ THAT FINE PRINT ABOVE THE DOTTED LINE  
WHICH GIVES THE WHEEL TO YOU  
AND YOU STEAL THE WHEEL**

RUDNICK

Oh, come on, now. Do you think so little of yourself that you believe you'd fall for that?

STEVE

Well, no.

RUDNICK

Well, then, great plan, you evil mastermind. Can I be your plus-one when you're nominated for the annual scheming awards next fall?

STEVE

Hey, it was my first try. Give me another shot.

RUDNICK

The floor is yours.

STEVE

**PRETEND THAT I AM YOU, FOR EASE'S SAKE  
AND THAT YOU ARE ME, AND I'M ABOUT TO TAKE  
THE WHEEL, AND YOU, THAT'S ME, SAYS "MERCY NO"  
AND THEN YOU, WHO'S ME TRIES TO CLUB YOUR HEAD  
BUT THEN ME, WHO'S NOW YOU, GOES AND SHOTS ME DEAD  
I GUESS IT'S TRUE THAT IT'S ALWAYS  
THE BEST WHO ARE FIRST TO GO**

**BUT YOU CAN'T LEAVE THE BODY ON THE GROUND INSIDE  
UNLESS YOU MAKE IT LOOK JUST LIKE A SUICIDE  
AND YOU GIVE THE GUN TO ME, WHO IS YOU FOR NOW**

(STEVE takes the slingshot from a confused Rudnick.)

**HEY CONGRATS, YOU'RE GONNA GET OFF SCOTT FREE  
WITHOUT EVER HAVIN' TO WORRY 'BOUT YOU, WHO'S ME  
AND THEN ME, WHO IS YOU, RUNS AWAY AND STEALS THE WHEEL**

RUDNICK

Well, that's a little better, but you're . . . I'm dead, and I can't really feel guilty about a fall from grace if I'm dead.

STEVE

Well then how about this one . . .

**PRETEND A MAN WITH NO SOUL STOLE THE WHEEL FROM YOU  
AND IN A FIT RAGE, YOU'VE DECIDED TO  
CONFRONT THIS MAN AND GET WHAT'S TRULY YOURS  
AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO WHAT YOU'VE SET OUT TO DO  
YOU FIND THE MAN IN A CHAIR SITTING NEXT TO YOU  
AND HE PULLS A GUN FROM ONE OF HIS DESK DRAWERS**

RUDNICK

Ooh, I like where this is going. I feel a turnaround coming on.

STEVE

**THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S COMING, 'CAUSE YOU START TO CHATTER  
'BOUT THIS AND THAT, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER  
YOU JUST KEEP ON TALKING, AND WAITING FOR YOUR CHANCE  
THEN THROUGH CLEVER WORDING AND SOME TRICKERY  
HE HANDS HIS GUN TO YOU VOLUNTARILY**

(STEVE points the gun at RUDNICK.)



STEVE (CONT.)  
**THEN YOU SIT HIM IN A CHAIR, TIE HIM UP, AND  
STEAL THE WHEEL  
STEAL THE WHEEL  
THEN YOU SIT HIM IN A CHAIR, TIE HIM UP, AND STEAL THE WHEEL**

RUDNICK  
(Applauding) Yes, yes! Brilliant! See, now you've got it!  
You turned him on himself. It's his own fault he's going to  
fail . . . except . . .

STEVE  
Except?

RUDNICK  
**YOU STEAL THE WHEEL FROM A WORKING MAN  
KNOWING IN YOUR HEART THAT THE MAN WILL PLAN  
TO STEAL THAT PRECIOUS WHEEL BACK FROM YOU SOMEHOW  
SO YOU STAY FAR AHEAD OF THE POOR BUFFOON  
'TILL HE WALKS IN YOUR OFFICE LIKE A TRAINED BABOON  
AND SPOUTS WORDS AS FAST AS HIS POOR TONGUE WILL ALLOW**

(RUDNICK gets up and starts walking to his desk.)

**SO YOU SAY OK, AND LET HIM HAVE YOUR GUN  
WHICH IS FINE, 'CAUSE YOU DIDN'T EVER LOAD THAT ONE  
AND JUST WHEN HE THINKS VICTORY'S IN HIS HANDS  
YOU TELL HIM THAT HIS MOMENT IN THE SUN IS DONE**

(RUDNICK grabs a slingshot from his desk and points it at STEVE as he walks toward  
him)

**AND THEN YOU GO TO YOUR DESK AND GRAB A LOADED GUN  
AND YOU TELL THE LITTLE MAN THAT HE WON'T STEAL THE WHEEL  
STEAL THE WHEEL  
THEN YOU TELL THE LITTLE MAN THAT HE WON'T STEAL THE WHEEL**

**A PERFECT PLAN AFTER ALL, YOU SEE,  
FALSE VIC'TRY O'ER YOUR ARCHENEMY  
AND NOW MY PLANNED DOMINATION CAN BEGIN  
I WIN! I WIN!**

STEVE  
(Thinks for a while)  
(To himself)  
**WELL LOOKING BACK, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT HE SAID**

(To Rudnick) That thing you said before, about "two  
wheels in every garage", I know you were mocking me  
and all, but that's actually how it'd be, wouldn't it?  
You'd really push these things hard, wouldn't you?

RUDNICK

Of course I would. It's a brilliant invention, Barrows, I'm gonna make a fortune off of it. It's a little hard to do that if I don't push it.

STEVE

(To himself)

**NO CREDIT, BUT ENSURED SUCCESS INSTEAD**

(To Rudnick) Mass production in a couple of weeks, selling globally within the next few months.

RUDNICK

I'm well aware of how it works, Steven. What are you getting at?

STEVE

(To himself)

**THE FAME IS NICE, DESIRING IT'S INNATE.  
THE NERD WAS RIGHT, IT'S NOT WHAT MAKES YOU GREAT**

(To Rudnick) You can keep it.

RUDNICK

Come again?

STEVE

The wheel, you can keep it. I'm going to head home and wallow in my own disappointment now.

RUDNICK

I'm not following. You're just going to leave it behind?

STEVE

You're not leaving me much choice. Besides, it's in good hands.

(STEVE walks out.)

RUDNICK

(Calling after him) Is this some kind of trick, Barrows? The pretend-you're-giving-the-evil-guy-what-he-wants-but-then-you-actually-don't-trick? If that's the trick, you're screwing it up? What's your game? You can't just leave like this! Barrows! Get back here! (To himself) I'm so confused.

(FRANCIS enters.)

RUDNICK (CONT.)

Ah, Francis. Excellent job guarding Mr. Barrows, I see. Do you care to tell me why he was just in my office?

FRANCIS

Mr. Rudnick, I'm here to inform you of my decision to tender my resignation.

RUDNICK

(Sarcastically) Oh, well I can't tell you what a great loss that will be to this company.

FRANCIS

I may be strong in stature, Mr. Rudnick, but I'm weak in will, and although I once had a dream of working for your fine establishment for the rest of my career, I'm afraid a new opportunity has arisen, and the benefits of this offer far outweigh any monetary rewards I may receive here.

RUDNICK

(To himself) Maybe it was some variation on the "make-the-evil-guy-think-he's-won-so-he-drops-his-guard" plan.

FRANCIS

I'm not above temptation, sir. At first I planned to offer my services for another two weeks, in fairness to you and this fine corporation you run. However, upon further discussions with some new acquaintances, I have determined that there is a better course of action ahead, one which will put both myself and others in a much better position in this crazy thing we call life. Therefore it is with a heavy heart that I must resort to the following. . .

(FRANCIS grabs RUDNICK by the throat.)

I mean no disrespect, sir, but I'm going to be taking this item (points to the wheel) from your office, because applicable laws regarding property rights clearly indicate that the item in question does not belong to you. I need to knock you out now. I apologize, and can only hope that one day you will grace me with your forgiveness.

(FRANCIS knocks out RUDNICK. PEGGY and MARVIN enter, dragging JOHNNY behind them.)

PEGGY

You did it! Thank you!

FRANCIS

(Motioning to Johnny) Is he going to be OK?

MARVIN

He should be fine. I think you hit him just hard enough to put him out.

(STEVE runs in.)

STEVE

What are you guys. . . (notices the bodies on the floor)  
What happened? I heard yelling.

PEGGY

Francis happened.

STEVE

(Surveys the situation for a while) So it's ours?

PEGGY

It's certainly not theirs.

STEVE

Huh. (stands there looking around).

PEGGY

Is everything all right?

STEVE

Yeah. Yeah, everything's good. Thanks, guys. Let's get back to Binning's.

(FRANCIS, PEGGY, and MARVIN exit, a thunderclap sounds, and STEVE wanders over to the picture window and looks outside. He then looks sheepishly around the room, looks out the window, gives a maniacal laugh, then turns and runs out the door.)

Act II  
Scene 6  
Binning's Inclined Planes

(STEVE, PEGGY, MARVIN, and FRANCIS return to an empty office. STEVE carries the wheel.)

PEGGY

Where is everybody?

(GERTIE enters, wearing something casual and whistling.)

STEVE

Gertie!

GERTIE

Huh? Oh, you guys scared me. Hey, you got it back?  
I'll be damned. I'm more surprised than a hobo's  
sweetheart on Flemming Day in Rygard.

STEVE

Uh, yeah. We're fine. Where is everybody?

GERTIE

Well, in all honesty, Steve, we didn't think you'd be able to  
do it, and so we moved out.

STEVE

We'll move back in. We've got the wheel.

GERTIE

Aw, hon, I'm through doing this. I've made enough money  
in my life to be happy. I'm looking forward to retirement.  
Thanks for the offer, though.

STEVE

But what about the wheel?

GERTIE

Well that's easy.

(GERTIE hands a set of keys to STEVE.)

I'm keeping the building. Going rate on leases in this area  
is thirty stones a square-foot, payment first of month, every  
month. Two-percent per day late fee on previous month's

GERTIE (CONT.)

rent, and fifty-percent of any special assessment or necessary improvements to the building and/or surrounding property. . . but I can probably cut you a deal.

STEVE

Thanks. For everything.

GERTIE

You can thank me by save me one of those things when you start production. I don't like waiting in line.

STEVE

You got it.

GERTIE

You know, you always were one of Paul's favorites.

STEVE

I know.

GERTIE

And mine.

STEVE

Thanks.

GERTIE

Well, what are you standing around for? Look at all these slackers. (To everyone) Look at all you slackers! New equation! Your boss equals Steven Barrows! Memorize it! You answer to him! (To Steve) They're all yours. Don't let 'em push you around. Good luck.

(As the music starts, EMPLOYEES start filing in and restoring the office.)

STEVE

**BRING EVERYTHING IN  
LET'S GO  
START TO UNPACK THOSE BOXES  
PUT ALL THE CLOCKS BACK ON THE WALL  
WE NEED TO PREPARE  
AND SO  
PLUG ALL THE PHONES BACK IN,  
IN CASE ANYONE SHOULD TRY TO CALL  
  
I CAN SEE BY YOUR EXCITED FACES  
IT WON'T BE TOO LONG BEFORE THIS STORE**

STEVE (CONT.)

**IS SURE TO SOAR FOREVER MORE  
SO PUT THOSE PLANTS UP ON THE WINDOWSILLS  
STACK THOSE BOOKS UPON THE SHELVES  
BUT DON'T DWELL ON THE OPPORTUNITY  
WE HAVE GIVEN TO OURSELVES  
IT'S A DAUNTING TASK, BUT WE'LL BE READY  
FOR A STEADY FLOW OF FOLKS TO SERVE  
NOTHING TO STEAL, NO ONE TO FIGHT  
ANYONE CAN SEE THAT OUR FUTURE'S BRIGHT  
OUR PRE-SALES ARE SCORCHIN', AND WE'LL MAKE A FORTUNE  
AND FIN'LY GET THE ATTENTION WE DESERVE**

**AND THEN THEY'LL NOTICE ME  
NOW I'LL FIN'LY BE THE ONE  
WHOSE NAME IS SAID AND ALWAYS RECOGNIZED  
NO MORE OBSCURITY  
NO MORE HAUNTING FAILURES NOW  
FOR NOW MY DREAMS HAVE ALL AT ONCE BEEN REALIZED  
AND I KNOW HOW TRUE HAPPINESS FEELS  
IN DESIGNING AND REFINING ALL MY WHEELS**

(PEGGY and MARVIN enter.)

MARVIN

**WON'T SOMEBODY TELL ME  
WHERE MY OFFICE IS**

(STEVE walks over to MARVIN as PEGGY walks over to DOTTIE.)

STEVE

Marvin! How's my new head engineer?

MARVIN

I'm doing great. We enjoyed the vacation.

STEVE

I'm glad. I cleaned out my office. It's all ready for you to move in.

MARVIN

Thanks, Steve. I want to go over some of those new plans with you later.

DOTTIE

(To Peggy) How was the trip?

PEGGY

You know, for such a scrawny guy, he wields a hell of a club.

DOTTIE

Well, I'm glad you're happy.

PEGGY

I am. And I've got something for you, too.

(PEGGY exits, then comes onstage with FRANCIS).

Dottie, meet Francis. Francis, Dottie. He's half Neanderthal!

FRANCIS

On my mother's side.

DOTTIE

Which makes you a Neanderthal, technically.

FRANCIS

Technically.

DOTTIE

(To Peggy) I owe you.

PEGGY

You can pay me back by never again mentioning what you're about to do.

(DOTTIE jumps into FRANCIS'S arms.)

DOTTIE

**HEY I GOT A NEANDERTHAL**

STEVE

**SOMEONE TAKE DOWN THE ORDERS  
AS THEY COME THROUGH THE DOOR  
SOMEONE MAKE SURE PRODUCTION IS ON-LINE  
SOMEONE TAKE OUT THE TRASH  
SOMEBODY SWEEP UP THE FLOOR  
SEND OUT NEXT WEEK'S MAIL, AND UNVEIL THE SIGN**

(Someone unveils a sign which reads "Steven Barrows's Deals on Wheels".)

GERTIE

**IT'S AMAZIN'  
WHOA, IT'S AMAZIN'  
HALLELUIAH  
WHOA, HALLELUIAH**

CHORUS

**IT'S AMAZIN', THE WHEEL'S AMAZIN'  
AND IT'S BLAZIN' A NEW FRONTIER  
HALLELUIAH, IT'S COMIN' TO 'YA  
HOLD YOUR BREATH 'CAUSE IT'S HERE**



GERTIE  
TAKE TIME TO PAUSE, BECAUSE WHERE I STAND  
I HERE THE BUZZ ALL ACROSS THE LAND

GERTIE AND STEVE  
WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF THE CHANGING TIMES  
BRAND NEW FRONTIERS, A NEW SET OF PARADIGMS

ALL  
BRING IN THE NEW, THROW OUT THE OLD  
THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HAS TO HOLD  
WE KNOW FOR SURE THAT WE'LL BE SECURE  
IN TIMES OF NEED, WE WILL SUCCEED  
WE WILL SUCCEED  
WHAT LIES BEYOND IS A MYSTERY  
THE OLDEST QUESTION IN HISTORY  
A BRAND NEW AGE OF CREATION'S ON ITS WAY  
TO STAY  
TODAY

(Blackout)  
(Bows)

(After the bows, we see RUDNICK sitting on a street somewhere with a box beside him, disheveled. A similarly disheveled JOHNNY comes running over to him, carrying something.)

JOHNNY  
Sir! Sir!

RUDNICK  
Johnny, get that thing out of here! I never want to see another one of those blasted things for as long as I live.

JOHNNY  
No, you have to see this, sir. Look, I took this wheel and put a string over the top of it. If I tie something to one end and pull the other, look!

(He does this.)

I call it . . . the pulley.

(Blackout.)