

**WHERE ALL GOOD RABBITS GO**

Karina Cochran

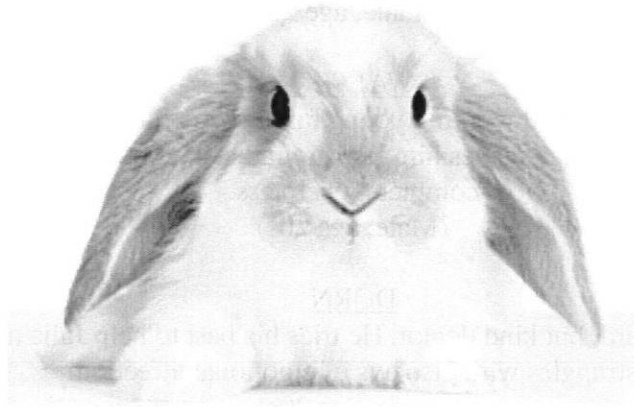
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*by Karina Cochran*



NOTES on the RABBIT

The rabbit in this story should ideally be a real rabbit. Though this may seem scary, it can be done! I have attached a document to the end of this play titled, *The Care and Keeping of Walter* that can be used as a guide to help you put a live rabbit on stage.

## CHARACTERS

### JULIA

A sweet woman with a past in fashion design. She experiences stress, anxiety and heartbreak throughout the play as she watches her husband turn into a rabbit.

(Female, age 20s)

### WALTER

Julia's husband. A grounded, hard working young farmer who turns into a rabbit throughout the course of the play. This change makes him less grounded and more manic, before becoming completely helpless.

(Male, age 20s)

### DORN

Julia's brother. An awkward, but kind doctor. He tries his best to help Julia and Walter, but often struggles with displays of emotional affection.

(Male, age 20s)

### DANCING RABBITS

5+

(Any gender, any age)

### COLLECTOR

Can be doubled with Dorn or one of the Dancing Rabbits

(Any gender, any age)



## SCENE 1

JULIA is wearing a fabulous dress. She adjusts it in the mirror and talks to a closed door.

JULIA

We're going to be late.

...

Like somewhere between fashionably late and rude. You almost done?

WALTER (O.S)

Mmmm hummm.

JULIA

Is it okay to bring half a bottle of wine to dinner?

WALTER (O.S)

Mmmmm hummm.

JULIA

I don't know about these things. My family didn't have formal dinner parties. We're more of a fast food family. Always rushing. Always hurrying. It's no way to live.

...

Maybe we can just bring some produce. An avocado and a tomato. We'll make the guacamole once we get there.

...

Walter? Honey? You okay?

WALTER opens the door.

WALTER

Let's go.

JULIA

What is it?

WALTER

Nothing.

JULIA

There's a panic in your face.

WALTER

I'm fine.

JULIA

I don't believe you.

WALTER

That dress looks good.

JULIA

Don't change the subject.

WALTER

Really, Julia, it's not a big deal.

JULIA

Then tell me.

WALTER

We're going to be late. We should get going.

JULIA grabs his arm and stares into his eyes.

JULIA

What is it?

WALTER

Let's just talk about it after dinner.

JULIA

No. Now.

WALTER

I want to have a nice relaxing dinner with our friends.

JULIA

Well, I won't be able to relax the whole night just wondering what's going on.  
Please. What is it?

WALTER takes a deep breath. He turns around, pulls up his shirt, and shows a bunny tail. She gasps and stares at it for a long time, unable to fully grasp what she is seeing.

WALTER

Honey?

JULIA

Maybe it's something else!

WALTER  
What else could it be?

JULIA  
A fungus?

WALTER  
It's hair.

JULIA  
Did you try to pull it off?

WALTER  
Of course.

JULIA  
Well?

WALTER  
It won't budge. Not even a little.  
...  
It's a tail.

JULIA  
Or maybe it's something else.

WALTER  
You think so?

JULIA  
We just don't know.

WALTER  
I guess, maybe it could be something else.

JULIA  
I saw a show once about a woman who thought she was transforming, but she just had this really abnormal hair growth.

WALTER  
Yeah?

JULIA  
Of course! Hair grows in weird places on the body all the time!

WALTER  
Did it look like this?

JULIA  
I don't remember.

WALTER  
It feels attached.

JULIA  
But still...

WALTER  
It feels fluffy.

JULIA  
It's all that crawling around in the dirt you do.

WALTER  
I don't crawl around in the dirt.

JULIA  
Yes you do, that's what farmers do, they crawl around in the dirt. It's giving you a fungus.

WALTER  
I've never gotten a fungus from farming before.

JULIA  
Well it was bound to happen sometime.

WALTER  
This isn't a fungus, Julia.

JULIA  
Well it can't be a tail. I mean, it can't be, right?  
...  
You're too young.

WALTER  
It's not impossible.

JULIA  
But statistically—

WALTER  
Statistically the chance is small.

JULIA

Percentage wise.

WALTER

Percentages would say it's unlikely.

JULIA

Numbers are important.

WALTER

But there's always a chance. Even if it seems slim.

JULIA

This is not happening. It has to be something else. It just has to be.

WALTER

Yeah. It's probably nothing. I'm probably over reacting.

They sit down together and hold hands.

JULIA

Should I call my brother?

WALTER

Let's just keep this between us for now.

JULIA

What's the point of having a doctor in the family if you can't call on them in times like this?

WALTER

I don't want your brother looking up my ass.

JULIA

It's not up your ass it's right above it.

WALTER

I don't know.

JULIA

Won't you feel relieved, just to know what's going on? I mean, it's probably nothing.

WALTER

But what if it's not nothing? What if it's a big BIG something? The biggest something there can be.

JULIA

I don't know.

WALTER

I don't want him looking up my ass.

JULIA

You can't dislike a person just because they play golf.

WALTER

It's not about the golf. He's weird.

JULIA

We're weird.

WALTER

He's a different kind of weird.

JULIA

He can help us. Please, let him look at it.

WALTER

I just want to go to dinner.

I want to have a nice, relaxing dinner with our friends.

I want them to joke about how we're always late.

I want them to joke about how we didn't bring anything except some loose produce and a half-drunk bottle of wine.

And then we'll talk in a meaningless way about our jobs and local events and every mutual friend we have together.

And then you and I will leave and we'll fall asleep next to each other, and it will be another perfect and forgettable day.

That's what I want. That's what I need, right now.

Okay?

JULIA

Okay.

I love you.

WALTER

I love you too.

## SCENE 2

WALTER and JULIA sit at a table eating full plates of food. They talk to invisible friends.

WALTER

Yes, we've been married a little over three years.

JULIA

And we dated only eight months before we got married.

WALTER

We felt this rush. This hurry.

JULIA

I don't know why.

WALTER

We met in the spring.

JULIA

At the farmer's market.

WALTER

It was the very beginning of the season. Still a little cold.

JULIA

He had just started working at the Lettuce Farm.

...

Pass the guacamole, will you?

She takes some and adds it to her plate.

WALTER

It was about a year and a half after my father had completed his Rabbit Transformation.

JULIA

And I'd just graduated with my degree in fashion design. So we were both in these new places in our lives. On our own.

WALTER

She used to wear this ridiculous green bonnet.

JULIA

I thought it was going to become a "thing." I know, insanity.

WALTER

But she seemed confident. A real character.

JULIA

Now I had noticed Walter before, but never talked to him.  
But once he smiled at me, real calm and cool like. I think I blushed.

WALTER

You did.

JULIA

I did!

WALTER

And then one day—

JULIA

One chilly April morning.

They stand up to reenact the scene.

WALTER

Hi.

JULIA

Oh, hi.

WALTER

Nice bonnet.

JULIA

Thanks.

WALTER

I don't see many folks in bonnets these days.

JULIA

I guess you don't read Vogue.

WALTER

Oh. No I don't.

JULIA

I was kidding. That was a joke. I don't read Vogue.  
I mean I do, but that's not the point.

WALTER

It looks like it might be hard to see under there.



JULIA

Yeah. The sides sort of block everything except what is directly in front of you.

WALTER

Oh. Bummer.

JULIA

But maybe that's a good thing? Maybe I should only be looking at what's directly in front of me.

WALTER

Sure, who needs peripheral vision anyway?

JULIA

Yeah, fuck peripheral vision!

WALTER

Yeah, fuck it!

...

Sorry, did you want to buy something?

JULIA

Oh, yes. I have a question.

WALTER

Sure.

JULIA

I read that there's some kind of lettuce that is supposed to make you invincible, or something like that?

WALTER

Well, it's all really healthy.

JULIA

But isn't there one that is special?

WALTER

You must be thinking of kale.

JULIA

Oh yes, this one, right?

They both reach for the same kale. Their hands touch. They linger for a moment, then sit back at the table.

WALTER

And our hands touched.

JULIA

Oh, doesn't it sound so lame now? "Our hands touched." As if we are the only people in the world with hands.

WALTER

But that's the truth, Julia. When you are falling for someone, your hands carry this extra power. This extra awareness. And you think: my hands are the best, most important hands in the whole world, because they get to touch you, the one I love.

WALTER holds her hand. JULIA just barely keeps her shit together.

JULIA

Is there any wine left in that bottle?

### SCENE 3

JULIA and WALTER sit holding hands in their living room.  
DORN wears a doctors coat, holds a clip board and paces around the room.

DORN

Well it certainly looks like a tail.

JULIA

So it *is* a tail.

DORN

Let's just evaluate the symptoms.

WALTER

You just said it looked like a tail.

DORN

But we don't know for sure. A doctor has to look at every possible angle of a condition.

JULIA

What sort of angles?

DORN

A human may feel a strong craving deep in the pit of their stomach. This could be hormones, or a vitamin deficiency, or it could be a sign that they are about to turn into a rabbit.

WALTER

But you just said it looked like a tail.

DORN

It could still be an abnormal hair growth. We don't know yet.

JULIA

So you're saying it *is* an abnormal hair growth.

DORN

Let's not jump to conclusions.

JULIA

You're family, Dorn. Family has to tell the truth!

DORN

I'm trying to figure out what that truth is, Julia.

JULIA

Well quit putting on your stupid doctor voice and talk to me like my brother.

DORN

It's not a doctor voice. It's my voice. I'm a doctor.

JULIA

Well I don't like the way it sounds.

DORN

Maybe you just don't like what I'm saying.

WALTER

Please. Can we just get through this?

JULIA

Fine. I'm sorry.

WALTER

Go ahead Dorn.

DORN looks at a clipboard.

DORN

Have you noticed any labored breathing anytime in the past few months?

WALTER

Breathing? I don't know. Do I breathe weird?

JULIA

He breathes constantly!

WALTER

Everyone does that, Julia.

DORN

Well we're more concerned with a nasal obstruction. So let's just check no.

JULIA looks slightly comforted.

Next, behavioral issues. Any sudden twitching motions?

WALTER

No.

JULIA

I haven't noticed anything like that.

WALTER

Maybe in my sleep.

DORN

That's perfectly normal.

WALTER

Okay. Fine.

JULIA

This seems good. This seems really good.

DORN

Alright. Next, any hopping?

JULIA

Hopping?

DORN

Rabbits hop.

JULIA

Wouldn't that be at a later stage in the transformation?

DORN

Yes, but the urge can start sooner. The desire to hop.

JULIA  
Well, Walter?

WALTER  
...

JULIA  
Walter?

WALTER  
I think I need to be alone.

JULIA  
Please, answer the question.

WALTER  
Am I allowed to be alone for a minute?

DORN  
Maybe you two need some time.

JULIA  
No wait.

DORN  
This can be overwhelming. I understand.

JULIA  
Hold on!

WALTER  
I need some air.

JULIA  
Stop.  
Walter, just answer the question. I want to tackle this. I want to be strong and face the problem.  
Please.

WALTER  
Well, yesterday I hopped. I hopped all the way from the bedroom to the kitchen. I don't know why I did it. I just...wanted to.

They are all silent for a moment.

JULIA

So. It's real.

DORN

It appears so.

JULIA

Oh god.

DORN

We still need to run tests to determine 100%.

WALTER

Don't even bother.

JULIA

But the tests. The tests might come back differently. Right?

WALTER

Julia, you know they won't.

DORN

I can't give my official word until the test comes back positive.

WALTER

Fine. You know what, run whatever tests you need. Blood test, tail test. I don't care. But could I please just be alone with my thoughts for a singular fucking second?!

WALTER exits.

JULIA

Oh my god, Dorn. I can't breathe.

DORN

This is...I don't know what to say.

JULIA

What do we do now?

DORN

There are a lot of options for us to consider.

JULIA

Then fix it! Fix this. You went to med school didn't you? Tell me how to fix this.

DORN

It just depends how far the transformation has moved into his bloodstream. Sometimes a rabbit trait is isolated to one spot. In that case, we can cut it out and it usually goes away.

JULIA

So if we just cut off Walter's tail he might get better?

DORN

Maybe, but I doubt it.

JULIA

Why?

DORN

Starting with a full tail is an aggressive sign. It's near the spine. Easier access to his brain. Plus, he's already hopping. That's not looking good.

JULIA

Well, shit Dorn. What options do we have?

DORN

There are various techniques. You can starve it out if it's in the stomach. Smoke it out if it's the lungs. Scare it out if it's in the nervous system.

JULIA

So we can fix it?

DORN

These remedies are a coin toss. Sometimes the rabbit traits can go away for a decade, sometimes a month, but sometimes it doesn't work at all.

JULIA

But will it work for Walter? That's all I need to know. Will it work for *him*?

DORN

We'll find out. The tests will help me find out. But for now we have to wait.

JULIA

Wait?

Wait.

DORN

I'm sorry I haven't seen you in awhile. You know how things get busy. The days seem to slip away from me. Tuesday turns into Wednesday and (whew!) where do they go? It's like the days are running and I'm just trying to catch them.

The sound of muffled crying from WALTER comes from the other room.  
DORN looks up at JULIA. They both appear startled and nervous.  
DORN stands.

DORN

I'll call you tomorrow.

DORN leaves.

JULIA

Walter? Walter!  
Come talk to me.  
Please—

WALTER enters.  
They hug each other.

JULIA

I can't believe this is real. I can't believe this is our lives.

WALTER

I always had some sense this might happen. An intuition about it. Some kind of rush to my life.

JULIA

It can take years. It can take a long time.

WALTER

It *can*.

JULIA

When your father transformed, what was it like?

WALTER

It was so sudden. He just went to work one day and poof! A rabbit. Just right there at his desk. It made the Year of Grief that much harder.

JULIA

Oh, the Year of Grief. What was that like?

WALTER

Strange at first. Having my father there at the house as a rabbit. But after awhile there was routine. We would feed him and he would sit next to us silently. You could still feel his presence in a small way. We became comfortable with him as a rabbit.



JULIA

That must have made it that much harder when they took him away.

WALTER

It was. He's there now at the Sacred Green Space.

JULIA

The Sacred Green Space.

WALTER

Where only the rabbits go, and no one else is allowed to enter. No one.

JULIA hugs WALTER.

JULIA

Oh, Walter. This hair. This face. This skin. I want to tape you together and sew you up. I want to keep you perfect, just like this.

WALTER

It's just a body.

JULIA

What is more important than a body?

WALTER

Passion. Connection. Memory.

JULIA

If only you could build a body out of memory. If only you could touch memory with your hands.

WALTER

I know.

JULIA

Does your personality change?

WALTER

I think so.

JULIA

But how? How soon?

WALTER

Gradually, every day. Just a little.

JULIA

I never payed attention when people talked about this. The Transformation. The turning into rabbits. The leaving your old life behind. I never wanted to acknowledge it, because acknowledging it somehow made it real.

But it turns out it's real anyway. Whether you acknowledge it or not.

WALTER

When I was a kid I ate a bunch of carrots once when no one was looking. I just grabbed them and shoved them in my mouth.

JULIA

Walter, you know that's bad luck!

WALTER

I was just so curious. I had to try. They tasted really good.

JULIA

I can't believe you never told me that.

WALTER

Maybe I was already transforming. Even back then, just a little. Just the tiniest bit. Maybe that's why I've always felt this rush to my life.

JULIA

Well, slow down Walter. Please, slow down.

#### SCENE 4

JULIA & WALTER in bed.

WALTER sits up and screams.

JULIA

What is it? What is it?

WALTER

It hurts.

JULIA

Where?

WALTER

All over. My head. My arms. My stomach.

JULIA

Aw honey. They're growing pains.

WALTER

It won't let up.

JULIA

Walter, there's hair all over the bed. Look, little tiny pieces of hair.

WALTER

I'm trying to will it to stop.

JULIA

That probably just makes it hurt more.

She starts rubbing his shoulders.

WALTER screams again and stands up.

WALTER

Don't touch me.

JULIA

I'm sorry!

WALTER

It's just--

I don't want to be touched right now.

JULIA

Okay.

What can I do, then?

WALTER

Nothing.

JULIA

Show me where it hurts.

WALTER

Don't talk to me like I'm a kid.

JULIA

I'm not. I'm being sympathetic.

WALTER

Well it makes me feel worse.

JULIA turns and faces away from him.

He groans.

She has some water by her bedside that she gives to him.

JULIA

Here. Drink some water.

He drinks and flinches.

Better?

WALTER

Not really.

JULIA

God, I wish I could just feel what you feel.

WALTER

No you don't.

JULIA

I'm saying at least we would be in this together.

WALTER

We can't be in this together. It's something we can't do together, because it's happening to me.

JULIA

What I feel right now is the lack of feeling. The lack of pain. The lack of transforming. All I feel is lack.

WALTER

I don't want to hear how sad you are about how little pain you're in.

JULIA

I'm sorry. I just want to know how you feel.

WALTER

And I don't want you to know how I feel.

JULIA

Then what do you want, Walter? Do you want me to leave you alone?

WALTER

No.

JULIA

Is this how you want us to remember our lives? Us fighting?

WALTER

No.

JULIA

What do people do in times like this? Is there a manual? Is there some sort of list?  
Do you want to travel the world and go skydiving? Do you want to fuck a bunch of redheads?  
What do you want?

WALTER

I just don't want to hurt.

JULIA

...

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

I'm not being fair.

WALTER

This isn't something we can prepare for. We don't know what it will be like until it happens.

JULIA

I know.

WALTER

This is really hard. This has been really hard, Julia.

JULIA

What are you thinking about?

WALTER

Little things.

JULIA

Like what?

WALTER

Rabbits can't wear wedding rings.

JULIA

But you're not a rabbit yet.

WALTER

No. Not yet.

JULIA

We can get through this. I'm not giving up.

WALTER

I'm not either.  
I think it might help if you rubbed my shoulders.

JULIA

Are you sure?

WALTER

Just a little.

She rubs his shoulders.

#### SCENE 5

DORN holds a casserole. JULIA in pajamas vacuuming.

DORN

I made you this casserole.

JULIA

What?

She turns off the vacuum and picks some hair off her clothes.

DORN

I made you this casserole.

JULIA

Why?

DORN

It's a common gesture of empathy.

JULIA

Who are you Betty Crocker?

DORN

(obviously)  
No.

JULIA

I'm sorry, Dorn. It's not you. It's just that my house is a mess.

DORN

Oh, everyone always says that, but it's never really that bad. People are just sensitive.

JULIA

No really. It's a mess. Walter shit all over the floor.

DORN

What?

JULIA

Look!

She holds up a plastic baggie filled with poop.

DORN

Oh.

JULIA

I knew his body would change, that's one thing, but everything else has changed too. And look at all the hair. Fur. He really has more and more hair every single day.

DORN

Every day?

JULIA

Is that normal?

DORN

It could be a side effect of something else...or...I don't want to worry you.

JULIA

It's too late for that, just tell me what to expect.

They sit down together. DORN talks patiently to her.

DORN

Okay. He's going to start eating a lot, shedding constantly. And lots of energy. I mean a lot of energy.

JULIA

Most of that is already happening.

DORN

And sometimes rabbits, now this is at a later stage in the transformation, but you need to know-

JULIA

What?

DORN

Well, to fully digest their food they have to...re-digest.

JULIA

What?

DORN

They have to eat their own—

JULIA

Wait, no...they have to eat their poop?

DORN

It's a rabbit trait.

JULIA

I can't do this.

I can't watch my husband eat his own poop.

DORN

We have to.

JULIA

Dorn, god! Why don't people tell you about this? All people talk about is the heartbreak, the pain, but they don't talk about how terrifying it is too. How they fall apart in front of you. The smells and the sadness. The trying to help them while holding your breath.

DORN

I know.

And there is something else too.

JULIA

What else? What else could there possibly be?

DORN

Now the studies aren't clear on this, but I've personally noticed my transformation patients have a sharp increase in...

He does a strange unrecognizable hand motion.

JULIA

What?



DORN

Uhm they seem to be a little bit more...their libido greatly increases.

JULIA

Oh...OH.

DORN

Like I said, there is no statistic on this. But I have found it to be almost universally so.

JULIA

Well at least there's one perk!

DORN is uncomfortable.  
He hands her the casserole.

DORN

I'm sorry. Do you want this?

JULIA

Sure.

DORN

You'll eat it won't you?

JULIA

I'll eat it, but it makes me sad.

She opens the foil and picks at it. They pick at the casserole together.

DORN

Where's Walter?

JULIA

He went to the farm.

DORN

Have him come to my office and talk to me.

JULIA

He won't.

DORN

Why not?

JULIA

You act...cold.

DORN

How am I cold? I brought a casserole.

JULIA

You talk to him like it's your job.

DORN

It is my job.

JULIA

There's a level of formality in your voice.

DORN

I have to talk to my patients like that. If I don't, I get upset. I get too invested.

JULIA

Walter is family. You're already invested.

DORN

It's just how I cope.

You see the patient. They're a person. They're a human.

They look up at you with these begging eyes. Always begging.

This "save me save me save me."

And sometimes you can. And it's good. And the family sends you a card that says "thank you."

And sometimes you can't, and it's awful. So you send their family a card that says "sympathy."

And that's that. It all gets to be a bit too much after awhile.

JULIA

I can't imagine having to deal with that everyday.

DORN

Have you talked to Mom?

JULIA

You know her. Smile and drink a martini and pretend everything's fine.

DORN

That's her way.

JULIA

It's not mine.

...

What do you think it's like in the Sacred Green Space?

DORN

I like to imagine that all the rabbits sit around and just eat cake together.

JULIA

That sounds nice.

DORN

It's more of a dream I return to.

JULIA

I like cake.

DORN

What do you think happens?

JULIA

Nothingness, dullness. Just chewing on hay and staring into oblivion.

DORN

It's past noon and you're still in your pajamas.

JULIA

I don't see the point of changing now.

DORN

You always wear the weirdest outfits.

JULIA

They're not weird. They're fashion forward.

DORN

You left the house one time wearing a kids jumper, a leather jacket, and bowling shoes.

JULIA

Well we can't all become doctors.

DORN

I'm only joking. I'm glad you're a fashion designer. I brag about it to people.

JULIA

Change your clothes, change your life. When you wear a dramatic dress you don't have to talk. Your clothes talk for you.

But lately I haven't cared about any of that. I can't seem to get anything done.

DORN

You should get dressed up and go out. You and Walter. It will be good for you. It will be good for you to do something fun.

JULIA imagines going out on a date with WALTER, and how nice it would be. Then she thinks about how WALTER might shit on the floor of the restaurant, or what if they see someone they know, but don't know well enough to talk about WALTER's illness with? This makes JULIA feel tired.

JULIA

It is very sad. It is very sad to watch your husband turn into a rabbit.

DORN

Yes it is.

JULIA

Thanks for the casserole.

DORN begins to exit.

Wait! Here.

JULIA hands him a lint roller. He uses it and hands it back, then leaves.

WALTER enters.

He has more fur on his body and is holding a box of dirt.

He hops into the room.

WALTER

I saw Dorn outside.

JULIA

He brought a casserole. He wants to help prolong your life.

WALTER

With the casserole?

JULIA

Maybe.

WALTER

I think I'm ready to quit things.

JULIA

I think I'm ready to cling to things.

So what's with the dirt?

WALTER

I went to the farm, packed up all my stuff, and left.

JULIA

Oh. I'm sorry.

WALTER

I loved being a farmer.

JULIA

I know.

WALTER

I liked taking a seed and putting it in the ground and watching that seed make many, many different things that people could eat.

I liked seed metaphors, like how watching a seed grow up through the concrete was similar to the resilience of the human spirit.

I liked picking dirt out from underneath my fingernails at the end of the day.

I liked it when people said, "you only need a doctor once in your life, but you need a farmer everyday." Because everyone has to eat.

JULIA

Yes. They do.

WALTER

If you don't eat you...

JULIA

Turn into a rabbit.

WALTER

So everyone has to eat.

They stare at the dirt.

JULIA

Our first date was in the dirt.

WALTER

It wasn't a real date. It was more of an accidental date.

JULIA

Those are the best kind.

They go back in time over the dirt.

WALTER

This is where I work.

JULIA

It's beautiful out here. The air smells like...honey.

They inhale.

WALTER

It's pretty great.

JULIA

It's so cool that you work in the dirt.

WALTER

Is it?

JULIA

Well, that you work with plants. With your hands. That you make things grow. You make life!

WALTER

I don't think of it as working *in* the dirt as much as working *with* the dirt.

JULIA

Like nature is your co-worker.

WALTER

Yeah.

JULIA

That's so real. I sit in a room. I'm not real.

WALTER

You're real.

JULIA

How do you know?

WALTER

You look real.

JULIA

Maybe I'm just a mirage.

WALTER

You sound real.

JULIA

Well people hear what they want to hear.

WALTER goes up to her and touches her.

WALTER

You feel real.

They break away.

JULIA

Is it hard to grow lettuce?

WALTER

Not at all. It's one of the easiest things to grow. Not like root vegetables. Root vegetables take months.

JULIA

Let me try some.

He picks a leaf of lettuce off a plant and hands it to her.

WALTER

The Native Americans thought eating lettuce prevented smallpox.

JULIA

Boy were they in for a shock!

WALTER

Hey, it's not funny. It's sad.

JULIA

I know. I think it's sad.

WALTER

Okay. Good. Because it is.

JULIA

I know. I'm sad.

WALTER

Cool.

They stare at each other. Did they just fight? She chews lettuce.

So do you like the taste? I think it's sort of bitter.

JULIA

Can you get drunk off lettuce?

WALTER

Maybe you need to sit down.

JULIA

It's all this chewing. It's making me feel loopy.

She sits down.

WALTER

Chewing is hard on the jaw.

JULIA

Chewing is so trashy.

WALTER

Yeah, classy people never chew. They just make a juice out of everything and drink it through a straw.

JULIA

I'm glad we're not classy.

WALTER

We're wild!

JULIA

Ya, we're wild! We live in dirt! Here eat this.

She feeds him some lettuce.

WALTER

Oh I think I'm getting tipsy.

JULIA

I'm going to have to cut you off.

They kiss. Julia turns away.

WALTER

I think I really like you.



JULIA

I like you too.

WALTER

I know we haven't known each other for that long, but I think I'm like 35% in love with you.

JULIA

Really?

WALTER

Yeah. So, I if you don't feel the same way I will be like 65% okay. But I also will be sad. Maybe like 45% sad.

JULIA

The number just increased.

WALTER

Oh. Damn.

They kiss again.

JULIA

I love dirt. I love lettuce.

They kiss some more.

JULIA

I love percentage increases.

They return to the present.

I love you.

WALTER

I want to plant something in this dirt. I want to watch a seed grow, and get dirt under my fingernails. I know it's not the same as a farm, but I think it will help. It will help me cope.

JULIA

I like that.

What are you going to plant?

Lights shine on WALTER. Rabbit ears are placed on his head.

WALTER

I'm going to plant carrots.

SCENE 6

JULIA is watering the dirt. Tiny sprouts are growing.  
WALTER is eating a giant stalk of celery and crawling around on the floor.  
He starts chewing on the couch. JULIA notices.

JULIA

Walter! Walter, here.

She redirects his head towards the celery.

WALTER

Mmmm.

JULIA

Here.

She helps pull him up to his feet.

Want to take a look at the seeds?

He hops over to the dirt.

WALTER

They look good.

JULIA

Do they?

WALTER

They're perfect.

JULIA

You think so?

WALTER

They are going to taste like...salvation.

JULIA

Walter, something about this seems strange.  
It seems morbid.

WALTER

It's efficient. We decided it's efficient.

JULIA

Yes, we did.

But, I don't know.

Look at them poking up through the ground like little bits of despair.

WALTER

I could eat anything. I could eat this whole house.

JULIA

This seems wrong. Most people wait until they actually transform before they have anything to do with carrots. And most people don't grow them on their own. They are delivered. That's how it should be. The system is set in place for a reason. Growing them here, now, is like inviting pain into our house.

WALTER

I'm so hungry I could eat the whole world if I had enough time.

JULIA

Walter, are you hearing what I'm saying?

I just don't feel good about growing these.

WALTER

But you can feed them to me when I'm a—

JULIA

Don't say it.

WALTER

Why?

JULIA

I don't like it to hear it.

WALTER

Not talking about it doesn't change the fact that I'm going to turn into—

JULIA

Don't say it.

WALTER

Oh, so if we don't say the word it might not exist, right?

JULIA

No. I just don't want to THINK about it.

WALTER

So words have magical powers?

JULIA

Maybe they do.

WALTER

So if we say the word "Bus" instead of "Rabbit" I'll turn into a bus?

JULIA

You're being mean.

WALTER

Rabbit.

JULIA

Stop!

WALTER

Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit!

JULIA

What is wrong with you?

WALTER

I don't see the point in avoiding it anymore. Being superstitious. Being silly. It's what I'm becoming. It's what you'll become one day. It's what becomes of us all. Rabbits!

JULIA

I said I don't like it!

WALTER

I don't like it either. Rabbit.

JULIA

What does it matter to you if I want to avoid the word? If it makes me feel better, what does it matter?

WALTER

Yeah, yeah you're right...  
Rabbit.

JULIA

Please!

WALTER

Raaaaaabit!

JULIA

Why say out loud what we have to stare in the face everyday? Why give it that power?

WALTER

Rabbit!

JULIA

What are you trying to prove?

WALTER

Say it! Rabbit! Rabbit!

JULIA

No. I won't.

JULIA is sitting with her hands over her ears. WALTER is jumping around.

WALTER

Rabbit! Say it! Rabbit! Say it! Rabbit! Rabbit! Rabbit!  
Rabbit! Rabbit! Rabbit! Rabbit! Rabbit!  
RAAAAABBBIT.

JULIA

Walter? Walter! What are you doing?  
Stop it!

WALTER

Rabbit! Rabbit!  
Rabbit!  
I'm becoming a RABBIT!

WALTER is jumping around her on the couch.  
He grabs her by the shoulders and starts shaking her while he yells.  
She tries to push him off, but he is in a manic state.  
She screams and falls.

JULIA

WALTER!

He realizes what he has done and stops.

Oh shit.  
What happened?

WALTER

You pushed me.

JULIA

Why?

WALTER

I don't know.

JULIA

I got a little carried away.

WALTER

You hurt me.

JULIA

Julia—

WALTER

You were a maniac!

JULIA

I'm sorry.

WALTER

I can't take this!  
I expected you to become feeble and weak.

JULIA

I did too.

WALTER

I expected you to become helpless.

JULIA

I am helpless.

WALTER

Instead you're becoming an animal.

JULIA

WALTER

Not an animal, just a rabbit.

JULIA

I can't do this.

I can't clean up after you.

I can't watch you eat shit just to be yelled at and thrown on the floor.

WALTER

I'm listening now. I'm not yelling now, okay?

Please, come sit by me.

JULIA

Not now. I need a minute.

WALTER

Please. I didn't mean to upset you.

I'll try not to yell.

I'll try not to shit on the floor.

I'll never chew the couch again I swear!

JULIA

Give me a second. Okay?

You just scared me.

WALTER

I'm sorry.

I'm so sorry.

I don't know what came over me.

It's frightening.

It's frightening for me.

...

I'm sorry.

She sits by him.

JULIA

It's okay.

WALTER

I don't ever want to hurt you. I don't ever want to do that again.

JULIA

I know.

Me either.

Are you okay now?

WALTER

Yes.

JULIA

Good.

WALTER

I was just so hungry.

He finds him the dilapidated piece of celery and eats it.

Where did you land?

JULIA

Just  
on my arm.

She shows him her elbow. He takes it and kisses it.

I forgive you.

...

I've been praying a lot recently. Who does a person pray to when they're not religious? No God, no church, just shouting requests into the void.

Let him stay, let him stay, let him stay.

Make it stop, make it stop, make it stop. Isn't it stupid?

WALTER

No.

JULIA

Maybe every human prays in their own way.

WALTER

That's what this garden is to me. The carrots. It's my form of prayer.

JULIA

How so? Maybe if you explain it to me, I'll understand better.

WALTER

It's just that, I don't have any control over anything anymore.

Not that anyone does, I guess. But I used to be able to at least convince myself I did.

Back when I had a schedule. A job.

*Plans.* It sounds so stupid now. A calendar. A retirement fund. An appointment at the dentist.



JULIA

That's how people live. You can't go through life without making some sort of plan.

WALTER

I want to own my own land. My own farm. That is complete freedom. Not working for anybody else.

JULIA

I know. I want that for you.

WALTER

I want us to have kids. Kids I could teach things to. Not even big things, but little things. Like what the color red looks like, or how to peel a banana.

JULIA

Yes, I know. I do too.

WALTER

I want a legacy. Not a giant legacy, just a little legacy.  
Like a semicolon instead of a period at the end of my life.  
I don't want to become a rabbit.

JULIA

I don't want you to either.

WALTER

But, we all will. We can't help it  
Everyone is walking a long path towards the rabbit hole.

JULIA

I just wish we just knew what happened in the Sacred Green Space.  
Will you remember me or not?  
Will you remember anything or not?  
I wish it wasn't such a mystery.

WALTER

But, if I grow the carrots then I can provide for myself. I can be responsible. I can be me.  
In my own way.

JULIA

That's one thing I've always loved about you. You always knew who you were. Some people have to discover it over time, but you always just knew.

WALTER

Now it's time to rediscover.

## SCENE 7

WALTER & JULIA get ready for bed.  
They change clothes.  
They brush their teeth.  
They comb their hair.  
They pick dirt out of their fingernails.  
They make the kind of movements you make when you are so sad you don't want to move, but you have to move because you have a body.  
They fall asleep.

The sound of many people yelling and arguing. DORN sits in a judge uniform.

DORN

Order in the court!

He hits a gavel.

I call the defendant to the stand.

JULIA gets out of bed in Pajamas.

JULIA

What? Me? Oh shit. I didn't know I had court today. I haven't prepared for this! I'm not dressed properly.

DORN

You say your husband should NOT be turned into a rabbit? IS this correct?

JULIA

Yes! He CAN not and SHOULD not be turned into a rabbit.

DORN

You may present your case now, please.

JULIA

Uhhmmmm

She finds a file folder and flips through it.

Wait, here's something!

She holds up a document and reads.

Alright, okay... Walter is a GOOD man.

The sound of people arguing.

DORN

Order.

He hits the gavel.

On what grounds is he good?

JULIA

He is kind to children and animals.

DORN

Big deal...aren't we all?

Mutters of "I am" in the crowd.

JULIA

Okay. Uhm...he is a very hard worker.

DORN

So what? We all work hard! Am I right?

CROWD agrees.

JULIA

Uhm...I don't think he's ever stolen anything?

DORN

You think? You *think*? Tell us what you know, not what you think.

JULIA

Okay. Fine. Let's see...Walter is a great snuggler.

DORN & CROWD seem impressed by this.

Listen! He's been changing. Transforming. And it affects more than just him, it affects me too!  
Isn't there some law about that?

DORN

Humm. She has a point.

JULIA

It's better for him and for me that he not be turned into a rabbit. Life was better before all this. He was better. I was better. It was easier to be good. To be a good person when nothing was wrong.

DORN

Alright, fair enough. But on what grounds does being a GOOD person make a strong enough case that he should NOT be turned into a rabbit? Considering that ALL people must eventually become rabbits, does it matter if he is GOOD or BAD?

JULIA

Yes, yes it matters! He does not deserve this.

SOMEONE in the crowd yells "IT'S NOT ABOUT DESERVING IT"

But Walter is young. Doesn't that matter? We must be allotted more time together.

She flips through her file folder.

Yes, I think we signed a document! I seem to remember a document about time.

DORN

There is no document.

JULIA

Isn't there a law about time? The time two people get to spend together?

DORN

There is no law about time.

JULIA

Well, there should be! There should be rules for minimum amount of time you get to spend with a person. Three years isn't enough.

DORN

Okay, how much time do you want then?

JULIA

Oh, uhm...more. Just more. Maybe forever.

Arguing crowd. Gavel.

Okay. Wait! Ten years? Twenty years? Thirty? Is that fair? I can't decide! It feels wrong to decide. But I should be allowed more time with him. Please, more time.

DORN

Julia, there is no law for time.  
You know that.

DORN exits.

JULIA

Walter. Walter?

She crawls back into bed.

Walter!

Walter jumps awake.

WALTER

What is it?

JULIA

Oh, nothing. Nothing.

She cuddles up next to him.

Bad dream.

## SCENE 8

DORN has a stethoscope on WALTER's back.

DORN

Cough.

WALTER coughs.

And inhale.

WALTER breathes deeply. DORN sighs.

WALTER

What?

DORN

It's in your lungs.

WALTER

What does that mean?

DORN

The process goes: first skin, then stomach, then lungs, then brain.

WALTER

So not good?

DORN

It's making our options for treatment slim.

WALTER

What can we do?

DORN

There's a ventilation machine for the lungs. You'd have to use it for a few hours each day. It's not cheap.

WALTER

But how effective?

DORN

2 out of 3 patients have had what we would classify as success.

WALTER

And how do you classify success?

DORN

Meaning it made them feel better rather than worse.

WALTER

So one out of 3 people felt worse?

DORN

Yes.

WALTER

I wish people became tigers instead of rabbits.  
Or dolphins. Or maybe unicorns.

DORN

Unicorns aren't real, Walter.

WALTER

Yes, I know that.

DORN

But being a rabbit is better than a slug.

Think about that.

WALTER

I'm glad I'm not a slug.

DORN

Your pills have been working?

WALTER

Yes. My cravings are subsiding. I just eat vegetables now. I still chew on the furniture sometimes. It's like I see myself doing it but I can't stop.

DORN nods and makes a note on his clipboard.

DORN

I heard you're growing carrots.

WALTER

Julia told you.

DORN

I've never met anyone who grew carrots.  
What do they taste like?

WALTER

They're sweet.

DORN

Like cake?

WALTER

Sort of.

DORN

Cake...carrot...cake. Yes. This all makes sense.

WALTER

Can you be a rabbit and a man too? A husband?

DORN

You'll still be all those things. You'll still be Walter.

WALTER

Will I?

DORN

Theoretically.

WALTER

But I'll also be a rabbit.

DORN

Identity is strange. Man, Woman, Married, Single, Blood Type. Categories.

WALTER

I guess people put a little too much stock into it.

DORN

I heard a woman say once, "I'm a hardwood floor type of gal." And all the people around her were like, "ohh yes, we are too." But I didn't say anything because I like rugs.

WALTER

People like to find ways to measure themselves.

DORN

I suppose they do.

JULIA enters. She is in a GREAT mood. She smiles and hums.

JULIA

Oh, hi Dorn.

She hums while she waters the carrots.

DORN

Hi.

JULIA

You staying for lunch?

DORN

No, I'd better get going soon.

JULIA

Okay, suit yourself.

JULIA walks over to WALTER and kisses him. It's awkwardly passionate.

I'll see you in the kitchen, cowboy.

She winks and exits, still humming.



DORN and WALTER stare at the floor.

WALTER

So, Dorn that thing you mentioned? About the...

DORN

Hum...the...?

WALTER

Yes.

DORN

Oh.

WALTER

Well, I guess I should mention that's been happening too.  
So, does that mean anything? For my treatment?

DORN thinks.

DORN

We have lungs and stomach, bloodstream now. Shit.

WALTER

So should we get the ventilation machine? Or something else? Do you think it will work? I mean, am I going to be the one in three who gets worse not better? Is there a way to tell? There must be a way to tell.

DORN

It's very hard to predict.

WALTER

I read about this man who was on the brink of transformation and then he threw himself into the Atlantic Ocean and it was really cold and he was freezing but he just stayed under the water and held his breath for what felt like a shockingly long time, and when he was down there he said he felt this beaming light, like pounding behind his eyes. And he thought "this is it, this is it, this is it." Then I guess he crawled back to shore and he was fine. And I guess he's still alive today.

...

So should I do that?

DORN

I have something for you.

WALTER

Okay.

DORN pulls a book out of his bag and hands it to Walter.

DORN

It's a health journal.

WALTER

My Transformation and Me.

DORN

Sorry about the lame cover.

WALTER opens the book and reads from it.

WALTER

Day One. Today I find beauty in the ordinary. Today I will be kind to myself.  
Dorn, what is this?

DORN

Some emotions can be very hard to process. Especially these large ones. There isn't a formula for this. You have to figure it out for yourself. I've found writing helps some people.

WALTER

This is bad isn't it?

DORN is speechless.

Dorn?

## SCENE 9

WALTER falls asleep and dreams that there is a RABBIT DANCE!  
The dance should involve 5+ people and show that the world is full of rabbits.

It is clear that JULIA & DORN are not a part of this world. WALTER is not quite a part of this world but almost. He is starting to desire to be a part of this world.

The dance is both whimsical and a little sad. The RABBITS circle WALTER but it is also clear he is not transforming, he is just observing this separate world.

WALTER wakes up laughing, then realizes he was dreaming and falls silent.

SCENE 10

JULIA in her pajamas.  
She holds different colored fabric up to her body.  
Each pattern is more fun than the last.  
She briefly gets into looking at them, but she has no ideas.

WALTER calls out from the bathroom.

WALTER

Julia? Can you--

JULIA

Yes, one second.

She opens the door and emerges a second later with WALTER wrapped in a towel. We see how much more of a rabbit he is.

WALTER

The bathtub clogged.  
Real Bad.

JULIA

I don't mind.

WALTER

You sure?

JULIA

I've gotten used to it. I don't even vacuum the house anymore. I don't lint roll my clothes.  
It's just—

WALTER

Normal now.

JULIA

I hate how the hair collects in the corner, so you can't see it until--

WALTER

Until you move a piece of furniture and then it just (whew!)

He moves his hands out. JULIA laughs.

JULIA

I know it just flies out!

WALTER

Yes!

JULIA

Just a part of the house now.

JULIA combs WALTER.

WALTER sees her fabric on the floor and points to it.

WALTER

Are you making something?

JULIA

Maybe.

She gets up and puts the fabric away.

There's a power in clothes. Memories soak into the fabric. The cells of the people who wore them before. The right dress can possess a person. They can make a person feel stronger or weaker than they actually are. That's why I wanted to design clothes. I wanted to find a way to harness that power.

JULIA holds up one of the pieces of fabric.

WALTER

I've seen that one before.

JULIA

It's a scrap from a dress I made last year.

WALTER

For your birthday.

JULIA

That's right.

WALTER

That was fun.

She holds the fabric close as if there is about to be a flashback.  
But then she puts it away.

JULIA

I don't want to think about that now.

She combs him.

JULIA

Walter. You're not going to...uhm.

WALTER

What is it?

JULIA

I've just been thinking that what if by the time I get to the Sacred Green Space...what if you have a whole new rabbit family?

WALTER

Julia, who even knows what the rabbits do in the green space. They probably just sit all day in quiet meditation.

JULIA

Or they might be having giant rabbit sex parties!

WALTER

Are you really worried about this?

JULIA

I don't know. It just crossed my mind.

WALTER

After I leave, one day, you are going to meet someone new.

JULIA

Walter, please.

WALTER

No. You will. You're young. It's OK.

JULIA

It's not OK.

WALTER

I don't want you to be alone.

I don't want you to live your whole life alone.

JULIA

But how can I be with someone else when I love you?

WALTER

Let's not talk about this.

JULIA

I didn't mean to be weird.

WALTER

I don't want to think about you with someone else.

JULIA

I don't want to think about you with someone else either.

JULIA crawls into bed.

JULIA picks up a book.

Come lay down.

WALTER can no longer lay in bed. He sits crouched like a rabbit.

JULIA tucks the blanket around WALTER.

Comfy?

WALTER

Yes. What book are you reading?

JULIA

It's a memoir about a woman who climbs Mt. Everest wearing only a wedding dress.

WALTER

That must have been cold.

JULIA

I think it's a metaphor for devotion, but I'm not sure. I'm only on page 30. She just descended the first summit. She has a sherpa who used to be an alcoholic. It's a side plot.

WALTER

Interesting.

I am suddenly feeling very tired.

JULIA

I keep having this strange reoccurring dream.

WALTER

What happens?

JULIA

I'm a lawyer. And the judges face looked just like Dorn's.

WALTER

Do you win the case?

JULIA

It's hard to say.

WALTER

My dreams have been kind of a blur lately. I had one where...I think we were all dancing.

JULIA

Oh, that's fun.

WALTER

Dreams are strange.

JULIA

It's fun to remember them.

It's like learning secrets you keep from yourself.

WALTER

Read part of that book to me.

JULIA

You sure? It might keep you awake.

WALTER

I want to hear it.

JULIA clears her throat.

JULIA

"I turned to see the harsh ice peak behind us. Its summit slowly dipping out of sight. The hem of my wedding dress blending in with the sparkling white snow."

WALTER

Does she mention her dress a lot?

JULIA

Only about every other page.

WALTER

Ha.

Go on.

JULIA

"To think we had just been struggling up that summit a few days earlier. The first battle now conquered. But as I looked forward, I knew there would be other mountains. Other battles. And that behind each mountain is another mountain. So is the way of life. One foot in front of the other. We are never done climbing."

She stops reading.

Behind each mountain is another mountain.

WALTER

That's why I've never had much interest in hiking.

JULIA

We hiked today.

WALTER

Around the neighborhood. That's different than an ice mountain.

JULIA

Hiking sounds cooler though. "I'm a hiker." it sounds better than "I'm a walker."

WALTER

Or a hopper.

JULIA

Right.

WALTER

What made you pick that book?

JULIA

It was awarded Best Existential Women's Adventure Novel of the year.

WALTER

I thought it was because of the dress.

JULIA

That did catch my eye. But I guess it was more for the adventure.

They smile.

JULIA reaches for the glass of water by her bed. It is empty.

JULIA

Do you want any water?



I'm not thirsty.

WALTER

She leaves the room.

WALTER becomes a rabbit.

JULIA re-enters and gasps with shock.

#### SCENE 11

JULIA and DORN stare at the rabbit.

JULIA  
And then just like that it was over.

DORN  
I've noticed that with my patients too. It always seems sudden, even when it takes a long time.

JULIA  
It still looks like Walter, don't you think?

DORN  
Does he have water?

JULIA  
Yes, I just filled it.

DORN  
Make sure he can reach it.

JULIA  
He can reach it.

DORN  
Okay.

JULIA  
There were so many things I wanted to tell him.

DORN  
You can tell them to him now.

JULIA  
But will he understand?

DORN  
We don't know.

JULIA  
We don't know.

DORN  
But it's worth a try.

JULIA  
What should I do?

DORN  
You have friends.

JULIA  
It's not the same.

DORN  
You can always talk to me if you need to.

JULIA  
Thank you but it's not the same.

DORN  
There are lots of things you can do to help. You can pray. Or join a club. Or meditate! There are new studies that show meditation can significantly decrease—

JULIA  
Please stop talking.

JULIA reaches towards a wine bottle.  
DORN moves it away.

DORN  
You don't want to go down that road.

JULIA  
Why not?  
Smile and drink a martini and pretend everything's fine.

DORN  
That's not you.  
One day at a time, Julia. Just one day at a time.

JULIA

I hate that saying. The last thing I want to think about is tomorrow.

DORN

It's not a saying, it's a truth. A fact of life. Our lives pass like that. Tuesday then Wednesday.

JULIA

Is there anything else we can do for him?

DORN

Take care of him. Feed him. Give him water.

JULIA

No, I mean is it really over? Is this really the end?

I'm looking at him and he's right there.

He's right there!

DORN

No. It's over.

JULIA

He's right there! He's right there!

DORN

It's over.

JULIA

Why couldn't you do more! As a doctor? I thought you could do something more.

DORN

I did what I could.

JULIA

All those years of med school! All those dollars and tests and days for what?

DORN

We tried Julia! I know. Do you think I feel good about this?

JULIA

I thought we could save him.

DORN

I thought that too. I hoped that. I looked at the facts. I read the diagnosis but I still had hope. I wanted to save him, for you. For the family. But no one can prevent the inevitable.

JULIA

It just looks like, a costume, an outfit. Transformation: the greatest outfit change of your life.

DORN

The one you can't take off.

JULIA pulls a carrot out of the ground.

DORN

Just remember: time heals all.

JULIA

Fuck you.

DORN walks away from her.

Don't leave.

DORN approaches her.

DORN

I had this dream recently. A vision of a world where no one turned into rabbits.

JULIA

If only there was such a place.

DORN

But instead of transforming they just, vanished. First went their voice, then their breath, and then they slowly washed away into dust. And it was if this place was existing now, somewhere far away, but at the same exact time as us.

JULIA pulls a carrot out of the carrot garden.

JULIA

Oh, Walter.

DORN

In some strange way it comforted me. To think of another world existing at the same time as ours. Maybe in that world, things ended differently. Maybe in this world we are all at a birthday part, who knows.

JULIA crawls in the pen with WALTER and feeds him the carrot.

Is he eating it?

JULIA nods "yes"

If you could have anything in the world right now, what would you want?

JULIA

My husband back.

DORN

What about...coffee?

JULIA

Okay.

Coffee.

Coffee sounds good.

## SCENE 12

JULIA stands next to the rabbit in his pen.

She is wearing a stunning black dress, almost grand, with a pillbox hat.

She takes a large sip of wine and sets it down.

JULIA

Well, this is it Walter. One year.

Without you all I have is wine. Oh, what a stupid joke. As if wine could replace a life. I guess it does for some people. What are they called? Winos? Sounds like Rhinos. Ha. Maybe I'll become one of those.

The first month I woke up every morning and I forgot you had changed. I thought you were still whole. Still you. But after a few months I stopped forgetting. And the cards stopped coming. The cards with the blue flowers on the front.

Everyone wrote the most beautiful cards for us. Didn't they, Walter?

But people like to keep grief at an arms length. Like it's contagious. Because friends can still ignore your phone calls. They can ignore your tears. They can fill their life with things besides you. But I guess if you show up at their house they let you in, and that is something. That really is something.

But you know what, where are they today? For the love of God don't I at least deserve a fucking casserole?

Okay. You're right, Walter. I'm getting carried away.

She collects herself.

I wish you could see my hat today, Walter. Can you? It would have made you proud. It has character. I designed this whole outfit just for today. Just for you.

Do you like it?

It's like I've been living in a dream. A dream where everyday I wear a dress of grief.

A dress I don't know how to take off.

Oh, don't say it Walter. Don't you dare say it! Oh fine, I know. I'm *lucky*.

She laughs.

I should try to feel gratefulness, right? I should keep a gratefulness journal. I should just sit around and meditate on my plethora of gratefulness! Well, okay let me count my blessings for a second. One...I am still a person. I have limbs and skin and a mouth like a human. I can wear clothes and walk and work.

And Two...I am still quite young. I have "my youth." At least that's what people tell me. But what does age matter when you never know what tomorrow will bring? What does age matter when at any point you could open a door and be alone. I might as well be old. I feel old.

It's so stupid, Walter. I had everything I ever wanted to have. Why wasn't I grateful then? Why didn't I wake up every day and scream with joy?

She sips her wine.

I wish the Rabbit Collectors could at least tell us an exact time they're coming over. Maybe they'll forget. They won't forget.

She stands inside the rabbit pen and picks  
the rabbit up.

Sometimes, when I hug you close, and I've already had three glasses of wine, and there is only enough light left for shadows, sometimes then I feel like I can remember everything.

WALTER enters as a human with no rabbit traits.

She sets the rabbit down.

WALTER and JULIA dance together.

The dance is a representation of their past, how they felt about each other, and their collected memories.

WALTER exits.

JULIA goes back to holding the rabbit with  
her eyes closed and a smile on her face.

A knock at the door.

She sets the rabbit down. She slowly walks to  
the door and opens it. The COLLECTOR in a long trench coat  
walks in carrying a small pet carrier.

COLLECTOR

You must be Julia.

She nods.

I'm here for Walter.

JULIA points to the pen. The COLLECTOR walks slowly towards the rabbit.

JULIA

Will he be safe? Will he be happy there?

COLLECTOR

Don't worry, Ma'am. He's going to be fine. He's going to the place where all good rabbits go. You'll see him again there one day. We all will. Don't worry.

JULIA places a kiss on the rabbit's forehead.

JULIA

Goodbye, Walter.

END OF PLAY

## **THE CARE AND KEEPING OF WALTER**

How to put a live rabbit on stage



### **WHY A LIVE RABBIT**

While working on this play it became clear to me and my collaborators that the rabbit **MUST** be a real rabbit. The play has an air of silliness to it, but by the end becomes serious and tragic. That seriousness cannot be accomplished unless a live rabbit is used. Believe me, it can be done!

### **CHOOSING YOUR WALTER**

A big first step is choosing your Walter. I recommend going around to several different shelters and pet stores to find the most confident rabbit. A confident rabbit is one that does not mind being picked up, will let you pet them without hopping away, and shows a generally curiosity in the world around them. If your rabbit does not do these three things, they do not have a life in the theatre. Even though the character Walter is a boy, it is not necessary to get a boy rabbit, as no one will be able to tell the difference.

### **HOUSING YOUR RABBIT**

Someone in the cast, one of the actors, the director, or one of the crew, may volunteer to keep the rabbit. It is best that one member of the team be responsible for the rabbit, though sharing the responsibilities between the group may also prove beneficial. If possible, it may be easiest to keep the rabbit in the theatre, as long as the rabbit is visited once a day to be fed, etc.

Whichever route you choose, it is important that whoever is taking care of the rabbit has read this manual.

### **DAILY CARE**

Walter is not only a member of your cast, he is also a living creature that needs taking care of. Rabbits are not hard to care for once you know what they need.

**WATER:** All living things need water, and rabbits are no exception. Figure out if your rabbit prefers a bowl or a bottle, and give them fresh water once a day.



**HAY:** Hay is 90% of a rabbit's diet. They literally cannot eat too much hay. You can put their hay in a hay ball, or a box, or just spread it across the floor of their pen. Fortunately, it is fairly inexpensive because you will be surprised how much of it they can eat.

**GREENS:** Rabbits also enjoy receiving vitamins & nutrients from greens. A small salad of about 1 cup greens a day will make a rabbit very happy. They can eat many different types of greens, but NO ICEBERG LETTUCE. For some reason, this can kill them. Instead choose romaine or arugula. Feel free to throw in spinach or kale on occasion as well as broccoli, carrots, cucumber, or celery to add a little variety of nutrients to your rabbit's diet.

**TREATS:** A bite of fruit makes a great treat. Ideal fruits are raisins, grapes, raspberries, melon, apple, or banana. Be sure to monitor their treats, because rabbits have a big sweet tooth and will not curb their appetite even if they are full.

**WASTE:** Rabbits can easily be litter box trained. Many may already be trained by the time you get them. Keep a litter box filled with bedding for the rabbits and they will naturally want to pee in the box instead of their cage. You may want to put a little hay in the box to encourage them.

**ACTIVITY:** Rabbits are generally happy in a moderately small space. As long as they can hop around a little within their cage, they should be fine. However, it is important for the rabbits health and well being to let it hop outside of the cage for *at least* twenty minutes a day. Many people do not cage their rabbits at all, but this is up to the choice of the care taker. Just make sure that they do not chew on any nearby electrical chords. Rabbits are sometimes drawn to chewing on electrical chords, which can be dangerous for them and annoying to you. A happy rabbit is a rabbit who gets to hop!

### **INTRODUCING WALTER TO THE GROUP**

So you've selected your actors and your bunny! Now it's time for everyone to come together.

#### **Day One with Walter:**

- Rabbits are prey animals. This makes them very different from a dog or cat who can defend themselves. They are fairly helpless creatures, so it is important that you allow them time to warm up to you. They may have acted very friendly at the pet store, but are suddenly shy and frightened when you bring them into the theatre. This is natural. Once the rabbit feels comfortable with their routine, they will act like themselves again. This should only take a day or two.
- The important thing on this first day is to give the rabbit space. Your actors may want to immediately scream and hug the bunny when they see it, but this will not help in building their future relationship. It is most important for the actor who plays Julia to have a strong bond with the rabbit, as she holds him the most.
- Allow the rabbit outside of their pen to hop around the perimeter of the space. They should naturally choose to do this and it will help them feel safe and free of external threats.

- I recommend that on this first day no one touch the rabbit unless it hops up directly to you as a gesture of friendship. Instead, simple observation and offering up a few treats will build the rabbits trust.

#### Day Two With Walter:

- Now that your rabbit knows the space and has met the actors, it is acceptable for them to approach the rabbit on their own. Rabbits like being pet on their nose and over the top of their head most of all. Most rabbits do not enjoy being touched on their feet, tail, or low back.
- Routine is important, not only for the rabbit, but also for the actors and crew. The more rehearsals the rabbit is at, the better. This allows the cast to see him as Walter, a part of the show, and not a novelty.

#### Day Three With Walter:

- By now the rabbit is beginning to accept the routine, and should be feeling more safe. If you have chosen a proper Walter and followed the steps to safe acclimation, you should be ready to practice picking up your Walter. Some rabbits can be picked up easily by anyone. Others will fight it to such a degree that they can injure themselves. Here are some steps to safely & effectively pick up your bunny:
  - Always pick up your rabbit gently but with great confidence. I was told to pick up the rabbit like the house is on fire and you have to save it. The rabbit can sense your urgency.
  - Rabbits feel safe in a dark confined space, so if they are struggling when you pick them up, tuck their head into your elbow or armpit and hug them close. This will allow them to feel secure.
- Theatre is an unpredictable world. It is important to get your bunny used to the possible sounds a large audience would produce. Introduce the sound of group laughter and clapping to the bunny and take note of how they react. It may not phase them at all, or may startle them. Either way it is something you may need to slowly condition your rabbit to accept.
- Being under bright lights are a part of being on stage. Though this will most likely not affect your rabbit, you should treat this the same way as you do sound, and make sure this does not upset them.

#### Day Four With Walter:

- You may now start rehearsing your scenes with Walter the Rabbit as you wish. The rabbit should now be acclimated to the space, accepting of the actors, and starting to understand the routine.
- Just as you got your Walter adjusted to your rehearsal room, it is important to make sure they feel safe on the actual performance stage as well.
- I recommend that you choose one crew member whose job it is to take the rabbit on and off stage. This crew member should form a similar type of bond to the rabbit that the actors do, so the rabbit feels safe during scene transitions.

The rest of the days are up to your rehearsal schedule. As I stated above, the more days that Walter can be there, the better.

### **WALTER ON STAGE**

Though the choice of how to reveal Walter on stage is entirely up to that of the production, there is however, one condition:

1) The rabbit must never be in any harm.

This may seem like a simple rule, but rabbits are flight animals, and will always run when feeling threatened. As each production gets to know their rabbit they will have a better sense of what can or cannot be done in the reveal and in the remaining scenes.

I also recommend that even if Walter is to be held through the entire scene, there should be some sort of pen to set them down, in case Walter gets scared or fidgety.

Having a backstage area for Walter is also important. I recommend a quiet part of the green room where the rabbit can relax. You do not want to have your rabbit stressed out before they even go on stage, or they will be more likely to react in a negative way.

If you follow these instructions you should have a happy rabbit that will be able to easily handle the unique experience of being on stage.



Production still by Louis Stein, *Where All Good Rabbits Go*

### **ONCE THE SHOW IS OVER**

Once the play has had its full run, Walter will need to find a new home outside the theatre. If no one in your cast or crew has fallen deeply in love with the rabbit, an alternative home should be considered. As you have learned, taking on a rabbit is no small feat, and you need to find a home

owner who understands the responsibilities. If no one in your community wants to take the rabbit, please take your Walter to a Rabbit Rescue. This is a shelter that focuses solely on rabbits. Most shelters accommodate mostly dogs and cats, with rabbits as an afterthought. This is no way to treat the star of your show. Ideally choose a shelter that is not over run with rabbits, and can devote the time and energy needed to find Walter his forever home. In emergency situations, please call the playwright and I will help you find a home for the rabbit.

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

All living things occasionally get sick. Here are ways to cure common rabbit illnesses on your own, and signs to watch out for in case of a serious illness.

### **Stomach Issues:**

Rabbits have very sensitive stomachs. They cannot puke! So it is important to make sure they are using the bathroom in a normal, healthy way. If their stool ever becomes soft, you may be feeding them too many treats. Stop all treats and give them only hay and water for three days. Also good for the digestive tract of rabbits is a scoop of purred pumpkin (no pumpkin pie spices), a bite of fresh mint leaf, thyme, or a bite of pineapple.

**If your rabbit ever stops eating entirely or has diarrhea, this is a sign of a more serious problem, and a vet should be contacted immediately.**

### **Colds:**

It is not uncommon for a rabbit to sneeze or get a tiny cold. This may be a sign that their cage needs cleaning. If mucus is coming out of the nose or eyes, wipe a swab of tea tree oil around the area to clear up any infection. Dandelion leaves are also excellent for promoting respiratory health. If these natural healing remedies do not work, and the problem continues or gets worse, then you should take the rabbit to the vet.

### **Ear Mites:**

Depending on which rabbit you choose, their ears may need to be occasionally cleaned to avoid ear mites. If your rabbit's ear is looking dirty, wipe it out with a clean cloth, and gently remove any debris with tweezers. If it looks like your rabbit does have ear mites put 6-7 drops of tea tree oil in the rabbit's ear to soothe the skin and suffocate the mites. If this natural healing remedy does not work, and the rabbit is constantly scratching their ears, you should take your rabbit to the vet.

### **Stress:**

Being in front of an audience is stressful for anyone, especially an animal who does not know what is going on. Giving your rabbit a bite of fresh rosemary, lavender, or lemon balm before the show will help keep them calm.

### **Veterinarian:**

If a vet's appointment is desired, visit this list of quality rabbit veterinarians, composed by the House Rabbit Society: <http://rabbit.org/vet-listings>

## **THE LANGUAGE OF RABBITS**

Your rabbit cannot talk to you, but there are certain ways they communicate with their body language that will let you know how they are feeling.

**Binky:** A binky is a happy hop. It is when all four rabbit paws leave the ground in quite a dramatic way. This is how rabbits express joy.

**Flop:** If your rabbit flops onto the ground, you might be startled thinking it has passed out. This is just their way of telling you they are feeling very comfortable. Whenever a rabbit exposes its stomach it means it is feeling very non-threatened.

**Lounging:** Much like a flop, a rabbit may lay down, completely relaxed. If they do this for long periods of time without other activity it may be a sign they are feeling sick. But 9 times out of 10 they are just feeling comfortable.

**Thump:** There is no mistaking a rabbit's thump. It is very loud! Especially considering how small rabbits are. A thump is when a rabbit hits their back legs hard against the ground. They do this when they are angry, wanting something, or if they are feeling threatened.

**Flick:** If you see your rabbit give an extra flick of their feet when they hop away from you, you have done something they do not like! This is basically a rabbits way of giving you the finger.

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I hope you now feel more confident about putting a rabbit on stage, and have learned how to properly care for your Walter. If you have more questions, please visit the House Rabbit Society webpage, or contact the playwright for more information.

