

a cloth like gauze

a play by oliver nowak

Characters

LUTHER: *An ex-medic of the Allied Forces. A survivor of D-Day. “...we could be who we are without remembering what we once were...”*

TOMMY: *An ex-Nazi soldier. A survivor of D-Day, also... “...seein udder people fucked up, ya know, makes em feel better. Makes em feel like dey ain’t knee-deep in da shit demselves...”*

CORNELIUS: *A greasy speed-freak. A product of the easy availability of Benzedrine in the 50’s. “...look I don’t give a fuck. I need the money...”*

WOMAN/MA: *A survivor... “...I haven’t been clean since...”*

Setting

1950's Suburban House: The dining room.

Time period

1950's

**“...to different minds,
the same world is a hell,
and a heaven.”**

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Act One

Prologue

(A dining room. A window covered by dusty venetian blinds is Up Stage Right. A door is Up Stage Left. The dining table, in the center of the room, is big enough for six people. There are five chairs. A chair is missing at the head of the table, which is towards Stage Right. LUTHER lies stiffly on the table. TOMMY stands in the basement door and looks at him.)

TOMMY

De whole world went black. An I prayed an prayed. Hoping dat I was alright.

LUTHER

That maybe it was all just flesh wounds.

TOMMY

Somebody would send for help.

LUTHER

But nobody had seen what happened.

TOMMY

I could feel it. De sharpness of it.

LUTHER

How it burned.

TOMMY

It was like my chest was on fire.

LUTHER

And when I opened my eyes *(HE opens his eyes.)* and looked-

TOMMY

I saw dat *I* was on fire.

LUTHER

A piece of metal stuck in my chest.

TOMMY

I saw him walk towards me.

(HE walks towards LUTHER.)

That's when it ended.

LUTHER

An I was powerless to stop it.

TOMMY

I tried to scream for help. But no sound came from my throat.

LUTHER

Inside my head de screams were deafening.

TOMMY

(LUTHER rises up stiffly.)

There were voices.

LUTHER

But I could only flinch at the sound of twisting metal.

TOMMY

I had hope.

LUTHER

(LUTHER slides off the table.)

I wanted to live.

TOMMY

And leave the wreckage behind.

LUTHER

To become...*(TOMMY lays down on the table.)*...human again.

TOMMY

Someding other then what I was.

LUTHER

Hesitation kills.

TOMMY

LUTHER
And I did not hesitate.

TOMMY
My lungs, filled wid smoke...I couldn't talk.

LUTHER
I saw the dirt on your face.

TOMMY
I wanted to be clean again.

LUTHER
I tried to rub it off.

TOMMY
I couldn't see his face.

LUTHER
I scrubbed.

TOMMY
I gurgled.

LUTHER
And the more I scrubbed the more it peeled away.

TOMMY
An den da whole world went black. (*Lights fade quickly.*)

MA (*Voice-over.*)
And I haven't been clean since.

(End Scene.)

Scene 1

(TOMMY and LUTHER are peeking through the blinds. TOMMY has the better view. Flashing siren lights filter through them.)

Think they saw us? LUTHER

Naah. TOMMY

(Pause.)

It was pretty obvious. LUTHER

What? TOMMY

Us. LUTHER

(Pause.)

Don't worry about it. *(Pause.)* Don't worry about it. They woulda knocked already. TOMMY

Think? LUTHER

Yah. TOMMY

Yeah. LUTHER

(Pause.)

We called em anyway. TOMMY

LUTHER

Yeah...

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Dat innersection, I'm tellin ya, da city's gotta fix it. Too many fuckin car crashes. Dat's all I'm sayin... Betcha Donna Reed don't live near an innersection like dat.

(Pause.)

LUTHER

Think he'll say somethin'?

TOMMY

Da driver?

LUTHER

Yeah.

TOMMY

He was fuckin delirious! He ain't gonna know whether ta shit or go blind.

(LUTHER walks to the table and sits down, lights a cigarette.)

LUTHER

Fuck.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Look at all dem rubbaneckas...

LUTHER

(Turns around.) Yeah? Fuckin lookin for somethin more excitin than Donna Reed, eh?

TOMMY

Dat's what I'm sayin.

(TOMMY walks to the table. HE motions for LUTHER to give him a cigarette. LUTHER complies.)

TOMMY

Seein udda people fucked up, ya know, makes em feel better. Makes em feel like dey ain't kneedeep in da shit demselves. Dat's all I'm sayin: people need somedin ta keep demselves from goin crazy...

(Pause.)

LUTHER

She's all fucked up.

TOMMY

She ain't dat fucked up.

LUTHER

You see her face?

TOMMY

Put some bandages on her den. We don't have ta look at her. Prolly better dat way. *(Pause.)* Yeah... Listen, we got ourselves somedin. Somedin dat just fell in our laps. Somedin nice.

LUTHER

What if she dies?

TOMMY

She's burned, sure, but she ain't gonna die. You'll see to it.

LUTHER

I don't wanna have that shit comin back to us, Tommy.

TOMMY

I have faith in ya.

LUTHER

I'm fuckin...I just...That guy, I don't want him sayin nothin...

TOMMY

He was unconscious. I checked.

LUTHER

You checked?

Yah. TOMMY

When? LUTHER

When you was lookin in da dashboard. TOMMY

That's when you checked? LUTHER

Yah. He was fucked, dat's all I'm sayin. TOMMY

You sure? LUTHER

Ludder, I'm ya fuckin brudder, am I gonna shit you? No. I ain't. TOMMY

I'm just sayin...I ain't goin back. LUTHER

You won't. TOMMY

Okay. Great. LUTHER

(Pause.)

Shouldn't one of us check up on her? LUTHER

I dunno, should we? TOMMY

I'm just sayin maybe we should. LUTHER

TOMMY

Well, if you're so fuckin concerned...

(LUTHER exits through the door.)

TOMMY

I get first crack at her: just so ya know! *(To himself.)* Ya fuckin bastard.

(TOMMY walks back to the window and peeks out. LUTHER enters.)

LUTHER

(Pause.) She's still unconcious.

TOMMY

She's alive, though, right?

LUTHER

Yeah. She was breathin. I saw her chest move.

TOMMY

Yah? She gotta nice chest... Donna Reed gotta nice chest...

(Pause.)

LUTHER

Maybe we should clean her up...?

(Pause.)

LUTHER

Her clothes are covered in blood, Tom. We gotta do somethin.

TOMMY

So, she's out, eh?

LUTHER

Yeah. Fuckin gone.

(TOMMY starts for the basement door.)

LUTHER

You goin?

Yah, what da fuck.

TOMMY

(LUTHER watches him go, stands for a second and then walks to the window. HE peeks through the blinds and lights another cigarette. HE walks back to the table and sits down. HE pulls out a pack of cards and deals himself Solitaire. TOMMY enters with blood on his hands. LUTHER looks up but doesn't say anything. TOMMY exits to the kitchen.)

TOMMY

(From kitchen.) Fuckin bitch!

LUTHER

Huh?

(TOMMY comes back with clean, wet hands.)

TOMMY

She's all fucked up!

LUTHER

That's what I been sayin. *(Pause.)* How was it?

TOMMY

Couldn't fuckin do it.

LUTHER

You couldn't do it?

TOMMY

She's all fucked up!

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Ya gotta clean her up.

LUTHER

Me?

Yah. You said you wanted to.

TOMMY

I just said we gotta: we.

LUTHER

I dunno, maybe give her some a your clothes...mine too big...wrap da face up: goddamn. *(Pause.)*
D'you see her face? D'you fuckin see it?!

LUTHER

Yeah.

TOMMY

Fuckin hamburger. We're definitely gonna have ta bag her. Dat's all I'm sayin, cuz I ain't gonna look at dat shit.

(Pause. Luther plays Solitaire.)

Ya got somedin in mind?

TOMMY

I dunno. Like what?

LUTHER

Clothes!

TOMMY

I dunno, I'm just playin cards.

LUTHER

Somedin loose, alright? *(Beat.)* Dat robe. Ya still got dat robe? Da one from da army. Da one dose nips wear.

LUTHER

Japan?

TOMMY

Yah! You still got it?

Naw. LUTHER

Shit! TOMMY

(Pause.)

I still got Ma's hospital shit. LUTHER

You still have dat shit?! I thought I tole you ta throw dat shit away? TOMMY

I forgot. LUTHER

Since when you not doin shit I tell you to do? TOMMY

(Pause.)

You wanna be locked down? TOMMY

Tommy, I'm sorry. LUTHER

You didn't hear what I said: you wanna be locked down? TOMMY

You haven't locked me down since before. LUTHER

I'm askin ya now. TOMMY

(Pause.)

No. LUTHER

Tommy
 Alright, den.

(Tommy stands and walks to the window, peeks through the blinds again.)

Tommy
 Nothin.

Luther
 Huh?

Tommy
 Out dere. Everyding's cleaned up. Doesn't look like nottin happened. Same ole street. Same ole innersection.

(End Scene.)

Scene 2

(Tommy sits at the dining room table reading a newspaper. HE smokes. A half bottle of whiskey is near the ashtray. LUTHER comes up from the basement with a bloody bucket, a trashbag, and a purse.)

Tommy
 You been down there all fuckin night?

Luther
 Yeah.

Tommy
 I thought I tole you I get first-blood?

Luther
 Don't worry about it, Tommy. You will. *(Exits to the kitchen.)*

Tommy
 You been cleanin her up?

Luther
(From kitchen.) Like you told me.

TOMMY

Da fuckin guvna wants ta cut benefits ta immigrants! Believe dat shit?
(LUTHER enters.)

TOMMY

Says, (*reads from newspaper.*) “Ain’t no more immigrants gonna take from us goddamned god-fearin citizens who work like fuckin dogs an eat tv dinners.” (*Laughs.*) When Hitler was in power-

LUTHER

Things would be worse.

TOMMY

(*Pause.*) So, how is she?

LUTHER

Annie?

TOMMY

An-Annie?! What da fuck is dis shit, Annie? She conscious?

LUTHER

I named her.

TOMMY

You named...none a dat shit.

(*Pause.*)

TOMMY

Better dat way.

(*Pause.*)

TOMMY

No names.

(*Pause.*)

LUTHER

We gotta name her.

TOMMY

No we don't. No names.

LUTHER

We're just gonna be cold-blooded about it?!

TOMMY

Yah.

LUTHER

No. No fuckin way. I'm namin her.

TOMMY

Jesus fuckin Christ. Don't you know what dat does? Don't you fuckin unnerstand? Da minute you give her a name, den what? Den ya wanna talk. An den, da shit hits da fan cuz-

LUTHER

It's cold-blooded.

TOMMY

No, no, lemme finish. Da shit hits da fan cuz why? Eh? Can your fuckin dick skull figger dat shit out? *(Pause.)* What happens we gotta dispose a da body? Huh? She gotta name, it's gonna be dat much harder. Yah?

LUTHER

(Pause.) Yeah...*(Pause.)* Yeah.

TOMMY

So no fuckin names. Least of all Annie. What da fuck, you get dat name out da crapper a what?

LUTHER

(Pause.) Her face was a fuckin windshield I took that much glass off her.

TOMMY

Yeh? All cleaned up, though, right?

LUTHER

(Nods.) Wearin Ma's hospital clothes.

TOMMY

Good. Now we got ourselves somedin.

LUTHER

What do we do with her clothes?

TOMMY

I dunno, fuckin throw em in da trash? Maybe cut em up? So dey ain't too recognizable. What's in her purse?

LUTHER

Nothin. Some stuff.

TOMMY

Dump it out. Let's see.

(LUTHER pauses a moment, then dumps contents of purse.)

TOMMY

So whatta we got?

(They look through the pile.)

LUTHER

Lipstick. Glorious red.

TOMMY

A picture a her an dat guy.

LUTHER

Tissue. Receipts for...sparklers.

TOMMY

Some make-up. She gonna need more'n dat now... We got keys. *(Pause.)* Wonder how far her house is?

LUTHER

Pretty far.

(TOMMY puts the keys in his pocket.)

LUTHER

A book. *(Looks through it.)* It's a book of poems, Tommy.

TOMMY
Throw it away. Throw it all away.

LUTHER
And her wallet?

TOMMY
She hadda wallet? Where? I don't see n—

(LUTHER produces one. TOMMY snatches it.)

TOMMY
How much money she have? *(Looks inside the wallet.)*

LUTHER
Nothin. Couple dollars.

TOMMY
Uh-huh. *(Finds the Driver's License and looks at it closely. Pause.)* Dat's what I thought. Gimme it.

(LUTHER produces the money. TOMMY snatches it.)

LUTHER
I ain't gonna call her that.

TOMMY
No names. I don't care what it says on here. It's for your own fuckin good. Unnerstand?

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Good.

(End Scene.)

Scene 3

(LUTHER is playing Solitaire. TOMMY is in the basement door.)

LUTHER
How was it?

Go down dere.

TOMMY

(TOMMY sits down, motions for a cigarette, and lights it.)

You still playin dat fuckin game?

TOMMY

I like it.

LUTHER

Why?

TOMMY

Cuz.

LUTHER

Dat's what I thought. *(Sighs.)* Shit.

TOMMY

Huh?

LUTHER

Thinkin about goin to da house.

TOMMY

Yeah?

LUTHER

Maybe tonight, what da fuck... you doin anyding?

TOMMY

Nothin. Cornelius outta town.

LUTHER

Cornelius. Whatta prick.

TOMMY

He's alright.

LUTHER

TOMMY

He'll steal anyding dat ain't guarded by de SS. I need someone I can trust...

LUTHER

I'm stayin in the car?

TOMMY

Yah, just watch for cops. Honk if dey come, all dat shit.

(Pause.)

LUTHER

The hospital called.

TOMMY

(Gravelly.) Yeh? What? What da fuck now?

LUTHER

Ma's gettin worse.

TOMMY

Fuck! I knew it! I fuckin knew dose fucks weren't gonna do shit! I fuckin knew it!

LUTHER *(Overlap.)*

You were busy an, an...

TOMMY *(Overlap.)*

Do we gotta pay dem muddafucks?! Can we, I dunno...

LUTHER *(Overlap.)*

...the phone was ringin...

TOMMY *(Overlap.)*

...shoot her up or some fuckin shit? Dat's gotta be better den what dey doin.

LUTHER *(Overlap.)*

I picked up the phone. I hadda. It was ringin forever.

TOMMY

Lou, what da fuck?

I picked up the phone...

LUTHER

Da fuck you talkin about?

TOMMY

It was ringin forever, my head was hurtin....

LUTHER

In dis case it was fine but no more. *(Pause.)* You did alright.

TOMMY

You need someone to watch your back, huh?

LUTHER

Aw, fuck it, I'm...I'm too far gone now.

TOMMY

I'm hungry. *(Pause.)* What about her, we gonna feed her?

LUTHER

I never thought a dat.

TOMMY

What do you think she likes?

LUTHER

Don't fuckin know.

TOMMY

Cuz I been thinkin.

LUTHER

Yah?

TOMMY

What happens she gotta take a shit?

LUTHER

A shit? I thought you were talkin about food?

TOMMY

LUTHER

But, you know, what if? I don't wanna have to clean her again. Then there's another problem: showers. She's gonna haveta shower. Member how Ma stank?

TOMMY

Yah.

LUTHER

So we gotta figure somethin out-

TOMMY

Dat's right.

LUTHER

--somethin that's safe for us cuz-

TOMMY

Safe, uh-huh.

LUTHER

--cuz we don't want any accidents-

TOMMY

Fuckin right, no accidents.

LUTHER

--an what's comfortable for her.

TOMMY

Comfortable?

LUTHER

So what are we gonna do?

TOMMY

I'm still on dis comfortable shit. Da hell you talkin 'comfortable'?

LUTHER

She's a human being.

TOMMY

She is?

LUTHER
No listen, Tommy.

TOMMY
What?! I gotta give her flowers?!

LUTHER
The less threatened she feels, the less she's gonna resist.

TOMMY
I told you dis before. What happens we gotta dispose a her? Huh?

LUTHER
I ain't gonna clean her every goddamned day!

TOMMY
Nottin dat she doesn't need. Dat's all I'm sayin...

LUTHER
Fine.

(Pause.)

TOMMY
We still got Ma's porta-potty.

LUTHER
Yeah.

TOMMY
Da shower ding...I dunno...

LUTHER
Tommy, there's one more thing...

TOMMY
Yah? What? She smoke?

LUTHER
Someone's gotta change her bandages.

(End Scene.)

Scene 4

(LUTHER and TOMMY enter from the kitchen. Something is moaning from the basement. They don't notice it, they are anxiously preoccupied with something else. LUTHER enters first. HE acts quiet, withdrawn. There is a smattering of blood on his white dress shirt. TOMMY enters with more energy but that quickly fades. THEY carry bags of groceries. THEY are armed with revolvers. LUTHER dumps contents of bag on the table. TOMMY follows.)

LUTHER

(Notices blood on his shirt.) My shirt.

TOMMY

Whatta we got?

LUTHER

I got that guy's blood on my shirt, Tommy. Look.

TOMMY

(He doesn't look.) Don't worry about it. We got cash. We got groceries.

LUTHER

His fuckin blood!

TOMMY

I tole him what da fuck! I fuckin tole him! *(Pause.)* Just look at dis shit.

(LUTHER takes off his shirt. HE notices the moaning.)

TOMMY

(To himself.) Chips. Whiskey. We got fuckin whiskey! Can't believe dat shit! An, an what else? Sauer Kraut. Wurst. Some bread. Know what da French call dat shit? Pain. Fuckin believe dat? We had you on dat beach in '44, dat's all I'm sayin...we fuckin had you.

LUTHER

(Confesses.) I'm hearin shit again, Tommy.

TOMMY

Wh-what?

(Pause. Moan.)

Dat?
TOMMY

Yeah.
LUTHER

She's up! Da fuckin bitch's up!
TOMMY

So now what? What are we gonna tell her?
LUTHER

Nottin! Don't tell her nottin! Da less she knows, da better.
TOMMY

(Moan.)

(Pause.) In pain, I would think.
LUTHER

Give her somedin. Howlin like a wolf.
TOMMY

(LUTHER exits Stage Right. Moaning continues intermittently. TOMMY becomes more and more nervous. HE starts playing with the stuff on the counter. LUTHER enters wearing a different dress shirt, holding a bottle of pills, a box of gauze, and a small sponge. HE puts it all in the bucket.)

Da hell else you got?
TOMMY

Gauze.
LUTHER

Dis screamin...*(Stands up.)* I dunno...I dink...
TOMMY

(End Scene.)

Scene 5

(The stage has no actors. The doorbell rings and rings. LUTHER enters from the basement. HIS white dress shirt is open. HE exits Stage Right. HE opens the front door. A man

enters briskly. HIS actions are hurried with an edge to them. HE'S very paranoid. LUTHER follows him in. HE buttons his shirt.)

CORNELIUS

Luther. Luther. Aw, man...

LUTHER

I thought you were outta town?!

CORNELIUS

Aw, shit. I was. But I blew it, man. Fuckin blew it!

LUTHER

The hell you talkin about?

(As LUTHER walks to the table HE closes the basement door. HE sits down.)

LUTHER

Why don't you sit down? You look like shit.

CORNELIUS

Man...man...you got any a that shit?

LUTHER

Ma's?

CORNELIUS

Yeh. I gotta sleep, man. I gotta sleep. Somethin.

LUTHER

We sold it over at Frankie's. Go there.

CORNELIUS

F-Frankie's? I was just there! Said he didn't have shit. He didn't have shit, man!

LUTHER

I don't know nothin about-

CORNELIUS

Come on, man. Please! *I gotta sleep.*

LUTHER

I...I...(A crash from the basement.)...don't have nothin...

CORNELIUS

What was that shit, man?

LUTHER

Fuckin dog.

CORNELIUS

Since when you have a dog?

LUTHER

I dunno...

CORNELIUS

Come on, you gotta have somethin.

(Pause.)

CORNELIUS

You don't have nothin?!

(Pause. Moan.)

LUTHER

It's at Frankie's. Nothin till next month.

CORNELIUS

Fuck! I need it now, man!

LUTHER

I can't help you.

(TOMMY enters from the kitchen. HE wears a jacket.)

TOMMY

What da fuck is all dis screamin-shit?!

LUTHER

Cornelius needs somethin to sleep.

CORNELIUS

Yeh. Sleep. Come on. Tommy. I swear. I'll pay double, I'm tellin ya...

TOMMY

We ain't got nottin. Frankie's got da shit.

LUTHER

That's what I been sayin.

(Moan. TOMMY notices.)

TOMMY

Dere's nottin here.

CORNELIUS

I been up two fuckin weeks!

TOMMY

Two fuckin...?! *(Sighs.)* Okay. Here's what I do. *(Finds his whiskey bottle.)* I have dis.

CORNELIUS

Aw, thank you, Tommy. Thank you. Thank you.

TOMMY

No, no...

(LUTHER enters the basement. TOMMY watches him go.)

TOMMY

You can have-

CORNELIUS

How much? Ten? You want ten?

TOMMY

Listen.

CORNELIUS

Yeah uh-huh.

TOMMY

Ya listenin?

CORNELIUS

Yeah yeah. Uh-huh. Ten? You want ten? *(Holds out some cash.)*

TOMMY

You gotta drink what's in dis now.

CORNELIUS

I'm gonna crash? Tommy? I'm gonna crash?

TOMMY

Yah.

CORNELIUS

Arright. Ten? You want this?

(TOMMY takes the money and gives him the bottle.)

TOMMY

All a dat.

CORNELIUS

Yeah, yeah. Arright. *(Laughs. Pause. Drinks it all.)*

TOMMY

Arright. Now get da hell outta here!

CORNELIUS

Tommy, thanks, man. I'm tellin ya...

TOMMY

Go.

CORNELIUS

You the man. Yeah. Yeah. Thanks. You get the ten? Did I give you the ten?

(TOMMY follows him offstage. The front door is opened and then slammed shut. TOMMY enters.)

TOMMY

Ludder?! *(Pause.)* Lou?!

(LUTHER appears in the basement doorway.)

What?

LUTHER

Lou, ya gotta tell dat prick not ta come here! I'm tellin ya, he says anyding-

TOMMY

He won't.

LUTHER

I'm just sayin...

TOMMY

Just walked in...speedin on Benzedrine...I didn't wanna aggravate him.

LUTHER

Nobody comes around here anymore. Dat's all I'm sayin...

TOMMY

Alright, Tommy. Is that it?

LUTHER

You fix dat moanin yet?

TOMMY

She's floatin.

LUTHER

Den what da fuck-

TOMMY

She heard him.

LUTHER

Can we cut her tongue out?

TOMMY

(Pause.) She'd still grunt.

LUTHER

Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

TOMMY

She's floatin.

LUTHER

Yeah?

TOMMY

Trust me.

LUTHER

(Pause. TOMMY sits down.)

Lou?

TOMMY

What's up, Tommy?

LUTHER

She's gettin worser. *(Pause.)* Doctors don't know shit. I was takin a piss an I swear I thought I saw one a dem lookin at a Reference Manual...*(Pause.)* Dere's nottin we can do. Nottin.

TOMMY

But what'd they say?

LUTHER

(Distracted.) Wha?

TOMMY

What'd they say, Tommy. The doctors.

LUTHER

(Pause.) She don't look to good...Dey said...dey said...we gotta start lookin for a fuckin grave, dat's what dey said! A fuckin grave, Ludder!

(Pause.)

LUTHER

What are we gonna do?

TOMMY

I don't fuckin know!

Can't we just trade her?
LUTHER

Tra-trade her?!
TOMMY

Yeah.
LUTHER

An how we gonna do dat, Ludder? I would like ta know...really, I would.
TOMMY

Why don't we call *her* Ma?
LUTHER

Shit! I knew it! I tole you what da fuck! Now you wanna mess everyding up!
TOMMY

Then Ma wouldn't die.
LUTHER

Den Ma wouldn't die. Ma's in da fuckin hospital! Hooked up on all sorts a fucked up shit: she can't even scratch her ass a light comes on! Den Ma wouldn't die?!
TOMMY

Yeah, then Ma wouldn't die.
LUTHER

I can't fuck my own mudder.
TOMMY

Why not?
LUTHER

I can't do it.
TOMMY

You already did.
LUTHER

TOMMY

Dat...was different. She wasn't Ma. She wasn't anyding.

LUTHER

I'm sayin we call her Ma. *(Pause.)* It's for your own good.

(Pause.)

LUTHER

Do ya wanna go back to the hospital? See Ma fucked up on some machine?

TOMMY

No names. Dat's all I'm sayin. No fuckin names.

LUTHER

Listen to-

TOMMY

No fuckin names!!

(Pause.)

TOMMY

None. End of it.

(Pause.)

LUTHER

Ma did it for you.

(TOMMY takes the empty whiskey bottle and bashes LUTHER's head in. LUTHER collapses. TOMMY stands over him.)

TOMMY

Shut da fuck up! She's not gonna fuckin die! Dey won't let her! She's...not gonna...you fuckin...fuckin...*(Collapses over LUTHER's semi-conscious body and cries.)*

(End Scene.)

Scene 6

(LUTHER sits in a chair. Half his face is fucked up. The bucket is on the table. An open box of gauze is on the table, too. TOMMY bandages LUTHER's head.)

TOMMY

I'm sorry, Ludder. *(Pause.)* I...I don't know why...wid Ma in da hospital...I'm sorry.

(Long Pause.)

LUTHER

I got some pictures I took.

TOMMY

Pictures? Pictures a what?

LUTHER

Ma.

TOMMY

Can I see em?

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Ludder, I'm sorry. How many times you want me ta say it? Eh? We're brudders!

(Pause. LUTHER gives him some Polaroids.)

TOMMY

Pictures a Ma?

LUTHER

Yeah.

TOMMY

I dunno...

LUTHER

It's alright. Sometimes I say the wrong thing. I don't know what I was thinkin. Ma loved us both...and I was only tryin...you like those pictures? Those pictures of Ma?

TOMMY

...yah...can I keep one?

LUTHER

Which one you want?

TOMMY

Dis one. Da one she sleeps in.

LUTHER

Sure. *(Pause.)* What's the time, Tommy?

TOMMY

Three.

LUTHER

I gotta give her medicine.

(LUTHER stands, wobbles a bit.)

TOMMY

Ludder, you alright? Eh?

LUTHER

Yeah...

TOMMY

Listen...when you get done...I'm gonna go downstairs.

LUTHER

That's fine.

TOMMY

Yah?

LUTHER

The jelly is on the shelf. Use it.

TOMMY

Yah, yah. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry, Ludder.

LUTHER

So am I.

(End Scene.)

Scene 7

(LUTHER stands over TOMMY. TOMMY reads a newspaper, oblivious. Another whiskey bottle sits near the ashtray. The ashtray is full. LUTHER throws a tube of petroleum jelly on the table in front of him. Pause.)

What? TOMMY

That. LUTHER

What are you talkin about? TOMMY

Look at it. LUTHER

Huh? *(Looks over newspaper.)* What? TOMMY

That. LUTHER

Yah? TOMMY

(Pause.)

I thought I told you to use that shit? LUTHER

I was in a hurry. TOMMY

She's fuckin bleedin, Tommy! LUTHER

So what? TOMMY

I'm tryin to fix-

LUTHER

She won't know any better.

TOMMY

--tryin to fix her an all you can do is break her?!

LUTHER

Broke it *in*.

TOMMY

(*Pause.*) We got somethin. That's what you said. Somethin nice.

LUTHER

So what. Think Doctor Stone uses dat shit when he wants Donna? No. So why should I?

TOMMY

I don't want you fuckin her up.

LUTHER

Da hell you talkin about, boy? It's ours. Eh? Dat's right, it's ours. An dat means I can do whatever da hell-

TOMMY

We gotta-

LUTHER

No! Listen! Don't talk!

TOMMY

We gotta do it-

LUTHER

--da way I want it done! Dat's it! Dat's all I'm gonna say!

(*Pause.*)

LUTHER

Fuck you, Tommy.

TOMMY

You not wanna listen? Fine. But I'm da one dat gets Ma's shit. Eh? I'm da one holdin da bullets.

LUTHER

All I'm sayin is...we gotta treat her-

TOMMY

My way! End of it!

(Pause.)

TOMMY

You wanna be locked down? I lock you down! Ya fuckin prick! Nobody tells me shit! But you don't listen. Wanna make it hard on yourself? Fine. I lock you down, and you know I hate dat. You *know*. Da way you look...it boddars me.

LUTHER

She wouldn't let you do this to me.

TOMMY

Ma's dead, Ludder! She's fuckin dead! I tole her about how you had a new girl an da fuckin...da fuckin...machine...it just...it was so fuckin loud, Ludder. Like some kinda fuckin banzai charge but higher. She's gone! She's fuckin gone! *(Pause.)* Ma died. An dere is nottin I can do. Nottin at all. Nottin. *(Pause.)* Jesus. Now you wanna start trouble wid me? I got udder dings ta worry about den some bitch in my basement don't like me ta fuck her widout jelly! Eh?! Da fuckin jelly don't mean shit! Now I gotta do dis...cuz I don't know about you. Actin weird again. Gettin dose...what da doctor said...delusions...cuz you dink too much. Too goddamned much! Ya fuckin prick!

LUTHER

You're not locking me down.

TOMMY

Just sit.

LUTHER

She really die?

TOMMY

What?

(Pause. TOMMY exits. LUTHER finds a revolver in the room. TOMMY comes back with

a strait-jacket. LUTHER points the revolver at him.)

LUTHER

I'm not going in that...again. I told you already.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Ludder...Ludder...dere's no point in dis. I'm lockin ya down, dat's da way it is.

LUTHER

No.

TOMMY

Yah.

LUTHER

I'll blow your fuckin brains out!

TOMMY

Ludder, put da gun down.

LUTHER

Give me the fuckin jacket!

TOMMY

I'm not giving you da jacket. *(Pause.)* Ludder...

LUTHER

What?!

TOMMY

It's empty.

LUTHER

What...?

TOMMY

Da gun is empty.

(TOMMY pulls out his revolver and points it at LUTHER.)

LUTHER

Bull-fuckin-shit! You're swingin your dick an you know it!

TOMMY

Ludder...

LUTHER

No! Fuck no!

TOMMY

Resistance makes everyding harder.

(TOMMY moves forward slowly. LUTHER pulls the trigger. It's empty. HE pulls again and again. HE breaks down, collapsing and howling.)

LUTHER

I can't believe...not trustin me...you're a fuck, Tommy...a fuck...

(TOMMY with the revolver pointed at LUTHER, moves slowly toward him. HE places the gun into LUTHER's forehead.)

LUTHER

After all that shit! All that fucking bullshit! You're such a fuck, Tommy! I fuckin saved your ass on that beach! You guys never had a chance! Fifty thousand troops in four hours! We cut through you like a scalpel through malignant tissue! We excised the tumor that was killing Europe! And I never said nothin about it! Never rubbed it in. Never asked for nothin. Never expected nothin. It was war--what the fuck. You were on one side, I on the other. Donna Reed, just a girl livin in some fucked up town. *(Pause.)* Coulda left you for dead, or even shot you just to make sure... But I thought, fuck it, we're all human! Fuckin...human. We all got families. *(Pause.)* You movin in with mine after the war. You became part of the family. What else could I do? The moment I decided to let you live we became brothers. Cuz we're all fuckin human. An Ma, she took you in with no questions. We were a family, Tommy. Like Donna Reed. An what'd you do? You just fucked her! You just fucked her.

TOMMY

Shut up.

LUTHER

That's all you fuckin did. You fuck her now.

TOMMY

Shut up.

LUTHER

Don't even have the fuckin courtesy to make it pain-

(TOMMY pistol-butts him. LUTHER doesn't even cry out in pain.)

LUTHER

...cleanin her shit...feedin her...

TOMMY

Shut up!

(TOMMY pistol-butts him again.)

LUTHER

...can't even see the dirt on your face...

(TOMMY freaks out, busting his face with the pistol.)

TOMMY

We're brudders! Fuckin brudders, Lou! Pullin a gun on me?! Eh?! Why?!! *(Cries.)*
Why...why...Jesus...we're fuckin...brudders...*(Pause.)* Say someding. *(Pause.)* Say someding,
goddamnit!

(Pause.)

LUTHER

...we're not...not...brothers...Tommy...

(TOMMY, in a crying rage, gets up, throws chairs around, trashes the place.)

(End Scene.)

Scene 8

(LUTHER sits in a chair at the head of the table with a strait-jacket on. HIS face is completely bandaged. TOMMY stands by the window, peering through them. He smokes nervously.)

TOMMY

Jesus Christ, Ludder! Dere goin to every fuckin house!

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Maybe I don't answer da door, dey leave. Eh? Maybe?

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Come on, say somedin.

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Nottin? We could go to prison an you got nottin?

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Ma would know what to do...

(Actor's note: LUTHER has a lisp from now on. TOMMY knocked all his teeth out...)

LUTHER
I guess your S. O. L. then.

TOMMY
You're in dis, too. *(To the window.)* Goddamnit. Dere right next door!

(He moves from the window to the table.)

TOMMY
Shit. We'll just sit here an not do anyding.

(Pause.)

TOMMY
I'm gonna sit right here. Wid you.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Ma woulda talked to em. She woulda tole em someding else, I tell you.

LUTHER

This isn't as bad as I remember it.

TOMMY

What?

LUTHER

This.

TOMMY

What, this? This?! If I didn't know I could turn on *Donna Reed*, I woulda thought dey were SS. Dat's all I'm sayin: dis is bullshit.

LUTHER

By denying me the right to a sane existence-

TOMMY

What is dis shit, Lou? Eh?

LUTHER

--I know what one could be...

TOMMY

Sane? You talkin sane? Dere's no sane. Sane is like, what? Like someone is normal, eh? Whose normal? You? Me?

(LUTHER laughs.)

TOMMY

Eh? I'm normal. I eat. I shit.

LUTHER

You fuck.

TOMMY

Yah, fuck. Fuck. *(Pause.)* Dink dey left?

(TOMMY walks to the blinds, peers out, snaps them back quickly.)

TOMMY

Fuck! *(Pause.)* Dey saw me, Ludder. Dey saw me lookin out. I'm fucked.

(LUTHER laughs.)

TOMMY

Dink dat's funny? I gotta open da door now an we're bode screwed.

(A knock. TOMMY glares at LUTHER. HE stuffs his revolver into the small of his back. HE exits.)

TOMMY

(Offstage.) Yah, yah. Sorry, officer.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Of course. I called you guys. Dat innersection...No...I don't...I saw it an den I call...yah. What happened? *(Pause.)* Will do, sir...bye.

(TOMMY closes the door. HE enters.)

TOMMY

Jesus. I thought dey were gonna come in. SS woulda come in.

LUTHER

FBI woulda.

TOMMY

(Surprised.) Dink?

(LUTHER nods.)

TOMMY

I'm sorry, Lou. About your teeth. *(Pause.)* Really.

LUTHER

You say you're sorry but you keep doin it.

TOMMY

I know. I dunno. I...

Fuck you. LUTHER

You pulled a gun, I freaked... TOMMY

(Pause.)

It's time for her shot. LUTHER

Huh? TOMMY

Ma. LUTHER

I can't let you out. TOMMY

You like to fuck, Tommy? LUTHER

What kinda- TOMMY

Then I gotta clean her up. LUTHER

I don't dink I could let you out just yet. TOMMY

Then she dies and you ain't got shit! LUTHER

Uh-huh...hmmm...what do you need to do? TOMMY

LUTHER
Administer the anaesthetic. Clean and dress her burns and lacerations.

TOMMY

Can't do it.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

I don't trust you.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

I dink...maybe...I dink I look myself. See myself what should be done. *After.*

(TOMMY walks to the basement door. The jelly is still on the table. End Scene.)

Scene 9

(TOMMY drops a pile of bloody gauze on the table. There is some moaning coming from the basement. LUTHER is in the same place he was before.)

TOMMY

Lou? *(Pause.)* Lou? *(Shakes LUTHER.)* You up? Eh? I can't do it, Lou. It's too...graphic. Reminds me a one a dem experiments dey did... Ya know, really, I can't unnerstand a word you're sayin. Lou? *(Pause.)* I gotta know. *(Pause.)* Lou, I can't...I mean, look. Look at dat shit down dere. God knows what her face looked like before...Maybe I let you out an you come at me wid a knife, eh? *(Sighs.)* Shit. *(Pause.)* Shit. Shit. Shit. I...I...what da fuck are you sayin?! *(TOMMY searches for something.)* I know dere around...hold...hold on...here, yah, I found dem! *(TOMMY holds up a pair of false teeth.)* Ma's teeth! *(TOMMY rushes over to LUTHER.)* I'm sure dey fit. Open your moud! Aah! Come on, no time for dilly-dally! *(TOMMY slaps him.)* Open!

LUTHER

(Resisting.) No!!

(TOMMY grips his jaw and pries his mouth open.)

TOMMY

See? Like dat!

(LUTHER resists. TOMMY forces the teeth into LUTHER's mouth. LUTHER cries in pain.)

TOMMY

Yah, yah. Mengele himself couldn't a done a better job!

(TOMMY stands back to admire his handiwork. HE has buck-teeth. Huge ones.)

LUTHER

Fuck you, Tommy.

TOMMY

You were sayin? A deal, what?

LUTHER

I want these outta my mouth!

TOMMY

What was da deal?

LUTHER

Fuck!!

TOMMY

You take care a-

LUTHER

--Ma, an I get outta this bullshit.

TOMMY

Yah. But...

LUTHER

(Pause.) Yeah.

TOMMY

We bring her up here...Yah...I dink...dat way no nottin goin on.

LUTHER

Whatever. Fine.

TOMMY

I'll have to handcuff you.

LUTHER

But I thought...you said...fuck handcuffs!

TOMMY

Yah. Dat's da only...I can't trust you. Dat's it.

(End Scene.)

Scene 10

(LUTHER still has false teeth. HE is sitting at the table handcuffed as TOMMY fusses around the room arranging things neatly. Every so often TOMMY goes to the kitchen. HE has his revolver in the small of his back.)

LUTHER

I'd really like-

TOMMY

I don't care what you like.

LUTHER

--some Solitaire.

TOMMY

No.

LUTHER

Just one hand.

TOMMY

No!

LUTHER

This is bullshit.

TOMMY

Don't care.

(Pause.)

LUTHER

Schnitzel?

TOMMY

Of course. Her favorite. Sauer Kraut. Wurst.

LUTHER

Dessert?

TOMMY

What do you dink?

LUTHER

Yeah...

(TOMMY exits Stage Right and comes back with a wheel chair. It's an old one from one of those sanitoriums. HE wheels it over to the head of the table.)

LUTHER

I knew she wasn't dead.

TOMMY

We're brudders, dat's what I do. Fuck wid you.

(TOMMY checks the revolver to make sure it's loaded. And with it pointed into LUTHER's eye, fishes for the keys in his pants. HE uncuffs him with one hand.)

LUTHER

This really isn't necessary.

TOMMY

Protection. Hitler had a revolver and cyanide in his bedroom.

LUTHER

I'm not the Allied Forces any more.

TOMMY

I don't care. Go. Get Ma from da basement.

(LUTHER walks to the basement. TOMMY keeps the revolver pointed at him at all times. LUTHER exits. There is some commotion below, moans, movement, things knocked over. Heavy step sounds. TOMMY, meanwhile, takes out a cigarette with one hand. The revolver never wavers from the basement door. LUTHER enters, carrying the woman on his back in a fireman's carry. TOMMY rushes for the wheelchair, keeping the revolver pointed at them at all times. The woman is barely concious, moaning loudly. LUTHER drops her into the wheelchair as TOMMY

*beckons him with “Come on. Come on.”. THE WOMAN wears loose fitting hospital clothes.
NOTE: Every inch of exposed skin is bandaged in gauze. There should be no exposed flesh.)*

TOMMY

Okay, okay. Push her to her place.

(LUTHER complies.)

LUTHER

Tom-

TOMMY

No talking. Just sit. Sit and wait.

(LUTHER sits to her left. This should be an automatic action. TOMMY, with his revolver in LUTHER’s eye again, cuffs him to the wheel chair.)

TOMMY

Sit, yah?

LUTHER

What else?

(THE WOMAN moans.)

TOMMY

I be right back.

(HE walks towards the kitchen, stops short of it.)

TOMMY

Oh! Cigarette? *(End Scene. End Act One.)*

Act Two**Scene 1**

(After dinner. Empty plates. LUTHER is still handcuffed to Ma. TOMMY sits at the other end of the table opposite from her. He smokes a cigarette. A bottle of whiskey and the revolver are nearby. MA howls intermittently. Pause.)

She looks good.

TOMMY

(Pause.)

Yeah.

LUTHER

Da doctors. I dink maybe...dey do a good job.

TOMMY

Yeah.

LUTHER

Yah, yah. Dat's all you say!

TOMMY

What else?

LUTHER

I dunno. Conversation. Bullshit.

TOMMY

With a pistol on the table? Handcuffs?

LUTHER

Precautions.

TOMMY

(Pause.) Yeah.

LUTHER

So what da fuck. We're all here. Again. Togedder.

TOMMY

This isn't gonna work.

LUTHER

Why not?

TOMMY

You can't keep us locked up.

LUTHER

You pull a gun, I lock you up. Dat's it.

TOMMY

(Pause.)

But dere is one way...to prove your loyalty.

TOMMY

We're brothers Tommy.

LUTHER

Dis is different. Put her on de table.

TOMMY

What?!

LUTHER

Do it!

TOMMY

(MA moans.)

Jesus Christ.

LUTHER

(Pause.)

What de fuck you waitin for?

TOMMY

Why don't you go first?

LUTHER

TOMMY

Cuz I want you to go. Dat way I know for sure.

(TOMMY puts his hand on the revolver.)

LUTHER

I can't do it. *(Pause.)* I won't do it.

TOMMY

Den I put you back in an dat's dat.

LUTHER

What?!

TOMMY

If I can't trust my own brudder-

LUTHER

You said you'd cut it up!

TOMMY

When I can trust you.

LUTHER

I'm not gonna pull a knife on you, I swear.

TOMMY

You go down an I believe you. Udderwise...

(LUTHER raises his right handcuffed hand. TOMMY uncuffs him, pistol pointed at him at all times, and returns to his seat.)

TOMMY

So now we can finally have dessert, eh?

(LUTHER carefully puts her on the table.)

LUTHER

I fuckin saved your ass, Tommy!

Yah, yah. What's done is done.

TOMMY

I coulda killed you.

LUTHER

But you didn't.

TOMMY

No, I didn't. I should have.

LUTHER

You couldn't. You fix people, Ludder. Dat's why I'm not dead.

TOMMY

(LUTHER is silently looking at MA.)

You woulda been a good doctor...but now you must become human and nottin more.

TOMMY

I wanted to wait.

LUTHER

Hesitation kills.

TOMMY

*(LUTHER gets between her legs. TOMMY lights a cigarette. **End Scene.**)*

Scene 2

(MA lays on the table. TOMMY still sits at the head of the table, smoking and drinking. LUTHER stands in the basement doorway away from the audience, looking down into it. The revolver is nowhere to be seen.)

You see?

TOMMY

What? What the fuck do I see?

LUTHER

It's not so bad, eh?

TOMMY

Your turn. LUTHER

After my cigarette. TOMMY

(Pause.)

Jesus. Jesus fucking Christ. LUTHER

What are you cryin about? TOMMY

Nothin. *(He turns around.)* Where are my cards? LUTHER

Why? TOMMY

(LUTHER walks to the table and sits at the other end, across from TOMMY. HE pulls a chair over if he must.)

Cuz I want em. LUTHER

I know, but why? TOMMY

Cuz I like to play. LUTHER

Dat's what I thought. Here. *(Throws him the pack.)* TOMMY

(LUTHER opens it and starts shuffling the cards.)

You weren't too long. TOMMY

LUTHER

I'm in, I'm out.

TOMMY

Just like de Americans: no patience.

LUTHER

Let's forget about it.

TOMMY

All of a sudden I'm de bad man now?

LUTHER

Are you goin or what? She's gettin cold.

(LUTHER starts dealing himself Solitaire.)

TOMMY

Sometimes...when I'm drunk like dis...

LUTHER

I really don't wanna hear what you have to say.

TOMMY

What is dis?

LUTHER

Nothin.

TOMMY

I let you out an you treat me like shit?

(Pause.)

TOMMY

I'm sorry, Ludder. It had to be done.

LUTHER

(Pause.) I'm sorry, too.

(Pause. THEY stare at each other from across the table. LUTHER breaks eye contact and plays Solitaire. TOMMY continues to look at LUTHER for a few moments, drinks from the bottle and gets up. He rolls the bottle across the floor towards LUTHER.)

Have some. TOMMY

Lost my taste for it. LUTHER

(TOMMY pauses again for a second and then spins MA around towards him so that her legs are facing his direction. HE gets between her legs. End Scene.)

Scene 3

(The bottle is empty. LUTHER is still playing Solitaire. TOMMY smokes. MA sits in the wheelchair.)

Es is...sehr...fucking...spaht. TOMMY

None a that bullshit. LUTHER

Wass? TOMMY

Talk...fucking English... LUTHER

(Pause.)

She's good, eh? TOMMY

As good as any hunk a meat, I guess. LUTHER

You just close de eyes...in de dark...pipes ringin in de ears... TOMMY

She's anythin you want her to be. LUTHER

Everyding I never had. TOMMY

LUTHER
You were on the wrong side.

TOMMY
(Laughs.) You say...fuck de past an den...den...you bring it right back up.

LUTHER
Yeah, well...

TOMMY
Sometimes...sometimes, Ludder I don't unnerstan you.

LUTHER
Oh well.

TOMMY
Oh well?

LUTHER
Yeah.

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Talk, Ludder. What's up?

LUTHER
Nothin.

TOMMY
Someding is. What?

LUTHER
These cards. They're all used up.

TOMMY
I get you new ones tomorrow.

LUTHER
Can't play tomorrow. I'm playin tonight.

TOMMY
Why...I dunno...it's a stupid game. I dink Canasta is better.

LUTHER
Don't know how to play Canasta.

TOMMY
I'll teach you. Gimme de cards.

LUTHER
I'm still playin.

TOMMY
Just...gimme de fuckin cards.

LUTHER
Wait.

(Pause. LUTHER continues playing.)

TOMMY
Dank you.

LUTHER
For what?

TOMMY
On dat beach... France. D-Day. Dat whole fucking shit. *(Pause.)* And also...for her.

LUTHER
We all need something to keep ourselves busy, to keep from going crazy. For some people it's collecting stamps, for others, alcohol. For you...

TOMMY
I know. I dunno, it was a crazy idea, but I thought, what de fuck, ya know?

LUTHER
We're brothers.

TOMMY
Exactly.

(End Scene.)

Scene 4

(Later. LUTHER and TOMMY play Canasta. MA sits in a corner overlooking the game.)

LUTHER

I gotta change her bandages in a couple hours.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

I dunno how you do it.

LUTHER

It's...nothin.

TOMMY

When I was down dere, ya know, wid her, I gotta turn off de lights.

LUTHER

The meat will heal in time.

TOMMY

Sometimes she gurgles...chokes...I dunno...

LUTHER

You get used to it.

TOMMY

As long as she doesn't scream...

LUTHER

You lose the gag-reflex you seen enough of em.

TOMMY

...I can't stand dat shit. De screamin.

LUTHER

(To himself.) Med school.

TOMMY

Sometimes I wonder what de fuck dis world is comin to. Hitler knew. He tried to stop it.

LUTHER
(To himself.) I woulda been a good doctor.

TOMMY
Ah well.

LUTHER
(Pause.) I'm runnin outta supplies.

TOMMY
What?

LUTHER
Gauze. Not much left.

TOMMY
We'll do what we can.

(Pause.)

TOMMY
What about de udder stuff?

LUTHER
We'll manage.

TOMMY
Yah.

(Pause. TOMMY turns and looks at MA.)

TOMMY
She looks peaceful.

LUTHER
She doesn't care.

TOMMY
De drugs, eh?

Pain distorts things. LUTHER

Dink? TOMMY

Know. LUTHER

What? What do ya know? TOMMY

(Evades the question.) She's dying. LUTHER

Don't say dat. TOMMY

She is. LUTHER

Don't. Keep her alive. TOMMY

With what? LUTHER

Wid what? TOMMY

Yeah. LUTHER

De fuckin shit you been doin! TOMMY

I need more supplies. Cards. LUTHER

I tole ya I get dem tomorrow. TOMMY

LUTHER

New ones. Fresh. Undamaged.

TOMMY

Yah, yah. De best.

LUTHER

More saline.

TOMMY

Where do I get dat?

(End Scene.)

Scene 5

(It is night. LUTHER stands in the basement. HIS hands are bloody. HIS left fore-arm is wrapped in gauze down to the wrist. HE wears an ammo pouch on his belt. HE closes the door behind him and walks off-stage, into the kitchen. HE returns with clean, wet hands and sits at the head of the table. From his shirt-pocket HE takes out his dentures and a cigarette pack. HE throws the mouthpiece on the table but carefully sets the pack down in front of him. HE opens the ammo pouch and takes out a needle and a bottle filled with clear liquid. It is almost empty. HE places these items carefully on the table, away from the mouthpiece but near the cigarette pack. HE unbuckles his belt and slides them out of his loops slowly, taking care to put the ammo pouch on the table between the mouthpiece and the cigarette pack. The set darkens as slides of WWII are shown on the wall. Images of carnage, destruction, medic personnel under fire, etc. A faint rumble is heard in the distance which sounds like artillery. It gets louder and happens more frequently until the sound becomes a continuous barrage of distortion. The barrage starts to gain a rhythm and as the distortion subsides it becomes a heartbeat. On the wall appears a black and white photo of a young man in a Navy uniform. The heart beat dies. The photo disappears. Silence and darkness for a few seconds then the lights fade up gradually. LUTHER sits in his chair as if he were poured into it. His belt is on the floor. His sleeve is rolled up. Slowly HE takes his belt and with extreme difficulty attempts to put them through his belt-loops. HE misses one or two of them. Afterwards, HE puts a cigarette in his mouth but can't light it. The lighter flame is about two inches from the tip of the cigarette. The doorbell rings. LUTHER lights his cigarette. The door rings again. LUTHER slowly becomes aware of it, puts his syringe and bottle back into the ammo pouch, and oozes out of his chair to walk to the front door. HE exits. The front door opens. CORNELIUS bursts onto the stage. LUTHER oozes behind him.)

CORNELIUS

Luther. Aw, Luther! Do I have some shit for you, man! I'm not talkin about no jacked up laxative shit either! You want some? Huh? Whaddya say?

LUTHER

...I...think you should leave...

CORNELIUS

Whaddya talkin about? This is pharmaceutical, man! Straight from the doctor's locker!

LUTHER

...It's just not a good time...right now...

(A loud moan emanates from the floor.)

CORNELIUS

Man I saved this strictly for you!

LUTHER

...I appreciate...

CORNELIUS

Come on man! I need the money!

LUTHER

...Under the circumstances...

(MA screams. Some glass breaks.)

CORNELIUS

What the hell is goin on down there? I thought you had a dog? That didn't sound like no dog.

(CORNELIUS walks to the basement door. LUTHER oozes after him.)

LUTHER

...wish we could...do this another time...

(MA howls.)

CORNELIUS

Sounds like she's hurt.

LUTHER

Leave her alone. It's just a temper tantrum.

CORNELIUS

(Pause.) Are you okay? I mean you look...*(Gestures around the face.)*...you know...

LUTHER

...been busy...why don't...

(LUTHER attempts to steer him away from the door.)

CORNELIUS

Look I don't give a fuck. I need the money.

LUTHER

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

CORNELIUS

Luther, come on, help a friend out! I haven't eaten in three days!

LUTHER

...I have some food...

CORNELIUS

Bullshit food. It's fuckin bullshit man. I need somethin stronger.

LUTHER

...stronger...

CORNELIUS

I might as well be walking around dead!

(Something big crashes in the basement. MA cries out.)

LUTHER

...well...

CORNELIUS

Gimme twenty. That's all I'm askin.

LUTHER

...sounds too much...

CORNELIUS

Okay fifteen.

LUTHER

...fifteen...

CORNELIUS

You want me breakin into houses? Help me out man.

(Pause. MA grunts. Sounds of stairs slowly being climbed one by one.)

LUTHER

...fifteen...?

CORNELIUS

Yeah. Yeah.

LUTHER

...can't you just get some food stamps...or something...?

CORNELIUS

Man I told you: how many times I been tellin you? I need cash man cash!

(MA emits something that's not quite a word but could be... SHE scratches the door.)

LUTHER

...I...I...(Sounds of footsteps above. HE looks up.)

CORNELIUS

What? *(HE looks up.)*

(The scratching gets more violent. MA howls loudly through the door. LUTHER and CORNELIUS wait, looking at the ceiling. A toilet flushes. Footsteps back to where they originated.)

LUTHER

...fifteen...?

CORNELIUS

Yeah man yeah. Fifteen.

(LUTHER gets his wallet out and pays him. CORNELIUS gives him a paper bag.)

CORNELIUS

Aw man! Thanks!

LUTHER

...yeah...

(MA scratches furiously on the door. The handle twists wildly. SHE moans.)

CORNELIUS

One day man! I'll be there for you! I swear!

LUTHER

...yeah...really...time to go...

CORNELIUS

Yeah. I gotta...

*(LUTHER follows CORNELIUS off-stage. MA struggles with her voice and emits something that sounds like 'Help me.' SHE continues to twist the door handle and scratch the door. LUTHER oozes back on stage. HE makes his way to the door and reaches out to the twisting door handle. MA'S howling fills the whole room, building up as his hand closes the distance with the door handle. HE grabs it and whips the door open. There is nothing there. The screaming has stopped. HE steps into the basement doorway and the lights fade as he slowly walks down the stairs. **End Scene.**)*

Scene 6

(LUTHER sleeps stiffly on the table. TOMMY stands over him. HE wears a jacket and a hat. MA sits by the window looking out. The blinds are drawn but open. TOMMY carefully nudges LUTHER. MA tries to say something but gurgles and then moans. THEY are harsher, more guttural than before. LUTHER rises up stiffly and opens his eyes. HE wears a necklace with something fleshy on it.)

TOMMY

I got de shit. It's in de kitchen.

LUTHER

Didn't need it.

TOMMY

Oh...well...

LUTHER

It was successful.

What? TOMMY

Exploratory surgery. LUTHER

Expl--what de fuck you doin?! TOMMY

If you're gonna have fun with her, so am I. LUTHER

(Pause.)

Dat. *(Points to LUTHER's necklace.)* What is dat? TOMMY

Her tongue. *(Slides off table.)* LUTHER

Her tongue?! TOMMY

Yeah. LUTHER

What de fuck you do dat for?! TOMMY

I told you. LUTHER

Jesus fucking--I liked her tongue! TOMMY

Then it's yours. *(HE takes off the necklace.)* LUTHER

(TOMMY refuses to take it.)

No! I don't want it! TOMMY

LUTHER
She gurgles even more now but...she'll live.

TOMMY
She'll live?! *(Pause.)* Why? Just tell me dat.

LUTHER
I wanted to have some fun with her.

TOMMY
Bullshit!

LUTHER
You don't believe me?

TOMMY
No!

LUTHER
She needed to be modified.

TOMMY
Modified?!

LUTHER
Updated.

TOMMY
What de fuck are you saying?!

LUTHER
(Pause.) She spoke to me, Tom. She called me a fuckin bastard. I ain't no bastard! I ain't! So fuck her!

TOMMY
Jesus Christ. *(Pause.)* She say anyding else?

LUTHER
No, not really. Where's the pack?

TOMMY
In de kitchen. What else did she say?

(LUTHER walks offstage to the kitchen.)

TOMMY

What does she know? Anyding?

(LUTHER comes back with the cards. HE sits down at the head of the table and opens the pack.)

LUTHER

It was lost in the translation.

(LUTHER shuffles.)

TOMMY

An dat's it? Dat's fucking it?!

LUTHER

Yeah.

(TOMMY sighs. Pause.)

TOMMY

I guess...it's better dat way.

LUTHER

I like these cards.

TOMMY

Yah?

LUTHER

Clean. They feel good in my hands.

(LUTHER starts dealing Solitaire.)

TOMMY

What are you gonna do wid it?

LUTHER

What?

Dat...ding around your neck.

TOMMY

It's a tongue, Tommy.

LUTHER

Whatever. Throw it away.

TOMMY

Later.

LUTHER

I don't wanna look at it.

TOMMY

Then don't.

LUTHER

Throw de damn ding away!

TOMMY

(LUTHER looks at him. Pause. HE carefully takes off the necklace and offers it to him again.)

You can do it.

LUTHER

(TOMMY grabs LUTHER, pulls him from the chair and throws him on the floor. HE sits on his chest.)

(HE shakes him.) You muddafucka! I liked her tongue! Why?! Why?!!!!!

TOMMY

(LUTHER is silent. TOMMY stands up.)

Get up! Get da fuck up! *(He grabs the necklace.)*

TOMMY

(LUTHER slowly stands up. TOMMY punches him. LUTHER reels. HE stands up again, with his false teeth in his hand. THEY'RE toe-to-toe.)

LUTHER

Fuck you, Tommy! Why should you get all the fun?!

TOMMY

You can have her too!

LUTHER

I don't wanna fuck her!

TOMMY

None a dis experimental bullshit. Dat's all I'm sayin. None of it.

LUTHER

I coulda...I coulda been somethin...

TOMMY

Why don't you go lie down?

LUTHER

I coulda...if you fucks just hadn't...

TOMMY

Ludder, it's over. De war is over.

LUTHER

(Cries.) I coulda...been someone...

*(MA howls. **End Scene.**)*

Scene 7

(MA and TOMMY sit at the table. TOMMY plays Canasta. SHE gurgles occasionally as if she knows what he is saying. LUTHER looks from Stage Right.)

LUTHER

Are you done?

(LUTHER walks to the table.)

TOMMY

I just dealt.

LUTHER

I meant with her.

TOMMY

What do you need her for?

LUTHER

There are some details I wanna check out.

TOMMY

Like what?

LUTHER

(Notices smudges on cards.) Like tryin to prevent grease from gettin on my cards. What the hell did you do to em?!

TOMMY

Nottin.

LUTHER

They're fuckin sticky!

TOMMY

I tell you I did nottin.

LUTHER

Blood!

TOMMY

Dat it is. I dunno...

LUTHER

You don't know?

TOMMY

She was...*(Motions with his hands/face. Gurgles.)*...doin dat shit. I try to clear it out but dere was nottin dere.

LUTHER

Course there was nothin there.

TOMMY

I thought she was chokin.

LUTHER

Since when did you care?

TOMMY

Ludder.

LUTHER

What?

TOMMY

(Pause.) Sometimes I dink she can hear me.

LUTHER

She's meat...nothin more.

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Take her! Get her da hell outta here!

LUTHER

Thank you.

(LUTHER pushes MA to the basement.)

LUTHER

I'll clean her up as well.

TOMMY

Good!

LUTHER

And you can keep the fuckin cards.

TOMMY

Maybe when you're done we play some Canasta, eh? *(Pause.)* Eh? Whaddya dink?

LUTHER

I don't think so.

TOMMY
We'll play some Canasta and drink whiskey.

LUTHER
I'm busy.

TOMMY
Busy? Wid what?

LUTHER
My studies.

TOMMY
Your stud--what de fuck is dis?!

LUTHER
Fuck em.

TOMMY
Fuck em? Who, Ludder? Who?

LUTHER
I coulda...I...Fuck em. I'm healin the meat you've destroyed.

TOMMY
I've destroyed?

LUTHER
I'm a healer. Not a...

TOMMY
What?

LUTHER
Card player.

TOMMY
What de hell are you talkin about?

LUTHER
Can I have her or not?

Of course, dere's no question-

TOMMY

Then fuck off.

LUTHER

(Pause.)

Just don't kill her.

TOMMY

(SHE moans.)

I'm gonna make her better.

LUTHER

Ludder-

TOMMY

You fuck her whenever you want. This is what I want.

LUTHER

Dat isn't-

TOMMY

I shared half the risk.

LUTHER

Dat's true but-

TOMMY

So I should get-

LUTHER

Goddamnit, stop!

TOMMY

--half the fun.

LUTHER

(Pause. LUTHER tries to pick her up carefully.)

TOMMY
Make her better how?

(LUTHER stops.)

LUTHER
I dunno if it can be done yet.

(Pause.)

TOMMY
Just don't kill her.

(End Scene.)

Scene 8

(TOMMY wears his Nazi uniform. The basement door is closed. HE smokes nervously and drinks from a flask. The table is set as follows: There is a white table-cloth. Three dinner plates, two of which have morsels of food on them. The third, in the middle, has not been touched. A wine bottle lies overturned on the Stage Right side of the table. The cloth is soaked through with red wine. TOMMY stands close to the door, listening. HE knocks and listens again.)

TOMMY
Come on, eh? Anniversary a D-Day an I can't even spend time wid her? What is dis?

(HE steps back. LUTHER opens the basement door. HE wears clothes characteristic of him.)

LUTHER
What the hell is this? *(HE closes the door behind him.)*

TOMMY
Dis?

LUTHER
This isn't funny.

TOMMY

I just wanted to see how it fits.

LUTHER

Same as last year?

TOMMY

Yah. A little tighter.

LUTHER

You're gonna haveta wait awhile.

TOMMY

Awhile? How much is a while?

LUTHER

Couple hours. Maybe even till tomorrow.

TOMMY

What?! Noooo.

LUTHER

I can't have you ripping it up until it's set completely.

TOMMY

Who said anyding-

LUTHER

Later.

(HE walks to the table and sits down. HE smokes.)

TOMMY

Who said anyding about ripping her up?

LUTHER

It's really sensitive right now.

TOMMY

Fuck it.

LUTHER

I wouldn't.

TOMMY

Why not?

LUTHER

The bandages are off.

TOMMY

What?! Ludder, I tole you I was gonna be wid her after dinner!

LUTHER

She's soaking.

TOMMY

In what? Her piss?

LUTHER

In saline.

TOMMY

Dat shit I bought?

LUTHER

Yeah.

TOMMY

What are you doin down dere?

LUTHER

Nothin.

TOMMY

What, Ludder?

LUTHER

What about our game of Canasta?

TOMMY

No...I wanna know.

LUTHER

Go down there if you wanna see.

(LUTHER grabs a deck of cards and starts shuffling.)

TOMMY

I don't wanna see her dat way.

LUTHER

Then don't ask.

TOMMY

But I have a right.

LUTHER

Do I ask what you do to her?

TOMMY

(Pause.) No.

LUTHER

Why don't you change your clothes. You look like a fool.

(TOMMY whips out his pistol and points it at him.)

TOMMY

How many times before you learn? Eh? I don't want nobody tellin *me* what de fuck!

LUTHER

I'm sorry Tom I was out of line.

TOMMY

(With gun still pointed at him.) What did you do to her?

LUTHER

I'm makin her better.

TOMMY

Better? Like how?

(LUTHER shows his forearms. They are covered in gauze.)

TOMMY

Yeah, so?

LUTHER

These are the key. But I don't think I have enough...

(TOMMY shakes his head.)

LUTHER

Skin grafts.

(TOMMY puts the pistol on the table.)

LUTHER

It works.

TOMMY

You can do it?

LUTHER

The meat will heal.

(TOMMY sits if he hasn't done so, across from LUTHER. LUTHER deals him in.)

TOMMY

Does it hurt?

LUTHER

What?

TOMMY

Your arms.

LUTHER

No. I take my medication with her.

TOMMY

Why don't you take more skin from udder parts of your body?

LUTHER

I have.

(LUTHER unbuttons his shirt and pulls up his undershirt. HIS torso is also covered in gauze.)

Jesus. TOMMY

Forty percent. LUTHER

Of your skin?! TOMMY

Forty percent coverage. I'm too small. LUTHER

We shoulda got da guy. TOMMY

We didn't know. LUTHER

(Pause.)

TOMMY
I knew, Ludder...on dat beach...I saw it in your eyes. You have de talent of keeping people alive. Like Doctor Stone on Donna Reed.

LUTHER
(To himself.) Or keeping the meat fresh. I wish they woulda known it.

TOMMY
It's better dis way. Practical.

LUTHER
We all need somethin to keep us busy, right?

TOMMY
At least someding to forget.

LUTHER
Plagued by memories?

Aren't you? TOMMY

Yeah. LUTHER

See? TOMMY

If one could forget permanently... LUTHER

Den it would be heaven. TOMMY

LUTHER
Modify ourselves. Change the pattern. We could be who we are without remembering what we once were.

(Pause. TOMMY drinks.)

Dis shit *(Indicates the whiskey.)*...if da turd reich had dis I dink- TOMMY

I thought you had better shit? LUTHER

Jack Daniels? No. TOMMY

Oh. LUTHER

Only work and fuck. TOMMY

For you just fuck. LUTHER

TOMMY

(Laughs.) And you, work. Dinking. It's all de same. *(Beat.)* Maybe I go back someday...

LUTHER

If your skin were thick enough.

TOMMY

I could be shot.

LUTHER

So you'll stay.

TOMMY

Wid you.

LUTHER

With me.

(The phone rings. THEY freeze. It keeps ringing. LUTHER motions to get it but TOMMY nods his head in the negative.)

TOMMY

Fuck em.

LUTHER

Could be important.

TOMMY

Nottin is important to interrupt Canasta.

(LUTHER gestures in the affirmative.)

LUTHER

Come on, drink, we got work to do.

TOMMY

An what kinda work is dat, Ludder?

(End Scene.)

Scene 9

(TOMMY's shirt is off. HE sits on the table and smokes. LUTHER is pointing something out to him on his chest.)

I would cut here to here.

LUTHER

But would it hurt?

TOMMY

There would be some pain, yes.

LUTHER

A bottle a whiskey...some cigarettes...

TOMMY

I'd shave the hair of course. The procedure would take no more than...three hours.

LUTHER

As long as it doesn't hurt.

TOMMY

I could give you a shot...

LUTHER

None a dat.

TOMMY

Just the whiskey then.

LUTHER

De skin goes where?

TOMMY

Her back.

LUTHER

Her back?

TOMMY

Yeah.

LUTHER

I never see her back. Put it on somewhere I can see.

TOMMY

Like where?
LUTHER

Her chest.
TOMMY

No, no. I've already set everything up.
LUTHER

I don't care.
TOMMY

No.
LUTHER

Ludder...
TOMMY

I'm doin it my way.
LUTHER

(Pause.) Fuck it den.
TOMMY

(He stands up.)

This is bullshit Tommy!
LUTHER

I don't care if it's bullshit! Dat's where I want it!
TOMMY

(Pause.)

Jesus Christ! *(LUTHER sits down abruptly.)* She's all set up! Do you know what this does?!
LUTHER
What kind of set back to the schedule this is?!

(LUTHER lights a cigarette.)

TOMMY

It's my skin.

LUTHER

It's your turn to contribute! It's your turn to share the risk!

TOMMY

De chest. Dat's all I'm sayin...

LUTHER

I don't fucking believe it!

(TOMMY extinguishes his cigarette on his chest.)

LUTHER

What-what did you just do?

(Pause. TOMMY lights his cigarette.)

LUTHER

What the fuck did you just do?!

(TOMMY extinguishes his cigarette on his chest again. LUTHER jumps out of his chair to try and stop him, but HE is too late.)

LUTHER

Are you fuckin crazy?!!

TOMMY

Nipples.

LUTHER

Nipples? Nipples?!!

TOMMY

Watch, I do it again.

LUTHER

No! No. Jesus Christ, Tommy.

TOMMY

I thought it'd hurt more.

LUTHER

Third degree burns only hurt once. *(Pause.)* Are you gonna stop?

TOMMY

Is she gonna have a chest?

(Pause.)

TOMMY

Is she gonna have a chest??

LUTHER

We gotta go to the store.

TOMMY

And what's at de store?

LUTHER

You want her to have a chest, we gotta go to the store.

(Pause. TOMMY stares at LUTHER. HE indicates the left side of his chest where the burns are.)

TOMMY

You will never take de skin over my heart. Dat...belongs to me. *(Pause.)* And my right arm. My right arm belongs to de turd reich an dat's it.

(End Scene.)

Scene 10

(It is night. The window is open. The basement door opens and a person dressed in black with a black ski-mask bursts through and crosses to the table. HE carries LUTHER's ammo pouch under his arm. HE is in a state of shock. Moans can be heard coming from the basement. HE tries to block the sound out with his hands but it doesn't work. HE quickly closes the door and stands, confused. A door in the kitchen opens and TOMMY's voice can be heard off-stage. The BURGLAR takes a position by the kitchen door and reveals a pistol. TOMMY enters.)

TOMMY

Fuck him. Couldn't drive if-

(The BURGLAR shoots TOMMY in the back. HE crumples. LUTHER enters and stops cold. The BURGLAR points the pistol at LUTHER but hesitates.)

LUTHER
Is that...you?

CORNELIUS
Don't you move man! Don't you fuckin move!!

LUTHER
Cornelius!

CORNELIUS
I'm takin your shit!

(Pause. LUTHER glares. TOMMY moans throughout the following exchange.)

CORNELIUS
And I won't say nothin about what I saw.

LUTHER
What...did you see?

(CORNELIUS starts to walk backwards towards the open window.)

CORNELIUS
Nothin. I didn't see nothin.

LUTHER
What did you see Cornelius?

CORNELIUS
Nothin!

LUTHER
Cornelius?!

CORNELIUS
Jesus Christ! Jesus fuckin Christ!

LUTHER
I wanna know what you saw!

CORNELIUS

I-I-what the fuck do you have in the basement Luther?! What the fuck is that?!

LUTHER

You can't leave.

CORNELIUS

Oh I'm leavin. But-but I won't, I won't say nothin. I swear.

LUTHER

Don't you leave.

CORNELIUS

Think you can talk like that to me?! I'm the one with the gun here!

LUTHER

Pistol, Cornelius. It's a pistol.

(LUTHER pulls a pistol from the small of his back. By this time, CORNELIUS and LUTHER should have moved to a position where TOMMY is between them.)

LUTHER

Like this one.

CORNELIUS

Luther I gonna fuckin blow your brains out all over the goddamned wall if you move another inch!

(Pause.)

CORNELIUS

(Laughs.) What the fuck you gonna do?

(LUTHER shoots him. CORNELIUS crumples. LUTHER looks around at the carnage. HE runs downstairs, pause, runs back upstairs and rushes to TOMMY. CORNELIUS moans.)

LUTHER

Tommy? Tommy?

TOMMY

...ohh...fuck...

LUTHER
Talk to me Tommy! Stay with me!

TOMMY
...can't feel...anyding...

LUTHER
You're doin fine! It's all good!

TOMMY
...floatin...on...on...

(LUTHER, in the midst of trying to contain TOMMY's bleeding, stops abruptly. CORNELIUS moans.)

TOMMY
...save Me...Ludder...Save...Tommy...your Brudder...Tommy...

(LUTHER turns TOMMY over and looks at him closely.)

TOMMY
...please...

(Pause. LUTHER continues to look him in the eyes as lights fade. End Scene.)

Epilogue

(Another chair is missing from the table. MA is in her wheelchair, placed next to the head of the table on the left side. HER skin is a patchwork of stitches. LUTHER is completely covered in gauze. HE plays Canasta with her. Donna Reed can be heard coming from the living room.)

LUTHER

...an so I ask the manager if I could work more hours, seeing as how we could use the extra money, what with bills and medical school and all... He said it was alright with him so I figure I'd go ahead and do it. And with spring coming I could get some seeds for your garden. Eh? Would you like that, Ma?

(MA nods.)

LUTHER

Good. Backyard hasn't been used in years. It'll have to be cleaned up. I could do that, I guess. Maybe I can get my brother to help out...

(LUTHER looks at his watch, and takes a syringe and a bottle from the ammo pouch HE is wearing. HE prepares a shot. HE gives it to MA. SHE gurgles approvingly. HE then walks to the living room and brings back someone in another wheelchair. The PERSON is totally covered in gauze. LUTHER prepares another shot.)

CORNELIUS

Donna Reed...she gotta nice chest.

LUTHER

I know, Tommy. I know.

(Lights fade out as LUTHER comes towards CORNELIUS with the syringe poised for injection.)

END OF PLAY