WHERE ALL GOOD RABBITS GO

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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)

Mmmmmm 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.

Honey?

WALTER

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.

I don't know.

WALTER

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 eights 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. There 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.

Why?

JULIA
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

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.

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?

(Obviously)
DORN
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.

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.

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-
What?

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

What?

JULIA
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, their 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.

Is it?

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

JULIA
I don’t think of it as working in the dirt as much as working with the dirt.

WALTER
Like nature is your co-worker.

JULIA
Yeah.

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

You’re real.

JULIA
How do you know?

You look real.

WALTER
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.

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.

Rabbit.

WALTER
Stop!

JULIA
Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit!

WALTER
What is wrong with you?

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

Raaaaabit!

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! RAAAAABBIT.

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.

WALTER!

He realizes what he has done and stops.
WALTER
Oh shit.
What happened?

JULIA
You pushed me.

WALTER
Why?

JULIA
I don’t know.

WALTER
I got a little carried away.

JULIA
You hurt me.

WALTER
Julia—

JULIA
You were a maniac!

WALTER
I’m sorry.

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

WALTER
I did too.

JULIA
I expected you to become helpless.

WALTER
I am helpless.

JULIA
Instead you’re becoming an animal.
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

Uhmmmm

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?
Mutter 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

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! Is 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! If 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.

Walter. Walter?

JULIA
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.

Cough.

DORN
WALTER coughs.

And inhale.

WALTER breathes deeply. DORN sighs.

What?

WALTER
It’s in your lungs.

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?
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.

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?
WALTER

I'm not thirsty.

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?
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

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.

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 raisons, 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 your 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 thought 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 to tea tree oil in the rabbits 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](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 rabbit’s 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.