



## LOVE'S DISENLIGHTENMENT

by Jeff Dunne

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# LOVE'S DISENLIGHTENMENT

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## CHARACTERS

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| JASON        | Resident playwright of a small theater company – eccentric, insecure, enthusiastic, temperamental                               |
| ASHLEY       | Resident artistic director of the theater company, a good and personal friend of Jason’s. Generally open-minded, but practical. |
| STAGE HAND 1 | Nearly any personality that includes “bored”. No spoken lines.  |
| STAGE HAND 2 | Basically the same as Stage Hand 1. No spoken lines.  |

Note: Names and genders are not relevant to the plot, and can be changed as desired.

## SETTING

A theater in modern day.

SCENE

*(Jason and Ashley are sitting in chairs on the side of the stage, each holding a script in their hands. Opposite them are a lamp and a stick, perhaps on the floor or possibly on platforms or stools or something to make them easier to see. The lamp should be plugged in, with the chord close to fully extended. Jason and Ashley are staring at the objects in silence for a time, the former with a look of appreciative contemplation and the latter with an expression of confusion that eventually becomes impatience.)*

ASHLEY

I don't get it.

JASON

What's not to get?

ASHLEY

What's not to... The whole thing. I don't get any of it. What's going on?

JASON

Isn't it obvious? They're falling in love.

ASHLEY

Oh.

JASON

Starting to. This is that awkward, uncomfortable phase.

ASHLEY

Yeah. I'm definitely picking up on the awkward and uncomfortable.

JASON

*(Mistaking the comment for sincere...)*

Isn't it great?

ASHLEY

And this is the whole bit? I thought plays were supposed to have dialog and action and stuff.

JASON

There *is* dialog. It's just nonverbal.

ASHLEY

Nonverbal dialog? What the hell is that supposed to mean? That's like inedible food. It doesn't—

JASON

Shhhh. You're missing it.

*(Ashley just stares at Jason like he's an idiot.)*

ASHLEY

Uh huh. *(Pause.)* Have I missed all of it yet?

JASON

Are you seriously telling me that you can't feel the tension between them? The longing? The uncertainty?

ASHLEY

No.

JASON

The deep connection...

ASHLEY

No.

JASON

...as they get past their inhibitions...

ASHLEY

No.

JASON

...each one wondering if the other feels the same way...

ASHLEY

No.

JASON

...neither one brave enough to be the first to reach out...

ASHLEY  
It's a stick...

JASON  
...to take that first bold step...

ASHLEY  
And a lamp...

JASON  
...to jump off the precipice of fate...

ASHLEY  
You're shitting me.

JASON  
...into the great beyond...

ASHLEY  
You are, right?

JASON  
...unable to know if the other will jump with them...

ASHLEY  
Jason?

JASON  
*(Pulled out of the theatrical experience...)*

What?

ASHLEY  
You're full of shit, right?

JASON  
What do you mean?

ASHLEY  
I mean, we're staring a lamp. And a stick.

JASON  
Are you honestly telling me that you can't feel the growing passion?

*(Ashley shakes his/her head in disbelief. Jason suddenly reacts like something important is going to happen, turns a page in his script.)*

JASON (CONT)

Oh, pay attention. This part is really moving.

ASHLEY

They're just...

*(A stage hand, dressed in the typical blacks, comes out and with a look of unsurpassed boredom and apathy pushes the stick closer to the lamp. Jason sighs in appreciation as the stage hand exits.)*

JASON

Oh. Isn't that beautiful.

ASHLEY

What the hell just happened?

*(Jason motions to Ashley's script.)*

JASON

He couldn't take it any longer.

ASHLEY

He?

JASON

And you said there wasn't any action.

ASHLEY

What makes the stick a 'he'?

JASON

Or she. Whatever.

ASHLEY

It's a stick.

JASON

You need to get over your preconceptions if you're ever going to have a chance to see it for its inner nature, Ashley.

*(Ashley just stares at Jason. S/he blinks like he is out of focus.)*

ASHLEY

What's really going on here, Jason?

JASON

Haven't you ever been in love, wanted to take that first step but not known how?

ASHLEY

Is this because no one came to auditions last week?

JASON

Shh shh shh.

*(Jason motions for Ashley to be silent. A moment later, another stage hand comes on, just as bored as the first, and moves the lamp back away from the stick a little, then exits. We can see the sympathy play out in Jason's face.)*

ASHLEY

What just happened?

JASON

The lamp got cold feet. They're too different, she's thinking. It could never work.

ASHLEY

And how did you get that?

JASON

Look.

*(He points to the script in Ashley's hand.)*

ASHLEY

An audience isn't going to have the script, Jason.