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The Hero Who Overslept

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THE HERO WHO OVERSLEPT

Written by

Philip Woodford
&
Stephen Peake

WORLD PREMIERE
at
THE ROSE THEATRE
EDINBURGH
1st-27th August 2017

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DUPLICATE ACTOR COPY

STAGE MANAGER VERSION: 29TH JULY
2017 09.00 PW

STANDBY LQ 1; HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN,
PRE-SET FOR START OF SHOW; LOW
LIGHT ON WALL CHART & EARTH
BALLOONS

STANDBY SQ A - GODS PRE-RECORDED & GOOD MORNING STARSHINE

GO LQ 1

GO SQ A

STANDY LQ 2

RECORDED SQ 1

GOD 1

Ah, hello there fellow celestial one - been meaning to catch up with you - how's that earth project of yours getting along, the one you created....ooh, how long ago now? Seems like only yesterday...

GOD 2

Yes, well funny you should ask. I've rather taken my eye of the ball there - I fear it's being somewhat bugged up if I'm honest

GOD 1

Oh dear, sorry to hear that. You had such high hopes. It all seemed to start so well didn't it...?

GOD 2

Yes. Yes. It was all there for them. Everything laid out just as I'd intended but sadly the latest version of the homo sapiens hasn't been an upgrade at all, in fact if anything, they've gone backwards. Actually there's a couple of "have a go" heroes I thought I'd experiment with at this big arts festival in Edinburgh right now. Try a different approach - see if that gets something going.....

SCENE ONE; GOOD MORNING STAR SHINE

SP enters from offstage looks on at PW bemused and bewildered at what he's witnessing in front of him...

GO LQ 2: FULL ILLUMINATION OF SET AS STEPHEN APPEARS ON STAGE...AND THE QUIETENING OF THE "GOOD MORNING" TRACK

STEPHEN

Excuse me, Philip - what in heaven's name are yer doin'?

PHILIP

Heaven's name...yeah. I'm waking up. I'm waking up Stephen..how about you?

STEPHEN

It's after lunchtime. I've been awake for hours. I'm about to deliver my lecture on climate change....

PHILIP

Yeah, I know, I know - I'll be in the audience cheering you on. But Stephen, I've just had some kind of visitation. Something...someone spoke to me in a dream - told me to, to get off my arse and and finally do my bit for the planet.

STEPHEN

That's wonderful Philip, I'm delighted for you but this is me doing my bit for the planet and you'll need to find a different space for what you want to do....

PHILIP

But Stephen - we said we'd do something together - don't you remember? The promise we made in our yurt, at Embercombe in Devon? We could try a different kind of lecture...more of a show - what do you say?

STEPHEN

Oh ho, yes I remember the yurt but I don't think this is what I had in mind - how on earth would my climate science combine with your hippy sing-a-long? Nooby wabba nabba? What's that mean anyway?

PHILIP

It's a classic song of the time. Peace and love for the earth - 50 years since the Summer of Love - overdue a revival, and that's the irresistible mix that you and I can bring to the Edinburgh party Stephen...

STEPHEN

There's no party going on here I can assure you - it's high time we took this climate crisis seriously...

PHILIP

Oh yes of course, but isn't it about reaching a wider audience - what about putting some drama back into the lecture theatre?

STEPHEN

Christ alive! You and your theatricals - hard credible facts is what people need, which is what I've got - in spades.

PHILIP

In charts.

STEPHEN

Sorry?

PHILIP

I said you provide it in charts, which might be alright for some but we need something different, they told me - I'm sure an Edinburgh audience would welcome a little song and dance?

STEPHEN

Look, why don't you go dance down the Royal Mile? That'd be different...

PHILIP

Hey maybe I will, but in the spirit of love, why don't you show me what you've got, and we'll see how we can harmonise?

STEPHEN

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours"? We're not at nursery school now you know...

PHILIP

[both taking a glance at the child chairs] You sure about that? Come on, we've got nothing to hide, have we? Why not grab me by the "logicals"...?

STEPHEN

Excuse me?

PHILIP

Hit me with your science, and I'll be your friendly face smiling back?

(PAUSE)

STEPHEN

Well OK, because of the promise we made I'll indulge you this time, but try not to disrupt it eh?

PHILIP

Oh, thank you Stephen. (sitting down on child's chair)
Science makes me feel small but I'll be the most attentive child in the classroom, promise.

STEPHEN

OK, I'll talk you through this new chart here. It's really good - or really bad depending on your reaction.

PHILIP

Isn't it one or the other?

STEPHEN

(peering towards audience) Audiences can be horrified by the truth. I get a strange satisfaction from seeing that. Odd isn't it?

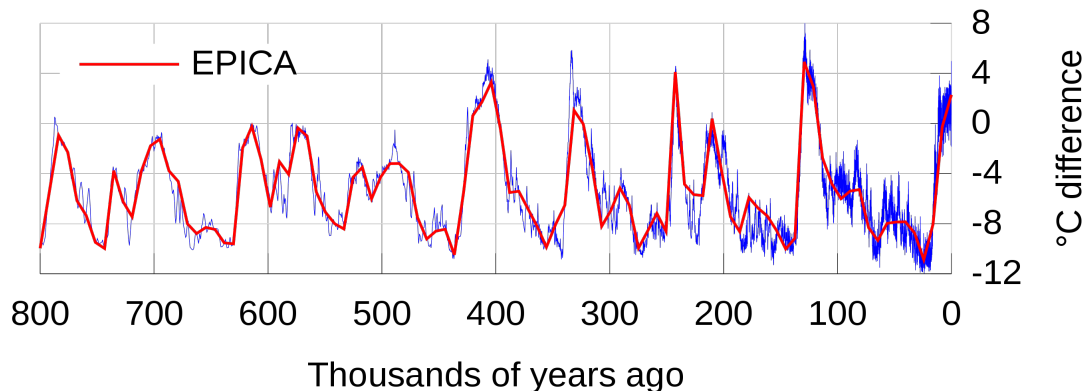
PHILIP

Yeah, that is slightly odd. Anyway, for you I'm ready to enter the "climate change House of Horrors"?

SCENE TWO: FACTS DONT WORK

STEPHEN

Rightio. This usually does the trick. The climate change piece de resistance. The smoking gun. Iconic. 800 thousand years worth of data from an ice core. This shows the correlation between atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and global average temperature.



PHILIP

Cool....spiky!

STEPHEN

Two mile time machine this is. Drill a kinda drain pipe 2 miles deep intut th'Antarctic ice. Pull out the core of ice carefully one section at a time as you go deeper. Ship these rods of ice back to the lab. Well I say lab. They keep em in a frozen pea warehouse just off the A1. Anyway, under a microscope you can make out each ancient winter/summer - like a tree ring you know. Alt thway back. Carefully slice em up, defrost each tiny disk. As they melt, you can hear pressurized bubbles of ancient air snap crackle and pop. Then analyse the chemical composition of the air and ice melt and bob's your uncle...

The red line is the temperature and the blue line is CO2. 800k years - a tiny fraction of earth's history, but quite a long time in terms of our species.

So, whereabouts do we humans arrive?

PHILIP

Somewhere in the garden of Eden?

STEPHEN

Oh very drole, you know, homo sapiens

PHILIP

Dunno, show me.

STEPHEN

About here - 220k years ago. East Africa. Well I say that - but a recent paper in Nature found hominid skulls very similar to ours in Morocco 300k years ago.

Anyway I digress, so we lived through about1, 2 ice ages and 1,2 warm ages - which is where we are now. Up to about here (50kya) we co-exist with the Neanderthals...

PHILIP

But late night tweets still come from those with small hands and fat thumbs...

STEPHEN

Pay attention - What do you notice overall ?

PHILIP

Well they go up and they go down together!

STEPHEN

Exactly. CO2 and temp have gone along hand in hand and up and down within this band, in and out of the ice ages.

Then along comes the industrial revolution - and wham! We burn loads of fossil fuels and we crank up the CO2 to around 400 ppm - way outside the normal range.

We kick the system like its never been kicked before.

Can you now see how frighteningly fast we are pushing CO2 levels up - 3 ppm a year !

PHILIP

3 *parts per million* - sounds like the success rate for an auditioning actor. Sorry, I am keeping up, honest.

STEPHEN

[sighs] OK - here's a simple analogy for you. Say I had a swimming pool with a million different coloured ping pong balls in it. (throwing bag full to Philip)

PHILIP

Why, thank you. What do they symbolise?

STEPHEN

Each of the balls represents 1 part of air at normal atmospheric pressure and temperature.

PHILIP

I think I'd gag on this many balls....

STEPHEN

If there were say, 400 blue balls in total within the million, then the pool would have in it a concentration of 400 ppm of blue ping pong balls....

PHILIP

Even I can follow that...so it's a swimming pool of ping pong balls with the odd blue one here and there.

STEPHEN

Brilliant - now your *thinking*. Now let's say we add another 10 years worth of human greenhouse gas waste - all in one go - Replace another 30 white balls with 30 blue balls - then mix it up again

PHILIP

I'm imagining a lovely Hockney pool painting, but still not that alarming.

STEPHEN

OK well, it may not seem alarming, but its knowing how powerful those little blue balls are. The damage they do.

PHILIP

So, tell me. Exactly how dangerous are blue balls....?

STEPHEN

Well of course they're not. Well I mean they are. Arggh. To actually *know* that you have to understand atmospheric physics, radiative forcing, - atmospheric chemistry...

PHILIP

I can barely understand the weather forecast. This is the problem. The science stuff is so abstract to most of us.

STEPHEN

Well alright, but when you get it, its the science that's truly moving....

PHILIP

(getting up from his chair) But remember that your "moving" and my "moving" are a little different.

STEPHEN

How could I forget? Look, you don't have to be an atmospheric physicist to understand lots of other aspects of the global environmental crisis.

PHILIP

Sounds great. So give me something I can run with...

STEPHEN

Well - peak oil for example - we're running out of oil. All the easy oil has gone - and its getting more and more difficult to replace supplies

PHILIP

And that's a good thing for the climate right?

STEPHEN

Right - sort of - except that we ought to leave most of it in the ground anyway. And there's peak gas - gas ain't gonna go on forever - got about 40 years of natural gas supply left.

PHILIP

But hang on. There's loads of wind and solar power going up isn't there?

STEPHEN

True - but windfarms don't make fertilizer do they?

PHILIP

Not unless you're winding me up?

STEPHEN

All over the planet our soil systems are being washed and blown away. We're losing 30 billion tonnes of soil a year. Just a handspan of top soil lies between us and food oblivion, and what soil we do have left needs heavy doses of gas-based fertilisers. We might have 30 years of soil left - after that its toast for your avocados Philip

PHILIP

(in an echoing cry) Nooo, not my avocados...!

STEPHEN

Because we homo sapiens have become so many now that we've got to start being kinder to this planet. Do you know, as a species we reached 1 billion in the year 1804 and then it took 123 years to reach 2 billion

PHILIP

And three billion ?

STEPHEN

1960

PHILIP

4 billion

STEPHEN

1974

PHILIP

5 billion?

STEPHEN

1987

PHILIP

6 ?

STEPHEN

2000

PHILIP

7 ?

STEPHEN

7 years ago in 2010. And 8 billion is only 5 years away. We'll be 10 or maybe 11 billion by 2050. Humans are having a massive impact on the planet. Transforming it with our take make waste economy - to the

(MORE)

STEPHEN (cont'd)
 extent we've driven it into a new geological epoch - The Anthropocene.

PHILIP
 (in a schlock horror movie announcer's voice) THE ANTHROPOCENE....! At a cinema near you...part of a frightening double bill with THE SIXTH MASS EXTINCTION...

STEPHEN
 Right - exactly! Now you're getting it. Its all connected and its serious

PHILIP
 Yes it's serious - but maybe the horror movie analogy is too scary for some? We scream and just take flight? (Philip imitates the Munch painting "The Scream")

STEPHEN
 What you doin'?

PHILIP
 That's my "Munch" (Munk) impression....

STEPHEN
 Monk impression? What have monks got to do with all this? But I have noticed that you can engage an audience for a short period - they can seem awake - but you only have a narrow window before they seem to say - well "that was a interesting story, but let's get back to reality"....This is the reality!

PHILIP
 (looking over his shoulder) Well done, you might just have woken one of them up there...but maybe it's not about how much knowledge you can have, it's about how much knowledge you can bear to have....?

STEPHEN
 Well profoundly true. Its like - no matter how much science, how well its presented, when they leave the lecture theatre there's some sort of airport security "amnesia scanner" on the way out. Once they pass through it, they conveniently *unknow* everything we've just talked about.

PHILIP
 (walking through imaginary scanner) Sorry what were you saying?

SCENE 3: HIPPYDOM DONT WORK

PHILIP

Cheap gag, sorry Stephen, but that's quite a problem you have. Truth is that I **think** that you're trying to solve the problem with the same thinking that created this mess in the first place.

STEPHEN

Ah, the old Einstein quote: "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it"

PHILIP

Precisely - it's the level of consciousness that's the key. All this rational argument might seem blindingly obvious to you materialist scientists but it's become too dominant, just as we humans have become too dominant over nature. Our rational minds have taken us so far but we're ignoring the rest of who we are.

STEPHEN

What are we ignoring then?

PHILIP

That we're head, heart and soul in unison....

STEPHEN

Aha....here's the new age pitch?

PHILIP

Look, you've just admitted that for all your best efforts people choose to forget what they've heard - I'm saying that's because some of their other channels are jammed.

STEPHEN

Who's doing the jamming?

PHILIP

Well it's not Bob Marley - sorry, it's the system my friend which keeps us in this trance of indifference. We've become disconnected from our true nature....with "all that surrounds us" (he pauses as SP looks sceptical) - bit like The Force....you know, in Star Wars?

STEPHEN

The Force? I'm one of the few who's never seen Star Wars...

PHILIP

Never seen Star Wars?! Well you better know this - we need to recover our heart connection if we're to change things - the critical connection we lost when Descartes said "I think therefore I am..."

STEPHEN

(pausing slightly) So you think we've put "*Descartes before the Force*"

PHILIP

(applauding) "Descartes before the force..." Oh bravo, that's really very good.

STEPHEN

Why thank you, but "The Force" as you put it, is just pure science fiction isn't it?

PHILIP

It's hugely popular science fiction. Not just because of the story but because it touches something that people already sense is true.

STEPHEN

What's that?

PHILIP

That we are not all separate selves. That there **is** some greater force connecting us all.

STEPHEN

Look, it's not going to be done by invoking some spirit force....it's done with credible and compelling arguments....

PHILIP

There's your highly developed problem solving mind, *thinking* that it can fix the world by controlling it.

STEPHEN

(becoming more irritated) Look, people still need to be *convinced* to make the changes the world needs - (tapping his head) they need to think it through.

PHILIP

Yes, but "thinky thinky" isn't going to be enough....

STEPHEN

It's a great deal more than just thinky thinky, Mr Hippy Dippy!

PHILIP

Hey stay cool Steve. But, here's the point, the more we stay in our heads, the less we're going to be in our hearts.

STEPHEN

So how exactly do we get into our hearts then? With a cardiologist?!

PHILIP

No. Heart surgery isn't required. It starts with daring to feel some connection with all that surrounds us, and not dismissing it so quickly with our heads.

STEPHEN

Oh yes, I know - huggie huggie, eye gazing, tears - is that the prescription?

PHILIP

Stephen, you're sceptical, I can tell. It's risky I know, daring to speak from your heart - but ask yourself, where's the root of that fear - a fear of rejection? That only leads to more separation, when the truth is that we humans all crave connection, but in the absence of that, we've become slaves to material things - evermore fleeting pleasures to ease our...distress?

STEPHEN

Well I suppose corporations do exploit our distress if we let them.

PHILIP

Exactly. What was it that Chomsky said - the manufacture of discontent? Those corporations would prefer it if we all stayed unhappy - it's the sickness of the Western world, but ultimately it's our heart which senses what's real, not our heads.

STEPHEN

Well I'm sorry but I still trust my head first.

PHILIP

That's the choice many make but it'll keep you in this obedient trance. Maybe we all finally need to lose our minds and come to our senses?

STEPHEN

Tune in and drop out? There's your naive hippy philosophy again. It didn't work in the 60s and it won't work now.

PHILIP

You have more in common with hippies than you think. They were a counter culture - and even back then they were trying to change our relationship to the planet as well as the system - and that's more critical now than ever. Difference is there's now a world wide web of concerned people who'd like to change the same dysfunctional system. (walks to edge of stage and looks out...)

STEPHEN

Oh please, not another flower power movement?

PHILIP

(taking out his flower) What's so threatening about that anyway?

STEPHEN

It's all so flaky - so indiscriminate.

PHILIP

That was partly the point...free love for all and the planet.

STEPHEN

Well I'm from Bolton and I don't do that kind of thing.

PHILIP

Really? Well I don't think Bolton is exempt from the love thing, otherwise you wouldn't be here would you?

STEPHEN

Aye lad - thi as a point there.

PHILIP

Anyway, it was a *heartfelt* attempt to get along on this planet we all share, and that philosophy is in urgent need of a revival. (looking over at earth balloon) Look, here's a different idea we could try - maybe your discomfort with flower power could be replaced by this earth balloon?

STANDBY SQ B

STEPHEN

Here we go. What weirdness are you trying now?

PHILIP

Come on. Let's give this connection thing a try. This earth balloon will be between us like a beating heart

STEPHEN

They definitely don't do this in Bolton.

PHILIP

Just go with it. Look deeply into the space between us....
BREATHE deeply and feel the movement in your body. Here we go, "From intimacy to eternity...."

GO SQ B

[**Music starts; 50 secs of "Radio Nights" by Matura.** SP & PW move in a kind of waltz staring through the balloon as the music plays]

PHILIP

How was that? Feeling something different?

STEPHEN

(walking shyly to edge of stage) Well I errr ..it were different I'll grant you that - but I think we should just keep that to ourselves

PHILIP

It's our little secret -(looking at audience)- do we trust this lot? Anyway it was a magical connection enhanced by music and the earth.

STEPHEN

Uh-Oh....Shades of Woodstock then?

PHILIP

Well, we missed out in '69, but we can have our own theatre version here and now...

STEPHEN

This Rose Theatre is a long way from Woodstock.....

PHILIP

It's just a matter of time and place. So any heart connection there then?

STEPHEN

Er, I'm not sure if I'm honest...

PHILIP

(following SP) Well, a different chakra perhaps? What about the anja chakra?

STEPHEN

Anja what? Anja having a laugh?

PHILIP

The anja is your third eye, right in the middle of your forehead..(tapping SP forehead)

STEPHEN

(recoiling) Ow, gerfoff - that's how Mam would jab me if I came home with a lousy school report....I'd get the third degree, never mind the third eye...

PHILIP

Well, it's your sixth sense - wisdom and intuition, which wouldn't have been on your school curriculum because we've forgotten the value of the sacred gift we've been given. Ever had one of those intuitive moments?

STEPHEN

Of course.

PHILIP

Well you're HIP then....

STEPHEN

No need for false flattery

PHILIP

H.I.P. A Highly Intuitive Person - nearly a hippy, but not quite...

STEPHEN

I'll stick with hip then...

PHILIP

Whereabouts do they happen, these intuitive moments?

STEPHEN

Well, might be on a walk, in nature - listening to the birds

PHILIP

In nature eh? So not much thinking just being?

STEPHEN

It's my most peaceful time.

PHILIP

So, when you're not thinking, along comes an intuitive connection with Mother Earth - difference being that this mother doesn't tell you off?

STEPHEN

No, but that's a different relationship isn't it?

PHILIP

Yes sort of, but isn't it part of that shift we want from *ego-centric to eco-centric*?

STEPHEN

Oh that's neat - yes I suppose so.

PHILIP

And I'm guessing that the students in your lectures aren't necessarily feeling a sense of wonder for *all that's alive in front of them*?

STEPHEN

Well I love good bit of feedback, but it's never like that

PHILIP

Maybe you need to get them out of their heads and the lecture room and actually have an encounter with nature?

STEPHEN

We do, sometimes...

PHILIP

Like the time I saw a whale in the wild for the first time - beautiful - I whelped with excitement...everyone else on the boat too.

STEPHEN

I haven't lectured on a boat but I did take a bunch of bankers into a wood near Oxford - looking for inspiration for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

PHILIP

Transatlantic what? But what about the TRANS-cendent experience Stephen, something that we can actually feel with our senses?

STEPHEN

Well they do that in shopping malls now...they're the temples of heavenly consumption.

PHILIP

Sadly true, but we're all guilty, and you know, it's now become a psychic phenomenon.

STEPHEN

A psychic phenomenon?

PHILIP

Yes. Part of the dis-ease in our civilisation. Tell you what here's another idea - let's play a little scene together. We'll call it **"Help, I just can't help myself."** You up for it?

STEPHEN

Oh why not? Can't help myself can I.....

PHILIP

Great. So why don't you try and sit here (on kids chair)... and I'll be your...childhood regression therapist?

STEPHEN

Am I in need of therapy?

PHILIP

For these purposes you are, maybe we all are. I'm going to run a few questions past you about your environmental

(MORE)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 choices and you pretend to be someone in total denial about the impact you're having. Sound OK?

STEPHEN
 OK. So like I'm going to be the driver who leaves his engine running outside the shops, or a litter tosser, or one who thinks there isn't enough plastic in the ocean....that kind of thing?

SCENE 4: THERAPY GAME

PHILIP
 You've got it. So here goes. (in a soothing voice) Welcome, welcome to your first introductory session of **"Help, I just can't help myself."**

STEPHEN
 Sounds a bit creepy if you ask me....

PHILIP
 Does it? Don't want to sound creepy. Maybe I need to sound more assertive, more authoritarian. (adopting Germanic style) Yah,I've got it. Zo, let's dig a little deeper into some of ze psychological excuses you may have been using to numb the pain of separation.

STEPHEN
 French - that's lovely !

PHILIP
 Zis is a German accent..

STEPHEN
 Oh sorry. Very convincing.

PHILIP
 May I carry on?

STEPHEN
 Please.

PHILIP
 Danke, zo. This balloon represents ze earth on which we both now stand (stamping his feet). Yah?

STEPHEN
 Yah. You've got me doing it now...(stamping his feet too)

PHILIP
 Good, we are in rapport. I vill now ask you a series of questions and ven I hear an answer that suggests you're indifferent to the impact you're having on the planet I'm
 (MORE)

PHILIP (cont'd)
going to give zis balloon a good kicking and ve'll see if
you feel anything at all...yah? Zehr gute?

STEPHEN
So if I get it wrong, you'll kick the planet?

PHILIP
Exactly. I like to call it "psy-kick therapy".

STEPHEN
Side-kick therapy?

PHILIP
No. Psy-kick, As in psychic. Oh never mind. Let's just get
on with it...

STEPHEN
Marvellous. Loving the sound of this game.

PHILIP
It's not a game! It's deadly serious....

STEPHEN
Yes, got it...

PHILIP
Right so here we go...first question - cheap holiday flights
are finally going to be rationed and your son is already
living abroad. You have a son yah?

STEPHEN
Yes, but he doesn't live abroad.

PHILIP
Never mind - for ze purposes of this he does.OK?

STEPHEN
OK? Whereabouts does he live?

PHILIP
Oh I don't know. It doesn't matter. Maybe it can be
Australia(sliding into a slightly Australian accent...)

STEPHEN
Are you German-Australian by any chance?

PHILIP
(proudly) No, I'm not sure what happened there. Maybe I'm a
chameleon- a "Chameleo-man" of the world.(he sniggers in a
self satisfied way)

STEPHEN
Oh yes. Very witty.

PHILIP

Thank you. Let's get on with it otherwise the planet will be bugged before we've even finished. Right, your son is in Australia and you're only allowed to make one flight a year. What is your reaction?

STEPHEN

Well this is hypothetical of course, but if that were the case I would see it as an infringement of my freedom

PHILIP

Infringement of your freedom! You're no different than a spoiled infant wailing at his mother for another chocolate biscuit...isn't that correct?

STEPHEN

No, that's not fair and the plane would fly anyway, with or without me.

PHILIP

No it wouldn't - that's the whole point...dumbkopf! Your answer merits a good kicking (kicks the globe) Right in the Maldives..did you feel anything zer?

STEPHEN

No, not really.

PHILIP

Well the Maldives certainly will. OK, not such a good start but let's try this one. A vind turbine is to be built near your charmingly comfortable village....

STEPHEN

A "vind turbine"?

PHILIP

Yes, a "vind turbine"...it's very clear, which will reduce your collective consumption of fossil fuels by 50% - what is your reaction?

STEPHEN

No thank you very much. Not in my back yard. We have a beautiful scenic view that absolutely mustn't be spoiled.

PHILIP

Ha your precious view is spoiled, but it's you who are spoiled once again. Another kicking...(kicks the globe again) - think that one got Venice, right in St Marks..... feel anything?

STEPHEN

Mmm. Maybe a little -

PHILIP

(leaning in interested) Really? What kind of feeling?

STEPHEN

Some sadness thinking of Venice submerged....I visited it once. Just beautiful.

PHILIP

(sarcastically) Yes tragic isn't it? That'll be a great loss. Maybe we'll need to get used to losing a lot more besides Venice. (feigns some crocodile tears) OK. Finally, let's ask what you might be prepared to give up in support of our fragile planet?

STEPHEN

Give up? Oh, I don't know - I gave up chocolate for Lent, but I'm just one person, trying to get by....after all, it is what it is isn't it....

PHILIP

What a lame arse answer.(kicks the globe harder)

STEPHEN

Ouch. Can you stop doing that please...

PHILIP

Why?

STEPHEN

Because it's unnecessarily violent

PHILIP

Too violent? To a balloon? Oh the irony of it all.

STEPHEN

What irony?

PHILIP

That you should think that me kicking this rubbery globe is any way comparable to the damage that we're actually doing to the planet!

STEPHEN

Oh come on. I think you're being a little alarmist. They'll figure it out, won't they....in the end?

PHILIP

(tuning out of game) Enough of this. I've had enough. I can't play this game anymore - it's no different than you trying to change minds in your lecture rooms. It's all so pointless.

STEPHEN

I'm sorry. That's all we've got time for this week.

PHILIP

What?

STEPHEN

Seems you're the one in need of therapy now.

PHILIP

(he sighs heavily) Yes, OK so maybe I am.....but I'm not the only one. What about the rest of humanity?

STEPHEN

Not sure there's enough therapists for that

PHILIP

Well maybe we all need to become therapists to ourselves. It's no longer just a climate crisis "out there" it's the one "in here" that needs urgent attention. People say "yes, we need change", but when the actual change is asked of them they look the other way, like you just did.

STEPHEN

Hey, I was only playing a part there. You did ask me to be the denier.

PHILIP

Yes, and maybe you're just a bit too good at it...maybe your academic mindset conveniently allows you to separate yourself from the consequences of it all. Frankly I wonder if your rational commitment is as strong as my heartfelt one?

STEPHEN

Now see, that's precisely the kind of over emotional statement that damages your cause. I'm going to choose to ignore that remark because your *feelings* have clouded your judgment, as is always the way....

PHILIP

Call it feelings if you like, I call it passion and that's what's needed if we're ever to shift the hearts **and** minds of our species, some of whom seem hell bent on destroying our very existence.

STEPHEN

We're on the same side Philip, honestly we are, but you need the science as well as your passion to influence those who are making the decisions. It all takes time...

PHILIP

Which we don't have. There's no doubt anymore about the impact we're having on the planet, but we'd rather leave it to the governments, ha!

STEPHEN

Paris Agreement might work !

PHILIP

Not a chance! Or we suppose some clever scientists will fix it, anyone but us...because we're the ones who'll have to live differently.(pause) Well I reckon I can make a statement with the life I still have.

STEPHEN

Oh really? What kind of statement?

PHILIP

You're the logical one - follow this. If we are indeed killing ourselves, no wonder we're all so depressed and looking for distractions where we can - living for the here and now, and to hell with anyone else's future.

STEPHEN

That's still a very pessimistic view of humanity.....have you really stopped believing?

PHILIP

Pretty much. It seems to me that the only *logical* thing to do is take my inevitable death into my own hands and get on with it myself.

STEPHEN

Ah yes - the old chestnut "how can I radically reduce my carbon footprint". "Kill myself".

PHILIP

(sounding increasingly frenzied)

There's a long line of dedicated humans who've sacrificed themselves for their cause.Suffragettes, Tibetan monks.... and at least I'll have answered the question from my children, "What did you do in the climate crisis Daddy?"

STEPHEN

You'll be dead - they won't thank you for that.

PHILIP

But what's the point of having children at all if we've stopped seeing the magic in our world? (picking up the discarded balloon) Maybe my death will be the difference that inspires others to action...

STEPHEN

This show'll be a short run that's for sure. I have to say that I think you're delusional...and slightly bonkers.

PHILIP

So you won't be joining me then?

STEPHEN

No I won't

PHILIP

Why not?

STEPHEN

Because its a mad idea - and anyway it would be defeatist.

PHILIP

Defeatist?! Exactly. One of the classic elements of any suicide, as well as feeling humiliated and trapped.....which is precisely what our own ecocide has created.

STEPHEN

Honestly. I really don't think we've reached that point yet.

PHILIP

Yet. But many of us have - another TV, another car, another holiday just won't cut it - I need a more permanent solution for the pain. This is it. (Philip produces a retractable knife).

STANDBY SQ C

STANDBY LQ 3

STEPHEN

Come on you loony, put the knife away...

PHILIP

Don't try to stop me...Don't try and stop this selfless act of protest.(pause - Stephen stands immune to the appeals..) I'm warning you. This will be my final act. As you are my witness here now today, I take my life so that others...

STEPHEN

Others what....

PHILIP

Others may finally appreciate the gift of life that we all now have....

STEPHEN

Not for much longer....

PHILIP

....."every beast of the earth, every bird of the air, everything that creeps upon the ground and all the fish of the sea...into your hand they are delivered". Why can't we love what keeps us alive?

GO SQ C - GODS

GO LQ 3 - BLACK OUT

STANDBY LQ 4 - DAWN

RECORDED GOD 2 (FEMALE VOICE)

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
The pall of a past world; no love was left;
All earth was but one thought, and that was death,
Immediate and inglorious; The world was void,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless--
A lump of death, a chaos of hard clay.

GOD 1

Well said, I think that adds a sufficiently darkening edge to the show..

GOD 2

Yes thank you, I like a touch of the romantic poets - some Gothic spookiness to stir the emotions...

GOD 1

So, how are they doing down there?

GOD 2

Well, you know. I'm beginning to approve. It seems clear that the humans are unmoved by the facts so I felt some emotion was required...

GOD 1

But symbolic suicide? That's a tad extreme isn't it?

GOD 2

Yes....I tend to agree..so here's a little secret.
I intervened and gave him the "near death" experience instead...

GOD 1

Oh well done, that's better. And let's hope they both take the lessons from that and see the light as we say....

GOD 2

We do say that don't we. Out of the darkness comes the light, like a new dawn one could say.

GOD 1

Excellent, so what's next?

GOD 2

Heaven knows? Well I suppose I should know shouldn't I? But it's really all up to them from here on in.....

GO LQ 4 - LOWEST LEVEL SETTING

SCENE 5: DUSK TO DAWN

IN THE DARKNESS, SP AND PW ARE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF STAGE

STEPHEN

(whispering) Anyone there? Anyone at all? (Silence)
(he strikes a match to light a candle or LED candle?)

PHILIP

Hello? I'm still here

STEPHEN

Is that you Philip?

PHILIP

Yes it's me. Over here.

STEPHEN

So you're alive then?

PHILIP

Yes, I'm still alive. Amazing isn't it?

STEPHEN

That's a relief. I thought you'd committed "hari-balloon".

PHILIP

I thought I had too.

STEPHEN

And what just happened after that?

PHILIP

Not sure. I think they call it a "near death experience".

STEPHEN

Really? How *near death* were you exactly?

PHILIP

(with all seriousness) Near enough I can tell you.

STEPHEN

(sarcastically) I bet you were.

PHILIP

Yes, for real. And when you're that close to death you really do feel alive. Like a great expansion of consciousness. How great would it be to feel like that every day?

STEPHEN

That takes illegal drugs I think

PHILIP

No,no, all natural, holistic and self generated.

STEPHEN

How does the organic version work then?

PHILIP

(turning on his laser
torch)

Well, you have this wonderful sense of being part of something bigger - an awesome sense of the magnificence of the human experience - like we're connected, and at the same time reflected in each other, like fragments of a gigantic mirror.

STEPHEN

But that is you shining the laser torch there to make your point?

PHILIP

Oh,yes I am. I was rather enjoying the effect. Can I leave it on for a little longer?

STEPHEN

If you really want to. But I'm thinking of a crap school disco, the embarrassment of which has never really left me.

PHILIP

But can you sense what I'm describing?

STEPHEN

I think so. I can begin to imagine it, yes.

PHILIP

You can? How lucky we humans actually are to be conscious of all this - our lives are only brief, like your candle - we're just a flicker in time - we need to keep it shining bright for others who come after us...

STANDBY LQ 5

STEPHEN

Yes, I get that. But not everyone does...

PHILIP

Not yet, but if one of us gets it, that becomes two, and two becomes four, four becomes eight and soon there is a shift, an **awakening** (loudly).

STEPHEN

You make it all sound very **loud**. I think I need something more to sway me.....

PHILIP

Well perhaps you've forgotten about the one all powerful ingredient....

STEPHEN

Are you still talking hallucinogenic drugs?

GO LQ 5 [LIGHTS SLOWLY BRIGHTEN AS IF THE DAWN IS NOW COMING]

STANDBY SQ D

PHILIP

No, much more simple than that, and seriously underestimated. L.O.V.E. Love.

STEPHEN

Aha. So we have come full circle to your hippy inspired ooby whabby nubber...?

PHILIP

That was just a song...this is in our very soul.

STEPHEN

Sssh, listen, here that?

[silence...except the sounds of the room - A/C, fan, exterior noise]

PHILIP

I can hear a fan, some lights, a door opening etc.

GO SQ D

[BLACKBIRD SOUNDS RISE SLOWLY.....]

STEPHEN

There he is - Mr Blacky - he's special!

The blackbird - listen...

PHILIP

Ah yes - now I can, a different kind of song?

STEPHEN

The blackbird is usually the ring leader - listen - there goes Mr Robin. Can you hear that ? Blacky goes 3 seconds on 3 seconds off. Rich mellow, flutey. Mr Robin is just as bright but has a hint of the minor key. Ever so slight slightly sad as he runs to his fade.

PHILIP

Brave enough to sing whilst the dawn is still dark.....

STEPHEN

Hear that one too?

PHILIP

Which one?

STEPHEN

There. Now that's a small man complex. Can you hear a voice punching above the rest - Mr Wren. Remarkable for such a tiny bird. Shaking with the effort - he explodes into his rattling warble.

PHILIP

Powerful sound yes....

STEPHEN

Oh there's a twitcher in you - I can hear it. And listen. Right on time. Here comes the bowler?

PHILIP

What, off the long run up?

STEPHEN

No, listen - here he is - takes a run up and there.....Mr Chaffinch.

PHILIP

You really do love those birds don't you Stephen?

STANDBY SQ E & LQ 6

STEPHEN

Little dinosaurs they are - been around long before us troublesome humans and most likely will be around a lot longer. What's not to love?

PHILIP

What's not to love indeed. Ah, falling in love for the first time, what a romantic time that was.

STEPHEN

Yes, start with the birds and soon everything will follow...

PHILIP

Start with the birds and the bees if you like. It doesn't matter, just as long as you do fall in love with what keeps us alive.

GO SQ E - "THIS GUY'S IN LOVE"**GO LQ 6 - BACK TO FULL ILLUMINATION**

(candles switched off/blown out - sound of Herb Albert's "This guy's in love" slowly building....PW & SP move to centre stage and dance with the inflated earth balloon)

DANCE SEQUENCE FOLLOWS....

SCENE 6: EARTHLY LOVE AFFAIR

PHILIP

How was that for you? Did the earth move?

STEPHEN

Well, it was an experience.

PHILIP

Did you feel it?

STEPHEN

I beg your pardon?

PHILIP

The love, the connection?

STEPHEN

Something happened, but it was definitely nothing like my school disco.

PHILIP

Maybe that's a blessing...but it's definitely a love affair we need with her don't we?

STEPHEN

(sung words) "If not I'll just die"...it was there in the song. After all, they said the earth is "too beautiful to have happened by accident"....

PHILIP

Who said that?

STEPHEN

The astronauts in '68 who saw earth from space for the first time. The blue suspended marble.

PHILIP

Love at first sight then....we may not have the astronaut's perspective but we can definitely love things from afar; mountains, landscapes, the sea, animals in the wild - my little secret is to look afar at someone I love.

STEPHEN

You're not looking over here are you?

PHILIP

No, no you're safe, actually I was thinking about my son playing rugby. I was on the touchline, close enough to see him running and tussling for the ball, right in the fray. I walked back a few metres and looked again. I could still make him out in the melee of boys running about. Then walking back still further I could only just make out the figures moving around. Somewhere in that group you know someone you love is there, and you feel a tug in your heart - but stay with it a while, and you soon realise just how much you can love someone from afar, and then it's a short step to loving something from afar, like our beautiful blue marble.

STEPHEN

I get that when I'm out at sea on a boat, looking back at the land as we lose the loom of the lighthouse and head into our night passage - and knowing like you, that there's loved ones back there and yet I'm in awe of the sea and the elements. The dolphins, the phosphorescence, the mermaids...

PHILIP

Beautiful. And that's what she gives us, isn't it? Mother earth.

STEPHEN

She certainly does. Goes on giving. We go on taking....

PHILIP

Maybe it's time to give something back...if we truly cherish her...so are you ready?

STEPHEN

Ready for what?

PHILIP

Ready to meet the challenge. We've played around a bit haven't we? Thank you for letting me bring something different to your lecture - a good combination of your head and my heart. But we're going to have to shuffle off soon and leave the space for others to take the spotlight.

STEPHEN

Ah yes, but who's brave enough to take the spotlight? Who's willing to do something extraordinary?

PHILIP

Who could be heroes?

STEPHEN

For more than one day?

PHILIP

Sometimes one day is all it takes - one turn of the earth, and when the sun rises we wake up to a new day and a new intention?

STEPHEN

But this needs to be a world wide intention...to "make the planet great again"

PHILIP

Ah, yes a chance to celebrate Monsieur Macron - why is that the French get it?

STEPHEN

(in French accent) Because they know the language of lurve....?

PHILIP

They're the ultimate "romantiques".

STEPHEN

But it's hard to love isn't it...it's really difficult sometimes.

PHILIP

Yes it is. It's like a test every day, to look beyond ourselves and take in all that's alive around us, even just in front of us?

STEPHEN

Yes....so who do we find in front of us?

STANDBY SQ F

(They both step forward to edge of stage and peer into the darkness...)

PHILIP

Ah ha, they came, they saw....

STEPHEN

They missed lunch....?

PHILIP

Worth missing a lunch to save the planet though?

STEPHEN

But there's no such thing as a free lunch is there?

PHILIP

Never has been, because we all have to stay optimistic and defy the doom-mongers who say there's no hope for us humans...

STEPHEN

And an Edinburgh audience is insatiably curious - never stop looking for ways to make a difference...

GO SQ F "LET'S GO ROUND AGAIN".....(AVERAGE WHITE BAND TRACK)

PHILIP

Exactly. So by the next turn of this amazing earth we could all have made a difference, who knows what heroics we could achievewe can't wait to go round again can we Stephen?

STEPHEN

Can't wait....Philip,can't wait....

PHILIP

It's all a matter of timing...

[DANCE SEQUENCE UNTIL THE QUIETEN
OF MUSIC TO ALLOW THIS TEXT]

PHILIP

SO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TO SEE OUR SHOW...WE'VE LOVED
HAVING YOU HERE....

STEPHEN

IT MEANS A HUGE AMOUNT THAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO ENTERTAIN AND
WE HOPE INSPIRE YOU....

PHILIP

SO IF YOU'VE HAD A GOOD TIME, PLEASE TAKE OUR LOVE AND
ENCOURAGEMENT OUT INTO THE STREETS OF EDINBURGH AND TELL AS
MANY OTHERS ABOUT OUR SHOW....

STEPHEN

BECAUSE IF WE'RE HONEST WE ALL NEED A BIT OF A WAKE UP CALL.
WE NEED MANY MORE HEROES IF WE'RE TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
THIS WORLD SO DEARLY NEEDS...

PHILIP

THANK YOU, THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING, AND TOGETHER LET'S KEEP
ON TURNING AND ABOVE ALL, LET'S KEEP ON DANCING...."

AS THE AUDIENCE LEAVE....REPRISE OF
"LET'S GO ROUND AGAIN" MUSIC?

END OF SHOW