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CALL AHEAD

an original one act play by

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INT. NORMAN'S ROOM -

The apartment is decorated, well decorated is an exaggeration, since the walls are covered with posters and memorabilia of every conceivable super hero or science fiction movie since the dawn of man. Some are preciously positioned with protective glass sealing them from any harm or potential errant phaser blast.

Norman, wearing a Superman t-shirt with a red towel draped around his neck like a cape, paces nervously back and forth. His hair is wet, newly washed, which he occasionally dries with his "towel cape."

Scattered across the floor lie toys and action figures, with a path clearly formed by Norman's incessant pacing.

NORMAN

(In a mission control  
radio static voice)

"T" minus three minutes and  
counting.

Norman looks at his vintage Mickey Mouse watch.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(Normal voice)

I'm early. Three minutes early to  
be exact. I know that, but early is  
good. Late is bad, you should never  
be late. Sometimes if you're late,  
it could be devastating. For  
instance.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

What If Superman's father Jor-El,  
was late and he couldn't launch  
baby Kal-El into space? Then what?

(excited)

Oh my God! We wouldn't have  
Superman. A world without Superman?  
No, I bet Jor-El was early too. Why  
take a chance when you need to save  
a planet or two?

(contemplative)

But was Bruce Wayne's father late?  
No wait. He was early.

Norman rubs the top of his head in thought.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

I think he was. He was early to the  
Gotham City Opera.

(MORE)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

That's why he was walking the deadly city streets with his wife and young Bruce.

(excited)

See! If he was late then he wouldn't be walking along and gotten shot. Then Bruce Wayne wouldn't need to immerse his whole physical being into becoming the Dark Knight. He and his family would live happily ever after. So see, early is bad. Very bad...

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(thought provoking)

But wait, if Mr. Wayne got shot because he was early then he wouldn't have gotten shot if he was late. If he didn't get shot then Bruce wouldn't need to become Batman and then the world would be without Batman.....

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(excited)

So late is bad! Very bad...or is it good? Is it better to be late or better to be early. Do we need Superman or Batman? Who's more important? I don't know. I'm so confused.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(calmly)

I'll just be on time then. That's it. Why take a chance when whole civilizations lie in the balance?

Norman tries to relax.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

I don't know why I'm so nervous. It's not like I'm asking her to marry me.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(excited)

Marry? Who said anything about marriage? Did Superman ever marry Lois Lane? Not a chance except in those alternate world issues which don't count since they're just make-believe.

(MORE)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

If it's not good enough for the Son of Krypton, then who am I to argue? Besides, most marriages end in divorce. Then what? I'd have to give her half of everything I own.

(annoyed)

It took me years to amass and compile my museum quality displays of collectible books, toys and figurines. That's not fair. Why should I give her half of my collections? And which half? The valuable first editions or the later, less desirable ones. Probably make a judge decide.

(Excited)

And she'll just sweet talk him, tempt him like she did me in a moment of weakness. That Jezebel! Her bountiful breasts, luscious and inviting like huge pearls filled with desire, a beauty mark placed ever so perfectly by the devil himself to taunt men's minds. They heave seductively as the judge, spellbound by this display of tantalizing flesh, divides and conquers my Crown Jewels.

Norman imitates the perceived judge:

JUDGE

And the Spider-Man number two, the first appearance of the Vulture...ah yes, that will go to wife.

NORMAN

I shudder at the thought but he goes on.

JUDGE

The complete works of Jack Kirby?

NORMAN

My eyes plead with mercy but one look over at that she-devil, her lips pursed and glossy, which her tongue licks ever so inviting, the judge awards her the Kirbys. She coyly flips her lustrous hair and he throws in my vintage Captain America collection on top of that.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
 (imitates Brando voice  
 from Apocalypse Now)  
 Oh the horror....the horror...

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
 And it goes on like that, my life's  
 work ripped apart, handed to that  
 Delilah, like the locks of Samson's  
 hair.

(Stares blankly)  
 But when he gets to my Frank  
 Frazetta collection, all originals,  
 well I just snap!

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
 (screams)  
 No!! Not the Frazettas...you can't!  
 What will I be without my Conan the  
 Barbarian figurine sculpture,  
 limited edition, number 12 out of  
 only 250 made and signed by the  
 master himself? What will I be?

Norman shudders and shakes, shows his wrists and begins to  
 act like he is cutting them.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
 (Insane-like)  
 I'll cut myself... That's what I'll  
 do. I'll slice an  
 artery...hee...hee...you'll see!  
 (Screams)  
 I'll die a death of a thousand cuts  
 and it will be on all your  
 consciences, and I will haunt you  
 forever and forever! I'll even post  
 it on Facebook for all eternity!  
 Because once it's on Facebook it's  
 always on Facebook! Thank you Mark  
 Zuckerberg!

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
 (pleading)  
 Please! I'm begging you! NOT THE  
 FRAZETTAS!

Norman composes himself.

JUDGE  
 Okay, Norman. You can keep the  
 Frazettas.

NORMAN

And then the judge walks from behind the bench, grabs that "Whore of Babylon," the vixen I once called my wife, my soulmate, and escorts her out of the chambers, arm in arm, as I...

Norman falls into a fetal position.

...melt into a heap of discombobulated ooze, that once was a proud man but now...nothing.

(Horrorified)

Oh, the humanity!....

Norman falls about but then recovers.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(assured)

No, marriage is out of the question. We'll just date.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(composing himself)

This is just nerves talking. I should just relax. Calm down... Be yourself...be yourself...Ease into a state of Vulcan mind control.

Norman holds his hand up in the Vulcan salute.

(in Vulcan language)

Nam-tor vu shai...nam-tor vu shai

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(corrects himself)

No! Not in Vulcan, in English... Be yourself...I will be myself...be myself...I...be myself

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(as a mantra)

...be myself... I...be myself...be myself...and I...be myself and I.

(confident and calm)

Be myself and I. That's it!

Norman looks at his watch.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Two minutes to go. "T" minus two minutes and counting.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

After all this, what if she says no? Wouldn't that suck? But she won't. She said she wanted to go. Seemed excited at the prospect and well, she should be. It's not everyone that gets primo tickets to Comic Con. One of the fringe benefits of the "Lost Tribes of Israel on Krypton" fan club.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

But should I ask what she's going to wear? Is that even polite? Asking someone what they're going to wear? But if I don't then we might clash. She might be Marvel and I might be DC. It'd be like a oil and vinegar or nitro and glycerine or even worse, Kanye and Kim, and some people wouldn't accept that at all. They'd think we were amateurs for sure. Should I tell her what I'm wearing and ask her to dress accordingly? Can I do that?

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(contemplative)

She did say she she liked Wonder Woman, so she's DC all the way. Now that would be sweet. I bet she'd make a great Wonder Woman. Wow, I like that. Long raven hair with an eagle tiara, gold amulets on her supple but elegant wrists. Her high-heeled boots accentuating her long legs that lead to her star-spangled bodice. A really great figure that fills her costume in the all the right places.

(Perplexed)

Or it is uniform? Hmmm...I don't know.

Norman scratches his head in thought.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Costume or uniform? Does it matter? It might to her, so I won't mention it. I will be very astute to avoid the whole costume versus uniform topic. Especially on the first date. Good catch on that, Norman.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(gleeful)

Wow! Me and Wonder Woman, flying around the world in her invisible plane. Now that's sweet. I bet that plane can fly fast and miles high.

(Excited)

Miles high in a plane with Wonder Woman. Maybe even get to the mile high club? Imagine that! Me and Wonder Woman getting it on in the mile high club, as we circle the globe in that invisible plane.

(concerned)

Oh my God! Only the plane is invisible. That means people could see us. Oh no! That wouldn't be good. I'd be too nervous. And when I'm nervous, I kinda, you know, ...wilt under pressure. What good would that be? I'm finally with Wonder Woman and I get performance anxiety, in front of everyone. Than she'd drop me like a hot piece of kryptonite! Maybe I should just relax. Must try.

(mantra)

Be myself and I...be myself and I...be myself and I...

Norman calms down.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

That's better. Now I can think straight. I'll suggest she come as a Pokemon. A big round yellow Pikachu.

Certainly not as sexy but at least it's safer.

(in thought)

But what if we hit it off? What if our desire gets the better of us? Can you have sex with a Pikachu? I know Wonder Woman has the right parts, but a Pikachu?

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(excited)

Holy cow! I could be having sexual relations with an alien species!

(MORE)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

We might create a whole breed of interracial "Pika-Sapiens." I would be the father of a whole new civilization.

(nervously)

But what if they turned out to be evil? What if they decided that there wasn't room on the Earth for two of us. They could wipe out the entire human race.

(frantic)

Oh my God! It would genocide on a planetary scale. I'd go down in history as one of the most evil men ever. It would be Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler and me...Norman. Noooooo!!!! Not Norman and Hitler. Together? What would my mother say?

I could see her at the Mah Jong game with her friends now.

OLD WOMAN

"And how is Norman? Is he dating."

NORMAN'S MOTHER

"Oh yes, a lovely yellow Pikachu"

OLD WOMAN

"How nice. Is he serious with her"

NORMAN'S MOTHER

"He certainly is, my Norman is. Why he's so serious that..."

NORMAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

(screams)

...That he decided to fuck over the whole human race!

NORMAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

(calmly)

"But that's just Norman. He could be a tad selfish sometimes."

NORMAN

(mantra)

Be myself and I...be myself and I...be myself and I...

Norman looks at his watch.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
(Mission control voice)  
Ground Control to Major Norman.  
Commencing countdown, engines on!

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
You can do this, Norman. You know you  
can.  
Be myself and I...be myself and I.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
(mission control voice)  
Norman, this is Ground Control  
Houston, Check Ignition, you are go  
for launch.  
Good luck!

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
(confident voice)  
Roger Houston. We are go. Let's  
light this candle!...Ignition!

Norman begins to hyperventilate, pulls out a brown paper bag and slows his breath down. He picks up his cellphone, which looks like Star Trek communicator device, and taps in the number.

The phone begins to ring as his breathing relaxes.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
(regular voice)  
Hello, Cindy... This is Norman.

FADE OUT.

THE END