

"VULTURES"

A Play In One Act

Ben Oddo

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Cast of Characters

<u>Mud</u> :	Jay Stephens '13
<u>Alfie</u> :	Morey Hill '12
<u>Dove</u> :	Ali Greenberg '13
<u>Priest</u> :	Henri Hammond-Paul '12
<u>Distraught Woman</u> :	Ashna Sharan '12
<u>Peter</u> :	Brian Clarke '14
<u>Bagpiper</u> :	Joe Doyle '12

Scene

Graveyard

Time

Fall, October 2010

ACT I

Scene I

*Red lights illuminate the stage as John Mayer's "Vultures" plays. Once song finishes, red lights down to reveal*

**EXT. OAKWOOD CEMETERY -- DAY**

*CENTER LEFT lies a casket horizontally placed and 5 MOURNERS standing behind it. The coffin, of mahogany wood, has a bouquet of flowers resting on top. The mourners stand silently with their hands CROSSED, eyes fixated on the casket. A PRIEST is to the right of the coffin with a Bible in his hands.*

*ENTER BAGPIPER from OFFSTAGE playing "Amazing Grace". Bagpiper slowly makes his way to the back right of the coffin, at which point bagpiping CEASES.*

PRIEST

(Reciting John Donne's "Death Be Not Proud")

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee/Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;/For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,/Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me./From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,/Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,/And soonest our best men with thee do go,/Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery./Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,/And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;/And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well/And better than thy stroke, why swell'st thou then?/One short sleep past, we wake eternally,/And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die. (Pause) Please bow your heads.

*LIGHTS DIM ON mourners, LIGHTS UP BACKSTAGE RIGHT to reveal two vultures, MUD and ALFIE, perched on the branch of a tree.*

MUD AND ALFIE

(Singing)

DUH, DUH, DUH, ANOTHER  
ONE BITES THE DUST!  
DUH, DUH, DUH, ANOTHER  
ONE BITES THE DUST!

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE

And another one gone, and another one--

MUD

No, wait, wait! I've got it. (Singing) SOOOOO...

ALFIE

(Joining him)

...OOOOO!

MUD AND ALFIE

LONG, FAREWELL,  
(muffled, inaudible)  
auf Wiedersehen, GOOD  
NIGHT.

MUD

I HATE TO GO AND LEAVE THIS PRETTY SIGHT!

MUD AND ALFIE

SO LONG, FAREWELL,  
(muffled, inaudible)  
auf Wiedersehen, GOOD  
NIGHT.

ALFIE

ADIEU, ADIEU, (to Mud) TO YIEU!

MUD

(to Alfie)

AND YIEU!

ALFIE

(to Mud)

AND YIEU!

(Suddenly) Hold on! How 'bout this: (Singing) Don't cry  
for me Argentina, the truth is, I never left you, all  
through my wild days, my--

MUD

No, no!

ALFIE

What?

MUD

Completely irrelevant.

ALFIE

Oh *really*? Tell that to that weeping willow down there.  
(Points to distraught woman)

MUD

Weeping willow? Alfie, don't you mean that weeping  
*widow*? (Both chuckle)

ALFIE

Weeping widow? Mud, don't you mean the...Grim...weeper?  
(Alfie chuckles)

MUD

Stop.

ALFIE

Okay.

MUD

I will say Alfie my boy, this is a rather morbid  
affair. More so than usual.

ALFIE

Any idea how the old bag of bones went?

MUD

I heard seppuku.

ALFIE

SEPPUKU!? (Then) What's that?

MUD

Japanese suicide ritual by disembowelment. (Making  
motions as he describes them) Victim takes a sword and  
plunges it into his abdomen, moving it from side to  
side to slice up the organs before angling the blade  
upwards and violently gutting the heart!

ALFIE

(Gasps)  
How *emphatic*!

MUD

(Pause)  
Alfie, come on! I'm just ruffling your feathers.

ALFIE

Oh (releases breath). I was gonna say, seppuku, wow.

MUD

We haven't had a seppuku victim in a while.

ALFIE

I don't think we've had a seppuku victim period.

MUD

Which means we're long overdue.

ALFIE

Really though, how'd he go?

MUD

I don't know, same way they all do: cancer, heart attack, stroke, polio if you go back far enough. And those are the lucky ones! That's nothing to say about the real winners. You know, the ones who drink and drive, whose lungs are filled with nicotine and tar, who jump 13,000 feet from airplanes because skydiving is "fun".

ALFIE

Hell of a rush.

MUD

Silence! Remind me Alfie, how many lives do we have?

ALFIE

One far as I know.

MUD

Exactly, one far as we know, and man, in his audacity, his pompous audacity, plays Russian roulette with his life on a daily basis. (Re: mourners below) How quickly they forget their own mortality.

ALFIE

(Pause)

So how'd he die, Mud?

MUD

Same way they all do, same way they all do.

*LIGHTS BACK UP on mourners as focus returns to them.*

PRIEST

I want to thank you all for joining us today as we gather at the final resting place of Ruth Geraldine Sullivan, resident of Winchester, Massachusetts.  
(Mourners whimper)

MUD

(Sarcastically)

Oh forgive me, it's a woman.

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE

They die too you know. (Beat) Well who's she then?  
(Pointing to distraught woman, crying still)

MUD

Hmm (thinking, then)...with the performance she's putting on, I'd say an actress (both look at one another and erupt in spontaneous laughter. They stop abruptly, then) Really though I think it's her assassin. Those could be crocodile tears.

ALFIE

You're saying this lady was muuuuuuuurdered? Mud, you inconsiderate dog you!

MUD

(Smugly)  
Please, I'm a vulture.

PRIEST

Ruthie was selfless, she was kind-hearted, she showed unconditional love to her family and friends. This is (casts a solemn look down on the casket) a life that should have never been lost.

MUD

(Mimicking)  
"This is a life that should have never been lost." Oh yes, as opposed to a life that should have been won! Hey Alfie, you hear that one about the guy who lived forever?

ALFIE

Suuuuuuure did. His name was Jesus.

MUD

Jesus died when he was 33.

ALFIE

(Incredulously)  
Of Nazareth? You sure?

MUD

(Slightly peeved)  
Yes, I am sure.

ALFIE

Oh god, what a conundrum then. Xenu? I don't, I don't kn--

MUD

No you dodo bird!

ALFIE

(Sheepishly)  
Vulture, please.

MUD

You haven't heard about the guy who lived forever because there never was a guy who lived forever! We all die, every single one of us! Six feet under, food for worms, LOSERS in the end. Again, the pompous audacity these humans have, it just, it just disgusts me.

ALFIE

Food for worms: that's a good one, Mud. Where'd you come up with that?

MUD

*Dead Poets Society* (Alfie looks at him quizzically, not getting the reference). Let's just say I ah, I got it from a Robin. (Mud chuckles, nudges Alfie)

ALFIE

(Deathly serious)  
What are you doing hanging out with robins? (Mud rolls his eyes) You know they're not carcass eaters.

MUD

(Annoyed, gesturing to mourners below)  
May we?

PRIEST

A life lost, a life never to be gotten back. Dreams: unfulfilled, pursuits: fruitless, pain: a world of it. A life lost, a life lost, a--

MUD

Life lost, ya we get it. Let's get out of here Alfie, I've had enough of this sob story (they begin to EXIT). You hungry? Saw a run-over wildebeest on the way over here.

ALFIE

In Massachusetts?

PRIEST

(Continuing)

A life which, at nine years of age (Mud and Alfie STOP DEAD in their tracks), was cut off much too soon. Rest in everlasting peace, Ruth Geraldine Sullivan. (Mourners WHIMPER, distraught woman, now understood to be her mother, HOWLS).

(CONTINUED)



*Alfie and Mud are wide-eyed and silent as they stare at the scene below. They shuffle back out onto the branch, never taking their eyes off of the mourners.*

MUD

(To Alfie)

What did he just say? (Alfie continues staring, doesn't respond, then) I thought he said...nine.

ALFIE

That's what I heard, too.

MUD

That's young. We haven't had a young person in a while.

ALFIE

I don't think we've had a young person period.

MUD

Which means...we were long overdue.

*LIGHTS DIM on Mud and Alfie as SPOTLIGHT goes on the casket, allowing the moment to sink in. After a brief period of silence, LIGHTS GO BACK UP on vultures.*

MUD

*Nine years old.* Who dies when they're nine years old? How could that happen?(Looking down) That poor woman, that poor mother, that, that--

ALFIE

That, that that what!? That poor weeping widow? That poor, *pompous* weeping widow?

MUD

What?

ALFIE

Go on Mud, go tell her she's a murderer while she bawls over her daughter's lifeless body. Or better yet, tell her the story about the guy who lived forever, and how her child is being eaten by worms, and how we all lose in the end. Tell her everything! I'm sure she'd looooooove to hear it!

MUD

(Defensively)

What's your problem?

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE

What's my problem? Oh, nothing really, I just have this thing towards spineless cowards, that's all. You know, the real winners, the ones who -- who talk mightily but whose words ring hollow!

MUD

(Angrily)

Where the hell do you get off?

ALFIE

(Puts hand up to Mud's face)

I'm sorry, I can't answer that question. I have a nine year-old cadaver to make fun of. Do stay tuned though, as I'm about to go snatch that beautiful bouquet of flowers and then shit on that bagpiper, just for good measure.

MUD

Oh I'm sorry, it's not like the last fifteen graveside burials we've listened in on weren't people 70 or older. (Then) You know I wouldn't have said those things if I had known it were a young person down there.

ALFIE

(Under his breath)

What difference does it make?

MUD

What?

ALFIE

I said what difference does it make? A death is a death, isn't it? No matter what age we are. Just because someone passes away when they're ninety doesn't make it any less important than if they pass away when they're nine.

MUD

Humph! Well look at you, all prim and proper all of a sudden. If that's the case, righteous one, then why are you so upset about this little girl? Weren't so upset the last couple of times when it was old Wrinkles McGee down there, were you?

ALFIE

(Softly)

Because I'm scared.

(CONTINUED)

MUD

What?

ALFIE

I said because I'm scared.

MUD

Scared? Scared of what? You have nothing to be scared of, okay? It's not like her ghost is going to float on up here and reprimand us for making fun of her. (Mimicking ghost voice) "Oooh, oooooooh! Mud and Alfie, you big bullies you, ooooooh!" Alright? Sticks and stones may break my bones but oh, I'm dead!

ALFIE

Listen to you, you're doing it again! Just stop it, okay? Just stop!

MUD

(Pause)

Okay. (Then) I'm sorry.

ALFIE

I'm not scared for me. I'm scared for her.

MUD

(Pointing to casket)

The little girl?

ALFIE

Ya.

MUD

(Sympathetic, throws his arm around Alfie's shoulder)

Alfie, there's nothing we can do about it. She's gone. You didn't even know this, this Ruthie girl. You need to let it go.

ALFIE

Who's going to watch out for her?

MUD

What?

ALFIE

Who's going to watch out for her? She's a little girl. The older folks I don't worry about because I know they're fine on their own. But who's going to hold her hand and make sure she's okay?

(CONTINUED)

MUD

Watch out for her? What, what are you talking about?  
Hold her hand and make sure she's okay? Make sure she's  
okay where?

*Alfie then begins to hyperventilate.*

ALFIE

Oh god, oh god!

MUD

Alfie, Alfie what's wrong?

ALFIE

Head spinning, heart pounding! Fight or flight, need to  
pee! Anxiety attack, anxiety attack!

MUD

Alfie, Alfie!

ALFIE

Existential conflict, existential conflict! Oh god!

MUD

Alfie compose yourself! You're acting bat-shit crazy!

ALFIE

Vulture-shit crazy!

MUD

Ya okay enough of that! What the hell is happening to  
you?

ALFIE

(Wide-eyed, very seriously)

Mud, answer me this: would you consider yourself  
*religious*?

MUD

Religious, me? Ya. Well, you know, minus the  
necrophilia and all.

ALFIE

Well then *where* is Ruthie going, and *who* is going to  
watch out for her?

MUD

I, I don't know Alfie.

ALFIE

(Exploding)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE (cont'd)

YOU DON'T KNOW!? I thought you said you were religious!  
Why wouldn't you say "Heaven"?

MUD

Well I would hope Ruthie is in heaven, wherever that  
may be.

ALFIE

What do you mean "wherever that may be"!? That's not  
good enough for me Mud.

*Alfie looks up at the sky, then*

FUCK IT! Let's fly up there and try and find the place  
right now! I need answers! (Begins frantically flapping  
wings)

MUD

(Struggling to restrain him)

Alfie relax, you're losing it! You're turning into a  
cuckoo bird.

*Alfie looks as if he's about to say something*  
(Continuing)

Don't you say it!

*Alfie brushes off his shoulders, calmer now but  
still clearly shaken up.*

ALFIE

Do you really want to know what I'm afraid of?

MUD

Yes, tell me what you're afraid of, just be calm about  
it.

ALFIE

Okay. (Takes a deep breath, then) I'm afraid of what  
happens after we die. What if we die and that's  
just...it?

MUD

What do you mean?

ALFIE

I mean what if there's no Heaven, no Pearly Gates, no  
nothin'? What if we croak and then it just goes black,  
like a TV screen being suddenly shut off and then never  
turned back on? Click! Black...forever.

MUD

Well...I don't know. But it's not too pleasant to think about, so why don't we stop.

ALFIE

(Continuing)

And if that's the case, what happens from there? Do things ever really end? Life is *finite*, but time is *infinite*, so what's the solution? Reincarnation? Exist as two eyeballs in space?

MUD

Alfie stop it, you're starting to scare me.

ALFIE

You're scared? How do you think little Ruthie feels? Poor girl was playing with Barbies one moment, navigating the dubious crossroads of the afterlife the next. That is, *if* they exist.

*Both begin to reflect as the information of the past few moments sinks in. A couple moments pass when Mud begins breathing heavily, then*

MUD

Oh god, oh god!

ALFIE

Mud what is it!?

MUD

Head spinning, heart pounding! Fight or flight, need to pee! Anxiety attack, anxiety attack!

MUD AND ALFIE

EXISTENTIAL CONFLICT!  
EXISTENTIAL CONFLICT!  
OH GOD!

ALFIE

Say it, Mud!

MUD

Alfie (pausing in a most dramatic fashion)...where was I before I was born?

ALFIE

You were in your mother's vulva!



MUD

Mortality. It's the opposite one, where you don't...live...forever.

ALFIE

Oh yes, mortality. (Then) Although what a quick and easy solution that would have been, huh?

*Both begin laughing hysterically, which quickly turns into uncontrollable crying.*

MUD

All this life and death talk is making me tired. I'm going to take a rest.

*Mud begins to lie down, loses his footing, and almost falls backwards before Alfie catches him.*

ALFIE

Mud, be careful! Didn't we just talk about this?

MUD

About what?

ALFIE

Not dying! If I weren't so sober with fear right now, I might not have caught you just then. That's a drop of (looks at ground beneath him, probably 5 feet below) at least 20 feet. You could've fallen back, broken your neck, and then click! TV off. Bye bye Mud, nice knowin' ya.

MUD

(Flapping his wings)

I have the ability of flight. I'm sure I would've caught my--

ALFIE

All I'm saying is be more aware. One false step in this world and it's rigor mortis time, mmkay? Food for...our brothers and sisters, I guess.

MUD

No, you're completely right. Life is precious, and we must be more vigilant in our daily routines.

ALFIE

Cross the street, look left, look right, look left again.



MUD

Fly at night, watch out for power lines.

ALFIE

Go to the zoo, only taunt the fully caged animals.

MUD

Walk the streets of New York, be wary of falling pianos.

ALFIE

See, now you're getting it!

MUD

Wow, Alfie. I'm beginning to feel better already.

*One of the mourners, Ruthie's brother Peter,  
begins to walk to the head of the casket.  
(Continuing)*

Oh look, that young man is about to say something.

ALFIE

Let's listen in!

PRIEST

Ruth's brother Peter would like to offer a couple final words.

PETER

Thank you, Father. (Takes breath, then) When Ruthie was first learning how to swim, all she wanted to do was go off the diving board. She would say to me, "Some day, Petey, I'm gonna be the best person to ever jump off that thing. I'm gonna do cannonballs, Swan dives, double flips...even flying squirrels. And everyone, everyone is gonna look up to me." "But Ruthie," I would say. "You need to get your badge for the deep-end first. You can't go off the diving board until you pass a two lap test." And so, she became a girl on a mission. Every morning, rain or shine, I would take her down to our public pool and she would practice her swimming. She was scared at first, of course. "I can't do it," she would say to me. "It's too hard." "Of course you can," I said to her. "All you need is a little help", and so I would hold on to her, guiding her along the pool to keep her afloat. "You won't let go of me, will you Petey?" she would ask. "Of course not, I'm going to be right here by your side." "The whole time?" She would say. "The whole time," I would say. "Petey?" She then said. "Ya Ruthie?" "I love you." "I love you too, Ruthie." She got her deep-end badge two weeks later, and no better person has ever jumped off that diving board.

(CONTINUED)

*Pete pauses, choking up a little, then*  
 I was the first one to hear the brakes screech. When I ran outside, she was in the street, lying down next to the car. I said to her, "Ruthie, Ruthie are you okay!?" I was holding her hand so tightly. (Pause) All she could muster was, "You won't let go of me, will you Petey?" I said, "Of course not, I'm going to be right here by your side." "The whole time?" she asked. "The whole time," I replied. (Pause) "I love you Petey," she then said. (Mud and Alfie GASP a little). "I love you too, Ruthie." (Mud and Alfie GASP again, a little louder this time. (Pause) Those were the last words Ruthie would ever say (Mud and Alfie WAIL now, as LIGHTS GO DOWN on the stage as bagpipes resume playing again).

Scene II

*Setting is the same. However, Mud and Alfie have now taken a visible turn for the worse. Smoking a cigarette and swinging a half-drunken bottle of Jack Daniels, Mud SINGS)*

MUD

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT, AND I FEEL FIIIIIIIIINE! Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die! That's the Hedonist way, ain't that right Alfie? (No response, then) Alfie?

ALFIE

What?

MUD

What are you doing?

ALFIE

I'm reading.

MUD

Reading what?

ALFIE

National Geographic.

MUD

Well (trying to peer over his shoulder), what's it say?

ALFIE

Nothing good (looks up to Mud). It says that the average human lifespan relative to geological time is only one and a quarter seconds. (Both GROAN)

(CONTINUED)

MUD

(Discovering something under his butt)

Ow!

ALFIE

What is it?

MUD

(Holding up a plastic wrapper)

It's a fortune cookie.

ALFIE

(Forlorn)

Ugh where don't those show up!? (Then) What's it say?  
(Begins to take a sip of the Jack Daniels)

MUD

(Unwraps wrapper, cracks it open)

It's by Stephen Hawking (both GROAN louder this time, causing Alfie to spit out some of the Jack Daniels). It says, "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark...in bed." (Both GROAN EXTREMELY LOUD this time) Alfie what do we do? It all seems so grim.

ALFIE

(Thinking, then)

We could act out a scene from *Waiting for Godot*.  
There's nothing grim about that.

MUD

Of course! But we don't have a copy.

ALFIE

Nonsense, I have one right here. (Pulls out copy of *Waiting for Godot*).

MUD

(Magically pulling out his own copy)

Where shall we begin?

ALFIE

How about the very end?

MUD

Natural starting point. Who shall I play?

ALFIE

You play Vladimir, and I'll play Estragon. Here I'll start: (clearing throat) "Let's go."

MUD

"We can't."

ALFIE

"Why not?"

MUD

"We're waiting for Godot." I don't know Alfie, not too lively of a scene.

ALFIE

Okay, you're right. Let's backtrack; how about right before the start of Act Two? (FLIPPING through pages, STOPS). Same roles, I'm Estragon, you're Vladimir. "Let's go."

MUD

"We can't."

ALFIE

"Why not?"

MUD

"We're waiting for Godot." Same lines Alfie, you did it again.

ALFIE

Shoot! Fine, fine. (FLIPPING through pages, STOPS) Very beginning, Act One, here we go: "Let's go."

MUD

"We ca--". Wait a sec I see what's going on here! The same thing keeps happening. Are they waiting in vain? Does this Godot person even exist? WHAT DOES GODOT MEAN? DOES IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH--

ALFIE

Shh!

MUD

What?

ALFIE

Look.

*They watch as a single leaf falls from the rafters, fluttering slowly to the ground. It lands, then*

MUD

Well, it's fall, so that's to be expected.

ALFIE

(Wide-eyed, still eerily transfixed on the leaf)

You're right, *it is the fall*. (Pause, then) MUD LOOK OUT!

*ENTER ONTO THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE TREE a DOVE, gliding gracefully in from offstage as the recording of a HEAVENLY CHOIR plays from O.S. Choir recording then STOPS when*

MUD

No, no! Too much!

ALFIE

Too much!

DOVE

I am a dove.

MUD

Too much symbolism! (Then) Go on, get out of here dove.

*Heavenly Choir RESUMES and Dove EXITS in the same graceful fashion.*

*(Continuing)*

God what is happening today!? First the whole thing with National Geographic, then the fortune cookie--

ALFIE

In bed.

MUD

In bed. Then Godot, the falling leaf, that dove. Just tell me Alfie, when will it end? When will it all just end?

ALFIE

(Pauses, thinks, then)

Isn't that the million dollar question?

*DOVE RE-ENTERS*

DOVE

Hey guys!

MUD AND ALFIE

Ah!

DOVE

(Continuing)

Not life, ya dumbo. He means these unnatural occurrences, when will they end?

MUD

Apparently not soon enough. Who are you, you roly poly, frumpy fart?

ALFIE

Frumpy fart.

DOVE

My name is Dove. I am a dove.

MUD

And what's a lady like you doing in a cemetery like this?

DOVE

I...eavesdrop on graveside burials all the time.

ALFIE

Aren't they wicked!?

MUD

Oh ya? Then how come we haven't seen you around here before?

DOVE

(Presumptuously)

Maybe we just go to different burials.

MUD

Can't be. Alfie and I are season ticket holders. We've been to every damn burial there is at this place.

DOVE

Then I was there, you must have just not seen me.

MUD

Well then let me ask you this, *duh-ve*: there was a burial two days ago on the east side of the cemetery. Older woman by the name of Ethel. How'd she die?

(CONTINUED)

DOVE

You mean Ethel Thompson, 86, of Medford? Succumbed to Alzheimers.

ALFIE

Ooooooh.

MUD

Alright, beginner's luck. How 'bout this one: a week back, in a plot about three rows down from here. Older man, World War II vet, named Ch--

DOVE

Charles "Chuck" McGillicuddy, of West Roxbury? The autopsy says he died of natural causes, but we all know it was because of--

DOVE AND ALFIE

A broken heart for his late wife Margaret, (growing LOUDER) who after 20 years of being apart, (LOUDER NOW) WERE FINALLY REUNITED IN HEAVEN!

ALFIE

Mud she's legit! The priest said those exact words!

MUD

Not so fast! Valerie Tang, 57, of Cambridge. Survived by her husband and three children, buried two and a half weeks ago in a very, very sad ceremony. (Pause) How...did that woman...perish?

*Dove pauses, beginning to appear nervous. Mud stays on her with suspicious eyes, while Alfie looks on encouragingly.*

MUD

Dove--

ALFIE

Come on Dove, you've got it!

MUD

(Continuing)

What's the verdict?

DOVE

(Blurting out)

I heard seppuku!

MUD

Ha! Wrong!

DOVE

Damn it!

ALFIE

(Shaking head)

We haven't had a seppuku victim in a while, Dove.

DOVE

It seemed like the natural response.

MUD

Valerie Tang, Miss Dove - if in fact that is your real name - died in a tragic skydiving accident.

ALFIE

Forgot her parachute on the way out. Classic mistake!

MUD

Go on bird, reveal yourself! Who are you and what are you doing here? Out with it!

DOVE

Alright, fine, fine. I wasn't lying about my name. It's Dove, and I am a dove. (Then) As for what I'm doing here, well, I was flying by looking for...an olive branch...when I heard a commotion coming from the trees. So, I flew in a little closer and that's when I heard your woes.

MUD

Ugh, don't remind us.

DOVE

(Pause)

*Why?*

MUD

Because it's bleak.

ALFIE

And we don't have the answers.

(CONTINUED)



DOVE

So? No one has the answers.

*Mud and Alfie look at one another.*  
(Continuing)

Not me, not you, not those humans down there. We're all in this boat together. To what end port, I don't know.

MUD

Well see that's the problem! Where is this end port? What if we're stuck on this boat forever, sailing round and round the globe towards the same distant horizon? I'd feel better knowing we sunk and drowned or got eaten by a whale.

ALFIE

Call me Ishmael.

DOVE

Listen guys--

MUD

Please, name's Mud.

ALFIE

And I'm Alfie!

DOVE

Mud, Alfie: I don't have the answers to your questions. Like I said, no one does. All we have is our faith and the hope that, in the end, it'll all work out. If it does, then great. If it doesn't, well, then, that's why we have right now. The present is a gift. That's why it's called "the present".

*Dove turns to leave.*

MUD

Dove, wait!

*Dove TURNS BACK AROUND.*  
(Continuing)

What do you recommend...we do?

DOVE

Well, I recommend you both stop worrying about the future and start living in the moment. Maybe do something you've never done before, see a place you've always wanted to see. (Continues her leave, TURNS BACK AROUND, then) Or better yet, stop coming to these things all the time and preying on the sadness of others. Try loving someone for a change.

(CONTINUED)

*Dove TURNS, EXITS. Similarly, the congregation begins their EXIT when*

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN

Um, before you all leave here today, I just wanted to say one final thing. Ruthie would've hated to see her mother like this, so if you'll indulge me for just one moment, I'd like to leave you all with a message of hope. It's a quote from one of my favorite plays, *Waiting for Godot*: "Let us not waste our time in idle discourse. Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late!" Thank you all for coming today.

*Mourners, Priest, and Bagpiper all EXIT.*

Scene III

*Setting is the same, however congregation is now gone and Mud and Alfie have come down from the tree. They being walking towards Ruthie's coffin.*

ALFIE

Mud.

MUD

Ya, Alfie?

ALFIE

I feel - I feel grounded.

MUD

Me too, Alfie, me too.

*Both approach the coffin.*

MUD

(Giving it a double tap)

You'll be okay Ruthie, you'll be okay.

ALFIE

(After a moment)

Hey Mud (Mud turns to face Alfie). About what Dove said: it was nice and all, but are we really any better off than we were before?

MUD

You know what Alfie, I think we are.

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE

You do?

MUD

Yes, I do. (Pause) You see, you and I could sit here the rest of our lives and keep worrying about where we go once it's all said and done, but wouldn't you rather...live, instead?

*Alfie gives a futile look.*  
(Continuing)

Of course you would! Come on, remember what Dove said: Isn't there something you've always wanted to do that you haven't done? Or a place you've always wanted to see that you haven't? Well now's the time. Not tomorrow, not in a week, NOW!

ALFIE

Well (cracking a slight smile), there is this one thing.

MUD

There we go, now we're talking! What is it?

ALFIE

(Sheepishly)

Well, I've always wanted to...own my own farm.

MUD

A farm! Perfect!

ALFIE

You know, have a plot of land out in the country, with a silo and a great big red barn. And then we'd have a pig! We wouldn't slaughter it though. It would be the farm pig, kind of like the farm dog. He would run around and roll in the mud and sit on the porch of my big farm house. We'd name him Kevin Bacon, for the double entendre.

MUD

That's wonderful, Alfie. And what about the actual farm itself? What types of things would you grow?

ALFIE

Squash.

MUD

(Somewhat confused)

Squash? Just squash?

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE

Ya, just squash. (Beat) It would be a squash farm.  
(Then) But enough about me, what about you? What grand  
plans do you have?

MUD

You know what? I think I'd like to go see more of the  
world. Maybe spend a week exploring the fjords of  
Norway, another week relaxing on the beaches of Brazil.

ALFIE

Making love to a toucan on the sands of Copacabana,  
with the tide rushing in and the sunset in your eyes?

MUD

Exactly.

ALFIE

Beautiful.

*Alfie looks at Ruthie's casket.*  
(Continuing)

Just makes me sad she'll never get to experience these  
things. She was so young.

*Alfie looks like he's about to get emotional again  
before Mud comes in, THROWS his arm around him,  
then*

MUD

Hey, hey, Alfie. It's okay. I'm here for you, bud.  
(Alfie snuffles, then) Hey (they look at one another,  
then)

(Singing)

All you need is love. All you need is love.

MUD AND ALFIE

(Singing)

All you need is love,  
love, love is all you  
need.

ALFIE

Love is all you need.

MUD

Love is all you need.

(CONTINUED)

ALFIE

Love is all you need.

MUD

Love is all you need.

ALFIE

Love is all you need.

MUD

Love is all you need.

ALFIE

We all live in a yellow submarine.

MUD

Love is all you need. Love, that much we can count on.

*LIGHTS DOWN, CUE THE BEATLES' "All You Need Is Love".*