

ADULTING (?!)

By

William Cordeiro

WHY I LIKE IT: *Drama Editor JOHN SULLIVAN writes...This play is a wild ride with rich potential for physicality and verbal pyrotechnics on stage. 'Adulting' brims over with an energy that looks stylistically back toward Commedia dell'arte and Dada antics at the original Cabaret Voltaire, while the content is totally of our current social moment. Though the script is a challenge for readers and directors, it's mos' def' worth the extra effort. A fair reading of 'Adulting' needs multi-sensory imaginative engagement beyond just the text. A successful director would need to harness the play's fractal energy and control its tempo to ensure that, with so much going on, the audience stays focused. Simultaneously hilarious and horrible, what more can I say?(Spacing is playwright's own.)*

ADULTING

Characters:

CHUCK – *Mid-forties, male. Messy, ignorant, unemployed "basic white man."*

JESSICA – *Mid-thirties, female. Hardworking yet unemployed, searching introvert.*

LISA – *Early forties, female. Sophisticated moocher and professional "U-Haul" lesbian.*

MARA – *Late thirties, female. Uptight career woman; TV producer.*

RALPH – *Late twenties to early thirties, male. Involuntary celibate and conspiracy theorist.*

Place: *Anthem, Arizona.*

Time: *Present.*

ACT I

SCENE 1

CHUCK, in shorts and one droopy athletic sock, eats chips and plays videogames in a pigsty man cave. Enter JESSICA, done up for the opera.

JESSICA
Hey. ...Hey, Chuck? —HEEEY!!

CHUCK
Huh? You say something?

JESSICA
Are you ready to go yet?

CHUCK
Wuh? Oh. Yeahyeah, right. Umm... Where are we going again?

JESSICA
The *opera*.

CHUCK
Oprah?

JESSICA
No, the *opera*. Remember?

CHUCK
Whaddya mean, “remember”?

JESSICA
I’ve been telling you *all* month—I got us tickets for *Lulu*.

CHUCK
(*Under breath.*) I think you’re lulu.

JESSICA
Obviously you’re not ready. Sheesh!

CHUCK
Ok, wait—hold up. I can go. I’m going. I’m... just let me finish this level first, and—

JESSICA
Why do I even put up with your shit?

CHUCK
What do you mean, my shit?

JESSICA
Chuck. Just *look* at this place. Ugh.

CHUCK

So? What are you saying?

JESSICA

Chuck. That pizza box has been there since at least the late 90s. And that pile of dirty clothes hasn't been washed, like, *ever*. And see that thing over there? I think that's—whoa, holy fuck, that's *literally* a little turd. You... poop in here?

CHUCK

This is my *man* cave, Jessica.

JESSICA

I'm so over this.

CHUCK

What does *that* even mean?

JESSICA

It means—I'm over YOU, Chuck!

CHUCK

But, but, c'mon. baby... *Baby*...

JESSICA

Chuck—you're the one who acts like a goddamn child!

CHUCK

Lookee, me wuvle you, lil' JessJess.

JESSICA

That's it, Chuck. We're done. You're the emotional equivalent of a fuckin' two-year-old.

CHUCK

WAHHH!!!

JESSICA

I'm outta here.

CHUCK

And, and just where d'hell ya think you're going anyway, Miss Grown-up Pants?

JESSICA

Have you listened to absolutely NOTHING I've been saying?

CHUCK

Huh?

JESSICA
I'm going to the OPERA!

CHUCK
But, JessJess, I doughd d'ju say dis place a mess.

JESSICA
Sh'duh.

CHUCK
Lil' preddy kitty JessJess....

JESSICA
Uh-huh?

CHUCK
Me *need* you.

JESSICA
Right. Ok. Hmm. Well...

CHUCK
Me need you help cwean up stinky-stinky messy-poo.

JESSICA
OH MY GOD! (*Exits.*)

CHUCK
Wait. You're weally not gonna cwean up?

SCENE 2

Box seats at the opera. JESSICA enters, moving to her seat, next to LISA.

JESSICA
Hi. Um...

LISA
Well hell-o there, darling.

JESSICA
Sorry, my seat's—

LISA
Oh, right. My bad.

JESSICA

(JESSICA awkwardly squeezes by into her seat, brushing up close to LISA.)
I didn't mean to, y'know...

LISA

Don't worry about any little thang, honey.

JESSICA

That's easy for you to say.

LISA

Are you here all by your lonesome, sweetie?

JESSICA

Well, I *had* this extra ticket, but—

LISA

But you're not gonna use it?

JESSICA

No, I guess not now...

LISA

Well, I would be most happy to dispose of it for you.

JESSICA

Oh, ok. *(JESSICA gives her the ticket; LISA stuffs the ticket in her bosom.)*

LISA

No problem, girl. Save the planet, totes.

JESSICA

Thank you...?

LISA

You're *very* welcome, darling.

JESSICA

So you need the ticket for a... friend? You're, um. Expecting someone?

LISA

Only you, sweetie.

JESSICA

What?

LISA

I snuck in the backdoor. Old habit, you know. That pesky usher's been trying to track me down.

JESSICA

Mh-hm, I see.

LISA

I am wholly, hella grateful for your patronage, darling. I do so depend on the kindness of strangers, sweetie, and I would do anything—*anything*—in return to show my most sincere appreciation. I'm eternally indebted that you've allowed me to see this show: I simply must find some way to pay you back.

JESSICA

It's really nothing, really. Don't think of it.

LISA

But I *will* think of it.

JESSICA

Hey. There's that usher—

LISA

Everything's just hunky-dory now, darling. (*LISA takes out the ticket and waggles it in the air.*) This is actually my favorite seat in the house.

JESSICA

Why's that?

LISA

It's the one right next to you, sweetie.

JESSICA

I'm glad things worked out for you.

LISA

I hope I can help make things work out for you, too. What's wrong, sugar?

JESSICA

I... I just broke up. I'm a fuckin' wreck. I don't think I'll ever find someone who loves me again.

LISA

Now you can tell me all about it; that's it. Come cry on daddy's shoulder, honey....

JESSICA

Well, ok. If you're sure. Maybe there *is* something you could do for me.

LISA

Anything, darling.

(Lights lower for the opera to begin as JESSICA reaches over to hold LISA'S hand.)

SCENE 3

JESSICA'S house. JESSICA and LISA at the table.

LISA

Now, sweetie, I know we've only been seeing each other for three days—

JESSICA

Oh, no! Did I forget our 72-hour anniversary!

LISA

—I've been giving it some serious thought. After we've shacked up and got married—

JESSICA

You don't think we're moving too fast, do you? *(JESSICA swoons over her wedding ring.)*

LISA

Not at all, pumpkin. I just wouldn't want our relationship to go laggard and stagnate.

JESSICA

You—you—you think we need an... an... open relationship?

LISA

Don't be a silly goose, darling.

JESSICA

Oh, thank goodness.

LISA

It's just been long enough by this point. We need to consider the next logical step, is all.

JESSICA

Kink dungeons?

LISA

Ooo, I appreciate the way your mind thinks. But, no. I meant... *(LISA holds up a turkey baster.)*

JESSICA

You *sure* you didn't mean kink dungeons?

LISA

We need to make our own wee little nipper, darling.

JESSICA

I dunno.

LISA

A scamp, a tyke, a tot, a squirt.

JESSICA

What about the money? We're not exactly swimming in it, as it is?

LISA

How pedestrian your mind can be sometimes. I'm talking about cosmic meaning, creation, LOVE!

JESSICA

But neither of us has a job right now.

LISA

All the better to raise a bay-bay.

JESSICA

But the cost of clothing and feeding and—

LISA

Pshaw, dear. How much can a baby eat? I'll just give the bay-bay a little of my food—it'll do wonders for my figure!

JESSICA

—and all the *work* involved; it'd be so stressful.

LISA

'T'would be so *fun*! A little bay-bay of ours very own.

JESSICA

T'would not.

LISA

Oh, darling. Puttyputty-please?

JESSICA

Hmm. Ehn.

LISA

What *is* it, darling?

JESSICA

Wouldn't we require a few dollops of, y'know... *man-spunk*?

LISA

Your ex, what's-his-name, Chuck—

JESSICA

Uh-huh?

LISA

He likely left a crusty lil' jizz spot *somewhere* around the house. (*LISA inspects the furniture.*)

JESSICA

And you—you'd be willing to scrape it off, baste it at 98°, and spooj it up your own quimpot?

LISA

Holy HELL no! Ewww. That, my darling, *THAT* would most definitely be *your* role.

JESSICA

Oh boy. I, I don't think I'm ready for mommy-time yet.

LISA

But, sweetie, for the sake of our *relationship*—

JESSICA

For our relationship—right—

LISA

We simply must have an ickle little a bay-bay.

JESSICA

Isn't our relationship about *us*. Since when does it need to involve a third party?

LISA

I'd do *anything* for you. And you'd do anything for me, too, right?

JESSICA

I, uh... I love you, Lisa. But, um...

LISA

Pshaw, darling. I've another idea. Chuck hasn't moved out yet, right?

JESSICA

Nope, nope. No he has not. He's still marinating down there in his "man cave."

LISA

Well then!

JESSICA

Well——what?

LISA

You know.... You could.... (Gestures.)

JESSICA

Oh my god! NO. No-no-no-no-no! I don't ever want to do that again. Not with *him*! How could you even *suggest* such a thing? Uck. Ugh. Ack!

LISA

Jess, it seems to me Chuck doesn't really *want* to move out.

JESSICA

Shit right. He doesn't want to move out. He wouldn't move out of his own pants if he soiled 'em.

LISA

Maybe, darling, you tell him you'll bone him one last time if he packs his bags?

JESSICA

Wait a sec.... YES!! OH FUCK YES!! HAHA!! YEAH!!!

LISA

Why do you suddenly seem so excited about this idea now?

JESSICA

No, Lisa. Listen. Why chuck Chuck out at all?

LISA

For one, we need his room for our bay-bay's nursery.

JESSICA

What if we already *have* a baby?

LISA

Snap! A MAN-baby! We'll adopt ourselves a *manbay-bay*! How simply mah-var-lous!

JESSICA

Precisely!

LISA

—No turkey baster, no stretch-marks, no nausea necessary! Fuck, you're brilliant, Jess.

JESSICA

Oh, Lisa! I love you.

LISA

Oh, dahrling! I adore you.

CHUCK

(CHUCK enters, scratching his butt; belches.) Howdy-howdy-ho, my bitches! So, like, I'm outta Corn Nuts, yo! ... Wha-? Hey, whadda I miss?

ACT II

SCENE 1

Playground. MARA, a TV producer, sits on a bench. RALPH hovers off stage, listening.

MARA

(On cell phone) I thought "Hot Beaches for Climate-Change Deniers" was already in postproduction. Oh, the footage got burned up in California? ... I have plenty of ideas, don't you worry. I'll give you something to greenlight, Tucker.... What about "Trump Administration Considers Ceding Puerto Rico to Russia"? No? C'mon pal, have I ever disappointed you before? You don't want "Border Wall Promises to Keep Out Bigfoots"? Ok, I'll think of something else! I'll get it to you soon... Yup, ASAP! *(Hangs up.)* Asshole!

(LISA and JESSICA enter with CHUCK, dressed in a diaper and dragging a blanket.)

JESSICA

Little Chuckie-wuckie, you can go play on the jungle gym, dearest.

LISA

Just be careful and don't hurt yourself.

CHUCK

LALALA!! ME SEE PIGEON DOODOO!! NYUM-NYUM!! *(CHUCK scampers off to play and make mud-pies.)*

LISA

(To Mara) They grow up so fast, don't they?

MARA

Maybe not fast enough.

JESSICA

Oh, kids!

MARA

He's your—?

JESSICA
Adult baby. *Ours*, technically.

MARA
And that's... a thing?

LISA
Oh, you're not here for the lesbian mummies of adult babies grouse-and-souse support group?

JESSICA
Bottom's up, by the way.

MARA
Cheers! Sure, right. I'm, uh, here for the support group... Adult babies. Sounds *fascinating*.

JESSICA
Which one's yours?

MARA
Mine?

LISA
Your adult baby?

MARA
Hm. Where'd he go? Umm... Oh! Yeah, that one, uhh, over there. Yup. He's my little pookums.

LISA
That man over there?

MARA
Right, exactly. Him.

JESSICA
So, I see you guys aren't "out" yet?

MARA
I, um... we... er... So! tell me more about this support group.

JESSICA
Well. We've been having trouble finding new members.

MARA
I couldn't imagine.

LISA

Maybe Anthem's not the right town. I keep telling Jessica it'd be absolutely HUGE in Portland.

MARA

How many members do you have so far in this support group?

LISA

Just two.

JESSICA

Three, actually. (*JESSICA winks at MARA.*)

MARA

Perhaps I could help you publicize?

JESSICA

You'd do that?

MARA

I'm a producer, actually.

LISA

Lemme guess. You have your own podcast?

MARA

No, I work in TV.

LISA

I'm... sorry.

MARA

Yeah, well. My network's been hesitating on a venture into reality-based programming.

LISA

Oh. Who do you work for?

MARA

Fox News.

JESSICA

—Hey, look! Our Chuckie is playing with *your* little manbaby! (*CHUCK has found RALPH amid the audience members and is hanging off his tie, making a general nuisance of himself.*)

LISA

Our little dinkies like each other!

MARA

Yeah, they're frickin' besties by now.

JESSICA

I know! Why don't we arrange a playdate. Between your little guy—

MARA

Er... Don-don.

JESSICA

Between your little Don-don and our Chucky-poo!

LISA

Here's our number.

MARA

Thanks!

JESSICA

Call us, ok?

MARA

I will. And—here's a waiver. Just sign on the bottom.

SCENE 2

MARA'S office. MARA at work. RALPH knocks.

MARA

Come in.

RALPH

So! What do you know about this cult for lesbian underage man-love?

MARA

Excuse me?

RALPH

I saw you in the park.

MARA

I saw YOU in the park.

RALPH

I think you must be mistaken... I was undercover.

MARA

O-kay. Right-o, dude.

RALPH

This is a serious matter: a federal investigation, in fact. It involves tax evasion, child protective services, secret payoffs to porn stars, and Robert Mueller's probe into Russian interference.

MARA

Juicy. Sounds like a rating's bonanza.

RALPH

Ralph P. Weenuswrinkle-Funkenpits, FBI. If you have any information on this supposed "man-baby," I must compel you to be more forthcoming under force of law.

MARA

Just how much force you got to make me forthcoming there, buddy?

RALPH

Ma'am. I need your full cooperation.

MARA

How 'bout I get *your* cooperation first?

RALPH

This is a highly sensitive matter.

MARA

I bet. You want more intel, right?

RALPH

Incel?

MARA

Like, you're lookin' for some... *Intel*.

RALPH

Correct, ma'am. I need more intelligence.

MARA

—I'd say... Then, I suggest you up your game.

RALPH

How's that?

MARA

You really wanna catch this man-baby, huh?

RALPH

Yes, ma'am.

MARA

And you're willing to do a sting operation? (*MARA begins costuming RALPH as a manbaby.*)

RALPH

Of course, by all means.

MARA

People say I have no taste, but I like you. If you promise to provide me with exclusive coverage, I'll help you out. But you must reveal *everything* you know to me.

RALPH

Everything? It's not much, really.

MARA

Exactly... Well, show me what you're working with, at least.

RALPH

I think we should search where pedophiles like to hang out.

MARA

And where's that? Schools?

RALPH

No! I'm not allowed within five hundred yards of a school. No—pizza parlors.

MARA

And why is that?

RALPH

Obviously, you don't keep up with the deep-state news from the dark web.

MARA

Ok then, pizza parlors. That's where we'll go.

RALPH

I know just the one!

MARA

Huh, I bet you do! Hold on to your conspiracy theories, cause we're going full-on deep throat!

RALPH

Oh-ho! I'm gonna dive right into the den of underage iniquity itself!

MARA

You bet your sweet bippy! We got ourselves a—playdate!

SCENE 3

A children's restaurant similar to Chuck-E-Cheese's. RALPH and CHUCK play together while MARA, JESSICA, and LISA look on.

MARA

They really do get along so well!

JESSICA

I'm so glad we finally found another manbaby mama. It felt like we might be the only ones.

MARA

I'd been a little worried, too.

JESSICA

Oh, why?

MARA

I just didn't know if DonDon was hitting his milestones. I mean, he's not fully verbal yet.

LISA

Luckily, a manbaby will *never* be completely verbal.

MARA

And he's been experiencing some weight gain. That's normal, right?

LISA

Abso-fuckin'-tutley! It's known in the literature as "beer gut."

MARA

And DonDon's still trying to breastfeed. Do you think that's a problem?

JESSICA

Nah. Comes with the territory.

MARA

Thank gosh goodness.

JESSICA

That's the beauty of a manbaby. They'll always stay infantilized.

LISA

Uh-oh, looks like Chucky is roughhousing too much. I'll skedaddle over and fix this situation.

JESSICA

Boys, y'know... *I* believe in strict free-range parenting principles, but *Lisa*—

MARA

Ooh, do tell. Sounds like drama!

JESSICA

I've been doing a bit of research on the internet.

MARA

How scientific!

JESSICA

Exactly! It's proven that, given appropriate freedom and independence, a manbaby can learn, y'know, basic microwave cooking, keyboard shortcuts, and how to operate an electric toothbrush—all that stuff. But *Lisa*! *Lisa* insists a manbaby needs “strict discipline.” I suspect she just *likes* doling out spankings... Come to think of it, she *does* like giving spankings.

MARA

So *Lisa* takes a more “hands-on” approach to parenting, you'd say?

JESSICA

Belts, paddles, whips, and chains, too. She just won't *listen*. We need to touch the *whole* child.

MARA

Tell me more about your tiff with *Lisa*—

LISA

(*Coming back over to JESSICA and MARA.*) “Tiff with *Lisa*”? What are you talking about?

JESSICA

It's, uh. Nothing.

MARA

Jessica. I really think she should know.

JESSICA

What do you mean, *Mara*?

LISA

(*To JESSICA*) Oh, sweetie. You best come clean. I *saw* you chattin' up this little skank.

MARA

—Skank?!

JESSICA

—You're delusional.

LISA

Oh, so you're saying she's NOT a skank? That it?

JESSICA

Jeezus, Lisa!

LISA

Maybe *you're* the skank-trash backstabbin' ho-bag, then?

JESSICA

Seriously. That's slut shaming. Get a grip.

LISA

Oh, I will, sweetie, I will a'ight! (*LISA grabs JESSICA'S hair. A catfight breaks out.*)

CHUCK

(*Coming over to the fight.*) Mommy? ...Other Mommy? ...MOMMIES!?!?

LISA

It's quits-ville.

JESSICA

Oh no—you can't break up with me.

LISA

And why's that?

JESSICA

Because I already done did broke you. UP! —We're through.

(*JESSICA AND LISA storm off-stage in opposite directions.*)

CHUCK

WAAAAAAAAAHHH!!! Me mommies no wonger wovel me!!

MARA

Yes, this is great footage! This will get the network drooling! Liberal in-fighting, woowee! "Backslapping Progressives Bitchslap Each Other." I see Tucker and Hannity slathering themselves over this! Wait—wait—what the fuck?!? What happened to the feed? The connection... NO, NO-NO!! Something's gone screwy—!!

RALPH

What did you *do*? I was trying to record this cult for lesbian underage man-love—I had 'em dead to rights and reeking with the deed—and then your stupid video messed up my wire.

MARA

Your *wire* fucked up my video, dipshit.

RALPH

Bitchface!

MARA

Limpdick!

CHUCK

Shut up, shut up, SHUT UP!! Dumb-dumbheads, me hab no *mommies* weft! WAHHHHHHH!!!!

ACT III

SCENE 1

TV studio. CHUCK squats on the floor while MARA films him.

CHUCK

Djoo stool me frum me mommies! Bad lady! BADBAD MEAN LADY!!

MARA

Listen here, Chuck.

CHUCK

Waaahhh!

MARA

We're going to play a little game, see?

CHUCK

Bad lady play wid Chuckie?

MARA

I know some fun games, kid.

CHUCK

Chuckie like funny games! Yippy-yippy.

MARA

This one's called the Quiet Game.

CHUCK

WAAAAAHHHH!!! NO ME LIKE QUIET GAME. STUPID GAME!! PTOOEY!! WAHHH!!

MARA

(Sotto voce) That's right. Keep screaming. Scream like a little bitch. This is killer footage! I can see the headline now: "Whiney Liberals Literally Act Like Big Fat Babies!" *(Cackles)* All the while, the mind-numbing newsfeeds are infantilizing *the viewers!* *(Beat)* Yes, you—you—you!

CHUCK

WAHHHH!!! Wa-wa-WAAHH!!!!

MARA

Haha! You keep this up, *nobody* will want to be your mommy!

CHUCK

(Silence. Beat. CHUCK begins sobbing.)

MARA

Oh shit.

CHUCK

MARA

Hm... Poor thing.

CHUCK

Nobuddy wuvs me.

MARA

That's not true.

CHUCK

You jus' say fibs to Chuckie?

MARA

I say a lot of things. At least, that much is true. But...

CHUCK

Me aww awone-awone in dis greatbig ooniberse. S'all so umpty as humppity dumpy.

MARA

Sometimes I feel that way, too, babe.

CHUCK

Me neeb a moomy.

MARA

There, there, Chuckie.

CHUCK

Do oo wuvle me?

MARA

There, there, little one.

SCENE 2

JESSICA'S house. JESSICA hands LISA U-Haul boxes of her stuff, and LISA begins carrying them off when RALPH, dressed once again as an FBI agent, bursts in the room.

RALPH

All right, ladies! Your little charade is up! You're hereby charged with conspiracy to corrupt public morals, parental neglect, misappropriation of conjugal relations, evasion of heterosexuality, and impersonating an adult!

JESSICA

See what your high-flown flighty hysteria has gone-done now?

LISA

Pardon me, mademoiselle. This wreckage you wrought, you little homewrecker, is due to your utterly depraved and platitudinous concerns!

JESSICA

You just *had* to have a baby, you dumb cunt, didn'tj'a!

LISA

Bitch! We're only getting caught because of your lowdown double-crossing sneakery!

RALPH

(RALPH puts each lady in one cuff of a handcuffs.)

You have the right to remain *SILENT*, ladies! Anything you say CAN be held against you... I have the incriminating recordings to put you two away for quite a loong time!

(LISA and JESSICA struggle against each other now they're forced in close quarters.)

LISA

Back off, you vapid strumpet! You can't keep your hands off anything, can you?

JESSICA

Get off my ass, or I'll pop you like a pimple, you stuck-up tart.

LISA

Watch it! Ouch! —Oof!

JESSICA

Whoa! Fuck off already! —Rrrr!

SCENE 3

MARA and CHUCK in the TV Studio. RALPH bombards in, dragging LISA and JESSICA together by their handcuffs.

CHUCK

DonDon! My playdate playmate, yippy-skippy! And yoos a' brung me back my two-two mummies!

RALPH

Shut up, you snotnosed twerp. I'm not your friend. Grow a pair already. What are you, like, forty-five? You're not a *millennial*; what's your excuse for trying to live with your parents, huh?

MARA

Ralph! What are you doing here?

RALPH

I brought you these two uppity radicals. We're gonna lock 'em up!

CHUCK

Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up!

MARA

Chuck—really.

CHUCK

(Pouts.)

RALPH

Yeah, you're next, tiddlywinks. I'll arraign you as an accessory to Sapphic miscreance and charge you with negligent defecation in your nappies!

MARA

Ralph P. Weenusrinkle-Funkenpits! Now you leave him out of this.

JESSICA

(To Lisa) Hmp. Get off.

LISA

Mmh. Get off, yeah. I think you were right about a kink dungeon.

JESSICA

I'd slap you right now if I could.

LISA

You'd slap me, would you? Have I been a bad girl?

JESSICA

Maybe we should borrow these handcuffs sometime.

RALPH

You'll get all the ratings you need with this mob of godless deviants.

MARA

And what will *you* get, Ralph?

RALPH

I'll get these perverts on tape this time!

JESSICA

What was that?

LISA

He doesn't have any evidence on us yet!

RALPH

Evidence schmevidence. I can always rustle up some alternative facts.

MARA

Oh, he's right, girls. We can whip up anything in the editing room.

RALPH

Haha! I don't have anything to show. So what? You're still going down.

LISA

You also don't have us under lock and key. (*LISA slips the cuffs with CHUCK'S help.*) But you're right about one thing: we'll go down all right.

JESSICA

But not on you! (*JESSICA slips her cuffs, too, and quickly latches RALPH into them.*)

LISA

TIME'S UP, Ralph!

JESSICA

We're ready for payback!

LISA

And some back pay, too, while you're at it.

MARA

Oh, now this—yes! yes!—this would make some bitchin' TV!

LISA

You think? How 'bout this, hun? Or this? (*LISA poses as she spanks RALPH.*)

JESSICA

Why don't we renegotiate our contracts while we're at it? (*JESSICA rips up the waivers.*)

LISA

We didn't need a *child*, dahling. We just needed someone to abuse!

RALPH

(*RALPH is being spanked by LISA.*) I confess! I confess! I'm not with the FBI. I'm just a Brony Sub-Reddit comment troll looking to fake up some QAnon conspiracies on the dark web!

CHUCK

Me moommies togever again but no neeb a baybee no more! Wa-wa-wahhh!

MARA

Come here, you spoiled imp. My Chucky-wuckie-poo, your momma's gonna take care of all your ickle bickle troubles! I'll dress you and pamper you and clean you up good, then take you to an Adult Baby Beauty Pageant! If you're a good boy and keep regressing enough, one day you might be nothing but a wee little squiggly-jiggly spermy-wormy-woo! O, coochie-coochie-coo!

(*MARA cradles CHUCK. CHUCK burps then shits his pants. ALL: tableaux. Fade out.*)

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS: *This is a fast-paced, over-the-top sex farce and political satire. The absurdity of so many recent news events—and the spin given to them by news producers—seemed ripe for comic treatment. Also, the norms of romantic relationships have changed a lot in the last, say, ten years that it offers fertile material for a new take on an old genre. We live in such wacky times that the characters, while obviously ridiculous, are poking fun at real tendencies, too. When writing, I felt if the characters were given clear motivations, I could easily push their desires into outlandish directions. Cross-purposes and misunderstandings abound, but all the nonsense has a logic to it. I tried to keep the scenes short, the dialogue quippy. Sometimes one joke acts as misdirection for another; sometimes a joke might be understated, and it only hits you a beat later. At least that's the hope. It's hard to pinpoint just one literary influence; forced to choose, I might claim Joe Orton as the most salient inspiration. The play was first performed on stage at Fire Creek Coffee by students in the Honors College at Northern Arizona University in November of 2018; they did a wonderful job handling the challenging script.*

AUTHOR BIO: Will Cordeiro has been the co-founder of Brooklyn Playwrights Collective and the artist-in-residence at the Riskey Black-Box Theater at Cornell University. Plays have been produced on stages off-off-Broadway and elsewhere. Work in other genres has been published in *AGNI*, *Bennington Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *DLAGRAM*, *The Threepenny Review*, and *THRUSH*. Will won the 2019 Able Muse Book Award for *Trap Street*. Will is also coauthor of *Experimental Writing: A Writer's Guide and Anthology*, forthcoming from Bloomsbury. Will coedits Eggtooth Editions and teaches in the Honors College at Northern Arizona University.