

**LISA PLEASE**

by Lain K.

**CHARACTERS**

RALPH GREENBLATT

A truly unremarkable twenty-something year old man, he works a low position in an office job.

*the* "YOUNG MAN"

A mysterious guide through the afterlife.

LISA GREENBLATT

A truly unremarkable twenty-something year old woman, a housewife.

2 male actors, 1 female actor

TIME: Some time in the mid-to-late 1900s.

## SCENE I

Unknown place. Unknown time.

*RALPH, a 20-something portly caucasian man with thinly rimmed glasses in business casual attire stands stage center, facing the audience, neutral expression, hands at his sides. A posh, well dressed, YOUNG MAN sits in a large armchair behind him, stage left, legs crossed with hands folded in his lap. A blue door stands stage left near the armchair, a red door stands stage right. Save for the armchair's placement, the setup is symmetrical The stage lighting is eerie and unusually dim.*

**RALPH:** *(Calm, slowly coming to his senses)* How long have I been standing here?

**YOUNG MAN:** *(Facetiously, tilting his head.)* How do you mean, Ralph?

**RALPH:** *(Confused, ruffling his brow.)* How much time's gone by?

**YOUNG MAN:** *(silent for a moment.)* I'm afraid that where we are, there's no such thing.

**RALPH:** *(Still confused, he nods his head, and slowly raises it, truly coming to his senses. Suddenly panicked, he quickly turns and faces the YOUNG MAN)* Where is this?

**YOUNG MAN:** *(smiling maliciously, he uncrosses his legs)* **There** it is.

**RALPH:** *(begins frantically pacing around the stage trying to get a sense of his surroundings,)*  
Where am I? *(He steps towards the YOUNG MAN once again.)* How did I get here? We're still in New York aren't we? *(RALPH looks down at the ground, focused on remembering)* I was just

leaving for the airport, it was- (*RALPH tries to look at his watch and is visibly concerned when he realizes it's missing.*) -uh, about 1 PM, and- (*YOUNG MAN cuts him off*)

**YOUNG MAN:** (*Annoyed*) You're **dead**, you **died**. (*Ralph steps away, shocked*) Y'know, Mr. Greenblatt, most people can figure this out on their own without throwing a fit.

**RALPH:** (*Still shocked, feeling his own body to make sure he still has one*) Well I don't know if I would call it a fit really more of a- uh... (*RALPH looks at the man for a second*) ...Is this the afterlife?

**YOUNG MAN:** Not **quite**, think of this as a- uh... **bridge** to the afterlife, or, more appropriately, (*he gestures towards the two doors*) a fork in the road.

**RALPH:** So... that's it then, isn't it. (*RALPH gestures towards the entire set, arms outstretched*) this is it. And these doors...? (*he spins around both ways, looking at the doors*) I have a choice, don't I?

**YOUNG MAN:** Well, maybe you're not so dense after all. (*RALPH slowly returns back to stage center*) Go through the blue door (*YOUNG MAN gestures stage left to the blue door*) and you will be no more. Your soul will fall into oblivion and you may decompose at whichever rate you're comfortable with. (*RALPH shudders, clearly shaken by the description*) A classic death, I know.

**RALPH:** (*Still slightly shaken*) Well, a "classic death" is fine, I suppose, there are much worse ends than that, afterall. But, the red door?

**YOUNG MAN:** (*giving a coy smile*) I'm afraid that that option is much more **interesting**. (*The YOUNG MAN gets up from his chair and walks over to the red door and places his hand on the*

*frame.*) If you are to walk through the red door, you will be reincarnated as an... *(He tosses his free hand around, looking for the right word)* **observer.**

**RALPH:** *(chuckles)* Like, a ghost.

**YOUNG MAN:** -If that's what you want to call it, sure. If you were to pick it, you would be stripped of your mortal coil and placed back on the Earth, and then, you would live forever.

**RALPH:** *(Incredulous)* Forever? Forever-ever?

**YOUNG MAN:** *(slight smile)* Yes, "forever-ever." *(he walks back towards center stage)* Many are tempted by eternal life, and I can certainly understand why, although I doubt it would very much interest a man like you. Anyhow, whichever door you pick, your choice will be final, once you walk through that door, *(not gesturing at either door specifically)* that's it.

**RALPH:** That's it? *(RALPH thinks for a moment)* Listen, now that's all fine and good, but *(exasperated, he cracks a nervous smile)* that's a lot of pressure to put on a guy, I just got here and you're asking me to choose my eternal fate?

**YOUNG MAN:** You didn't "just get here," this place exists outside of linear time, you've been here forever. *(he begins slowly walking back to his chair)* And in this eternity, I have already seen your decision, your heart is already set, your choice: already made, *(he sits down with a sigh)* so don't worry about it so much.

**RALPH:** Great, well then just tell me what my "destiny" is or whatever so we can get this over with.

**YOUNG MAN:** Oh but I can't tell you that, if I told you your fate, it would change your fate.

**RALPH:** *(Scoffs, acting tough)* Fine. I don't need you to tell me what my **own** decision is, if it's really already made, then I should just make it! *(The YOUNG MAN tilts his head forward,*

*curiously, seemingly surprised and intrigued.*) I tell you that I would never kneel at the feet of life, clinging at its threads. (*RALPH begins walking towards the blue door*) I don't need a pitiful eternity, I accept oblivion.

**YOUNG MAN:** I admire your- **gusto** Mr. Greenblatt, not one to keep your fate waiting I see, it doesn't seem like you have any (*The YOUNG MAN, sitting in the chair near the blue door places a hand on RALPH's shoulder as he's about to walk through the door, stopping him in his place*) “**unfinished business,**” (*the lighting changes to a cooler color*) that's for sure.

**RALPH:** (*thrown off balance, his tough act waivers*) Unfinished business? What do you mean?

**YOUNG MAN:** (*Innocent.*) Oh- I don't mean to startle you, it's just a turn of phrase isn't it? Correct me if I'm wrong, isn't that the usual reason why- “ghosts” come back in your stories, unfinished business, right? Seeing as how set you are for oblivion it certainly doesn't seem like you have any.

**RALPH:** (*Clearly distracted*) Oh- well, yeah, I suppose... (*Stepping away from the door, freeing himself of the YOUNG MAN's hand.*)

**YOUNG MAN:** (*After an awkward silence has passed*) Is something troubling you, Ralph?

**RALPH:** (*RALPH is slowly having an epiphany*) Lisa...

**YOUNG MAN:** A woman?

**RALPH:** Yeah, my wife. Lisa.

**YOUNG MAN:** (*Crossing his legs once again, he leans forward.*) You never struck me as a married man, Ralph, I'll be honest with you, I'm surprised.

**RALPH:** Yeah I get that a lot, I'm- maybe I haven't been the greatest spouse.

**YOUNG MAN:** Oh do tell, the gossip is the only redeeming part of this job. It's not like I'm gonna tell anyway.

**RALPH:** Well (*Ralph pauses, considering*) it's nothing, it's just- (*RALPH looks toward the red door*) the last time we spoke things didn't end on- the **best** terms, so to speak.

**YOUNG MAN:** Oh?

**RALPH:** (*Pacing, avoiding eye contact with the YOUNG MAN, mumbling*) Yeah it was a whole fight, it was... bad. I was just about to leave for a business trip, and we just got whipped up into this big thing like we always do, and- I just had to get away from it. On my way back I guess something must have happened to me, otherwise I wouldn't be here. I just- (*RALPH turns and looks over to the red door again, pausing*) wish I could see her again. (*RALPH turns back, stepping towards the blue door again, nervously chuckling*) Well, that would sure be nice, but, my choice is already made- I mean, I'm fated for oblivion aren't I?

**YOUNG MAN:** Well, (*The YOUNG MAN tosses his hands about indistinctly*) y'know, I'm not allowed to say, remember?

**RALPH:** Right... (*Pensive*) If I had chosen reincarnation, I could have seen her again, right?

**YOUNG MAN:** (*The YOUNG MAN pauses, seeming to carefully consider his words before slow and measured speech.*) If you were to be reincarnated, you would definitely be able to see her again, yes.

**RALPH:** (*RALPH thinks for a moment before reaching a feeling of lucidity, turning around, facing straight towards the red door*) Well... what's stopping me?

**YOUNG MAN:** (*Noticeably suppressing laughter behind RALPH's back*) Fate is never really set in stone, Mr. Greenblatt. If your love is **really** strong enough, (*playing up the hokeyness in this*) perhaps you can change destiny!

**RALPH:** Well... I just wish I could see her face again. I don't fear oblivion but... I don't want to disappear with my last memories of her being bad ones.

**YOUNG MAN:** (*Feigning utmost seriousness*) The door is right there, Mr. Greenblatt.

**RALPH:** (*RALPH stares at the YOUNG MAN for a moment before turning back to the door*) If this means that I can see Lisa, then it's what I need to do.

**YOUNG MAN:** (*cracking a smile*) I admire your **dying** commitment to this relationship, Ralph.  
(*RALPH slowly walks through the red door, and it closes behind him*)

**YOUNG MAN:** (*Looks towards the fourth wall, addressing the audience with a smile*) A trick has never been easier!

## SCENE II

Ralph & Lisa's home. Mid-day, moments after the end of scene 1.

*LISA, a 20-something woman dressed in casual attire sits center stage in a chair facing the audience (it's implied that she's watching a television,) a sofa sits stage right, facing the chair, its length perpendicular to the front edge of the stage. A door stands stage right, already open and in a similar position to the blue door in scene 1. RALPH walks through the door.*

**RALPH:** *(Immediately startled by his surroundings) I'm here! It worked! (Ralph begins feeling his own body) I even still have my body and everything, this is incredible! And- (RALPH notices LISA's presence for the first time) Lisa...! (Lisa doesn't seem to notice RALPH's presence in the slightest, still idly staring forward. RALPH speaks shakily, still overcome with shock and emotion) Just- watching some TV I see. (He says, gesturing towards the audience to the point in space LISA's staring at. RALPH begins slowly walking towards LISA, hesitating, nervously wringing his hands.) I- don't know what to say... (RALPH stands by LISA's side, stage left to her. RALPH puts his hand on her shoulder; LISA still doesn't respond.) Lisa... (RALPH stands for a moment, watching the TV over LISA's shoulder; he doesn't know what to do. After the moment has passed, he looks away, before slowly walking in front of LISA and turning to face her, blocking the audience's direct view of her. LISA continues to seemingly look through him, still watching the television. RALPH lets out a big sigh and walks to the sofa, sitting down,*



*looking at the ground. He speaks again, but this time, to himself. He speaks quietly, defeated.)*

...An observer... at least I can see your face again, hm? that's what I'm here for, isn't? (*RALPH sits for a moment before lifting his head to face LISA sideways.*) Lisa? (*He calls out in desperation*) Lisa...? Lisa, please. (*RALPH just sits and stares for a moment, before LISA's neutral aloof expression slowly turns to a glare as she thinks to herself.*)

**LISA:** (*LISA tries to keep her emotions from surfacing, but she begins choking up, holding back tears, her head drops.*) He's never coming back, is he?

**RALPH:** (*RALPH is startled by LISA's sudden outburst*) What? Lisa what's wrong, is- ... -Oh right, you don't know! How long has it been? (*RALPH is whipping his head around, seemingly looking for a calendar or clock.*) I'm supposed to be back from my business trip by now, aren't I? (*He stands and puts a hand on LISA's shoulder and gets down on a knee, trying to comfort her, he speaks quickly.*) Listen, I couldn't come back, Lisa, please, I swear I was coming- I just- (*LISA cuts him off*)

**LISA:** (*Still speaking through tears*) He probably hates me... (*She begins weeping*)

**RALPH:** Lisa... I don't hate you, I'm here now, right? Right?! I came back for you now, I did this just for you. (*LISA continues sobbing. RALPH slowly stands up, realizing that it's no use, he steps backwards, collapsing onto the couch again.*) Is this really all there is? This what I came back for? At least I get to see your face... (*RALPH vacantly stares at Lisa crying, his eyes drifting to the ground.*)

**LISA:** (*Speaking through sobs*) He can deny it all he wants... (*RALPH suddenly looks up at her, saying nothing*)

**RALPH:** What? Deny what?!

**LISA:** I know he's cheating on me! **I saw her.** And doesn't even care enough to just come out and say it!

**RALPH:** *(RALPH is stoney silent for a moment before standing up and shouting)* Okay! Fine! If that's what this is about, Fine! **Yeah**, maybe I haven't been the most faithful, is that what you want?! *(RALPH grips both of LISA's shoulders)* Will you **speak** now?! *(RALPH pauses for a moment, staring down at LISA, but LISA just continues crying.)* God damnit. *(Ralph lifts his hands off of her, and begins angrily pacing around the room.)* Okay! I get it! I see what this is, I never really did have a choice, did I? I just wanted to make things right! *(RALPH turns his anger towards the ceiling.)* Was all of that crap about fate and destiny just a lie?! This wasn't about changing fate at all, was it? When you said my choice was made, this is it, isn't it?! *(RALPH is besides himself, he stands center stage shouting at the ceiling, trying to reach some unknown place with his voice.)* Come out here and face me! Come and face me like a man! *(RALPH, out of breath and totally defeated, slowly walks back to the couch, and lays down, facing the audience. After a long silence, he speaks.)* My choice was made, and my mistake was final. A Hell of my own making. *(RALPH stares off into space as LISA continues crying, before the curtains close.)*

**THE END**