

SMALL "G"

BY

ARTHUR WALSH

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

In order of appearance.

GEORGE.....

HAROLD.....

JERRY.....

TOMMY.....

ARTHUR.....

NATALIE.....

GUY.....

ACT - I

SCENE 1

(The scene is a small restaurant. Only the night light is on at curtain but it is daylight and some light filters in from outside. Someone unlocks the door, opens it light streams across the room then the door closes. The two men seated at a table in the darkness are not lit directly buy the light from the doorway but the audience will know that they are there. As Jerry enters in the near darkness he steps behind the bar. (Something he does every day. Not unlike a blind person walking around in a familiar space.) And in the night light quickly sorts through the mail. The audience, accustomed to the darkness can see him cross to an area near the seated men. There Jerry turns on a light.

JERRY.

(Startled.) Oh! Shit!

GEORGE.

(Speaking like a well mannered hoodlum.) Hello, Jerry.

JERRY.

What the hell?

HAROLD.

Hi, Jerry.

GEORGE.

Did we scare you?

HAROLD.

Cause we didn't mean to scare ya.

GEORGE.

Speak for yourself Harold.

HAROLD.

That's what I always do.

JERRY.

(Having backed up to the bar and half way onto a stool.) Jesus, you scared the livin' shit out of me. Whether you meant to or not.

HAROLD.

Sorry Jerry.

GEORGE.

I'm not. I thought you were going to shit your pants.

JERRY.

I'm not sure I didn't.

GEORGE.

(Standing & crossing to Jerry.) Any way, good morning Jerry. Now that the fun is over, you probably want to know why I'm here.

JERRY.

I never know why you come here. I know it's not because you're my nephew, and I know I don't owe you any money. So tell me, just why are you here?

HAROLD.

I know why.

GEORGE.

Harold, go play in the kitchen ---

HAROLD.

I don't play in the ---

GEORGE.

Jerry, tell him!

JERRY.

Harold, just go into the kitchen and turn on the lights, will you.

HAROLD.

OK, Jerry. (He exits.)

GEORGE.

That's a good boy. Now, you know God damned well what I'm doing here. Jake wants what's his and so that he didn't come over to wreck the place and maybe extend his personal greetings to you, I kind of volunteered.

JERRY.

A magnanimous gesture.

GEORGE.

Why you wanna be like that? Why don't you just cough it up? Then maybe me and Jake and some friends, come by for dinner some night to show our appreciation.

JERRY.

What appreciation? George, I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

GEORGE.

Just cause you know I won't play rough with my own flesh and blood ---

JERRY.

George, I won't play this game any more. I have a lot to do. This restaurant doesn't open up by it's self.

GEORGE.

So maybe it don't open at all. Sorry, cuz. But, I got my instructions.

JERRY.

So do I. Now get the hell out of my hair, would you? (Reaching into his pocket and taking out some money.)

GEORGE.

(Dropping the gangster accent.) Jesus, Jerry, How am I ever gonna get this character down if I got nobody to practice on?

JERRY.

Here's a twenty go practice on one of your friends.

GEORGE.

Keep the twenty. Thanks for nothing.

JERRY.

I love you like a son George but I have work to do. I don't have time to play games.

GEORGE.

It isn't a game, Jerry. It's my career.

JERRY.

I mean it kid I'd love to help but you can see, I don't have time.

GEORGE.

Again, thanks for nothing. (He tosses the twenty at Jerry and turns to leave.)

JERRY.

(Catching the bill.) Hold on a second.

GEORGE.

(Holds the door ajar.) All right! I knew you wouldn't let me down. Thanks Jerry. I won't take up any more of your time than I have to.

JERRY.

No, George. (Gesturing toward the bar.) Have a seat kid. (Jerry goes behind the bar.)

GEORGE.

No thanks Jerry. (Lapsing into the gangster accent.) It's too early in the day to drink. Besides I have to keep my mind clear in order to create. (Loosing the accent.) Besides, you know I don't drink.

JERRY.

Did you ever think of maybe creating a character with a regular job and a regular life?

GEORGE.

Those aren't the kind of roles that get you noticed.

JERRY.

No, I guess not but they are the ones that put food on the table and a roof over your head. Jesus, George. When are you going to give up this fantasy and get a real life for yourself?

GEORGE.

You've been talking to my mother again, haven't you? Maybe I've said this to you before. Thanks for nothing. I have a gift and I intend to prove it. To someone.

JERRY.

Let's say you have this, gift. Here, (Holding out the money.) take this.

GEORGE.

I better go.

JERRY.

Listen, kid. The truth is, I'd like nothing better than if you became a big star. I would proudly put your picture on the wall.

GEORGE.

And hope I'd come in for dinner once a month to attract business.

JERRY.

It wouldn't hurt. That's not the point I'm driving. You see, me personally, who's got talent and who doesn't have talent, I can't tell. I mean, I could have talent and not know it, or I might think I have talent and the opposite might be the truth. What I'm saying George is, it's a big risk when all you've got is this belief that you're talented. And a willingness to bet your whole future on it.

GEORGE.

I've obviously taken up to much of you're time, already. (As he exits.) And Jerry.

JERRY.

Just think about it, will you?

GEORGE.

Thanks for the advice and for nothing. (He is gone.)

JERRY.

Maybe the kid's right. How the hell should I know. (Harold enters.) Harold!

HAROLD.

Yea, Jerry?

JERRY.

The next time my sister calls, tell her I locked myself in the walk-in box, would you?

HAROLD.

Why you wanna get locked in there?

JERRY.

What?

HAROLD.

Why you wanna get-----

JERRY.

It's just a figure of speech, Harold.

TOMMY.

(Entering from the street door.) Heya Jerry, I just saw George, what the hell did you say to the guy?

JERRY.

Nothing much. Why?

TOMMY.

He looked like his best friend just kicked him.

JERRY.

I just suggested that he ought to start thinking about getting a real job.

TOMMY.

Oh, I see. Encouragement. Just what every aspiring artist needs. Someone to tell him he's wasting his life. Good move, Jerry. You're a gem.

JERRY.

His damned mother called me again last night ---

TOMMY.

So it was her advice and encouragement that you were passing along to the poor kid. Now, I forgive you.

JERRY.

I don't need your forgiveness and I didn't ask for it.

TOMMY.

How about a blackberry and a beer? And you do need my forgiveness. Because, you aren't going to get it from any body else.

JERRY.

What a beautiful thing. Forgiveness for trying to do a good deed, from a guy who doesn't even believe in it.

TOMMY.

I believe in forgiveness. Don't I Harold?

HAROLD.

You forgived me for that window I broke.

JERRY.

That was an accident. You don't forgive people for having accidents.

HAROLD.

Tommy does. Don't ya?

TOMMY.

I am a compassionate man. I am a being, who at his very core understands the downtrodden and the misunderstood. I suffer with them. With them and for them.

JERRY.

And profit from your compassion.

TOMMY.

I am an artist. I paint what I see.

HAROLD.

And sell it too?

JERRY.

My point exactly. Thank you Harold. Harold, you've been thinking again haven't you?

TOMMY.

Harold is a great thinker, he just doesn't ordinarily think the same way or about the same things as you and I Jerry.

JERRY.

You and I don't think alike and I'm sure Harold is exactly what Rodin had in mind as a model.

TOMMY.

Great fucking idea! I can't believe you thought of it before I did. Come on Harold. Tell our miserly friend that you have something important to do today.

HAROLD.

What?

TOMMY.

You, my friend, are going to pose for me. An innovative and very interesting modern interpretation.

JERRY.

(Having gotten Tom his drinks.) Are you going to drink these?

TOMMY.

Are you crazy? I am embarking on creation. Of course I'm going to drink them. (He downs the brandy, grabs the beer.) Pour another one of those, please. The muse is also thirsty.

HAROLD.

I ain't thirsty.

TOMMY.

You also, ain't the muse.

HAROLD.

I didn't think so.

JERRY.

Here you go. Tom, how long are you going to keep Harold?

HAROLD.

I think he only wants to paint my picture. You ain't gonna keep me are ya Tommy?

TOMMY.

I just want to do a few sketches.

HAROLD.

Cause Jerry couldn't run this place without me. Right Jerry?

JERRY.

No I couldn't Harold. Don't keep him to long Tom, please.

TOMMY.

(As they exit.) Come let us be off to interpret my muse. While Jerry recalling how much he misses your presence when you are gone, contemplates an increase in your remuneration.

HAROLD.

I don't understand all them big words ---

TOMMY.

That's all right, Jerry does.

JERRY.

(As the door closes behind them.) And, how much are you going to pay him. Leonardo? (The bar the phone rings.) Hello, Cozy's.

VOICE.

(Male with foreign accent.) Hello? Annauska is there?

JERRY.

This is Cozy's cafe. Who do you want?

VOICE.

Annauska. Very blond, very beautiful. She is there?

JERRY.

I'm afraid you have the wrong number. Sorry.

VOICE.

Not, wrong number. Right number, okay, so maybe she is redhead. No, yes?

JERRY.

I'm going to hang up now. I hope you find this Nanuk but I have to go.

VOICE.

I apologize for saying wrong thing. This is small restaurant on Smith Street.?

JERRY.

Yes. Cozy's Cafe ---

VOICE.

Good. I am to make the reserves for your place.
To have the dinner. What is time you serve the
dinner?

JERRY.

(Bewildered.) Excuse me?

VOICE.

You serve the dinner, yes?

JERRY.

We serve the dinner, yes. What the hell am I
doing? Yes, we serve dinner. The kitchen opens
at five and remains open till ten thirty.

VOICE.

You serve the banquet? Good we come. Five on
those dots.

JERRY.

How many in your party?

VOICE.

We will be sixteen of us. (The door opens and
George enters with a cell phone to his ear.)

JERRY.

Sixteen? The cafe only seats, let me see--

GEORGE.

Hia, uncle Jerry!

JERRY.

Please George, not now I am on the phone.

GEORGE.

(Into the phone.) So is I, am on the phones.

JERRY.

(Realizing the situation.) George!

GEORGE.

Thanks for letting me practice the accent on you,
I ---

JERRY.

(Yelling into the phone.) George! Get the hell
out of here.

GEORGE.

(Almost dropping the phone.) Easy, uncle Jerry!
You could damage a person's eardrum screaming
like that.

JERRY.

Is it that hard for you to imagine that I have a
lot of work to do?

GEORGE.

I'm an actor. I have a great imagination. Go
ahead ask me to imagine something. Anything.

JERRY.

Imagine that you are at work and far too busy to
be wasting my time with this bullshit.

GEORGE.

But I don't even have a job to imagine being at,
so it would be impossible for me to imagine that
I am busy at something that doesn't exist. Now
if it were an actual acting job, say a beer
commercial or Shakespeare in the park ---

JERRY.

And me like a jerk, (As he exits into the back
room.) I'm standing here wasting my time talking
to you.

GEORGE.

(Speaking as though Jerry were still in the room.) Help yourself to a coke George. (Crossing behind the bar.) Thank you, don't mind if I do. I could do this for a living. (He is speaking as he goes about finding himself a glass, some ice, etc.) Tending bar is fun? It's just a big act after all. Schmooze with the beautiful ladies, toss out an occasional drunk. Ah! Here you are miss, the specialty of the house. Cola on the rocks. So, I haven't seen you in here before, have I?

BLACKOUT

END SCENE 1

SCENE 2

(Later that day. Seated at the bar, one a woman, no beauty but attractive, mid thirties, a gentleman in his late fifties, standing at the end of the bar is Harold. Jerry is lighting the woman's cigarette.)

ARTHUR.

Excuse me.

NATALIE.

Everybody has fantasies.

JERRY.

I don't know. It's too, personal.

ARTHUR.

I hate to interrupt.....

NATALIE.

Grown-ups should be able to share.

JERRY.

Maybe, not everything.

NATALIE.

I don't give up easily.

ARTHUR.

I hate to disturb you.

JERRY.

You're not disturbing me. (He does not look at Arthur.)

ARTHUR.

That is rather obvious to me. I thought, if there was any beer left, you might dare to pour me another.

JERRY.

Coming right up.

NATALIE.

Thank you, honey. (Puffing on the cigarette.)

JERRY.

My pleasure, Miss. (Motions to Harold.) Harold.

NATALIE.

Now, where were we?

ARTHUR.

Jerry was about to draw me another beer.

HAROLD.

Yes, Jerry? Whatchya need?

JERRY.

(Getting a beer for Arthur.) Do me a favor.

NATALIE.

So you say that you don't fantasize at all when you and your wife are ---

JERRY.

I didn't say that.

NATALIE.

So you admit it. Who do you fantasize about?

ARTHUR.

(Almost absentmindedly.) Kim Novak.

JERRY.

Really?

NATALIE.

I'd have thought in your case, maybe Myrna Loy. Although, nobody cares. So Jerry who's your lucky movie star?

JERRY.

My wife.

HAROLD.

She in the movies? I didn't know that.

JERRY.

No, not that. I just think about her.

NATALIE.

How touching.

JERRY.

Harold. Do me a big favor and bring me the three cases of beer from the cooler, would you?

GUY.

(Enters through the men's room door and crosses to the bar.)

GUY.

How about another vodka?

HAROLD.

What ones?

JERRY.

There's three of them stacked just inside the door on the left. (Taking a fresh glass.) One Absolute, coming right up.

HAROLD.

You're left or my left?

JERRY.

Yours. (Harold exits, holding his left hand above his head.)

GUY.

What's the matter with that one. (Pointing to his glass.)

JERRY.

Harold? He's a little slow, that's all.

GUY.

No I mean that one. (Again indicating his glass and then picking it up and rattling the ice.)

JERRY.

Nothing, I guess. (Reaching for the man's glass.)

GUY.

And don't dump the ice. It's barely broken in.

JERRY.

What ever you say, sir.

GUY.

You don't have to call me, sir.

JERRY.

What ever you say. (He pours vodka directly into the glass.)

HAROLD.

(Enters carrying some cases of beer.) Jerry where you want I should put these?

JERRY.

Just leave them on the floor at the end of the bar. Thanks.

HAROLD.

That's an okie dokie with me. (He moves off with the boxes.)

JERRY.

Here you are sir.

GUY.

I told you, it wasn't necessary to call me, sir.

JERRY.

What should I call you? What's your name?

GUY.

I go by the name Guy, which you may call me.

JERRY.

Guy? Why do I have this feeling, that I can call you Guy, but, it's not your real name.

GUY.

An astute observation.

HAROLD.

(Putting down the boxes.) Jerry! Is this okay, Jerry?

JERRY.

That's just fine Harold, thanks. (To Guy.) So what is your name?

GUY.

For the lack of a better term, god. (No one else reacts to what the Guy has said, except Harold, who simply scratches his head and exits.) It isn't necessary to call me ---

JERRY.

Don't worry, I won't. (Conspiratorially, leaning forward.) And if I were you I wouldn't mention it again. (Looking up and down the bar.) If you get my drift.

GUY.

Don't worry about them. They have no idea what we're saying. Except maybe Harold.

JERRY.

They don't? Why Harold?

GUY.

I'm not sure, there's something about Harold. To them I'm some guy, sitting at a bar having a conversation with the bartender. They're not paying any attention to us.

JERRY.

And you're sure about this?

GUY.

Positive.

JERRY.

Except for Harold.

GUY.

Forget about Harold. Now where were we?

JERRY.

I think I was about to ask you a question. What makes you think you're God?

GUY.

You don't have to capitalize it.

JERRY.

What?

GUY.

God, you don't have to capitalize it.

JERRY.

I thought proper nouns were capitalized.

GUY.

I stand corrected. Yes, as my name, a proper noun, God is capitalized but not as an adjective. As an adjective it merely describes what I am.

NATALIE.

Excuse me.

JERRY.

Now what do you say?

GUY.

She probably wants another drink.

JERRY.

She probably wants me to call a medic. Yes ma'am

NATALIE.

Another Manhattan, please. You mix a very good Manhattan, what did you say your name was?

JERRY.

Jerry.

NATALIE.

Jerry, you mix a very good Manhattan, (To Guy.)
Don't you think so?

GUY.

Yes, I think so.

NATALIE.

What were you two talking about so intently?

JERRY.

Nothing in particular. (He proceeds with making her drink.)

GUY.

Language.

NATALIE.

Language?

GUY.

Parts of speech to be precise.

NATALIE.

How interesting. (She turns away.)

GUY.

God, with a small g.

JERRY.

If you insist. (Gives Natalie her drink.) Okay, small g.

GUY.

Call me Guy.

JERRY.

Good, I'll call you Guy.

GUY.

By the way, you make a pretty good absolute on the rocks. You probably want to know why I'm here. (Pause.) Don't you?

JERRY.

An Absolute on the rocks or maybe two? Just a guess.

GUY.

Maybe more than two. Do you know what day this is?

JERRY.

Saturday.

GUY.

There is a bit more significance attached to this particular Saturday, Jerry. Do you know what that is?

JERRY.

I admit that I don't know the significance of this particular Saturday. Please tell me what it is.

NATALIE.

Pulaski day.

JERRY.

What?

NATALIE.

It's Pulaski day. Big Polish holiday.

GUY.

Correct. The lady from the Manhattan is correct. Today is Pulaski day.

JERRY.

I thought you said that no one was paying attention to us.

GUY.

Maybe I lied.

JERRY.

You didn't stop somewhere else before you came in here. I mean, this isn't only your second drink today, is it?

GUY.

Absolutely. (Then with a smirk.) Swear to god.
(Jerry tares at him incredulously.)

GUY.

I can do that. I'm him. First stop, I promise.
You don't believe me do you?

JERRY.

That this is your second drink, or that you are,
God.

GUY.

I told you. You don't have to capitalize it.
Unless you are refereeing to me by my name, of
course. As in, hey God, please pass the peanuts.
Not as in oh my god the sky is falling! Or
something like that. Got it?

JERRY.

In principle but it will take some getting used
to. Soooo--?

GUY.

Trying to figure out the next important question
to ask me?

JERRY.

I never thought about. I wonder if many people
do, probably not. What would I ask god if I
ever met him.

GUY.

Not him.

JERRY.

Not him?

GUY.

I'm just, god. I have no gender, another thing
you might have trouble getting used to.

JERRY.

You look, masculine. Wait a minute, I knew there was something odd about you. You're not ---

GUY.

Jerry, we're not going to get very far if I have to take time to explain everything.
(Jerry just stares at him.)

This is not what I look like. That is to say, I don't have an actual physical presence. I don't have, nor do I need a body. That is unless I want to have a conversation with a human being. Which I occasionally do. This being one of those occasions, I chose this one. I could have chosen that one. (Indicating Natalie.)

JERRY.

You could have? That might prove interesting.

GUY.

I have taken on this form in order to have a conversation.

JERRY.

Are you insinuating that we could not have this conversation if you were Natalie?

GUY.

I never insinuate. You'll learn that.

JERRY.

You're stating that we could not have this conversation if you were here in the form of a woman? And why would that be so, or on the other hand what if you were talking to a woman?

GUY.

But I'm not.

JERRY.

How do you know? Maybe I'm, never mind I forgot
you're God

GUY.

It doesn't work that way.

JERRY.

What doesn't work, what way?

NATALIE.

(Stands and takes a step toward Arthur. She has
a dollar in her hand.) Want to hear anything
special?
(No response.)

GUY.

Let's get down to basics, shall we? God with a
small g, got it. This is not about some all
powerful being that can alter things in the
universe on a whim. I do not have that capacity.
Nor do I know all things. Which assuming for a
moment I did, that would probably drive me nuts.

JERRY.

So you're not the God capital G who created the
universe and all things in it?

GUY.

Wrong. And wrong. I am the god lower case g who
created the universe, well sort of, but not
everything in it. Most of it just kind of
happened.

JERRY.

Give me a break.

NATALIE.

(At the juke box.) Jerry?

JERRY.

Natalie?

NATALIE.

Do you have a request?

JERRY.

Nothing special for me, thanks.

NATALIE.

What about your friend?

GUY.

Stardust.

JERRY.

There's one thing I know, the God who created the universe from some master plan, which, only he knows, is spelled with a capital G. Period.

GUY.

Not exactly.

JERRY.

Not exactly? What do you mean not exactly?

GUY.

It was more serendipitous.

JERRY.

Seren, what?

GUY.

Serendipitous.

JERRY.

What the hell is serendipitous?

ARTHUR.

The gift of accidentally finding valuable or agreeable things. According to Webster.

JERRY.

Thank you.

ARTHUR.

Don't mention it.

JERRY.

(Back to Guy.) He didn't do it intentionally, is that what you want me to believe?

GUY.

I didn't do it intentionally. I knew we would eventually get around to this. Listen to me, carefully. Number one I don't need you to believe me. I'm not here to start a religion. I just wanted a little conversation and it's a known fact that bartenders are good listeners and talkers. Two, there is no god with a capital g, there is only me. Three, there was no master plan. It just sort of happened. There is no gender distinction. I am god, that is all.

JERRY.

And you created the universe, how? By accident?

GUY.

You said the magic word.

JERRY.

What magic word?

GUY.

Accident.

JERRY.

How? When?

GUY.

When? I'm afraid not. There is no when. Before man invented time, there was no time. I am from the time before time.

When there was no time or anything else for that matter. Including matter.

JERRY.

All right, no when. I can accept that, I think. No matter? That's a different kettle of fish, and what about the how?

GUY.

That is simple enough. I got bored.

JERRY.

You bored? How could that be? You could have anything you want.

GUY.

Not if there was nothing. And I'm talking nothing, lots of nothing, very serious nothing. You can't even imagine.

JERRY.

I think I can. Sort of like being out at sea all alone, with nothing but ocean as far as one could see.

GUY.

Not even close, an ocean is something. You see when I say nothing I mean nothing. Not a room with nothing in it. I mean no room, no building for the room to be in. No planet for the building to be on. No solar system, no galaxies, no cosmos. Not even empty space because that would imply a nothing in between other things and there were no things. Nothing, in my lexicon means exactly that. The only thing that did exist was what you might call thought.

JERRY.
You were right. I had no idea.

GUY.
Thank you.

JERRY.
So, what happened?

GUY.
As I have said, I was bored. Nothing to see,
nothing to do or even to touch. Although I must
admit that I was not tactile. I mean there was
nothing anywhere and there was nothing
everywhere.

JERRY.
Because there was nothing to touch?

GUY.
Good! Then it hit me. I did have something, and
plenty of it. Assuming that nothing was
everywhere, well. I had plenty of it.

JERRY.
'Plenty of Nothing' A good song title. Natalie,
play "I Got Plenty of Nothing"

NATALIE.
Sure honey, if it's on here.

JERRY.
Okay, then what happened.

GUY.
Why then I realized, plenty of nothing it may
have been. But it was all mine.

JERRY.
What happened next?

GUY.

I became severely depressed.

JERRY.

Depressed?

GUY.

Think about it. Here I had made this great discovery of my newfound wealth and I still had nothing.

JERRY.

I can understand.

GUY.

Can you really? We're talking major depression here.

JERRY.

God, depressed?

GUY.

Then out of nowhere. And I mean.....

JERRY.

Nowhere?

GUY.

Right. Any way I had this idea. Think positive, I thought to myself. That was the answer.

JERRY.

The answer. I don't think I heard the question.

GUY.

How to make something out of nothing before I lost it completely. That was the question.

JERRY.

Thinking positive was the answer to that question? I see. No I don't see, I'm afraid I'm not following you at all.

GUY.

I understood that what I had was nothing and that even if it was nothing, it existed and therefore what I had was a vast amount of positive nothing all I needed I surmised and don't ask me how I thought of this, was some negative nothing, which I found by looking where the nothing wasn't. Once I had positive and negative nothing, I just smashed them together and then all this happened.

JERRY.

That's an interesting concept. What are you some kind of science fiction writer? Because, and I mean it, that's a very interesting concept.

GUY.

Why thank you Jerry. The unfortunate thing is, I can't take credit for it. You see I didn't dream it up, I did it. It's not a concept, it's your reality.

JERRY.

I guess I'm having a hard time with the god thing. I mean here you are, standing right in front of me and I'm having trouble understanding. Is that clear to you?

GUY.

Perfectly.

JERRY.

That makes one of us.

GUY.

Don't you think I realize that it is difficult to comprehend.

After all you've been taught about me, or rather an image of me that is to say the least, enhanced. I readily admit to my own existence. Therefore I say to you that god does exist for here I am. One other thing "The reports of my death have been exaggerated." Just as were those of Samuel Clemmens.

JERRY.

Mark Twain, said that I believe.

GUY.

We are though, loosing sight of the main reason that I am here.

JERRY.

Which is? I'm sorry, if you told me I guess I forgot.

GUY.

Conversation.

JERRY.

Right. What do you want to talk about?

GUY.

Nothing in particular and if possible, nothing important. You pick a topic. Go on ask me something, anything. But ---

JERRY.

Nothing important. How did I get so lucky? Guy says he's god and wants to chat. I can ask him anything except that it can't be anything important. This is not a question. Do you think I'm nuts?

If you think that I believe you and you don't think I'm nuts then either you are nuts or you're actually god.

GUY.

On the other hand. If I am god and you don't believe me how will you explain that to your grandchildren?

JERRY.

Not to worry. I don't intend to explain or even mention this to anyone. I think I might have a tough time convincing people that I'm sane.

GUY.

I've run into that before. It's not a bit unusual.

JERRY.

Do you do this often?

GUY.

Only on Pulaski day, and not every year.

JERRY.

No, no. Seriously, is this something you do as a regular, you know, gag or something? Because, and I mean this sincerely. You are very good. Are you recording this?

GUY.

Jerry? I want you to think about something. Follow me closely. There are in your, excuse me, in mankind's estimation, billions of stars. Am I right?

JERRY.

That's what they tell me. Maybe trillions, give or take.

GUY.

Let's begin with that assumption, that there are a trillion stars. We'll start with that, okay?

JERRY.

Fine, let's start with a trillion. Start what?

GUY.

A mathematical table, if you will? If a mere one percent of those stars are like your sun, what you call a yellow dwarf, that would amount to ten billion. If one percent of those stars were the center of a solar system, how many would that be?

JERRY.

I have no idea.

ARTHUR.

One hundred million. Am I correct?

GUY.

One hundred million. Do you see where this is headed?

JERRY.

I'm not quite sure. But I think you're getting close.

GUY.

If one percent of those solar systems have a planet of similar size and mass as this planet, there would be one million possible earth's that might under the proper circumstances produce life as you know it.

JERRY.

Humans?

GUY.

On a much simpler scale, simple, carbon based life. And if one percent of these planets produced air breathing vertebrate animals, that would amount to ten thousand, a very large number. Wouldn't you agree that ten thousand earths' is a formidable number?

JERRY.

That's a lot of earths.

GUY.

If one percent of those earth's produced intelligent life.

JERRY.

One hundred planets like earth with intelligent life? Wow? How do you know all this and why tell me? Tell the scientists. They're the ones who should know.

GUY.

They pretty much do. They haven't been able to prove it yet. Jerry, it was not my intention to let you in on any major secrets about the universe. I just wanted you to understand that there are lots of places I could be right now but I have a nice feeling about this world you live on. And you must realize that this is not my first visit here.

There is something about the way things developed on this Earth of yours that intrigues me and after having observed it for a very long time I have found myself able to intermingle with its life forms, as a Science Fiction writer might put it, and I have learned many things about them. As well as about myself. So here I am and it's Pulaski day

JERRY.

I'm not sure I get it.

GUY.

Maybe I'd be better off talking to the young lady.

JERRY.

I don't think so. Listen I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend.

GUY.

Why don't we try this, forget everything that's happened to this point, and let's just start over. What do you say?

(Harold enters, carrying a sandwich.)

JERRY.

Good. So you must be new around here? I don't remember seeing you before.

GUY.

I travel a lot. Don't spend much time in the area.

JERRY.

Then, you do live around here?

HAROLD.

Jerry, could I have a soda?

GUY.

In a manner of speaking.

JERRY.

In a second Harold. It's just that I don't remember seeing you, in here or around town. (He fills a glass with ice and soda. He sets the glass down in front of Harold.)

GUY.

As I said, I travel a lot.

JERRY.

Here you are Harold.

HAROLD.

Thanks Jerry.

JERRY.

Are you in sales?

GUY.

No.

NATALIE.

He looks like the creative type to me. Doesn't he look like the creative type?

JERRY.

Yeah, I guess he does. You know something, I think Natalie hit on something. Are you the creative type.

GUY.

In a way, I guess you might say that I've dabbled a bit.

ARTHUR.

Computers, right?

JERRY.

I thought you said that nobody else would understand.

GUY.

We started over again didn't we? No not computers.

NATALIE.

But you do something creative, don't you. You design things, I'll bet.

JERRY.

Not exactly.

ARTHUR.

How did you know that?

JERRY.

I --- I

GUY.

I think it might have been something I said earlier.

NATALIE.

He doesn't look like the computer type to me. What did he say earlier, Jerry?

JERRY.

He said that he, had sort of made some, ---
(Aside to Guy.) Help me out here would you?

GUY.

You're doing fine. But don't have an accident.

JERRY.

Accident? Right! He mentioned that he once made some mistake or other and thereby stumbled onto something. In that way has done some creating, you might say.

ARTHUR.

That's where serendipitous, came into the conversation?

GUY.

As I recall, yes. And thank you once more for the definition.

JERRY.

I'm the one who should thank him. I'm pretty sure that you already knew what it meant.

GUY.

True.

NATALIE.

Could we get back to the creative thing?

ARTHUR.

Yes, shall we? I think we are on the verge of a convoluted yet interesting sort of treasure hunt. In a manner of speaking.

JERRY.

Would you like to tell us what it is that you serendipitous-ested? Or whatever.

GUY.

It might be a bit difficult to explain.

NATALIE.

You don't think that we can understand? Is that it?

JERRY.

Maybe he's afraid that you will.

ARTHUR.

I, for one am willing to test my abilities at comprehension. Please, do go on. Challenge our powers of reasoning.

I don't think you could have created serendipitously or otherwise anything which is beyond human comprehension.

HAROLD.

What'd he say?

GUY.

That he believes he will understand anything which I might say to him. Am I correct?

ARTHUR.

And stated succinctly, I might add. Now the question.

NATALIE.

Is that clear now, Harold?

HAROLD.

(Barely looking up from his sandwich.) What?

ARTHUR.

May we get back to our little game? Shall we try the twenty questions methodology?

JERRY.

Animal, vegetable or mineral? This could prove interesting.

NATALIE.

I always liked that game. My father and I used to play it in the car.

ARTHUR.

Who would like to start the game?

HAROLD.

I would.

GUY.

Jerry, could I speak to you for a moment?

JERRY.

Sure.

GUY.

Alone? If you folks would not be offended.

NATALIE.

Not me. Why should I be offended? I'm just killing time till Jesse shows.

ARTHUR.

I also am not offended, for I unlike many others I thrive in my own company. As for Howard, he has yet to devour his sandwich completely and therefore will in all likelihood take no offense.

HAROLD.

Who's Howard?

NATALIE.

Don't pay any attention to him Harold.

ARTHUR.

May I ask you something?

NATALIE.

So long as it's not too personal, sure why not.

ARTHUR.

Did you happen to notice anything unusual about our bar companion?

NATALIE.

Of course I did. What do you think I am, color blind or something.

ARTHUR.

Color blind? Ah, yes, I see. You allude to the fact the he is dressed entirely in black. Well of course you would notice that. You are after all, a woman.

NATALIE.

Thank you for noticing. Unless, that wasn't meant as a compliment.

ARTHUR.

You may take it as a compliment. And I might add a rather attractive woman at that.

HAROLD.

He talks like he knows things.

NATALIE.

(Indicating Arthur.) He sure does. Where'd you go to school?

HAROLD.

Not him. That Guy, guy. He knows things.

ARTHUR.

Accurate, in a rough sort of a way. What sorts of things do you think he knows?

HAROLD.

About stuff. He knows lots of things about all kinds of stuff.

GUY.

Inequity is here to stay my friend.

JERRY.

Things keep getting better, I thought.

GUY.

Different. Things just get different, Jerry.

JERRY.

What about all the advances in medicine? Look at how easy early diagnosis of some cancers has become.

GUY.

That will last until the cure becomes cheaper to manufacture. Then, the insurance companies who now pay for MRI's and other screening methods won't be willing to pay for them because it will be cheaper to cure someone in the advanced stages of the disease than to detect it early. The high moral ground will be, the savings, not the stopping of suffering.

JERRY.

If you're not God capital 'G', how do you know that?

GUY.

Because, I'm not stupid capital 'S'.

JERRY.

Forgive me. I thought I caught you seeing into the future.

GUY.

Have I not set forth in a delineated fashion that I do not possess those powers. Let me try, one more time. I have been around a very long time. I can barely remember the past, there is so much of it. I think that if my mind ever was capable of such a feat it would have manifested itself long before it got filled with all the things that have happened, to which I have been witness. Is that clear enough?

JERRY.

Yes. That's something I seem to be forgetting. You know all about everything that has happened in the past. Don't you?

GUY.

No, I don't.

JERRY.

How can that be? You just said that you witnessed all the things that have happened.

ARTHUR.

Correction. You do not mind if I correct our young friend.

GUY.

Be my guest.

ARTHUR.

Our learned companion here has simply stated that he has been a witness to many things. He did not state nor even intimate that he had witnessed all the things that have happened. He is merely stating, correct me if I am wrong on this point, that his mind is quite full up with all of the things to which he has been a witness. From which you inferred that he had witnessed everything. An incorrect assumption on your part.

JERRY.

I guess I stand corrected.

ARTHUR.

You must learn to pay attention.

GUY.

Thank you, Arthur. Although I think Jerry's problem is one of getting hold of a concept which is alien to the way he has been taught to reason.

Not a lack of intellect or inability to pay attention. Simply put he has no understanding of the concept.

ARTHUR.
Right church wrong pew?

GUY.
More to the point.

ARTHUR.
Since I have already interrupted you're conversation, gentlemen. Would it be considered more bad form to insinuate myself further?

GUY.
Not at all and you have done so quite artfully, I might add.

JERRY.
And don't ask me. It's his conversation.

GUY.
Jerry, you do yourself a disservice.

JERRY.
I seem to spend more time listening than contributing and as you pointed out, not retaining very much.

GUY.
Nonsense. Think about what you said concerning the so-called 'theory of evolution'.

ARTHUR.
So called? You have another theory, Jerry?

JERRY.

No. It just occurred to me, that if the universe started the way god, small g, said it did then the theory of evolution makes more sense to me than it did before.

ARTHUR.

Do you refer to the universe as we think we know it or to the universe that actually exists?

JERRY.

Well I only know the part of it that I know about. (Feeling stupid.) So that's probably the one I'm referring to.

ARTHUR.

The seeking of knowledge implies a willingness to admit to ignorance of some fact or other. It would make no sense for one who actually knows everything to waste time seeking to learn more. So that by admitting to lack of knowledge and showing an eagerness to understand you display an active intellect, my friend. This is an admirable trait. (To Guy.) Don't you agree? I'm afraid I didn't catch your name, sir.

JERRY.

Here we go again.

GUY.

Guy.

JERRY.

That was easy?

GUY.

You appear to be a well informed person, Arthur. In another day perhaps the term erudite would have been appropriate, I think.

ARTHUR.

You do me an honor, sir.

JERRY.

You don't have to call him sir.

GUY.

Ignore him, please, for the moment. Jerry would you be kind enough to pour another Absolute?

JERRY.

Absolutely, sir.

ARTHUR.

I appear to have done more than interrupt, apparently I have dismantled you're conversation.

GUY.

Not to worry.

JERRY.

Not to worry. (Being careful not to spill the ice.)

GUY.

We weren't discussing anything earth shattering.

JERRY.

Nothing earth shattering.

ARTHUR.

Then may I assume that any reference to theories relative would not be earth shattering?

GUY.

Jerry did touch on the subject before you became involved.

ARTHUR.

You mean before I interrupted?

GUY.

No. You will come to understand that I always say precisely what I mean. It is your assumption that you had interrupted. I made no such assertion. Am I correct Jerry?

JERRY.

I think that you may have been invited.

ARTHUR.

If an invitation has been extended, I accept. Now about this so-called theory of evolution.

GUY.

You are referring to the interrupted conversation?

ARTHUR.

Yes, the theory of evolution as proffered by our inquisitive bartender. Tell us more Jerry.

JERRY.

First I look up that word. Preferred, wasn't it?

GUY.

Proffered. Offered for consideration.

JERRY.

I was just talking. Making conversation.

ARTHUR.

And evidently drawn a conclusion about evolution based upon something you heard.

GUY.

Actually based on something I said.

JERRY.

He said that the beginning of our universe could have been a complete accident. Am I right? And then I thought, if that was true and everything that happened after that was a result of the accident. Just one accident causing another, sort of like a --- I don't know ---

ARTHUR.

Chain reaction?

JERRY.

That's it. A chain reaction. That would explain evolution.

ARTHUR.

It would?

(Tom enters and as he crosses to the men's room door.)

TOM.

Got any of that blackberry brandy left Jerry.

JERRY.

As hard as you try, you'll never drink it all.

TOM.

Set me up, will you. (He exits into the men's room.)

JERRY.

Speaking of earth shattering. There goes a guy how could stand the whole thing on its end. If he wanted to.

HAROLD.

Which end?

GUY.

Apparently, he doesn't want to. Because?

JERRY.

Not overly ambitious. Enormously talented but not a lot of ambition.

ARTHUR.

Really? That's a shame.

NATALIE.

I think he's nice looking.

GUY.

Why is it a shame?

ARTHUR.

Ambition is the driving force behind the universe.

GUY.

Is that true? What kind of talents does he have?

JERRY.

He paints and sculpts, he makes things.

HAROLD.

He made me into a thinker.

GUY.

You must introduce me to him. (Looking at Harold.) He sounds interesting.

ARTHUR.

(Taking a hard look at Harold.) He certainly does.

NATALIE.

And nice looking.

ARTHUR.

What kind of a thinker did he make you into?

HAROLD.

A sitting one. I guess.

TOM.

(Entering rubbing his hands together.) Is that mine?

GUY.

Jerry, introduce us to your friend.

JERRY.

Right. Natalie, Arthur, Guy, this is Tom.

(Tom extends his hand to Guy, who reacts to that fact that it is a wet hand.)

TOM.

Oh, I'm sorry about that I have this superstition about peeing on my hand for good luck.

(Guy does not react.)

NATALIE.

That's terrible!

JERRY.

Tom! Cut it out, will you?

TOM.

Actually, you're out of paper towels in the men's. (He downs the shot.)

NATALIE.

That's funny. (Turning to Arthur.) Don't you think that was funny?

ARTHUR.

In a crude way, yes.

TOM.

It's the warm water that makes the whole gimmick work.

NATALIE.

Very funny.

GUY.

With impeccable timing. How do you do, Tom.
Would you care for another?

TOM.

Thanks but I haven't got time. I've got to get
back to work.

GUY.

What kind of work do you do?

TOM.

This and that.

GUY.

Harold said that you made him into a thinker.

TOM.

He did? And what sort of thinker did he become.

ARTHUR.

A sitting one. Apparently.

TOM.

And an interesting one.

ARTHUR.

How did this fascinating yet so far undetected
transformation occur?

TOM.

This morning for no apparent reason I looked at
Harold and saw a new interpretation of 'The
Thinker'.

GUY.

Rodin. Quite a fellow.

TOM.

Actually it was Jerry who thought of it. But I will create the canvas, bring new life to the idea of man as the animal who thinks. I can't believe I didn't think of it before.

ARTHUR.

Tell us about this new concept of yours.

TOM.

We look at people and somehow in our minds determine without reason whether or not they have intellect. As Jerry pointed out to me this morning, excuse me. Jerry, another blackberry. Harold is a thinker. He just doesn't necessarily think about the same things or in the same way as others. That's what I want to capture.

ARTHUR.

Sometimes, I have observed, people deep in thought appear to have a rather half witted look about them.

TOM.

Exactly. Now you take Guy here. He looks for all the world like a person who knows a lot.

HAROLD.

That's what I thought.

GUY.

Who may not turn out to be as bright as you think?

TOM.

Something like that. No offense.

NATALIE.

But, he is. Maybe even brighter. Tell us what you created. That'll show him. He's the creative type. We were just going to find out what he created by playing twenty questions.

ARTHUR.

Won't you join us?

TOM.

Twenty questions? Okay, what are we trying to find out?

ARTHUR.

What thing, which Guy here created in a serendipitous fashion.

NATALIE.

You see I thought he looked like the creative type.

TOM.

And you invented something or made something which came about through some accidental discovery?

JERRY.

Very good.

GUY.

Though not entirely accurate.

TOM.

Okay. Who started and what did I miss?

NATALIE.

We never got started so you haven't missed anything.

HAROLD.

I was gonna go first.

ARTHUR.

By all means, have at it. You establish the line of questioning and we will follow your lead.

HAROLD.

What'd he say.

JERRY.

It's your turn. Go ahead ask the first question.

HAROLD.

What is it?

GUY.

What is what?

HAROLD.

What is it, is what I asked.

GUY.

Fair enough.

ARTHUR.

It is animal vegetable or mineral.

HAROLD.

Which one.

ARTHUR.

That is what you are to ascertain.

HAROLD.

What'd he say?

NATALIE.

Is it animal?

GUY.

How specific do you want to me to be.

JERRY.

Very.

GUY.

Then the answer is no. It is not animal.

ARTHUR.

Is it vegetable?

GUY.

Likewise, no.

NATALIE.

Then it must be mineral ---

ARTHUR.

I believe it is Jerry's turn or possibly Tom's.

TOM.

I'll bite. Is it mineral?

GUY.

Again, how specific do you want me to be?

ARTHUR.

I don't think at this juncture it is necessary to be overly specific, pardon me Jerry. I agree with Miss Natalie, though she spoke out of turn, by process of elimination it must be mineral. So, Jerry please pose the next question.

GUY.

The answer to the last question is no.

ARTHUR.

Go on Jerry --- What did you say?

HAROLD.

He said it ain't mineral. Right?

TOM.

That's what he said.

ARTHUR.

You'll pardon me but that cannot be.

GUY.

Ah, but it is.

JERRY.

Is it animal, vegetable and mineral?

ARTHUR.

That's preposter ---

GUY.
Yes!

NATALIE.
It's all of them?

ARTHUR.
I had not thought of that. Your turn again
Harold.

HAROLD.
But he told us.

ARTHUR.
I'm afraid not. We still do not know what it is
he "created" ask your next question, or pass.

TOM.
Harold, why don't you pass this time and just
think about it.

HAROLD.
Okay.

JERRY.
Natalie?

NATALIE.
Actually it's still Jerry's turn because he got a
yes answer.

TOM.
Them's the rules.

JERRY.
It's not really fair. I have a little inside
information.

ARTHUR.
That's right. You already know the answer.

JERRY.
Sort of.

NATALIE.

Now it's my turn. What's animal, vegetable and mineral?

HAROLD.

The creature from the black lagoon was animal and vegetables.

TOM.

Very good Harold. Good thinking.

NATALIE.

But not mineral.

ARTHUR.

What about his teeth and bones?

HAROLD.

He had teeth and bones.

ARTHUR.

Calcium is a mineral.

TOM.

You invented a movie character?

NATALIE.

That's not an invention.

JERRY.

It is a creation.

GUY.

It's not the creature from the black lagoon.

HAROLD.

It's everything. Everything is animal, vegetable and minerals. Ain't they?

ARTHUR.

That's preposterous.

JERRY.

Is it?

TOM.

Good thinking. Next time, Harold I'm gonna paint you as Einstein and then we'll see what happens. Okay, Guy is it, so you're saying that you invented everything. Is that it?

NATALIE.

The games over?

ARTHUR.

Not so fast. You see my friends if this gentleman invented or created everything then he would have to be God.

GUY & JERRY.

You don't have to capitalize it.

NATALIE.

I admit to too many Manhattans but I don't believe He's God.

ARTHUR.

Creator of the universe? Yet as I recall the accidental creator. You must explain. I beg your pardon, would you please explain.

NATALIE.

What a load of bunk.

ARTHUR.

I wouldn't be so hasty. You do remember how it happened, don't you?

GUY.

Of course I remember. There was nothing which I eventually reasoned was in some way actually something.

I further reasoned that if there existed positive nothing there must also be negative nothing.

ARTHUR.

(Amused.) Quite a piece of reasoning.

TOM.

Tell us more.

GUY.

Well I had no idea how to find or even identify negative nothing. After all I couldn't actually identify positive nothing. Although my reasoning told me it had to be. Then, came the big idea. Positive nothing was all around me it was the nothing which was everywhere and nowhere. So I began to search where the nothing wasn't and eureka I had found it!

JERRY.

Then what?

GUY.

I just smashed them together and big bang.

NATALIE.

He sure sounds like he knows what he's talking about and as I said before, he does look like the creative type.

JERRY.

It was serendipitous.

ARTHUR.

That's what you were talking about so covertly. Intriguing.

TOM.

You guy's are good. (To Guy.) I guess were even.

GUY.

Even?

TOM.

The wet hands?

GUY.

The practical joke.

ARTHUR.

I knew there was something suspicious cooking here.

NATALIE.

Sure you did!

ARTHUR.

May I try one of those delicious looking Manhattan's?

JERRY.

Coming right up.

ARTHUR.

(Turning to Guy.) Now were where we?

NATALIE.

I was right here.

ARTHUR.

Here's a dollar. Do you think you can find your way back over to the juke box?

NATALIE.

I certainly can and I also certainly don't need your money. (Getting up from her stool and crossing to the juke box.) I wonder what the hell is keeping Jesse.

JERRY.

(Serves Arthur the Manhattan, then turning to Guy.) Would you like another?

GUY.

I think I've reached my limit.

ARTHUR.

How many is that?

GUY.

How many have I had, Jerry?

JERRY.

Four.

GUY.

My limit is four. (Taking a wad of money out of his pocket and putting some bills on the bar.) This ought to cover everything.

JERRY.

I knew it. You're in show business or something, aren't you? It's an act, right.

GUY.

Jerry, you've been a wonderful host and I wish I could explain everything to you but I'm afraid I must be on my way.

JERRY.

Stop in again some time.

GUY.

Maybe Pulaski day, next year. I'll just use the men's room and be on my way.

JERRY.

Right.
(Guy exits into the men's room.)

ARTHUR.

Does he come in here often?

JERRY.

Never saw him before, but a very interesting character.

ARTHUR.

That was one hell of an act he put on.

JERRY.

You're probably right. Excuse me a minute will you. Tom said I was out of paper in the men's.

TOM.

Yes, you are. And I don't think it was an act. At least I'm willing to admit that I'm not sure. Gotta run. I want to draw his picture before I forget what he looks like.
(As Tom exits.)

ARTHUR.

I think that you a very wise not to presume to know what every religious and atheist are dead sure about.

NATALIE.

(Returning from the juke box.) Where'd everybody go?

ARTHUR.

How do you feel about evolution, miss?

NATALIE.

Natalie, miss Natalie. I think evolution was a great idea. I mean where would we all be without it.

ARTHUR.

Precisely. We'd be a chain without a chain reaction. Instead, we're a family tree.

NATALIE.

I think if I shook your tree nothing would fall out.
(Jerry exits to mens room. George enters in disguise.)

GEORGE.

(Foreign accent.) I am patron from last night, leave behind some package. You find package, no?

JERRY.

No.

GEORGE.

You, not man who find package, yes.

JERRY.

Yes.

GEORGE.

Good. I come to pick up package.

JERRY.

I meant, yes, I am not the man who find, found the package.

GEORGE.

The man who find package is here? I speak to him please?

JERRY.

No.

GEORGE.

Why I can't speak to man who find package?

JERRY.

I don't know.

GEORGE.

You work in restaurant, no?

JERRY.

Yes. I own restaurant. I own the restaurant, but I don't know anything about any package.

GEORGE.

I call maybe police. Have many valuables in package. Maybe you take package?

JERRY.

For the last time I don't know anything about any package. Listen, maybe the man working here last night found your package. I'll ask him when he comes in later.

GEORGE.

How latter?

JERRY.

How about you give me a phone number where I can reach you and when he comes in I'll ask him. OK?

GEORGE.

OK, you call 555-2324 ---

JERRY.

555-232 Hey wait a minute! That's my number-----

GEORGE.

I know. That be best place to reach me.
(Dropping accent and removing part of the disguise.) Hi uncle Jerry.

JERRY.

George, you're going to have to stop doing that.

GEORGE.

Just practicing Unk.

JERRY.

What brings you back here? And don't tell me a cab!

GEORGE.

No more jokes, I promise. Just wanted to see for myself. Tom said you had a guy in here who says he's God.

HAROLD.

He went to the men's room.

GEORGE.

I have to see for my self. (Exits into men's room.)

HAROLD.

That guy he's like got some kinda message. About how we should take the blame when we do wrong and stuff and be responsible for how we does things. We shouldn't think how others think about things it could be they think wrong. Or read the wrong books or somethin'. Being greedy with ambition isn't how it all works. And that it's creativity that's the driving force behind the universe.

GEORGE.

(Returning from men's room.) Nothing in there but a pile of clothes.

GUY.

(Entering from men's room.) Thank you all for a lovely afternoon. Good afternoon. (He exits.)

GEORGE

Just kidding.
(All react to George.)
Can't a guy make a joke?

NATALIE

I wonder what's keeping Jesse.

Blackout

THE END