

Toke

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A one act play

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SCENE 1

Several large mushrooms are grouped center stage. All are big enough to sit on.

GREEN CATERPILLAR, PINK CATERPILLAR, and GREEN CATERPILLAR sit comfortably on mushrooms. They seem kinda stoned.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

(Off stage)

“You are old, Father William the young man cried, The few locks which are left you are grey; You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man, Now tell me the reason, I pray.”

Responding to hearing Blue, the three attempt to straighten themselves up.

PINK CATERPILLAR

I can't believe Blue's actually coming.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Quiet, Pink. This is for the good of the many.

BLUE CATERPILLAR enters, slowly ambling to a mushroom and lazily climbing onto it while reciting

BLUE CATERPILLAR

“In the days of my youth, Father William replied, I remember'd that youth would fly fast, And abused not my health and my vigour at first, That I never might need them at last.”

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Hello Blue.

Green glares at Pink and Orange.

PINK & ORANGE CATERPILLAR

(droning)

Hi, Blue.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

I'm glad you decided to join us. And you used your mantra today on your way here, Blue. That's a wonderful first step.

Thanks.  
BLUE CATERPILLAR

I don't see your hookah.  
GREEN CATERPILLAR

I left it. Didn't want to be tempted. I had my good stuff in there today.  
BLUE CATERPILLAR

Looks of longing from the others.

All right then. Everyone's here now, so why don't we get started.  
GREEN CATERPILLAR

Blue, Pink, and Orange straighten up and face each other.

Blue? You want to start?  
GREEN CATERPILLAR

I... I'd rather not.  
BLUE CATERPILLAR

Why is that?  
GREEN CATERPILLAR

I just got here... and I've never been to one of these before.  
BLUE CATERPILLAR

Pink? How about you?  
GREEN CATERPILLAR

Be happy to. Hi. My name is Pink.  
PINK CATERPILLAR

Hi Pink.  
GREEN AND ORANGE CATARPILLAR

Green coaxes Blue to respond.

Oh. Hi Pink.  
BLUE CATERPILLAR

PINK CATERPILLAR

It's been...

(Looks quickly at Green and Orange, who  
flashes three legs)

Three hours.

The others clap.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Very good, Pink. That's a personal best.

Pink grins.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Orange?

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Hi, I'm Orange.

GREEN, PINK, BLUE CATERPILLAR

Hi Orange.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

It's been two hours, fourteen minutes, and twenty-two seconds..

BLUE CATERPILLAR

That's quite precise.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Gotta count every moment, Blue.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Well, that's very good, Orange....

The other's clap.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Okay, Blue.

Blue is ashamed.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Hi... I'm Blue.

GREEN, PINK, ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Hi Blue.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

My last toke... um.... It's been... fifteen minutes...

Pink and Orange bemoan Blue's failure.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Hey!

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Pink and Orange, that is not respectful behavior.

PINK & ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Sorry.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Blue, would you like to discuss why you gave in to the hookah so quickly?

PINK CATERPILLAR

Human.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Not just a human. A young *girl*.

Pink and Orange are aghast.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Exactly. *And* she was really quite stupid.

PINK CATERPILLAR

Those are hard to deal with.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

It's like talking to pollen.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Exactly. You have to be pretty stupid to deliberately drop yourself down a hole in the ground.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Maybe next time you could stuff her into a mushroom and pretend she was never there.

PINK CATERPILLAR

Yeah.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

What?

PINK CATERPILLAR

Or... or you could, you know... hide.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

But the girl isn't my problem.

Pink and Orange Caterpillar don't buy it.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Blue, has it ever occurred to you that perhaps your addiction is to humans, and you smoke the hookah as a form of self punishment?

BLUE CATERPILLAR

What? No. It hasn't, considering that it's my job to confound every single human who "stumbles" down that stupid hole.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

There are other jobs, you know.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Oh. Like what you do?

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

What's wrong with what I do?

BLUE CATERPILLAR

You eat leaves all day and poop into a tin.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

You eat leaves and poop.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Not for an audience and not into a tin.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

My poop has covered the walls of nearly every castle wall, I'll have you know. My poop is famous! Valuable! It's golden!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

It's golden only because they make you eat golden leaves.

PINK CATERPILLAR

Gold leaves *are* pretty gross, Orange.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

The point here is that you can do something else if humans bother you that much.

PINK CATERPILLAR

Like conduct traffic!

Pink flails its many arms around. Orange tries not to laugh. Green glares at them.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Let me ask you something, Orange. What happens when someone asks the Queen for a new job?

Orange looks down, unconsciously touching where his neck would be. Green and Pink are overly sad.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Exactly.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Well then, Blue. What do you think you could do instead of smoke a hookah to deal with your stress? You were reciting your mantra as you entered. That didn't help?

Blue shakes its head.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

I even asked the girl to recite it for me. She didn't know who she was, let alone what she was saying. Truth is, I've been using that poem to try to calm myself nearly since the first human I met.

PINK CATERPILLAR

How about a different poem?

BLUE CATERPILLAR

But I like it.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

But... you've been using it for... a very long time.

PINK CATERPILLAR

Very.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

It... used to work for me.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Perhaps it's time to make a change, Blue.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Change?

PINK CATERPILLAR

Maybe one not written by a human this time.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

What? You want me to use one of White Rabbit's love poems? They're awful!

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Have you considered creating one of your own?

PINK & ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Yeah.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Maybe. I'll have to think about it. I've thought about it. No.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Perhaps some change would be good for you.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

No. It definitely wouldn't.

The others look at him quizzically.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Blue... You're a caterpillar.

Blue bursts into tears. Pink and Orange roll their eyes.

Green slips off the mushroom and pats Blue on the back.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Are you afraid of change? Is that why you're hooked on the hemp?

PINK CATERPILLAR

Dope for the dope!



Pink and Orange are amusing themselves.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Jonesin for the ganja!

Blue just cries harder.

Green Caterpillar shushes them and they get very serious.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

That stupid girl had to go and point out the futility of my life! "You have to turn into a chrysalis. You will some day, you know, and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?" Twerp!

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Transformation is a wonderful thing.

PINK CATERPILLAR

I can't wait to fly!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Has it ever occurred to any of you that when you seal yourself into your chrysalis, you might never come back out?

PINK CATERPILLAR

No.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Why?

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Because it's a possibility! What if some crazy... Jabberwocky comes along and whacks the chrysalis down and you get trampled?

GREEN CATERPILLAR

That's not likely to happen, Blue.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

But it CAN. And you will NEVER KNOW THAT YOU'RE DEAD!

PINK CATERPILLAR

That's stressful just thinking about it.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Exactly!

PINK CATERPILLAR

So don't think about it!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

How can you not? We spend every waking moment wondering if simply breathing will upset the Queen and she'll have our heads for it. Some stupid human girl could tumble down the stupid hole that the stupid rabbit should finally get around to closing instead of fall for every stupid girl that falls down it and she'll see you emerge as a butterfly and tear your wings off! I don't want to go!

PINK CATERPILLAR

Blue, you're nuts.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

(half-heartedly)

Hey, now.

PINK CATERPILLAR

Seriously. You need help.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Pink...

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Oh! Well, that's just the most supportive thing I've ever heard!

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

You MOLT! Regularly!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

I don't go into a COMA to do it, Orange!

Blue slips off of the mushroom.

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Where are you going?

BLUE CATERPILLAR

I'm going!

Blue heads in the direction of where Green hid the hookah.

Wait! Don't!

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Pink and Orange slide off of their mushrooms and try to intercept Blue, but it's too late. Blue stares down at the hookah before picking it up and dragging it into the open.

Blue picks up the base.

It's warm.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

The others are frozen.

You were toking before I got here.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Blue steps up to Orange's face.

Why would you do that?

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Blue looks up at Green.

This is a RECOVERY PROGRAM!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

The truth is, Blue...

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Everybody knows what happens when you interact with a human-

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Which is practically constantly-

PINK CATERPILLAR

It's not that often-

BLUE CATERPILLAR

You recite that awful poem at the top of your lungs and then everyone in Wonderland knows to keep away from you.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Clearly I have an issue!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

PINK CATERPILLAR

Quite a few, apparently.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

And now, it seems, you hate your own kind!

GREEN CATERPILLAR

You are a hater, Blue.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

This is supposed to be a SUPPORT GROUP!

PINK CATERPILLAR

You're not the only one here who needs support, Blue. I toke on the hookah because I've got six HUNDRED children and they're all silk spinners like their other parent.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

What's wrong with being a silk spinner?

PINK CATERPILLAR

(Breaking down)

I feel inadequate!

Orange comforts Pink.

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Good work, Blue.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

What did I do?

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Pink's crying, for goodness' sake!

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Maybe Pink needs to find a functional support group!

ORANGE CATERPILLAR

It was functioning just fine until today.

BLUE CATERPILLAR

Green pressured me into coming!

GREEN CATERPILLAR

Perhaps that was wrong of me.

## BLUE CATERPILLAR

Oh. That's just great! You don't want me here because I bum you out... even you, Green, the one who's supposed to be the voice of reason, the helpful counselor. But you guys were toking before I came because NONE of you can handle stress! This is a support group, all right: for supporting addictive behavior! Should I have brought my good stuff? Cuz I bet we'd all be the best of friends if I had.

(disgusted, to Green)

I bet you don't even have a license.

Green, Pink, and Orange avoid eye contact with Blue.

Blue shoves the hookah at Green.

## BLUE CATERPILLAR

I'm outta here.

(Yelling exaggerated as Blue exits)

"You are old, Father William, the young man cried, And pleasures with youth pass away;  
And yet you lament not the days that are gone, Now tell me the reason, I pray!"

## ORANGE CATERPILLAR

Well, that didn't quite go as planned.

## PINK CATERPILLAR

Nope.

## GREEN CATERPILLAR

That was way too stressful.

Green puts the hookah down in the center, takes out a lighter from... somewhere... and lights the coals. Green takes a long pull, de-stressing, and passes it along.

END SCENE