

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest you read the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Brave New World

By
DOUGLAS POST

Based on the book by
ALDOUS HUXLEY

Dramatic Publishing Company
Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

© Dramatic Publishing

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play that are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.
--

©MMXXV by DOUGLAS POST

Based upon the book *Brave New World* by ALDOUS HUXLEY

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved

(BRAVE NEW WORLD)

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact:

Georges Borchardt, Inc.

228 E. 45th St., 14S

New York, NY 10017

ISBN: 978-1-61959-302-2

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to Aldous Huxley as the author of the book and Douglas Post as the dramatizer of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The names of Aldous Huxley and Douglas Post *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on Aldous Huxley and Douglas Post, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs.

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Douglas Post’s plays, which include *Blissfield*, *Somebody Foreign*, *Personal Effects*, *Earth and Sky* and *Murder in Green Meadows*, and musicals, which include *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Kingdom of Grimm* and *Scrooge and the Ghostly Spirits*, have been produced in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Canada, England, Wales, Germany, Austria, Russia, China and South Africa. He has also been commissioned to write screenplays for Warner Bros. and NBC, teleplays for WMAQ-TV, and several radio adaptations of his scripts. On three occasions, he has been selected to develop his work at the O’Neill National Playwrights Conference and once at the O’Neill National Music Theater Conference. He has received the L. Arnold Weissberger Playwriting Award, the Midwestern Playwrights Festival Award, the Cunningham Commission Award, the Blue Ink Playwriting Award and three Playwriting Fellowship Awards from the Illinois Arts Council, and has been nominated for three Joseph Jefferson Awards, a Suzi Bass Award and an Emmy Award. Post lives in Chicago where he is president of Long River Records, has composed songs and incidental music for more than 25 productions, and teaches playwriting and theatre appreciation at the University of Chicago Graham School.

PRAISE FOR DOUGLAS POST'S ADAPTATION OF *BRAVE NEW WORLD*

“Adapting Huxley’s prophetic story is a mammoth undertaking, and one that Douglas Post achieves with a level of skill and dramatic verve that makes this play feel freshly minted. *Brave New World* is a story of our times that has been faithfully adapted for the stage in this version that will ensure that Huxley’s vision of our future shall continue to endure for many years to come.”

—Edward Hall
Artistic Director, Chicago Shakespeare Theater

“Douglas Post has captured the harrowing depiction of a world that eradicates free will in favor of socially engineered contentment. In ultimately focusing on those few ‘misfits’ for whom free will remains invaluable, the play reminds us that life can only be experienced as precious by embracing the range of its extreme hardships and rewards.”

—Jeff Perry
Cofounder, Steppenwolf Theatre

“Douglas Post’s adaptation is a revelation, an expertly realized theatricalization of Huxley’s dystopian 1932 novel, chillingly resonant for our times. The script can be produced by professional, community and university companies and is an essential addition to the American repertoire.”

—Emily Mann
Playwright and Director

“Before the face of totalitarianism, the question is always ‘What can be done?’ Douglas Post’s telling of Huxley’s story is taut, suspenseful, and ultimately devastating. It’s a quick jolt and a sharp kick. In a time of peril like ours is, *Brave New World* is the anti-soma we need.”

—Terry McCabe
Producer and Artistic Director, City Lit Theater Company

“Douglas Post’s adaptation of *Brave New World*, Huxley’s famously ‘banned book,’ comes at you with all its timely shocks, debates, and adult themes intact. This boldly futuristic dystopia feels just as relevant and frightening in our current moment as when first published in 1932, in the midst of the depression and at the dawn of modern Fascism. Post’s speedy and suspenseful version makes Huxley’s horrific warning very clear—that this future world is built upon a trivial and passive culture, and that future is now.”

—Nick Sandys
Actor, Director and Fight Director

“Douglas Post is the perfect playwright to adapt this timely dystopian satire, and this is the perfect moment in history to explore this story through a contemporary lens. Post’s adaptation stays true to Huxley’s masterpiece and delivers snappy, swift, and hilarious tongue-in-cheek dialogue. The characters are one hundred percent believable in this totalitarian version of our society and one cannot help but draw connections to the Stockholm Syndrome from which huge swaths of the American people seem to currently suffer.”

—Scott Westerman
Artistic Director, Go To Productions

“Douglas Post is a gifted storyteller with an unerring sense of structure, character, and dialogue. While true to the spirit of Huxley’s novel, he has taken the often difficult transition from one art form to another as an opportunity to refocus the sweeping scale of the original work to function within the confines of a single evening in the theatre. Huxley gave us one of science fiction’s most popular tropes: a dystopian society hooked on drugs designed to mitigate the inconvenience of being human. But with this adaptation, and its graceful adherence to Huxley’s original premise, I judge no one’s ever done it better.”

—Jeff Watkins
Artistic Director, Atlanta Shakespeare Company

This play is dedicated to
Sally Nemeth
and the founding members of
the Chicago New Plays Festival Company

PREFACE

A funny thing happened on the way to the publisher.

Some 40 years ago, when I was green and ready to go at anything, I got the idea of adapting Aldous Huxley's fantastic work of future shock into a play for the stage. I had studied *Brave New World* fairly intensely while in high school, and it had made a deep dent in my psyche. It was a book I took with me to college and then kept in my library when I moved myself and my belongings to Chicago to become a part of what was then called the off-Loop theatre movement. And so, one morning sitting at my desk, I dove in. First things first, I thought. Let's see if I can actually acquire the stage rights to this piece, assuming that it had not yet entered the public domain. Not really knowing where to start, I sent a letter of inquiry off to Harper & Row in New York City as they were the publishers of the paperback edition I had already started to mark up. They kindly wrote back and referred me to Laura Huxley, the author's widow. I wrote Mrs. Huxley who responded with a handwritten note explaining that she had forwarded my request to the Reece Halsey Agency in Los Angeles. I waited. Nothing from Reece or Halsey arrived, and so I typed up another correspondence and mailed it their way. Their reply was terse, but to the point:

"Replying to your letter of September 15th [this was 1983] regarding the rights to *Brave New World*, I regret that, at this time, there are none available. If the situation changes, I would be happy to inform you of the same."

OK. Onward and upward. I decided to try my luck again with Harper & Row (did I mention how very green I was?) to make certain that I was correct about this novel still being protected by copyright as some research I had done indicated that in a year or so it might come into the domain that is public. This

time, the publisher did not respond, nor were they under any obligation to do so. I went back to Reece Halsey looking for further clarification and was told:

“Responding to your letter of November 26th, I can only tell you that I have delivered to you the information that was available to me. Perhaps you may find other information elsewhere.”

I can’t think of nicer way to say, “Leave us alone now.”

Meantime, a letter had finally arrived from the Permissions Department at Harper & Row explaining that with the Copyright Revision Act of 1976, this work was now protected for 75 years from the date of first publication. Huxley’s book was published in 1932, so my situation seemed hopeless. Of course, these laws would change again over time, putting the text even further from my reach, but I didn’t know that then.

The next step, it seemed to me, was to hire a lawyer to contact the Copyright Office in Washington, D.C., to make sure the novel had been properly renewed as I was told these things have a way of falling through the cracks. I don’t believe we received anything like a reply, and so my attorney pressed ahead and wrote to Reece Halsey essentially asking three things: What performance rights did they hold? What rights, if any, have they assigned? And, if assigned to a third party, might this party be interested in producing a new stage play based on the book? This correspondence was returned to us as is with the following message scribbled at the bottom:

“None available. The rights have been granted.”

Looking back, I feel I should get points for persistence.

The thing of it is that by this moment in time I had actually written the play or what felt like a play to me. I don’t know if I was confident I could somehow attain the stage rights through brute force or if

I was simply impatient, but a script had somehow emerged from my manual typewriter, and I was anxious to hear it read aloud. I talked to Sally Nemeth, who was the artistic director of a group I'd recently been asked to join called the Chicago New Plays Festival Company. We were a playwright's collective that was then a part of the Organic Greenhouse Project, which was a developmental wing of the Organic Theater Company. This wing was dedicated to the nurturing of new work and theatre artists, and so I assumed that meant me. Sally secured us a spot on the mainstage, and a date was set. My play was large (still is) and needed 15 actors to bring it to life. I made the calls and was able to assemble a team of expert performers whom I had worked with at such venues as Steppenwolf Theatre, Absolute Theatre and the Free Shakespeare Company. Invitations went out to what I intended to be a relatively private reading with invited guests where no admission would be charged. One such invitation was sent to Dramatic Publishing Company in Woodstock, Ill., as we had recently begun conversations with them about reading our fledgling scripts and viewing our minimalist productions. I cannot clearly recall whether I received a call from them at my home or some correspondence through the mail, but I believe it was one of their senior staff by the name of Sally Fyfe who contacted me to say:

"Doug, you can't do this reading because we hold the stage rights."

Well, at least I'd finally tracked down the party I was looking for. I felt terribly naïve, but Ms. Fyfe was extraordinarily gracious. Dramatic Publishing would allow me to do my reading, but it could only be for a single night, and after that I had to put my play away.

Fair enough.

The reading went relatively well, and it was attended by Jeff Perry, actor, director and cofounder of Steppenwolf, as well as Nicholas Patricca and John Ostrander, two peers and fellow playwrights.

All three gentleman gave me some excellent notes to consider in terms of moving my work forward, but my work could not move forward. Instead it would achieve stasis as it was put into a drawer where it would remain for several decades to come.

Now it is the pandemic. Like many people around the world, I am looking for ways to retain my sanity while being confined to my home. My thoughts turn to Huxley's satiric narrative and my stage adaptation, which sits idly in my file cabinet. Surely someday the copyright will expire and this work will be legally playable in theatres hither and yon. I do the research and find out I am correct. But that day is still a ways away, and I want to be ready when it comes. I return to my script. I make all the changes my friends had suggested and many more that I had made note of myself. I am a much better writer now than I was then (thank God) and so apply myself to the task of making this immense story as theatrical as possible. I finish. I set it aside and go on to other things. I come back to it. I revise. I revise again. And finally I have a script that I believe will be entertaining, enlightening and may even provide an epiphany for audiences in the 21st century.

In the intervening years since the one-night-only airing of my previous draft, I had developed a relationship with Dramatic Publishing as they have published several of my other scripts. And so I contacted them directly. Would they ever be interested in publishing an alternative stage version of Huxley's epic novel that differs from the one they currently offer? They would, but first they would have to like it. And then Huxley's estate would have to read it, approve it and sign off on it. And so I send them my script, and after a time I hear back. They do in fact like it, but now it must go to New York City. Laura Huxley died in 2007, and her late husband's literary estate is currently being tended to by an agency in Manhattan. The

script is sent their way. A few months go by. And the news that comes back is positive. My adaptation has passed the test. My play will be put into print.

Any scribe taking an epic piece of prose and turning it into a play is by definition a servant of two masters. One needs to be true to the source material, but one also needs to be true to the new medium in which one is working. As such, changes were made along the way, and it is worth mentioning a few of them here. I believe Huxley intended John “the Savage” to be the central character of the story. After all, he is clearly the one who goes through the greatest transformation and gets to deliver the title of the text when he quotes Shakespeare to state, “O brave new world that has such people in it.” But in the novel, he doesn’t appear until almost halfway through. I elected to introduce him at the top of the play. In Huxley’s tale, Bernard Marx tends to drift away before the big finish, having been sent into exile with his friend Helmholtz Watson. I found a different ending for Bernard that seemed more appropriate for a man who has always wanted to fit in and find acceptance. As for Lenina Crowne, I felt the need to show that she has a distinct change of heart and mind, and hopefully one that takes her on a variant path to another place. In this way, the three main characters of the novel now have slightly different arcs but are still very much the same people created by Mr. Huxley.

I also chose to rewrite many sections of dialogue so that the idiom is less specifically British and slightly more neutral. In this way, the play can be performed by American actors without them having to adopt accents. The location of the main action has also been changed from London to New London, so, really, this fictive metropolis could be almost anywhere. Having said that, I do think the play could be performed in the U.K. with local accents intact and still be highly effective.

Finally, for a variety of reasons (economics being one), I made the decision to take the tribal ritual that Bernard, Lenina and John witness at Malpais and move it off the stage and into the house as if we in the audience are the participants. It is now something they see happening in front of them while facing straight out staring at us and so react with a mixture of emotions. Incidentally, it is no accident that the citizens of New London refer to the people of this region as “savages” living on “a savage reservation.” A contemporary audience may take offense at these terms, but I think that is exactly what Huxley intended. He wanted to show the extreme racism and prejudice that has been programmed into the occupants of the World State. And it is clear that his sympathies were not with their notion of “civilization” but instead lay with John and the other members of his tribe who are living a more authentic life.

Incidentally, *Brave New World* contains four songs or snippets of songs. The lyrics to three of them were written by Huxley and the fourth by Mr. Shakespeare. I’ve composed music for these selections, which can be found at the back of this script. They are all meant to be sung without accompaniment, so I’ve only notated the vocal lines. The key signatures can, of course, be shifted to meet the vocal range of the ensemble or the individual singer.

When I first read Aldous Huxley’s astonishing work as a teenager, it made a profound impression on me as it seemed so close to our day and age. Today it seems even closer. That is the mark of a great work of art, and a prophetic one at that. I wish our current world was not so very much like the World State of AF 632, but it is, so on we go.

Here is the play.

—Douglas Post
May 2025

Brave New World

CHARACTERS

JOHN
DIRECTOR
FIRST STUDENT
SECOND STUDENT
THIRD STUDENT
LENINA CROWNE
BERNARD MARX
HENRY FOSTER
MUSTAPHA MOND
BENITO HOOVER
FANNY TROTSKY
HELMHOLTZ WATSON
GROUP LEADER
MORGANA ROTHSCHILD
RECEPTIONIST
WARDEN
LINDA
DR. TURGENEV
MISS KEATE
PILOT
HUMAN ELEMENT MANAGER
FIRST BETA
SECOND BETA
THIRD BETA
FOURTH BETA
ARCH-COMMUNITY-SONGSTER
NURSE
EPSILON ORDERLY
SOMA DISTRIBUTOR

GAMMA BUTLER
DELTA LANDOWNER
FEELY CORP REPORTER
PEOPLE OF NEW LONDON including WORKERS, GROUP,
CROWD, etc.

TIME: A future.

PLACE: A city called New London and a village called Malpais.

CASTING: Of course, more actors are preferable in order to create a sense of the city, with the people of New London—Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons—coming and going. Alternatively, this play can be performed by as few as 15 actors (10m., 5w.) with the following doubling:

John

Director/Dr. Turgenev/Second Beta/Delta Landowner

First Student/Human Element Manager/Third Beta/Arch-
Community-Songster/Epsilon Orderly

Second Student/Group Leader/Miss Keate/Fourth Beta/Gamma
Butler

Third Student/Warden/Pilot/Soma Distributor/Feely Corp
Reporter

Lenina Crowne

Bernard Marx

Henry Foster

Morgana Rothschild/Receptionist/First Beta/Nurse

Mustapha Mond

Benito Hoover

Fanny Trotsky

Helmholtz Watson

Linda

MUSIC: The music for “Ford, We Are Many,” “Orgy-Porgy,” “The Cod’s in the Sea” and “The Wind and the Rain” is located in the back of the book and also available as a free download on Dramatic Publishing’s website.

Brave New World

ACT I

Scene 1

(JOHN stands in the moonlight staring out into the vastness of the universe.)

JOHN. Father. Pookong. Jesus in the sky. I know I am not worthy to come to you tonight. My heart is tainted and I am in darkness. Eternally outcast. Alone. I pray to you to forgive my transgressions, my many transgressions, and to offer me hope. Here, I have none. I move from morning to twilight. Midnight to dawn. Not belonging. Not fitting in. I understand. I am not of their world. But there is another world. I have heard of it. I have been told the stories. There is light and purity and happiness. With houses as high as the mountains. And palaces with pictures in motion. Where no one is wretched. No one is sad. I have been told of this happiness. I know it exists. Now there is nothing. Only this skeleton world of shadows and rock. Where I am fenced in like an animal. Treated like an animal. And so I am sick in the corners of my soul. And uncertain of what to do next. So I come to you. Father. Let me know this light. Let me see this happiness. Before I die, before I depart this mortal plane, let me glimpse it. Let me gather it in my arms.

(Pause.)

JOHN *(cont'd)*. Take me to the Other Place.

Scene 2

(The Central Hatchery and Conditioning Center. There is a flurry of activity and a feeling of forward motion as the workers tend to their tasks within this hive of industry. The setting needs to allow for a variety of locations as we are often in more than one area at a time. We need to move freely from here to there, so everything should be suggested and little should be literal. Of course, it is essential to note that we are operating somewhere in the future. Or a future. Or perhaps a future as imagined from the perspective of 1931. The DIRECTOR enters with a group of three STUDENTS.)

DIRECTOR. And so to give you a general sense of how the Center is laid out, we'll walk through each of the main areas. Tomorrow you'll be settling down to serious work and you won't have time for generalities. For now, I shall begin at the beginning.

(The STUDENTS write down the phrase "Begin at the beginning," mumbling it to themselves as they do.)

DIRECTOR *(cont'd)*. You don't need to copy down every word I say.

(Immediately, they stop.)

DIRECTOR *(cont'd)*. We're standing in the middle of the Central Hatchery and Conditioning Center, the only one of its kind in New London. In this direction, you can see the doors of the Fertilizing Room. I assume you're all familiar with the process. A standardized spermatozoa rarely takes more than fifteen minutes to find its ova. The Alpha and Beta eggs are then returned to their incubators. Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons are brought out after a day and a half to undergo ... can anyone tell me?

FIRST STUDENT. Bokanovsky's process.

DIRECTOR. Elaborate.

FIRST STUDENT. Well ... a bokanovskied egg will bud, will proliferate, will ...

DIRECTOR. Divide.

FIRST STUDENT. Er ... yes. Up to ninety-six times.

DIRECTOR. Standardized men and women in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single egg. That's the beauty of it. You really know where you are. For the first time in history: Community, Identity, Stability. Those words, I might add, are worth writing down.

(Swiftly, they do.)

DIRECTOR *(cont'd)*. From there the eggs go to the Bottling Room. They're transferred from test tubes to decanters and labeled according to caste, heredity and date of fertilization. They're no longer anonymous but named, identified and ready for the Social Predestination Room. That's where we keep all relevant information on the embryos. On the basis of this data, the Predeterminators send their figures to the Fertilizers, who ship down the embryos as specified. Supply and demand, you might say. The bottles are predestined in detail and sent to ... where?

SECOND STUDENT. The Embryo Store.

DIRECTOR. Correct. This way.

(The tour moves into a room filled with red light. At the same time, LENINA CROWNE is revealed working in another part of the Center. BERNARD MARX enters behind her and stands silently.)

DIRECTOR (*cont'd*). Embryos are like film. They can only exist in this polarized light. Take a good look, everyone. These are the people of tomorrow.

(*LENINA turns and sees BERNARD.*)

LENINA. Bernard. You startled me.

BERNARD. I was, uh ... watching you work.

LENINA. Was I doing something wrong?

BERNARD. No, I was only, uh ... that is, I can come back if ...

LENINA. What's the matter?

BERNARD. Lenina, may I talk to you for a moment?

(*The DIRECTOR and STUDENTS move into another area, where they find HENRY FOSTER.*)

DIRECTOR. Ah, Mr. Foster. Why don't you tell our young students about the Decanting Room?

HENRY. Certainly, Director. Well, essentially, we're in the business of development. We provide the bottled embryos with their first sense of motion, introduce them to various shades of light and deal with the problem of fertility. As you know, in the vast majority of cases, this is only a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred would be sufficient for our purposes, but we want to have a good selection. So we allow as many as thirty percent of the female embryos to develop normally. The others get a dose of male sex hormones. The result, they're decanted as freemartins. Structurally normal, but sterile.

DIRECTOR. Which brings us out of the realm of a mere slavish imitation of nature and into the much more interesting world of human invention.

BERNARD. I'm planning on taking a small trip this month. To a Savage Reservation. And I thought, perhaps if you'd never been, that we could ... that you might like to travel with me, if you weren't already engaged, that is.

LENINA. Oh, I see. Is that all? I thought you had some terrible news. Are you sure you're feeling all right?

HENRY. We condition the embryos while we continue the Predetermination process and decant babies as socialized human beings. As Epsilon Semi-Morons or Alpha-Plus Intellectuals. As future sewage workers or ... *(With a nod to the DIRECTOR.)* future Directors of Hatchery and Conditioning Centers.

THIRD STUDENT. But how?

HENRY. Well, we control oxygen intake for a start. Nothing like a shortage of oxygen to keep an embryo subpar.

DIRECTOR. Because an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as Epsilon heredity.

HENRY. The lower the caste, the shorter the oxygen. The first organ affected is the brain. After that, the skeleton. At seventy percent of normal oxygen, we get minikins. At less than seventy, we could produce eyeless monsters.

DIRECTOR. Who are, of course, no use to us at all.

HENRY. None.

LENINA. Well, I'll let you know by the end of the week. You're sure you're OK, Bernard? Perhaps a gram of soma?

BERNARD. No. Thank you.

(The tour continues, with HENRY joining in, and arrives at LENINA's area.)

HENRY. Well, Lenina.

LENINA. Henry. Director.

DIRECTOR. And this charming young lady is Miss Crowne. She's one of several nurses in the Heat Conditioning Area. What Mr. Marx is doing here, I have no idea.

BERNARD. I was, uh ... observing.

DIRECTOR. Your responsibilities lie in the Psychological Conditioning Clinic, do they not?

BERNARD. Yes, sir.

DIRECTOR. Then perhaps you'd better get back there before someone notices you're missing.

(BERNARD exits.)

DIRECTOR *(cont'd)*. We shall conclude the tour in the nurseries. Thank you, Mr. Foster. Miss Crowne.

(HENRY tosses a glance at LENINA.)

HENRY. Ten to five this afternoon, on the roof, as usual.

LENINA. I won't forget.

DIRECTOR. Charming.

(LENINA and HENRY exit in separate directions. The tour moves on to another area and a recorded voice is heard.)

RECORDED VOICE *(V.O.)*. And Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are even worse. They're too stupid to read or write. Besides, they wear black, which is such a hideous color. I'm so glad I'm a Beta. I get to wear mulberry. Alpha children have to wear grey. And they have to work much harder than we do because they're so smart. I'm glad I'm a Beta because I don't have to work so hard. And then we are much better than Gammas and Deltas. Gammas all wear green. And Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons ...

DIRECTOR. By now you should all be familiar with the concepts behind Sleep Teaching. This particular recording will be repeated forty or fifty more times before the children wake. Then again on Thursday and Sunday. A hundred and twenty times, three times a week for two years. After that, they move on to more advanced lessons about the dangers of reading, of being alone and other anti-social activities. Till, at last, the child's mind is these suggestions and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind. And the adult's mind, too. The mind that judges and decides and desires, made up not of an arbitrary assortment of notions, but with the ideas of the State!

(He slams his fist against a hard surface for emphasis. Immediately there is crying and wailing.)

DIRECTOR *(cont'd)*. Ah, let's move on to the courtyard.

ANOTHER RECORDED VOICE *(V.O.)*. Main Day-shift off duty. Second Day-shift take over. Main Day-shift off duty.

(The tour is winding down.)

FIRST STUDENT. But there was a time, wasn't there? When the education and development of the children, well ... the process wasn't supervised by the State?

DIRECTOR. Oh, yes. In the days before our Ford and for some centuries afterwards.

SECOND STUDENT. And what were the results?

(MUSTAPHA MOND enters.)

MOND. The results were terrible.

DIRECTOR. Controller! What an unexpected pleasure. Students, this is our Resident World Controller, his fordship, Mustapha Mond.

(HENRY and BENITO HOOVER enter the men's changing room and change from their work clothes to play clothes.)

BENITO. Afternoon, Henry.

HENRY. Benito.

BENITO. Going to the feelies this evening? I hear the new one at the Alhambra is first-rate. There's a sex scene on a bearskin rug.

MOND. You all remember that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford: History is bunk. History ... is bunk. That is why you're not taught any. But now the time has come. It's all right, Director. I won't corrupt them.

(LENINA and FANNY TROTSKY enter the women's changing room and also change.)

LENINA. Hello, Fanny.

BENITO. Every hair of the bear is perfectly reproduced. You can really feel it.

MOND. Have you ever heard the term "parent?"

FIRST STUDENT. Yes. Well ... of course.

MOND. And what does it mean?

FIRST STUDENT. Well, human beings used to be ... viviparous.

MOND. Yes.

FIRST STUDENT. And when babies were decanted—

MOND. Born.

FIRST STUDENT. Yes, well, then they were the parents. I mean, not the babies, of course. The other ones.

MOND. In brief, the parents were the father and the mother.

(The STUDENTS wince.)

MOND (*cont'd*). These are unpleasant facts, I know, but then most historical facts are unpleasant.

LENINA. Who are you going out with tonight?

FANNY. Nobody. I haven't been feeling too well lately. Doctor Gaffney advised me to take a Pregnancy Substitute. I suppose you're going out?

(*LENINA nods.*)

FANNY (*cont'd*). Who with?

LENINA. Henry Foster.

FANNY. Again?

MOND. Do you know what "home" was?

(*The STUDENTS shake their heads.*)

MOND (*cont'd*). Home is where one lived with one's family. A few small rooms stiflingly over-inhabited by a man, a periodically teeming woman, a rabble of boys and girls of all ages. No air, no space, an unsterilized prison. Darkness, disease and smells.

(*The STUDENTS react again.*)

MOND (*cont'd*). Yes, you may well shudder.

(*BERNARD enters the men's changing room to change.*)

BENITO. And after that there's another round of sex in the backseat of a heliochop.

HENRY. Really?

BENITO. Oh, yes. The plush upholstery, the whirling of the rotor blades, you really get everything. Hello, Marx. Going to the feelies this evening?

BERNARD. Ah ... no.

MOND. Our Ford—or our Freud, as he sometimes referred to himself when dealing with matters psychological—was the first to reveal the dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers and was therefore full of misery. Full of mothers and therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity. Full of brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts. Full of madness and suicide.

FANNY. How long have you been having him?

LENINA. Only four months.

FANNY. Only four months! An eternity! And what's more, there's been nobody except Henry all that time, has there?

LENINA. No, there hasn't and I honestly don't see why there should be.

FANNY. Oh, she doesn't see why there should be! Because it's disgraceful behavior, Lenina, that's why. And you know how the Director objects to anything long or drawn out. Four months of Henry Foster, without another man! Why, he'd be furious if he knew.

MOND. Family, monogamy, romance. It was terrifying. Everywhere, exclusiveness. A narrow channeling of impulse and energy.

SECOND STUDENT. But everyone belongs to everyone else.

FANNY. There's no need to give him up. Just have somebody else from time to time, that's all. He has other girls, doesn't he? Of course he does. Trust Henry Foster to be the perfect gentleman.

MOND. No wonder those poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. With temptation and lonely remorse, diseases and endless, isolating pain. With all the uncertainties and poverty, how could they hope to be stable?

BENITO. Henry, what's your opinion of Lenina Crowne?

HENRY. Oh, she's a splendid girl. Very good in bed.

MOND. The machine turns and turns and must keep turning.

It is death if it stands still. There must be those to tend it as steady as the wheels upon their axles. Sane, obedient, stable in contentment.

LENINA. I don't know, Fanny. Somehow I haven't been feeling very promiscuous lately. There are times when one doesn't. Have you found that to be true?

FANNY. Yes, but all the same, one's got to make the effort.

MOND. Stability. The primal and ultimate need. Hence all that you see before you.

LENINA. You're right, of course. To tell you the truth, I'm beginning to get a little bored with nothing but Henry every day. Do you know Bernard Marx?

FANNY. You don't mean to say—?

LENINA. Why not? Bernard's an Alpha-Plus. Besides, he's asked me to go with him to one of the Savage Reservations.

FANNY. But his reputation—

LENINA. What do I care about his reputation?

FANNY. They say he doesn't like Obstacle Golf.

LENINA. *They say.*

FANNY. And that he spends most of his time by himself, alone.

LENINA. Well, he won't be alone when he's with me, will he? And anyway, why are people so awful to him? I think he's nice.

HENRY. Yes, I'm surprised you haven't had her.

BENITO. I can't think of how it is I haven't. I certainly will at the first opportunity.

MOND. Consider your own lives. Have any of you ever encountered an insurmountable impediment? Have you ever been compelled to live through an extended period of time between the consciousness of a desire and its fulfillment?

THIRD STUDENT. Well ...

MOND. Speak up.

THIRD STUDENT. I once had to wait nearly two weeks before a girl I wanted would let me have her.

MOND. And you felt a strong emotion as a consequence?

THIRD STUDENT. Horrible!

FANNY. He's so ugly!

LENINA. I sort of like his looks.

FANNY. And small.

LENINA. I think he's sweet.

FANNY. They say someone made a mistake when he was still in the bottle. They thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate. That's why he's so stunted.

LENINA. Oh, Fanny, what nonsense!

MOND. Our ancestors were so stupid and short-sighted that when the first reformers came along and offered to deliver them from those horrible emotions, they wouldn't have anything to do with them.

HENRY. Yes, I strongly advise you try her.

BENITO. Well, I certainly will. Thank you, Henry.

HENRY. My dear man, you're welcome. After all, everyone belongs to everyone else.

(BERNARD is becoming increasingly irritated by this conversation.)

MOND. Sleep teaching was actually prohibited. There were speeches about liberty and freedom. Liberty to be inefficient and miserable. Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole.

HENRY. Fanny Trotsky's a nice girl, too, although not as stimulating as Lenina.

MOND. And the caste system. Constantly proposed. Constantly rejected.

LENINA. Well, all I can say is that I'm going to accept his invitation.

MOND. There was something called democracy. As though human beings were something more than physio-chemically equal.

LENINA. Even if it were true about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate, which I simply don't believe.

MOND. There was a thing called religion.

LENINA. Although he was so absurdly shy when he asked me, as though I were a World Controller and he was a Gamma-Minus machine tender.

MOND. And a concept known as God.

LENINA. And I really do want to see a Savage Reservation.

MOND. Then came the Nine Years War and the Great Economic Collapse. There was a choice between World Control and complete destruction. Between stability and chaos.

BENITO. Why so glum, Marx?

MOND. There was a campaign against the Past. The breaking up of museums, the blowing up of historical monuments, the burning of all books published before 150 A.F.

LENINA. At least it's somebody other than Henry Foster.

MOND. We have the World State now. And Ford's Day celebrations and Community Sings and Solidarity Services.

FANNY. You're hopeless, Lenina. I give up.

MOND. And, perhaps most importantly, we have our youth. Our bodies are free of disease and our metabolism is kept permanently stimulated. Thanks to the wonders of modern biological science, we stay young, almost unimpaired till the age of sixty-five. And then, crack! The end. It's a wonderful thing, though I doubt you can fully appreciate it.

HENRY. Glum, Marx. Glum.

MOND. For, you see, while mankind has youth and prosperity, there is no need to dwell on such abstractions as God and religion. And, if you ever were to feel despondent or in a slump, there's always soma.

HENRY. What you need is a gram of soma.

MOND. Delicious soma. Half a gram for half a holiday. One gram for a weekend. Two grams for a trip to the East. Three for a dark eternity on the far side of the moon.

BENITO. One cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy sentiments.

MOND. Take a break from reality whenever you like and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology.

HENRY. Possibly a stick of sex-hormone chewing gum?

(BERNARD turns on them.)

BERNARD. Damn you! Damn you!

BENITO. My dear fellow.

MOND. As is said, "Was and will make me ill. I have a gram and only am."

HENRY. Bernard, do try to remember, a gram is better than a damn.

(HENRY and BENITO leave the changing room, laughing as they go.)

LENINA. I have to go. Come on, Fanny. Let's make up.

(The two women hug.)

MOND. What more could you want? I ask you. Honestly.

BERNARD. Idiots! Swine! Talking about her as though she were a piece of meat. Have her here. Have her there. Like mutton. Degrading her to so much mutton.

LENINA. Do I look all right?

(FANNY nods.)

BERNARD. Ford, how I hate them. Ford, how I hate them all.

(LENINA leaves the changing room. After a moment, FANNY follows her out.)

MOND. And there you have it.

FIRST STUDENT. Community!

SECOND STUDENT. Identity!

THIRD STUDENT. And stability!

(BERNARD leaves the changing room, and LENINA sees him.)

LENINA. Bernard! I was looking for you. I wanted to talk to you about our plans. Our upcoming trip.

(She intentionally says this loud enough for several other workers to overhear.)

LENINA *(cont'd)*. I'd love to go with you, that is, if you still want to have me.

BERNARD. Lenina. Shouldn't we talk about this privately? Somewhere else?

(She laughs.)

LENINA. How funny you are, Bernard. You'll give me at least a week's warning, won't you? And now, I must fly. Henry gets angry when I keep him waiting. Let me know about the date.

(She blows him a kiss and exits.)

MOND. Ford's in his flivver and all's well with the world.

(MOND makes the sign of the "T" across his chest, and the DIRECTOR and the STUDENTS do the same. BERNARD stands in a state of shock, amazed and also appalled.)

Scene 3

(HELMHOLTZ WATSON's domicile. BERNARD is seated. HELMHOLTZ is speaking into his portaphone.)

HELMHOLTZ. My dear Alicia, I would love to go to dinner with you and Phoebe, but I'm far too busy tonight. Besides, I have company. Some other time perhaps ... well, tell Clara I miss her, too. Yes, goodbye, my dear.

(He puts the phone down.)

HELMHOLTZ *(cont'd)*. These women, Bernard. They simply won't take no for an answer.

BERNARD. It must be horrible for you.

HELMHOLTZ. Six hundred and forty-four of them in two years. That's got to be some kind of a record. And for what? After a time, it all becomes so ... oh, I don't know ... secondary.

BERNARD. Yes, I can see how that would be.

HELMHOLTZ. Secondary to what I'm not sure. I've been cutting all my committees lately, as well as my girls. You can imagine what a commotion they've been making about it at the College. Still, it's been worth it, I think. The effects ... well, they're odd. Very odd. I hope you don't mind my going on like this.

BERNARD. Not at all, Helmholtz. You're about the only person I can stand listening to.

HELMHOLTZ. It's just that ... well, did you ever feel as though you had something remarkable inside you? Some sort of significant power that you weren't using, like all the phosphorus that goes unrecovered at the crematorium?

BERNARD. Do you mean the emotions one might feel if things were different?

HELMHOLTZ. In a way, but ... I'm thinking of a strange sensation I sometimes get. A feeling that I've got something important to say and the power to say it, only I don't know what it is. I'm pretty good at writing phrases for the Emotional Engineers, but it's not enough that the phrases are good. What you *make* with them ought to be good, too.

BERNARD. But your things *are* good, Helmholtz.

HELMHOLTZ. Oh, as far as they go, but they aren't enough. Words can be like x-rays, that's what I teach my students. If you use them properly, they'll go through anything. But what on earth's the good of being pierced by an article about a community sing or the latest improvements in Escalator Squash? How can you say something about nothing? That's what it finally comes down to.

BERNARD. There's someone at your door.

HELMHOLTZ. Oh, Bernard.

BERNARD. I'm sure of it.

(HELMHOLTZ goes to look.)

HELMHOLTZ. No one.

BERNARD. I'm sorry. I suppose I just get nervous when you start talking this way. I've had a very strange afternoon.

HELMHOLTZ. You finally talked to Lenina Crowne?

BERNARD. Oh, yes. All these months of indecision. I looked and longed, and I despaired of ever having the courage to ask her. Of being humiliated by a contemptuous refusal.

HELMHOLTZ. She said no?

BERNARD. She said yes!

HELMHOLTZ. Well, then—

BERNARD. And I'm *still* miserable.

HELMHOLTZ. But why?

BERNARD. Because she's perfectly content to run off with that imbecile, Henry Foster. Because she finds me peculiar for not wanting to talk about our most private affairs in public.

HELMHOLTZ. Because, in short, she behaves the way that any normal, healthy, virtuous girl ought to.

BERNARD. Yes!

HELMHOLTZ. Bernard, you're going to have to pull yourself together. All this fuss about having a woman. I must say, I don't understand.

BERNARD. Perhaps ... perhaps it's rather like those sensations you're not able to make sense of because you don't know what they are.

HELMHOLTZ. Hmm. (*He considers this.*) No. No, I don't think so.

BERNARD. Oh, damn, look at the time! I'll be late for the Solidarity Service. I'll talk to you tomorrow. Call me at the ... no, wait, that's no good. I'll stop by your domicile.

HELMHOLTZ. I'll be here.

BERNARD. See you.

(*He leaves. HELMHOLTZ shakes his head. He sighs.*)

HELMHOLTZ. Poor little fellow.

Scene 4

(*The Fordson Community Singery. A group of men and women are seated in a circle. One seat is empty. BERNARD enters.*)

GROUP LEADER. You're late, Marx.

BERNARD. I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

GROUP LEADER. That's what you said last week.

(BERNARD sits down next to MORGANA ROTHSCHILD.)

MORGANA. What were you playing at this afternoon?
Obstacle Golf or Electro-Magnetic Table Tennis?

BERNARD. Neither.

MORGANA. Oh.

GROUP LEADER. Let us begin by making the sign of the
"T" in honor of our Ford's first Model T car.

(The GROUP LEADER makes the sign of the "T" across her chest and the others do the same. Then each member of the GROUP swallows a tablet of soma. The GROUP LEADER holds out a large cup.)

GROUP LEADER *(cont'd)*. I drink to my annihilation.

(She drinks from the cup and passes it around the circle. Each person drinks from it. While the cup is being passed around, the GROUP sings.)

GROUP.

FORD, WE ARE MANY, OH, MAKE US ONE,
LIKE DROPS WITHIN THE SOCIAL RIVER.
OH, MAKE US NOW TOGETHER RUN
AS SWIFTLY AS THY SHINING FLIVVER.

GROUP LEADER. I drink to the Greater Being.

(The cup goes around the circle again.)

GROUP.

COME, GREATER BEING, SOCIAL FRIEND,
ANNIHILATING ALL INTO ONE.
WE LONG TO DIE, FOR WHEN WE END
OUR LARGER LIFE HAS BUT BEGUN.

GROUP LEADER. I drink to the imminence of his Coming.

(The cup goes around the circle again.)

GROUP.

FEEL HOW THE GREATER BEING COMES.
REJOICE AND, IN REJOICING, DIE.
MELT IN THE MUSIC OF THE DRUMS
FOR I AM YOU AND YOU ARE I.

(The cup returns to the GROUP LEADER.)

GROUP LEADER. Listen. Can you hear? Do you hear the feet of the Greater Being? The feet of the Greater Being are on the stairs. Can you hear him? Can you hear him coming?

(MORGANA suddenly jumps up.)

MORGANA. I hear him! I hear him!

(One by one, the other members of the GROUP spring to their feet.)

GROUP. He's coming! Yes, he's coming, I hear him! Oh, he's coming! The feet of the Greater Being! I hear him!

(Only BERNARD remains seated. Finally, with forced conviction, he, too, jumps up.)

BERNARD. I hear him! He's coming!

(The song changes, and they start to dance in a circular motion, clapping their hands and stamping their feet.)

GROUP.

ORGY-PORGY, FORD AND FUN,
KISS THE GIRLS AND MAKE THEM ONE.
BOYS AT ONE WITH GIRLS AT PEACE,
ORGY-PORGY GIVES RELEASE.

(This turns into a round, and all are lost within the ritual except BERNARD, who does his best to imitate the enthusiasm of the others. The GROUP continues to sing and dance, and the circle turns into a snake dance that moves sinuously through the room, leaving BERNARD at the tail end. He stops and stays behind, while the others move on to another area, presumably to take part in some form of collective sex. He spits the tablet of soma out into his hand and tosses it to one side. He wanders away from wherever the GROUP has gone, separating himself from the collective.)

Scene 5

(A cliff overlooking a body of water at night. BERNARD stands alone. We hear LENINA calling for him from the darkness.)

LENINA *(offstage)*. Bernard? Bernard?

BERNARD. Here.

(She walks on.)

LENINA. Oh, there you are. I thought I'd lost you. In the dark.
BERNARD. No.

LENINA. Whatever are we doing here?