

EVERYBODY COMES TO GRIFF'S

**By
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Heidi, the local cat lady.

Griff, a body modification expert.

Adam, the child.

TIME

Now and then.

PLACE

A Body Modification Boutique, "GRIFF'S SLIP YOUR SKIN SALON."

In dreams.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Griff has rigged his suspension apparatus to be run by one person, himself. Although this is not usual, it's how Griff likes it.

Griff's bird sounds should be based on those of a vulture.

Some vultures squawk, while other have more of a growl. The choice is yours.

When Adam is limp, collapsed on the ground, he may sometimes toss, turn, grunt, groan, sigh, etc...All signs that he is in the midst of dreaming. This is especially true during many of the Griff/Heidi scenes.

Any of the actions in the play could be enhanced by the use of puppets if so desired.

What a sublime end of one's body, what an enskyment; what a life after death.

--From Robinson Jeffers' poem, *Vulture*.

*ADAM lies still.
He twists.
He turns.*

ADAM

(voice over)

Mama and Papa met because I was having bad dreams.

*He sits up.
Weaves a spell from his dream
state.*

ADAM

Terrible One.

Wrathful One.

One Who is Overcome By Hatred.

One who unleashes the attacking lions.

Evil Eye Incarnate.

Devouring Mouth of Eternity.

Creature of Many Faces.

God of Pestilence.

Warrior of all Wars.

Destroyer by Fire.

Destructor by Plague.

Ruler of the Bloodbath.

Master of the Tomb.

Parent of the Dead.

*The soft glow of street-lamps on
a city sidewalk.
HEIDI appears, sleeping on the
streets.*

ADAM

Wanderer in the Waste.

Escape Artist of Yesterdays.

*GRIFF, in a separate corner, appears in spotlight.
He is suspended vertically from
the ceiling by hooks in his back.
The "Suicide" position. He chants
from his closed eyes sleep state.*

GRIFF
The sun has set
I lie and rest
and think
of you.

ADAM
You who reduces to silence.
You who reduces to nothing.
You whom all of existence fears.

*ADAM places a cat puppet on his
hand, begins his incantation.*

ADAM
Rise flame!

GRIFF
Give my weary body peace.

*He walks the cat puppet across
HEIDI's path.*

ADAM
Rise high.

GRIFF
Let my legs and arms stop aching.

HEIDI opens her eyes.

ADAM
Rise high to turn your blue sky,

HEIDI grabs the cat.

GRIFF
Let my heart stop pumping

She nuzzles it.

ADAM
and rains to burning embers.

*ADAM's other hand is now a cat.
She grabs and nuzzles.*

GRIFF
Let my veins stop carrying

ADAM
Come storm!

*A cat on his foot.
She grabs and nuzzles.*

GRIFF
Let my neck stop straining

ADAM
Come fire!

*The other foot.
Grab. Nuzzle.*

GRIFF
Let my lips stop speaking

ADAM
Direct Not on Your Family.

ADAM puts cat ears on his head.

GRIFF
Let my head stop thinking.

ADAM
Waste not on your enemy.

HEIDI grabs his face. Nuzzle.

GRIFF
Let me sleep.

ADAM
Do not wander, Demon.
Do not escape.
and the firestorm shall reduce you to silence.

*Arms, legs, head all attack.
Hissing, the cats tear her apart.*

GRIFF
Sleep.

ADAM
To nothing.

*ADAM stops attacking.
HEIDI is a bloody mess.
He stands, holds up a bottle of
poison (Skull and cross bones).*

ADAM
Night Night, Mama.

He waves goodbye to GRIFF.

ADAM,
Night Night.

*Sends a paper airplane to GRIFF.
Catches it in his mouth.
He eats the paper.*

GRIFF
Sleep.

*ADAM drinks the poison.
Falls to the floor.*

HEIDI
ALL ALONE!

She reaches out.

GRIFF
SLEEP!
in your arms.

*ADAM crawls in between her legs ,
enters her body.*

HEIDI
REEEEEEOOOOOWWWYYYYEEEESSSSSS!

GRIFF's eyes remain closed.

Blackout.

*HEIDI wanders the streets, head
dripping blood.*

*A broken, buzzing neon sign of a vulture holding a
scalpel.*

*“GRIFF'S SLIP YOUR SKIN SALON.
GREETINGS!”*

*The sign has turned dingy, with missing and
dangling letters. Intermittently, the sign flashes on
and off, the vulture ripping into a carcass.*

*HEIDI knocks on what looks like a
cage door and calls out.*

HEIDI
I'm looking for love.

*GRIFF, from the blackness, calls
out.*

GRIFF
No one here by that name.

HEIDI
I'm looking for surrender.

GRIFF
He no longer works here.

HEIDI
I'm looking for eternity.

GRIFF
Maybe down the block, lady.

HEIDI
I'm looking for escape.

A moment.

The door swings open.

*HEIDI enters the shop, a giant
bird cage with dust, dirt and equipment, long since
fallen into disarray.*

*An operating table, gloves,
scalpels, sterilization machines,
piercing tools, poison bottles
with skull and cross bones.*

The door slams behind her.

HEIDI
Hello?

*Moonlight streams in on GRIFF,
suspended from the ceiling.
His suspension apparatus is nearby.
He shakes.
He screams.*

GRIFF
AAAAAAAAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHH!

He cries. The sounds of a vulture.

GRIFF
Rrrraaaaaaaaaawwwwhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

He chants.

GRIFF
The sun has set
I lie and rest
and think
of you.

*The shaking stops.
A moment of peace.
He sleeps.
He snores.*

HEIDI
Excuse me?

*He spins over, so he is facing
her.*

GRIFF
Aagggggggghhhh!

HEIDI
You're hurt?

GRIFF
No!
(beat)
You're bleeding.

HEIDI
No!

*She walks over to the suspension
apparatus.*

GRIFF
 No! Don't!
 Touch!
 Don't!
 TOUCH!
 NO TOUCH!
 NO TOUCH!
 NO!

*Spins round and round, lowering
 himself to the floor.
 Unhooks himself.*

GRIFF
 Lie down.

Pause.

GRIFF
 Go on.

*HEIDI lies down on the table.
 Suddenly they are in two
 spotlights, facing out.*

HEIDI
 I am lying down on your table because you have told me to and I never learned how to say no.

GRIFF
 I am taking a scalpel from its sterilization chamber and placing it next to you because I want you to know that what you are in for is pure.

*He does so, removing a scalpel and
 gauze from sterile packet in a
 nearby drawer, first blowing off the dust and
 grime.*

HEIDI
 I am shutting my eyes because I never much liked knowing what I was in for.

GRIFF
 I am praying underneath my breath
 (he screams aloud in her face)
*What was done was done
 Be it now undone
 By the light of the full moon's wane
 Cleanse my soul of taint and stain
 Let now my hurtful spell reverse
 And lift from me this vicious curse
 As I enter now this sacred space
 Return my spirit to it's grace
 Accept my sorrows for what has come
 Disperse my grief with the morning's sun*

GRIFF

(cont'd, back to facing out)

because before I begin I have to hope I don't screw up..not ever...again.

HEIDI

I am shutting my eyes because I don't want to see if you screw up. I don't want to see...not ever...again.

GRIFF

I am lifting my instrument and looking at your skin reflected in its mirrored surface because I need a moment of quiet before you get loud.

HEIDI

I am shutting my lips because you will help me if I just keep quiet and let you do your thing.

GRIFF

I ask you a question

(faces her)

“Are you comfortable?”

(face out)

because I want you to say something so I know I'm not alone in here.

HEIDI

And I do not answer because I know that I can never have the right one.

GRIFF

I ask you a question

(faces her)

“Do you need a pillow?”

(face out)

because I don't know what's going to happen next and pillows are one of the few things I can control.

HEIDI

And I do not answer because I do not ask for anything I need, not anymore.

GRIFF

I ask you a question

(faces her)

“Do you like your head?”

(face out)

because before I begin I need to know if I get to be the artist I was born to be or are you going to selfishly, shallowly prevent me from my birthright? I ask.

HEIDI

And I do not answer because I do not answer because I do not answer.

GRIFF

And I stop asking questions.

*Long silence.
GRIFF holds the scalpel high above
her head.*

HEIDI

And I open my eyes because I want to see what you are doing so I know something is happening and happening and happening right now now NOWWWWWW!

The scalpel comes down.

HEIDI

RRRREEEEEEOOOOOWWWWWWW!

At the same moment, ADAM appears, sleeping. Covered in blood and muck, as though in the womb, he tosses and turns. He speaks from this dream state.

ADAM

Mama?
I wish to dream

HEIDI pets the air as though a cat is there.

GRIFF

Hold still.

He puts her hand down.

HEIDI

Whatever you say.

ADAM

To dream of little kid things in a soft bed.

HEIDI

Whatever you say.

ADAM

But I can't make it to the bed because there are too many little fuckers in the way.

HEIDI

Whatever you say.

*He falls on the floor, convulses.
It's huge, comical and horrifying all at once.
Waves Goodbye and throws a paper
airplane to GRIFF.
GRIFF looks about, then eats the paper.
ADAM goes limp, sleeping.*

*She reaches for him.
GRIFF puts her hand down, pats it.*

GRIFF
All done.

HEIDI
But Adam--

GRIFF
Griff.

HEIDI
No.

GRIFF
Yes.

HEIDI
My baby.

GRIFF
No.

HEIDI
Yes.
Baby!
BAAAAABBBBBBBBYYYY!

*She rises up in a rage, to attack.
He holds up a mirror. This stops her.
She sees the cat ears coming from her head.
ADAM, a choking kitten, appears on
the other side of the mirror.*

HEIDI
This face is not my own.
My own face is not this.
Not my own face this is.
Own my face is not this.

HEIDI

(cont'd)

Face my own this is not.

Is own face not this is face my own face not this face not my face

not own face not face not face not face Not NOT NOT NOT NOT NOT NOT NOT NOT

NOOOTT

FAA

AAACCCCCCCE

She throws the mirror on the ground.

It shatters.

ADAM

Night Night.

ADAM goes limp, sleeping.

She reaches to him.

Forever.

HEIDI

Is this not my own face?

GRIFF

It is.

HEIDI

But--

GRIFF

I found them.

HEIDI

Where?

GRIFF

Inside you.

He goes to touch her ears.

HEIDI

Hiss!

He pulls away, grabs a broom and sweeps up the glass.

HEIDI

Oh dear, I dropped the mirror.

Please forgive me.

GRIFF

Oh my, that was an antique.

HEIDI

Oh for heaven's sake, I am such a klutz.

GRIFF

Oh for pity's pride, I shouldn't have trusted you with something so valuable. My fault.
Really.

HEIDI

Oh for Jesus's juice, I shouldn't have taken you at your word that gifts are given freely and without expectation. My fault.
Really.

GRIFF

Oh for the Love of Luscious Lidocaine, I shouldn't have offered my services without first checking you for the kinds of instability which are beyond normalcy and threaten the sanctity of my home.
My fault.
Really.

HEIDI

Oh for Time's Titillations, I shouldn't have put my well being in the hands of a stranger whose interests obviously lie in twisting and turning those in pain to bend to his will so that he can feel like something big and strong in a world of small and meek.
My fault.

GRIFF

Oh for fault's favorite flaws, I shouldn't have begun with one who obviously has so little interest in seeing it to freedom's end because not all endings are bitter, but the cynics may say so.
My fault.

HEIDI

Oh for tomorrow's tyrants, I shouldn't have brought you an open wound when obviously, your only interest lies in infections and how they spread. My fault.

GRIFF

Oh for right now, I shouldn't have given my time when it is precious and you have no interest in precious things, like the sight of blood easing from a waiting mouth or muscle pulsing because it does not know what to do when it does not have to fight.
My fault.

Long pause.

HEIDI

Did you say I was precious?

GRIFF
I suppose I did.

She smiles.

HEIDI
Don't.
(beat)
How much?

GRIFF
What?

HEIDI
This is a business. You're a man.
You're a business man.

She lies down, ass in the air.

HEIDI
How much?

GRIFF
I'll Stay.

HEIDI
What?

GRIFF
I won't go away.

HEIDI
You won't?

GRIFF
I mean. Stay.
You.
Don't go away.
You.

HEIDI
Why?

GRIFF
You're a fascinating specimen.

HEIDI
I'm a specimen. Fascinating.

GRIFF
You're a unique creature.

HEIDI
I'm a creature. Unique.

GRIFF
You remind me of--

HEIDI
Someone?

GRIFF
No one. You remind me of no one.

He throws her a giant pillow.

GRIFF
Here.

*She curls up on the pillow, like a cat.
She sleeps.*

*GRIFF crosses to his suspension
apparatus and attaches a hook into his back.
ADAM stirs.*

GRIFF
Terrible one.

*Another hook. Harder.
ADAM grunts.*

GRIFF
Creature of many faces.

*Another. Harder.
ADAM twists.*

GRIFF
Father of the dead.

*Another. Rough.
ADAM turns.*

GRIFF
Escape artist of yesterdays.

Another. Brutal.
ADAM groans.

GRIFF
 Reduce me to silence.

One last hook. Unforgiving.
ADAM shakes.

GRIFF
 Reduce me to nothing.

He uses the apparatus to hoist himself into the sky.
Suspended horizontally, the "Superman" position.

GRIFF
 Nothing.

He soars above HEIDI, who snores.
He watches her sleep.
He sleeps.
ADAM jerks up, pulled by the
nightmare.
Walks over to GRIFF's hooks.
Yanks on them.

GRIFF
 Hey!

ADAM
 Hey!

HEIDI
 (spoken in sleep)
 Hey.

GRIFF
 You don't belong here.

ADAM
 Wanna play?

GRIFF
 No.
 I've been flying and boy, are my arms tired.

HEIDI
 (in sleep)
 Tired.