

The Omelet Hour  
A One Act Play

(At rise, a chocolate mousse and a chair are the only two objects visible on a bare stage aside from ROBERT and GALINGALI, a speaking automaton made of eighty-two eggs and his creator. ROBERT sits centerstage on the ground as GALINGALI paces, limping.)

ROBERT  
What time is it?

GALINGALI  
I told you I don't know.

ROBERT  
(After a moment) What time is it?

GALINGALI  
Robert, I don't know. (Seeing the mousse) What's that?

ROBERT  
I do not know.

GALINGALI  
Have you ever seen one of these before? (He motions to the mousse) It's not from around here, I'll tell you that.

ROBERT  
What time is it?

GALINGALI  
I swear to the Almighty, if you don't stop with that--

ROBERT  
Is Galingali angry with me?

GALINGALI  
No, Robert. Your voice box is broken again. When we get back I'll fix it. For right now, try to be quiet.

ROBERT  
I sense you are upset with me.

GALINGALI  
I'm not. Just . . . (He limps over to the mousse and

*picks it up*) What is it?

ROBERT

I do not know.

GALINGALI

You said that already.

ROBERT

What time is--

*(Lights go out. Cross to:)*

Scene 2

*(In the darkness, we hear the magnified sound of wood being sawed. Lights come back up and the chair is gone. ROBERT and GALINGALI are now sitting together on the ground. GALINGALI holds the mousse in his lap)*

GALINGALI

Why do you think we're sitting here?

ROBERT

I do not know.

GALINGALI

It feels like it's been forever. *(He looks over at ROBERT)* I should program some new messages for you. Would you like that?

ROBERT

Thank you.

GALINGALI

You don't need to thank me. It's just us.

ROBERT

Thank you.

GALINGALI

*(Slightly annoyed)*

Ugh. *(He scoops up a bite with his fingers)* This is horrible.

ROBERT

I am sorry you feel that way.

GALINGALI

Nah, it's fine. The flavor's off, though. You like dessert, Robert? In all our time together, I don't think I've ever asked you that.

ROBERT

Yes.

GALINGALI

Really? What kind?

ROBERT

Every kind.

GALINGALI

Ah, right. *(He shakes his head)* You're not programmed with preferences. Maybe we ought to make something. You know, to pass the time. *(He looks around, finds nothing, then looks back at ROBERT)* One of your eggs looks ready to fall off.

ROBERT

I am sorry you feel that way.

GALINGALI

I'll patch it up when we get back. At least your voice box is fixed. Thank the Almighty for that.

ROBERT

What?

GALINGALI

Nothing.

ROBERT

What time is it?

GALINGALI

*(Standing up)* Time to press on.

ROBERT

I am sorry you feel that way, Galingali.

GALINGALI

*(Frowning at the mousse)* Don't worry about it, buddy.

*(Lights go out. Cross to:)*

Scene 3

*(In the darkness, we hear the magnified sound of a shovel scraping over slate. Lights come back up, and the mousse is now gone. GALINGALI is standing)*

GALINGALI

You hear that?

ROBERT

No.

GALINGALI

Me neither. It's the sound of silence. I enjoy it immensely.

ROBERT

How is the weather today?

GALINGALI

Fair. I think. *(He looks around and then back at ROBERT)* We ought to cook something. Whatever that thing was last time, it was not very satisfying. Would you like an omelet, Robert?

ROBERT

That would please me very much.

GALINGALI

Great.

*(He takes an egg from Robert's shoulder, kneels, taps it twice on the ground, and cracks it open. Eighty-one left. The innards spill onto the ground, yolk and all. GALINGALI stares at it and waits for something to happen)*

ROBERT

What was that?

GALINGALI

What.

ROBERT

Nothing.

GALINGALI

Do you want salt and pepper?

ROBERT

Yes.

*(GALINGALI continues to stare at the egg and makes no move to season the egg. ROBERT falls on his side, cracking several more eggs. Seventy-seven left. The whites spill and reach GALINGALI. They stain his pants. He doesn't react)*

GALINGALI

Almost done.

ROBERT

What time is it?

GALINGALI  
*(Sighing)*

Too late. We need to head back soon and get you fresh eggs. I'm sure the hens have laid plenty while we've been gone . . . you know you / need--

ROBERT

Eighty-two.

GALINGALI

*(Nodding)* Eighty-two precisely. Not one more, not one less--

*(Lights go out. Cross to:)*

#### Scene 4

*(In the darkness, we hear the magnified sound of children fighting with laser guns. Lights come back up. ROBERT is encased in a packing crate up to the waist, facing the audience. He now has eighty-two eggs. GALINGALI sits cross-legged beside the crate, sliding his fingers through the egg whites that still blanket the ground)*

GALINGALI

Since we'll be gone soon, I've been wondering something and I'd like to wonder it aloud.

ROBERT

Yes?

GALINGALI

How many babies does the earth weigh?

ROBERT

*(After a moment, as if calibrating)*

I do not know. Why do you ask, Galingali?

GALINGALI

If we measured the weight of things in babies--say, with an average weight of seven pounds and eight ounces--how many babies would we be standing on? And if those babies all grew up and were replaced by new ones, by that time would we need to add more babies if the earth's weight increased like it does every year *plus* the weight of those grown babies? But if / there's--

ROBERT

What time is it?

GALINGALI

I don't know.

ROBERT

Thank you for being my friend, Galingali.

*(GALINGALI stands and does not wipe off his pants. Yolks and egg whites pool around the crate. Neither acknowledge anything except each other. GALINGALI exhales)*

I sense you are upset with me.

GALINGALI

I'm not. Just tired is all.

*(Lights go out. In the darkness, we hear the loud sound of ice cracking. Lights come back up. ROBERT is encased in the packing crate up to the neck, and GALINGALI is encased in a packing crate up to the waist, also facing the audience. They are too far apart to touch each other)*

GALINGALI

I think when we get back, I'm going to kill a hen--the fattest, roundest one, Robert--and we're going to boil some noodles and

sautéé asparagus--wait, you don't like asparagus.

ROBERT

I don't know.

GALINGALI

I'll use some eggs for the--yes! That's it. I'll make carbonara. It's gonna be you and me at a table with that nine grain bread from Ms. Tinky's, gorging ourselves on chicken carbonara, and we'll calculate how many babies it's going to take to replace the earth.

ROBERT

I would like that very much, Galingali.

GALINGALI

*(Smiling)*

I'm glad.

*(Lights go out. Cross to:)*

#### Scene 5

*(In the darkness we hear the magnified sound of teeth clacking. Lights come back up. ROBERT is totally encased in the packing crate and has lost the power of speech. GALINGALI is encased in a packing crate up to the neck)*

GALINGALI

Robert? Robert, can you hear me?

*(A grunt sounds from ROBERT's crate. GALINGALI sighs in relief)*

GALINGALI

Phew. For a minute there I thought I'd lost you. When we get back, Robert, it'll be around Easter. Maybe the kids will paint some eggs and we'll doll you up for Sunday. I think that'd be nice. Last year--and you won't remember this, but we placed you high up in one of those sycamores down by the river and we had all the kids searching for you--the grand prize! They didn't find you until it was dark. After, we painted all your eggs and it was like having a jester in town. Reds, pinks, pastels, purples, you name it. All glowy under the lamp lights.

*(He pauses and looks at ROBERT's crate.)*

No answer)

When we get back, I'll be sure to put you in . . . Robert?

*(Lights go out. In the darkness we hear the sound of a baby crying. Lights come back up. GALINGALI is completely encased now as well. Two packing crates face the audience. Lights out. In the darkness we hear the magnified sound of a crash. It is the End. The sound of wood snapping and eggshells breaking. A shout. Lights come back up. A human ROBERT has broken free, however, his eggs have all been smashed. He lies on his side in a pool of salt and peppered scrambled egg yolks, reminiscent of a newborn. GALINGALI is still encased)*

ROBERT  
(Gently)

How many babies does the earth weigh, Galingali?

*(No answer. ROBERT carefully moves to a sitting position. He looks at the other packing crate)*

Well? How many?

*(Again, no answer. He struggles to stand, but manages it and limps to the other crate. He knocks on the wood, then rests his hand flat against it)*

This is it. We're never going to know. Can you believe that?

*(ROBERT turns to face the audience and leans against the crate. He closes his eyes)*

When we get back, we're going to cook a nice meal of chicken carbonara and sautéed asparagus and slice into that bread from Ms. Tinky's. It'll be Easter, so the kids will come around and they'll want to paint me in pastels, and I'll let them. We'll have everyone come over--the birds and the babies and your old colleagues, too--and we'll indulge ourselves and by the end when it's time to finish the egg hunt we won't want it to be over. Why do things end, Galingali? I don't want this to be the end.



*(He opens his eyes)*

But it's time, isn't it?

*(Lights fade to black. The end.)*