

## **TIDES REVERSED IT**

**::A Surrealist Dream-Play, in Palindrome::**  
**—of 171 spoken words—**

*palindrome* \Pal"i'n\*drome\, n. [Gr. ? running back again; ? again + ? to run: cf. F. palindrome.] A word, verse, or sentence, that is the same when read backward or forward; as, "madam;" "Hannah;" or "Lewd did I live, & evil I did dwel."

**“No! ...I sullied it. Aha! No... I tan. I cull a— Ha! O... It is such a... pot. Stir! It’s Norton’s demesne. Moss or gyre? Vow to parcel truth, sir. Eh? Co-operate! No. Sis... air? O!! Spill it... Is Naomi OK? No, retardy! He did tip into her. Go on... I got no bar— Got?? —to grab onto. Get a Kodak! I’m a ton, ergo Naomi was— I—? —nursed! It’s a wonder I’m alive! Norton’s not Ron, Delia. I’m... O!? ...an ogre! Dennis, I... Dennis, I am Ron! Now I won. Norma, I sinned. I sinned, ergo Naomi ailed. Norton’s not Ron? EVIL! Am I red now? As tides run, I saw... I’m... O!? ...an ogre, not a mikado\*. Kate got no bar. Got to grab onto gin! O! Ogre! Hot? Nip it, D. I dehydrate, Ron. K.O.! I moan... SIT!... Ill. I? Psoriasis... One tare. Poo? Cherish turtle-crap. O! Two very gross omens. E! Meds! ... Not Ron? Stir it... Stop! Ah, cuss it! I— O! ... A hallucination! Ah! A tide illusion!”**

*[The audience should be able to follow the palindrome along in the programs or through a slide projection.]*

**The Beginning:**

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Projection: Beach, Waves waxing and ebbing, Time lapse video of Tides moving in and out: Forward Play, then Reverse Play (Rewind).

[Ron is at DR., tanning in a fold-out chair on the beach. The stage-lights mimic the beating summer sun. He is exhausted, yawns frequently, and moves languorously. He performs a few small tasks, like rubbing himself with suntan lotion, eating, and so on. He begins flipping through a large, hardcover novel, and he encounters a word that he does not recognize. He points to it and ponders hard, unsuccessful. He then whips out a large, clearly-labeled dictionary to look up the word. However, his exhaustion overcomes him and he falls asleep. A final yawn and a soft strobe-light mark this event, as the lights fade to black and the dream-sequence begins.]

Projection: Tides, Forward/Rewind against darkness. Projection fades out smoothly.

[Lights come up again. Ron appears C., standing in his underwear, wearing a name-tag. He begins dancing to some whimsical music, and he stumbles in his dance across a large trunk, labeled “TRUNK”. He opens the trunk and pulls out clothes. From here it is clear that everything and everyone in the dream (except Ron) are clearly labeled with small rectangles of paper. Ron puts on several things and takes them off again, deciding they do not seem to fit the situation or to fit him. These items include a top hat and some nurse’s shoes. He finds a kimono and puts it on, modeling.]

Projection: Ron modeling kimono.

[He digs deeper into the trunk and finds a tiara/crown and puts it on his head. He also finds a scepter and tries to gesture like a king.]

Projection: Mikado\*. Caption: Mikado/dictionary definition of mikado. From here on in the script, the “\*” will signify the projection of a word’s definition; as a caption, if other things are being projected at the same time.

Projection: Henry VIII, captioned with “Henry VIII”.

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[*Note:* There is always a smooth transition or fadeout between each projection.]

Projection: Ron as mikado/king morphing into ogre\*/ugly monster.

[Eerie piano chord is heard, preferably from the lower keys. Children's laughter is heard. Dancing people enter. They frolic and play children's games, dance in a circle. An obstacle course forms on-stage: hopscotch, platforms, ropes, etc. The course ends with a tall, black platform next to a metal bar. The dancers begin the course and, on reaching the end, swing down with the bar. Ron watches all in amusement. Before dancer Kate swings down, someone removes the bar. Gin bottles are put in its place. Kate simply hops down. After this, the dancers seem to settle into calmer activities. Ron tries the obstacle course himself, but since the bar is gone, he has nothing to grab hold of. He tips over from the platform and falls on Naomi. Nurses come out to care for her. She is taken to a hospital bed, which appears at L. She is wrapped in bandages and hooked to many tubes. Ron's crown/tiara falls off onto the stage.]

**RON: No! ...I sullied\* it.** [Referring to what he has just done.]

**NORTON: Aha!** [Threateningly, to Ron.]

**RON: No... I tan.** [Referring to his beach activities; an "audience member" places a bottle of sun-tan lotion in his hand.]

**KATE: I cull\* a—** [A threat to Ron, uncompleted.]

**DENNIS: Ha!** [A guffaw.]

**RON: O...**

**DELIA (to Kate): It is such a... pot.** [Delia and Kate are caring for Naomi. They are preparing a medicinal brew in a cauldron, and Delia seems unfamiliar with such procedures.]

**KATE (to Delia): Stir!**

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**NORTON: It's Norton's demesne\*.** [Norton picks up Ron's crown/tiara and puts it on. He assumes the persona of a king in a childlike way.]

**NORMA (to Ron): Moss\* or gyre\*?** [Ron is led to a witness stand, where a silent judge presides. Dennis acts as a cross-examiner. Norma offers him a choice of two bibles to be sworn-in on. One bible is covered in Spanish moss and the other has a spiral drawn conspicuously on the cover. Norma places Ron's hand after he points to his choice. Dancers take all the clothes from the trunk and begin to play with them. Dennis holds a postman's mailbag. Another character places a postman's hat on his head.]

**DENNIS: Vow to parcel truth, sir.**

**RON: Eh?** [Spotlight: White, on Ron. ]

**DENNIS: Co-operate\*!**

**RON: No.**

**KATE (to Naomi): Sis... air?** [Holding up a small, portable fan to Naomi. The labels proclaim Naomi, Kate, and Delia as sisters.]

**RON: O!!**

**DENNIS: (to Ron) Spill it... (to the Sisters) Is Naomi OK?**

**KATE (to Dennis): No, retarded! He did tip into her.** [Pointing to Ron, and demonstrating tipping over and falling down.]

**DENNIS (to Ron): Go on...**

**RON: I got no bar—**

**DENNIS: Got???**

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**RON: —to grab onto.** [Spotlight: On Ron, blue and green, alternating. ]

**NORMA: Get a Kodak\*!** [She cajoles a comrade who is weighed down with cameras to take a picture of the spectacle.]

**RON: I'm a ton\*, ergo Naomi was—**

**NAOMI: I—?**

**RON: —nursed!**

**NAOMI: It's a wonder I'm alive!** [Screaming from hospital bed.]

**RON: Norton's not Ron, Delia. I'm...** [Delia is going around trying to place a “RON” name-tag on everyone, and she keeps getting shooed away. She comes to Norton and gets Ron's attention.]

**DENNIS: O!?**

Projection: Ron as mikado/king morphing into ogre/ugly monster.

**RON: ...an ogre! Dennis, I... Dennis, I am Ron!** [Snatching name-tag.]

**NORMA: Now I won.** [Triumphant after having just won a game of some kind: solitaire, gameboy, whatever!]

**RON: Norma, I sinned. I sinned, ergo Naomi ailed.** [Breaking down.]

**DELIA: Norton's not Ron?**

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**DENNIS (to Ron): EVIL! [Spotlight: Red, on Ron. ]**

Projection: Beach/Tides, Forward/Rewind.

**RON: Am I red now? As tides run, I saw... I'm...**

**DENNIS: O!?**

Projection: Ogre.

**RON: ...an ogre, not a mikado\*. [Tosses off kimono.]**

Projection: Japanese emperor.

**NAOMI: Kate got no bar. [Invalidating Ron's excuse.]**

**KATE: Got to grab onto gin! [Demonstrating a gin bottle. She and Naomi are drinking gin now.]**

**DENNIS: O!**

**RON: Ogre!**

**NAOMI (to Delia): Hot? Nip it, D. [Referring to the gins she offers Delia the bottle.] I dehydrate\*, Ron. [Drinking thirstily as Delia declines.]**

[Kate punches Ron in the eye, giving him a shiner. He falls off the stand. Dennis counts off 3...2...1 with his fingers in the manner of a boxing match referee.]

**DENNIS: K.O.!**

**RON: I moan...**

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[Time lapses. Black out. Lights go up again, and Ron appears on a chair at C. Psychic Examiner is at his left. Ron tries to rise.]

**PSYCHIC EXAMINER: SIT!...** [Examiner looks Ron over, listening to his heartbeat and breathing with a stethoscope, etc.] **III.**

**RON: I?** [Pointing to himself in disbelief.]

**PSYCHIC EXAMINER: Psoriasis\*...** [Examiner walks to L., where a turtle (real/fake) sits next to two lumps of joke-excrement. The examiner, with a rubber-gloved hand, places the lumps in an empty and transparent container, labeled “TARE”.] **One tare\*.** [She hands the container to Ron, who examines the contents incredulously.]

**RON: Poo?**

**PSYCHIC EXAMINER: Cherish turtle-crap.** [The examiner smells the container, smiles, and then clasps it to her chest. She hands it back to Ron.]

**RON: O!** [In revile and disgust.] **Two very gross omens. E!** [A shriek.]

**PSYCHIC EXAMINER: Meds! ...** [The doctor tries to place a “RON” name-tag on Ron. He refuses.] **... Not Ron?** [The examiner reveals a spoon from her lab-coat pocket and gestures to encourage Ron to stir.] **Stir it...** [Ron stirs terribly wrongly, too forcefully, or just very different from the way the examiner stirs.]

Projection: Beach/Tides, Forward/Rewind.

**PSYCHIC EXAMINER: Stop! Ah, cuss it!**

[A shock of recognition hits Ron now. He realizes that it has all been a dream. Everything but Ron freezes.]

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**RON: I— O! ... A hallucination\*! Ah! A tide illusion\*!**

Projection: Beach/Tides, Forward/Rewind.

[Triple fast backward re-run of play from the end-of-play-to-beginning, with same words/text spoken as were/was spoken from-beginning-to-end. That is, repeat of text, but reversal of plot.]

Projection: Beach/Tides, Forward/Rewind.

[Ron awakens, startled.]

***The End.***

*The characters:*

A Dreamer:

Ron

A Retinue of Dreamees:

Norton

Kate

Dennis

Delia

Norma

Naomi

Psychic Examiner

*\*\*Since the only way we know who is who in the play is through the use of name-tags, more than one character may be played by a single actor merely by switching or changing name-tags.\*\**