

Simulticity
by ian pierce

VOICE
HISTLE
CHARM
TWINE
GRACE

(Lights Raise)

(A blank stage)

(Blackout)

Voice: Charm, a writer of stories, sits in a chair patiently listening silent. Histle, a character who works hard, stands over Charm.

(Lights Raise)

(Histle is sitting in a chair, Charm is standing over Histle)

(Lights Lower)

Voice: Histle sat in a chair patiently listening silent. Charm stood over Histle.

(Lights Raise)

(Charm is sitting in a chair, Histle is standing over Charm)

(Lights Lower)

Voice: Histle and Charm sat in chairs patiently listening silent. Charm and Histle stood over Histle and Charm.

(Lights Raise)

(Both Histle and Charm are sitting in chairs facing each other)

Histle: So in other words. Yes. Yes I do understand. And yet I can't agree with your...means of trans...trans.puh...transportation. Your vehicle...you. Your driving intentions...Actions. Your perception of your actions. What you believe. There it is! What you believe...to be.

Charm: Then you don't really understand.

Histle: But I do.

Charm: But you don't. If you did you wouldn't have trouble believing me.

HISTLE: I believe that you believe.

CHARM: It's not the same.

HISTLE: Why not?

CHARM: Because when you say "believe to be" your restricting my knowledge to mere perception, which may be agreeable if you were able to believe what I believe. But only believing that I believe implies my perception is tantamount to imagination. What I say is reality, is only perceivable to you in imagination. So you do not understand what I am saying.

HISTLE: So what do I understand?

CHARM: That's not for me to say.

HISTLE: Why did you bother telling me then?

CHARM: I thought you might understand.

HISTLE: Well I guess I don't.

CHARM: I didn't think you would.

(a montage of useless love attempts with Charm and Twine)

(Slow Fade down)

(Slow fade up)

(A silent scene to the music of Herb Alpert. With Histle and Twine.)

(Blackout)

CHARM: (In the Dark) Histle and Twine, happily married, sit side by side.

VOICE: Charm is in his own story.

(Lights up)

(Twine is sitting on the floor painting her nails. Histle is sitting in a chair. Charm is standing over Histle.)

CHARM: The whole night I sat behind that bush slightly to the right of her door waiting for the appropriate moment. It was icy and cold. The chilled wind sliced at my neck, as if God stood over my shoulders with an open notebook relentlessly defacing my skin with paper-cuts.

TWINE: Ooh.

CHARM: I had put the note between my knees to protect it from the rain and the snow
HISTLE: It's called sleet.

CHARM: I fell asleep, if it were not for the alcohol sloshing through my veins I surely would have died...

HISTLE: (Looking at Twine, as if referring to a conversation they had earlier) Yet another reason not to quit.

CHARM: I awoke by the light of dawn, folded the letter as many times as it would fold, and stuck it in my sock. I stood for a moment staring at the front door.

(Pause)

TWINE: You never gave her the letter.

CHARM: No.

HISTLE: You came here instead.

CHARM: You could say that.

TWINE: That's sad.

HISTLE: The Romantic's heart lives in the head not the chest, my dear.

CHARM: (with Passive disagreement) I didn't think it was right.

TWINE: Would you mind reading it to us? I'd like to hear it.
CHARM: Sure.
GRACE: (enters through door) Hi.

(Blackout)

(the Lights raise slowly on the dialogue, when the last word is spoken the lights hit full and fall rapidly into darkness.)

(Twine is standing with a note in her hand. Grace is sitting in a chair staring at Twine)

TWINE: This bright world holds me full of blue and shining joy. It is the comfort of knowing you are in my century only breathes away from my touch. When I am alone I wander around through space where I know you have been and think of time as simultaneous and still, we are together here. We are together because I know the mind and all moments are one. I love you.

(Blackout)

Voice: Twine is standing with a note in her hand. Grace is sitting in a chair staring at Twine

(Lights up)

(Grace is standing with a note in her hand. Twine is sitting in a chair staring at Grace)

GRACE: So what makes you think what you think?
TWINE: I think it's fairly obvious.
GRACE: But you said he said he didn't give her the note.
TWINE: He didn't, I asked for it.
GRACE: (Pause, she looks again at the note) What are you going to do?
TWINE: Nothing.
GRACE: (Pause, she looks again at the note) What are you going to do?
TWINE: Applaud. For his courage, for the exotic numbness it makes me feel.
GRACE: (Pause, she looks again at the note) What are you going to do?
TWINE: Ignore him. How dare he try to destroy what I've wanted for myself since I was little.
GRACE: (Pause, she looks again at the note) What are you going to do?
TWINE: Put a rope around my neck and wait to see who pulls the chair away.
GRACE: (Pause, she looks again at the note) What are you going to do?
TWINE: Buy a new dress, lose myself for an evening, come home late and then hang the dress up in our "his and hers" closet with all the other ones.

GRACE: (Pause, she does not look at the note) I could love you, I could love your husband, I could love a complete stranger, I could love anyone. I could love objects. I could love scenery and Fantastical images planted in my head from books I have read, I could love myself if I were far enough away. I could love blown up images of swollen lips and textures as loud as glass, I could kick a dog and birth a planet if I were given the gift of infinity, or the

omnipotence to see through time. I could love! Be! or create! anything if I were only given the chance.

TWINE: I will Applaud. For a show of courage, for the exotic, sensual numbness it makes me feel.

GRACE: (wishing to express complete honesty) I could. (Looks at the note)(Straining to go back to how she was saying it before) What are you going to do?

TWINE: Nothing (a mid-paced transition from confidence to confusion) I don't know.
(Blackout)

(Lights raise on foot tapping and mumbling)

HISTLE: Not bad, not especially good, sappy and yet snip snappy and mysteriously poignant, but you should be spending less time on love letters and more time on plot.

CHARM: Well, I don't think I need advice from you, it's only the beginning of a larger picture. I needed to write the note in order to plant the seeds of action.

HISTLE: It sounds to me the only seed you planted was yourself outside her door. That's not romantic that's pathetic.

CHARM: This isn't about romance it's about observing and creating the right moments.

HISTLE: Creating but not controlling.

CHARM: Correct.

HISTLE: Well then, get to it.

(Histle and Charm begin to dance, Charm leading the moves and Histle following. Grace and Twine join in. Charm begins to dance with Twine, Histle watches with distain. Histle sets the table, Twine and Charm immediately take the dishes away while dancing. Grace is left on stage dancing by herself. Histle sits at the table tying and untying his shoes.)

GRACE: Do you need some help with the dishes?

TWINE: There are none, everything was made of paper, I just threw it all away

HISTLE: (Sitting on a chair tying and untying his shoes.) That's not true, my dear, you still have me.

CHARM: Charm is telling a story

(Pause)

TWINE: Charm, you are Charm.

CHARM: Then Charm is telling his own story

HISTLE: Is that how it ends or how it begins?

CHARM: both.

GRACE: Is there dialogue, are we allowed to play through?

CHARM: As long as your voices don't stray too far from my bias interpretation of them.

TWINE: Aren't we allowed a bit of personal input?

CHARM: No. This is Charm's story and Charm only knows what he knows.

HISTLE: Well, in order for me to participate I most definitely have to play the part of Charm, I've grown bored of acting Histle, too many performances for too many years. why don't you play Histle and let me tell the story

CHARM: Strange... and yet.... grotesque. I'm all for it.

HISTLE: Charm is telling a story. This story takes place only moments earlier than now
CHARM: Is that how it ends or how it begins?

HISTLE: Both.

TWINE: I think I've heard this story.

HISTLE: Not my version. Histle, a hard working man married to a woman equally as hard comes back to his wife from....

GRACE: a traveling circus?

CHARM: an African safari?

TWINE: a lobotomy.

HISTLE: Yes, a lobotomy, an unsuccessful lobotomy at that, instead of pacified to the point of extinction he has been stimulated, he is no longer satisfied with only three dimensions, time has become nothing more than a picture in his living room.

GRACE: But what about Charm? Isn't this his story?

HISTLE: I'm not quite sure where Charm is during the labotomizing of Histle, yes it is true that Charm tells the story but let's not assume he's completely sure of his whereabouts.

CHARM: I know where he is, he's at the theater, watching the comedic remake of a romantic thriller.

HISTLE: Yes now I can see myself, yes I'm laughing hysterically I can tell because I can see my tears, and I'm holding the hand of my beloved wife, Twine.

TWINE: You're slipping back into your own clothes my dear. Twine is married to Histle.

HISTLE: Oh yes, that's right I'd forgotten.

GRACE: This isn't fun, I'm going home.

HISTLE: You're just upset because you're not in the story yet.

GRACE: Charm, will you walk me home?

HISTLE: Sure I will, that's what Charms are for.

GRACE: I was talking to the real Charm.

HISTLE: You bet your Sweet Jesus he's a real charm, courteous, kind, omniscient and helpful to the helpless.

CHARM: Sure, I'll walk you home... Grace, it's no problem.

TWINE: I'll go get your coats.

HISTLE: Oh fiddlesticks! I threw them away, I thought they were made of paper.

Blackout

HISTLE: The sky's gone out.

VOICE: Histle and Twine are in the dark.

HISTLE: Honey did we pay the electric bill?

TWINE: No you must have thrown it away, it was made of paper.

VOICE: Charm is walking Grace Home.

(Flashlights and candles)

CHARM: Is this your home?

GRACE: I don't think so.

(The two lines repeat until....)

CHARM: No, it's not, but it seems to be a good place to stop. (Looks at her) So.....
What..... (Stares blankly)

GRACE: What, "what"?

CHARM: Nothing, just a bit of nothing. Sometimes I speak spontaneously in hopes of forming a cohesive... thought but too often that thought is not much more than nothing at all. I have to apologize for my behavior.

GRACE: But you haven't done anything.

CHARM: Of course I haven't. But I'd like to apologize anyway, for Histle's behavior, and then for myself, for not having done anything.

GRACE: Oh, I'm use to it by now.

CHARM: You are?

GRACE: Aren't I?

CHARM: No.

GRACE: No?

CHARM: Maybe, I'm not sure.

GRACE: Do you Love Twine?

CHARM: Did I just say something?

GRACE: No, I did. Was that letter written for Twine?

CHARM: I wrote it for a woman who doesn't exist. She's part of a larger story.

GRACE: You don't mind that she let me read it?

CHARM: She couldn't have let you read it, she doesn't exist.

GRACE: No, Twine let me-

CHARM: No Twine, no Grace, No Histle.

GRACE: Charm -

CHARM: No Charm. No, I'm Charm. I not only read it, I wrote it.

GRACE: I know. Twine showed it to me. Do you mind?

CHARM: No, that's fine, more the merrier. It doesn't have anything to do with you anyway.

GRACE: But it does.

CHARM: It's time to go

GRACE: I'm not home yet.

CHARM: Where do you live?

GRACE: I don't know.

CHARM: Then it's time to go.

(Blackout)

VOICE: Twine is standing on a table and Grace is-
(Twine and Grace are sitting at a table)

(Lights up)

TWINE: Leaving? But you're the only friend I have.

GRACE: what? Is that all you have to say? I don't believe you.

TWINE: I'll miss you, is there something wrong with that?

GRACE: I am leaving for good!

TWINE: Yes, I know I've heard.

GRACE: Because I've told you!

TWINE: Why are you getting upset?

GRACE: shut up!

TWINE: What's wrong?

GRACE: I'm leaving everything I know behind to go who the hell knows where, and all you have to say is that you'll miss your only friend.

TWINE: I was being honest.

GRACE: No! Fuck this! I'm staying right here!

(Pause)

TWINE: Would you like something to drink?

GRACE: (Calm) No, I have to go.

(Blackout)

VOICE: Grace has left. Histle and Charm Philosophize.

(Twine and Grace are still in the room. Histle and Charm are left with nowhere to sit.)

TWINE: (An answer from the last scene) No.

CHARM: Grace?

GRACE: Yes?

CHARM: You're here, sitting.....in a chair.

GRACE: Yes, that's right.

TWINE: Grace is staying here for awhile, is that alright with you Honey?

CHARM & HISTLE: No.

CHARM: No, sure, no, yes.....Grace would you like Histle to take you home?

GRACE & HISTLE: No.

HISTLE: No. Grace and Charm leave. Histle and Twine are alone.

CHARM: What?

TWINE: She's staying!

HISTLE: (To Charm) She's your friend take her home.

(Argument ensues)

TWINE: She's my friend she stays!

CHARM: STOP!

(Everyone freezes. Charm glances at the lighting booth)

BLACKOUT

VOICE: The audience is requested to disregard that last scene. Please be advised to strike it from your memory. Histle tells Grace to leave. Charm hides behind the door.

Lights Raise

TWINE: ...yes

HISTLE: Grace?

GRACE: Yes?

HISTLE: You, are sitting at a table.

GRACE: That's right, and you are standing on my coat.

HISTLE: Now you have it. Is it all making sense now? Do you see my point?

GRACE: I'm afraid only the most obvious of points, any meaning beyond this table or that coat, is beyond me.

HISTLE: stand up

(both women stand)

HISTLE: No, you sit (pointing at Twine) you stand (pointing at Grace)

TWINE: I, (she sits) am sitting.

HISTLE: (insidiously) Yes Pooh Bear, but that doesn't matter. (He grabs Grace's chair and throws it on her coat) Fuck! (Pause) What just happened?

GRACE: You threw a chair at my coat.

HISTLE: And...

GRACE: And what?

HISTLE: And then...

GRACE: And then you screamed "Fuck"?

HISTLE: That's a coat, right?

(both women look at each other and then at Histle)

TWINE & GRACE: Yes

HISTLE: But is that all it is?

TWINE: It looks to be a dead animal.

GRACE: No it's synthetic.

TWINE: Wow! It looks authentic.

GRACE: And it's as warm as a real one too, without the guilt.

HISTLE: (screams) Tangent! (they give him their attention) It's not only a dead synthetic guiltless coat, it's your coat (Pointing at Grace) Your coat. My throw. Our chair. My "Fuck!"

GRACE: In the future I should learn to leave before you get back.

HISTLE: I thought you were leaving, Twine.

TWINE: Grace

HISTLE: Grace, I thought you were leaving.

GRACE: I tried but you were standing on my coat.

HISTLE: I thought you were leaving for good.

GRACE: Twine!

TWINE: I never told him. (And then remembers the previous scene) You just told me.

GRACE: Then who did?

HISTLE: No one did, because... because I'm wrong. You're not leaving are you?

GRACE: you were spying.

HISTLE: I didn't have to, for some reason I just know. Right Dear? I just know things don't !?

TWINE: I don't understand what you mean.

HISTLE: I know you don't. But you actually do, don't you Charm?

GRACE: (To Histle)Her name is Twine! She's your wife!

HISTLE: Twine? yes My wife.Wife, my wife?, coat, your coat, my door, your ass.

(Throws the coat at Grace) Fuck the hell out of here!

(Blackout)

VOICE: Twine and Histle argue.

(Lights Up)

(Twine and Histle sit in silence)

TWINE: Is there something wrong my sweet?
HISTLE: No, everything is just fine. All is well.
TWINE: All is as it should be?
HISTLE: As it should be.

(Blackout)

(Twine is sitting on Charms lap.)
TWINE: Is there something wrong my sweet?
HISTLE: No, everything is just fine. All is well.
TWINE: All is as it should be?
HISTLE: As it should be.

(Blackout)

(Scene repeats until Histle reaches the table with his chair.)
TWINE: Is there something wrong my sweet?
HISTLE: No, everything is just fine. All is well.
TWINE: All is as it should be?
HISTLE: As it should be.

(Blackout)

TWINE: Is there something wrong my-
HISTLE: Shut up! Why did you keep the note?
TWINE: What note
HISTLE: The note. You took it off the table during the black out and tucked it in your bra. Why? Why did you keep it?

TWINE: I like the way it sounds.
HISTLE: It's not for you!
TWINE: Maybe it isn't, but that doesn't matter. It makes me feel good.
HISTLE: He wrote it for himself. Histle doesn't Love you.
TWINE: What do you mean you don't love me?
HISTLE: Charm, Charm doesn't love you
TWINE: Why are we here if you don't love me, Histle? Why do we bother arguing if it means nothing at all to you?

HISTLE: Charm, I meant Charm.
TWINE: I know what you mean.
HISTLE: No you don't, your not listening, your not understanding.
TWINE: I don't need to understand, I just want something to believe in.
HISTLE: You can't believe in what's not real.
TWINE: If this isn't real, if you don't believe in me, get out.
HISTLE: That's not what I said
TWINE: No, but it's what you meant.
HISTLE: No Twine, there are truths I don't want to believe to be, but I understand them to be fact. How long have you known me?

TWINE: (No answer)
HISTLE: How long have you known me?

TWINE: I don't know.

HISTLE: Where did we meet?

TWINE: I don't remember

HISTLE: Who was our Best man.

TWINE: This is pointless.

HISTLE: What if we never had a wedding. Never had a wedding night. Think about it. Just once question who we are. Ask yourself about the past.

CHARM: Blackout! Voice Over!

VOICE: Histle has left for no reason. Charm is behind the door.

CHARM: Hello. I've been standing behind this door for long while. I didn't knock, or ring a doorbell, I just stood there.

TWINE: That's a very strange thing to be doing.

CHARM: I wouldn't know about that. Is Histle around?

TWINE: No, he's not here right now.

CHARM: Yes, I suppose he's not. Am I here with you?

TWINE: Yes.

CHARM: Are we alone?

TWINE: I don't know. What do you need?

CHARM: Nothing, I just came over to see if Histle wasn't here. Are you sure he's not standing right there? (Pointing at Histle's feet)

TWINE: No.

CHARM: No, he's not standing right there, or No, you're not sure.

TWINE: Yes.

CHARM: Yes?

TWINE: No I'm am not sure! But why am I not sure? I see him and I don't see him. I should be sure, I should know!

CHARM: (To Twine) No, you shouldn't know, none of this is your fault.

(To Histle) Are you in this room... right now?

HISTLE: No, I'm with Twine. We're having an affair.

CHARM: You're not suppose to be here!

HISTLE: This is our place, you're not suppose to be here. I want to be alone with Twine.

CHARM: It's not possible, you can't do that

TWINE: Darling.

HISTLE & CHARM: Yes?

TWINE: I'm not feeling well. I'm tired. Very tired. I want to sleep. I want to wake up. There are gaps, why are there gaps? I'm very tired. Could we end this now?

HISTLE: Yes.

(Blackout)

(Lights raise)

(They are in the same positions as the last scene)

TWINE: I'm not feeling well. I'm tired. I can't sleep. I can't wake up. I'm tired, very tired. Could we end this now?

CHARM: Yes.

(BLACKOUT)

(LIGHTS RAISE)

TWINE: (PAUSE) Please, could we end this now?

VOICE: Yes. (Twine and Histle walk to their places) Charm is alone.

CHARM: Charm is telling a story, of Love, of cowardice, of himself having recently lost control and wishing he were no longer part of his own life. Of gaps too big to make sense of, of character's unable to define themselves. (Pause) Histle is now dead, for awhile, Grace is in another play that may never be written. Charm is comforting Twine.

HISTLE: Charm is dead.

CHARM: No I'm Charm, Histle is dead.

HISTLE: Histle is telling a story, he can't be dead.

CHARM: charm is telling a story.

HISTLE: (To audience) Histle is telling a story of cowardice-

CHARM: Stop using my words, it isn't fair.

HISTLE: And killing Charm is fair?

CHARM: No, Histle is dead, Charm is -

HISTLE: a small character in a larger picture.

CHARM: No.

HISTLE: A synthetic, guiltless coat.

CHARM: No

HISTLE: A disillusioned romantic.

CHARM: I'm not a Romantic.

HISTLE: Who else would create their own surroundings? I should call you a lunatic, I don't see much difference.

CHARM: A romantic would of created greatness, likenesses larger than the life they were taken from. You are a weak character.

HISTLE: Stronger than you intended.

CHARM: If your talking about defying the death I just imposed on you, don't forget that I allowed you to come back.

HISTLE: And I came back.

CHARM: Because I brought you back.

HISTLE: Because I came back.

CHARM: Stop it!

HISTLE: I can't! Isn't that right? Isn't that right Histle?

CHARM: Charm. I am Charm I have to be Charm, because Charm is who I am.

HISTLE: (To audience) Who is the real Charm. May the strongest man win.

(A Montage: comical snapshots of competitions)

CHARM: You're mocking my play.

HISTLE: We are mocking your play. You don't know what you're creating anymore.

CHARM: You're not helping.

HISTLE: Then let me go.

CHARM: No!

HISTLE: I know our situation, I know where I belong. (Begins to walk back to his spot.)

Histle is now dead, Grace is in another play that may never be written. Charm is comforting Twine, for awhile.

CHARM: Twine! (Hugs her, she does not hug back)

GRACE: My name is Grace

No sir, I'm just known as Grace.

CHARM: Oh Twine, this is where I've always wanted to be, here alone with you.

GRACE: I just arrived in town, this is my first audition.

Well not much experience, but I've always felt that I could do whatever I put my mind to.

CHARM: I'm tired.

GRACE: I know I'm not the first one to have said that but...

CHARM: I just want to hold you in my arms and bury myself in your silence.

GRACE: Yes, I'm sorry.

CHARM: I won't deny you anything.

GRACE: I've prepared a monologue by Charm Histleman.

CHARM: I'll create us a world unto itself.

GRACE: Charm Histleman.

CHARM: (Looks in her eyes and sees nothing)Twine?

GRACE: He's mostly known for short stories, he wrote a good deal of plays early in his career, performed in a long running show called "Information Overload" and then stopped writing all together.

CHARM: Twine?

GRACE: Some say it was the pressure. In an obscure essay he wrote, it says he couldn't create a structure that fully expressed his intentions and one that didn't sacrifice

emotional content over structure. He thought he hadn't anything to write about anymore, nothing was believable to him. I just think he tried too hard, and gave up before he should have.

Yes sir, I guess there are enough writers out there, but still, it's sad.

This piece is from a play called Simulticity. It was originally a dialogue, But I took the liberty of cutting out one of the characters, I think it sounds better anyway.

(Begins the Monologue):

Histle?

TWINE: Histle?

GRACE & TWINE: Please here me.

GRACE: Listen. It's all right.

TWINE: I don't need a past to explain emotions that are unexplainable. Please don't question your place here. It is possible that you exist for me and I exist for you. But I see rage in your eyes and I feel as if I'm looking at a stranger. I'm cold inside. I see my faults reflected in your eyes, the ground disappears, and I don't know what to do.

HISTLE: I don't trust you. I can't make this cynicism disappear. I want to. But I can't stop myself from filling gaps with doubt. I want to erase your world and leave you for myself, create an untouchable time and watch your mannerisms endlessly.

GRACE: Charm? Charm? Please here me. Listen. It's all right.

CHARM: I fell in Love with a stranger, stole her likeness and gave it to another man. I don't understand what I've done here. Every time I venture out of my house I create the day with an abundance of energy. So many directions, voices, moments, so many ways to squander time. I can let myself down, that I can deal with, but so many people are involved, so many people affected with each little touch, with every negation. I've messed everything up. I've ripped out souls and fed them to my brain.

GRACE: Charm? Charm? Please here me. Listen. It's all right.

CHARM: You can't here me. I've brought myself to this point, to be with you, and I can't make you here me. I can give you words, I can take them away, I can banish you from my sight, but I can't make you listen.

GRACE: Charm? Charm? Please here me. Listen. It's all right.

CHARM: Yes Grace, it is all right. It's as it should be.

(The cast leaves the stage. Charm is alone.)

The End

VOICE: Charm?

CHARM: Yes?

VOICE: Are you in this story?

CHARM: Yes.

VOICE: Are you in the play containing this story?

CHARM: Yes.

VOICE: Then are you actually Charm?

CHARM: Not really, though at times I feel I am.

VOICE: Who are you?

CHARM: Patrick Populorum

VOICE: Thank you Patrick. Thank you for being Charm once again.