

CONFLICT

by
Wade Bradford





HEUER
P U B L I S H I N G
SINCE 1928



CONFLICT

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Wade Bradford

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SYNOPSIS: A very amusing explanation of how we crave stories in which the protagonist experiences all kinds of hardship. *Conflict* won the "Page to Stage" competition at the Repertory East Playhouse in Santa Clarita, California.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(THREE MEN, TWO WOMEN, ONE NON-GENDER SPECIFIC)

NARRATOR (m or f)(66 lines)

PROTAGONIST (m)(92 lines)

WOMAN #1.....Plays Protagonist's spouse and later, "man vs. woman" lady love. (22 lines)

WOMAN #2.....Plays Protagonist's mother. (21 lines)

ANTAGONIST #1 (m)Plays Angry Farmer. (24 lines)

ANTAGONIST #2 (m).....Plays Protagonist's father, Con Artist, and later, Zeus. (28 lines)

SET

A blank stage.

COSTUMES

Doesn't matter.

BUDGET

The cost of a single cantaloupe.

CASTING

Doubling is optional: Woman #1 could be played by two female actors and Antagonist #2 could be played by three male actors.

AT RISE:

The Narrator (male or female) stands downstage right. Upstage left, a man – the Protagonist – lies on the floor, curled up in a fetal position.

NARRATOR: A story begins.

Lights come up on Protagonist.

NARRATOR: A child is born.

Protag (as we shall now call him) stretches, cries like a newborn baby.

NARRATOR: He grows into a man.

Protag quickly “grows” and assumes a manly pose.

NARRATOR: He experiences happiness.

PROTAG: (*Very happy.*) Ah!

NARRATOR: He experiences sadness.

PROTAG: (*Very sad.*) Aw . . .

NARRATOR: He meets a girl.

Woman #1 approaches Protag.

PROTAG: Hello!

WOMAN #1: Hello.

NARRATOR: They fall in love. They get married. They go on their honeymoon.

The blocking for the above actors is entirely up to the director's discretion.

NARRATOR: They have four children.

From somewhere offstage, an unseen cast member tosses four baby dolls. Protag lovingly catches them one after another. He drops the fourth one.

CONFLICT

NARRATOR: Three children.

Protag and Woman #1 lean against each other, adoring their children.

NARRATOR: The children grow up and move away.

PROTAG: *(Tossing the babies back to cast member.)* G'bye kids.
Good luck with college!

NARRATOR: There's a fifty-fifty chance that he and his wife divorce.

Woman #1 flips a coin. She looks at it. Shrugs at Protag and then leaves.

NARRATOR: All alone, the man grows old.

Protag sags a little.

NARRATOR: Older . . .

Protag hunches over, waddling about like a very old man.

NARRATOR: Olllderr . . . and dies.

Protag falls over, lifeless.

NARRATOR: The end.

The Narrator lifts up Protag's wrist and lets it drop down to the floor.

NARRATOR: Not very satisfying, is it? And why? The story had no conflict. Conflict is struggle, a quest, a battle, a challenge, a longing, an agony, a goal that seems forever out of our grasp. We, as an audience, desire, nay, we demand that our characters experience conflict.

As the Narrator speaks, he stands the Protag back up, and arranges him as if working with a sculpture or a mannequin.

NARRATOR: And why do we crave hardship for our main character? Why must he be tortured emotionally and sometimes physically? *Because it is fun to watch.* Here stands a man, but he cannot become a hero until I, the narrator, give him conflict. We need something besides the protagonist on stage. We need something . . . an object that will elicit desire and ultimately suffering. It could be anything, really . . . excuse me, madam . . .

He speaks to Woman #2, an older woman who sits in the second row.
[**Note:** She should at first seem like an ordinary audience member.]

WOMAN #2: Yes?

NARRATOR: Do you have something in your purse we could use?

WOMAN #2: Oh, like what?

NARRATOR: A stick of gum, or eyeliner, perhaps. The first thing you find will do. We simply need an object of desire for our protagonist.

WOMAN #2: I'm afraid all I have is a cantaloupe.

NARRATOR: That's perfect. Now we can begin the story again and generate enough conflict to please the cruelest of audiences. A story begins . . . a child is born . . . and at three years of age . . .

PROTAG: I'm three years old . . .

NARRATOR: At the age of three years, he discovered that he absolutely loved cantaloupes.

The toddler-minded Protagonist sees the cantaloupe. The Narrator holds it out, enticing Protag. Protag toddles across the stage.

PROTAG: Canna-wope!

NARRATOR: That's right, little protagonist, that's right! No one knew why the little boy loved cantaloupes. Maybe it was the wondrous globe shape, maybe it was the subtle yet heavenly aroma, or maybe it was the fact that he severely lacked Vitamin C. Whatever the reason, he wanted this spherical fruit. But he could not have it.

The Narrator tosses the cantaloupe to Antagonist #1, a man who behaves like an angry old farmer.

CONFLICT

ANTAG #1: You rascal! Get off my property. This is my cantaloupe farm!

NARRATOR: Our first conflict, Man versus Man. The protagonist wants one thing . . .

PROTAG: Canna-wope!

NARRATOR: And the Antagonist wants to prevent our hero from getting it.

ANTAG #1: Oh, no you don't, you ain't gettin' your fat, dirty fingers on my prize winning cantaloupe. I'm building me a fence around my whole farm. You'll never get one of my cantaloupes! Ever!

Protag grabs the cantaloupe. They pull back and forth.

PROTAG: Mine!

ANTAG #1: No!

PROTAG: Mine!

ANTAG #1: No!

PROTAG: Mine!

ANTAG #1: I said NO!

Antag #1 pushes Protag to the ground. Protag cries.

NARRATOR: And so the forces against the protagonist win the first battle. But when our hero feels that all is lost, that is when a supporting character steps in to encourage him. *(Talks to the same woman sitting in the second row.)* Excuse me again, do you happen to have a tissue?

WOMAN #2: Why, yes I do.

NARRATOR: Excellent. Could you offer one to that young man over there?

WOMAN #2: On stage?

NARRATOR: Yes.

WOMAN #2: But . . . what do I do . . . ?

NARRATOR: Just be his mother . . . it shouldn't take more than five minutes of your time . . . why look, he's reaching out to you.

PROTAG: *(Reaches out to Woman #2 as she approaches.)* Mama?

NARRATOR: Go to him. He needs you.

PROTAG: Mama!

WOMAN #2: Oh, uh, here junior . . . *(Offers tissue.)* Dry your tears.
(He wipes his whole face on her sleeve/blouse.) Ugh. Now, uh,
junior, why are you so sad?

PROTAG: Because I wanna canna-wope an' I canna have one!

Antag #1 waltzes across the stage, dancing about with the cantaloupe, teasing the Protagonist.

ANTAG #1: Looks delicious, doesn't it? *(Brings it close to Protagonist.)*

Protagonist reaches for it.

ANTAG #1: *(Quickly drawing back.)* Can't have it! *(Exits, laughing cruelly.)*

Protag cries some more while Woman #2 consoles him.

WOMAN #2: There, there. Don't let Farmer Antagonist antagonize you. Maybe I have something in my purse that you'll like. *(She pulls out a makeup case.)* Want to play with this?

PROTAG: No!

WOMAN #2: Tic tac?

PROTAG: No!

WOMAN #2: Car keys?

PROTAG: Me don't want car keys! Me want canna-wope!

WOMAN #2: Well, junior, you're a smart boy. I'm sure you'll find a way to have a cantaloupe of your very own.

PROTAG: A canna-wope of my vewy own?

WOMAN #2: Here, maybe this will help.

She gives him a book, pats his head and exits the stage.

NARRATOR: The book she gave him changed his life . . . as soon as he was old enough to read, that is . . .

PROTAG: "The Science of Cantaloupe Farming."

NARRATOR: As the years passed, the Protagonist learned all there was to know about cantaloupes. He memorized that book from

CONFLICT

one cover to the next. By the time he was seventeen, he was ready to grow his own delicious melon.

Protag is now center stage, on his hands and knees, gardening.

PROTAG: There! The soil is just right. And now, to plant my cantaloupe seed.

ANTAG #1: So, finally getting around to making your own melon? Well, it won't taste as good as mine!

PROTAG: You're wrong about that, old timer! It'll be ten times better than your mangy vegetation, and you know why? Because I'm planting my cantaloupe with soil, compost, and the most important nutrient of all, love. *(Plants seed.)*

Antag #1 shrugs and walks away with a grunt.

NARRATOR: And yet there are many variations of conflict of Man versus Man. There is something far worse than Man versus Farmer. Enter the new conflict Man versus Father.

A fatherly Antagonist #2 enters.

ANTAG #2: Son! Oh son! I've got good news - hey what are you doing with that watering can?

PROTAG: *(Tries to hide the can.)* Uh, nothing!

ANTAG #2: Son . . . you've been trying to raise cantaloupes again, haven't you?

PROTAG: Dad, I -

ANTAG #2: How very disappointing. And here I was just about to congratulate . . . I thought you were ready to come work for me . . . as my partner!

PROTAG: But Dad! I don't want to go into the pumpkin business!

ANTAG #2: Pumpkins aren't good enough for you? Huh?! You love cantaloupes exclusively, is that it?

PROTAG: I do. And I've just planted my first one. And I'm going to grow it on my own.

ANTAG #2: You disappoint me. When you were younger I wanted to put a stop to this cantaloupe nonsense. No son of mine was going to be a fruity weirdo! But your mother said, "It's just a phase. He'll

grow out of it.” And now look at you, rejecting the family business for this . . . this frivolous desire. Well I’m putting a stop to it. I’m digging up that seed before it takes root.

PROTAG: Father, I love you, but if you touch my cantaloupe garden I’ll never speak to you again.

ANTAG #2: So that’s it, huh? You would choose a fruit over the wishes of your family.

PROTAG: I’m growing this melon and there’s nothing you can do about it!

ANTAG #2: Then I have no son!

Antag #2 exits.

PROTAG: Dad? *(Remorseful, then turns defiant.)* Fine . . . Fine! I don’t need you. I don’t need anyone. Right, little seed. Don’t mind us humans as we argue over petty things. You just rest and grow.

NARRATOR: The days passed by without contact with his family . . . until . . .

Woman #2 (Mom) enters carrying a blanket.

PROTAG: Momma?

WOMAN #2: I brought you a blanket. Are you sure you don’t want to come back into the house?

PROTAG: Not until Dad admit he’s wrong!

WOMAN #2: Junior . . . your father and I are moving.

PROTAG: Moving? Where?

WOMAN #2: To Pumpkinville.

PROTAG: When?

WOMAN #2: Five minutes. Your father says he’s never coming back. And we’ll never see you again.

She sobs. She hugs her son and wipes her tears (and nose) against her son’s sleeves.

WOMAN #2: Oh look! *(Points to the ground.)*

PROTAG: My cantaloupe! It’s sprouting!

CONFLICT

WOMAN #2: Oh junior, your dreams are coming true! I wish you all the happiness in the world. Goodbye, my sweet baby boy. *(She runs away, crying. Exits.)*

PROTAG: Wait! Mom! Don't leave. I'll go with . . . *(He starts to follow, then slowly comes to a halt. He knows that he belongs by his garden.)* Goodbye Mom. *(Kneels down next to plant.)* Don't worry, little cantaloupe. We'll make it somehow. Now that you're growing, that's all I need. Nothing will hinder us now.

Thunder sound effect.

NARRATOR: Man versus nature. As the protagonist tended his garden, the elements fought against him.

Rain sound effect. Protag feels drops of rain. He covers himself, helplessly. The Narrator hands him an umbrella.

NARRATOR: Man versus rain.

Wind sound effect. Protag tumbles over, then stands up, acting as though he is fighting against a strong wind.

NARRATOR: Man versus wind!

Protag manages to get back to center stage.

NARRATOR: Man versus lightning.

Lighting cue and "ZAP" sound effect. Protag acts as though he's been suddenly electrocuted.

PROTAG: Ow!

Lighting cue: the stage glows with a red tint.

NARRATOR: Man versus extreme temperature.

PROTAG: *(Fanning the plant.)* Poor little cantaloupe. It's so hot. But at least it's a dry heat.

NARRATOR: Man versus humidity.

Protag lets out a sigh of frustration. He fans himself rapidly.

NARRATOR: Man versus mosquitoes.

Mosquito sound effect. Protag slaps himself, swatting at the bugs.

NARRATOR: Man versus killer bees.

PROTAG: *(Flailing about, warding off a swarm.)* Oh come on!

Lighting cue: the lights change to a tint of icy blue.

NARRATOR: Man versus extreme cold.

PROTAG: Don't worry, my little friend. I'll protect you from the frost.

He curls up around the plant. He seems to fall asleep.

NARRATOR: Months of struggling passed by . . . and finally, the day arrived. The day he thought all of his hopes and dreams had finally come true.

The Narrator places the cantaloupe center stage. Protag awakens.

PROTAG: My cantaloupe! You're here! You're finally here! Now at long last I can quench my desires and partake in your deliciousness. All I need now is a melon baller.

NARRATOR: But then he encountered a conflict greater than the forces of nature.

Woman #1 steps onto the stage.

NARRATOR: Man versus woman.

WOMAN #1: *(Approaches Protag.)* Hello.

PROTAG: H . . . Hello . . .

They stare at each other.

PROTAG: Why are you looking at me that way?

WOMAN #1: Because I see a man who is no longer a boy and I am captivated by the sight of him. As I look at your rain-drenched

clothes, I can feel the storms you have weathered, all alone, and it makes me want to end your loneliness. As I look at the dirt caked into the palms of your hands, I can feel the struggle you have undergone, the struggle to create beauty, and I long to join you in your struggles. As I look at your eyes, I can feel them searching, searching for love, gazing endlessly; oh would that I could end your search.

PROTAG: As I look at you . . . I think you're pretty.

WOMAN #1: I, too, find you attractive. How long have you been tending this garden?

PROTAG: Almost nine months.

WOMAN #1: That shows you're not afraid of commitment, that you are earnest and faithful. And why have you been struggling so?

PROTAG: (*Presenting cantaloupe.*) To bring life into this world.

WOMAN #1: You'll make a wonderful father someday, hopefully soon. Do you really think that I'm pretty?

PROTAG: More than pretty. Beautiful. I . . . I love you.

WOMAN #1: And I love you.

PROTAG: (*Kneeling.*) Would you be my wife? I will share everything in the world with you. Even the thing that I hold dearest to me. (*Offers cantaloupe.*)

WOMAN #1: (*Guiding him back to his feet.*) Yes, my soulmate, yes! Let's run away and be with each other forever and ever. (*About to embrace, she pauses and notices the cantaloupe for the first time.*) But you'll have to drop the melon - I'm allergic.

PROTAG: My cantaloupe? But I . . .

WOMAN #1: It's me or the melon. Your choice. I can see you need time to think. I'll be waiting over here . . . thinking romantic thoughts . . . about our honeymoon . . .

She slowly flits away, teasing as she goes. He watches her, then looks back at his cantaloupe.

PROTAG: But I haven't even tasted it yet . . .

He holds the fruit, arm outstretched. He weighs his choices.

NARRATOR: Man versus self.

Protag looks over his shoulder to his lady love, then back to his cantaloupe. He does this a couple times.

PROTAG: Maybe just one bite.

WOMAN #1: Don't take too long . . .

PROTAG: Just a moment, my darling one! *(About to bite into cantaloupe.)*

WOMAN #1: And don't get cantaloupe on your lips. I don't want to break out in hives.

PROTAG: *(Frustrated. Sets the fruit down; speaks to it.)* Goodbye. I'm so sorry it had to end like this.

He starts to walk away. He stops. He looks back. Then he runs to the cantaloupe, falls to his knees and cradles the melon in his arms.

PROTAG: I can't leave you!

WOMAN #1: *(As she walks off stage.)* Oh lover-boy! I'm waiting to consummate the relationship!

PROTAG: *(Abruptly abandons the cantaloupe.)* Gotta go!

He briskly walks towards offstage. Antag #1 enters from the opposite side.

ANTAG #1: Hey twerp!

Protag stops dead in his tracks.

ANTAG #1: I heard through the melon-vine that you've got yourself a measly little garden. Just came by so I could laugh at it.

PROTAG: That's right. I have a garden. And remember you said I'd never lay my hands on a cantaloupe. Well, look what I have! *(Proudly holds cantaloupe.)*

ANTAG #1: Cantaloupe?! Who cares about cantaloupes?! *(Proudly holds up a large grapefruit.)* Grapefruit is the new king of produce!

NARRATOR: Man versus rival.

ANTAG #1: My grapefruit is far superior to your cantaloupe.

PROTAG: It is not!

ANTAG #1: It tastes better. It's smoother, rounder, filled with more vitamins. It's sleeker, shinier, firmer and faster -

CONFLICT

PROTAG: Faster? What are you talking about? You're crazy.

ANTAG #1: You don't believe me? There's only one way to find out.
Let's race.

PROTAG: I'm not going to race my cantaloupe.

ANTAG #1: Because you know she'll lose. *(Turns to leave.)*

PROTAG: Wait. We'll race. We'll race, and by God, we're going to win!

ANTAG #1: Now you're talking, twerp!

They line up and prepare to roll their fruits. Woman #1 re-enters. She stands near their imaginary finish line.

WOMAN #1: What's going on?

PROTAG: On three. One. Two. Three!

Antag #1 cheats and rolls his grapefruit right before Protag says "Three." Each piece of fruit rolls across the stage, but the grapefruit is in the lead. It rolls into the hands of Woman #1. The cantaloupe loses.

WOMAN #1: I've never seen such a fast and virile grapefruit. Who owns this?

ANTAG #1: That would be me, ma'am.

WOMAN #1: *(Seductively.)* Hello.

ANTAG #1: Hello!

She takes his arm and they exit.

PROTAG: But my love . . . my soulmate . . . come back . . . uh . . .
(Tries to think of her name.) . . . person . . .

Saddened and alone, he looks back at the cantaloupe.

PROTAG: How could I ever think of abandoning you? Can you forgive me? *(He bends to pick it up.)*

Antag #2, now dressed as a gypsy-like soothsayer, hobbles out on stage with a cane.

ANTAG #2: Young man! Do not touch that abomination!

PROTAG: Why not?

ANTAG #2: Because . . . it is CURSED!

Lighting cue: lights flash. Sound cue: over-dramatic music.

NARRATOR: Man versus the supernatural.

PROTAG: Cursed? That's nonsense.

ANTAG #2: Cursed it is indeed. I can see it with my third eye.

PROTAG: You have a third eye?

ANTAG #2: And a fourth nostril, but I don't like to brag. I can sense the imminent danger, a dark aura is cast from this cursed cantaloupe. All who touch it are doomed, doomed to a life of unnatural agony and unspeakable shame!

PROTAG: But I've already touched it! I'm already doomed! Please, you have to help me! Isn't there something you can do to remove the curse?

ANTAG #2: *(Thinking.)* Hmmm . . .

NARRATOR: Man versus Con Artist.

ANTAG #2: Give me fifty dollars.

PROTAG: Okay. *(Hands over money.)*

ANTAG #2: *(Waves hands over the melon and chants.)* There you are . . . the curse is reversed.

PROTAG: Oh good. *(Picks up melon.)* Wait, "reversed"? What does that mean exactly?

ANTAG #2: When it was cursed, this cantaloupe hated you. It wanted to destroy you. But now I reversed the spell. Now it loves you. Thanks for your money.

Antag #2 exits, counting the dollar bills.

PROTAG: *(Regards cantaloupe.)* It loves me? That's ridiculous. It's just an inanimate object. Sure, it might be the most beautiful melon in the world . . . but it doesn't possess feelings. It can't love me back. Or can it?

He stares longingly at the cantaloupe and slowly draws it closer to his lips.

NARRATOR: Man versus self . . . yet again.

CONFLICT

Protag is about to kiss the cantaloupe, but he stops himself.

PROTAG: What am I doing?! Snap out of it! *(He slaps himself a few times.)* I'm lonely and pathetic, but I'm not insane. I am not falling in love with my cantaloupe. I AM NOT FALLING IN LOVE WITH MY CANTALOUPE. I am not attracted to my cantaloupe in any way shape or form. I am not falling in - oh who am I kidding?!

He embraces the cantaloupe, kissing it passionately.

Optional sound cue: romantic music begins to play.

NARRATOR: *(Hides eyes.)* Tell me when it's over.

Motherly Woman #2 enters the stage.

WOMAN #2: Junior, I'm back from - eek!

PROTAG: Mom!

WOMAN #2: What are you doing?!

Woman #1 and Antag #1 rush onto the stage.

ANTAG #1: What's happening?

WOMAN #1: Is he doing what I think he's doing?

ANTAG #1: For shame! Do we want that kind of libertine defiling our community?

WOMAN #1 / ANTAG #1: NO!

NARRATOR: Man versus society. Ladies and gentlemen of the audience, you also constitute part of society. As you can see, on stage, our protagonist is getting to know his cantaloupe in the biblical sense. This is something that should shock and mortify those of decent moral sensibility. So, as a society we must fight against this abnormality. So, if you will, please raise your hand *(Hopefully, the audience does this. Adlib as necessary to gain audience participation.)* point your finger at the protagonist. Now, prepare to self-righteously waggle your finger as we chant: "SHAME ON YOU!"

WOMAN #1 / ANTAG #1: (*Wagging fingers.*) Shame on you!
Shame on you! Shame on you!

ANTAG #1: Society condemns you and your lusty cantaloupe.

PROTAG: Don't judge us just because you don't understand us . . .
We're both consenting . . . things. If we love each other, and we
don't bother other people or vegetables, why should you condemn
us? If we want to be together, why should you stand in our way?
And if we want to join each other in holy matrimony as man and
melon, what of it? Who dares to stop us?

Lighting and sound cue: thunder, flashing lights.

ANTAG #2: (*From offstage in a booming voice.*) I DO!

NARRATOR: Man versus the Gods.

WOMAN #1 / ANTAG #1: All hail Zeus!

Antag #2 enters dressed in a god-like robe and wearing a godly-looking beard. Protag remains standing, but all others bow down.

ANTAG #2: Junior of 241 Garden Lane, forsake your unnatural
desires and cast away that cantaloupe!

PROTAG: I . . . I . . . I . . .

WOMAN #2: Do what he says, Junior!

PROTAG: I . . . I won't do it! It's my cantaloupe. I won't give her up
for anything or anyone.

ANTAG #2: Really?

PROTAG: Yes, really.

ANTAG #2: You would defy the Greek God Zeus?!

PROTAG: Aren't you just mythology?

Antag #2 threatens him with a cardboard lightning bolt.

PROTAG: I'm sorry, sir, it's just that I refuse to give up the most
wonderful thing in my life.

ANTAG #2: Hmm. And what if, instead of commanding you to
change your ways, I offered you a trade?

PROTAG: What do you mean? What kind of trade?

ANTAG #2: Let's see what I have in my god bag.

CONFLICT

Narrator hands Antag #2 a burlap sack. Protag is interested.

ANTAG #2: Would you give up that cantaloupe for . . . good health.

PROTAG: No.

ANTAG #2: How about . . . world peace?

PROTAG: No.

ANTAG #2: Cure for cancer?

PROTAG: Nope.

ANTAG #2: Eternal happiness?

PROTAG: (*Filled with anxiety and paranoia.*) I've already found it!

ANTAG #2: Hmm . . . (*Looks in bag.*) Car keys?

PROTAG: I've made my decision. I am not giving up my cantaloupe.

ANTAG #2: So be it. Let the world forever know that thou art a weirdo. And as such you shall forever wander alone, without a friend in the world, with the exception of your cantaloupe. To all of those who obey my word, speak no words of disdain or compassion to this man. Depart and leave him to his own fate.

Antag #2 begins to leave with Antag #1 close behind. On his way, he passes in front of Woman #1.

WOMAN #1: Hello.

ANTAG #2: Hello!

Antag #1, Antag #2, and Woman #1 exit arm in arm. Motherly Woman #2 stands upstage, her back faces the Protagonist. She is emotionally distraught. She takes a few steps away.

PROTAG: Mom . . .

She stops.

PROTAG: You're not leaving me are you? Just because of what Zeus said . . .

The Narrator approaches Woman #2.

WOMAN #2: (*Whispering to the Narrator.*) I don't want to be here anymore . . .

PROTAG: Mom?! Aren't you at least going to say goodbye?

WOMAN #2: (*Distraught. To Narrator.*) Would you help me back to my seat?

PROTAG: Aren't you at least going to look at me?!

She sits back in her seat and hides her face behind the program. She leans next to whoever is sitting next to her.

WOMAN #2: Tell me when it's over.

NARRATOR: And so the protagonist gained the object of his desire, yet lost all else in the process.

PROTAG: Oh shut up! Don't act like this is a sad ending! It's not! It's a happy one. I am triumphant. I overcame every one of those obstacles. I have survived all that you have thrown at me. I have endured every conflict there is.

NARRATOR: Almost every conflict. We forgot about one.

PROTAG: What?

NARRATOR: Man versus Narrator.

The Narrator grabs the cantaloupe and throws it to the floor, as hard as possible, breaking the cantaloupe. [The Narrator might even jump on it a few times, depending on how messy the stage can get.]

PROTAG: Nooooo! My . . . my . . . cantaloupe. My sweet, spherical cantaloupe. (*Falls to his knees.*) She was my whole world.

NARRATOR: And with the object of his desire obliterated, the conflict evaporates . . . and the resolution can begin . . . the protagonist can see more clearly and he experiences an epiphany.

PROTAG: Well, that sucked.

NARRATOR: Or perhaps he learns something a bit more uplifting and constructive . . .

PROTAG: Maybe . . . maybe I shouldn't be so obsessed and single minded . . . maybe there's more to life than cantaloupe.

NARRATOR: Or perhaps he will be too consumed by tragedy . . .

Protag cries into the cantaloupe remains.

NARRATOR: And instead of leaving a lesson he will become overwhelmed by grief.

CONFLICT

PROTAG: I'm a widower!

NARRATOR: And as he gazes at the remains of his beloved, his heart suddenly grows old . . .

Protag holds his chest, in pain.

NARRATOR: Older . . .

Protag lurches over, grasping the cantaloupe remains to him.

NARRATOR: Ollderrr . . . And he dies -

Protag falls to the floor, lifeless.

NARRATOR: - of a broken heart. We could end the story here, draw the curtains and raise the house lights, or we could speak of the next day. When the people found him . . .

Antag #1, #2 and Woman #1 enter and form a semi-circle around Protag.

NARRATOR: They scratched their heads. Though the townsfolk never understood the protagonist, they knew how he would want to be laid to rest. They dug a hole in the earth and buried him with the cantaloupe in his arms. Within the grave, the body of the man and the seed of the fruit mingled, and the protagonist and the object of his desire became one. And the following spring, the roots took hold, and up from the earth sprouted . . . a cantaloupe tree.

PROTAG: *(Lifts up his head from deathly slumber.)* But, cantaloupes don't grow on trees.

NARRATOR: That's what makes it such a beautiful ending. The End.

THE END

NOTES:

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



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