

# the block

**By Dana M. Petric**

## THE BLOCK

**Premise:** Zoe Row is allowed one year to come up with an idea. All hopes are placed on the concept of a great idea. The result of her pontificating is the physicalization of a creative block.

**Style  
of the**

**setting:** 3 dimensional - cartoonish style - checkered floor with illusion of perspective.  
Colours - red and yellow.

**Costume:** pants with suspenders, t-shirt (**Writeous**), cap

**Props:** computer keyboard (needs to be amplified or have pre-recorded sound of typing on a keyboard)  
large, flexible letters  
large clock  
Photocopies of large images of each character - (each image has a sticky backing. At one point all the alter-egos of Zoe are stuck to her)  
slanted ramp structure

### CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS:

**ZOE ROW:** has short hair and is Woody Allen-like. She has a nasally voice - is dorky, yet smart, and slightly neurotic. She loves computer games. **[Cleans obsessively. Astronomy is her passion? Loves space and time theories. English major.]**

### ALTER EGO CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS:

**BERNIE, THE BRAIN:** Southern accent, opinionated, overbearing, brash, bullying

**DERGO, THE DEPRESSED:** obviously depressed, heavy mannerisms, unmotivated

**FILLILA:** Flighty, ethereal, new age-ist

**CHARLIE:** character created by Zoe - she is aware of her existence  
- determined, physically strong

**CHUCK:** tough, streetwise guy who plays in a band

**VIRGINIA WOLF:** Defined by a mask, the lighthearted side of Virginia

**SCENE I.**

**LIGHTS UP**

**SOUND CUE: #1**

**VOICE-OVER**

Bye, Zoe.

**Sweeping off stage**

**ZOE**

Yeah, okay, bye Miranda. I'm leaving soon. See ya tomorrow.

**ZOE sweeping with a broom. A DUST CLOUD FORMS. CHOKING, ZOE SPINS & STUMBLES, COUGHS & FREEZES IN A GAGGING POSITION).**

**LIGHT: A BRIGHT LIGHT SHINES ON ZOE**

**SOUND: CUE #2**

**AUNT FLEND A (ON TAPE)**

"Come up with that great idea and write that book you have longed to write. I will give you \$17,432 26 and a deadline of one year to complete it. If you don't, the money must be returned. Fulfill your dream and create your masterpiece, Brenda."

**MOVEMENT: ZOE COMES OUT OF THE FREEZE POSITION**

**ZOE**

*BRENDA?*

**LIGHTS OUT**

SCENE II.

LIGHTS UP

MUSIC: 3 PLUCKING NOTES

IMAGE: ZOE MIMING BANGING HEAD AGAINST WALL (3 TIMES)

LIGHTS OUT FOR 1 BEAT, LIGHTS UP FOR 2 BEATS

MUSIC: stretched chord - 2 beats

IMAGE: ZOE LYING ON BACK WITH FEET OVER HEAD

LIGHTS OUT FOR 1 BEAT, LIGHTS UP FOR 2 BEATS

MUSIC: down scale - 2 beats

IMAGE: ZOE CROUCHING, STRAIGHTEN LEGS, LOOKS AT AUDIENCE FROM BETWEEN LEGS

LIGHTS OUT FOR 1 BEAT, LIGHTS UP FOR 3 BEATS

MUSIC: feet tap to groovy tune - 3 beats

IMAGE: LEANING AGAINST WALL - HEAD BACK - FEET SPLAYED OUT IN FRONT- continue while lights out)

LIGHTS OUT FOR 1 BEAT, LIGHTS UP

IMAGE: ZOE SQUATTING ON GROUND HOLDING HEAD

MUSIC: twang - head up - wait a beat

ZOE

But I'm *not* Brenda!

MUSIC: twang - head up - wait a beat

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE III.

LIGHTS UP

ZOE face down on ramp - 3 loud sighs

ZOE

Beginning is half the thing..., (*music responds*)

*beginning* is half the thing..., (*music responds*)

beginning is *half* the thing..., (*music responds*)

beginning is half the *thing*... (*music responds*)

ZOE suddenly jumps to her feet, and turns to audience

ZOE

Beginning is half the thing! If I begin, then I am half finished. But if I never begin, then I will never be finished, and without beginning there is no end to the beginning of the thing. Right? Right. But what is the THING? Thing, thing, thing.

**MUSIC CUE: Loud, ominous music**

LIGHTS DOWN

**SOUND CUE #3: sound of footsteps is heard**

## LIGHTS UP

**Jump/turn - look stage right (do crossover step - look stage left (do crossover step)- take a few steps and stop**

### ZOE

Did you see it? It was brash, brilliant and full of... substance. Could the thing fit?

### LIGHT CUE: flashing

**Chase after it - using a Chaplinesque style of movement with old movie music - lights flashing to simulate sped up movement - hop on one foot - grab onto "IDEA" or "IT" object and run behind wall...**

**MUSIC SOUND: Echo chamber effect**

### ZOE

(yelling) I try ***the thing*** on in the fitting-room of my mind. My mind, a cubicle marred with black scuff-marks - a buzzing fluorescent light stuck on the wall with a rusty nail hanging below it. Trying ***the thing*** on is like squeezing myself into a bikini in the middle of winter. The harsh lighting reflects every ripple of my mind. I stand stunned.

**Struggle with material with the word "IDEA" written on it. Grapple with it while trying to put it on in front of wall - go back and  
Poke out head & say:**

### ZOE

**(desperate)** I need to see how ***the thing*** looks. The mirror is just outside the curtain. But those vultures disguised as people won't leave. An ill-fit is what they're waiting for. Will it fit without messing up my hair? If I undo the gist, suck in my concept, reverse the premise, and turn ***the thing*** inside out - ***the thing*** just might fit.

**SOUND CUE: end music**

**LIGHTS OUT**

**SOUND CUE #4: sound of ripping is heard**

**SOUND CUE #5: A bell rings**

**VOICE OVER**

*I stand on the balcony of a mogul palace at sunset. A slight breeze wafts through my diaphanous gown as I wait for the vultures to swoop down and devour me.*

**MUSIC CUE: Bernie's theme - Sentimental Journey**

**LIGHTS UP**

go to under keyboard to pick up Bernie

**ZOE**

Bernie! There you are. You're looking quite grey today.

**BERNIE**

My usual pallor.

**ZOE**

Pal or what of mine?

**MUSIC STOPS**

... Chasing after empty ideas is all I do lately. Where are you when I need you?

**BERNIE**

Where am I? As always, in your head.

**ZOE**

But you're not helping me. You feel so vacuous, empty...

**BERNIE**

Therefore, the fitting-room metaphor. How simplistic. I am sorry to break it to you, but your brain is a brain. Time to re-write that piece of vapid nothingness.

**ZOE**

No, it isn't! Even if it is, it's my vapid nothingness. And I like it.

**BERNIE**

Don't be so positive. You'll never get anywhere by being self-indulgent. Be more... critical.

**ZOE**

NO! Don't push me! I have to be positive to write something. And then I will revise and revise until there is nothing left to revise. And I am stuck with one word imprinted on the blank page that is you, my brain. Now, you are a blank page. So ponder that.

**BERNIE**

You don't think much of me, do you?

**ZOE**

Not much. All you do is constantly criticise. **(mimic Bernie)** *"Too linear, too analytical, too dull. Not enough emotion, passion. More fantasy, illusion, abstraction"...* stop it! What do you want from me? Prodding and pummelling me till my skull is pounding. Leaving me a babbling blob. You know Bernie, if you continue to annoy me I will cut you in half - the right side of you is all I really need. **(pause)** Remember *that!*

**BERNIE**

You talk the way you write. Like a floofler

**ZOE**

What does that mean? That I *floofle*? Are you implying I am vague and obscure? Are you picking a fight? Fine, it's time we had it out. **(Look at Bernie)** I expose you for what you

are - an undisciplined, corrupt, sabotaging, lump of wetness,... so impressive with your lobes, fissures, hypothalamus, etc., yet all you are is a mass of ...

**(Start wind-up motion)** muscularity...oozy, messy matter with activating synapsis!

**Smash down to ground, slowly bring up and begin turn & punch full circle - punch up in the air - grab with both hands bring down to chest - do circles, knee bends. End with pose of Bernie imprinted on right side of Zoe's head**

**MUSIC:** boxing music - the blues - twangy, sharp, music softens and fades on pose

**LIGHTING CUE:** Lights fade to black

**SOUND CUE #6:** a bell rings

#### **VOICE OVER**

*I see the empty room - stone walls - long, narrow, barren - void of all things and thoughts like my brain. He tells me it has been cleaned out, but I don't trust him. I know he was in my brain. Get out of my brain! I should tell the big boy that my brain is full of cream of wheat. He knows already - that is frightening. I am afraid to tell him that I have no thoughts.*

