

PALAIS OOPS !!

1. MASTER OF CEREMONIES

ATLAS:

Boys and Girls, Ladies and Gentlemen, and anybody else who does not fit that description: welcome to Palais Oops. Please take your seats and put them on the chairs (or floor) provided. Today, on our very stage the Palais Oops proudly presents the great galloping, goodtime, all purpose, green pantomime revue, also known as the Grand Radiant Exposition, but which we call, Atlas At Last! For your entertainment and your edification, we will present a variety of acts unseen anywhere else in the world! In fact, we will bring on the world, our world, our earth, our living globe, the lovely Gaia, spinning in space on a year's run around the sun. It will be carried by that ancient Greek God, the enormously mighty, the mightily enormous, the inevitable, Atlas! For eons this tower of strength has borne the weight of the sky. Now he will scoop up the very Earth itself in addition to bearing the crushing mass of the heavens. Yes, friends, this is your opportunity to witness the incredible potency of Atlas, that ancient Titan, who is -

None other than myself! Trumpeters, a Fanfare for Atlas, if you please.

Disappears off. The protean clowns run out with kazoos and render a fanfare.

Atlas returns with large globe of Earth on his back. As he speaks the kazoos build a low drone into loud buzz.

ATLAS:

For eons beyond measure

Glares at proteans.

Before your grandfathers' grandfathers' ancestors ever trod upon the surface of this planet.

Before your grandmothers' great great grandmothers ever so ancient, I have borne upon my back the weight of the sky, and now I have with one hearty heft....

Another glare. Proteans trickle off on the kazoos. They leave.

It's hard to find good help nowadays.

He has begun to twitch and now sets the globe down on stage.

Whoo! It's getting too hot to handle. I'm going to need some help. You won't mind if I leave the world behind for a few moments while I seek assistance? Good.

Atlas exits.

2. THE STAGEHAND

Hand, the stagehand strolls on, a perfect nondescript, humming a little tune and maybe giving the odd skip until tripping over the ball. Trying to right it makes Hand's hands hot. Jumping up and down while shaking hands in the air then sucking them, does not seem to cool the fingers.

HAND:

Ooooooo! Oo who hoo!

FINGERS, also a stagehand, runs on.

FINGERS:

Okay, where is it? Is it here? Boss says to clear it away. Is that it?

HAND:

What? Where? Why? When? Whatever?
What?

FINGERS:

The Globe?

HAND:

Globe?

FINGERS:

Round thing. All the way round.

HAND:

Like, Earthlike?

FINGERS:

Yeah, Our world.

HAND:

Oh. *Points* That's it there.

FINGERS:

That's what I asked you.

HAND:

That's what I told you.

FINGERS: *glares*

We've to move it. Come on, give me a hand.

As Fingers grasps the globe, Hand claps. Fingers leaps back with burned digits.

HAND:

It's too hot to handle.

FINGERS:
Why didn't you warn me?

HAND:
I did.

FINGERS:
You did not.

HAND:
I clapped my hands.

FINGERS:
You gave me a hand?

HAND:
I clapped to get your attention.

FINGERS:
Why would you do that?

HAND:
So I could warn you. And I did. I told you it's too hot to handle.

FINGERS:
After I touched it.

HAND:
That's why I clapped, to stop you.

FINGERS:
You could have said "Don't touch!"

HAND:
I never thought of that.

BEAT. Fingers gives Hand a look.

FINGERS:
It's got to be moved.

HAND:
Why?

FINGERS:

Boss says so.

HAND:

I'm not picking it up. I'm not scorching my hands.

FINGERS:

How about feet?

HAND:

I'm not scorching my feet neither.

FINGERS:

Shoes! You've got shoes. They can protect you.

HAND:

Right! Good idea. *Takes off his shoes and puts them on hands.*

FINGERS:

What are you doing?

HAND:

Moving the world.

Grabs ball with shoe clad hands. Of course, the ball has to have weight so Hand can't shift it, except onto Hand's own foot which no longer has the protection of the shoes.

Oww! My foot. Get it off my foot.

FINGERS:

I'll save you!

Without considering. Fingers puts hands on the ball to move it, of course fingers are withdrawn immediately. Fingers jumps about trying to cool the offended digits.

HAND:

Hurry! My foot's on fire and my toes are getting flattened.

FINGERS:

Hold on!

Takes a run and a kick at the ball. Foot stops dead at ball. Now FINGERS' foot is trapped under the ball. Both struggle. They try pulling each other off the globe. Finally Hand drops to the floor and backs out by walking on the shoe clad hands. At once Hand puts shoes back on feet.

HAND:

Saved by the shoes.

FINGERS:

Oi! What about me?

HAND:
You want to take your shoes off?

FINGERS:
No! I want you to take the globe off my foot.
HAND grabs Fingers and pulls. They each fall back as Fingers is released. They both look at the ball.

FINGERS:
Well, that didn't work.

HAND:
Better tell the boss.

FINGERS:
Oh Zeus! We'll just get sent back.

HAND:
Maybe we should bring her fever down.

FINGERS:
That will never work. Come on, we've got some thinking to do.

HAND:
I don't know how...

FINGERS:
I noticed.

HAND:
...to cool her down.

THEY LEAVE

3. THE BLANKET OF ATLAS

Enter Atlas.

ATLAS:
I say, I say, I say. Do you know how hot a globe can get? No? If you hum the tune maybe I'll remember the words!

Sings *(Red Sails In The Sunset)*
How hot can the world get?
How hot could that be?

Have we reached the point yet
Where it's boiling the sea?

When a planet gets heated
then what will it do
to all of Earth's critters
and that includes me and you?

Spoken I've got a problem. My job is to carry the globe, Gaia through space. Hot or not I'm going to have to pick it up. So, I need some insulation. Something between Gaia and me. Don't move from this spot. I will return in some sort of a jiffy. Or maybe I'll return on foot. Either way, I will be back.

Atlas leaves as Fingers enters carrying a big cluster of cloth.

FINGERS:

This ought to do it.

Tries to put the cloth over the globe. The principle here is to end up rolling over the ball, sliding in many directions until at last the globe is covered by the cloth. As soon as it's covered whistles and alarms go off and Atlas races back on.

ATLAS:

What is happening? The globe is overheating!

FINGERS:

I just wrapped it in a blanket so I could touch it.

ATLAS:

Well, it's getting hotter under there! What's that blanket made of?

FINGERS:

Carbon Dioxide. CO₂. You know. It's used for smothering fires.

ATLAS:

It's smothering the Earth! Don't you know that humanity has been busy making a blanket like that for two hundred years or so! That's what's warming it up. It can't take having much more added!

FINGERS:

Wooops!

Fingers removes the blanket, but not without a wrestle with it, getting wrapped up in the folds.

ATLAS:

Very well. No more carbon dioxide! We have to find a way to stop putting that gas into the air.

FINGERS:

I'll put the blanket away. Now if only we could get rid of that man-made blanket.

ATLAS:

That's a job a for humanity. First, people have to reduce their footprint.

FINGERS:

They're stomping on something?

ATLAS:

All over it.

FINGERS:

What?

ATLAS:

The Air.

FINGERS:

They need lighter shoes.

ATLAS:

Much lighter, to cut down the carbon footprint.

FINGERS:

Heavy stuff carbon. Used to be you could pour that stuff down the sink.

ATLAS:

All Earth's sinks are getting clogged. Humanity is clogging them.

FINGERS:

Right. Lighter shoes. Unclog the sinks. I'll go find somebody to suggest it to.

EXIT

ATLAS:

That still doesn't help me lift it right now.

(Modern Major General)

I'm going to have go and search
and find some way to carry it.
To pick up something very hot
is really very scary, it
poses quite a problem
and I haven't really got a clue

I just hope someone else will figure something very smart to do.

4. QUICK CHANGE ARTIST

A folding screen edges onto the stage behind Atlas. Throughout this scene the projection screen will play images reflecting the spoken images. Each time Hand changes costume there should be a signature image.

ATLAS:

But before I do that ☐cBoys and girls, ladies and gentlemen we have come to the point in our show where we present to you a lithe, lissom, terpsichorean carrying on the great vaudeville tradition: the quick change artiste! Now on our stage, with her unique and totally personal style, the Palais Oops Green Pantomime is proud to present the lovely Gaia in the terra forming Dance Of The Earth!

On spins Hand from behind the screen, dressed in a fiery red outfit, and whirls about

the stage.

Way back when the Sun was young, Gaia was just a ball of fire twirling through the darkness of space. But it changed.

Disappears behind the screen and emerges in blue. Another dance routine.

Eons later Gaia was water. Waving, rolling, raining, clouding, and splashing. Then out of the water, like a giant turtle surfacing, the land sprang up. Another change!

Disappears again and returns in blue and green. Dance routine.

Out of the sea soup came teeming life
onto the expanding land. It came greening.
Grasses, trees, shrubs and flowers
vegetables, vines, fruits and nuts .
But ... it changed.

Humanity began to organise.
Domesticate.
Civilise.

FINGERS appears and reaches and takes a piece of green from the outfit, leaving a sandy coloured patch. As the chant goes on Fingers plucks more away.

Humanity began to grow.
Cut down weeds,
Sow seeds,
cut down trees,
clear for fields
Gobbling up poor Gaia,
leaving lots of waste.
Clogging the carbon sinks
Getting far too stinky
Oooooooooo
Can't breathe.

Hand falls to the floor gasping. FINGERS looks down in dismay. Looks at green patches in hand.

ATLAS:

So! What are you going to do about that, humanity? What can we do to replace the trees that get cut down; and all those bogs and things that clean the Carbon Dioxide out of the air? Those are the carbon sinks; they're Gaia's lungs; she needs them to breathe just like you do. What do you folks think?

Play off audience

Plant trees? How many do you think? One for every tree cut down and one for the forest.

Fingers starts to put green patches back on the fallen Hand.

There's a lot to replace, keep working at it.

Fingers goes wild to get the patches back on. After they are all on Hand slowly revives.

If only it could be as fast as that. After all, this is pantomime! Life moves so much slower than in the panto.

Fingers helps Hand off.

5. THE PANTO

ATLAS:

And speaking of panto – What – is a panto without an old-fashioned pantomime? Way back before television, before radio, before movies, there was the stage. Every year each theatre put on a pantomime that was always based on a nursery rhyme or an old folk tale from long ago. And today, right here on our stage the Palais Oops Green Pantomime will present a five minute panto of your choosing. May I have some suggestions from the audience please? I think I heard Jack and beanstalk. Boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen kindly put your palms together, for – Jack and the beanstalk.

Enter Hand as Maw. HAND:

Jack, Jack, there's no grain in the grain bin, no bread in the bread bin, no soup in the soup tin, no milk in the cow. We'll have to sell her now. We need food and rent.

FINGERS:

Aw Maw! Our money's all spent?

I'll do as you say, I guess.
C'mon. Ol' Bess.

Hand becomes cow and is led by Jack. There is a flatulent blast.

I can't believe the blast
of stinky gas you pass.

HAND:

Moo!

FINGERS:

You want to buy my cow, good gent?

Hand becomes buyer.

HAND:

Don't look like much of a cow. ***Turns back into cow for a beat and a blast.*** I'll
give you a handful of beans for her.

Do you concur?

FINGERS:

Do I agree? Not me.
I don't know what you mean,
selling the family cow for beans!?

HAND:

You think that I'm some sly guy? How could you think that I
would be so cheap? No, no, these beans are quite unique.

FINGERS:

You say, unique?

HAND:

Dare I say, magique? That's French for magic.
Manifique magique!

FINGERS:

Wow, bilingual beans! That's magic! If they get us our meals then you've got a
deal.

HAND:

It's a steal. Here's your beans. Now, I'll take the cow. Your Maw will be proud of
your sales know-how. Plant them, they're the best beans ever seen, and when they
grow, you will know the magic in green.

Turns again and becomes cow. Another blast.

Moo.

FINGERS:

Bless you, Bess! It's for the best. You've blessed us with...

HAND: *Ma*

Beans? What do you mean: Beans! You got beans for the cow? How could you? How??

FINGERS:

Now, now! You'll have to admit the cow wasn't fit for

HAND:

Beans!

Tosses beans away

FINGERS:

Aw, maw! How far did you throw...where did they go?
I sure hope they grow.

HAND:

We've nothing to eat and it's time to sleep. *Both slump in a slumber*

BEAT. *Hand whirls into Rooster pose and crows.*

Cock a doodle doo! *Or some such rooster crow*

FINGERS: *awakens*

Morning already! And what do you know? Wow, did those beans ever grow!

HAND: *Ma*

Oh Jack, we have food that gives us protein.

FINGERS:

Wow! Look at all those different kinds of beans!
We'll never be short of food again.

HAND:

The End!

I love a happy ending, don't you?

ATLAS returns to the scene.

ATLAS:

Wait a moment! This isn't how Jack and The Beanstalk ends!

FINGERS:

It's how this one ends.

HAND:

I love a happy ending, don't you?

ATLAS:

It always has a happy ending. It's just that a lot more happens in the story before

the happy ending. You know. He climbs the beanstalk and is sniffed out by a giant, my role, who chases after Jack, who is rescuing a golden-egg-laying goose and a singing harp. And Jack scrambles down the stalk, chops it down and the giant falls to earth and, after a magnificent death scene, is flattened.

HAND:

No. We didn't do that one.

ATLAS:

Why ever not?

FINGERS:

We like beans. Good vegetable protein.

ATLAS:

But you had meat protein with the cow.

HAND:

But once we ate her she'd be all gone. The beans grow every year.

FINGERS:

So Jack and his mother would always have food. That's good.

HAND:

I love a happy ending, don't you? Besides, you know all that gas she blows from her...

FINGERS:

Assuming, obviously, there are a lot of cows kept to feed millions of people, that's a lot of gas they all release.

HAND:

Suffocating it is.

FINGERS:

A big part of that blanket that's warming the Earth. And we won't be using up all our water on the cow. Beans don't need half as much.

HAND:

See, I told you! I love a happy ending.

They start to leave. Atlas shrugs.

ATLAS:

Well, that means I don't get to be the giant, although as Atlas I already am more than gigantic. I am Titanic. That's my family name, Titan.

EXIT

HAND:

Thinks he's a ship now.

FINGERS:

Titanic? It sank.

EXIT

6. PATTERN PITTER PATTERN

ATLAS:

Lots to do, lots to do. So little time to do it. And speaking of time

Bell rings

It's time for a little song and dance. Whoever heard of a pantomime without some song and dance? Well, that is one of its ingredients.

So, let's get cooking.

On comes Hand or Fingers with keyboard: Other protean enters with percussion (washboard?). Atlas may join in with a jug or kazoo. After the intro, he sings. Introduction is one verse on keyboard, then all play chorus on kazoos.

Puttin' On The Style

ATLAS:

1. Little ball, afloat in space,
Circling round the sun,
Racing through the seasons,
Spinning as it runs.
Hanging with the planets
In our yearly race.
Sliding on a milky way
Through the immensity of space.

CHORUS

Start fixing up the planet now
that's what we've got to do
We're all in this together

including me and you.

Reduce, reuse, recycle,
to get things on the mend,
or from top down to the bottom
we'll be coming to an end.

Dance Break: chorus on kazoo's while Hand does a tap routine. Then

2. Hang on to the planet, folks
It's the only one we've got
And the way that we're consuming it
We aren't left with a lot.
We've got to change our habits, folks,
From the top down to the rump,
Or pretty soon we'll turn our world
Into a garbage dump.

CHORUS

Start fixing up the planet now
that's what we've got to do
We're all in this together
including me and you.

Reduce, reuse, recycle,
to get things on the mend,
or from leaders to the people
we'll be coming to an end.

All repeat twice

or from leaders to the people
we'll be coming to an end.

All bow and run off.

7. PERSONS AT WORK

ATLAS:

Can you believe the globe is warming? It only seems like yesterday she was fine; now things are getting so out of hand humanity asked me to find someone who can help. You know Gaia's cousin, Mars? He doesn't come round the neighbourhood much, last time was sixty thousand years ago. Today Mars said he's sending along his top assistants to take a look at Gaia. I hope they don't shake her up too much. Mars can be a bit rough at times, but I really don't want Gaia lying around getting hotter. She won't be fit for Humanity to live on if people keep going on like this.

The two clowns enter. They do a little dance number with the ditty they sing.

CLOWNS:

No job too big
No job too small
You want it done
We're the ones to call.

HAND:

I am Phobos, I am the Hand

FINGERS:

I am Deimos, I am the Fingers.

CLOWNS:

We'll do the work
And we won't linger.
We'll get 'er done

'Cause we won't rest
Until we've shown
That we're the best.

*They finish with a high five, which they miss. On the projection screen a sign:
PERSONS AT WORK.*

FINGERS: *looks at globe*
Ooh, looks a bit crusty. Phobos, get the screen.

ATLAS:
What's the screen for?

FINGERS:
We don't operate in public.

ATLAS:
Why don't you operate in public?

HAND: *puts low screen in front of the globe*
Too painful to watch.

ATLAS:
That sounds drastic.

FINGERS:
Drastic times call for drastic measures. Going to need the big tool kit.

HAND:
Right, big tools for the big job!

ATLAS:
Looks like that's what Mars sent alright. *Hand exit.*

FINGERS:
Don't you worry, Mr. Atlas. We're on the job.

ATLAS:
That's what worries me.

FINGERS:
Don't you worry! Right, Phobos, make yourself handy, go dig a big hole.

HAND: *enters with large kit*
Dig a hole? With my hands?

FINGERS:

Better yet. Use a shovel.

HAND:

I like the way you think. Thanks Deimos, that sounds much easier.
Wrestles kit over screen and suddenly follows it over. Have we got a shovel?

FINGERS:

Got everything in that tool kit.

Shovel head appears. Hand gradually sinks out of sight with the shovelling.

ATLAS:

Why do you need to dig a hole?

FINGERS:

Well, if anything goes wrong it will do less damage if it's down a hole. Hey Phobos, how're you doing?

HAND:

Nearly deep enough.

ATLAS:

What do you mean, "if anything goes wrong"?

FINGERS:

Work safe, play safe. Just common sense.

HAND: *hollow sound*

It's deep enough now.

FINGERS;

Okay, I'll come supervise you.

ATLAS:

I hope you know what you're doing?

FINGERS:

Sure we do. We just don't know if it will work. I'm coming down.
Goes behind screen and descends out of sight as if on a ladder.

ATLAS:

You know when Mars and crew are around they often shake things up a bit.

FINGERS:

Alright, Phobos, let's see if we can adjust the crust; that ought to release some

heat.

HAND:

Okay, pass me the drill.

FINGERS:

Here you go. I've got the clamps.

HAND:

Nasty things, cramps.

FINGERS:

Clamps! I've got the clamps!

HAND:

Well, stay away from me; I don't want to catch them.

FINGERS:

Just drill!

We hear lots of drill and hammering coming from behind the screen. Hand and Fingers' voices have the hollow sound of depth.

Whoa, too much pressure!

HAND:

Hey, look at that!

FINGERS:

Something's going to blow!

HAND:

I'll just adjust...

FINGERS:

Your gravitational field is jolting! Uh oh!

There is an immediate explosion and Hand flies up in the air from behind the screen and drops down again. All sorts of things are flying about on the rear-projection screen.

FINGERS: *head appears*

I hope we didn't do that?

HAND: *from below*

That was fun. Can I do it again?

FINGERS:

No!

ATLAS:

What's going on?

FINGERS:

Just a few shakes and a bit of a mudslide.

ATLAS:

What on Earth?

FINGERS:

All round the Earth.

HAND:

Wow, the earth moved! Hope there's no after effects.

ATLAS:

That's enough! You've rocked my world for the last time.

FINGERS:

Just can't satisfy some people.

ATLAS:

Did you cool it off any?

HAND:

Um ... Ouch! No!

ATLAS:

You're right, I'm not satisfied: just put it back where you found it.

HAND:

Okay, okay. Ouch!

FINGERS:

Use your big tools to jack it up, not your hands. *Lots of sounds.* Good. Now you can fill in the hole.

HAND:

Why me?

FINGERS:

Why not? You dug it, you're the expert. We're just about done, Mr. Atlas.

Last big sound effect.

HAND: *hollow*

Got 'er! She's done.

FINGERS:

There you go, we gone got 'er done.

ATLAS:

Good. Now you've gone got 'er done, can you go get you gone?

FINGERS:

Phobos, hand me up that tool kit there, buddy. Thanks. Woops!
Disappears suddenly. Loud clunking sound. Ouch! Dang, that's heavy! *hollow*

HAND:

Here, I'll help you. Hang on I forgot something. Whoooooa!
Loud clunking sound again as Fingers disappears.

FINGERS:

Not again!

HAND:

Sorry. Here you go, buddy. *Leans over to bring Fingers into view.*

FINGERS: *rubbing his head*

Gee thanks. *Both reappear.*

HAND:

Got it! *Before Fingers takes the screen, Hand lugs the kit over the screen and follows it with a tumble and is caught by Atlas.*

FINGERS:

Nice catch.

ATLAS:

And if I catch you messing with the Earth like that again there will be trouble. You tell Mars he's not much help, thanks all the same.

HAND:

Oh, anytime. Ta ta!

FINGERS:

There's no need for sarcasm, you know.

HAND:

Is that in the tool kit?

They are gone.

ATLAS:

Sorry humanity, this is a problem you're going having to solve yourselves.

8. MARIONETTES

ATLAS:

And now, one of the most astounding acts to grace the stage of the Palais Oops. The highly touted, much shouted, hear all about it, the mysterious movers, marionettes manipulated with such skill that you do not even see the strings: we call them: The Unstrung Heroes! Oops. I forgot. They are puppets, they can't move on their own. I'll just go get them.

He leaves only to return carrying a limp Hand, whom he props against the ladder. Hand starts to slide and Atlas has to straighten up Hand into sitting position. Atlas leaves and returns hauling the limp Fingers. As he arrives Hand is starting to slide, so he lets go of Fingers to catch Hand. Fingers then starts to slide and Atlas has to rush to straighten Fingers. Once he's got them both set up. He goes and gets two sets of crossed-sticks and comes back to made a show of attaching the invisible strings. Atlas then climbs one of the two ladders to stand in the centre of the board. Manipulating one set of the crosspieces he grazes Hand to stand, while doing a voice for the character.

ATLAS: (as COMMERCE)

How do you do? My name is Commerce. I am always on the go.

With the other set of controls he grazes Fingers. And does Progress' voice.

ATLAS: (as PROGRESS)

I'm called Progress. I never look back.

Progress starts forward and ATLAS has to haul the puppet back with obvious difficulty.

COMMERCE: *Merge Atlas voice to Fingers*

Now to business. Got to make some profit. What stuff can we sell?

ATLAS:

Hold on there. What are you trying to sell?

COMMERCE:

Doesn't matter. Any old junk. Just so I can make money.

PROGRESS: *Merge Atlas voice to Hand*

Excuse me. Move aside. Nobody gets in the way of progress.

Progress is trying to get Commerce to move. Atlas is struggling to keep control.

ATLAS:

Hold on there! I'm the puppeteer here. None of this going off on your own.

PROGRESS:

Hey, I'm Progress. I go wherever I want.

COMMERCE:

Progress will never get in the way of Commerce.

ATLAS:

Oi, stop it. I'm the one in control here.

COMMERCE

No, I am in control.

PROGRESS:

Don't get pushy with me.

COMMERCE tries to walk through Progress who trips Commerce. This gives Atlas a jolt.

ATLAS:

Hey!

Commerce crawls between Progress' legs.. This ties up the Puppeteer, Atlas. Progress sits on Commerce, who begins to buck. Atlas is getting in knots. Progress goes flying and on landing turns to face Commerce and walks away.

COMMERCE:

Now where are you going?

PROGRESS:

Over there. *Does an abrupt turn and start in opposite direction*

COMMERCE:

I thought you were going the other way.

PROGRESS

So did I. That's Progress for you. Never know which direction I'm going to go off in.

ATLAS:

Getting tied up in response to Progress.

You're telling me!

COMMERCE:

Not me. I follow the bottom line. Plain to see.

Commerce is looking down walking. Progress collides and knocks Commerce to the floor.

COMMERCE:

Sometimes you are impossible to be around.

Progress picks Commerce up.

PROGRESS:

And sometimes I pick you right up.

ATLAS:

And sometimes you drag us all down. Gaia included.

The marionettes help each other up and start circling back-to-back looking for each other.

COMMERCE:

Thanks for the help.

PROGRESS:

See, we're making progress! *Stops dead* Oi, what's holding me back?

COMMERCE:

We're tangled together.

PROGRESS:

Oh, knots!

ATLAS:

See what can happen with the two of you running off on your own?

The Proteans and Atlas go through a series of intertwining contortions to unravel themselves. At last they succeed. Proteans stand in neutral position, very loose and dangly limbed. The following bit of dialogue will be of minimal movement and must appear to be controlled by Atlas.

COMMERCE:

At last!

ATLAS:

No, it's Atlas.

PROGRESS:

You're Atlas.

COMMERCE:

He's the last?

PROGRESS:

Atlas!

COMMERCE:

That's what I said; at last!

ATLAS:

I am Atlas.

COMMERCE:

Oh, Atlas!

PROGRESS:

At last!

COMMERCE:

That's what I said in the first place.

ATLAS:

Never mind. At last, we're disentangled.

PROGRESS:

Is that the name of our group?

ATLAS:

You can't really call us a group until we are all working together.

COMMERCE:

We got out of that mess by working together.

ATLAS:

And maybe, by working together, we could help stop Gaia from getting too hot.

PROGRESS:

Too hot for what?

ATLAS:

Humanity.

COMMERCE:

Oh, Humanity!

PROGRESS:

Like, people, like.

ATLAS:

Exactly like. I know the two of you had something to do with warming her up, so now you can work toward cooling her down.

COMMERCE:

Why would we want to do that?

ATLAS:

If it gets too hot for Humanity you won't have anyone to work with.

COMMERCE:

Oooh! Don't want that.

PROGRESS:

So, we work as a group: The Disentangled?

COMMERCE:

Nifty name.

ATLAS:

See how much better it is when we work together? Alley oop!

Lifts his controls and Commerce and Progress straighten out. They begin to rock from side to side as Atlas appears to make them dance. They get a step going and sing:

CHORUS:

Start fixing up the planet now
that's what we've got to do
We're all in this together
including me and you.

Reduce, reuse, recycle,
to get things on the mend,
or from top down to the bottom
we'll be coming to an end.

PROGRESS:

Hey, we're a group!

ATLAS:

We're going to have to keep it together if we're going to make it work.

COMMERCE:

Okay, so we work with humanity, where do you come in?

ATLAS:

I help guide you with the □ principles of preservation. □h

PROGRESS:

What □fs that?

ATLAS:

These! *Raises controls. Proteans arms shoot over their heads. They go through a series of fast daft manoeuvres with Atlas. Abrupt stop.*

COMMERCE:

Atlas gradually resumes speaking for Commerce

When they □fre not tangled up, those are pretty useful □ principles □h.

PROGRESS:

Atlas gradually resumes speaking for Progress

Don □ft feel like strings at all.

ATLAS: (as COMMERCE)

So, let □fs get to it!

ATLAS: (as PROGRESS)

Right! *Proteans walk off in opposite directions. The controls fly out of Atlas □f hands.*

ATLAS:

Going to need stronger principles.

9. ON THE WIRE

ATLAS:

Don't look too good. Still warm. Running a fever, eh? Poor old Gaia.
Reaches hand over globe and reacts to warmth. Pulls out magnifying glass.
Proteans arrive.

HAND:

What's up, Doc?

ATLAS:

She's sick from all that junk.

FINGERS:

Junk food, eh?

ATLAS:

Like any living organism too much junk makes her sick.

HAND: *to globe*

So stop with the junk. That will make things better.

FINGERS:

No use telling Gaia, it's humanity that forces the junk on her.

HAND:

If humanity keeps producing at this rate it won't be long before the whole world will become one enormous heap of rubbish.

ATLAS:

What happens when you turn a planet into a heap of rubbish?

HAND:

A riddle! I love riddles.

FINGERS:

I know. I know! You dump it!

ATLAS:

Dump it where? There will be nowhere left to toss your garbage. The whole planet will be garbage.

FINGERS:

Oh, that's a good point.

HAND:

And where will humanity go if the planet is all trash?

ATLAS:

Exactly, toss your planet into the rubbish and you've nowhere left to go!
Proteans get into a panic and start running around and bumping into each other.

HAND:

Nowhere to go! What to do, what to do!

FINGERS:

Buried in garbage! Oh no!

ATLAS:

Don't panic! There's still a chance to turn things around.

With a final collision the proteans come to a halt.

HAND: *spins*

I am turning around, but I don't see anything different.

FINGERS:

I think we've got to work at it. *Hand spins faster.*

HAND:

I am working at it.

FINGERS:

To turn **things** around. Not you. *Hand collapses onto the floor*

HAND:

Oh.

ATLAS:

The thing is to change things as a person and as a community, and as a nation, and as part of the human race which makes up humanity, which lives on Gaia. She fed us and clothed us for centuries, she's exhausted. It's time she got something back.

FINGERS:

Already? Alright. - Now, friends and fellows all, the greatest strongman ever to grace the stage of the Palais Oops, the mighty titan, Atlas, will cause you to gasp at his grasp as he grapples the globe of Earth to his back.

ATLAS:

I won't be able to keep this up much longer unless things change. I'm walking a fine line here. It's getting trickier. *ATLAS gingerly lifts the globe.*

HAND:

And to make this trick more tricky Atlas will carry Earth upon a tightrope.
The clowns flip over the drape that was the puppeteer's stand, the support appears to be a tightrope with the drape a black cloth to blend into the board.

FINGERS:

Yes friends, then you can see for yourselves what a fine line the Earth is on between turning the planet to rubbish or cleaning it up,

ATLAS:

Remember, I can't carry Gaia much longer if she keeps getting hotter. It starts with each of us doing our bit to help. Now, what can you do?

This is the interplay with the audience to coax responses. The actors may have to do some leading on this if answers are not forthcoming. Atlas begins to scale the ladder and start onto the □grope□h

Alright. You start doing that to help me carry Gaia along a lot further.

As Atlas starts across they all sing the chorus, □gStart fixing up the planet□h:as Atlas reaches the middle and hoists the globe on the last notes: freeze. END