The Denver Center production of The Whale was the world premiere, and so the script was still in its infancy. The later, playwrights horizons edition of the script had numerous changes. Below is a side-by-side of all differences between the scripts and the dramaturg's explanation for why this change might have been made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denver Center</th>
<th>Playwrights Horizons</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p. 13</td>
<td>p. 2</td>
<td>Character continuity. Here the action is changed from Charlie attempting to help himself to Charlie attempting to call for help—something more in line with the character. Charlie only tries to stand up twice in the play, and those are significant moments. He is more likely to call out for Liz or Ellie.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHARLIE, in the same position before, in front of his computer, masturbating to gay porn.</td>
<td>CHARLIE, in the same position before, in front of his computer, masturbating to gay porn.</td>
<td>Additionally, the updated action has even less dignity to it</td>
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<tr>
<td>After a few moments, his breathing becomes more and more shallow. He pushes the computer desk away from him. He feels some sharp pain in his chest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He hits his chest once or twice, it doesn't help. He reaches toward his walker, but accidentally knocks it over. He tries to stand a few times but doesn't make it. All the while, the gay porn is still playing in the background</td>
<td>He reaches for his cell phone, but accidentally knocks it onto the floor. The pain becomes worse, All the while, the gay porn is still playing in the background</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 16</td>
<td>p. 8</td>
<td>Simplification / tonal tweaking to make banter between Liz &amp; Charlie easier</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHARLIE: You know that I don’t have health insurance</td>
<td>CHARLIE: With no health insurance?</td>
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<td>p. 17</td>
<td>p. 9</td>
<td>Further exaggerating the extent to which Charlie has let himself go</td>
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<td>CHARLIE: A little. What was my blood pressure?</td>
<td>CHARLIE: A little. What was my blood pressure?</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIZ: 237/135</td>
<td>LIZ: 238/134</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 18</td>
<td>LIZ: I fucking hate Mormons. I shouldn’t say that, I don’t fucking hate Mormons, I fucking hate Mormonism. I hate the sin, not the sinner. How can you believe in a God like that? He gives us the Old Testament, fine, we’ll all be Jews. Then Jesus shows up and he’s like, “Hey so, I’m the son of God, stop being Jewish, here’s the New Testament, sorry.” And then he shows up a second time, and he’s like, “Oh shit, sorry! Here’s this other thing, it’s called the Book of Mormon.” And after that we’re still supposed to wait around for him to come back a third fucking time to kill us all with holy fire and dragons and—</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 11</td>
<td>LIZ: I fucking hate Mormons. I shouldn’t say that, I don’t fucking hate Mormons, I fucking hate Mormonism. How can you believe in a God like that? He gives us the Old Testament, fine, we’ll all be Jews. Then Jesus shows up and he’s like, “Hey so, I’m the son of God, stop being Jewish, here’s the New Testament, sorry.” And then he shows up a <em>second</em> time, and he’s like, “Oh shit, sorry! Here’s this other thing, it’s called the Book of Mormon.” And after that we’re still supposed to wait around for him to come back a <em>third</em> fucking time to kill us all with holy fire and dragons and—</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 21</td>
<td>LIZ: Did you tell that little fucker you wanted to hear about the Church?</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 16</td>
<td>LIZ: Did you tell him you wanted to hear about the Church?</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 28</td>
<td>ELLIE: Well, it’s what you’re gonna do if you want me around. How much can you pay me? ELLIE: Well, it’s what you’re gonna do if you want me around. How much can you pay me?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>p. 26</td>
<td>ELLIE: Well, it’s what you’re gonna do if you want me around. How much can you pay me? CHARLIE: Whatever I have. Whatever’s is in the apartment—the TV, my computer, anything. And all the money I have in the bank. CHARLIE: Whatever I have. All the money I have in the bank.</td>
<td>Simplification / tonal adjustment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Simplification of unnecessarily long line. The crux of why Ellie is here is the money, and that in itself becomes an item of controversy later when Mary comes and the money is revealed to Liz. The rest is superfluous</td>
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</table>
CHARLIE sits on the couch reading essays and eating an extra large bar of chocolate. LIZ enters without knocking, with a small suitcase and a few shopping bags. CHARLIE quickly hides the chocolate behind a pillow on the couch.

LIZ: Hey.

Charlie: Hi. Liz, I love you, but I’d really like you to knock before you–

Liz: Shut up for a second. I brought you something.

LIZ has brought various bulk-sized groceries, they sit near the door still in bags.

LIZ: I don’t remember what it’s called, something ridiculous, I don’t remember. But it’s for you, it’s going to help you out. You ever heard of “biofeedback”?

CHARLIE: What is that?

LIZ: I don’t remember what it’s called, something ridiculous, I don’t remember. But it’s for you, it’s going to help you out. You ever heard of “biofeedback”?

Simplification of unnecessary buildup to action. Additionally, removal of a potentially distracting comic element—the chocolate bar. It might have been a funny moment where one was not needed. In a play like this, if it is too funny, it ceases to be as real as it needs to be to affect an audience.
LIZ: Oh God. Oh god, are you choking?! You’re choking?!
Okay, I don’t–lean forward!

CHARLIE leans forward as best he can, LIZ hits his back a few times. It doesn’t help.

LIZ: Okay, okay–lean over the arm!

CHARLIE struggles to lean over the arm of the couch, stomach down. As best she can, LIZ pushes on CHARLIE’s back, attempting the Heimlich Maneuver. Finally, she puts all her weight into it, and CHARLIE spits out the piece of food.

LIZ: Shit. Oh, shit, Charlie

CHARLIE: Listen, at this point in the class, I’ve given you all I can in terms of structure, building a thesis, paragraph organization. But for once–just write it. See what happens. It won’t count towards your final grade, you can rewrite it later if you want. I just–I want to know what you really think. I want you to be honest.

(pause)

Also—if you have any larger questions about essay writing, or any essays that you feel are ready for me to look at—you must send them to me by Friday at the latest. Okay?
CHARLIE: It’s called “Song of Myself”.

ELLIE: That doesn’t make any sense.

CHARLIE: It’s called “Song of Myself”.

ELLIE: My title’s better.

CHARLIE: It’s called “Song of Myself”.

ELLIE: Maybe I do understand it. Maybe I understand exactly what this poem is about, but I just don’t care. Because it was written by some self-involved moron, and even though he thinks that his “metaphor for the self” is deep and shit, it’s actually just some stupid little poem. And it doesn’t mean anything, because he’s just some worthless nineteenth century faggot. How about that”

ELLIE: Maybe I do understand it. Maybe I understand exactly what this poem is about, but I just don’t care. Because it was written by some self-involved moron, and even though he thinks that his “metaphor for the self” is deep and shit, it doesn’t mean anything, because he’s just some worthless nineteenth century faggot. How about that”

CHARLIE: Facebook.

ELLIE: Oh. You don’t stay in touch with mom?

CHARLIE: Facebook.

ELLIE: Creepy. You don’t stay in touch with mom?

Character continuity. More in line with Ellie being ambiguously smart and sassy, as opposed to being more of a screw-up

Simplification

Character continuity. Makes more sense with Ellie’s personality
| p. 35 | CHARLIE: He sort of… Slowly killed himself. (pause) He had the flu, and it developed into pneumonia, but he got that sick because he—never ate. Toward the end he was less than a hundred pounds. He just—refused to eat anything. For weeks. | p. 46 | CHARLIE: He sort of… Slowly killed himself. (pause) He had the flu, and it developed into pneumonia, but he got that sick because he—just sort of shut down. Stopped taking care of himself, stopped eating. ELLIE: Why did he do that? Removed the repetition of the fact that Alan didn’t eat. This is important and serves as a stark contrast to Charlie, but being too explicit about it is unnecessary. |
| p. 36 | CHARLIE: Yes. Don’t worry about it being good, I’m the only person who will see it. Now, I’m going to be in the bathroom for a while, but I’ll start working on your essay after— | p. 47 | CHARLIE: Yes. Don’t worry about it being good, I’m the only person who will see it. (short pause) Okay, I’m going to be in the bathroom for a while, but I’ll start working on your essay after— Removal of unnecessary pause |
| p. 38 | ELDER THOMAS: Are you ready to hear about the Church? pause CHARLIE: Yes. lights | p. 52 | ELDER THOMAS: Are you ready to hear about the Church? \( \text{pause. ELDER THOMAS smiles} \) lights This way the lights come down in the middle of the action as opposed to at the end of an exchange, keeping the play moving |
| p. 41 | ELDER THOMAS: Is this about your—? Your domestic—? Your life partner—boyfriend? pause | p. 57 | ELDER THOMAS: Is this about your—? Your domestic—… removal of unnecessary awkward stuttering moment |
CHARLIE: I thought he’d be able to get over all this religious stuff, but—It got worse and worse, to the point where every time we’d drive by that church he’d start to hyperventilate. His parents had abandoned him, refused to talk to him at all. But one night, about ten years ago, his father showed up here and he looked at Alan and he said, “I’ve written a sermon for you. You have to come tomorrow, because the sermon is for you.” I told Alan not to go, but… The next morning he came home after the service, and he was just—hollow. It took him over, and he just—stopped everything. He stopped bathing, he stopped eating, he stopped sleeping. And a few months later, he was gone.

ELDER THOMAS: What was the sermon about?

CHARLIE: I don’t know. I guess I was hoping you could find out.

ELDER THOMAS: What happened? At the service?

CHARLIE: I don’t know. Alan wouldn’t tell me what they did to him. I guess—I was hoping you could find out.

Makes it more ambiguous whether Alan’s father was a sadistic religious extremist or a religious person who was trying to make sense of his son and his religious beliefs.

Also, adds to the tragedy of the play by not making Alan’s father too obviously an antagonist.
LIZ: There, see?
ELDER THOMAS: I should probably go–
LIZ: Not before we have our little chat
ELDER THOMAS: Oh, I. What?

LIZ wheels CHARLIE toward the bathroom.
CHARLIE: Liz, what are you doing?
LIZ: You probably haven’t been to the bathroom all day.
CHARLIE: Liz–
LIZ: Give us a few minutes

LIZ pushes him out of the room. LIZ turns back to ELDER THOMAS, stares at him.

p. 62
LIZ: Good?
CHARLIE: Yeah, it’s—. It’s actually nice.
(rolls a few more feet)
Thank you, Liz, it’s really–
LIZ: Why don’t you see if it fits through the bedroom door, you probably haven’t been in there for days, right?
ELDER THOMAS: I should probably go–
LIZ: Not before we have our little chat
ELDER THOMAS: Oh, I. What?
CHARLIE: Liz–
LIZ (to CHARLIE): Give us a few minutes

LIZ pushes him toward the bedroom, out of the room. LIZ turns back to ELDER THOMAS, stares at him

Takes Charlie into consideration at the beginning of this scene, as opposed to ignoring the presence of his character here
ELDER THOMAS: He didn’t want to--?

LIZ: Not at all. Dad had set it all up, pushed him into getting engaged to this girl from the church he barely knew. When he came back, he refused to go through with the wedding. Fell in love with someone else, started a whole new life. Until one day, when he went back to the church—I don’t know what religious bullshit my dad heaped on him that day, but it sure fucked him up. And after that he just started wasting away until he was--just gone. (pause) That was my little brother. Alan. My little brother. A sweet, sensitive little kid who was crushed under the church that you think can save Charlie.

ELDER THOMAS: He didn’t want to--?

LIZ: Dad had set it all up, pushed him into getting engaged to this girl from the church he barely knew. When he came back, he refused to go through with the wedding. Fell in love with someone else, started a whole new life. Until one day, when he went back to the church—I don’t know what the hell they did to him that day, but it sure fucked him up. And after that he just started wasting away until he was just--gone. (pause) That was my brother. Alan. My big brother who was crushed under the church that you think can save Charlie.

Again, makes Alan’s father less of an obvious antagonist and thereby adds to the tragedy of the play. Because there is not an obvious scapegoat to blame, it is harder to make sense of Alan’s death, and makes a line between right and wrong harder to draw.

Additionally, Liz’s age was changed so that she is the younger sister, as opposed to the older sister. This makes sense with her characters actions, her general feelings of helplessness and attempts to make up for Alan by feeding Charlie. Her character seems like someone with less life experience than Charlie, so it is nice that her age was changed for the updated script.
CHARLIE: I think I owe you all an apology. I've been teaching you all to rewrite and rewrite and rewrite, to edit your thoughts and change them and make them clearer, more precise, more objective. And I'm starting to realize that that's horseshit. You don't have any true reaction to these books because I've taught you to edit your reactions, to reshape them and reconfigure them over and over. And after all that, you don't even have a reaction at all. You just end up hating it. And hating everyone else.

(pause)

How about this? Don't write about the book. Forget the assignment, forget the readings. Hell—forget everything you know about what makes a good essay and just—write. Just sit down, and write me something. Just give me something truthful. Okay?
ELDER THOMAS: Is he okay? Should he be taking sleeping pills?

ELLIE: I told you, I can take three at a time, and I only weigh—guess what I weigh. If you guess too high I’ll punch you

ELDER THOMAS: But he’s sort of sick, you know, so I don’t know if sleeping pills—

ELLIE: Yeah, anyway. Why is your name “Elder”?

ELDER THOMAS: I left. I didn’t want to do it anymore

(pause)
We just kept going from house to house asking people if they wanted to hear about the church, most of the time they’d just shut the door. Sometimes they’d let us talk, they’d sort of listen, and then they’d say thank you, and we’d never hear from them again. So after a while, it was like—what am I actually doing here? Am I really, like, really helping people?
ELDER THOMAS: Why do you want to know?

ELLIE: Because we’re friends now.

pause

ELDER THOMAS: Elder Paulson

Further humanizes Elder Thomas. He still seems like this weird symbol when we learn his last name is Paulson, but by learning that he has a first name too, Joseph, we get to really see him as a person earlier on in the show.
ELDER THOMAS: I thought my parents were going to disown me, and you know what they said? They said they loved me, they cared about me, and they wanted me to come home. How awful is that? (pause) But then— I got this amazing email, and I knew I had to come over to tell you.

CHARLIE: What was—?

CHARLIE feels a sharp pain in his chest, he bends his head down in pain

ELDER THOMAS: What’s wrong?

CHARLIE: I’m fine.

ELDER THOMAS: No, you’re not.

CHARLIE: It’s just... It’s going to go away, it just hurts—

ELDER THOMAS: I just want to help. I know I can help you

CHARLIE: I’m not going to the hospital—

ELDER THOMAS: I know. I won’t make you go. But I can help you. (pause) My name is Joseph. My real name— it’s Joseph Paulson. You need to know my real name. (pause) It’s not too late to know God’s love. You don’t have to be in this kind of pain anymore. You don’t have to let this body hold your spirit down.

CHARLIE: You’re high.

ELDER THOMAS: Sure, but— that doesn’t matter. When I sin, when I fall, I still know that God is in my life. That he’s still there, looking out for me, ready to forgive my sins, no matter how big they are.

Better delivery of information to audience, changed order of sentences to refrain from overloading the audience with information and risking the possibility of some of it going over their heads.

Additionally, the syntactic edits of this scene make it notably shorter, which is good because it was a lengthier scene and it is important that the play keeps moving forward and building to the last scenes.
Don't you want to have that feeling?

*pause*

CHARLIE: You need to go home to your family, Joseph.

ELDER THOMAS: I know. But I want to help you first. *(pause)* I got an email tonight, from Cindy Miller, from the church. She remembers. It just popped into her head, earlier today. She remembers the sermon. I wanted to come and tell you.

*Silence.*

CHARLIE: What was the sermon about?

ELDER THOMAS: Jonah.

CHARLIE: Jonah?

ELDER THOMAS: Yeah. Jonah and the whale

*(pause)*

Don't you see? That essay you had me read to you—the one you like so much, the one about *Moby Dick*... This isn't just a coincidence, this is *God's intervention in your life*. Charlie, I've been on this mission for four months now, after the last few weeks—I wasn't even sure if I believed in it anymore. But when I read that email—it was like I was helping you talk with God. It re-affirmed my faith.

*(pause)*

Jonah—it's about refusing the call of God, you know? Jonah tries to escape from God's will, he gets swallowed by a whale, and when he prays to God for help, God saves him by making the whale spit him onto shore

*Silence.*

CHARLIE laughs a little bit, the laughter causing pain in his chest

CHARLIE: Is this what it fucking comes down to? I always thought, whatever they did to him that day must have been so awful, so cruel... A story? Some stupid story, that's what killed him?
you think he’s going to die, God sends a whale to swallow him for three days until Jonah prays for salvation, and God commands the whale to spit him onto shore.

Pause

CHARLIE: You’re lying to me.

ELDER THOMAS: No, I’m not

CHARLIE: You’re making this up.

ELDER THOMAS: I swear, Charlie, I’m not. This isn’t a coincidence, this is God. God is speaking to you, to both of us.

CHARLIE laughs a little bit, the laughter causing pain in his chest

CHARLIE: Is this what it fucking comes down to? I always thought, whatever was in that sermon must be so terrifying, so moving... A fucking whale? A guy being swallowed by a fucking whale, this is what killed him?!

ELDER THOMAS: It’s about someone refusing the call of God, don’t you understand? Your boyfriend, he turned his back on the church. He chose his lifestyle with you over God. And when his dad made him come back to church, made him really listen this story, to God’s word—he knew. He knew God wasn’t in his life anymore. And without God, he couldn’t do anything, he couldn’t go on living. But it’s not too late for you. You can still know God. You can still ask God to make the whale spit you out.

ELDER THOMAS: No, it’s not a just a story—

CHARLIE: Look, I appreciate what you’re trying to do, but this doesn’t mean anything, it—. I don’t even know what I was expecting to find out, it’s not—

ELDER THOMAS: Listen to me.

(short pause)

Charlie, your boyfriend—he tried to escape God’s will, he chose his lifestyle with you over God. And when he heard this story, when he heard God’s word, he knew. He knew the truth. He never prayed for salvation—but it’s not too late for you.
p. 70
CHARLIE: Get out of my apartment.
ELDER THOMAS: No.
CHARLIE: Get out of my apartment.
ELDER THOMAS: No.
Pause. CHARLIE stares at ELDER THOMAS

p. 72
CHARLIE: KristyStar9, you wrote: “My parents want me to be a pharmacist, but I don’t even know what that is.”

p. 74
CHARLIE: I have to believe she cares. She didn’t do it to hurt him, she did it to send him home.

p. 74
CHARLIE: People. Are. Amazing

p. 75
LIZ: Fuck you, Charlie. I’m not letting this go on any more, I’m calling an ambulance. I’m not going through this again!

p. 119
CHARLIE: KristyStar9, you wrote: “My parents want me to be a radiologist. but I don’t even know what that is.”

p. 119
CHARLIE: KristyStar9, you wrote: “My parents want me to be a radiologist. but I don’t even know what that is.”

p. 123
CHARLIE: She didn’t do it to hurt him, she did it to send him home

p. 123
CHARLIE: She didn’t do it to hurt him, she did it to send him home

p. 124

p. 125
LIZ: No. I’m not letting this go on any more, I’m calling an ambulance. I’m not going through this again!

p. 125
LIZ: No. I’m not letting this go on any more, I’m calling an ambulance. I’m not going through this again!

Character continuity. Charlie doesn’t lose his temper throughout the entire play, to have him do it now is premature. When it does happen in the updated script, it is warranted and cathartic.

Everyone knows what a pharmacist is, come on.

Simplification of unnecessarily long line.

Makes it more ambiguous whether Charlie is lucid or not, adds to tragedy of the moment

Shows character growth in Liz, and shows that she really does care about Charlie and that this is a real moment of concern, not just anger.