The Brother's Merlin and Their Magnificent Menagerie of Mysteries

(Pre-show, side show acts are performing close to the loading dock, outside the theater. The performances come to a halt when suddenly there is a loud crash of breaking glass, rush of liquid and a gigantic roar from inside the theater. **BILLY** and **JUJO** come running out of the open loading dock door. She is wearing a belt of knives)

BILLY

Oh See! SEE! You've done it now!

(He begins to push the door closed, **JUJO** jumps in to help him.)

JUJO

It was an accident!

(They slam the door shut, and lean back on it. The roaring continues, getting louder)

BILLY

You can't just pick up a belt of knives from the stage and start throwing them all over the place!

JUJO

They were *throwing* knives for Christ sakes!

BILLY

I thought you were making that up!!

(A male voice cries out. There are Snarling noises, attack sounds from inside the theater)

JUJO

How was I supposed to know I'd suck at being a knife thrower!

BILLY

Because you've never done it! You have no idea what you're doing!

(a loud banging, beating on the other side of the door.)

JUJO

Run!!

(They both run off. **JUJO** is still wearing the belt of knives. After they leave, the snarling subsides, banging stops. **EVELYN** enters from the direction of the office)

EVELYN

Ladies and Gentlemen!

(Realizes that the sideshow acts are not going, and her entrance music is not playing)

EVELYN (cont.)

(loud whisper to the musicians)

What are you doing? Play the music already!

(musicians do some sort of drum roll, or fanfare for **EVELYN**. She starts her speech again)

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to The Brothers Merlin and their Magnificent Menagerie of Mysteries. Behold our universe of mystery and suspense. Your eyes have never gazed upon the wonders, AND horrors that lie behind these doors.

(**EVELYN** opens the theatre doors, the musicians march in, the patrons are ushered in behind them, take their seats, etc. The fire exit door is open. **EVELYN** shuts that door, goes to check the bathrooms. Just as the show is about to start, **JUJO** and **BILLY** run in and head towards their seats in the audience. They are nervous, looking around.)

BILLY

I don't want to be in here, Jujo! Whatever you hit with that knife is still around!

JUJO

*Who*ever I hit, Billy. You know who it was. I have to find him! I have to see him!

BILLY

I don't know what you're talking about!

JUJO

Look, Billy. This is not a *normal* carnival. These are not *normal* carnies. You know that. I showed you the pictures. Does this tent look familiar at all to you?

(She takes a folded picture out of her back pocket and holds it up in comparison with the stage, set up like the big top. He looks at it and the stage, shaking his head)

BILLY

I don't know...

JUJO

Its obvious! Everything in front of us looks exactly like this picture. A picture from 1892! I wonder if even the Brothers Merlin look the same as in this photograph.

BILLY

Oh come on, Jujo, that's ridiculous! They aren't vampires or anything.

JUJO

I know they aren't vampires, Billy! But we know they're hiding something. We've just got to find out what their angle is before we reveal ourselves. It's part of my plan.

BILLY

Like throwing that knife and hitting.... whatever that was. Like *that* part of your plan?

JUJO

I don't expect you to understand. But I'm heading backstage.

BILLY

What about the show! The bearded lady-

JUJO

Screw the bearded lady!

(**JUJO** runs for the backstage. **BILLY** jumps up to follow. **EVELYN** re-enters. She walks to center stage to make announcement.)

EVELYN

You have dared enter our world of the strange and absurd. You must play by our rules now. Stay in your seats. Turn off your goddamn electronic devices. Please try not to be assholes. The exits are the way you came in and back there-

(notices the fire door is open. Crosses to it and closes it, looking out it cautiously first. Obviously a little spooked, she resumes her speech.)

Avoid eye contact. Loud noises and flashing lights will spook our wonders. And trust me, you don't want to be here when that happens. Consider yourselves warned.

(**EVELYN** exits.)

EVELYN

(Off)

Fucking drunk! You check under the bleachers? The Yak-Woman's boudoir? You! You! Get out there!

MIKE (off)

But I can't-

(suddenly **MIKE** appears onstage, pushed onstage by **EVELYN**. He is wearing the ill-fitting ringmaster coat)

EVELYN (off)

Harvey keeps his notes in the left pocket.

(**MIKE** searches the pockets and pulls out some cards.)

EVELYN

(enters just bit.)

He looks like a cracked-up scarecrow in a tux.

(**EVELYN** cackles, removes the pin, and walks off stage. As soon as the pin is removed, **MIKE** signs in relief and rubs his back, glaring at the direction **EVELYN** went. He realizes the audience is waiting for him to say something. He starts slowly, but quickly warms up and shows an amazing talent for carnival barkery.)

MIKE

Uhhh...Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen to The Brothers Merlin and their Magnificent Menagerie of Mysteries. Prepare yourself for a world of wonders and feats of amazement.

(**MIKE** drops his cards and gets them mixed up slightly. Starts to read the next one.)

First we have Fritzi and his Frolicking Frauleins! An Aryan with a heart of gold. He turned his back on the

third Reich to commit himself to cajoling cavorting canines to canter, capriole, and catapult through conflagrant hoops of certain calamity!

(The spotlight hits **FRITZI** holding a hoop. One dog runs on from off stage and jumps through his hoop. A second dog runs from offstage and jumps through his hoop. Then nothing. **FRITZI** lights a punt and makes ready to apply it to the hoop. He snaps his fingers. A loud snarl and yelp from offstage.)

FRITZI

Brunhilde!

(He blows out the punt and runs offstage)

MIKE

Uh.....

(He shuffles cards)

Her ears pop when she sits up in bed. Her brobdingnagian bloomers have been known to jumble the most lascivious liaisons. She's Angie Dew, the tallest woman I knew.

(**MONKEY MAN** is spotlighted. He is a man wearing a monkey suit with the head of a person. **ANGIE**, a woman on stilts enters and staggers around looking confused and angry. She collides with **MONKEY MAN**, who makes angry chimp noises and jumps up and down, flapping his arms at **ANGIE**. She staggers offstage. He makes some obscene gesture.)

MIKE (cont.)

And now ladies and gentlemen, you cannot fail to be hypnotized by the hirsute handsomeness of our next attraction. You may have heard the tales. Yes. Even the songs.

(Lights up on **NADIA's** dais. She is standing coquettishly in a skin-tight dress with a fan in front of her face.)

MIKE (cont.)

All the way from the wilds of Eurasia comes our very own Cossack beauty. Nadia the Bearded Lady.

(**NADIA** removes her fan to reveal her beard.)

MIKE (cont.)

Nadia's love is legendary, but decidedly disastrous. Her lover is a man cursed to every night throw knives at the one he loves in order to appease a chaotic god. He is Bard, the man behind the dangerous discharge of daggers.

(**BARD** enters, crouches at the edge of **NADIA'S** dais, looking for something. Lights up on a large dais blocked off by a large red curtain with a long braided cord. **MIKE** checks his cards)

MIKE (cont.)

Consider yourself lucky, or perhaps cursed, to be able to gaze upon this, our final exhibit. "Oh". I mean—"Ooooooooo". Only the most brave dare to disturb his evil slumber. No one but Bard has the key to unleash the beast.

(**BARD** is hissing something at **NADIA**)

MIKE (cont.)

To UNLEASH THE BEAST.

(**BARD** makes motions to stall and runs off.)

MIKE (cont.)

Oh hell. Behold the Alligator Man.

(**MIKE** pulls the cord. It resists him. He pulls harder. He pulls one more time. The entire curtain and rod fall down. A mangled unrecognizable bloody corpse is revealed.)

MIKE (cont).

JESUS CHRIST!

(Blackout. Screaming and pandemonium sounds. Lights back up. **NADIA** is standing there screaming. **FRITZI** runs in holding his dog at arms length in front of him. It has a human arm in his mouth. He has blood on his hands and clothes. He is hysterical.)

FRITZI

(shaking his dog)

Brunhilde! Brunhilde!!! Vat have you done?!!!!

(**FRITZI** cries, **NADIA** continues to scream)

MIKE

(shouting over their noise)

What the fuck is going on!

(**EVELYN** storms in, takes stock of the situation.)

EVELYN

HELLS BELLS AND BUCKETS OF BLOOD!

(She marches toward **FRITZI** and **NADIA**. She slaps **NADIA**, then turns and slaps **FRITZI**. They both stop screaming/crying.)

EVELYN

Just calm the hell down! I can't hear myself think! Hysterics ain't gonna keep us all alive.

MIKE

But- Harvey! And... whatever the fuck that is!

(points at the bloody arm in the dog's mouth)

What is this! Who did this! Somebody should call the police!

(**EVELYN** grabs the arm from the dog's mouth, and gestures with it.)

EVELYN

No cops! What kind of dumbass are you! The vat is in pieces all over the floor! This
(shakes the arm, then throws it offstage)
could only have been done by-

NADIA

The ALLIGATOR MAN!! No one is safe!!!!

(**NADIA** starts screaming again and runs off in hysterics.)

FRITZI

Mein Brunhilde!! She has the taste for blood and she is ruined! RUINED!

(he runs off crying and screaming)

(As **FRITZI** runs off, he collides with **BARD** who is running in. **FRITZI** doesn't stop crying, shoves **BARD** away and keeps going. **BARD** marches up to **MIKE**.)

BARD

You didn't set my knives! I need my knives!!

MIKE

I put them exactly where you told me. I *always* put them exactly where you tell me. Its not my fault you were too hung over to find them!

BARD

I wouldn't be hung over if you weren't always trying to get me drunk!

(**EVELYN** pushes the two apart)

EVELYN

GODDAMN IT! Would you two old ladies shut up for one goddamn second!

BARD

But my knives!

EVELYN

I don't give a rat's ass about your knives. We've got bigger fish to fry.

(**BARD** registers Harvey's body for the first time)

BARD

Holy shit! Is that?

MIKE

Harvey?
(picks up the tiny bloody moustache)
Um-hm.

BARD

Someone needs to tell Merle!

EVELYN

NO! No Merle. You listen to me and do what I tell you to do.

BARD

But, I think we ought to-

EVELYN

Did I ask you to think? Your job is to get out there and find those two screaming idiots and get them into the rehearsal tent. Now move!

(**EVELYN** shoves **BARD** offstage as she speaks, over **BARD**'s protests. **EVELYN** turns to face **MIKE**, gets right up in his face)

And you.

(**EVELYN** grabs a mop, shoves it in **MIKE's** chest)

Get rid of this

(Shoves him towards "Harvey")

MIKE

(turns away from the body)

This is not my problem.

EVELYN

This shit is *everyone's* problem. The gator is out of the bag now sweet cheeks.

MIKE

But why *me*?

(**EVELYN** leans in close, whispering)

EVELYN

When I hired you, I told you things might get a little messy.

MIKE

You never said anything about mopping up some poor sod's guts.

(**EVELYN** pushes him back, **MIKE** slips on some blood and falls into the gore.)

EVELYN

Try not to fuck this up cowboy.

(A roar, then a scream comes from the midway. **CUE CARD GIRL** holds up the following:)

[WE'RE GOING BACK IN TIME NOW]
[1 WEEK]
[A CONVERSATION WITH THAT ASSHOLE MERLE]
[HIS TRAILER]

(Setting is the interior of **MERLE**'s trailer, one week prior. It is very cluttered. **MERLE** sits at a table full of sheaves of paper, old books, odd objects, strange scientific instruments. He is dozing, also

muttering to himself in his dream. Lights up as **EVELYN** barges into the trailer.)

EVELYN

Good god almighty. How you can stand it like this, I'll never know.

(**MERLE** stirs a bit, still asleep. **EVELYN** kicks through the piles of stuff as she walks toward **MERLE**.)

EVELYN

You'd think after all this time you could learn to at least pick up after yourself.

(She walks over to him and nudges him, he's still asleep. Nudges again. Nothing. She leans over and yells in his ear.)

EVELYN (cont.)

Hey! Merle! Wake the hell up!

(**MERLE** jerks awake, he shouts out still half asleep)

MERLE

Get your hands out of her beard! She's mine! All mine!

EVELYN

Whoa, there.

(**MERLE** comes to his senses, straightens his robes,etc.)

EVELYN (cont.)

Sorry to disturb your beauty sleep.

(**MERLE** shakes himself awake, puts on his hat, stretches, etc.)

MERLE

What do you want Evelyn?

EVELYN

I need a drink and you have the best whiskey.

MERLE

What is it you really came here for?

EVELYN

What, old friends can't have a drink now and then, asshole?

(**MERLE** grumbles under his breath as he walks toward a trunk. He opens the trunk and a brilliant glow springs forth from the trunk, and washes over the entire room. Bathing it in luminous green. Distant music, a good jig, and a thick Irish lilt are heard coming from the trunk. **MERLE** pulls from the trunk a dusty old bottle. He pours 2 glasses and gives one to **EVELYN**.)

EVELYN

To longevity.

(They clink together their glasses and down them. We flash back to them on their wedding night. Lights up on **MERLE** and a pregnant **EVELYN**. **FRITZI** and **NADIA** come in in their stage hand garb and put pieces on them in full view of the audience, i.e. a dress that velcros up the back with a pregnant belly and a veil for **EVELYN** and a suit jacket for **MERLE**. plus their champagne glasses. They are dressed in 70s style clothing. They both have glasses of champagne. More cue cards.)

[THE BLESSED UNION OF EVELYN AND MERLE]
[THEIR DIE CAST]
[40 YEARS AGO]

EVELYN

*(*holding up her glass)

To us.

MERLE

To us!

(They clink their glasses together, then **MERLE** dips **EVELYN** and kisses her.)

EVELYN

Woo- honey, watch out for the baby!

MERLE

Sorry. I just can't help myself.

(beat)

I am so lucky. I love you. Both of you.

(**MERLE** rests his hand on **EVELYN's** belly and then produces a flower out of seemingly nowhere)

EVELYN

Damn right you're lucky.

(winks and kisses **MERLE**)

And we love you too, Merle.

MERLE

But...

EVELYN

But what?

MERLE

There's something I need to explain to you. There are certain... precautions you need to be made aware of.

EVELYN

(thinking he's speaking of getting pregnant, holding her belly*)*

It's a little too late for that.

(she chuckles and takes another sip of her champagne)

MERLE

That's not what I'm talking about. This is about that big cage. In the locked trailer.

EVELYN

You mean the big curtain drop? The thing in the knife act?

MERLE

Exactly. Don't go near it.

EVELYN

What? But how am I supposed to run the back stage if I can't-

MERLE

Don't go near it. And if anything should... happen to it. If anything damages it in any way. Take the baby and run like hell in the opposite direction. Just run. Don't look back. Don't think twice. Run.

EVELYN

Merle, what are you talking about?

MERLE

Promise you'll run. No matter what anyone says. No matter what Thomas says. No matter what I say. Just run. Promise me.

EVELYN

But Merle-

(**MERLE** loses his temper for a moment. He grabs Evelyn's wrists. Lights dim, furniture, and windows rattle slightly)

MERLE

Promise me!

EVELYN

Merle! You're scaring me!

(**MERLE** calms down. Lights return to normal)

MERLE

Forgive me, dear. I forgot myself. But, If anything happens to you, Evelyn. To either of you. I could never live with myself.

EVELYN

Ain't nothing going to happen to either of us.

MERLE

You don't know that!

EVELYN

There's a lot I don't know about this place. So tell me now. You didn't take the time before knocking me up and making me your bride, but better late than never.

MERLE

I kept it to myself because it's never been an issue before. Well, except for once. In the beginning. But that was different. A long time ago Thomas and I did something. What we did seemed okay at the time. A means to an end. But you've made me see I had it all wrong.

EVELYN

For god's sake, spit it out, Merle!

MERLE

There is danger here, Evelyn. And you must hold to your promise. In case anything ever happens. Your life depends on it.

EVELYN

Danger is nothing new to me, sweetie.

MERLE

But something like this-

EVELYN

Merle, you just need to hush.

(**EVELYN** closes his mouth with a kiss. Stage hands remove the pieces and we're back to the original flashback. **EVELYN** pours them another shot each of whiskey.)

MERLE

How did you get so old?

EVELYN

Thanks, asshole.

(She downs her whiskey.)

It's been forty-two years since we met. People do age in forty-two years.

MERLE

Except for me.

EVELYN

That's right. Except for you.

(She pours another shot.)

EVELYN (cont.)

You look just the same as you did the day we met.

MERLE

You mean when we picked you up on the side of that road. If we hadn't come across you, with that crazed mob closing in-

EVELYN

They would have strung me up. People sure do like an old-fashioned witch-burning. You'd think a girl'd never cursed her stepfather before. But I didn't murder that asshole. Never had the stomach for it. Lucky for him. And lucky for you.

(Beat)

But I ain't ever gonna forgive you, Merle.

MERLE

I know.

(**MERLE** crosses over to a photograph of him standing next to the Alligator Man in a big water-filled tank. It's an old photograph, and very large, poster-size. As he stares at it.)

EVELYN

Farrah's never coming back. I made sure of that.

MERLE

Don't be so sure. Who can say what fruit our choices will bear? I should know.

(He grabs the bottle of whiskey and takes a long pull.He slumps back in his chair.)

Whatever my fate, I deserve it.

(Lights out. **CUE CARD GIRL** pulls up more cue cards.)

[HE DOES DESERVE IT]
[EGYPT, 1902]

(Lights flicker like an old style movie projector projecting an egyptian tomb on the walls of the tent. **MERLE** is catching a flask thrown by **THOMAS**. They are wearing 1900's safari garb. Hopefully with pith helmets. Their sister, **GWYNETH**, is leaning on a shovel)

MERLE

A toast? To what?

THOMAS

To brothers being reunited. To adventure. To Egypt. To drink!

MERLE

It's barely 6 in the morning.

THOMAS

Come on, brother, don't be so old-fashioned.

(he gestures to **MERLE** to drink)

Cheers, Merlin.

MERLE

(reluctantly taking the flask.)

Cheers, Thomas

(takes a tiny sip and begins coughing violently)

THOMAS

Such a lightweight.

GWENYTH

Are ladies not allowed to imbibe? Or did you forget I was here?

THOMAS

How could I forget you, Gwen?

(**THOMAS** takes the flask from **MERLE** and passes it to **GWEN**. She takes a bigger sip than **MERLE**, then tries to hold in her cough as she holds the flask back out to **THOMAS**. He grabs flask and takes a huge swig.)

MERLE

What the hell is that?

GWENYTH

It tastes deadly.

THOMAS

(shrugs)

I don't know. The fellow who showed us to this tomb sold it to me for a very low price. More for me, I suppose.

MERLE

Please tell me we're not just here to watch you get intoxicated.

GWENYTH

You didn't read the scroll, did you Merle?

THOMAS

What? Didn't you read the scroll?

MERLE

Yes, of course I did. If you call looking at those pictures "reading". Something about an alligator head on a man's body.

THOMAS

That would be Sobek.

MERLE

Sobek?

GWENYTH

The Egyptian God Sobek.

THOMAS

This is his tomb. So says that scroll.

MERLE

A tomb for a god? Must not have been a very powerful one.

THOMAS

That is where you are wrong, my brother. Sobek crawled out of the waters of chaos to create the world. But immortality was not enough for Sobek. He tried to take the form of a man so that he could control the earth. He terrorized cities along the Nile, until the hero Nakhti entrapped him, and placed him in this temple. Here the unaging Nakhti and his vast family tended Sobek for a thousand years until foreign invaders dragged him out of the temple and its secret was lost.

MERLE

How do you know all this?

THOMAS

It is all in the scroll. Some of us take the time to read things.

GWYNETH

And some of us get our dear sister to translate things for them while they spend the evening in a brothel.

THOMAS

Yes, well...

MERLE

You know how to read hieroglyphics?

GWYNETH

Don't be so surprised. I have been traveling the ancient lands for years as a researcher for the British Royal Geographical Society. Have you read any of my letters?

THOMAS

(under his breath)
Show off.

GWENYTH

(ignoring Thomas)
Finding the tomb of Sobek was a prize I'd never dreamed of claiming. Until Thomas came to me with that scroll, I doubted its very existence. I had to come along, even if it does mean I have to spend time with you two.

MERLE

How did you get your hands on that scroll, Thomas?

THOMAS

You know these Egyptians. They'd sell their own children for a high enough price.

GWENYTH

Have you had quite enough chat?

(She returns to her shoveling and proceeds to ignore her brothers.)

MERLE

What is she doing?

THOMAS

Unearthing Sobek.

MERLE

What?!

GWENYTH

You're welcome to join in at any time, brothers!

THOMAS

We are going to steal his immortality for ourselves..

MERLE

Immortality?

THOMAS

Just look at us, Merlin. We are in the prime of our lives.

(looks at **MERLE**)

Well, I am, anyway. We shall retain our youth, our vigor, forever!

GWENYTH

I think I've hit something down here.

THOMAS

We shall have nothing but time at our disposal. To do with as we please!

MERLE

But will we not tire of it all?

THOMAS

Of course not! Think of all you can learn. What kind of a magician you could become.

MERLE

I already am a great magician.

THOMAS

You are a fantastic magician. Already you have bedazzled so many with your wonderful tricks. But that is all

a magician is Merle. A man with a bag of tricks. But think of the power you could some day gain through years, NO, centuries of study. Merle the Magician, bah. I see Merlin the Magnificent! A wizard with power to charm, but also to heal, and to counsel the leaders of this ever growing world of ours. Dear brother, you will cheat that one force that no one, not even kings, have managed to cheat, Death. Death will hold no power over you.

MERLE

And you Thomas? Where do you fit into this grand plan you have so thoughtfully laid out for me?

THOMAS

Well, I shall be by your side. I could not allow you to grow lonely or bored. Merle, let us bury that old hatchet. We could join forces, get our carnival back on the road.

MERLE

(picturing it in his mind)
The Brothers Merlin.

THOMAS

Well, we can work on the name I suppose...

GWENYTH

What are you two prattling on about? Just like men to make the women do all the work.

THOMAS

There is just one thing....

MERLE

Just one thing?

THOMAS

Nakhti the hero, he trapped Sobek with blood, sacrificing his own daughter to tame the beast. While Sobek was drunk on the blood he wrapped a chain around Sobek's neck and entrapped him for all eternity. Blood feeds his immortality, and I expect after such a long sleep, Sobek must be very hungry.

(He pulls out a knife and places it in **MERLE's** hands.)

MERLE

Hungry?

THOMAS

We'll need a sacrifice. Preferably female, but any family member will do in a pinch.

MERLE

You mean...
(**MERLE** looks at **GWYNETH**)

MERLE (cont.)

She doesn't know?

THOMAS

She is a scientist Merle. It is nothing but myth to her. The false dreams of a vanished civilization. But you and I - we have seen things. We know the magic undergirding the world, the sprites and pixies that dart just outside the range of your eyes. The doors that open into the worlds of the gods.

MERLE

I can't do it.

THOMAS

I know it's hard. But, think of the big picture, brother! And this way she will die doing what she loves!

GWYNETH

I've found a sarcophagus! Can someone help me move this stone?

(grunting and panting)

THOMAS

Just listen to the joy in her voice

MERLE

I'm not stabbing our sister.

THOMAS

I would never steer you wrong, brother. You know I've always had a knack for seeing the way forward. This is really all for the best.

GWYNETH

It has a carving of an Alligator head!

THOMAS

Wonderful! Can you pry it open?

(Turns back to **MERLE** and pulls out some rope.)

Now, when she cracks it open, be ready with the knife. After you do your bit, I will be ready with the rope for our ancient reptile friend. You understand what you have to do, brother?

MERLE

(Tries to run towards **GWYNETH** and pull her back)

Gwen, stop!

GWYNETH

I've got it! It's open! It's-

(**THOMAS** restrains **MERLE** as he tries to reach **GWYNETH**. A very loud growl comes from inside. **GWYNETH** reels backwards and drops her torch.)

THOMAS

Quick now with the knife Merle, or you'll be next!

(We hear struggling in the dark, sounds of mauling and chomping, **GWYNETH** screaming.)

THOMAS

Must I do everything myself? Give me that!

(**THOMAS** grabs the knife from **MERLE** in the dark. There is a knife penetrating flesh sound and **GWYNETH** stops screaming. **THOMAS** lights a torch. He is holding the knife. **THOMAS** is holding the rope like a leash, attached to something on the floor. They are both peering over the edge of the sarcophogus.)

MERLE

Oh God. What did it do to her?

THOMAS

Next time you'll use the knife, eh Merle?

(dangling the knife in front of him)

Well, it looks like you have quite the mess there, dear brother..

(Lights out.)

(Lights up on **MIKE** in the performance space with his broom pushing the "body" across the stage and leaves a bright red smear. He picks up his broom and sees that it's covered in gristle and gore. **CUE CARD GIRL** appears.)

[[Someone has to clean up the mess]]
[[no matter who makes it]]
[Present Time]

(THOMAS sneaks up behind **MIKE** and taps him on the shoulder.)

THOMAS

Looks like you have a mess there, amigo.

MIKE

(jumps, startled)

You can't be back here!

THOMAS

(recognizes **MIKE** from the bar.)

What in the world are you doing here?

(referring to the fact he knows him from the bar.)

MIKE

(thinking he means cleaning up the body. Menacing.)

Look, "friend", this is no concern of yours. You need to move along now.

THOMAS

Relax, I am a friend of the Brothers Merlin. I am looking for a woman about this high
(gestures the height of **EVELYN**)
who runs this place. Usually walks around saying things like,
(speaks in an exaggerated version of **EVELYN'**s accent.)
"Well batter me up and call me a corn dog!"

MIKE

(gestures to the way **EVELYN** exited without looking up from his work.)
She's over that way. But if you'd like to give me a hand with this...

THOMAS

That's not really my department. But thank you ever so much for your assistance.
(he strolls off in the direction **MIKE** gestured to.)

MIKE

Don't mention it.
(he watches **THOMAS** exit for a moment before continuing his work. Notices a knife on the ground. Picks it up)

MIKE

(to himself)
There's your damn knife, Bard.
(Looks at the knife for a beat. **CUE CARD GIRL** holds up more cue cards.)

[[He needs a drink.]]
[[2 days is two too many sober]]
[A BAR 2 NIGHTS AGO]

(Flashback to a bar 2 nights ago. **BARD** and **MIKE** are both obviously drunk.)

BARD

You don't look like a Mike.

MIKE

Huh?

BARD

You look more like a Woodrow
(giggles)

MIKE

Woodrow?

BARD

Alright, Woodrow, if that is your real name...

MIKE

It is now.

BARD

Good. So, Woodrow, tell me your story. If you tell me yours, I'll tell you mine.

MIKE

I know this game. But aren't you supposed to show me yours?

BARD

That would call for another drink!

(**MIKE** pours a shot for both of them.)

MIKE

Bottoms up.

(They both have another shot.)

BARD

So, tell me…

MIKE

I can tell you anything you want to hear.

BARD

I bet you can. How about the truth?

MIKE

The truth? Let's see... I muck out stalls all day.

BARD

I've seen you muck out the stalls. Up here
(taps her own forehead)
You aren't mucking out stalls. I want to know what's going on in there.
(leans in and taps **MIKE**'s forehead)
Where'd you come from?

MIKE

I could ask you the same thing.

BARD

But I asked you first.

MIKE

Fair enough.

(**NATHAN** is played by either **FRITZI** or **MERLE**. **BARD** will sit blearily watching from a bar stool.)

[THREE YEARS AGO]

[INDIANAPOLIS THE CROSSROADS OF AMERICA]
[NEVER TRUST A MAN IN A HOTEL BAR]

MIKE

The stranger you see before you in this bar used to have a hold on the American Dream. Or at least a 21st century version. I'd worked my way to a lot of success in my field, I owned a house in the suburbs with a lovely lawn, and the man I loved and I had been together for five years. We were even getting the ball in motion to have a child together. We just couldn't decide who got to donate the "genetic material" so to speak. Nathan joked we should both cum in a jar, shake it up, and let the little swimmers duke out paternity. This was right before a business trip to the Cross Roads of America - Indianapolis! Something was off, though. I mean, it had been for a while. I'd been walking through my life, despite everything I had, feeling like something was missing.On the trip, it just got worse. I couldn't sleep, couldn't think. On the second night, I woke up in our hotel room, startled Nathan...

(**MIKE** sits down on the edge of the bed **NATHAN** is sleeping in.)

NATHAN

(wakes up. Puts his arms around **MIKE**)
Again? Come here, I know what'll put you out like a light.
(starts to kiss **MIKE**'s neck.)

MIKE

(Jumps to his feet rather abruptly.)
I'm going to get a drink.

(notices **NATHAN**'s sad look)

MIKE

I'll be back in a bit.
(kisses **NATHAN**)
Go back to sleep.

(**MIKE** leaves the room. **NATHAN** sadly watches him go. Lights out on hotel room. **MIKE** enters the hotel bar. On the way in, he bumps into **THOMAS** on his way out.)

MIKE

Pardon me.

THOMAS

No pardon needed. You look like you could use a hand there, amigo. Or at least a drink. What'll you have?

MIKE

Not necessary, I'm fine.

THOMAS

(holds out his hand)
I insist Mike. I'm Thomas.

MIKE

I don't remember telling you my name.

THOMAS

Not in so many words. Let's just say I read it on you. It's sort of a...talent I have. Come on, what are you drinking?

MIKE

(eyes him dubiously)

You can guess my name, but not my drink?

THOMAS

(sigh) You'll have a gin-

MIKE

Neat. Nice trick.

THOMAS

(turning to the bar.)

Two gins. Neat.

(gins are produced immediately. He takes them to a table and sits with **MIKE**.)

So, Mike, does the client like what he sees?

MIKE

What? I don't recall telling you I was here on business.

THOMAS

(smiles.)

No one comes to Indianapolis for pleasure.

MIKE

(Laughs)

No. No I suppose not.

THOMAS

But perhaps you are looking for a bit of pleasure?

MIKE

(his smile fades.)

Look, if that is what this is about, I suggest you take your gin and go. I am a happily committed man-

THOMAS

I'm not propositioning you, Mike. But let's be honest with ourselves, shall we? "Happily"? When was the last time you were happy, Mike? With your career, with your house, with Nathan-

MIKE

How the hell do you know about Nathan?! Wait, he put you up to this, didn't he? You're some sort of life coach. I'm going to fucking kill him.

(**MIKE** stands up to go.)

THOMAS

(quietly, but firmly)
Sit down, Mike.

MIKE

(sits down immediately, almost as if pulled to the seat.)
What the-?

THOMAS

I am not a “life coach”, Mike. That ridiculous title sounds like something my brother would brand himself. No, Mike, I am more of an anti-life coach. I am here to help people ready to jump from the life they lead to a new one. I teach that when the sign says “Turn Right Here” sometimes it is far more interesting to turn left. All of that is to say, I like to dabble in chaos.

MIKE

What do you mean?

THOMAS

Mike, how much do you know about particle physics?

(**THOMAS** throughout this is gesturing and mouthing words, but we don’t hear it, it’s not clear.)

MIKE

(to **BARD**)
Before I can respond he starts speaking in a strange language, one I've never heard before. I have no idea how, but I can understand every word he is saying to me. Or rather his words take shape in my thought, a living tapestry, his words a needle, every moment of my life a different stitch. It begins slowly, a single deliberate stitch - conception. It gains momentum, my birth. The Universe begins to take shape around me. It grows as I do, but I’m not the center, just one of many centers. You’re a center, I’m a center, Nadia, that fucking guy that always heckles and barks at Fritzi’s bitches, all of us, we’re each a stitch, and we weave in and out of the Universe. But there’s a bigger truth, something greater. The purpose behind it all. He’s coming to it. The single truth that binds the Universe together and my place in it. Here it comes...something distracts him...

THOMAS

(**THOMAS**, looks toward the door, sighs and shakes his head)
Oh Farrah...

(**MIKE** turns around to see what it is and when he turns back, **THOMAS** is gone.)

MIKE

He was gone. I’d only turned around for a moment. For a fraction of a second, and when I turned back, he was gone. His seat is so empty, it sends a chill up my back. It’s as if he was never there. The bartender swears he hasn’t seen anyone but me for the last fifteen minutes. Suddenly, the weight of it all, of everything he’s told me, just unravels. I can’t move. I make it to the lobby and I just sit there. I don’t move

for three days. I can't eat, I can't sleep. What if I miss him? Finally, the hotel kicks us out. Somehow, Nathan gets us packed up and off to the airport.

(During the above monologue, **NATHAN** acts out what **MIKE** describes.)

MIKE (cont.)

I just need to hit the bathroom.

NATHAN

I'm not letting you out of my sight.

MIKE

(smiles)
I'm starting to feel like my old self again. Really. Come on, I don't need you to hold my hand while I pee.

(**NATHAN** laughs nervously and kisses **MIKE**. **MIKE** turns, and he and **BARD** are back in the bar together a few nights ago. **MIKE** takes his seat next to **BARD** again.)

MIKE (cont.)

I turned the corner and never saw him again.

BARD

Wow. What about all that stuff Thomas told you?

MIKE

That's the fucked up part, I don't know. I can see bits and pieces. But he didn't finish telling me. He didn't tie the knot at the end, and when he walked away all the stitches unravelled. But I'm clinging to that thread. I was so close to the big picture. So, I'm looking for him. He kept talking about chaos, so, I don't know...I chase chaos. I turn left when it feels like I should turn right. I'm going to find that answer, or that guy again, and it's going to be worth it. All of it. That's what I keep telling myself, anyway. There's something I need to do, and someday this will all make sense.

BARD

You are mysterious, Woodrow Mike.

MIKE

Enough about me. I want to hear about you. What's your secret, Bard?

BARD

(guffaws)
Trust me, you do not want to know my secret. Besides, my life is pretty textbook. Daddy abandonment, dead Momma, etc. etc. Same old story, different name.

MIKE

You might be onto something there, Bard.

BARD

Hmm?

MIKE

We are doing entirely too much talking.

(**MIKE** leans over to try and kiss **BARD**, but **THOMAS** walks by just then, knocking **BARD** off of her barstool.)

BARD

Oh shit. It's getting late. I should get to sleep. Don't want to accidentally kill Nadia tomorrow.

(**MIKE** reaches down and helps **BARD** up. Holds onto her hand a little too long.)

MIKE

I don't clean up dead bodies.

BARD

I don't make mistakes.

MIKE

Then why are you leaving?

(Suddenly they both look up and see **NADIA** there.)

NADIA

Hmmmph! So this is what you mean by "picking up a few things backstage"?!

(She pulls **BARD** away from **MIKE** and they stumble off into the night. **NADIA** shooting figurative daggers in **MIKE**'s direction. We return to the present of **MIKE** and his cleaning supplies. He holds **BARD**'s knife in one hand as he hefts the bloody body into a basket. Smiling, thinking of the kiss, he pushes the body off stage and exits. **CUE CARD GIRL** enters at the same time he pushes it off.)

[[Right Now]]
[[Across the fairway]]
[[An acrimonious reunion]]

(**EVELYN** is approaching **MERLE**'s trailer, **THOMAS** emerges from the shadows before she gets there.)

THOMAS

Hello, Evelyn.

EVELYN

What the hell are you doing here, you son of a bitch?

THOMAS

There's really only one reason I'd be here.

EVELYN

She's here?

THOMAS

She is.

EVELYN

Where?

(**THOMAS** just laughs)

EVELYN (cont.)

Don't fuck with me. If Farrah were here I'd know it. I am her mother.

THOMAS

I saw her just this evening, strolling down the midway. Cool as could be.

EVELYN

That can't be. You're a liar.

THOMAS

Come now, Evelyn. It's serendipitous. Divine providence. It's like we found a baby in the bush and now we don't have to sacrifice the ram.

(With a snarl, **EVELYN** jumps at **THOMAS**' throat and we spin back in time twenty odd years **EVELYN** has her hands around **THOMAS**' throat and he easily tosses her aside. She lies in a heap on the floor, staring at him, seething with rage, **CUE CARD GIRL** comes back with more cards.)

[[20 years ago]]
[[A mother protects her daughter]]

EVELYN

You pushed my boy right into the jaws of that monster.

THOMAS

That was an accident. When the axle on the truck broke, and the monster escaped... We did what we had to do to contain the problem.

EVELYN

You call it what you want. I call it murder.

THOMAS

It was your life or theirs. You know that. It was a choice, probably not an easy one, I suspect.

EVELYN

If it wasn't for you, he wouldn't have had to do it

THOMAS

Don't try to pin this on me, Evelyn. That was Merlin. But you can't hate him. So you hate me instead. It's easy. Just like you. Tell me, Evelyn. Where would you be if it wasn't for us, for this little carnival I let Merlin keep going? Hmm? You'd still be on the side of the road, lost and scared. Probably would have hiked up your skirts for the next man who came along, instead of jumping into bed with my brother.

EVELYN

I would have done what I had to do. And I wouldn't have been ashamed.

THOMAS

I suppose not. I can say the same. I have always done what had to be done. This time, Merlin had to do it, too. It's a shame you forced him into it. Dale and Farrah weren't any of my doing, nor was Dale's death. Don't blame me for your choices, Evelyn.

EVELYN

Murder. It was murder. And, I swear to you, murder is not a choice Farrah's ever going to need to make.

THOMAS

One grows accustomed to it after a while when it becomes what one must do to stay alive.

EVELYN

You son-of-a-bitch.

(**EVELYN** takes a large chunk of **THOMAS**' hair, pulls a wicked looking knife out and slices it off.)

THOMAS

What the-?!

(**EVELYN** quickly crouches and draws a circle around herself in the dirt, or on the ground with a rock.)

EVELYN

You're going to make sure that she never lives through what I did! She'll never have a child. You'll see to it.

(As she speaks, she takes a pouch from around her neck, puts the hair into it. Does something to show that she is putting a curse on him, casting a spell of some sort.)

As long as she can have children, you'll never be far behind.

(We spin forward in time to a hotel room. **PIERRE**, a sensitive, but rakishly handsome poet and **FARRAH** are in a hotel room sharing a bottle of wine. **CUE CARD GIRL** offers cue cards.)

[[A few years later]]
[[A Cursed American in Paris]]

PIERRE

But, mon cherie, you can trust me. I will not, how do you say, play games with your heart?

FARRAH

(facing away from him)

You really should just go.

PIERRE

But I love you. I know you feel the same.

(he pulls **FARRAH** close to him)

I can feel your heart beating wildly against my chest.

FARRAH

I ran here.

PIERRE

Really? Is it that simple? Or is it from mad désir?

(He pulls her in to kiss her.)

FARRAH

(pushing him away and jumping up)

No, you can't!

PIERRE

But, you must tell me why!

FARRAH

I can't.

PIERRE

Then I must make love to you.

(he stands and advances to kiss)

FARRAH

Pierre! Wait! Stay back and I'll tell you.

(**FARRAH** brandishes a book to keep him at arms length. He hesitates, then holds up his hands to show he gives up.)

FARRAH

I am cursed, Pierre. Every man I have ever kissed has been struck dead. I'll never find happiness.

PIERRE

Then it is very lucky for you that you have met me.

FARRAH

Why?

PIERRE

For I, sweet Farrah, am an angel. There is no evil that can harm me.

FARRAH

What?

PIERRE

It may sound fantastique, but I think I have been sent to protect you.

FARRAH

Pierre, don't joke.

PIERRE

I never kid, my sweet. Let me prove it to you. Let me kiss you.

FARRAH

Really? Well, maybe just this once....

(he leans in to kiss her. Just as their lips touch-)

THOMAS

(fires a pistol into Pierre's back)

Again?

FARRAH

Thomas?! You bastard, you just killed an angell!

THOMAS

Farrah, you are far too gullible. He was just lying to get in your pants.

FARRAH

But, but I loved him!

THOMAS

I'm sure you did.

(**FARRAH** jumps at **THOMAS** and they tussle for the gun. **FARRAH** gets hold of it. She brings the gun to her temple. Closes her eyes and prepares to pull the trigger.)

FARRAH

Fuck it, his poetry wasn't that great anyway.

THOMAS

(**THOMAS** takes the gun back from **FARRAH**)

You truly MUST stop falling for these boys. I love gay Paree, but do you really think I enjoy following you all over the earth, putting a bullet in every man you kiss?

FARRAH

I don't want to, but they won't leave me alone!

THOMAS

(**THOMAS** picks up **PIERRE'S** discarded cloak and hat and holds them out to her)

Farrah, if you are that irresistible to the male of the species, why don't you hide your light under a bushel?

(**FARRAH** takes them and looks at **THOMAS** quizzically.)

THOMAS

Oh for heaven's sake, do I have to do everything?

(**THOMAS** puts the hat on **FARRAH's** head, shoving her hair up into it, then puts the cloak on her.)

And, voila! You look like a new man.

FARRAH

(doubtful)

Really? And this will work? I guess it's worth a try.

(takes a compact out of her purse and examines her reflection.)

You really think I look like a man?

THOMAS

No. But since you do tend to associate with drunkards in bars, perhaps they won't notice your feminine wiles. Shall we depart before someone notifies the gendarmes?

(**FARRAH** looks at him for a moment before jumping out the window. **THOMAS** sighs and goes out after her.)

(Back to the present with **EVELYN** and **THOMAS**)

[[Indianapolis, The Present]]

[[The curse runs full circle]]

EVELYN

You double crossing bastard! How could you let her come here?!

(She lunges at him, and he neatly sidesteps.)

THOMAS

Things were getting a bit too predictable. Do you have any idea how tedious it has been wasting my immortality following her around? I wanted to see how my dear brother and our magnificent menagerie had been faring. I had no clue the Alligator Man would be out.

EVELYN

Where's Farrah? Tell me right now or so help me God-

THOMAS

What happened to your mother's intuition, Evelyn? Have you not noticed that your knife throwing talent has rather.... slender wrists? One might even say feminine.

EVELYN

Bard?! Is Farrah?!

THOMAS

One and the same.

(Roar! **EVELYN** and **THOMAS** run for cover in different directions.)

(present with **BILLY** and **JUJO**. **BILLY** has been chasing **JUJO**. **CUE CARD GIRL** presents some cue cards.)

[MEANWHILE]
[OR THE PAST]
[ABOUT 10 MINUTES AGO AT THIS POINT]
[CHECK YOUR WATCH AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIGURE IT OUT]

BILLY

Jujo. You're going to chase a murderous reptile? That's just, just-

JUJO

Why did you come here?

BILLY

Jujo, I-

JUJO

Listen, I know you followed me just so you could fuck me.

BILLY

No! I mean, if it had happened, I wouldn't have stopped it, but-

JUJO

FUCK ME, BILLY. That's why you're here. And now at the slightest setback you're-

BILLY

It's not just a slight set back. It's a pretty huge set back, Jujo. People are being turned into bloody messes.

JUJO

You're giving up.

(**BILLY** grabs **JUJO** by the shoulders.)

BILLY

It's not worth it.
(grabs one the the knives from the belt she is wearing, holds it up in front of her face)
Your life isn't worth it.

JUJO

You don't know what you're missing.

BILLY

You're not alligator girl.

JUJO

(pulls away from Billy)

Who are you to say? You don't know anything about me, you big pussy.

(**JUJO** runs off.)

BILLY

(to thin air)
You're just a girl.

(**BILLY** stands for a minute. Starts to walk back towards taking his seat in the audience. Then has a moment of conscience and takes off running after her.)

BILLY

JUJO!

(The bigtop tent flies back into place. **BARD** enters the tent, dragging **FRITZI** and **NADIA** along. **FRITZI** is still hysterical. **NADIA** yanks herself away from **BARD** as soon as they enter.)

[MEANWHILE NADIA, BARD, FRITZI, AND SOME NAZIS]

NADIA

Get your hands off me!

BARD

I'm just trying to get you somewhere safe.

NADIA

I don't want those filthy fingers near me.

BARD

Look, Nadia, I know you're scared, but-

NADIA

To think I loved you!

BARD

Loved me? Woah, Nadia, I don't know if I've been sending out the wrong signals, but our relationship is strictly professional.

NADIA

Just like your "professional" relationship with Mike? You lying-

(Suddenly **NADIA** is knocked onto the ground from behind. A poodle with blood lust takes a bite out of her neck. Lifting a piece of skin aloft, it's muzzle is coated in blood. **BARD** quickly pulls Schatze off **NADIA** and throws the dog across the room, killing it.)

FRITZI

What have you done! Mein Schatze!

NADIA

Zat rabid fucker pulled a chunk out of my kneck.

FRITIZI

You killed her. You monster.

(He runs at **BARD** and attacks her. **NADIA** pulls him off and pins him in a very contorted pose.)

NADIA

Shit Fritzi. You've got to get control of yourself.

(**FRITZI** is crying so hard he starts hyperventilating.)

BARD

Fritzi, I'm sorry, but he tried to eat Nadia! She's a person and they're just dogs.

FRITZI

Just dogs? JUST DOGS!

(A memory is triggered for **FRITZI**. Lights on a side stage area for the flashback conversation. **BARD**, **FRITZI**, and **NADIA** are in half light, frozen.)

[FRITZI's origins begin 30 years ago in South America]
[They Saved Hitler's Brain]
[And his miniature schnauzers]

GOTTLIEB

Tell me, Eichelberger, what exactly did The Subject tell you and Reinhart on the morning of his 18th birthday when you presented him with the formal invitation to his Grand Coronation as the one true Fuhrer of the Reich?

EICHELBERGER

He, um, he told us he didn't want to do that.

GOTTLEIB

To lead the Aryan people from defeat and disgrace? To reclaim Der Fatherland, to seize his destiny! He "didn't want to do that?"

EICHELBERGER

He told me he... he wanted to train his dogs.

GOTTLIEB

Dogs?

EICHELBERGER

Small dogs, yes.

GOTTLIEB

Small attack dogs? Fighting dogs?

EICHELBERGER

Uh, no, no, more like trick dogs? Like in a carnival.

GOTTLIEB

He wanted to train dogs. Like in a carnival?

EICHELBERGER

We tried to talk him out of it! Reverse psychology, hypnosis, electroshock, gifts, treats, threats, drugs. No use. He always went back to his dogs.

GOTTLIEB

And whose idea were these dogs?

EICHELBERGER

It was mine, sir. We believed The Subject must learn command if he were to ever smash the leftists with an iron fist. It was agreed that some strong, German dogs would help.

GOTTLIEB

Strong German dogs? You gave him miniature schnauzers!

EICHELBERGER

That's all we could find on short notice. The Subject took to ordering these little dogs around immediately. But then he began talking only to his dogs

GOTTLIEB

Talking to the dogs? What about?

EICHELBERGER

He made fun of us. Of The Project. He told his dogs that instead of goose stepping and Seig Heiling, he'd like to run away with them and join a carnival. He said that they were the only ones who had ever loved him.

GOTTLIEB

This is worse than we thought!

EICHELBARGER

It was around this time that the Subject discovered the truth. That he was a clone- genetically engineered from the leaders of the Third Reich, including Adolf Hitler himself.

GOTTLIEB

And no one thought to just take the dogs away?

EICHELBERGER

Reinhart killed them. Last Thursday. Without my permission. That is when things went very very wrong.

(Curtain drop on side stage scene, lights back up on **FRITZI** and others.)

[THE PRESENT]
[THE PROVERBIAL SHIT IS RISING TO MEET THE PROVERBIAL FAN]

FRITZI

Just dogs?!! JUST DOGS?!!

(**FRITZI** overpowers **NADIA** with a loud cry of anguish and grabs **BARD** by the throat, pinning her against the wall.)

BARD

(struggling to speak)
Sweet dogs?

FRITZI

Schatze ist tot! And the rest are out there! With Alligator Man!

(**FRITZI** breaks down again and drops Bard.)

NADIA

Look what you've done to him!

BARD

Me? That dog was trying to eat you.

FRITZI

And you had to kill it? She was so very small.

NADIA

It's all you know. Hurting people who trust you.

BARD

What?

(**NADIA** moves to put an arm around **FRITZI** who is still crying.)

NADIA (cont.)

Its okay. Don't worry. Bard will help you find them, Fritzi. And he won't kill any of them.

BARD

What if they attack me?

NADIA

None of them. Or else.

BARD

(takes a minute and stares at **NADIA**)
Fine I'll go. Fritzi's bloodthirsty dogs scare me a hell of a lot less than your crazy.

(The yelp of a poodle is heard in the distance.)

FRITZI

Brunhilde! My baby!

(**FRITZI** runs toward the sound of the bark with Shatze's body in his arms. **BARD** glares at **NADIA**, then chases after.)

NADIA

Now, to find that oslayob Mike.

(**NADIA** exits. **JUJO** enters with a roll of duct tape and a small dog. **JUJO** is trying to talk sense into Brunhilde while simultaneously duct taping Brunhilde's mouth shut. Brunhilde is whimpering.)

JUJO

Listen I don't make the rules. To lure this kind of reptilian power you need a blood sacrifice.

(A roar is heard.)

JUJO (cont.)

You have to be the bait. I'm sorry Brunhilde.

(**JUJO** runs in the direction of the roar. Tent flies away and the lights follows her as she runs into a dimly lit side stage area. This could be "outside." She stops, catching her breath, looking for Alligator Man. **THOMAS** steps out of the shadows.)

[PRESENT STILL]
[MADE YOU LOOK]

THOMAS

Looking for something?

(**JUJO** whips out a knife from the belt she's been wearing and whirls around in a kung fu move at **THOMAS**.)

JUJO

Hi-ya!

THOMAS

That's quite a knife you've got there.

JUJO

Who says?

THOMAS

I'm Thomas. Half of the "Brothers" in the "Brothers Merlin"? Charmed, I'm sure.
(Offers his hand.)

JUJO

(shocked)
You look the same as your picture!

THOMAS

Picture?

JUJO

I'm a big fan. I've got tons of pictures. Of the carnival, I mean.

THOMAS

But Jujo, for such a big fan you seem to have wandered away from the audience. And now you're alone. In the dark. With a dog.

JUJO

You know my name.

THOMAS

Of course I do.

JUJO

Of course you do. I, um, I'm hunting alligator man.

THOMAS

That sounds dangerous.

JUJO

He's my father. See, just look at my skin!
(she lifts her shirt)

THOMAS

Now that *is* interesting.

JUJO

I've got to capture him. And maybe I can talk to him. I've got to try.

THOMAS

He's not really one for talking. He's more alligator than man, really. You'll need a back up plan. You *do* have a back up plan, don't you?

JUJO

Well, sure. Except that, um. Well. Not really.

THOMAS

Let me give you some sage advice, my dear. You seem to have quite an affinity for these knives.
(gently takes the knife she's holding and places it surreptitiously in his cloak or clothing.)
Let me point you to one that may be more to your liking.
(draws another knife from the belt. It is the same one he presented to Merle in the tomb)

Would you believe it's an ancient weapon? Oh, yes. And an ancient weapon can be quite handy in situations like these. When killing is called for.

JUJO

Killing?

THOMAS

I'm assuming you and your father don't have a close relationship?

JUJO

No. He attacked and raped my mother. We've never met.

THOMAS

How terrible! Worse than I thought! So I'm sure you'll have no problem dispatching the monster.

JUJO

Of course not. No problem at all.

THOMAS

There's a brave girl. You know, I daresay there may be a future for you in this carnival.

(**THOMAS** puts his arm around her and steers her offstage.)

THOMAS (cont.)

If it were me, I would look for him by the animal cages.

(He gives her a push on her way.)

[TEN MINUTES LATER]
[DON'T PISS OFF HITLER'S PROGENY]
[OR A RUSSIAN LADY WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE RELATED TO RASPUTIN]

(Lights out on **THOMAS**. Performance tent flies back. Lights up on **NADIA** finishing up tying a passed out **MIKE** to the knife throwing target.)

NADIA

I knew when I saw you two the other night that you were up to no good. I can't believe I found you holding Bard's knife! You're probably on your way to find him so that you two can attack your next victim! I don't know what you've done to brainwash Bard, but I will wrest him from your clutches and he will be mine forever!

(**BARD** and **FRITZI** come running in. They both stop short when they see **NADIA** tying up **MIKE**.)

NADIA

Oh. Hello.

BARD

What are you doing?

NADIA

Doing us a favor, clearly. He's in league with the Alligator Man.

BARD

That's insane! How'd you knock him out?

NADIA

Chloroform. I love Nancy Drew.

FRITZI

He unleashed this horrible blood lust in my hunds?

NADIA

Turned your dogs, murdered Harvey. There's no telling what he's done.

BARD

That's ridiculous!

NADIA

They

(pointing at **BARD**)

were in it together. I caught them just the other night carousing and scheming.

FRITZI

You too? No wonder it was so easy to kill my precious Schatze.

(**FRITZI** and **NADIA** begin backing **BARD** toward the target.)

BARD

If you'd just stop being such a damn Nazi about those fucking dogs, you'd see she's just a jealous lunatic!

FRITZI

NAZI! DID YOU JUST CALL ME A NAZI! Niemand nennt mich einen nazi!!!

(**FRITZI** lunges towards **BARD**, shoving her against the target. There are already handcuffs or ties in place on the target that he uses to bind her to it)

FRITZI

Zere. Restrained.

NADIA

Perfect alligator bait.

FRITZI

Succulent.

NADIA

Delectable.

FRITZI

Zey look good enough to eat.

(they both start laughing hysterically. There is a roar close by, and they both scream and run)

(Flashback to **MERLE's** trailer, he is slumped over, sleeping in his chair.)

[[6 months ago]]
[[A family re-united]]

MERLE

(muttering in his sleep)
Can we do it on your stilts?

(**BARD** sneaks into the trailer. She sneaks up behind **MERLE** and taps him on the shoulder.)

yanks

BARD

It's been too long-

(**MERLE** quickly whirls around and, using his magic, pins **BARD** to the wall. Crossing to the immobilized **BARD**, he grabs a knife from her belt and holds it to her throat. Suddenly **THOMAS** enters and **MERLE** and **BARD** look up.)

THOMAS

(clapping)
Bravo. You're still spry. But I don't think you want to do that.

MERLE

I think I would be well within my rights to dispatch-

(**MERLE** pulls off **BARD's** hat and her hair tumbles out)

THOMAS

Your daughter?

MERLE

Farrah?

(**MERLE** releases her. **BARD** scurries away and crouches against the wall.)

BARD

(deeper)
Bard.

THOMAS

She's a he now.

BARD

His suggestion.

THOMAS

My suggestion. It seemed easier than all the killing.

BARD

You didn't seem to mind that much.

THOMAS

Oh. I like the killing. The cleanup and disposal, on the other hand... That is not my skill set.

MERLE

Why is she back here, Thomas?

BARD

I'm here for a job.

THOMAS

She wants a job. I tried to talk her out of it.

MERLE

You did?

THOMAS

No.

BARD

It's about time I get to be in the family business. I've been training. For years. And I have a target girl.

THOMAS

I tried to explain to her how backwards that was.

MERLE

Take her away, Thomas.

BARD

You can't make me leave.

THOMAS

She's an adult, Merle.

MERLE

You can't have a job.

BARD

How do you plan to stop me? You can't just dump me on the steps of a boarding school any more. I'm a bit too old for that.

THOMAS

You can't stop her. And she's good.

BARD

Very good.

MERLE

We don't need a knife thrower. The liability insurance alone will kill us.

BARD

I have my own insurance.

MERLE

Evelyn will never agree to it.

BARD

I'll talk to Evelyn. I've got a way with the ladies.

(winks.)

MERLE

No, no, don't do that! I'll take care of Evelyn.

BARD

Does that mean I've got the job?

MERLE

I didn't say that.

BARD

You owe me. I spent 10 years at a boarding school. On scholarship. Do you have any clue what that's like? The other girls went shopping, I worked in the office on work study. The other girls went on skiing vacations or at the very least home to their parents, I hung out with the headmistress and sent myself fake letters so it looked like someone cared about me enough to write. You owe me this job, "Dad".

THOMAS

She has a point, Merlin.

MERLE

(glares at his brother. Then looks at **BARD** for a moment.)

Okay.

BARD

I've got the job?

MERLE

Yes. Yes, you've got the job.

(**BARD** is giddy like a school girl. She jumps up and hugs **THOMAS**. It's painfully obvious she's closer to him than **MERLE**.)

BARD

(To **MERLE**.)
Thanks. You won't regret it.

(She exits. **THOMAS** turns to follow and **MERLE** blocks the doorway, keeping him in)

MERLE

Not one word to Evelyn about who Bard really is.

THOMAS

(**THOMAS** mimes zipping his lips, locking them, and throwing away the key.)

MERLE

And if Sobek gets loose it's going to be your blood staining the sacrifice.

THOMAS

Oh Merle. We both know you could never do that.
(exits)

MERLE

You'd be horrified at what love can drive a man to do.

[BACK TO THE PRESENT]
[MERLE'S TRAILER]
[GUILT IS THE NOOSE THAT HANGS THE UNFORGIVEN]

(Back to present. **MERLE**'s trailer. **MERLE** is cowering in a corner. A diabolical growl can be heard from outside. The trailer door bursts open into the darkened room and **BILLY** rushes in, quickly closing it. He is breathing heavily. The noise of the door causes **MERLE** to scurry into another corner. It is too dark for either one to see each other. **BILLY** leans against the door listening to noise outside. He backs cautiously away from the door. Merle in his haste to hide, dislodges some junk in the trailer which **BILLY** hears.)

BILLY

Jujo?

(There's a slight rustling noise)

BILLY (cont.)

(waving his knife around)
I don't want to hurt you. I'm turning on a light now.

(**BILLY** frantically feels about the dark wall with one hand, while holding out the knife in the other. Dim lights rise up on **MERLE**. He's a mess. **BILLY** sees him, and brandishes the knife. **MERLE** shrinks back into the wall covering his head. Merle's distress is projected throughout the trailer. The trailer shakes, dishes and glasses fall from shelves. Windows shatter.)

BILLY

What's going on?! Who are you?

(**BILLY** approaches **MERLE** cautiously, lowering the knife. The trailers stops shaking, **MERLE** whimpers still shielding his head.)

BILLY

I'm Billy. It's okay. Did the Alligator Man hurt you?

MERLE

(Barely above a whisper)
In more ways than you can imagine.

BILLY

Well you don't look hurt or anything. I don't see any blood.

MERLE

I couldn't find Evelyn or the kids...

BILLY

Mister I think you're in shock.

(**BILLY** gets a blanket and wraps it around **MERLE**)

BILLY (cont.)

Hey, I know how you feel. I can't find my friend JuJo.

MERLE

I can't watch this happen again. I never wanted...

[[34 years ago]]
[[under the same circumstances]]

(The carnival is in complete chaos. People are screaming. **EVELYN** enters running with the sounds of the Alligator Man close on her heels. She is wielding a baseball bat. The Alligator Man growls offstage as Evelyn stops and looks for her family. Ideally, this whole flashback should be really dark, and the Alligator Man is suggested rather than actually seen.)

EVELYN

Merle? Merle? Oh my God, where are you Merle?

(**EVELYN** runs offstage in a panic. **MERLE** and **EVELYN**'s son **DALE** enters carrying a baby. He

could perhaps be played by **BILLY**. He is terrified.)

DALE

Mom?

(The baby starts to cry)

It's okay. It's okay. Dad?

(**DALE** clutches the baby to his chest and rushes offstage. The growling gets louder as the shape of the Alligator Man comes onstage, then disappears. **MERLE** enters with a knife

MERLE

Dale? Evelyn?

(Hears the growling)

Shit! Dale?

(**MERLE** exits as more screams are heard, intermingled with the sound of a crying baby. **DALE** re-enters first with the baby.)

DALE

Dad? It's okay sissy. Stop crying. Mom?

(**EVELYN** re-enters and sees **DALE**. The Alligator Man is behind her.)

EVELYN

Run Dale! Take your sister and get the hell out of here!

(**DALE** freezes as he sees Alligator Man coming up behind **EVELYN**.)

EVELYN (cont.)

Dammit Dale! Run!

DALE

Mom!

(**MERLE** re-enters sees the suggestion of the Alligator Man behind **EVELYN** and makes a beeline for **DALE** and the baby. He grabs the baby from **DALE** right as **EVELYN** is "snatched" by the Alligator Man or the suggestion of the Alligator Man and she screams.)

DALE

Dad! What about Mom?

EVELYN

(Trying to fight off what has grabbed her)

Merle! Don't! Please!

MERLE

Sorry, I have to...

DALE

Dad! Don't!

(**MERLE** puts the baby on the ground and pulls out his knife. He closes his eyes. He raises the knife, as **DALE** rushes toward the baby and covers her body with his own. We see the knife stab **DALE**, as **EVELYN** screams, the baby cries, and the sounds of the Alligator Man suddenly stop as the flashback goes to black. Lights back up in the storage trailer and the present. **MERLE** and **BILLY** sit thoughtfully for a beat.)

[BACK TO THE PRESENT IN MERLE'S TRAILER]

BILLY

Who are you?

MERLE

(Regaining his composure)
I am Merle of the Brothers Merlin. This is my carnival

(**MERLE** snaps his fingers and lights in the trailer come on. Flash of light illuminates the entire stage, then dims to just illuminate the scene. **BILLY** is visibly shocked)

BILLY

But how? And what are you doing hiding in here?

MERLE

Sometimes, a body just gets tired, and well, if it must be said.
(**MERLE**'s voice drops to a whisper)
I'm scared, just plain scared. Scared of what I might do if I walk out that door. I don't know if I can do it again. She's the only child I have. When you have seen the horrors I've seen, and done the unspeakable things I have done-

(**BILLY** starts to reply but is cut off by a low distant roar that is quickly approaching. **BILLY** freezes.)

BILLY

(squeaking)
Oh God.

MERLE

(Fully in command of himself again)
Back away from the door quietly. Ok.

(The growling gets louder, something is rustling outside)

BILLY

It's outside. What if it comes through the door?

MERLE

Just be still. And quiet.

BILLY

But-

MERLE

Shhhhhh.

(The low growling draws closer. A scraping, clawing sound surrounds the trailer. **BILLY** crosses to cower in the corner next to **MERLE**. **MERLE** sings a very quiet lullaby or shushing, something to comfort **BILLY** and himself. Slowly the growling recedes from the trailer door. **BILLY** continues to cower.)

MERLE

He's gone.

BILLY

Not really, he is still out there and so is Jujo. I'm a coward. I ran away. I left her out there alone.

MERLE

You know, being brave isn't the same thing as not being scared. You wouldn't be much good to her dead. That's what fear is. It's the instinct to keep us alive. To protect us.

(**MERLE** reflects for a moment on what he's just said)

Protect those we love. And you have to be careful, Billy. Because sometimes fear can make us do very rash things, especially to protect the people we love.

(as he speaks, he removes the knife from **BILLY**'s hand)

BILLY

What is the Alligator Man?

MERLE

Something very old and very hungry.

BILLY

Can it be stopped?

MERLE

Yes.

BILLY

How?

MERLE

It's complicated. That's what makes it scary.

BILLY

I don't understand.

MERLE

(resolute)

Sometimes, sacrifices have to be made. Billy, listen at the door. See if that thing is still shuffling about.

BILLY

(Nervously)

Ok.

(**BILLY** gets up and quietly walks over to the trailer door. He carefully leans his ear against it, listening.)

MERLE

Hear anything?

BILLY

No. You think it's gone?

MERLE

Might be our best chance either way. You need to find your Jujo, and I need to stop hiding and find my family.

BILLY

Alright. Do you have a plan?

MERLE

Not as such, but I'll figure something out.

(**MERLE** and **BILLY** get up to approach the door. A large growl is heard, a woman screams,and **BILLY** bolts out the door.)

BILLY

JuJo!

MERLE

Billy! Wait!

(**MERLE** runs after **BILLY**)

(Lights up on **BARD/FARRAH** and **MIKE**, tied up on opposite sides of The Devils door. A vertical platform [like a door] that spins like a revolving door)

BARD/FARRAH

Mike! Wake up, you idiot! Mike!

MIKE (coming to)

Huh? What the fuck...?

BARD

Mike? Are you back with me?

MIKE

I think so. What happened... Where are... Goddamn my head hurts

BARD

That's the chloroform Nadia dosed you with. Apparently she's gotten it in her head that she's in love with me. Crazy jealous bitch.

MIKE

Chloroform?! Jesus!

BARD

Yeah, sorry about that. I never meant for this to happen to you, Mike. Any of this.

MIKE

It's ok. I'm fine, at least I think I am. Maybe would be better if I wasn't tied up. Is someone about to throw knives at us?

(**THOMAS** enters)

THOMAS

Hello Farrah.

FARRAH

Shit!

MIKE

Farrah?

FARRAH

(pleading)

No please. Stop. He thinks I'm a man. This is different. It's not like that.

MIKE

You're not a man?

FARRAH

No Mike I'm not a man. Please, Thomas.

THOMAS

It's sounds like you're rather attached to him. Poor Nadia AND Mike. Toying with two hearts, eh?

FARRAH

Please don't kill him, Thomas.

THOMAS

I'm not here for him, Farrah.

(**MERLE** enters)

MERLE

He's here for you.

MIKE

You're seriously not a man?

(everyone looks at **MIKE** for a beat, then resumes)

THOMAS

Good evening, Merle. I was wondering when you were going to put in an appearance.

MERLE

Thomas. Brother. I thought I was quite clear that this time it would be your blood spilled.

FARRAH

Brother?

MERLE

Farrah, this is your Uncle. Thomas.

FARRAH

Uncle?

THOMAS

You must forgive me, darling. You see, we've always been a family that likes to keep its secrets. Isn't that right, Merle?

MERLE

Too many secrets, Thomas.

THOMAS

Perhaps. But time is running a little short to go digging up the past right now, "dear brother." We both know-

(**THOMAS** has crossed near **MIKE**. **MIKE** sees **THOMAS** for who he really is- the guy from the bar. **MIKE** reaches out and manages to catch **THOMAS'** clothes)

MIKE

You! It's you! I can't believe I didn't recognize you earlier. What the hell are you doing here?!

THOMAS

Yep. It's me. Hello again. Surprised you didn't say anything when you were mopping up guts. Shock I suppose?

MIKE

You ruined my life! I've done nothing since that night but roam, looking for answers!

THOMAS

Well I'm glad you've had the chance to see the world. Now if you'll excuse me-

(**MERLE** uses the distraction to try to tackle **THOMAS** who throws him off with ease. **MERLE** tries again. Again he is rebuffed.)

THOMAS (cont.)

Oh, Merle. This is pathetic. Just stand back while I perform the sacrifice.

MERLE

No. Please Thomas, this was not how it was supposed to be. You were supposed to keep her away from here. This wasn't in the plan.

(**MERLE** reaches out his hand to touch **FARRAH**'s cheek, but **THOMAS** grabs him and stops him.)

THOMAS

The plan? There is no plan, Merle. All is chaos. That is the beauty of this life. It is the world we have made for ourselves. So, stop torturing yourself like this! Sobek has broken his bonds- yet *again*. Ergo we must offer him the blood of our family. Enter Farrah, your daughter. Her blood quenches Sobek's blood lust, and he returns to his slumber. We keep control and retain our immortality. It is our pact.

MERLE

I cannot do this. I will not kill another of my children.

THOMAS

You don't have to.

(pulls out his knife)

I am more than happy to do it this time.

(**MERLE** gets up, finding some new strength and positions himself between Thomas and Farrah)

MERLE

No! She will not die to save us.

(A loud roar is heard in the distance, screams follow.)

THOMAS

Do you hear that Merle?! That thing will devour us all! Hell, it may very well devour everything. She's not worth that.

MERLE

This is **y*our*** mess. Your blood will be the cleansing agent.

THOMAS

You can't kill me Merle. You will not kill her, so I will. Now move so I can end this.

(**MERLE** does not move)

THOMAS (cont.)

(feigning deep sadness and hurt)
Dear brother. Has it really come to this?

(**THOMAS** suddenly, without warning lunges at **MERLE**. **MERLE** is fighting wildly, but eventually **THOMAS** gets the upper hand. He raises his arm to fatally stab **MERLE**, BANG! **THOMAS** drops and doesn't move. Enter **EVELYN** with a smoking gun.)

EVELYN

(spits on **THOMAS**)
You're not spilling any of that girl's blood. And Merle, you step away from that knife. I don't want you stabbing the wrong person again.

FARRAH

Again? There were others?

MERLE

(to **EVELYN**)
But I saved your life. I had to, to save your life.

EVELYN

You killed your child. *My* child. He was my child too. And so is she. And I'm sure as hell not letting it happen again.

FARRAH

I had a brother? And *you're* my mother?
(to **MERLE**)
You said Mom was dead!

EVELYN

It's the truth, sure as shit. The two of them.
(gestures at **THOMAS**)
In it together. And dragged me into it too. But not anymore. I sent you away. I couldn't take the chance that something would happen to you. That you'd be killed to keep them alive like your brother.

MERLE

I wasn't going to kill her. I was going to end this.

MIKE

Um, I hate to interrupt...

EVELYN

Why in the hell is your mouth even moving!

MIKE

Where did Thomas go?

EVELYN

He's right over there where that bullet left him, dumb ass.

MIKE

You might want to double check that.

(**EVELYN** turns around, still holding **MERLE** in a headlock with the gun in his jaw. **THOMAS** is not where they left him.)

EVELYN

That slippery son-of-a-bitch.

(**THOMAS** enters, this time next to **FARRAH**. He still has the knife. While he is still very much alive, there is fresh blood on the back of his coat where the bullet had hit him.)

THOMAS

That's the thing about immortality. Makes me hard to get rid of.

(He puts his knife to **FARRAH**'s throat.)

EVELYN

Don't you dare.

THOMAS

You know, I have never gotten to do this part of it before. I think I shall rather enjoy this...

(A shadowy figure starts to creep up from behind the target, making a very faint sniffing noise.)

MIKE

Um...

THOMAS

Shut up, you!

EVELYN

You kill her and I will spend the rest of my life making sure you suffer.

THOMAS

I will admit Evelyn, there is more bravado left in you than I would have given you credit for, but I would wager that watching your daughter bleed to death will break you. Let us see.

(He raises the knife to **FARRAH**'s throat, but just as he does **MIKE** throws his weight to the side...)

MIKE

No!!

(**MIKE**'s weight has caused the target to come rolling off it's stand. It rolls over **THOMAS**'s foot and leg, causing him to screech in pain and drop the knife. The target hits the wall, and cracks apart,

leaving **MIKE** and **FARRAH** tangled in ropes and wooden pieces. Suddenly, the Alligator Man, attracted by the scent of the fresh blood on **THOMAS**' s jacket, rushes forward and grabs him in his jaws. Distracted by **MIKE**'s action, **THOMAS** never sees him coming. **THOMAS** screams once, and then with a great snap of his head, the Alligator Man breaks his neck. **MERLE** doesn't hesitate; he rushes Alligator Man. He picks up the knife and tries to use it as a weapon against Alligator Man.)

MERLE

Run you fools!

(**EVELYN** uses some powder from the bag around her neck and sprinkles it on the rope, releasing **FARRAH** and **MIKE** and they run and hide. **MERLE** manages a few well placed hits, but ultimately Alligator Man mauls and kills him. **JUJO** runs onstage, "special" knife in hand, Brunhilde in her other arm. She sees the attack and races toward Alligator Man, jumps on his back and immediately starts ramming his snout with the hilt of her knife. **BILLY**, with **NADIA** and **FRITZI** on his heels, run onstage.)

BILLY

You're going to get killed!

JUJO

Trust me! I know what I'm doing!

(Alligator Man begins whirling around in a circle, trying to get **JUJO** off his back. She sticks her thumb in Alligator man's eye and thunks his snout again with the hilt of the knife. He howls and drops to the ground. She tries to slit his throat, but he shakes her off. **JUJO** and Alligator Man stand, circle one another, preparing for the next round.)

JUJO

Everyone knows you have to use bait to catch a gator. Fetch!

(She throws Brunhilde offstage)

FRITZI

No!!

(The sudden sound and movement distract Alligator Man from **JUJO**. He turns and growls. She rushes at him and stabs him in the heart. He bites her as he goes down. They both lay still for a moment.)

(**BILLY** runs over to **JUJO**. **FARRAH** runs over to **MERLE**'s body.)

BILLY

Jujo! Are you okay?

(He rolls her over. She moans.)

FARRAH

You stupid old man!

NADIA

Is it dead?

(**EVELYN** walks over and pokes Alligator man's body with her gun. **MIKE** walks over to **FARRAH**, to put a hand on her shoulder to comfort her.)

EVELYN

Dead as a doornail. She got that son of a bitch in his heart. She must have been up on her Egyptian mythology.

NADIA

So, what now?

EVELYN

Hell if I know..

BILLY

Is Jujo going to be alright?

EVELYN

Goddamn it, if I knew, don't you think I'd tell you? The only people who'd know the answer to that question are lying here dead.

(**BILLY** gently rolls **JUJO**'s body over.)

BILLY

Jujo, say something.

(She moans again, but this time it sounds more like a growl.)

BILLY

Jujo?

(**JUJO** does a half human/half alligator roar that sounds something like "Alligator girl!" And lunges at someone.)

EVELYN

Oh shit, I was afraid of this.

(**EVELYN** yanks the velvet curtain that had been hiding the dais that previously held Harvey's corpse and throws it over **JUJO** like a net.)

EVELYN

Could use a fucking hand here!

(**MIKE** rushes over to help her hold down the wrapped **JUJO**.)

EVELYN

Rope!

(**FARRAH** tosses her the rope that she'd been tied up with, and **EVELYN**, with **MIKE**'s help, hog-ties the velvet curtain around **JUJO**.)

EVELYN

She's not too strong yet. That'll come. Billy, get her out of here right now. Put her somewhere she can't get out. I think you know the trailer. Be sure now. Test every one of them damn locks. We don't have anyone else to sacrifice right now.

BILLY

But-

EVELYN

Just do it!

(**BILLY** takes hold of the snarling velvet curtain bundle. **EVELYN** pushes **FRITZI** and **NADIA** over to **BILLY**.)

EVELYN

Don't just stand there like a couple of damn fools! Help him!

(They drag it offstage.)

EVELYN

(to **FARRAH**)

I guess there's still some explaining to do here.

FARRAH

You could say that.

EVELYN

Goddamn, why is shit so complicated? I gotta go take care of this, ok? Just don't go anywhere. Please? I'll be right back.

(**EVELYN** exits in the direction that the new Alligator Girl has just been taken.)

(**FARRAH** walks over to **MIKE**.)

FARRAH

Why in the hell are you still wearing this thing?

(She takes off the barker's coat which he's been wearing this whole time. She throws it on the ground.)

MIKE

I kind of forgot I still had it on. Things got a little messy there...

(looks at **FARRAH** for a beat)

MIKE (cont.)

You're really a girl.

FARRAH

Yep.

MIKE

Not a dude.

FARRAH

Definitely not. Sorry?

MIKE

(Chuckles lightly)
I think I'm going to need a drink.

FARRAH

I hear we're in Indianapolis. Crossroads of America, right? Maybe there's a guy waiting around in a hotel bar, looking for some answers...

(They walk offstage.)

(Quick scene transition)

[ONE MONTH AGO]
[A CURB IN INDIANAPOLIS]
[MEETING CUTE)]

(Flashback: **BILLY** and **JUJO** are sitting on a curb eating popcorn)

JUJO

(Lifting up the side of her shirt to show **BILLY** her "scales")
And that's proof that I am Alligator Girl.

BILLY

(A little flustered)
Really? It just looks you have really dry skin! Probably just need lotion or something.

JUJO

(offended)
Have you ever heard of an alligator with oily skin? They don't make acne products for reptiles!

BILLY

Sorry, JuJo I didn't mean to make you mad.

JUJO

(Crestfallen)

I was hoping that you would believe me. I am special, you know. I am going to do something big. I mean, really big! It's meant to be.

BILLY

Aren't we all supposed to believe that?

JUJO

I guess so, but how many grown-ups do you see working at Taco Bell?

BILLY

There's nothing wrong with that!

JUJO

I know there is nothing wrong with that Billy, but do you think any of the people you see working in the drive thru ever sat in math class fantasizing about serving tacos?

BILLY

Well, no.

JUJO

Don't you see? I can't stand the idea of that ever happening to me.

BILLY

There is nothing wrong with being ordinary.

JUJO

(Tearful)

There is everything wrong with being ordinary, and I won't let it happen to me.

BILLY

(Starts to hug **JUJO**, then stops himself. Thinks for a beat)

Well, when you become extraordinary, I hope you don't forget about me.

JUJO

I promise I won't.

(**JUJO** leans over and gives **BILLY** a kiss on the cheek. She throws her popcorn in the trash can, and exits. **BILLY**, in a daze, reaches up to touch his face where **JUJO** kissed him, and smiles. Lights change. We hear music, perhaps of a carnival and perhaps of a New Orleans funeral. The music gets closer as the rest of the living cast returns to the stage. **EVELYN** brings over the barker's coat and helps **BILLY** into it, while the others carry/wheel in a large tank/case marked with a brass plaque, "The Amazing Alligator Girl." They position it and then all but **BILLY** exit, the music receding with them. Lights change again. **BILLY** walks over to the case and begins polishing it with a handkerchief. He speaks lowly to it, in a conversational tone.)

BILLY

You'll never believe what happened today, Jujo. Evelyn was so mad! You see...

(As he speaks, lights and **BILLY**'s voice fade together.)

THE END

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