

# **Der Zufall**

By

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## SCENE I

SETTING: DENVER, COLORADO. WINTER.  
DOWNTOWN.

*(MESMORIA is shoveling snow in front of a 7/11. A hypnotist's wheel sits on his head like a hat. He takes notice of the audience.)*

## MESMORIA

*(To Audience.)*

Oh hi. I didn't see you there. I mean—THE GREAT MESMORIA SEES ALL—Oh, who the hell am I kidding? I can't put up a front when you're watching me shovel snow for five bucks a pop! Truth is, I'm not the fantastical magician that I once was. I am but a shell of a man who once had the world within his very grasp. The entertainment world, I mean, but still! I used to play at all of the great casinos in Vegas. Circus Circus! Excalibur!... And others! Yes, I was on top of the world until—and, and it wasn't really my fault, this mistake, but it was still enough to sufficiently stop my career dead, but I... I cut one of Siegfried and Roy's tigers in half. They assured me that it knew to retract its legs into the secret compartment of the box I was sawing in half. What choice did I have but to believe them? I don't speak tiger. And, and, both Siegfried AND Roy AND their manager, that little shit, told me that the tiger was a trained actor, and had been instructed to put on a show for the audience as I sawed into the box. So, there I was, a third of the way or so into the box, when the tiger starts roaring like crazy! It starts twisting and turning, and I keep going because I, like the audience, think it is part of the show. I finish sawing my way through the box and the tiger stops moving entirely, which I think, "oh man, this thing can play dead too?" But... It wasn't playing. I trusted the wrong people and a tiger was dead because of it. The audience starts booing. Some are crying. Some are throwing bottles and random shit at me. And I leave the stage in shame.

*(Mesmoria finishes shoveling and knocks on the door.)*

I go backstage and go to Siegfried and Roy and say, you know, "what the fuck, guys? I thought you were Siegfried and Roy, world famous tiger trainers or whatever. How could you stick me with this amateur shit? What happened today was your fault!". Remember, I was under the impression that the tiger was trained and was told what to do by the guys and their shitty, piece of garbage manager. Fuckin' slime ball.

*(PETER MATTHEWS, a 7/11 manager in his forties, comes through the store doors.)*

Alright Mr. Matthews, that'll be five bucks.

## PETER

Not bad. I really appreciate you doing this.

## MESMORIA

Yeah, no problem. You want me back tomorrow for the same thing?

PETER

The forecast doesn't call for snow tomorrow.

*(Mesmoria spins his little hypnotism hat.)*

MESMORIA

You sure about that?

PETER

I mean, yes, of course. Come back tomorrow. Same time. I'll give you five more dollars.

MESMORIA

Yeah, yeah. Pleasure doing business with you.

*(Peter goes back inside.)*

Anyway, back to my story. I say to these guys, "I thought you two knew how to train a tiger right, being Siegfried and Roy and all. Get this—they tell me they're not really those guys. Their real names were Hans and Gruber. They had bought this rare tiger from the estate of some dead, eccentric rich guy who used it to impress chicks or some shit. These two knuckleheads were posing as Siegfried and Roy so that I would thrust their tiger into the spotlight and they could start careers as some sort of knock off version of those two. I shoulda known. One of them was clearly a woman. But, I had never seen the real Siegfried and Roy up close, and it's 2020 so I figure, whatever, ya know? Love is love is love. Kay Surra Surra.

*(Mesmoria knocks on the next door, which is a Panda Express.)*

Yo! You want your walkway shoveled?

Come out here!

Come talk to me out here!

I can shovel your walkway for five bucks!

What do you mean, you "got a guy"?

Your guy is sure doing a piss poor job if your walkway still has snow all over it!

No, no, fuck YOU! I hope you remember this choice when some old broad comes here for some of your disgusting orange chicken and slips on this snow and breaks her fucking back! You gonna pay her medical bills when you can't even afford to keep kung pao shrimp on the menu year round? FUCK YOU!

What do you mean it's a rotating item?

## MESMORIA

What do you got now?

What!?

Coconut shrimp!

*(To audience.)*

Fuck me, that sounds tasty. I'm gonna get me some of that later. Obviously, not at this Panda Express. I don't think that guy would be happy serving me, and if he did, it's probably a ruse to spit in my food or some shit. Guys like that are always crapping on us little guys so they could laugh behind our back. Anyway, where was I... Oh yeah! So, I killed this tiger, Siegfried and Roy aren't real, blah blah blah. Later, I get a call from those two frauds' creepy, little manager. He says the tiger was endangered and I owed them forty grand to replace it! He says if I don't have it by the end of the week—he'll break my legs. Then, if I didn't come up with the money a week after that—I'd be horribly killed. Well, I sure as shit didn't have forty thousand dollars, so I skipped town. That is why I am here, in sunny Denver, Colorado. Shoveling snow to get enough money to keep hiding from these sadistic fucks in relative comfort... Wait a minute... I'm a world-class hypnotist. I am so fucking stupid...

*(Mesmoria opens the door to the Panda Express.)*

Hey! I will take some of that coconut shrimp.

Two entrée plate with fried rice.

Orange chicken.

You gonna spit in it?

You gonna spit in it?

*(Mesmoria spins the hypnotism hat.)*

Don't spit in it.

*(Mesmoria enters the Panda Express.)*

## SCENE II

SETTING: AN OFFICE. FUCKING GREAT  
FISH TANK IN BACK.

*(A very small, very greasy man, GINO, sits behind a desk.)*

*(There is a KNOCK at the door.)*

GINO

Come in.

*(Hans and Gruber enter. Both are very tall, very blond, and very German.)*

Ah, yes. Thank you for coming by. I just wanted to reassure you that we here at the organization are doing everything in our power to find that son of a bitch who killed your tiger.

HANS

Patches.

GINO

Patches—that's right. Your tiger, Patches. I will not rest until The Great Mesmoria's head is on a plate!

GRUBER

We really appreciate it, Mr. Gino.

GINO

Please. Just Gino. My dad was Mr. Gino.

HANS

He was a very formal man?

GINO

No, he... It's just a saying. I was trying to make a joke.

HANS

Oh, HA HA HA HA. Did you hear, Gruber? He made a lustiger witz!

GRUBER

HA HA HA HA. That is a funny.

GINO

Yeah, save some of that witty back-and-forth for the stage.

*(Gino moves over to the fish tank. He starts feeding the fish.)*

This guy may be on the run, but we'll find him. And, we'll make him pay. You see, guys like him are a lot like fish. Sooner or later, they gotta come out of their plastic castle and eat something. As soon as we see him pop his little head out, then BAM! We got him.

HANS

But... Everything has to eat. Why did you say, "guys like him" when we are all like fish?

GINO

I don't... I dunno, Hans. It sounds smart in American.

GRUBER

Just a translation issue.

HANS

Yes. That must be it.

*(Hans looks suspiciously at Gino.)*

GINO

Anyway, we'll catch this punk. After all, he ripped off the organization too. Remember, we got this tiger with you. 50/50. Split down the middle.

*(Hans and Gruber scream out in pain.)*

Oh my god! I am so sorry. That was a poor choice of words when describing the tiger.

HANS

Patches!

GINO

Patches! Yes! I'm sorry, guys. What I meant to say is we have a vested interest in finding Patches' killer. We will stop at nothing to track down Mesmoria and make him pay.

GRUBER

How do you expect to do that?

GINO

I thought you would never ask.

*(Gino sends out a sharp WHISTLE.)*

*(After a beat, a huge, intimidating man, WILLY, enters. He speaks quickly, in an incredibly stereotypical and dumb, Chicago mobster accent.)*

WILLY

You whistle, boss?

GINO

Yes, Willy. Thank you for being so prompt. Boys, this is Willy. Willy, this is Hans and Gruber.

WILLY

It's a pleasure to meet ya's.

HANS

Do you really think we'll be able to find this guy, Willy?

WILLY

Of course. Wit my trackin' skills, our network a contacts, an da power a positive thinkin' we can do anythin'.

GRUBER

I'm sorry, what was that last thing?

WILLY

What? Da power a positive thinkin'? Ya never heard'a dat?

GRUBER

I can't say we have. Optimism is not a common trait in Germany. We are harsh realists in a universe governed by chaos. We live, we die, we become food for worms. Every German baby, from the time of its conception is told this truth, not for terror, but in preparation of a cold, unforgiving reality in which we all must navigate.

GINO

From the time of conception? Really?

GRUBER

Yes. I still remember my mother's voice as I formed in the womb. She said, "Gruber, time is fearless and does not relent to the pleas of man. The steady beat of the clock ticks us all onward, toward a grim eventuality that no one can escape. You will come to know this, little baby, on the coldest of nights and in your darkest hours. When even the vast wilderness can feel like a claustrophobic nightmare. Now grow, my love. Grow, so you may know these truths."

GINO

Jesus Christ, Gruber. That's some dark stuff.

GRUBER

Nonsense. That is a classic, German nursery rhyme, "das Kind und die Welt der Trauer".

GINO

Well, I uh... I'm sure it sounds sweeter in German.

HANS

Actually, it is quite horrible.

GINO

Yeah, well, just follow Willy's lead on this one then. He says "Jump", you say—

GRUBER

I will do as you wish, but first must know the proper level and direction in which to jump.

GINO

Uh... Yeah, that's correct. Now, we are lucky enough to have a lead. One of our contacts in Fort Collins says some weirdo magician has been hanging around Denver since October. Says they've been doing odd jobs to survive. I've got a strong feeling like it's our guy.

WILLY

We go in. Get da guy. Bring 'em back. Simple.

HANS

Right.

GINO

Good luck to you, gentlemen.

WILLY

Thank ya, Gino.

*(Willy hugs Gino affectionately. They both smile.)*

*(Hans and Gruber begin to walk out.)*

GINO

Hey! Where the hell do ya two think you're going? Get over here, ya knuckleheads.

*(Hans and Gruber reluctantly hug Gino. Gino smiles, they break apart, and Hans, Gruber, and Willy exit.)*

Anyone teach these fuckin' kids manners anymore? Jesus.



## SCENE III

SETTING: A SHOP. LOOKS OLD TIMEY.  
MIGHT EVEN BE A SHOPPE IN  
THAT CASE.

*(POSEY, a strong, young mountain woman, is cleaning a gun and wearing flannel.)*

*(Mesmoria enters.)*

POSEY

Oh, hello. Welcome to “Fur and Flannel”, the best outdoorsman shop this side of the rocky mountains. How can I help you?

MESMORIA

Hello. I’m looking for hiking supplies... And a tent, I guess.

POSEY

Sure thing, fella. We have plenty of gear to get you started. What kind of hike are you doing?

MESMORIA

I was thinking of taking a shot at the Continental Divide Trail.

*(Posey bursts out laughing.)*

POSEY

The Continental Divide Trail!? You can’t be serious!? Guy, you will literally freeze to death in the first week. It is really not smart to undertake such a rigorous trail in the middle of Winter.

MESMORIA

Oh, I see you don’t recognize me. I am THE GREAT MESMORIA! I am a magician, illusionist, and for a while, when my career had hit a small speedbump, I was an endurance artist.

POSEY

What the hell is that?

MESMORIA

It’s like, uh... You remember when David Blaine froze himself in a block of ice?

POSEY

Yeah.

MESMORIA

It’s like that. Only, David Blaine is a hack. I would have frozen myself in a block of ice, in a frozen lake, in Alaska. That’s what a real magician would have done.

POSEY

None of that sounds like magic.

MESMORIA

But it is! The mystical arts are mysterious and far-reaching. It is up to magicians like I, and to a lesser extent, David Blaine, to push the boundaries of what is known and reach newfound heights in the realm of magic.

POSEY

Oh... So, are you gonna buy something, or...

MESMORIA

Yes! I will be requiring supplies to keep me warm – not that I need them – but just to be safe.

POSEY

Right. Well, as long as you're aware that it is very possible to freeze to death in high mountains during the winter.

MESMORIA

Really? Has it ever happened before?

POSEY

You ever hear of the Donner Party?

MESMORIA

Can't say that I have.

POSEY

Oh, you're going to do just fine up there then.

MESMORIA

Alright. What do you suggest I take with me?

POSEY

Furs and flannels. And plenty of them!

MESMORIA

What about a tent? Cooking supplies? Things of that nature?

POSEY

Yeah, sure, we have those, but you're really going to be kicking yourself if you don't get yourself a few warm furs and flannels.

MESMORIA

Really? Because I've heard good things about Gore-tex—

POSEY

Gore-tex!?! You come into my store where I specifically sell the most splendid furs and flannels in all of Colorado and you want Gore-tex? Get the hell out of my store.

MESMORIA

Whoa! I am so sorry if I offended you. I had no idea you were so passionate about furs and flannels. I'm starting to think that I'm not cut out for this trip after all.

POSEY

Yeah, well maybe you're not.

MESMORIA

I suppose there is only one thing I can do.

POSEY

What? Quit?

MESMORIA

No.

*(Mesmoria spins his hypnosis hat.)*

You will come with me on my trek. You will do anything you can to protect me – including laying down your life for mine.

POSEY

I will protect you and, if necessary, die for you.

MESMORIA

That's right. Now, when I snap my fingers, you will be ecstatic about joining me on this trip.

*(Mesmoria snaps his fingers.)*

POSEY

Whoa. I feel like I was asleep or something.

MESMORIA

Are you feeling okay? You look a bit sick.

POSEY

No, I'm fine. Just a bit tired, I guess.

MESMORIA

You know what you need? Some fresh air. How would you like to come with me on a two-thousand mile hike to Alaska?

POSEY

Wow, I would LOVE that! That would be the most amazing experience I could possibly dream of. It's like a fairy tale come to life!

MESMORIA

Okay, calm down. I may have made you a little too excited to come with me.

POSEY

Fuck that. Why would you even say that? I WANT TO GO WITH YOU. Are you worried about my shoppe? Cause I will burn this shit to the ground if it means I can go with you.

MESMORIA

This is a little creepy. I better tone you down.

*(Mesmoria reaches for his hat again when OLIVER, a young man, walks through the door.)*

OLIVER

Hey Posey. What's going on?

POSEY

Oh, hi Oliver. I was just hanging out with my new best friend. We're going on an incredibly long hike for the next few months.

OLIVER

What? You can't do that, Posey. We own this shop together. If you think you can go running off whenever you like, then you're mistaken.

MESMORIA

*(To self.)*

Aw shit. I've created a problem here. Screw it. He can come with. I have to be a bit more toned down with this one than I was with Posey.

*(He spins his wheel in Oliver's face.)*

Yo, man. You're coming with us on a hike, dawg.

OLIVER

Cool.

MESMORIA

When I snap my fingers you will—

OLIVER

Yeah, dude, I said I'm with you. Let's go.

## MESMORIA

Aw, crap. I didn't realize it would be that easy. Oh well. I'll leave Posey how she is. Trying to fix what I did will probably just complicate things. Posey. Oliver. Grab everything you can carry. We're going hiking.

## POSEY

Right-O!

*(Posey and Oliver gather supplies for a long time. Like an uncomfortably long time.)*

## SCENE IV

SETTING: AN AIRPLANE. IT IS  
DECORATED WITH PARTY  
SUPPLIES.

*(Hans, Gruber, and Willy enter in a conga line. Everyone sings “Conga, conga, con-ga”, over and over again. The line consists of CHARLIE, a middle aged man, FLORA, a middle aged woman, and TIM, an old man. They are being led by young and incredibly handsome flight attendant, HUGO.)*

HANS

This is amazing, Willy!

GRUBER

I had never even heard of this airline!

WILLY

Ya, it’s da party plane! Free drinks, dancin’, sexy people – it’s all good!

HUGO

Hello everyone, please take a seat. Thank you for flying with the Party Plane!

*(Everyone “woo’s”.)*

Now, we don’t believe in long, boring safety instructions like those other airlines. Let’s just say if we have to make an emergency exit, open the exit door and ride the big ass party slide!

*(“Wooo”.)*

If the cabin depressurizes, oxygen masks will release on the right side. On the left side, you will find a similar mask that is filled with nitrous, if you feel like doing a mother fuckin’ whip it!

*(“Wooo!”)*

And, of course, in case of turbulence, take off your seatbelt and go to the bathroom with someone sexy! That rumble is just the thing you need to “get that ass off the ground”, if you know what I’m saying!

*(“Wooooo!”)*

Oh. There is one, unfortunate thing tonight. We forgot our usual party mix to play on the overhead radio. The only thing we could find was Beethoven’s 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony.

*(The crowd “awwww’s” over the sound of the symphony. After a moment of the classic mix, the music starts to ramp up to a combination classical/club sound. The violins swell until they reach an apex, then the muthafuckin’ beat drops.)*

Awww shit! You know we just messin’ wit’ chu! Let’s fly this damn plane!

*(The music shifts to some sick ass beat.)*

Go dance and die, bitches!

*(The crowd bumps as they pass along bottles of some baller champaign.)*

*(The lights go crazy, until they fade down to black.)*

## SCENE V

SETTING: THE WOODS. IT'S COLD. THE SHADOWS OF BRANCHES ARE EVERYWHERE. OR, AT LEAST A GOBO APPROXIMATION OF THEM ARE.

*(Mesmoria, Posey, and Oliver are trudging through the snow.)*

MESMORIA

Let's rest.

*(They stop for a moment.)*

Man, this is difficult. Why didn't you say it would be this difficult, Posey?

POSEY

I did, boss!

MESMORIA

Well, yeah, with your words. But, I didn't think you meant it through your inflection.

POSEY

What did you think I meant?

MESMORIA

I thought you were just messing with me. Like, "here's another gringo from out of town, come down to mess up my mountain. I better tell him it's more difficult out there than it is, so he'll turn back."

POSEY

That was the old me, boss. This is the new me. I will DIE before I let anything happen to you. Unfortunately, we might just die out here because the wilderness really is harsh in the winter. But, don't fret, boss. If I do die, you can always eat me for food. Or! You can make additional clothing out of my skin to keep you warm! Make sure to keep pieces of my body so you can throw them out as a distraction for any hungry carnivores not hibernating!

MESMORIA

Jesus, Posey. That's fucking dark.

POSEY

I speak my heart, boss.

MESMORIA

Okay... Oliver, how about you? How are you doing?



OLIVER

Fine. I have a little bit of foot pain, but I'm probably just not wearing the right shoes.

*(Oliver takes his shoe off. One of his toes is black.)*

MESMORIA

That can't be good.

OLIVER

It is what it is. The important thing is the journey. Say, Mesmoria? Why are we going to Alaska?

MESMORIA

It's silly.

POSEY

Hey! Don't do that to yourself. It is not silly. Whatever the reason is, it is not silly! You know who people called silly once? Henry Ford. When he implemented the factory assembly line. Before that, people just assembled cars by hand, all willy-nilly.

MESMORIA

Is that true?

POSEY

Most of it, maybe. The point is, people called him silly for trying something. And what happened when he succeeded? He revolutionized car manufacturing!

MESMORIA

My god, you're right! It is not silly!

OLIVER

Then tell us, Mesmoria!

MESMORIA

Okay. Well, remember how I told you I used to be an endurance artist?

POSEY

Oh yes!

## MESMORIA

Well, what I didn't tell you is that I actually went to Alaska to research what it would take to encase my body in ice while also in a frozen lake. Don't forget to drink water, by the way. I may not know much about hiking, but I know the importance of good hydration.

*(Oliver takes a water canteen out and drinks.)*

So, I head to Alaska with my crew and we're looking at potential lakes. In fact, we happen to find the perfect one somewhere up North of Anchorage. It wasn't too cold yet, so the lake had barely started to freeze. The plan was to cut a block out of the surface water which would allow me to enter and wait until the fuckin' thing froze over again. Good plan, right?

## POSEY

Perfect plan, boss. Amazing plan.

## MESMORIA

Well, that's what I thought too. I enter the water. And, as I'm watching from my icy encasement, which of course had been supplied with oxygen and all the necessary things you might think to make this story plausible, I had no choice but to stare at the sky. It was dark, but there were magical lights dancing above me. The locals call it the "aurora borealis".

## OLIVER

Everyone calls it that.

## MESMORIA

Really? Well, I had never heard of it before. It was amazing. Vivid blues and greens and pinks all intermingling in the sky. It was gorgeous. But, as the ice began to reform at the surface of the water, I started seeing less and less of the lights. Then, suddenly, I heard muffled screams coming from above. The lights were replaced by a dark film that splattered across the ice. Though the pools were black, I knew what they were... Blood.

## POSEY

Oh my gosh!

## MESMORIA

That's right. It seems a pack of hungry polar bears had wandered into our site. Everyone was ripped apart in a matter of seconds. My camera crew. Producers. Kyle, the boom operator. A make-a-wish kid – that was messed up. It was a real blood bath.

## POSEY

I am so sorry, boss. That is the worst story I have ever heard in my life.

## MESMORIA

I bet.

OLIVER

What did you do next?

MESMORIA

I couldn't do anything. Nobody was alive to pull me out of the ice. I just lay there – eventually passing out from exhaustion. When I woke up, I was in a hospital in Anchorage. Local hunters had found the horrific scene and got me out of the lake. I tried to go on living; go on performing again, but things weren't the same. My act went downhill. I felt no passion for magic or performance. I was haunted by the memory of that night. So, I thought to myself one day, "you will never get over this until you confront the past. Go back to Alaska. Go back to where it all happened."

OLIVER

Oh wow. Wow, that is just... I mean—

*(Oliver takes a sip of water and instantly chokes.)*

MESMORIA

Uh... You okay, Oliver?

OLIVER

Yeah... Just... Oh my god... Water in my lungs... So annoying... God, it feels like knives it's so cold...

MESMORIA

Cool. Well, I'm glad you're alright. Let's get moving. Alaska is still a couple thousand of miles away.

POSEY

Right, boss!

*(They all pick up their stuff and start to head out when the sound of a PLANE comes rushing overhead. The plane CRASHES not too far away.)*

Oh God!

OLIVER

Was that a plane crash!?

*(The sound of something SOARING through the air closes in on them. It gets louder until a wet, severed head hits Oliver. He picks it up, sees what it is, and screams.)*

MESMORIA

That's not good.

POSEY

Should we check it out? There could be survivors.

MESMORIA

I'm a little skeptical that a plane crash in the mountain that is capable of launching a human head a mile or more would have survivors, but sure. Let's check that shit out.

*(They exit toward the crash.)*

## SCENE VI

SETTING: PLANE WRECKAGE. A SMALL  
FIRE LIGHTS THE AREA.

*(Willy, Hans, Gruber, Charlie, and Flora are all eating Tim. Hans is now sporting a bandage over one eye.)*

GRUBER

Do you think we all waited long enough to eat a man?

FLORA

Hey! That flight didn't serve a meal, just endless amounts of alcohol. We need a little something in our bellies, otherwise we risk a hangover.

GRUBER

You are so wise.

FLORA

Ah shucks. No I'm not. Charlie and I just picked up a few things from being parents.

GRUBER

Did your children ever eat someone?

FLORA

Heavens, no. This is an extenuating circumstance. But, they didn't get in to their fair share of shenanigans.

WILLY

She's right. We godda get some energy in us. Godda get strong! We'll be oudda here in no time if we're strong.

CHARLIE

I'd say you're strong enough for all of us, Willy! You are an absolutely hulking figure. What do you do for work?

WILLY

I hurt people. For da mob.

CHARLIE

Oh, now, ya see, that is something that I just would never be able to do.

FLORA

How fascinating. We're all thumbs when it comes to stuff like that. One time, somebody tried to break into our house. He climbed through the window, but didn't realize the drop from our window to our floor was a bit long. He tried to jump down and broke his leg. Of course, we immediately awoke from all the commotion. He was writhing on the floor in agony. We just didn't know what to do. I wanted to teach him a lesson by breaking his other leg, but we're not a violent family and didn't have anything strong enough to hit him with.

CHARLIE

I mean, I had some flower pots, but I'd be gosh-darned if I'm going to waste a good flower pot on teaching a stranger a lesson. Pots are for petunias!

FLORA

Right. So, we opt to get a steak knife from the kitchen and just scare him a little. I chose to wave the knife while Charlie dished out the threats.

CHARLIE

Big mistake. I mean, I don't know the first thing about being a potty-mouth. She's holding the knife to his throat – hand shaking while I'm standing over him saying things like, “how dare you, naughty young man. If you come here again, you will get the thrashing of a lifetime, I promise you.” It was not very intimidating. Plus, Flora here kept breaking out in cute, little chuckles while I was talking.

FLORA

That was not my fault! You were being so adorable. Oh... It's doing things as a couple that is the key to a lasting and love-filled marriage. You boys remember that.

GRUBER

We will, Flora. We will.

FLORA

How did you boys get involved in organized crime?

GRUBER

Oh, Hans and I are not working for the mafia. We are merely business partners with a mafia boss. Willy here is his, how do you say in English? “Heavy hitter”. He is helping us exact vengeance on a weasel of a magician.

FLORA

Wow, what a tremendous story. And you, Willy? How did you get involved?

WILLY

People treat Willy different all my life because of my size. I get a job in da kitchen of a fancy restaurant. There, I get stronger doin' dishes and bussin' tables. Soon, Gino say I can do other jobs. Start by breaking fingers an' crushin' bones. Good work. My ma said I either join da army or leave when I was eighteen. I don' like da army, and so, I followed da mob.

CHARLIE

That's amazing. We really do support unconventional pathways to success. Congratulations, Willy. You have accomplished so much.

WILLY

Dank you.

CHARLIE

And what about your sister, Gruber? What's her story?

GRUBER

Hans?

*(Gruber looks over at Hans. She is sitting by himself.)*

Maybe ask her later. I should see how she is holding up.

*(Gruber crosses to Hans.)*

Hello, Hans. How are you feeling?

HANS

Sad, Gruber.

GRUBER

Are you sad because of your eye?

HANS

No. I have another. I am sad because our vengeance has led us here. What are we becoming? What have we become?

GRUBER

But Hans... If life and the universe is chaos, how must we label our actions as anything but driven by chaos? We are agents of nothing, marching toward not a destiny, but a resolution of our own making.

HANS

This is truth.

GRUBER

What is morality but a concept of our own making? We have been wronged and are therefore granted opportunity to make it right. We must seize this.

HANS

This is truth.

GRUBER

But?

HANS

But, what if there is more than that? What if there is a designer of the chaos that governs our reality? After all, don't molten bits of planets and elements and stardust accrete past billions of years of superheated magma into entire worlds? What is the chaos if not disparate forms of mass that are governed into submission by the greater force of gravity? Perhaps... Perhaps we are not looking at a sufficient macrocosm to see past the chaos and finding the force that holds it all together? What are we but disparate forms of mass that are refusing to coalesce into our ultimate form?

GRUBER

Hans.

HANS

Yes, Gruber.

GRUBER

You hit your head very hard. There is no greater form than ones of our making, even on a cosmic scale. Everything is just coincidence.

HANS

Or maybe there is no such thing as coincidence.

GRUBER

... Get your things. We leave in ten minutes.

HANS

Leave where?

GRUBER

South, Hans. To Denver. To make our own fate.



## SCENE VII

SETTING: A FROZEN LAKE. THE STAGE IS NOW SEPERATED INTO TWO SIDES. ONE OF THE SIDES IS MESMORIA'S GROUP. THE OTHER IS THE MOB GROUP.

*(Lights up on Mesmoria's group.)*

MESMORIA

We have been walking for a while, team. Do we need a break?

POSEY

No, sir! I will walk until my feet are nothing but bloody stubs, if that's what you prefer.

MESMORIA

I do not prefer that, Posey. Please tell me if your feet are turning into bloody stubs.

POSEY

You got it, boss.

MESMORIA

Well, I am bored. Does anybody know any good stories or, shit, I dunno... Something entertaining?

OLIVER

I know a sonnet.

MESMORIA

A sonnet? Ugh, well, whatever Shakespeare. Knock yourself out.

OLIVER

There once was a man from Nantucket  
Who started to feel funny one day  
He bent himself over a bucket  
And heaved and heaved his face gray

Nothing came out his own facial spout  
But his stomach ached so horribly  
He went to the doc, fearing it gout  
Who diagnosed emphatically

What did you eat, the doctor did say  
But the man just sat there and shrugged  
This ulcer will see you dead today  
For there is no way can be plugged

The man left to make peace with his gods  
So should we all if we eat hot dogs

MESMORIA

Wow, Oliver. That was something.

OLIVER

I learned it at a vegan retreat in Boulder. Hot dogs are their go-to for gross, carnivore foods.

POSEY

I thought it was great. That's why I married him.

MESMORIA

Wait. You're married?

POSEY

Formerly. Now, we just stay friends, run the business, and raise our children.

CHARLIE

Wait, who told you we were friends?

*(They both smile.)*

MESMORIA

Children?

POSEY

Oh yes. Tiny children that will surely starve to death if we're not back soon.

MESMORIA

Oh...

POSEY

But that's in the past. What lies ahead is the mission. Onward!

MESMORIA

Yes... Onward...

*(Lights down on Mesmoria's side.)*

*(Lights up on the mob side.)*

*(Flora is carrying Norman Rockwell's "Girl at Mirror" painting.)*

CHARLIE

Anyway, after our last kid left the nest, I suppose we decided we needed a little more adventure in our lives. Plus, my heart attack really made us realize that life is for living.

FLORA

We also knew that with my slide of hand skills and Charlie's uncurable toe thing, we would be unstoppable as a team. That's how we became art thieves.

GRUBER

Wait. How does his toe thing come into play?

CHARLIE

I just change into my sandals and boom – instant distraction. It repels people like nobody's business.

GRUBER

Ah.

HANS

This is pointless! We will never get anywhere close to Denver before we freeze to death.

WILLY

Hey, calm down little buddy. There ain't nothin' dat can get us down, as long as we keep smilin'.

HANS

Oh, shut up, Willy. Your relentless optimism is driving me mad!

GRUBER

Hey! Don't talk to Willy like that. He didn't have to come with us to take down Mesmoria.

HANS

Quiet! I can no longer act like nothing affects me. I am a human being. I have been wronged. I have been hurt. I have bled and watched the things I loved bleed. I want to see the bigger picture in this. I know it is there.

*(Hans screams into the void.)*

I know you are out there! When will this make sense!? When will your plan reveal itself!?

GRUBER

Hans, please. You're embarrassing yours—

MESMORIA

*(Offstage.)*

Hello?

GRUBER

--self... Who the hell is that?

CHARLIE

Maybe somebody who saw the plane crash. Rescue party, maybe?

HANS

Of course!

We're over here!!

*(After a beat, Mesmoria, Posey, and Oliver enter.)*

GRUBER

You!

MESMORIA

You!?

WILLY

Who?

HANS

Mesmoria. The target!

WILLY

Oh! Hang on.

*(Willy walks over to Mesmoria.)*

I'm gon' kill ya now, son. I hope ya know there ain't no hard feelin's. Jus'ma'job.

*(Willy grabs Mesmoria by the neck and begins to strangle him. He is interrupted by a loud CRUNCH. Willy turns to see Charlie eating a nutrition bar.)*

CHARLIE

Sorry everyone! Didn't mean to startle you. Just eating a nutrition bar. Feeling a little peckish, ya know? Would anyone want one? It's made with protein made from milled grasshoppers.

GRUBER

That is so interesting. I've always wanted to try insect protein.

CHARLIE

Here. Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Willy. Please continue.

*(Willy starts strangling again.)*

POSEY

Wait! Please, Mr. Willy. Whatever Mesmoria did in the past, I will take the punishment for it. I have sworn an oath to him, to protect him from harm and never leave his side. I ask that you take my life into your hands and wring it out, in exchange for Mesmoria's life.

WILLY

Wow. Dat's so damn brave of ya's.

GRUBER

Mmm, this is a tasty nutrition bar. I hope they didn't make it out of... Oh shoot. What's the name of that Disney grasshopper?

OLIVER

It's not a grasshopper, it's a cricket.

GRUBER

That's right! Oh!

*(Gruber snaps his fingers, instantly waking Oliver and Posey from their hypnosis.)*

Jiminy Cricket!

POSEY

What the hell. Where am I? What's going on here?

WILLY

Ya don't remembah?

POSEY

No. The last thing I remember was being in my shop and... You! Mesmoria! This son of a bitch hypnotized me!

WILLY

Wait, so ya ain't gon' lay down your life for 'em?

POSEY

God no! He kidnapped me and Oliver!

WILLY

Oh. Well... Dem's da breaks, bud.

MESMORIA

*(Being choked.)*

What?... No... No!

*(Willy chokes Mesmoria until a SNAP is heard. Mesmoria falls down dead.)*

FLORA

Oof. Ya know, it's always nice to see a master at work. Thank you for that, Willy.

*(Willy takes a bow as everyone claps.)*

CHARLIE

That performance took MY breath away.

*(Everyone laughs.)*

POSEY

Come on, folks. If I remember right, this douche was taking us to Alaska. If we keep heading South, we'll meet up with Denver again.

*(Posey leads everyone except for Hans and Gruber out.)*

HANS

Gruber... Before you go with them, can we talk?

GRUBER

Of course, mein sister. What is it?

HANS

Do you still believe in chaos?

GRUBER

I believe in chaos. And coincidence. Why must you have more?

HANS

I don't need to have more. I can see now that there is more. Some people can look at the night sky and see Orion. Others may just see stars. We can connect the dots on Earth and show this connection between Betelgeuse and Bellatrix. Some may see that this connection is arbitrary. Man made nonsense. But if we were to fly to those lands, we may be able to examine the connective tissue of the systems. Perhaps an atom or two or ten trillion are entangled with each other, separated by light years and spread out amongst the constellation. Is that coincidence? Is it more likely than our airplane crash landing near Mesmoria?

*(A loud ROAR is heard. Seconds later, a snow leopard appears onstage. It nuzzles against Gruber's hand. Gruber pats it on the head.)*

*(Hans smiles at Gruber. Gruber smiles back. They exit with the leopard.)*

*(Lights down.)*