

A Tuned Masterpiece

by  
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INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Braun runs to the doors, trying to get out. He rattles the locked doors.

BRAUN

Help me! She's trying to kill me!

At the two security guards grab him from behind. They cover his mouth and drag him back to the backstage area.

BRAUN

No, please no! She'll kill me!

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They drag him closer to Lainey's room. The closer Braun gets, the more he thrashes.

BRAUN

Please, she's evil-

INT. FACTORY- AFTERNOON

TWO DAYS PRIOR

BRAUN (40), stares at the TOOLS in front of him.

His knuckle's grasp tightens as he accepts the hard labor he'll be doing for the rest of his 12 hour shift.

Braun puts his FACE SHIELD back on, picks up the tools, and starts to strike them against the HOT METAL. With each hit, it becomes more forceful.

The WORKERS around him are in perfect sync, slamming their HAMMERS against the metal.

INT. BRAUN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Braun stares at his food like he does the metal.

Him, his wife SARAH (40), and their son JOHN (8) are positioned at the table, having dinner.

SARAH

Honey, honey... Honey.

BRAUN

Yes, dear?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

How was your day?

BRAUN

Fine, same as usual. Today the shipment was late, so we were behind schedule.

SARAH

Okay.

Sarah waits for a response, nothing.

John plays with his MEATLOAF and PEAS. He's made a small castle with his food. Moat sold separately.

SARAH

John, please stop playing with your food and eat it.

JOHN

Why?

SARAH

Because food is not to be played with.

JOHN

But I don't want no peas.

BRAUN

*But I do not like peas.*

Sarah gives Braun a disapproving look.

JOHN

Micheal told me he doesn't have to eat peas.

SARAH

Micheal's mom isn't your mom, is she?

JOHN

No.

BRAUN

Bud, we have the same fight every night, c'mon. These things are good for you! Make you strong like your dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

John smiles and starts to eat his veggies. Sarah folds her napkin and walks off.

SARAH (V.O.)

Why does he only listen to you?

INT. BRAUN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

SARAH

Anytime I tell him to do anything, he is like a stone wall.

BRAUN

It's just that age, he'll grow out of it.

SARAH

He just doesn't respect me. When he looks at you it's like you're a hero.

BRAUN

My son can't look up to me?

SARAH

That's not what I said.

BRAUN

Is this about respecting you? Our kid is 8 years old. John just needs some time.

SARAH

Okay, let's drop it. You're right.

Braun takes out a NEWSPAPER. Sarah mindlessly flips through channels on the TELEVISION. Both in their own worlds

SARAH

They might cut my hours at work.

BRAUN

Did they say why?

SARAH

Not really, but they hired 12 new people onto the floor.

BRAUN

C'mon...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

I know, our union isn't too happy about it.

(beat)

Do you think we'll be okay?

BRAUN

If they cut your hours, i'll pick up more at the shop.

SARAH

You already do 50 hours there, Braun.

BRAUN

I know, it'll be fine.

SARAH

I'm scared you'll overwork yourself. Throw out your back again.

BRAUN

I feel fine.

SARAH

Last time you said you wouldn't do too much, you had to wear a back brace for over a year.

BRAUN

That won't happen again.

SARAH

You don't know that.

BRAUN

Yeah I do, I just do. My back is better, so I don't know why we're talking about it.

SARAH

(beat)

We could do something to take your mind off work, something fun

Braun still isn't paying much attention to Sarah. Husband of the year.

BRAUN

Oh yeah? What did you have in mind?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH

Like a date night?

Braun stops, this isn't what he had in mind.

BRAUN

A date night?

SARAH

Yeah, like we go out and do something. I know that isn't usually your cup of tea but-

BRAUN

I know, i know, i'll do it-

SARAH

We haven't spent that much time together lately.

BRAUN

Okay, and what did you have in mind?

SARAH

Maybe, Some of the other seamstresses said that there is a show coming to town tomorrow. A lot of people have been raving about it.

BRAUN

What kind is it?

SARAH

I'm not sure, but I know its good. Linda says she has a cousin who has gone to the show 4 different times in the past year.

BRAUN

Even the best shows don't have to be seen more than once.

SARAH

(chuckles)

Yeah, just think about it okay?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

As the sun rises, the heads of TOWNSFOLK are seen as silhouettes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The crowds attract to the doors of the theater. The HOST and STAGE MANAGER look out a high WINDOW.

INT. THEATER ATTIC

The stage manager paces around the attic, as the host continues to admire his audience.

STAGE MANAGER

This can't fail.

HOST

And it won't.

STAGE MANAGER

How do you know that?

HOST

Because we have sold out the last 3 shows, people didn't leave until they absolutely had to.

STAGE MANAGER

I don't know, I have a bad feeling about this one...

HOST

You're being delusional.

STAGE MANAGER

No, I am a business man trying to make money. I have people in high places that expect this to work out.

HOST

You said we couldn't accept finances from outside circles.

STAGE MANAGER

You can if they're dumb and filthy rich.

HOST

If they're so stupid, why are you scared of disappointing them?

The stage manager stops pacing.

STAGE MANAGER

Just don't mess up, they will eat us alive.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

The stage manager walks to the door, leaving the host.

INT. FACTORY - AFTERNOON

Braun is hard at work. Today is wrong, they are no longer in sync. There are two people missing and a GROUP OF WORKERS crowded together. Braun lifts his mask and walks over to them.

BRAUN

You know, if you guys wanted to sit around all day, maybe you should go work with the ladies in the sewing circle across the street.

BRUCE

Sorry, we're just talking about that new show in town. People say that its the best thing they've ever seen.

BRAUN

Why would I care about some show?

BRUCE

Its the show of the year! They are selling out of tickets so fast, they are planning on extending their performance here.

LEDGER

It's so good, that Johnson and Kerner didn't show up for work today.

BRAUN

What?

BRUCE

They were only suppose to go just get tickets, but they haven't been back

Braun's face is contorted in confusion, but shakes it off.

BRAUN

I don't want to hear anymore about Johnson, Kerner, or this show. Get back to work, or i'll send you home with no pay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gets nods from the men as they get back to work. They are almost all in sync again. A man in a suit, MR. MOURTER approaches behind Braun.

MOURTER

Mr. Lantz.

Braun whips his head around and sees his boss. Mourter's stand tall and poised.

MOURTER

Can you come with me to my office?

They walk out the workshop doors, all the workers remain in sync.

INT. MOURTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

They sit across from one another, Mourter at his desk.

MOURTER

Mr. Lantz, do you know why I called you in today?

BRAUN

No idea, sir.

MOURTER

I like you, I do really. You are the best supervisor this factory has seen in a long time. You have your men in line.

They turn to the TV on the desk, which shows the workers still in sync.

BRAUN

Thank you sir-

MOURTER

However, there is something terribly wrong with this picture. Could you tell me, Mr. Lantz, what is wrong with the screen?

BRAUN

I'm not sure, sir. Could it be the signage? We've been talking about how it's not up to code for a long time now-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOURTER

No, it's not that. Look at your men, there are two missing.

BRAUN

Sir, they usually show up to work timely, both of them. I don't know why they aren't here.

MOURTER

(sighs)  
A shame really.

Mourter takes out a pad and pen.

MOURTER

Names of these men?

BRAUN

Brian Johnson and Leonard Kerner.

Mourter writes names on note pad.

MOURTER

That's all I need, thank you Mr. Lantz.

BRAUN

That's all?

MOURTER

Yes, once I get these to HR, terminate these two, and cut the pay you get for having a fixed amount of workers, then I will need an update on your quarterly's-

BRAUN

Sir, please I don't think we need to do all this.

MOURTER

Those are your men, Braun. They aren't here, you are responsible for them.

BRAUN

How do I fix this?

MOURTER

You figure that out, if that shop isn't full of workers by the end of the day, you'll have hell to pay. Get out of my office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Braun quickly leaves the office, and runs down the stairway.

INT. STAIRWAY

Braun looks back to the doors of the workshop, he quickly peaks his head through the door.

BRAUN

Bruce! I'm gonna go get Kerner and Johnson, I'll be back. Don't burn down my shop.

Braun turns out the other door to the town square. He's made a choice.

EXT. WORKSHOP BUILDING

Braun looks around, figuring out which way to turn. He starts striding down the street towards the playhouse.

EXT. PLAYHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Braun approaches the large crowd. He tries peering around them. He starts to push his way through.

A grip on his arm pulls him away. A HOMELESS MAN peers at him, gripping tighter to Braun's arm.

HOMELESS MAN

You shouldn't be here.

BRAUN

I'm just trying to grab someone inside.

HOMELESS MAN

No, you need to leave.

He tries to pull Braun away from the crowd. Braun pulls against him.

BRAUN

Let go of me!

He shoves the man to the ground. Braun stands speechless. He turns around and walks in line. Braun doesn't dare to look back.

The homeless man stumbles and keeps staring at Braun until he's inside the theater.

INT. TICKET BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

A zoned out TICKET BOOTH SELLER fixes on Braun as he comes up to the ticket booth.

SELLER

Ticket please.

BRAUN

I don't have a ticket.

SELLER

Oh. Your total is gonna be \$59.99 then.

BRAUN

Oh no, I'm not buying a ticket.

SELLER

Okay... Why are you here then?

BRAUN

I'm just trying to find someone I know, he's gotta be here.

SELLER

Okay, that'll be \$59.99.

BRAUN

(scoffs)

I just told you I don't need a ticket.

SELLER

Listen man, if you wanna get in you need a ticket. Do you know how many people have tried getting in without one?

Braun reluctantly pays for his ticket.

SELLER

Enjoy the show...

(to himself)

Jerk.

BRAUN

(mumbling)

No respect...degenerate piece of trash.

INT. ORCHESTRA ZONE

Braun scans the CROWD. He stops any man that looks like Kerner or Johnson. People scowl at him.

MAN 1

Get your hands off me man!

BRAUN

Sorry, my bad.

He looks for what seems like forever, until across an aisle he sees Johnson.

BRAUN

Johnson? Brian Johnson!

Johnson sees him, and takes a few steps back. He then makes urgent shoving to get to Braun. There are too many people in Braun's way, and can't get to Johnson anyhow.

The lights flicker and Johnson looks around him, someone forces him to sit down.

BRAUN

Johnson, come back!

MAN 2

Keep your voice down! The show is about to begin again!

The instruments begin to sound their waking calls. Braun looks around to see that people are settling in, and he quickly tries to get out, and realizes it isn't possible. He takes a seat.

BRAUN

Wait, no, no-

MAN 2

Shhh!

Braun grumbles as the HOST(35, Male) comes out to the stage, applause erupts. The host waits for silence.

HOST

Ladies and gentlemen, we wish to entertain you, which is why we have come today. We have been so excited to see you all. Tonight we have a consistent assortment-

The doors to the theater shut. The host pauses and shudders. He cannot fail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOST

Of amazing acts. Beautiful singers, hilarious comedy, and stunts the mind has only dared to imagine. We hope you enjoy the show. Our first act is comedian, that many of you are very fond of. Give it up for, Lenny Durby!

LENNY runs out and shakes the host's hand on his way off.

BRAUN

This is it? Like a talent show?

MAN 2

Some people just cannot appreciate the beauty of performance art.

LENNY

What is up fartfaces! How are you guys tonight?

The crowd cheers.

LENNY

C'mon I didn't hear you, how are you guys doing tonight?

The crowd cheers louder.

LENNY

Awesome! Yeah, so glad I get to be here with you guys tonight. You know I've always wanted to perform in the great city of...man, what city is it?

Lenny looks offstage, the host shrugs.

LENNY

Man, I don't know. Being here tonight is like being in an acid trip: you don't know where you are, the lights are so bright, and is that lizard man in the third row really puking rainbows?

Crowd laughs, Braun is not amused.

LENNY

Oh no, he's just getting ready to run for congress.

The crowd gives a shocked laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LENNY

Man, the world is so crazy right now right? I mean with everything going on, it's hard to not feel like that guy in the third row. I wanna puke rainbows too, my guy.

Braun rolls his eyes. He gets out of his seat and heads to the hallway. A SECURITY GUARD holds his hand out.

SECURITY GUARD 1

Sir, you need to sit back down.

BRAUN

No, I am just heading out. I didn't mean to stay for the show.

SECURITY GUARD 1

There is a hold on the first act, you'll need to head back to your seat.

BRAUN

But please, I need to grab someone and we can go-

Braun turns around and Brian is gone.

BRAUN

He was just there, how?

Braun palms his forehead, he lets out a sigh.

BRAUN

Fine.  
(to himself)  
I'm so fired.

He gets back to his seat.

MAN 2

Miss me?

BRAUN

Shut up.

The crowd continues to laugh. Lenny is really crushing it on the stage. The way he says vague statements like every comedian with a hour long special is undeniable.

LENNY

And the waiter said to me..."Sir, that's my wife!"

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

He drops his jaw, the crowd eats it up.

LENNY

Man! I am on fire tonight! Well hey guys, before I go...

The crowd boos.

LENNY

I know, I love you guys too! But I have one more story to tell you guys. Are you sure you wanna hear this one?

The crowd cheers, they holler and screech. An encore is demanded.

LENNY

So, the other night, I met my first homeless guy. I know what you guys are thinking, "Your first? Aren't you like 25?"

He clearly is much older 25, but he means this sincerely.

LENNY

But he looks up at me and asks me if I have any money, and you know I say, "No, but let's go grab something for you."

The crowd awes.

LENNY

I know, I am such a good guy. Anyways, I go to this deli place and you know, they're making his sandwich the way he likes. So, we get to talking. I asked him you know, "What do you do for a living" and he's giving me this "you gotta be kidding me" look, right? So I kind of stand quiet and he asks what I do, and I tell him that I am the best comedian in town, right?

A string of undeserved applause.

LENNY

So he asks me to do some of my material, and when I finish cracking some jokes he just stares at me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LENNY (CONT'D)

He looks at me and says, "That was the worst thing I have ever seen in my life."

The crowd gives a nervous laugh.

LENNY

I couldn't believe it, this guy is crapping on my bit. So I ask him, "Why?" He looks at me dead in the eye and says, "If I say I like it, will you give me \$50?" So I am all for this, if you didn't know I am an attention hog. I give him a \$50, he compliments me. "Now, if you give me \$100, you can do it again and I'll clap and cheer for you. So I do, and he does it. I'm feeling pretty good about myself at this point! After this, he tells me, "if you give me \$1000, I'll put you in front of a crowd of thousands."

Crowd gasps.

LENNY

Let's just say my billfold is looking quite empty tonight folks.

The crowd cheers and gives the man of the hour a standing ovation.

LENNY

Thank you guys, I'm Lenny Durby. Goodnight!

HOST

Thank you Lenny! While we are waiting for our next performance, let's read off some advertisements.

The host pulls out a LIST of ads.

HOST

When you are home and don't know what to cook, try Orange Field's dino chicken nuggets.

Braun is staring in disbelief.

BRAUN

What is this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MAN 2

They do this after every act.

Braun walks to the hallway. He is so close to the doors of the theater, when another SECURITY GUARD (2) stops him.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Where are you going? The show just started?

BRAUN

Sorry, I'm not suppose to be here. I need to leave right now.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sorry sir, I can't let you out now. The next act is coming up, and the light coming in can distract them.

BRAUN

That's ridiculous.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sorry, I don't make the rules, I just enforce them. You might want to head back to your seat.

Braun see a bathroom at the end of the hall, and heads there instead. He cannot bear to be immersed with another act.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Braun stands at the sink and washes his face. He stares at himself as the water dribbles from his chin.

INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

After he hides in the bathroom, Brian walks towards the doors again.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sir, again we can not let anyone out right now unless it's an emergency.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRAUN

This whole place is insane, what kind of operation are you running here? These acts are pointless. I mean, look at this-

He looks through one of the orchestra doors to see this next act. They are a STUNT GROUP. Braun's expression changes, and he is in awe.

BRAUN

Okay, this is actually pretty cool.

SECURITY GUARD 2

I'm glad you think that, we have something for everyone.

BRAUN

Y'know I haven't seen a group like this since I was at least 27.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Really?

BRAUN

Afterwards I went home and practiced those stunts as much as I could. My friends and I would actually put on shows for our friends and family.

SECURITY GUARD 2

How long did you do it for?

BRAUN

Not too long.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Why?

BRAUN

Back injury at work. You know, life works in mysterious ways, but sometimes it just sucks.

The security guard is no longer interested in the conversation.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sir, the act is about to end. If you'd like, I can let you out a little earlier.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SECURITY GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

I know it's technically not allowed, but you seem like a nice guy.

BRAUN

Actually, I think I'll stay.

INT. ORCHESTRA ZONE - MOMENTS LATER

Braun slowly starts to return to his seat, admiring the stunt group as they contort their bodies in pretzels. He finds his seat.

The group keeps doing spectacular stunts, and earn a standing ovation.

STUNT LEADER

Hey! This isn't over yet! Our team is going to do a somersault backflip that you aren't gonna wanna miss!

The group shoots uncomfortable glances.

STUNT LEADER

Guys it's fine. We practiced this all week, let's go.

They prepare for their act, half the group on stage right and the other on stage left. They run and start their somersault, then a front flip.

The audience cheers them on.

At the end of their act, they do another somersault, but a backflip. Everyone does it perfect, except for one. You can hear a loud snap onstage.

A performer screams out in agony. The crowd is in shock, and they continue to peer at the man with the broken leg.

Some cheer, stare in disgust, or mimic the stunt performer's cries.

The stunt leader stands there, staring at this man. He leans over to him.

STUNT LEADER

Get up.

PERFORMER

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUNT LEADER

Get up, now.

PERFORMER

I can't get up, my leg is broken.

STUNT LEADER

You're lying.

The host struts out to him.

HOST

What seems to be the problem?

The host can see that this mans leg is snapped. The crowd is stirring, loosing their attention.

HOST

Get off my stage, if he doesn't want to walk then drag him off. Your time here is up, we're cutting you from the act.

PERFORMER

No, please. I can get up, just give me a chance.

The team drag the man off, the host remains on the stage.

PERFORMER

Please! This is what I was born to do!

After the performer is off the stage, he beams at his audience.

HOST

How about that tonight, huh?

The crowd applauds like nothing happened. Braun also keeps clapping, uncaring of what he just witnessed.

HOST

We have a so much more in store for you tonight. Let's say that I won't read off the advertisement right now and get into the next act!

MONTAGE

INT. STAGE

A CLOWN performs.

--

Another COMEDIAN

COMEDIAN 2

Man, it's hard to be funny now a  
days...

--

A TAP DANCER performs a routine.

--

Another STUNT PERFORMER with an insane amount of body  
piercings swallows fire.

--

A PREACHER gives his sermon.

PREACHER

And the Lord said to the man,  
"Love the Lord your God with all  
your heart..."

--

An archer shoots an apple off of a man's head. The man  
turns to the audience to get applause, we can see  
multiple graze marks on the other side of his head.

PREACHER (O.S.)

"With all your soul, and with all  
your mind..."

--

A group of kids do Pop music dances.

--

The Preacher appears again.

PREACHER

"This is the greatest and most  
important command. The second like  
it: Love your neighbor as  
yourself."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--

A Makeup guru is onstage, telling a story.

GURU

And so when I realize I had said something awful, I decided to wait a few weeks to blow this over. If you are still angry I'm sorry you feel that way.

--

An Alpha Male podcaster takes the stage with his FRIENDS.

ALPHA MALE

You can't be funny anymore, everyone takes everything so seriously.

FRIEND 1

I agree, it's crazy out there man.

ALPHA MALE

Yeah, am I right? Like I use to say as a joke to my girlfriend like, "Shut up and make me a sandwich" like that's funny!

The crowd laughs with him, he's encouraged.

ALPHA MALE

Exactly! Nothing is that serious.

FRIEND 2

Literally, like you don't actually think that.

ALPHA MALE

Well...

FRIEND 2

Really?

ALPHA MALE

Let's just say an alpha male like me know's where a woman's place is.

FRIEND 1

Well I don't know-

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

ALPHA MALE

Think about it, their brains are smaller.

Men cheer from the crowd.

FRIEND 1

I don't think that's true-

ALPHA MALE

You think I'm wrong? Well, that's my opinion. I think women are not equal, and you wanna tell me I am wrong?

FRIEND 2

Dude, he didn't say that-

ALPHA MALE

Whatever.

The alpha male walks away, choking on tears.

ALPHA MALE

I can say what I want!

The crowd boos and cheers simultaneously.

During these acts, Braun remains entertained. To him, there is no passage of time. He rests here in this moment, enjoying the show.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. ORCHESTRA ZONE

After the podcast, his mind wanders and he yawns. Braun looks around, and he finally catches his eye on BRIAN JOHNSON, his subordinate. Brian looks around, terrified.

Braun watches him like a hawk as Brian gets up from his seat. Braun looks at the stage, then back at Brian. He makes the choice to go after him.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Braun is on hot pursuit of Brian. When Braun begins to reach out to grab his arm, Brian who was pretending to head to the restrooms, suddenly pivots and runs to the exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Before security realize what is happening, Brian has left the building. He looks back, and sees Braun. Brian's eyes widen as the security guards lock all the front doors.

BRIAN

Run Braun, get out!

The security guard runs over and begins to shut the door.

SECURITY GUARD 1

Get back to your seat, now.

BRAUN

That's my coworker, I need to go.

SECURITY GUARD 1

No, go back to your seat. The show is not over. Do you know how many people would kill to see this show? Be grateful for this opportunity and sit down.

Braun takes a last look at Brian, who is running from the theater. Security shuts the door, obscuring Braun's view. He heads back to the orchestra.

BRAUN

You and this theater have some messed up rules, you know?

He walks to the bathroom again.

INT. RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Braun has water dripping down his chin again, he gives himself a cold splash on his face one more time. He begins to walk out when he bumps into the stage manager.

STAGE MANAGER

Watch it!

BRAUN

Geez, sorry.

Braun walks back to his seat. The stage manager is pacing in the bathroom. The Host speeds in.

STAGE MANAGER

What the heck is going on out there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOST

I don't know. They usually eat all of this up but we're losing them!

STAGE MANAGER

How many did you see leave?

HOST

One, maybe two.

The stage manager is going to be sick.

STAGE MANAGER

No more, do you know what happens if we close earlier than expected?

The Host turns his face from him.

STAGE MANAGER

Look at me!

He grabs the host's face and forces eye contact.

STAGE MANAGER

If this show sucks, if we lose enough people, we are done. The audience is all we have.

He releases the Host, who gasps for air.

HOST

What do we do? What is something that will keep hold of them?

Lightbulb.

STAGE MANAGER

Bring out the siren.

INT. STAGE - MINUTES LATER

The host glides onto the stage. He's rewarded applause.

HOST

Haha! Thank you ladies and gentlemen! You all have been a pleasure tonight. Now before we continue, let's hear a word from our sponsors...

A collective groan from the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOST

Oh I know, I know... Do you ever find that you don't know what to say? For example, you are at home with your wife, and she wants to have a conversation. It's been a long day at work and you don't know where to start...

Braun shouts from his seat.

BRAUN

Amen!

HOST

...then you need SynthiMind: the new system that tells you the right things to say! SynthiMind: Step into the future. Now, for the moment many of you have been waiting for, our belle of the ball, the star on top of the tree, a slice of our pie, famous singer Lainey O'Theomuerdt!

Braun is entranced when LAINEY takes the stage. She has the attention of everyone: they want to be her or be with her.

LAINEY

Thank you, thank you. I will be singing La Vie En Rose...which means "to see life through rose-colored glasses. Even though we don't have anything like that. There are some like these you can buy in stores-

The Host clears his throat offstage, frowning at her. This is her cue to start singing.

LAINEY

(singing)

*Des yeux qui font baisser les  
miens. Un rire qui se perd sur sa  
bouche. Voila le portrait sans  
retouches. De i'homme auquel  
j'appartiens.*

An angel, she is a siren calling the audience to dangerous waters. Braun is fixated on her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAINNEY

*Quand il me prend dans ses bras.  
Qu'il me parle tout bas. Je vois  
la vie en rose. Il me dit des mots  
d'amour. Des mots de tous les  
jours. Mais moi, ca me fait  
quelque chose. Il est entre dans  
mon coeur.*

She begins to move around the stage. Lainey makes eye contact with Braun and gives him a smile. She looks at the curtain, then back at Braun and gives him a wink.

When she turns to the other side of the stage, her head sharply twitches.

INT. BACKSTAGE

The stage manager is on high alert.

STAGE MANAGER

What was that?

HOST

Maybe an itch?

STAGE MANAGER

Did that look like any itch you've ever seen?

INT. STAGE

Lainey plays it off.

LAINNEY

*Une grande part de bonheur. Dont je  
(voice alters)  
cause...*

As she hits that final note her voice alters like a computer malfunction. The crowd starts to stir, and Lainey panics.

LAINNEY

*C'est lui pour moi, moi pour lui  
dans la vie. Il me l'a dit, l'a  
jure pour la  
(voice alters)  
vie...*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her perfectly tuned voice shatters. Lainey clasps her hands over her mouth. She looks at the audience in horror. They begin to boo her and yell vulgar remarks.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Get the off the stage!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

Auto-tuned wannabe!

Lainey runs off the stage, crying. Braun can't help but stand up, he must follow her. He passes through the row of people. The security guard tries to stop him at the entrance.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sir, please go back to your seat  
till the show is over-

Braun pushes him and starts to sprint down the hall. He looks at both directions and takes a right. The security guard gets up and grabs his WALKIE-TALKIE.

SECURITY GUARD 2

We may have a problem.

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Braun lurks in the shadows, looking for the siren. He stops and listens to the stage manager scream at Lainey.

STAGE MANAGER

All of this hard work, the money  
we put in to taking care of you!  
And what do we get in return?  
Horsecrap, that's what!

LAINEY

I don't know what happened, why  
did my voice do that?

STAGE MANAGER

It did that because you're a  
deadbeat singer! We made you, you  
are a star because of us!

LAINEY

It's not my fault!

STAGE MANAGER

You sit in here and think about  
what you've done to this show!  
Think long and hard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The stage manager slams the door to Lainey's dressing room. Lainey is loudly hyperventilating on the other side. Braun creeps into the door frame, holding onto the door knob.

Braun twists it, and opens the door quickly and on the other side, and twists the knob back in place.

INT. LAINEY'S DRESSING ROOM

He slowly turns around, and sees the woman's back faced to him. Her breath maintain's its same rate.

LAINEY

I am not ready to perform again,  
my brain feels confused still-

She turns around and sees Braun. Lainey stops for only a moment, only a second to load.

LAINEY

Oh, Braun!

Lainey runs to him and embraces him. Braun wraps his arms around her.

LAINEY

What are you doing back here? You  
could get caught!

BRAUN

I had to see you, I'm sorry I  
shouldn't bother you miss.

LAINEY

No, please stay! I could use the  
company.

Her lip twitches.

BRAUN

You shouldn't let him talk to you  
like that, he's not in control of  
you.

LAINEY

But he is! He's the reason I am on  
the stage, it's what I am meant to  
do.

BRAUN

But a woman like you deserves so  
much more, I don't understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAINNEY

And you don't have to, please just stay with me.

As he holds her, Braun can hear her loud breathing.

BRAUN

I couldn't help but run after you, I heard your song and knew I had to find you.

LAINNEY

But I messed up, I am a garbage loser!

BRAUN

No! You were like a songbird, I was carried away in the night. I was lost in your song in every way imaginable.

LAINNEY

You are a poet, my dear.

Lainey has a total body twitch. Braun realizes himself.

BRAUN

Actually, I'm not. I don't talk much.

LAINNEY

Why not?

BRAUN

I have no one interesting to talk to, and nothing interesting to talk about.

LAINNEY

I bet you do, you seem like a man that is important.

BRAUN

I guess I am. I just am surrounded by uninteresting people day...and night.

He tries to distance himself from Lainey. She pulls closer.

LAINNEY

It must be lonely.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

He stares into her eyes, she meets his level. Lainey leans in while Braun leans back. He holds her face, admiring her, then leans into her kiss.

It's not long, he pulls away in shame. He puts 50 ft of distance between them in the 6x6 room.

BRAUN

I have to go.

LAINNEY

Stay with me, I beg you.

BRAUN

This isn't right, I have a wife.

LAINNEY

A  
(voice alter)  
wife?

Her voice alters. Braun is now putting 51 ft. between them.

BRAUN

Yes, I'm sorry.

Lainey turns away from Braun, breathing like a maniac. The pitch of her breath hits different keys. When she gets a hold of herself, she turns back to him.

LAINNEY

I understand.

BRAUN

You do?

LAINNEY

Yes.

BRAUN

I'm glad...be safe in  
this...circus, okay?

LAINNEY

Wait! Before you go, can I please  
give you a poem?

BRAUN

A poem? Oh...I shouldn't...I  
should get back to my seat...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAINNEY

Oh please, it would mean so much to me! They never let me recite it and I worked so hard on it. It's better than any song I'll ever sing.

BRAUN

Okay, but please make it quick. I don't want to miss any more of the show.

LAINNEY

Oh I will! Here, sit!

She plants her feet, facing Braun.

LAINNEY

It's called, "Miss Lainey  
(voice alters)  
O'Theomuerdt".

LAINNEY

*I say yes, I say no. I know what's best! They are so slow, Lainey O' wants to grow...*

(blurts)

Buy war bonds!

Lainey covers her mouth, she begins to pace.

LAINNEY

*I am a tuned masterpiece. When I sing, the world is to cease. How can it be? What is this sorcery?*

(voice alter)

*Can the world run without my conformity?*

(blurts)

No! My world, mine!

BRAUN

I should go.

LAINNEY

No I am not done! *It is as clear as day, as white as snow. Oh, Lainey O'Theomuerdt, you run the show! They ask me how, but it's so simple now...*

Lainey begins to destroy her dressing room, Braun runs to the door but is turned around by Lainey. She quickly paces again, hiding her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LAINIEY

*Hear me draw you out, from space,  
from time, from what you face,  
from your prime. I control it all,  
I control whats mine!*

Lainey contorts and pulls at her face. She turns to the VANITY MIRROR and smashes it.

BRAUN

Stop it! Stop it now!

Lainey's face is contorted in the shards of glass.

LAINIEY

*Oh Braun, you are so composed.  
I'll tear you down, make you  
unopposed. You'll be there for  
every final bow...Oh Braun...*

Lainey faces Braun, her face holding the same contortion from the mirror.

LAINIEY

(voice alter)  
*Do you like your siren now?*

Braun bolts out the door. In exhaustion, Lainey collapses.

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY

Braun runs from the dressing room, screaming.

BRAUN

Help me! Monster! Help!

INT. HALLWAY

Braun runs to the doors, trying to get out. He rattles the locked doors.

BRAUN

Help me! She's trying to kill me!

Two security guards grab him from behind. They cover his mouth and drag him back to the backstage area.

BRAUN

No, please no! She'll kill me!

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They drag him closer to Lainey's room. The closer Braun gets, the more he thrashes.

BRAUN  
Please, she's evil-

They drag him past her room, with the door open, he can see her room is perfect. It looks like it has never been touched.

BRAUN  
What? But she...I mean... she was there-

The guards throw him in the stage manager's office.

INT. STAGE MANAGER'S OFFICE

He looks around to room to see the manager behind his DESK.

STAGE MANAGER  
Braun, how are you bud? You seem lost.

BRAUN  
What...how do you know my name-

STAGE MANAGER  
We screen everyone here for security. We know who you are, your family, where you work, yada, yada, yada.

BRAUN  
Sir, you have to help me. That singer wants to kill me!

STAGE MANAGER  
Lainey? Oh, she wouldn't hurt a fly!

BRAUN  
She destroyed her room! Her face was all messed up!

STAGE MANAGER  
You're tired! The brain saw what it wanted to. You looked a little drained when the show started too, work got you down?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The stage manager hits a BUTTON.

STAGE MANAGER

Two scotches.

A security guard quickly brings in a BAR CART.

BRAUN

This isn't the time for a drink!  
This show is not normal!

STAGE MANAGER

Of course it isn't normal? Normal theaters are stuffy. We have the best acts around...the best performances...consistently.

Braun is gripping onto his seat in shock, he glares at the man across the desk.

STAGE MANAGER

Look, we screwed up. Clearly now, you don't love your experience. We are sorry that you feel this way. Here.

He slides THREE TICKETS across the desk.

STAGE MANAGER

What do you think? We're not usually suppose to do this, but I do like making exceptions to the rule-

BRAUN

You can't be serious.

STAGE MANAGER

Serious as a hard attack. Don't you have a lovely wife and son? Bring them to the Gimsdale show! It's fun for the whole family, trust me.

BRAUN

I want to leave, now.

The stage manager leans in.

STAGE MANAGER

I hear you, I do. But we can't let anyone out until the show is over. Here's what I propose...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He stands up and guides Braun towards the door.

STAGE MANAGER

We are going to give you a front seat view of the next act. You'll love it. It's a comedian that we've had on our show for a really long time.

BRAUN

But I-

STAGE MANAGER

No need to thank me, security will bring you to your seat.

Security guards guide Braun out the door.

INT. ORCHESTRA ZONE - MOMENTS LATER

Braun is in the front row of the orchestra.

The host is on stage.

HOST

You're perfume is not good anymore, all the classy women wear Jean Kalvary's new "Shestain". Retailing at \$120, Shestain will make you feel like a woman finally. And now, it has a new signature scent for women's appreciation called "Horshiet", retailing at \$150. Shestain and Horshiet, buy them today, feel like a woman tomorrow. A Kalvary Signature. Now for the moment you've all waited for! An exclusive interview with our finest comedian takes the stage! He's been in our company since our humble beginnings, give it up for Mr. Henry Clock!

HENRY's appearance gives him a standing ovation. He creeps onto the stage, whipping his head back and forth from the audience.

HOST

Hello, Henry.

HENRY

Hi...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The audience laughs.

HOST

Henry, how are you doing tonight?

HENRY

I'm doing good. I just fell  
backstage and hit my head real  
hard...

The audience laughs again.

HOST

My goodness! Do you think you'll  
be alright?

HENRY

Yeah, I am still that guy.

HOST

"That guy", what do you mean by  
that?

HENRY

I mean like I am still a star. I  
guess here I am, am I right folks?

The audience cheers, the Host shoots daggers at Henry.

HOST

I guess you are, so tell me Henry,  
you've been with us since we  
started this whole show-

HENRY

40 years ago, yeah I gave my life  
to this show.

HOST

That must mean you love it very  
much...

HENRY

Well...

The audience chuckles.

HENRY

I wouldn't call it love.

HOST

Oh? Then what would you call it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HENRY

Addiction.

HOST

Henry, are you saying that you love this show so much, you've been addicted to performing in it for 40 years? Everyone give him a round of applause!

The crowd cheers for the wounded jester.

HENRY

Again, it's not love, it's a need.

HOST

Henry, are you sure that you feel okay-

HENRY

I feel fine. I thought that doing this show would bring me purpose. I was young, and stupid. I wanted to be loved by everyone, until everyone I loved was gone.

HOST

I don't think that's entirely our fault. Reminder that you have people who love you here tonight...

HENRY

It is, and the audience doesn't love me-

HOST

Remember in the 90's when you broke off your engagement to that sweet girl? That may have been what drove everyone away. Am I right folks?

The audience laughs.

HENRY

But who encouraged me? Who affirmed me in my ego?

HOST

Remember we are on stage-

HENRY

Yeah I can see that.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

A soft chuckle from the crowd. Henry turns to the crowd.

HENRY

You think I'm funny? This is all a  
joke right? C'mon, laugh at me!

They laugh and clap, giving him a standing ovation.

HENRY

You all are here for a good  
time...wouldn't be show without  
some fun audience shoutouts!

The crowd goes wild.

HOST

Henry, this is a warning.

HENRY

The audience loves it, so don't  
you?

Henry scans the audience and picks out MANDY.

HENRY

You ma'am! What's your name?

MANDY

Oh, I am Mandy Jones-

HENRY

Mandy Jones, of Auburn Lane, who  
works as a secretary at a law  
firm, a high end one too. You like  
puppies, opera, and have a sweet  
tooth for the salted caramel  
cupcakes from the east side of  
town. Oh did I forget the name of  
the bakery? Nope, it's Harney's  
Cupcake Collection! They'll have  
an ad for that at some point, and  
good thing we have an act coming  
up where puppies jump through a  
ring of fire.

The crowd laughs, Mindy is not.

HENRY

I'm serious, it's after Act 2.

HOST

Stop it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HENRY

No! Let's find another one! How about Jerry with the cattle farm? Or Rachel who loves posting about her all encompassing purpose of being a life coach? Oh Rachel, just a reminder Olivia's teacher thinks she might have ADHD, and she's sick of trying to reach out to you about it.

RACHEL looks around in her seat.

HENRY

Who's next?

Henry catches Braun in the crowd, he looks at the host then back at Braun.

HENRY

They lied to you. You're not crazy, run. Run! They're trying to control you! They want you to be docile, take in what they want!

Braun gets up and runs away from the stage.

HOST

That's enough, security.

Security drags Henry off stage.

HOST

Sorry ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Henry Clock can be so sensitive at times.

HENRY

You're running out of time! Go while you can! Run! All of you!

The room is silent, the Host stumbles.

HOST

Henry wanted to try a horror act for you guys to make you entertained, wasn't it great?

A MAN stands from his seat, and gives thunderous applause. The crowd joins in, they all stand up from their chairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HOST

Wasn't that great? And some of you may ask, how did we know their names? In the show, we pick three random people, who get tickets to this very show, for life!

The thunder continues to boom, whistles and screaming consumes the theater. Rachel cries of excitement.

HOST

Isn't that great? Well the show must go on! We have so much more in store for all of you tonight!

INT. THEATER HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Braun rattles the doors, begging for freedom. He spots hope, a light in the darkest place, the ticket booth.

He runs to the booth, swinging the door open. He startles our most prestigious ticket salesman.

SELLER

Hey man, ticket sellers only.

BRAUN

Shut up!

SELLER

I don't like it anymore than you do...

BRAUN

Listen, if you do anything that is even considered meaningful in your life, you will tell me how to get out of here.

SELLER

Did you try the doors?

BRAUN

They are locked! You've watched me rattle them God knows how many times.

SELLER

Oh...have you tried turning them on or off?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRAUN

That may be the dumbest freaking thing anyone has ever asked me.

SELLER

Hey man, I don't come in here and tell you how to do your job.

BRAUN

Are you high?

SELLER

I don't know... are you a cop? You have to tell me if you are, man.

BRAUN

This is pointless, where else can I go?

SELLER

Did you try asking to leave?

BRAUN

Numerous times!

SELLER

My mom has told me two things in life, One: don't smoke weed, and I failed that. Two: If you want to get things done, do it yourself.

BRAUN

What?

SELLER

If you want out, just find a way out. This is a big building, man. There has to be more than just one exit.

BRAUN

How would I find them?

SELLER

I don't know, whoever's the big papa around here probably knows.

BRAUN

That's it!

Braun goes to leave, but turns back to the seller.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRAUN

You may be the smartest and most  
idiotic person I have ever met.  
Stop doing drugs kid.

Braun checks if the coast is clear, then runs to the  
backstage area.

SELLER

I'll do what I want, jerk.

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY

Braun is a fly on the wall, he sees the stage manager's  
office.

The stage manager walks out of it with the two security  
guards.

STAGE MANAGER

He seems to have calmed down,  
we'll check on him in twenty. Go  
find Lantz.

They walk out the other way, leaving a clear path to the  
stage manager's office. Braun swings the door open to see  
Henry on the ground, mildly sedated.

HENRY

I'm not ready to go back out yet,  
you need to give me like an hour  
minimum.

Henry looks up and sees Braun.

HENRY

Oh no...you gotta go...you can't  
be here. I thought you escaped.

BRAUN

I'm trying to, I need to find  
another exit. Does he have any  
sort of map of the place?

HENRY

Wouldn't surprise me, control  
freak.

Braun is searching through the stage manager's FILES, and  
sees a FILE labeled, "LAINEY O'T".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRAUN

Why does he have a file on Lainey?  
Huh?

HENRY

Why are you looking through that,  
find what you need and get out.

BRAUN

I should, but I have to know  
what's wrong with her.

HENRY

Lainey? Leave it alone, you aren't  
ready to know.

Braun flips open the files and sifts through PHOTOS of  
Lainey, missing arms, legs, at one point her head. A  
JOURNAL opens.

BRAUN

I knew she couldn't be real.

HENRY

You say that now...

BRAUN

"Log #31: Our advanced  
intellectual entity has made  
farther strides than we could  
imagine. After examining a crowd  
of 10 people at last night's fair,  
she was able to identify personal  
information that helps us tune our  
performance acts."

He flips again.

BRAUN

"Log #40: The entity has requested  
we call it 'Lainey', and it's  
started acting feminine.  
We are concerned about its  
personification."

HENRY

You're gonna make yourself upset,  
find an exit and leave now while  
you still can.

Braun flips to a new page.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRAUN

"Log #46: Lainey, while having glitches in her system, has made a breakthrough. Something that cannot be explained, something unnatural...a curse or a miracle..." No, no! No, this is not real.

The files tremble out of Braun's hands, and he's about to be sick.

HENRY

Told you.

SECURITY GUARD 2 (O.S.)

Camera's show him going into your office sir!

The door swings open, the stage manager, security guards, and host fly into the room.

HENRY

I didn't do it, I told him to go.

HOST

And he should have, he's a fool.

BRAUN

How long?

STAGE MANAGER

How long what?

BRAUN

How long has this show been going on?

HOST

Well, for 40 years of course!

HENRY

Cut the crap, he knows.

STAGE MANAGER

You don't know what you read, you could never understand it-

BRAUN

How long has this show, the one right now been going on for? How long have I been here?

The Host cracks a grin at Braun's horror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOST

Five weeks, you've been here for five weeks.

BRAUN

That's not true, I've only been here for three hours, I haven't even slept.

HOST

Lainey is a true gift, we don't know how she has done it. Dr. Krane-

STAGE MANAGER

Shut it. He's gone, Lainey is ours now. As for Braun, your time here is done.

He pulls out a GUN and points it at Braun. The Host steps in front of him.

HOST

Wait!

STAGE MANAGER

Okay, seriously? What?

HOST

What if we could guarantee his departure and his silence? No murder, it's too messy this time around.

STAGE MANAGER

Okay, what did you have in mind?

The host turns to Braun.

HOST

He's part of a act.

The stage manager snaps his fingers.

STAGE MANAGER

Yes, and it's done.

BRAUN

No, I won't do it.

HOST

Well it's either this or die so...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

BRAUN

Why, why do you want me to do this?

HOST

I have a feeling this won't be the last time I see you. But if it is, I want it to be an experience you'll never forget.

BRAUN

What's the act?

INT. STAGE - MINUTES LATER

The host is onstage with a Braun wearing only a pair of SWIM TRUNKS. Some of the audience members giggle at his public humiliation.

HOST

Ladies and gentleman, we have a very special trick to show you all tonight. I have been perfecting this act since I started here. Braun, my pal, you look cold.

The audience laughs.

BRAUN

Just a bit.

HOST

Now I haven't discussed this fully with Braun yet, but we are doing a special act I like to call, "The Water Boy". Are you ready water boy?

BRAUN

Ready as I'll ever be.

They laugh at Braun.

HOST

Excellent, they love you! Now, we have three stunts that you'll pull off. The first being the water balloon juggle!

BRAUN

That's not too hard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOST

Let's begin!

He begins to throw 3 WATER BALLOONS at Braun. The host looks back to see a bored audience.

HOST

Oh, we can do better than this,  
can't we?

The audience cheers. The host pulls out THREE DARTS, and begins to pop the water balloons. Once, there is one last one, Braun gets shaky.

BRAUN

Hey man, be careful with that last  
one-

The host throws a dart at Braun's arm, impaling him. Braun cries out in pain. The audience gasps in curiosity.

HOST

Oops!

BRAUN

Man, it feels like you shot me!

HOST

Let's take that out.

The host walks up and makes sure the audience can see. He pulls the dart slowly out of Braun's arm. Braun grits his teeth.

HOST

There we go! Now that wasn't too  
hard, was it Braun?

BRAUN

No, but that really hurt!

HOST

Onto the next stunt, Braun!

The audience claps as they bring out a DUNK TANK. They put Braun in the tank. The host runs and grabs THREE BALLS.

HOST

Ready folks?

He throws them at the target, the third one dunking Braun. The audience murmurs, with light clapping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOST

Folks, let's be honest, was that any good?

There are boos.

HOST

That's what I thought, you wish to be entertained! That's why you are all here, because we've made that commitment. Right?

The audience claps and cheers.

HOST

Now, we have a surprise act for you all.

BRAUN

We do?

HOST

Indeed, Braun is going to attempt to hold his breath underwater for not 1, not 2, but 4 minutes long!

The crowd gasps.

BRAUN

Hey, I can't do that-

HOST

Let's begin!

The host grips the back of Braun's neck, and submerges him in the dunk tank. Braun's arms wave and he begins to kick.

HOST

Ladies and gentlemen, watch him swim!

They laugh and ogle Braun. The host pulls Braun up.

HOST

How's it going down there Braun?

BRAUN

I can't breathe, please...

The host shoves Braun back into the water, the audience laughs and claps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The host, overcome by his need to perform, continues to bob Braun's head in and out of the water. He is torturing Braun for entertainment.

BRAUN

Please...stop...i can't take much  
more...no...no...no!

Braun, finally gets a hold of the rim of the dunk tank and falls out on the ground. He screams in terror.

BRAUN

Make it stop! I am done! No more,  
please!

The audience gives him thunderous applause, he continues to scream.

HOST

That's enough, Braun!

The host squats down to meet Braun, who is now on his hand and knees, coughing and crying.

BRAUN

Why?

HOST

Why, what?

BRAUN

Why did you do that?

HOST

Because it's fun.

BRAUN

You're psychotic.

HOST

Aw, maybe. But at least I'm loved.  
Do you still wanna go outside?

Braun nods his head.

HOST

I figured, what a waste.

INT. BACK ALLEY - MINUTES LATER

The two security guards throw Braun out the back alley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STAGE MANAGER

Don't come back here ever, if I had my way I would kill you here right now.

BRAUN

Then do it.

The stage manager takes one long look at Braun, then slams the back door of the theater. Braun flails his hands, hitting the door.

BRAUN

Then do it! Kill me! Kill me!

Braun slumps over, sobbing. He cradles himself.

BRAUN

How am I suppose to go on?

The homeless man is camped by the back door.

HOMELESS MAN

Grow up, you big baby. Look at yourself. You are a grown man.

BRAUN

But my family...

HOMELESS MAN

Tell them you got too drunk, or pull some dumb crap. Five weeks is hard to explain though.

BRAUN

DO you think this is funny?

HOMELESS MAN

Yeah, do you think you're the only one they've thrown out like that? You're just lucky to be alive when they threw you out.

BRAUN

I don't know how to go on...

HOMELESS MAN

You just do, if you don't you'll be back in line by next week.

BRAUN

Part of me wishes I was thrown out dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOMELESS MAN

I know, a part of you always will.  
Now go home before you run back to  
a never-ending trap.

Braun stumbles away. The homeless man takes a flask out  
and takes a hearty swig.

CUT TO:

INT. GIMSDALE THEATER - EVENING

GIMSDALE: TWO WEEKS LATER

The seats are filling up, chatter breaks out across the  
orchestra. Braun, Sarah, and John, are dressed up heading  
to their seats.

SARAH

Honey, how much were these  
tickets?

BRAUN

No need to worry about that, it  
was free from a friend.

JOHN

Yeah, there's no need to worry  
about that.

Braun smacks John upside the head.

BRAUN

Don't talk to your mother like  
that.

JOHN

Sorry, mom.

She kisses John's forehead. The lights flicker.

JOHN

It's about to start!

SARAH

Let's settle in.

They all sit in the front of the theater. Braun admires  
his wife.

BRAUN

I promise you'll love it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He shares a tender kiss with her. The curtain's go up, and the host glides out to the stage. There is thunderous applause for him, and he graciously bows.

The host bows in Braun's direction, and make eye contact with him. The host stops, and gives a smile to Braun, who exchanges a smile and nod.

The host returns to his stature.

HOST

Ladies and gentlemen, we wish to entertain you, which is why we have come today. We have been so excited to see you all. Tonight we have a consistent assortment of amazing acts. Beautiful singers, hilarious comedy, and stunts the mind has only dared to imagine. We hope you enjoy the show.

FADE TO BLACK.