

The Green Dragon

A Modern Myth

A Play in 3 Acts

By

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PROLOGUE

CATHERINE

I remember that it was a very sunny day. The skies were blue. Like a movie set. Just wide and open and blue, with just a few patches of clouds here and there. It was twenty years ago. That day. I was seven. We were down by the castle to buy new shoes. Ballet shoes. I was going to start ballet classes. I was so excited. I loved being downtown. The important men and women in suits, the hotdog vendors, the people with cameras. And right in the middle of it all was the castle. Our magnificent castle. You could see it for miles. If you ever got lost, you could tell which way you were going just by looking up and looking for the towering castle. You would see the castle and you knew exactly where you were. And yet, I remember standing in the courtyard in front of the castle and looking up, and I would say to myself, "it doesn't look so big."

We were in coming out of the store when suddenly I heard a loud crash above. Things started crashing onto the ground from the sky. People were running about screaming. I looked up and there was a huge gaping hole on the side of the castle. I grabbed my mother's hand, but she just stood there, looking up.

"What happened?" I cried.

She didn't answer.

"Mommy! What's happening?" I cried again.

She looked down on me, took my hand and said, "Catherine. We have to go."

And she took me by the hand and we began to walk quickly, away from the castle. I tried to look back, but she pulled me along. She kept me close to her so that I wouldn't get hit by the people who were running. But we were walking too fast, and I didn't wear my good shoes that day, and my feet started to hurt.

"Mommy, my feet hurt." I said.

"We have to keep moving, Catherine" She said, dragging me along.

"My feet really hurt!" I cried.

And she took me aside and we found a corner where we could stay without being trampled by the running people. She held my head toward her, so that I couldn't see. I could hear people shouting, women screaming, men screaming, sirens, lots of sirens.

And then suddenly, a loud rumbling, like an earthquake, like thunder. I heard my mother quietly say, "oh no", when suddenly, she grabbed me and started running. I was screaming, getting dragged along, losing my footing.

"Mommy!"

Suddenly, she made a sharp left and went into a store, with other people shoving their way in. Once we were inside I looked outside, through the glass windows, and there was this dark gray cloud rolling by, like an avalanche, swallowing people into it. And it got dark outside. Real dark and quiet. Like we were underwater. The only light we had was the light from the store's fluorescent lights. My mother turned my head away.

"Don't look," she said, and pulled me to a corner of the store where we sat crouched down on the floor.

"What happened?" I asked.

She sat there, silently, like she was thinking of what to say. Then finally, she said, "The Green Dragon. It was the Green Dragon."

I had a book about the Green Dragon. I read it all the time.

"I thought it was just a story."

She didn't say anything. I read that book all the time. It was about a green dragon that comes to a little village and destroys their castle. Then a valiant Silver Knight goes forth on a quest to search out the dragon and kill it so that it would never hurt anyone ever again.

"I thought it was just a story. You said there were no dragons in real life." I said.

"There are, honey." she said. "There are dragons in real life."

Suddenly, there was a crash on the door. Someone was trying to get in. The men in the store opened the door just enough to pull him in. He was covered in dust. He looked like the dust had come alive and taken the form of a man. He was screaming in pain. My mother said, "don't look", and turned my head away.

And there we sat, for a few hours. We were mostly quiet except for some occasional quiet murmurs between the people in the store. The owner of the store went around, offering people water in paper cups.

After a while, the dust began to settle. Sunlight began to peak into the store again. People began to make their way out in small groups, wishing each other luck. My mother eventually got up too, and took me by the hand, and we went outside.

And there we made our pilgrimage up north. Just walking. With all the other people. A whole crowd of people filling the streets, just walking north. Some were covered in dust. Some were clean. Some were bleeding. We were all just walking. No-one was talking. There were some sobs, but mostly everyone was just quietly walking. North.

We finally made it back to our apartment. We usually take the bus, but there were no buses, so we just walked. I don't think I have ever walked that far in my life. But I wasn't tired. Somehow, I found the strength to make it home on foot.

My mother brought me in. Took me out of my dirty clothes and gave me a bath. Then she took me to my room. She asked if I wanted anything to eat and I said no. She told me to take a nap and when I woke up, dinner would be ready.

And I sat there, on my bed. It was only noon. After all that, it was only noon. In the other room, I could hear sobbing. I had never heard her sob before. She was trying to keep quiet so I wouldn't hear, but I could. I could hear her.

That was twenty years ago. A lot has happened since then.

ACT I

(General Notes: The MAN who is the center of the story is invisible to the audience for all of Act I. The other characters will act as if HE is there with them. Although they take turns supplying the voice of the MAN, they should never physically *be* the MAN.)

Scene 1

(The company members (except CATHERINE) appear one by one on stage.)

DEBRA

Our city. Our city has more than a million residents.

JACOB

During the day, the population swells almost threefold.

EMILY

We have museums, parks, gardens.

DAVID

Theatres, galleries, concert halls.

JEREMY

Libraries, zoos. Our city is the center of the world.

EMILY

We are very proud of our city.

DAVID

It is our home.

JACOB

And at the center of our city was the castle.

JEREMY

Our magnificent castle.

EMILY

Majestic and tall, it reached out to the heavens.

DEBRA

Until the dragon...

JACOB

The Green Dragon...

DEBRA

Now the castle is no more.

DAVID

But our city still stands.

EMILY

Our story begins in the city park. The day after. Flowers and pictures and candles are strewn all over the lawn.

JEREMY

People wander around the park. We are all here for different reasons.

(CATHERINE enters. She is no longer the character in the Prologue. She is now one of the ensemble. The others acknowledge her entrance.)

CATHERINE

He wasn't much different from anyone else. Medium height. Average build. Late thirties. The only distinguishing feature was that he had this small patch of white hair in the front like, you know, some people have. He grew it long, so it became a stripe of white hair.

(DAVID, late teens, enters. He is in jeans and a hooded sweatshirt. He carries a sagging backpack behind him.)

DAVID

(Addresses MAN.) Is anyone sitting here?

(CATHERINE voices the MAN's words.)

CATHERINE

"No," he said, "Go ahead."

DAVID

Thanks. My feet are killing me. I've been walking around all day.

CATHERINE

The man with the white stripe in his hair looked completely normal otherwise. He wore a beige windbreaker over a striped collared shirt and navy blue slacks and gray sneakers with white socks. He was as normal as anyone could ever be.

(DAVID shows him a flyer.)

DAVID

Have you seen this man?

(CATHERINE shakes her head.)

DAVID

That's ok. No-one has. Jesse. His name is Jesse. He's my big brother. He stopped answering his phone after... you know. He's a bike messenger, so we don't know if he was even near the thing, he's all over the place most of the time. My mom is so mad that he's not answering his phone, it's so inconsiderate of him. She's so worried. So it's up to me to go out and look for him. I've been walking all day, this is a really big city.

Who would have thought that such a thing could happen? You know. Some things... some things you just always assume will be there. I know that's a silly thought, but... I mean, I've never actually been there... yeah, I know, I live just over the river, I don't get out much, as you can see... but still, you can see it for miles and miles and it just sorta made you feel good that it was there, you know.

My name is David, by the way...

CATHERINE

"Adam."

DAVID

Nice to meet you.

He is so going to get it when he gets back home. I mean. It's not like mom doesn't already get hysterical enough as it is. I mean, what are we going to do without him, it's not like mom can work, and I'm still in school, I mean, what are we going to do, you know?

I mean granted, he could have been hurt, like he could have gotten hit in the head, or he got amnesia or something, but still. He had no business being there. Why didn't he have the good sense to get away like everyone else.

But we don't know he was there. He probably wasn't there.

I mean, I'll forgive him. I'll be mad and junk, but eventually, I'll forgive him. I just want him back.

I'm sorry.

What about you. Are you looking for someone too?

(CATHERINE makes a motion of handing DAVID a flyer. DAVID takes the flyer from "HIM")

DAVID

Which one are you looking for?

(Uneasy pause)

All of them? Your wife and...

(Pause)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

CATHERINE

The Man begins to break down in tears

(DAVID looks around a bit alarmed, but then turns back to comfort him.)

DAVID

Hey, don't cry. Oh man, don't cry.

Ok, cry. It's good for you. You gotta let it out you know. It's just too much to keep inside. You gotta let it out.

I wish none of this had ever happened.

JACOB

I've been out looking for a bar, any bar, that was open. What the hell? Am I the only one who needs a drink right now? I've been walking all day already and no luck. There should be a bunch a' bars open by now. I only found one place that's open two blocks down. Yeah, it's packed. I only had a chance to grab my beer and stand next to the pinball machine. The TV was on. Guess what was playing. Yeah.

I think the worst part of all this is the wondering what's going to happen next. No-one expected this. No-one. I mean how can you? Expect something like this? This is the thing you only see in the movies. You don't think it could actually happen. To us. Not to us. How could it happen to us?

But as ugly as this was, you just have the sinking feeling it's going to get worse. Because people are people and if you know people well enough, you know it will either bring out the best in people or the worst in them. I hope it's the first, but I don't know. I really hope it turns out better and that I be proven a cynical bastard.

Not that I'm not a cynical bastard. But that's not the point.

(DAVID makes a call on his cellphone, and sits listening to it for a while.)

DEBRA

I like to shop. I admit it. And stop rolling your eyes, there's nothing wrong with a woman that likes to shop. But don't think I'm careless with my money. I'm very careful with where I spend my money. I only buy the clothes that are right for me. I'm a very informed shopper. And the stores appreciate that. I'm not one of those impulse buyers. I take my time. And the stores appreciate that because I never have to return anything.

(DAVID puts away the cellphone.)

DAVID

It's the only thing I have of his voice. On his voicemail. I'm so afraid I'll forget his voice.

You never really know, you know? I mean, he could be in a hospital somewhere, or he just doesn't know where he is, or he could be real busy helping out, you never really know. I just can't give up hope like that. I know he's out there.

He can be such a hero sometimes. If he sees a burning car, he's the kind of person that'll jump in and try to save the people inside, even though it could blow up at any time. I mean, yeah, save the people, but what about you, there are people who need you too, have you ever thought about us? What the hell are we going to do without you? You stupid idiot!

DEBRA

As much as I can, I like to shop with someone. I'll tell you why. If you're in the dressing room, and the dress is one size too small or one size too big, you have to get all dressed up to go out and then get the size you need and then try it on. If there's someone else there, they can get it for you. And it's nice you know, for someone to tell you "oh, I think the next size looks better on you", or "I like the yellow better, it goes with your hair." It's nice to have that re-assurance.

JACOB

The castle stood on a hill in the southern part of the city. An entire ten block radius has been completely closed off to all people except for officials. The people who lived in that area just had to find another place to stay for the night. Some don't even know if their building is still standing.

I probably should not have left the house. There are enough people outside. We don't really know everything that's going on. People are huddled around radios and portable televisions clinging to every bit of information from the news.

It's so quiet. I've never seen the people so quiet. I mean, people are talking, people are walking, sometimes even laughing. I'm not really sure why, but it just seems so quiet. Like today the air is twice as heavy, it feels like. I should go back home. I probably should be at home right now. Someone could call.

EMILY

I was teaching when it all happened. Five miles away, the children were there. They saw it too. I should have closed the blinds. They didn't need to see that. I wasn't thinking. I don't think anyone was thinking clearly. School is out for the week. Here I am, trying to do what I can. I have to do something. I'd go crazy if I just stayed home.

CATHERINE

The Man finally stopped crying. He had run out of tears. For now.

DAVID

I wonder where that truck is that's giving out those sandwiches. I should have brought some food from home. Excuse me, do you know where that truck is that's giving out the sandwiches?

JEREMY

I think it's parked on 14th and 6th.

DAVID

Thank you.

JEREMY

Anytime.

DAVID

Hey. I'm going to see if there are any sandwiches left. Would you like me to get you one too?

Are you sure?

(CATHERINE nods her head. DAVID takes one of his flyers and writes on it, then hands it to the MAN)

DAVID

Here. Something to remember me by. He looks kinda like me. I guess. And if you happen to see him, you'll let me know, ok?

Good luck.

CATHERINE

"Good luck."

JEREMY

Excuse me. I'm uh one of the volunteers. I'm making my rounds to find out if I could be of help to anyone.

If you haven't put in your loved one's name among the list of the missing, I could do that for you.

Or if you need any kind of information. Like a list of hospitals and shelters and the like, I could get that for you. If you need it.

My name is Jeremy.

DEBRA

Now the boutique just one block away from the castle was one of my favorite places to shop. They were always very nice there. And they had the nicest dresses. They weren't too dressy, not like those business type suits, they were very feminine. But at the same time, they were not too revealing, like what you see a lot of nowadays. It's a shame. A darn shame.

JEREMY

I didn't know anyone who was there. Frankly, I don't really know too many people. I live right around here though. I mean, I couldn't stay home. I figured I'd see what I can do to help out, you know? It's the least I could do.

CATHERINE

"Why? Why did this happen?"

JEREMY

I don't know.

CATHERINE

"Why?"

JEREMY

I don't know. I'm sorry.

There's still hope. You can't give up hope.

JACOB

(Speaking into a phone at home)

Hello. Yes, it's Jacob. I've been out. Yes, out. I was out, alright? Yeah, I got your messages. I just listened to all of them. Yes, I'm all right, I don't live anywhere near the castle, you know that. How the hell could anything happen to me? You can't expect me to have stayed inside all day. (Long pause) Yeah, I know I called their house, Mom and Dad had already left for work. You haven't...? Ok. Ok. Yeah, yeah. Ok. Bye.

(During this, the rest of the cast slowly leave the stage as the lights focus on JACOB. JACOB sits in his apartment. The muffled sound of the television can be heard. He looks around nervously. He turns the TV off. Pause. He looks out the window nervously. He is starting to breathe heavily. He can't stand the silence and turns the TV back on. He is disgusted by what is on TV. He changes the channels a few times. They are all showing the same thing. He turns it off. He feels as if the walls of the apartment are closing in on him. He is close to a panic attack. He grabs his light coat and rushes out.

Blackout)

Scene 2

CATHERINE

It is a few days later. We see the Man with the white stripe in his hair wandering the streets. He hasn't eaten much or slept much. He hasn't been home too much. He cannot bear to be at home with reminders of his family in every room.

JACOB

You too, huh?

A lot of that going around.

So Jimmy's down the street is open. There was one down at fourth, but they're closed today, I don't know why. I think Jimmy's is open until 1 AM, but right now, he's out of Coronas. He's been very busy and the supply truck hasn't been around in a while. Better get there before he runs out completely.

CATHERINE

"I don't drink."

JACOB

You should.

CATHERINE

(Smiles)

"Yes, perhaps I should."

JACOB

But, well, there's too many people in there for me. You can't turn around without hitting someone in the face with your elbow. The cops, they see me in the street and tell me to go home and that I shouldn't be out, but to hell with them, I don't want to be home. I'd go crazy if I stayed at home. I just get up and move to another street. They can't arrest you for being in the street. It's a free country, last I heard.

(MADDIE is played by the actress playing DEBRA)

MADDIE

What makes a good cheesecake? Well, I'll tell you. It's not always all the extra stuff that they put into it. Now I can tell you a good raspberry swirl cheesecake can be heaven, but a plain old cheesecake can knock your socks off if done right. You see, most cheesecakes that you can get have probably been sitting in some shelf for days and days. Sometimes, they even freeze it first, and then thaw it out before they serve it. Now you never see it, because they do all this in the back. But that can really mess up a cheesecake. Freezing it. And because they've just been sitting around, they get all crumbly. It's all those preservatives and flour. Now a real cheesecake, when done right, is moist and creamy. Not crumbly. When you bring a fork through it, it should pass through smoothly. And the crust, would you believe most people just use that pre-made crusts that you can buy at the supermarket? Isn't that terrible? It's such a shame really, nobody knows how to make a good cheesecake.

There is only one place that knows how to make a good cheesecake. Or I should say, there *was* only one place that knew how to make a good cheesecake. Such a shame. A real darn shame.

JACOB

My younger brother and his wife are taking care of the stuff. The death stuff. The house. The will. All that. I really should help out, but if he says he's got it taken care of... He was just so much better at being responsible than I was, that's why father...

It stinks. It smells like burning rubber. I don't know where that smell is coming from... I mean... I know... but why rubber? Hope it's not dangerous.

All I can say right now is, there goes my chances of getting a job. I mean, getting a job was hard enough before. It's gonna be near impossible now. I'm not sure what I'm gonna do.

Damn, this sucks.

(EMILY is carrying some bags. One of the bags fall over and spill.
JEREMY comes in and helps her.)

JEREMY

Let me help you with...

EMILY

Thank you. I'm...

JEREMY

Let me...

EMILY

Fine. Thank you.

JEREMY

No need to, uh ...

EMILY

I just need a rest.

JEREMY

Yes. Sit down.

EMILY

I guess.

JEREMY

Take a breather.

EMILY

Yes.

(Pause)

JEREMY

Where do these go?

EMILY

There...

JEREMY

Oh...

EMILY

That tent. Over there.

JEREMY

I'll help you get it there.

EMILY

It's only....

JEREMY

It's ok...

EMILY

I can...

JEREMY

Really...

EMILY

Thanks.

JEREMY

No problem.

EMILY

It's pretty out here.

JEREMY

Yes.

EMILY

I mean... not like....

JEREMY

No...

EMILY

It's just that...

JEREMY

Of course...

EMILY

I've never been to the park during...

JEREMY

I understand...

EMILY

... the day... I'm usually teaching.

JEREMY

It's a beautiful day.

EMILY

Yes.

JEREMY

Thank goodness for that.

EMILY

Gotta count your blessings.

JEREMY

Exactly.

EMILY

Yes.

MADDIE

Now I tried to find out who it was that owned that shop that made the good cheesecake. It's kind of hard when you don't even know the name of the shop. I just know where it is, the corner, but you know in all the years I've been going there, I never found out the name of the shop? I guess it may not have even had a name. Anyways, I wanted to find out what happened to the owner of the shop so that if he happened to open up the shop again somewhere else in the city, I would know about it.

EMILY

I didn't really... I just came down here to... uh... to do what I could. To help.

JEREMY

Yes.

EMILY

I didn't know anyone up... I...

JEREMY

I didn't either...

EMILY

Oh. That's g...

JEREMY

It didn't feel right just staying home...

EMILY

Yes, that's how I....

(Pause)

JEREMY

Yeah.

EMILY

I probably better get going...

(SHE doesn't move)

JACOB

It's giving me the creeps. Seeing the streets like this. Since I was small, these streets have always been bustling with people, even at night.

I spoke to my little brother a few times over the phone. He sounded worried about me. I felt bad. He had enough to worry about. Taking care of all that stuff. But he said everything was being taken care of and not to worry about it.

It's times like that I wish I wasn't unemployed. At least a job would get my mind off of things. But here I am, wandering the streets. I can only take the bar for so long.

I was sitting on the stoop in the front of the library when a cop comes by and tells me to move along.

"There's nowhere else to go," I said.

But he said, "I don't care, you're not supposed to loiter around here, move along, buddy."

"I'm not your buddy, and since when is it a crime to sit in front of the library?"

But he wouldn't listen. He said move along or he would bust me for drinking in public.

"It's only a coke!" I said. I was so angry. But I moved on. The last thing I wanted was to spend a night in a small cell. I would lose it. What's this world coming to if you can't even hang around in the streets of your own city.

This is how I spend my day, just walking around. I can't go home. I'd go crazy.

EMILY

Cath. She makes everyone call her Cath. Not Cat. Not Cathy. No, no, definitely not Cathy. Cath. She's the biggest kid in the class. Almost as tall as I am even. So she gets her way. At least in that class.

Second grade.

Very precious. A lot smarter than you would think.

JEREMY

I love kids.

EMILY

Me too. I mean, well...

JEREMY

Heh

EMILY

Duh. I mean...

JEREMY

I have nephews back home. I miss them terribly. The only thing about home I miss.

EMILY

What do you...

JEREMY

This and that...

EMILY

Oh.

JEREMY

Whatever will pay me.

EMILY

Oh.

JEREMY

Whatever supports my habit.

EMILY

Habit...

JEREMY

I paint. I'm one of those... those guys you see on TV... "arteests"...

EMILY

I... I'm sure you're quite good.

JEREMY

I wish...

EMILY

No...

JEREMY

Really...

EMILY

But at least you're...

JEREMY

I'm not good for much else.

EMILY

We need that right now... art... especially now...

JEREMY

I guess.

MADDIE

So if you happen to come across a shop that makes the kind of cheesecake I'm talking about, you let me know. My life isn't complete until I find out where he set up shop and I can once again taste that fabulous cheesecake.

Now you may think this is obsessive, but I'll tell you about obsession. My sister Debra just loves to shop. She keeps dragging me along so that she can stay all day in the dressing room while I get clothes for her. It's quite silly, the way that she goes on and on about clothes. We had a deal, I go along and help her shop if we get to stop at the cheesecake shop afterwards. She hates doing it because she says the cheesecake makes her fat, but really, it's cheesecake. It was a fair trade, if you ask me.

JEREMY

I live by myself. Yeah, I know that's rare around here. I have small room at the top floor of a six story brownstone with no elevator. That's how I can afford it. It's great though, I never have to go to the gym.

EMILY

Haha.

JEREMY

But then again, nobody wants to come visit either.

EMILY

Aw.

JEREMY

What about you?

EMILY

Me? I share a small studio with an actress. She sleeps during the day and is out all night. She is either doing a play or is bartending or whatever. I work during the day and spend the rest of the evening reading a good book or watching TV or cooking.

JEREMY

Cooking?

EMILY

Oh, I'm no gourmet or anything. But it's fun trying to do the stuff they do in the cooking shows. It's pretty silly, by the time I'm done cooking I no longer feel like eating.

The summer is the best. I go away for a month and go hiking. Just by myself. Be one with the trees and the dirt road. Put on a pair of old comfy hiking boots and just go. Follow the trail.

JEREMY

Just by yourself?

EMILY

Oh, it's quite safe. You'd be surprised. Nobody likes hiking anymore so I pretty much got the mountains to myself. God, it can be so beautiful. No picture or movie could ever do it justice. Being there in the wide open... it's...

JEREMY

Yes?

EMILY

You walk for miles, but that view... I would walk days just to experience that view...

JEREMY

Like you're one with the universe.

EMILY

Yes.

JEREMY

That sounds wonderful...

EMILY

But I'm blabbing.... I better....

JEREMY

No, stay.

EMILY

I mean, I'm supposed to be here to help, not making...

JEREMY

Let me...

EMILY

No, no, it's ok, really...

JEREMY

Did I say some...

EMILY

There's a lot of work to be done. People are...

JEREMY

It was nice to meet you.

EMILY

Yes.

JEREMY

Jeremy. My name...

EMILY

Emily.

JEREMY

Emily.

EMILY

Nice to meet you.

(EMILY exits.)

(Blackout)

Scene 3

MADDIE

(She is speaking to the MAN)

It's so peaceful out here. I wish I had found this place sooner. The sound of the water, the ships, the birds. The lights of the city across the river, still beautiful, always beautiful. So peaceful when you look at it from afar.

(Her cellphone rings in her bag. She picks it up and answers.)

Hello. Oh yes! Yes! Thank you so much for returning my call. Yes, the one near the castle. Next to the shoe store. Well, I don't know, all I ever ordered was cheesecake. Of course, yes, they served coffee. And other pastries, maybe, yes. Yes. You'll see what you can find? Oh thank you! I realize this is a rather strange request. Thank you.

(She puts her phone away.)

Let's hope they find something. I searched the Internet trying to find out what happened to that store, and I came upon this group of cheesecake lovers. Yes! Cheesecake lovers! Would you believe? On the Internet! Well, they know all about that little store. But they don't know the name of it either! So I wasn't crazy. Someone did know the first name of the owner though. Jose. Anyway, we've gotten together and we're sharing information to try and get the information that we need. Our own little investigative team. We're sure to find something.

JACOB

We had a funeral for them. My parents. When I left the cemetery, I just walked away. I didn't go home. I just walked around. It was three days already, since I've showered, since I've stepped foot in my apartment. I sat in the park, wherever, and slept outside where I could.

DAVID

Eventually, the phone company cut off my brother's cellphone, and I lost his voice forever.

JACOB

There was an old man up this street where I was walking. He looked harmless, but as I was passing him by, he suddenly pushed me, for no reason. Angrily I pushed him back. I yelled out some profanity, but he never said anything. He just lunged at me, and we wrestled. He was much stronger than I thought. He was very strong for an old man. Finally, he struck my right thigh very hard with his fist. I yelled out in pain and couldn't get up. Then he just walks away. Just like that. I sat there, on the sidewalk, in pain. Where's a cop when you need one.

Finally, I was able to get up. My leg wasn't broken, he just hit me really hard. I eventually hobbled home and fell asleep.

EMILY

Children? Ok, children. Does anyone know what day it is today? Anyone? No, Julian, it's not Saturday. We don't go to school on Saturday. No. Not Monday. What day comes after Thursday? No. Friday. Yes! Today is Friday. And what day is tomorrow? Yes, Saturday. We don't go to school on Saturday. We get to stay home and watch cartoons in the morning. Matthew, it's not polite to put your finger up your nose. So everyone take out your art supplies. We're going to do some drawing. We'll be drawing what we do on Saturdays. Can anyone tell us what sort of things we do on the weekends when we don't have school? The mall, yes, a lot of people go to the mall. Play in the backyard? Go to the park? Yes, we do all that on the weekends. I'll let you make a picture and you tell me all about it, ok? Matthew, I said cut that out.

(RACHEL is played by the same actress that plays CATHERINE)

RACHEL

I was so excited. Working for a big time newspaper like that. I mean, three years out of college, and there I was, a junior reporter. But perhaps it would have been better if I had joined the paper when I was more... mature. I was given these small stories here and there, dog shows, funerals, obits, you know. I was doing really well, even if the stories I covered were, well, boring. But finally, I was given a chance. One of the reporters had taken sick, and the others were too busy on other stories, so the editor sent me out to cover this story. It was my big chance. I did my job like any conscientious reporter would, I went out and conducted all kinds of interviews. Interviews with the families of... you know. I had to ask them these questions. Questions that were too painful to answer. I felt like such a monster for having to ask them these questions. They were crying, they were...

DEBRA

Now I love my sister dearly, but lately she has been driving me crazy. We used to spend our Saturdays out and about when we weren't teaching. But ever since all this happened, we can't anymore. Now me, I'm adjusting. I have discovered the wonders of soap opera on television. But my sister, she's not doing too well. She comes into my apartment hysterical. I try to calm her down, but she doesn't like to admit that she's dependent on her sister. She can be so difficult sometimes.

JEREMY

Hello mother.

Yes, I'm fine.

I'm just about to eat dinner.

Yes, dinner.

What am I doing... Mother...

Spaghetti. I'm going to eat spaghetti. It's on the stove right now as we speak.

Ragu. Ragu sauce with mushrooms. From one of those big jars. I'm going to put it in the microwave. Is there anything else you want to know?

Mother. I'm ok. Really. You don't need to call me...

Mother, I was four miles away. I'm not...

Ok. Ok. I love you too Mom. Stop worrying about...

Ok. Bye.

RACHEL

The deadline loomed. I only had a few days. I didn't have enough material. The editor was leaving me voicemail and email asking for a status report. I didn't know what to do; I couldn't face any more people.

DAVID

It was tough at first. Finishing my senior year of high school during the day, and then working at night. We got some money from the government, so that helped. My mother is holding up surprisingly well. She's been really brave through it all.

There's this pier on the river that overlooks the place where the castle once stood. I pass by it on the way home from work. I just stand there, on the railing, taking in the sight, the smell, the sound of the ships passing by. I find myself there a lot. Just standing there. For about an hour, I would just stand there. It helps clear my head.

RACHEL

The deadline came. I was at my computer. I had written fifty words. That was it. I got a call from my editor to his office. I went in and sat in a chair, and I faced him across his desk, and I told him that I wasn't cut out for this kind of work, and I handed him my resignation.

Now I just have to figure out what it is I want to do.

JEREMY

Yes Mother.

Yes, of course I'm alone. Who...

I don't feel like going to a movie right now.

I'm perfectly fine in my apartment. Really! I'm used to being alone...

Mother, please stop.

Mother. MOM!

Mom. I... I'm doing fine. Really. I'm really fine.

EMILY

What? Yes, that's very pretty Margaret. No, I'm not crying. I just have... why don't you draw some trees over there. You have a little more space. Maybe an airplane. We see a lot of airplanes in the sky, don't we?

RACHEL

When you don't have a job, hanging out here is the best place to be. It's pretty, it's peaceful, and most importantly, it's free. You know what I mean?

DAVID

The Man with the white stripe in his hair eventually lost his job. He just stopped coming. They liked him a lot, and they wanted to help him, but they couldn't keep paying a man who didn't come to work.

RACHEL

But you can only sit here for so long, you know? You gotta have a purpose. You have to be here on this world for a reason.

MADDIE

You have to find out what it is you have to do. And when you find it, you have to do it, no matter how hard it looks. You have to do whatever it takes to keep yourself sane. To put things back in order.

DAVID

It's out there. The answers. You just gotta go look for it.

JACOB

Out there.

Scene 4

DAVID

Do you need help with your bag sir?

JACOB

(As MAN) "No, thank you, I'm fine.

DAVID

I remember you. Adam. Right?

JACOB

"Yes. You were in the park."

DAVID

Yes. That was me.

JACOB

"How are you?"

DAVID

Well, I'm here. I work here at the airport after school.

JACOB

"How is your mother?"

DAVID

She's doing well, considering.

JACOB

"Yes."

JEREMY

Excuse me.

EMILY

Hi.

JEREMY

I'm sorry to bother you.

EMILY

No, not at all.

JEREMY

I wasn't sure if you, uh...

EMILY

Jeremy.

JEREMY

Yes.

EMILY

Hi.

JEREMY

I was just wandering around the park and I saw you sitting and I thought...

EMILY

Yes, me too. I was just... sitting here enjoying the sun and...

JEREMY

It's a lovely day.

EMILY

Yes.

DAVID

So where are you going?

DEBRA

"West."

DAVID

West?

DEBRA

"West, just West. I don't know yet exactly."

DAVID

Oh. Vacation?

DEBRA

"No, not vacation. I don't have anything here anymore. I've sold the house and everything in it. Now I'm just going West."

DAVID

Wow.

DEBRA

"To find out a way to kill the Green Dragon."

DAVID

Wow, really?

DEBRA

"Yes."

JACOB

So I did it. I went there. Out of sheer boredom, I went. To where the castle once stood. There they were, picking up the pieces, one by one. There were lines of people going from the rubble all the way to the trucks, passing down rocks and pieces of metal and junk. Smaller pieces from the castle, like pictures frames and papers and coffee mugs, were being put into buckets which went into a different truck. In another area, they got tents with rows of tables with food set up.

Someone saw me standing there and called out to me to help. I was like, "do we get free food?" and he said, "Yeah, you get free food."

So, I get into the line. Taking boulders from one guy and passing it to the guy next to me. It was a lot of work, those boulders were really heavy. After three hours, the line goes off to rest, and another group of guys takes over. It was good to finally have a full meal in weeks. After an hour we go back to the line.

After a few shifts, they tell us to go home and if we wanted, to come back the next day. So, I grab a couple of bagels and go home. I go right to bed, I was so tired... I lie there... looking up at the ceiling and... I start to... .. well, maybe, just maybe, if my father could see me now, he wouldn't be so disappointed in me...

JEREMY

I tried to cook the other day.

EMILY

Really?

JEREMY

Yes. Baked chicken. I got the recipe on the back of one of them soup cans. Baked chicken covered with breadcrumbs. When I pulled it out of the oven and started to eat it, the inside was still pink, so I put it back in the oven right till it was almost burnt. But the inside still wasn't cooked. I wasn't sure if it was ok that the chicken was still frozen when I put the coating on.

(EMILY laughs)

It was salty too. And the crust really never got all crispy, it was soggy and falling off. I know what you mean when you said that when you finish cooking, you don't feel like eating anymore.

But I don't think it's for the same reason.

You think, um... maybe... you could, um... show me some... give me pointers or something? If it's too much trouble...

EMILY

I'd like that.

JEREMY

Really?

EMILY

Yes.

JEREMY

I need the help.

EMILY

I'd be glad to.

DEBRA

I was walking home from the doctors office. It was bit out of the way so I'm not there all the time. When I saw it. This small boutique. They had pretty flowered dresses at the window. Pretty feminine dresses that were not too revealing like many dresses are nowadays. I went inside and was looking around, and the people there were so nice! They were very accommodating, and considering I'm a very picky shopper, that's very much appreciated. I love this place! I'm going to tell Maddie all about it.

DAVID

Will you ever come back?

JEREMY

"I don't know."

EMILY

"Maybe."

JACOB

"Well, that's my flight."

DAVID

Good luck.

DEBRA

"Thank you."

DAVID

I hope you find what you're looking for.

CATHERINE

The Man with the white stripe in his hair nodded and picked up his one bag and pulled it over his shoulder. Through the airport windows, he could see the city in the distance. He took one long look and then stepped into the plane. David watched silently as the door closed behind him.

ACT II

Scene 1

(The company is on stage. As they tell the story, they enhance the storytelling through movement. The character names used below are used only to identify the actor, but they no longer play these characters for Act II.

In this act, the MAN is played directly by the actors.

There is a violent storm. We are in the middle of the ocean. In this section, CATHERINE will play the MAN.)

DEBRA

The man with the white stripe was thrown from the plane and fell into the raging sea. The plane had run into a storm and went down into the angry waters. The man struggled to stay afloat amid the waves and swells but he was soon dragged away till he could no longer see the plane or the debris or the other people who were thrown into the water when it went down.

JEREMY

He swam and swam, trying to find something to cling to, but there was nothing else but miles of water in every direction, and the rain above.

JENNIFER

(played by EMILY) Daddy, come quick! I've found a comet! I've found a comet! Quick! Before it disappears!

(Looks into telescope, lets her father see as she stares into the sky.
JACOB lends his voice as the MAN, as CATHERINE looks on.)

MAN

I see it. Sure is a pretty comet.

JENNIFER

I wonder if they'll name it after me. It's such a beautiful comet.

JEREMY

But the man's strength could only take him so far, and as soon as he stopped struggling, the sea swallowed him up into its depths.

THOMAS

(played by DAVID) Daddy. I've cleaned up my room.

MAN

You did?

THOMAS

Yes, and I've helped Mommy set the table.

MAN

Really, she asked you to help her?

THOMAS

No, I just did.

MAN

What would make you do something like that?

THOMAS

Because I wanted to make up for what I've done.

MAN

Really?

THOMAS

I'm sorry, I won't fight in school anymore. Will you forgive me?

MAN

Of course, Thomas. Of course I forgive you.

JEREMY

In a surge of energy, the man struggled again to the surface, but to no avail. The sea was too powerful for him.

SARAH

(played by DEBRA) Honey, you won't believe the kitchen table that my aunt Molly is giving us. This beautiful oak table. It's gorgeous. And it's in great condition. We'll just have to put a tablecloth over it unless we were having company over. Can you believe it? My aunt is getting a new one, so she wanted us to have her old one. This will save us so much money...

What? Why are you looking at me like that? Stop it, you're making me self-conscious.

... this will save us a lot of money, do you know how much kitchen tables are these days?

Stop it! Ok, I love you too. No, really... ok... I mean it this time... I love you.

(During the following speech, the light fades out on SARAH, THOMAS, and JENNIFER. The lifeless MAN is carried around by the others.)

JEREMY

By now, the man had no more strength to struggle. The sea in its depths, unlike the raging surface, was calm and silent. The sea gently carried the man down to its depths through the great valleys of coral and seaweed and brought him into the belly of a giant whale.

MAN (CATHERINE)

Where am I?

JACOB

You are in the belly of a giant whale.

MAN

I'm alive?

JACOB

Yes, of course you're alive.

DAVID

You wouldn't be here if you weren't alive.

MAN

You were swallowed by the whale too?

DAVID

Yes.

MAN

How long have you been here?

DAVID

I've lost count.

MAN

How do you get out?

JACOB

Nobody can get out.

EMILY

And the man remained in the belly of the whale for thirty six days and thirty six nights. But in the belly of a whale there is no day or night, so the man just wandered and sat and slept, not aware of how much time has passed.

(A large spider runs across the stage and into a crevice. DEBRA enters the stage as the blind SPIDER-WOMAN.)

SPIDER-WOMAN

No, Wendy, come back. Come back little one.

(SHE moves her head to and fro to try to hear where the spider went.)

MAN

It went up there.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Who is that? Who are you? What do you want?

MAN

It's just me. I mean you no harm.

SPIDER-WOMAN

That's what they all say.

MAN

It's afraid to come down. I think it's stuck.

SPIDER-WOMAN

"She", not "It", "She". Oh why, oh why did you not listen to me? You never listen to mother.

MAN

Do you know the way out of this whale?

SPIDER-WOMAN

The way out? Why?

MAN

I have been wandering around for many days and I still don't know how to get out.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Get out? Why would you ever want to get out?

MAN

I have no purpose here.

SPIDER-WOMAN

So?

MAN

I have to get out so that I can accomplish what it is that I have set out to do.

SPIDER-WOMAN

And what is that?

MAN

I have set out to avenge my family.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Oh, you're one of those.

MAN

I have gone out to slay the Green Dragon.

SPIDER-WOMAN

The Green Dragon? Hahaha! And how do you propose to do that?

MAN

I don't know.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Of course not.

MAN

Tell me then.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Why?

MAN

Because I have to know.

SPIDER-WOMAN

So you can get yourself killed?

MAN

I'm already dead. I have nothing to lose.

SPIDER-WOMAN

It's a fool's journey. You will never succeed.

MAN

Then I bid you farewell.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Wait. What about Wendy?

MAN

I'm sorry.

SPIDER-WOMAN

You're sorry? You're sorry?! You drive a hard bargain.

MAN

I must complete my quest.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Oh brother. Ok then, I'll tell you. But first, you'll need this.

(The SPIDER-WOMAN weaves a long white strip of fabric that the MAN wraps around him. From this point forward, the actor playing MAN is identified by the long white strip of fabric.)

SPIDER-WOMAN

Lovely. Ok, then. Listen up, the only way to harm the Green Dragon is to find his heart, which lies at the top of the dark tower atop the unclimbable mountain in the island with no name. The island is populated with all manner of dangerous creatures like snakes and lizards and whatnot. If you do somehow get to the unclimbable mountain, you will need to get past the ogre who guards the entrance. Beyond that, the tower, which by the way, has no door, has walls laced with poison that kills anyone on contact. If you do manage to get to the chamber that holds the heart of the dragon, you must convince the witch to let you have it.

MAN

What do I do once I have the heart?

SPIDER-WOMAN

The heart grants you the power of the dragon. Only this energy is capable of harming it.

MAN

How do I get there?

SPIDER-WOMAN

Sigh. The whale visits the island with no name every year to feed on the snakes and lizards that bathe on the beach during their sun festival. On this day, go to the mouth of the whale and wait. It will swallow large numbers of the snakes and lizards, digests them, and then spits out their bones. If you are able to be among the bones, you will be spit out onto the island as well.

MAN

Won't I be digested as well?

SPIDER-WOMAN

No. Your shawl will protect you.

MAN

This? How?

SPIDER-WOMAN

You ask too many questions kid. Just trust me on this one, ok? Now, about Wendy...

(The MAN goes up and picks up the frightened spider and releases it to the floor.)

MAN

But when does this feast occur?

SPIDER-WOMAN

Tonight. You better going.

MAN

Thank you.

SPIDER-WOMAN

Yeah yeah. Wendy, come to mother. Now don't you go out running again. Next time I'll leave you out there to starve.

(As she turns to go:)

SPIDER-WOMAN

Good luck kid. You'll need it.

(Blackout)

Scene 2

(The white strip of fabric is on JEREMY)

JEREMY

The man with the white stripe in his hair tied the white scarf woven for him by the Spider-woman tightly around himself and went to part of belly of the whale where the snakes and lizards would enter and waited. As the Spider-woman predicted, a gush of sea water comes in through the whale's throat and in the water, all manner of frightening and dangerous creatures, giant snakes twenty feet long and as thick as a man's torso, great lizards with arms and legs like men, carrying spears and swords. There were young creatures, and old creatures. Strong ones and weak ones. They all came in a were washed into the whale's stomach where they were digested in the whale's juices. The man watched as they writhed in agony, being eaten away and dissolved by the whale's juices into one giant soup until all that was left of them were bones.

Then, a valve opens and sucks in all the juices and leaves the bones strewn all over. The man walks among them, at the bones of the horrific creatures. He takes one of the biggest bones and sharpens the end of it into a sword. Then he takes a number of the smaller bones and makes himself several daggers. He takes the tough skin of the lizard men and fashions for himself shoes and pants and a vest that works like armor.

When he was finished, the chamber once again begins to fill up with water. When it was full, the whale vomited the water, with the bones and the man, back onto the shore of the island. The man, having escaped the whale, swam to the shore of the island with no name.

(During this, EMILY comes on stage and takes the white stripe from JACOB)

DAVID

And there he made his journey through the terrible jungle towards the unclimbable mountain. He lived on the berries in the trees and small animals that he would find, and sometimes on the meat of the savage creatures that would come upon him. He defended himself with the weapons that he had fashioned out of the bones of the animals. He called upon the magic given to him by the Spider-woman to plant seeds that would grow for him the grain to make the bread that he would take along for his journey.

(During the following speech, DAVID changes into his costume for the SUN-KING.)

One day, as he was making his way through the dense jungle, he heard something that he had not heard in a long time. He heard singing. It was a sweet seductive tenor voice which could melt the hearts of all unsuspecting maidens who come upon it. The man made his way through the jungle, following the sweet pitch perfect sound of the beautiful song. Finally, he arrived. He came upon a clearing which was decorated with all kinds of beautiful flowers. And in the center of the clearing, upon his throne, there sat the most perfect specimen of man, whose face could drive people mad with passion, whose body was so beautiful it could never be captured by the most skilled of artists. He came upon the Sun King: Me.

(The MAN (EMILY) stares at him for a beat.)

SUN-KING (DAVID)

Hi.

MAN (EMILY)

Uh. Hello.

SUN-KING

What brings you to this neck of the woods?

MAN

I am on my way to the unclimbable mountain.

SUN-KING

Why?

MAN

Because it is my quest.

SUN-KING

Your quest? Why would someone like you have a quest?

MAN

Someone like me?

SUN-KING

You have no business going on a quest. Who do you think you are?

MAN

Nobody important, but nevertheless, one who must complete his quest.

SUN-KING

Worship me.

MAN

Worship you?

SUN-KING

People such as you have no purpose but to worship a being such as me.

MAN

Why?

SUN-KING

Follow me and you will live in peace. You will no longer have to protect yourself from the savage creatures of this island. You will have everything you need, all the food you could want, shelter from the heat and the cold.

MAN

No. I am not an animal. I need more than just food and shelter to fulfill me.

SUN-KING

You will be part of a greater whole. By yourself you are nothing, you are insignificant. With us, you will be important. Your life will have meaning.

MAN

No. I need more than wealth and importance. I need love and companionship.

SUN-KING

You will live in happiness. You will find a woman to love and children to watch grow, and you will have a family. Again.

MAN

A family?

SUN-KING

Yes. A family. Forget the one that you lost. They are gone. You need to move on. They are dead. You, you are still alive.

MAN

But how can I forget my family?

SUN-KING

Easy. You just need to drink this potion. Drink this and you will forget all your pain. You will be one of us. You will be happy.

MAN

I cannot.

SUN-KING

You dare refuse the Sun-King?

MAN

You promise me much, but I cannot be diverted from my quest. This is my one and only purpose in this life.

SUN-KING

Well, then, suit yourself.

MAN

How do I get to the gate that leads to the unclimbable mountain.

SUN-KING

Follow the path and by morning you will see it.

MAN

I will go.

(The SUN-KING exits. During the following speech, EMILY narrates as JEREMY takes the white stripe from her and wears it.)

EMILY

So the Man followed the path shown to him by the Sun-King and traveled it. By dawn, he came across a gigantic gate, as tall as the tallest tree, made of the hardest stone and the strongest wood. The massive doors of the gate were shut, and at the gate sat a giant ogre as tall as a house, hands big enough to crush the strongest man, teeth big enough to grind the hardest bones. He was asleep.

(The OGRE (JACOB) appears on stage.)

EMILY

The Man was petrified with fear. For a second he thought about turning back, to accept the Sun-King's offer. But then he decided that he had come this far, he could not turn back now.

MAN (JEREMY)

Let me pass.

OGRE (JACOB)

Who? What?

MAN

I need to pass through the gate.

OGRE

Who are you that I will let you pass?

MAN

I am me. That should be enough reason.

OGRE

I will kill you and roast you on a spit. Then I will grind your bones and use it for fertilizer.

MAN

You may have defeated those who came before me, but you will not stop me from fulfilling my quest.

EMILY

So the ogre took his club and swung it at the Man, hitting him and sending him flying ten feet. The Man fell, but got back up on his feet. The ogre comes and swings his club again, making him fly twenty feet. The Man fell, bleeding, and badly wounded, but got back up on his feet again. The ogre comes again and swings his club, making him fly thirty feet. The Man fell. He was bleeding and had many broken bones and was near death, but he mustered up all his strength and got back up on his feet.

OGRE

What kind of man are you that can take so much punishment? Why don't you just end this and let yourself die?

MAN

If I die now, then I will have come all this way for nothing.

EMILY

So the ogre comes at him again, and just as he raised his hand to swing his club again, the Man takes his sword out of bone and plunges it into the heart of the ogre, killing it. Then, as the ogre breathed his last, the mighty wooden gate swung open. Bright light poured through, blinding the Man at first, but then as his eyes adjusted, he saw the foot of the unclimbable mountain.

(During the following speech. DEBRA will "dress" herself and will take the white stripe from JEREMY)

EMILY

The Man laid there for many days until his wounds healed. Then to prepare himself, he shed his clothes made of animal skin and took the clothes from the ogre, whose clothes were made of cotton and silk and other soft material. He took the sword from the ogre, which was not made of bone, but of iron.

(DEBRA is now dressed and JEREMY exits)

EMILY

And so the Man stepped through the gate and was bathed in the light that shone from beyond the gate. And the Man looked to the heavens and the stars and learned where the island was located in the Universe. And in the light, he learned poetry and mathematics and science. And he made for himself a machine out of stones and sticks and leaves and which had wings and was powered by fire that was made from burning the ogre's blood. And he got into the machine and flew up to the top of the unclimbable mountain.

(The "machine" is created by the members of the ensemble.)

And so the man arrived at the base of the tower. The silver tower stood many times taller than the tallest tree. It had no doors, and the only window was at the very top of the tower. The poisonous walls of the tower were coated with a silver goo that seemed alive and moved towards anything that approached it. The Man touched the wall of the tower with a stick and saw that the stick began to turn into metal.

But the man was determined more than ever to make it to the top. He refashioned his flying machine into a different machine, one that would scale the very walls of the tower. He got in, and the machine began to climb the tower, and the machine, which was made of stones and sticks and leaves, began to turn into iron and lead and copper, and the machine became even more powerful than it was before. But as the machine reached the top of the tower, the man realized that even he was changing too. His skin was turning to plastic and his veins were turning into copper and his blood was turning into electricity. By the time he reached the top of the tower, he had become one with his machine, and he crawled into the tower a hulking monstrosity of metal and smoke and electricity.

(Blackout)

Scene 3

(The "machine" is gone now. Although he is still a machine, the MAN (DAVID) appears onstage with only the white stripe. The WITCH-GODDESS (CATHERINE) is upstage stretched out on a caftan. On the center of the stage there is a pedestal, on top of which rests a dome concealing it's contents.)

WITCH

Who the hell are you?

MAN

I have come for the heart of the dragon.

WITCH

You can't have it.

MAN

I must.

WITCH

Do you even have any idea what it is you are asking for?

MAN

It is that which will give me the power to slay the green dragon.

WITCH

Surely you must have a better reason than that.

MAN

I don't. Isn't it reason enough?

WITCH

It's pathetic, that's what it is. The power you are asking for is far greater than your petty desires. Your problems are insignificant.

MAN

But I must rid my world of an evil menace. Are the lives of an entire city not sufficient reason?

WITCH

No. You have no idea what you are dealing with.

MAN

Then show me.

WITCH

It is not for mortal man to experience. It is beyond your understanding.

MAN

Show me. If I go mad, then destroy me and spread my ashes into the ocean. If I leave here fruitless, then my life is not worth living anyway.

WITCH

It is not for you to have! Now go.

MAN

I have come all this way.

WITCH

Your life is insignificant. Your sufferings do not move me.

MAN

Then what must I do to convince you?

WITCH

There is nothing you can do to convince me.

MAN

I do not have the means to leave this place.

WITCH

Jump out of the tower for all I care. If you want to die so badly, there's your chance.

MAN

I will stay here till you give me what I want.

WITCH

No you won't. You don't know the extent of my power.

MAN

Look at me. I am nothing more than a heap of metal and plastic. I am no longer human. My humanity I have given up so that I may bring justice to my family. I have been beaten within an inch of my life by a fierce ogre. I have spent many years in the jungle living off the berries in the trees and fighting off fierce creatures.

WITCH

That was your choice. You placed those sufferings on yourself. That is not my concern. I am not a benevolent Witch. I do not give things away for free, much less something as important as this.

MAN

I do not have anything to offer you.

WITCH

Of course not. You cannot possibly have anything valuable enough for me to want.

MAN

All I have is this scarf. It was made for me by the Spider-Woman in the belly of a giant whale. It has protected me up to this point. It is the only thing I have that has not been corrupted.

WITCH

Wait. You have a scarf made from the silks of the Spider-Woman?

MAN

Yes, it is yours if you give me the heart of the dragon.

WITCH

The heart of the dragon is not for you to have. It must never leave this chamber. I will show you the heart, and you will surely go mad and be consumed. For the scarf, I will show you the heart.

MAN

Agreed.

WITCH

Very well.

(The WITCH takes the scarf from the MAN and then goes to the pedestal and removes the dome. When she does this, the light changes and the MAN is transported from the chamber of the witch into the vast expanse of the universe. The WITCH has disappeared. On both sides of the stage enter two HEAVENLY BEINGS (JEREMY and EMILY))

MAN

Where am I?

MALE HEAVENLY BEING

Nowhere.

MAN

Nowhere? How can I be nowhere?

FEMALE HEAVENLY BEING

You're everywhere.

MAN

I don't understand.

MALE HEAVENLY BEING

Of course not.

FEMALE HEAVENLY BEING

You are in the heart of the dragon.

MAN

It's so big.

MALE HEAVENLY BEING

Size is irrelevant.

(The MAN looks over to the pedestal.)

MAN

A bean? That's the heart of the dragon?

FEMALE HEAVENLY BEING

Yes. The whole universe is contained within a single bean.

MALE HEAVENLY BEING

All of eternity is contained within a single bean.

MAN

That's impossible. All this? The endless expanse of the universe, all of eternity, is contained in it?

FEMALE HEAVENLY BEING

Yes.

MAN

The island, my city...

MALE HEAVENLY BEING

Is smaller than a speck of dust compared to the rest of the universe.

MAN

I just wanted to find a way to destroy the dragon.

(An OLD MAN (JACOB) appears)

OLD MAN

You have.

MAN

I have?

OLD MAN

Yes, you have.

MAN

I don't understand.

OLD MAN

Yes, you do.

(Silence.)

OLD MAN

All this, as vast and infinite as this universe is, there are many many other universes of a nature that you cannot even fathom. But you are still man. You can only see what man in your physical form is able to see.

MAN

Yes, I think I understand now.

OLD MAN

I know.

(Silence.)

MAN

Thank you.

OLD MAN

You're welcome... Son. Remember, once you take it, you may never speak again, for if you open your mouth, the energy will be released, and you will be destroyed.

(The MAN goes over the pedestal, takes the bean and then swallows it. The OLD MAN and the HEAVENLY BEINGS disappear. There is a piercing scream and a deafening noise as the very walls begin to crumble.

The company returns with the white stripe, and manipulate it in different shapes. DAVID ceases playing the MAN and narrates the rest of the act.)

DAVID

The roof of the tower was torn away in the ensuing destruction. The very tower itself, even the entire island, began to sink into the ocean. The Witch-Goddess herself, had become a giant serpent, her fury enough to turn ordinary men into stone. The Man ran as fast as he could, the mechanical parts of his body began to fall away. He kept running, not looking back, fearing that one look at the Witch-Goddess' eyes would destroy him. But he could hear her terrifying shrieks as it came closer and closer.

(The company, manipulating the white sheet, transforms it into the MAN, then into a Beautiful Winged Figure)

Just as the Man thought that Witch-Goddess would reach him for sure, beautiful white wings began to grow out of his back. Beautiful white radiant wings. With the wings, he flew up into the sky, leaving the horrible angry shrieks of the Witch-Goddess behind on the island as it eventually sank into the ocean.

The Man flew and flew across the vast ocean, with only the North star to guide him at night, and the bright sun to guide him during the day. Finally, the lights of the city appeared in the distance. The Man was finally home.

(Blackout)

End of Act II

ACT III

Scene 1

(The lights come up on one side of the stage and RACHEL (CATHERINE) is at a podium.)

RACHEL

Hi. Good evening. I'm so thankful you all could come.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am a writer. I used to be a journalist, but not any more. I used to have a great job at this very prestigious newspaper. But things have a way of not working out the way you plan, so now I am no longer a journalist, nor will I be one again in the foreseeable future. I am now a writer, since there are no qualifications required to call oneself that.

(The lights come up on the other side of the stage. GUS (JACOB) is sitting in a chair. The lights are isolating, like an interrogation room.)

GUS

Ok, where do I start. I work for an airline... you knew that. Duh. Sorry, I'm a bit nervous.

Yeah, I know I ain't under arrest, but still, I... have bad memories, you know... policemen, closed room, tape recorder... makes me uneasy. Where I grew up, I was in a room like this all the time.

RACHEL

Luckily, I possess a myriad of administrative skills which I honed in my years of college, which I'm still paying for. These skills now allow me to maintain a job in an office, which provides me with the income that I need to do in my spare time what I'm doing now.

GUS

Naw, I ain't have a record or nothing. But I got questioned several times. Like I said, goes with the neighborhood. Some people say that I ain't all that smart, so that's why nobody bothered me, ya know... why everyone left me alone... like why they never forced me into any gangs or nothing.

No, I don't live there no more. Got out to the suburbs... which ain't that much better let me tell you. I mean, sure, you ain't got all them gangs and junk, but you got other problems you know? Like you just don't fit in there... like when you grow up in the 'hood you just ain't gonna fit anywhere else no matter what you do.

RACHEL

I first became interested in the winged man about a year ago, when I read a story about a plane that blew an engine, but somehow managed to travel twenty five miles to the nearest airport and land safely. Many call it a miracle, but others report seeing something else... a man, with gigantic wings on his back, held the plane steady as it traveled those twenty five miles. In my further research, I uncovered other incidents around a fifty mile radius of other "miraculous" happenings, all involving a vague sighting of a man with gigantic wings.

GUS

At the airline? Well, no, are you kidding? They don't let me anywhere near the engines. I don't know enough to do that sort of thing. Basically, I just operate the lifts and drive the baggage carts and stuff like that. I'm one of the guys who load the baggage and junk into the airplanes. Sometimes I get to help with the fueling, but that's about it.

RACHEL

Three children were playing unsupervised in a private beach. One of them is swept away by the undertow and is dragged into the ocean. The other two children report seeing a man with wings come down from the sky and pull the unconscious boy out of the water and take him to shore.

GUS

Yes, married... well, separated. Two kids, one five year old, one three. She took them with her, so they live with her.

Yes, I live alone now.

Naw, I never touch the stuff. I don't even drink, that's not why my wife...

Yeah, I'm not really comfortable talking about... you know... can we...

RACHEL

A man was driving across a lonely highway when he falls asleep at the wheel and goes off the road and into a tree. The man awoke to find himself lying down thirty feet away from the horribly wrecked car. He had not major injuries. In my interview with him, he said his angel saved him. That this man, with wings, pulled him out of the car, laid him down thirty feet away, and... put his hands on his injuries and healed them.

GUS

Ok. Well, I was out on the fence at the edge of the runway. I already got into trouble about it, but yeah. I was out there. They don't let us smoke anywhere near the terminal, see, not even right outside. So I gotta go all the way out into the edge of the runway... even though I'm not supposed to.

Heck yeah, you're not supposed to be out there. You can get run over. (Suddenly panicking) I can't get in trouble for that can I? I mean, go to jail and junk? I mean, I don't wanna go to jail and I should probably have a lawyer or something here if I could go to jail for that, right?

Ok... yeah, I know you told me. I ain't under arrest. Still...

RACHEL

You may have noticed recently the sudden appearance of long white streaks in the sky. Every so often, a white streak, hundreds of miles long will be drawn by an invisible pen, and dissipate in about ten minutes. No-one has been able to explain it, and local experts claim it to be some sort of cloud formation. I believe that this mysterious winged man is connected. Perhaps, as he flies through the air, his wings, or whatever engine he may have on himself, leaves this white trail as a residue.

Nevertheless, no-one has been able to come to a consensus on exactly who or what this winged man is... whether his wings are the result of some hideous mutation, or if his wings are of a mechanical nature, or if, as popular mythology suggests, he is some sort of angel. But if so, why does he appear now?

GUS

Ok. I was out on the fence having a smoke. You know my wife always told me that smoking was bad for me. She said that it would really get me into trouble one day, but I thought that it was because I'd get like cancer or something, I never really thought that it would get me into trouble like this, you know? I mean, geez, my wife had been trying to get me to quit for the longest time and if only I had listened to her, I wouldn't be in all this trouble...

RACHEL

I have taken it upon myself to seek out and uncover the truth behind this winged man. As you can see, sightings of this man so far have been limited to one or two people, and even then, the sources are not what one would call trustworthy. Nevertheless, I believe that all these people cannot have imagined the very same figure. So, I need concrete evidence; pictures, video footage, an Oprah interview... but I cannot write a story solely based on the testimony of mere humans.

GUS

Ok. Well, I was out there on the runway for a smoke and all these fire engines start coming toward me, you know? And I get up and jump into my cart to try to get back to the terminal... but the stupid cart won't start. And then I hear it... the plane, coming down... and it turn around and there it is, coming down onto the runway. And it lands... just like any other plane, it zooms past me and its wheels touch down and off it went, towards the terminal.

No, it wasn't like flying weird or anything like that. Just like I said, it landed just like any normal plane.

The wing?

Don't you already know what happened to the wing?

Ok, yeah, part of the wing was missing. Like it broke off... and it was missing one engine.

No, I don't know how it could have landed so smoothly like that. I don't know how it was able to fly like that. But I don't know much about airplanes, like I said, I ain't that smart.

I don't wanna get locked up.

I know, you say that now, just to get me to say it and then next thing I know...

For all I know, y'all will come and put me into a lab and like run all sorts of tests, cuz I ain't got no family and no-one will miss me... who'll miss some guy like me without no family...

I mean, I don't know if I can trust you right? I mean, no offense, but, I mean it's hard for someone like me to... You guys look so scary with them suits and all...

I mean, no-one else saw it. I can't believe that no-one else saw it... what about the people in the plane, didn't they see anything?

(Pause)

Ok. There was something on the wing. Holding up the plane. There was this man, with wings. Big ass wings, all glowing and junk. He was holding up the side of the plane that was missing the wing. No, I don't know who or what it was. It looked like a man, but it went by too fast... all I saw were the big ass white glowing wings. I swear, that's what I saw.

(The lights go out on GUS)

RACHEL

My sources led me to believe that he sometimes makes appearances at the top of the now tallest building in the city. So, I used my good charm and other tricks that would probably get me arrested to get me to the top of a nearby building, where I made camp and scanned the sky for any sign of his appearance.

It was about the fifteenth day when it happened. I was sitting facing the building, trying to keep warm, huddled in my blanket. I heard a slight noise behind me. I realized that I was not alone up there, and, fearing that it might be a policeman, or security guard, I hid myself behind one of the structures on the roof. After a minute, I went out and cautiously went to see who it was. I caught a glimpse of a man disappearing around a corner. I called out and followed him, but when I went around the corner, he was gone. As I turned around, I caught sight of a pair of magnificent wings in the distance. I couldn't tell in the dark if they were mechanical or feathered, but it was a glorious sight. One that will remain with me forever. The magnificent winged figure disappeared behind the now tallest building and that was the last I saw of it.

I continued to camp out there for the next couple of weeks, but I soon realized that he would no longer appear around there.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I now continue this search. It has become painfully evident to me that I will need additional funding in this endeavor. I now know that he does exist, you must believe me. My task now is to find the proof. I must find out who he is, what he is, and why he is here. What kind of power does he possess? Is he a hero sent to help mankind? or is he a normal person, just like you and me, granted with magnificent power?

This is a big story, ladies and gentlemen. One, I believe, will change our lives forever. It is my hope that your support will enable me to continue my research and maybe offer hope, which has been of short supply lately, since the attack of the Green Dragon.

I thank you for your time.

(Blackout)

Scene 2

(DAVID'S MOM is sitting in a comfortable chair.)

DAVID'S MOM (DEBRA)

I'm not an unreasonable person, am I? I understand completely that he needs his space. He is twenty years old, he is surely old enough to wander about the city past midnight doing heaven knows what, while his mother sits in her chair in this lonely apartment staring out the window hoping that when a man walks through those front steps, it will be her dear old David whom she loves dearly, and not some policeman with horrible news. All I asked was that he would show some consideration for his dear old mother, his only surviving relative, the only family he has left in this world. I ask you, is that unreasonable?

(Lights on EVE (EMILY) sitting at the pier. DAVID comes in.)

EVE

You again.

DAVID

Me? You're in my spot.

EVE

Dream on jerk.

DAVID

I've been coming here every night. You can't just...

EVE

I don't see your name on it.

DAVID

Fine. I'll sit right here.

EVE

Suit yourself.

DAVID'S MOM

"I can't talk you, mother!" That's what he said to me. "You couldn't possibly understand!" Yes. He said that. To me. His own mother. How can I not understand, I'm his mother! I don't know what to do. Ever since his brother... left us, he just changed. He always looked up to his brother for everything. But now... Before that, he never, ever, talked back to his mother. But now... I don't know what to do.

DAVID

You shouldn't be out here. By yourself, at this time of night.

EVE

Yeah, whatever you say, dad.

DAVID

I'm just saying...

EVE

I've fought enough demons already for anything here to scare me.

DAVID

What demons?

EVE

None of your business.

DAVID

Fine. We'll just sit here and not say a word to each other.

EVE

Good!

DAVID

I'm not leaving here. This is my spot and you can't drive me away.

EVE

You still talking?

DAVID

Yeah I am. What're you gonna do about it?

EVE

Are you trying to pick a fight with me?

DAVID

No. I ain't trying to pick a fight with a girl.

EVE

Oh. Ok. Haha.

DAVID

Look, I ain't trying to do anything. This is my spot and I ain't got nowhere else I can be right now. If you wanna sit there, fine, but I'm staying right here.

(Pause)

EVE

What's your name?

DAVID

David.

EVE

My name is Eve.

DAVID

It's nice to meet you.

EVE

Same here.

DAVID'S MOM

Well, it's David that doesn't understand. He doesn't understand that his mother has a condition, and she has had this condition long before the Green Dragon business even happened. You see, I can't step out of the house. I can't. Not even to take out the garbage. I get dizzy. My heart starts beating wildly till I think I'm having a heart attack. David knows this. He knows that his mother is helpless. But he doesn't care. It's terribly lonely. He's the only human contact I have, and the only time I see him is when he leaves for work in the morning, and on weekends when he goes out shopping for the week.

GUS

Things were never quite the same after that thing that happened. I mean, already, the guys made fun of me before, but after this... I just couldn't take it. You could tell, from the tone of their voice whenever they say something to me, that they were laughing. Laughing at crazy old Gus. Boozing, crackhead Gus. But even then, I just let it slide. I needed the job, you know? You know how hard it is to get a job nowadays? Especially someone like me? So I let them make fun of me... "sticks and stones," that's what I told myself. They can't say anything that I ain't already heard.

But it got worse, feathers in my lunchbox, taking my keys and putting them somewhere else so that I'll go look for them and make people think I'm losing it. I don't know why they did all that stuff, I never did nothing to them.

Then finally, I went to my locker at the end of my shift, and I notice that the locker isn't locked. And I looked inside, and everything was still there, so I thought maybe I just forgot to lock it, you know. And after that, I went over to my ex-wife's house to go visit my kids, they only let me see them once a week now. And I brought my copy of The Cat in the Hat, which I had for a long time, because that was my book when I was like five, and now I was reading it to my own kids, and they loved that book, you don't understand.

And I open the book, and all over the pages was pigeon shit. They wiped pigeon shit all over the pages of my book. I mean, what can I do, I don't know who did it.

I went in the next day, and everyone was in the locker room changing, and they look at me like nothing happened, but I knew, I knew that they all knew what happened. So I went over to my locker, and I take all my stuff and put it into my bag, and then I stand up on the bench. I say with a loud voice, loud enough that my supervisor came out of his office to see what was going on, I mean, no-one ever heard my voice this loud before, and I said, "I don't know which of you did that thing. It was wrong, what you did. That ain't right. A man has got his pride. And you made me look bad in front of my own kid. That ain't right. You ain't never gonna see me again. Goodbye. I hope you get what you deserve. "

And then I got down. And I told my supervisor that I ain't coming back. And I left. And I ain't had a job since.

SCENE 3

(Lights change to DAVID and EVE (EMILY) sitting at the pier.)

EVE

I had another one last night. I was sleeping at my bed when I woke up and the house was shaking. And I looked out the window and the Green Dragon was looking in. Then the house starts shaking, like it's being torn apart, and the ceiling comes off, and suddenly, the floor of my room collapses in and I'm falling. That's when I woke up. I thought it was real. I didn't think, "Eve, you're having a nightmare", I really thought it was happening.

DAVID

They're only nightmares. It isn't real. They'll stop eventually.

EVE

When?

DAVID

Eventually. I don't know. I ain't no shrink.

EVE

I don't know how much longer I can take it.

DAVID

They're only nightmares. Thoughts. Brain waves. That's all it is.

EVE

Speak for yourself. It's easy for you to say.

DAVID

Why? You're not the only one who gets nightmares.

EVE

I know that.

DAVID

I haven't had a good night's sleep on my own bed in months. Eventually, lying in bed staring at the shadows in the ceiling would have driven me insane.

EVE

They ain't just nightmares if they can drive us insane.

DAVID

We all gotta fight our own demons.

EVE

Out here? We ain't fighting demons, we're running away from them.

DAVID

My mother doesn't believe me. She won't believe me when I tell her that I just sit out here for hours until I'm tired enough to fall asleep. She thinks I roam around doing heaven knows what.

EVE

This can't go on much longer, can it?

DAVID

No.

EVE

No, I guess not.

(Blackout)

SCENE 4

(A street. GUS is sitting on a bench at the bus stop.
RACHEL approaches, sees him, and stands apart from him, trying not to
notice. GUS turns and sees her.)

GUS

Hey.

RACHEL

Hi.

GUS

You take this bus?

RACHEL

Don't be surprised, it's the only bus in this part of town.

GUS

Oh. Any luck?

RACHEL

No.

GUS

Oh. Ok. I'm sorry if I was a bit snippy, it's just that I've been out of work for a while
now.

RACHEL

No prob.

GUS

I hope I didn't ruin my chances of...

RACHEL

No.

GUS

Ok.

(Pause)

But then you're not at work anymore, and you probably don't want to be talking about
work, so I better....

RACHEL

Why did you leave your job at the airport.

Me? GUS

Yes. RACHEL

I, uh... I didn't like it there. GUS

That's it? RACHEL

I didn't fit in. GUS

Oh? RACHEL

Yeah. GUS

Where you there when... when it happened? RACHEL

What? GUS

That miracle with the plane. RACHEL

I don't know what you're talking about. GUS

You know. RACHEL

No. No I don't. GUS

Ok. It's just that I'm doing research on that. I'm writing a book about it, well, not "it", but the man... the winged man. RACHEL

Really? GUS

RACHEL

Yeah.

GUS

You know who he is?

RACHEL

Well, no. I just have stories... stories that I've heard, that people have told me.

GUS

Oh.

RACHEL

To be honest, I'm not really getting anywhere, and I'm at a dead end.

GUS

That's too bad. I'm sure it would have been a great book.

RACHEL

I haven't given up yet. You don't know anything about it? You've never heard anyone talk about it?

(Pause.)

GUS

No. Sorry.

(Blackout)

SCENE 5

(Split scene: David and Eve at the pier, David's Mom at the house)

DAVID

Do you think we'll ever get used to it? Not seeing it there?

EVE

I suppose. Eventually.

DAVID

I'm sure they'll try to build another one or something.

EVE

Yeah.

(Doorbell)

DAVID'S MOM

Who is it?

EVE

It's only a building.

DAVID

It was a symbol.

EVE

A symbol that only has meaning if you let it. If it doesn't mean anything to you, then the loss of it won't affect you.

DAVID

That's a way of evading it, I suppose.

EVE

Or you can make it mean whatever you want it to, then its loss can mean whatever you want it to mean.

DAVID

That doesn't make any sense.

EVE

Maybe not.

(Doorbell)

DAVID'S MOM

Just a minute!

(She gets up to open the door.)

EVE

I haven't shown this to anyone. Promise you won't tell anyone about it?

DAVID

What?

DAVID'S MOM

Hello?

GUS

Hello, Mrs. Freed?

DAVID'S MOM

Yes?

GUS

Good evening. My name is Gus. I used to work with David at the airport. We were good friends.

DAVID'S MOM

Hello.

GUS

I was wondering if I could speak to David, if he is here.

(EVE takes a photograph and shows it to DAVID)

EVE

What do you think?

DAVID

What is it?

EVE

It's my painting, silly.

DAVID

Oh, your painting...

EVE

It's not finished, of course, but what do you think.

DAVID

I'm not really an art person, I wouldn't know what to tell you.

EVE

You don't have to be just tell me what you feel from it.

DAVID'S MOM

David is out at the moment, but please, come in.

GUS

I don't know if I should.

DAVID'S MOM

Please, I insist.

GUS

Maybe for a minute.

DAVID'S MOM

Sit. You said you knew my son?

GUS

Yes. I worked with him at the airport.

DAVID'S MOM

Oh. "Worked"?

GUS

I left my job about a month ago. The reason I'm here was because... I was wondering if... um... David knew of any openings or something where I could apply. I'm still looking...

DAVID'S MOM

I see.

GUS

David is great like that.

DAVID'S MOM

Yes, I suppose he is. So... you two go out drinking with the guys?

GUS

Me? No, I gave up drinking a while ago. That's why me and David get along, he's the only other guy that doesn't drink.

DAVID'S MOM

He doesn't drink?

GUS

No, not a drop. The guys tease him about it, but he's very strong.

DAVID'S MOM

I see.

GUS

You seem surprised.

DAVID'S MOM

He keeps to himself. It worries me.

GUS

Yes, he's like that. Like a turtle.

DAVID'S MOM

It worries me a lot.

DAVID

It's very angry. Frustrated. Confused.

EVE

Yes?

DAVID

Despair.

EVE

Despair?

DAVID

I told you, I don't know how to look at these things.

EVE

No, no... keep going.

DAVID

Am I right?

EVE

There's no right or wrong, it's what you feel from it.

DAVID

I feel stupid...

EVE

No. David, just tell me what you think...

DAVID

There's a hole... like something used to be there, but now it isn't... and all of these things are pouring out of it...

EVE

Thanks.

DAVID'S MOM

I don't know where he is right now. He doesn't come home till very late. If he doesn't drink, I don't know what he does all night. He's never home. It worries me.

GUS

He's a good kid. I know he's ok.

DAVID'S MOM

I'm sorry. I don't mean to foist my problems on you. You just came here to look for a job.

GUS

Is there something I can do?

DAVID'S MOM

I just want to know where he is.

GUS

I'm sure he's ok, but if I see him around, I'll let you know.

DAVID'S MOM

Thank you.

DAVID

Is this about...

EVE

I'm trying to put it on canvas, but I'm not doing a good job.

DAVID

It's very good.

EVE

But it's not it... this... it... this feeling... that's trying to claw itself out of me. I just can't put it on the canvas... I can't get it right. This is just a part of it, but it's not *it*.

DAVID

What?

EVE

It! If I could explain it, I'd have a finished painting, but I don't...

DAVID

I'm sorry I don't get it.

EVE

No... it's ok. I just need to keep trying...

DAVID'S MOM

Do you take sugar with your coffee?

GUS

Yes, thank you.

(Blackout)

SCENE 6

RACHEL

It's cold as hell. What am I doing here? What are you doing here Rachel? Talking to yourself, that's what. Talking to yourself like some loony. Well hey, it's not so strange, Hamlet talked to himself all the time and he wasn't a loony. Ok, bad example.

It's really really cold! You don't suppose that winged man could haunt warmer climates. I should have brought a thicker jacket. I should have chosen a different career. I'm just not cut out for this crap.

Shut up Rachel, stop being such a sissy. You can't start giving up at the slightest sign of hardship. No-one ever said it would be easy. What, you think fame and fortune comes just like that? Of course not. You gotta sweat for it... or the opposite of sweating, anyway.

Why is it so cold! It's only August!

DAVID'S MOM

"I found him, Mrs. Freed," he said. "I found him at the pier, like he said he was. We had a long talk. He hangs out at the pier all the time."

He hangs out at the pier. He just sits there. All night. He comes home at three am in the morning why? Because he sits out all night at some park bench. He'd rather sit out there in the cold than be at home. Gus must think I'm some horrible person.

"David's a good kid," he says, "He just needs to sort himself out. This is something people have to do every now and then. Sort themselves out. You don't need to worry."

"Don't worry," he says. Don't worry. How can I not worry? I don't understand it. I just don't. I don't understand.

"I'll take you to him," he says.

"You know I can't," I say.

GUS

"Yes, you can, Mrs. Freed," I say, "You just need to want it bad enough."

DAVID'S MOM

"He needs you, whether he will admit it or not."

Imagine that.

GUS

"But it's not my place to say. It ain't my affair. But if you need me, this is my number, just call."

DAVID'S MOM

"Goodnight Gus."

GUS

"Goodnight Mrs. Freed. He's a good kid."

DAVID'S MOM

"I know."

GUS

"I know you do. Goodnight."

RACHEL

Chasing around a fairy tale, that's what. No wonder I couldn't cut it as a reporter. I chase around fictions, myths. Why couldn't I find a nice story of political corruption or something, something real. Instead, I might as well be searching for the sasquatch.

No, no! You saw him Rachel! You did! You saw those magnificent wings with your own eyes! He's real! It's real. I think. Well, sitting up all night in the cold does make one delirious, I mean look at yourself right now.

Ugh! Rachel pull yourself together!

GUS

It was pretty late when I left their apartment. I had to walk home, since I didn't have any more money for the bus. It was ok, the night was nice and I wasn't in a hurry to get home anyway. It sucks not to have a job, well, actually, not having a job is kinda nice. It's not having any money that sucks. I wish I had never seen that winged man on the plane. Why did it have to happen to me? I wasn't asking for no miracle.

DAVID'S MOM

"He needs you," he said. Of course he needs me, I'm his mother. But I need him too. Don't you think I've been trying to find a way to get to him? What do you think I've been trying to do all these months?

RACHEL

What's real anyway? Maybe some of us would rather believe in something that isn't real. Because reality is so ugly that we would rather cling to the hope that there is something we don't know about that is beautiful. Something that is only in our minds, but is beautiful and gives us hope.

DAVID'S MOM

But he's right. I need to leave this apartment. I need to go out into the world and conquer my fears. For my son. To save my son.

GUS

I sat in on a bench at the edge of a park. I was in no hurry to get home. I sat there and stared up at the sky. "Where is that winged man now?" I thought. Why hasn't anyone else seen him? Surely by now he would have been all over. Why would he just do one thing and then disappear? Why won't he show himself? So we can see him and know him and believe in miracles and hope.

RACHEL

Come on, Mr. Man. Where are you? I wish you'd show yourself.

GUS

On my way back home, I passed by a small shrine around one of the trees in the park. The whole park used to be filled with these after that day of the Green Dragon. Now that was all that was left. It has been three years.

RACHEL

Wings. Magnificent, white shimmering wings.

GUS

I wonder...

RACHEL

It's not the belief that matters, it's the act of believing. That's why I need to be here.

GUS

I got home, got into bed and promptly fell asleep. Hopefully the next day will bring better things.

DAVID'S MOM

I will. I will get out of this apartment. I will get out and face the world again. I must.

(Blackout)

SCENE 7

(EVE and DAVID sitting at the Pier)

EVE

I'm going away, David.

DAVID

What?

EVE

I'm moving away. My father is buying me this small house in lovely town down south. It's got a wonderful yard where I can plant tomatoes and peppers. I can grow my own little red pepper tree and pick peppers off of it to put into my chilies.

DAVID

But your work, your painting...

EVE

I'll still do that. It might not be what the type of work I'm known for, but I'll still be working.

DAVID

You never finished it...

EVE

It? The painting? The work of art that encapsulates everything that happened on that day? I don't know if I'm ever going to finish *it*. I don't know if such a thing *can* be finished. We all write and paint and think and worry and agonize over trying to find the answers, trying to understand why things are the way they are. But who am I that I should be the one to understand? Well... (pause) maybe there isn't anything to understand. Maybe that's what we don't get. Maybe that's what it was all along.

DAVID

But you know you will always try to understand anyway.

EVE

I know. Whatever. All I know is that I'm going to live my life in the meantime. I have to go David. I can't stay here anymore. That much I know.

DAVID

What about me?

EVE

I don't know. That's up to you.

(Blackout)

SCENE 8

(JEREMY enters carrying a brown paper doggie bag. He enters cautiously, sees the MAN and approaches him slowly.)

Hello there.

It's me... It's ok... it's just me.

I, uh, brought you something to eat. I hope like pbj... that's all I keep bringing you... hell, even if you did like it, you're probably all sick of it by now... but trust me, that's the only edible thing I can make. What an impression, huh? You'll probably talk to your buddies up there and I'm gonna be known as the peanut butter and jelly man. I can just see it now, when I die, all the angels will be all snickering and junk, pointing to me calling me the peanut butter and jelly man.

How are ya feeling? (no answer)

I mean, I guess if you want me to call someone or something, I could do that... but I guess you probably don't want me to, cause you'll just get into more trouble or something... and you don't want the feds like dissecting you and junk, you know you can't really trust those guys, you never know what they're gonna do... I mean... I don't really know, I've never met any of them, but.... you know... that's what they say... in like movies and junk....

Well... I hope you enjoy your sandwich...

Do you even talk? I mean... can you? I've never heard you say anything, I mean, for all I know, you can't even speak English and you can't understand a word I'm saying.....

But no... I think you can... I know you can... because, what would you be doing around here if you didn't speak English right?....

Um... well, I guess I better get going... leave you to your sandwich...

(Turns to go, but then changes his mind and sits down)

I, uh, figure you might want some company. It probably gets boring here, what with you just lying there all day and junk... I mean... I don't want to you feel like you're in like jail

or something... not that this is anything like jail, I've never been to jail... as hard as that is to believe... but... I mean...

Yeah, I guess I figure I'd keep you company up here. It's not like I got anything to do downstairs anyway, and it's been a very empty apartment, ever since, Emily, my girlfriend...

But I really don't feel like watching TV no more, and I ain't that much of a reader, and it gets pretty lonely down there and...

(Pause)

But if you want me to go, just... like... give a signal or something and I'll leave you alone.

(Looks at him to check for a response, but no signal.)

Ok.

(Awkward pause)

At least out here, you can enjoy the view. Though you can't really see the stars what with the cloud and all, and besides, there are all them buildings in the way.

You don't get cold out here, do you? Because I could bring you some more blankets...

How's it feeling? Does it hurt? I mean, I guess so... duh... stupid question... what does it look like, of course it does... ..

I'm sorry... I talk too much.

I guess I'm not really that good company, huh?

Emily was really the only one who could put up with me... she's special like that, you know?

(Pause)

Look, um... I wanted to, um....

Well, you arrived just a few days after the funeral, and... I, mean, I got so mad, because you arrived too late and if you were just a few days earlier... you... could have done something.....

But...

Look, I don't even know what you are and what you can do. All I was thinking was that you were someone who could... help her.

I mean... of all the people to get sick, why did it have to be her? Why not the grumpy old lady down the hall? Why not the guy at the corner store? Why not the bum on the street? Why her? Why not me?

You know?

Anyway, I'm just hoping against hope that you are able to do something... like you know... bring her back... use your connections... something?

I miss her so much.

(He looks to the man for an answer. He gets it.)

I'm sorry. I guess I was hoping too much...

It's ok. Really. I mean... it was a longshot, I know...

(Getting up)

Well, anyway, you must be tired and all, with all my talking and junk. So I better...

Just let me know if you need anything.

(Exits)

SCENE 9

(DAVID standing center stage. The others come into the stage one by one and walk up into the house.)

CATHERINE

David at the pier for the last time.

DEBRA

David is sad.

JACOB

David is lonely.

JEREMY

David has lost the will to go on.

EMILY

David needs salvation.

(By this point, they are all standing with the audience on the aisles and say their lines from there.)

CATHERINE

David sees a figure at the end of the pier. It is a man. It is just a man.

DAVID

It's you.

JEREMY

The man does not say a word.

DAVID

I remember you.

(Pause)

You've come back.

(Pause)

Did you? Did you slay the Green Dragon?

EMILY

The man sadly shakes his head.

DAVID

That's ok. I know you tried.

(Pause)

Adam. That's your name. Adam.

JACOB

Yes. Adam. That was my name.

DEBRA

A cool silent breeze blows through.

JEREMY

My time here is done.

EMILY

It is time for me to go.

CATHERINE

But you, you have many years left.

JACOB

Live your life.

EMILY

Don't waste your life.

DEBRA

It is much too precious for that.

DAVID

I can't.

CATHERINE

Yes you can.

EMILY

Goodbye.

DEBRA

David.

CATHERINE

And remember.

DAVID

And the man spread out his magnificent white feathered wings. And he flew up into the night sky...

JEREMY

Leaving behind a trail of white mist...

EMILY

And the man and his magnificent wings began to dissolve into the air...

DEBRA

Dissipating like mist...

CATHERINE

Until the man with the white stripe in his hair turned into mist...

JACOB

Into a cloud...

EMILY

Which eventually faded into the air...

JEREMY

Into the sky...

DEBRA

Till you begin to wonder if he ever really existed...

CATHERINE

Or if your memory is just playing tricks on you.

(The COMPANY slowly walks back on stage, and then one by one, they leave the stage until only DAVID is left, still looking up at the sky where the MAN was last seen. Finally, he too turns to leave. He takes one last look, and then slowly leaves the stage.)

(Blackout)

End of Act III

EPILOGUE

(CATHERINE is alone on stage. She addresses the audience.)

CATHERINE

When I was very young, my mother used to tell me a story about the man with the white stripe in his hair, who had magnificent wings. He came to live among men until they no longer had a need for him. So he flew up into the sky and dissolved into the clouds and when he was vaporized, all his molecules went into the air. And that is why, whenever an airplane flies through the air, it leaves behind a long white trail, just like the man used to make when he flew across sky.

Last week, I went back. Back to the hill. Where the castle once stood. To the memorial that they put up. It was my first time back. First time in twenty years.

My family moved away a couple of months after that day. My dad took another job in another state. We moved out of our apartment and bought a house with a driveway on a street with trees. We lived a normal life. My little brother is now married, marrying his high school sweetheart right out of college. I went to college, got my own place to live, and a job as a librarian which pays the bills as I work on my book. My parents now live on their own in the house and converted our rooms into a library, (my idea) and a room where my mother paints. I'm getting my book published... that's what brought me back to town.

I figured maybe I should... come back...

So I look up at the wall, at all the names... the ones who didn't make it. Names. People. With lives, just like I have. I look at each name and I imagine what that person must have been like... what they'd be right now if they lived...

There was another man on the platform, with his son, about nine years old... they were staring up at the names.

(JACOB appears)

CATHERINE

They need to fix this place up. It's getting a big neglected.

JACOB

It was a long time ago.

CATHERINE

True.

JACOB

(To his son) Hey, don't go too far.

CATHERINE

Is that your son?

JACOB

Yeah. I take him here because it's good for him. To teach him about the past. Where he comes from.

CATHERINE

Who did you lose? Up there.

JACOB

My parents. Junior here never knew them. They were great people. I want him to know that they existed.

CATHERINE

I see.

JACOB

What about you?

CATHERINE

I was there. When it happened. When I was a little girl. We escaped.

JACOB

That must have been a horrible experience.

CATHERINE

It was. But it was a long time ago.

JACOB

Yes, it was.

CATHERINE

It's my first time back since then.

JACOB

I see.

(Pause)

JACOB

Well. Better get going. Junior here needs to get to class.

CATHERINE

What kind of class?

JACOB

Dance. Tap. It was his idea.

CATHERINE

Ah.

JACOB

It was nice to meet you.

CATHERINE

Same here.

(He exits.)

CATHERINE

We never saw The Green Dragon again. There have been other dragons, bigger dragons, and we have built other castles, bigger castles. But that was the last we saw of The Green Dragon. It will probably come back. Maybe some generations into the future, it'll return and once again destroy our castle, as it did many generations before ours. And from that generation, will, once again, emerge a man with the white stripe in his hair, seeking the wings and the weapon with which to slay The Green Dragon.

As for this generation, we just simply live on.