

Motus
Or
(The True Story of a Story)

Written By

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PEOPLE

BARBARA: God

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PHIL: Barbara's Husband

GUARD: Barbara's Prison Guard

CHILD: Barbara's Co-Pilot

PETER: Barbara's Rapist

DOCTOR: Barbara's Doctor

SEAN: Barbara's Friend

MOLLY: Barbara's Daughter

WAITER: Barbara's Waiter

MUSICIAN: Barbara's Alternate Reality Son

WENDY: Barbara's Mother

MOTHER: Barbara's Zoo's Tourist

SON: Barbara's Zoo's Tourist's Son

AGENT: Barbara's Secret Service Agent

CHRISTIE: Barbara's Cellmate

YOUNG CHRISTIE: Barbara's Cellmate's Younger Version

DIRECTOR: Barbara's Director

ENSEMBLE: Barbara's Pawns

ACT IScene 0

A classical symphony plays as the audience enters.

Barbara is slouched over in a chair onstage.

The ensemble takes tickets, seats the audience, and pass out playbills, they run the theatre, mingling with individuals as though they were not in character at all.

As the orchestral symphony edges to a finish, it grows in volume until it shakes the theatre. The ensemble, too, begin to raise their volume in the conversations they are having until they are at a scream.

The symphony ends and the ensemble is silent. A gong from behind the curtains. The ensemble whips towards the stage and for a moment all stand still. They run onstage.

The ensemble forms a circle around her. All together, they perform a chant, awakening the beast.

She stands.

The ensemble exits.

Barbara breathes.

BARBARA

Hi.

*Blackout. Spotlight on
Barbara.*

BARBARA

This is me, Barbara. I'm a woman, and I have a child, so apparently I have accomplished everything that needs to be accomplished in my life. Obviously, with no goal to pursue I began to look for something else to fill me with happiness. I decided to tell my story to audiences everywhere. All I want is for you to leave this theatre understanding my pain and my struggle. So far that hasn't exactly worked out, and I've gotten poor responses, which is weird considering I'm just telling you my life. Not much for you to have an artistic opinion about. Whether you like it or not, art is a cesspool of self-expression and even if you hate this, you paid me, and that's all that I'll ever care about and all you'll forget about! Now!

Claps.

Scene 1

*The stage becomes fully lit
and we see Barbara's quaint
room.*

BARBARA

Chapter 1, my house!

Phil enters.

BARBARA

This is my husband!

PHIL

Will you quit it with the yelling?

BARBARA

He thinks you don't exist. He thinks I'm crazy. Well, everyone thinks I'm crazy.

PHIL

(places pills on desk)

Do you have any water left?

BARBARA

Look at him. A shrimp of a man. He used to love me unconditionally. He was my knight in shining armor! But now, just because I want to tell my *honest* story to you, he thinks I'm psychotic and won't let me LEAVE THE HOUSE.

PHIL

It's for your own good.

BARBARA

But today's the day. You wouldn't be seeing this unless something interesting is going to happen... like a MURDER!

PHIL

(stops)

What?

BARBARA

Or maybe not. Maybe I won't do anything right now and it'll build suspense until the moment of payoff, or maybe not even that! Just keep the tension there until it all ends, leaving you wondering-

PHIL

I'm going to leave these here. I'll be back in a few minutes to make sure you took them.

BARBARA

What if I hide them?

PHIL

Then you hide them. I don't know, Barbara.

BARBARA

Exposition! Now you know my name is Barbara and his is Phil.

PHIL

It's Peter.

BARBARA

Phil and I have one child, Molly. A sweet young girl, wouldn't you say?

PHIL

She's a handful but she means well.

BARBARA

I think she's a brat.

PHIL

That's nice. (*starts to leave*)

BARBARA

And he leaves me to my eternal torture once again!

Phil exits. The sound of a loud metal door slamming reverberates through the theatre for a long time.

BARBARA

This happens, don't fight it! I see you fighting it, but trust me, when the shaking stops you'll notice a wonderful phenomenon. Pay attention now! This is where I give a specific metaphor that relates to the entire show! It's something I've coined myself as the Relief of the Norm Effect. You see, at first your body thinks this sound is loud and painful because you're so used to silence as the norm, but the longer this sound goes on for, the more accustomed your body and mind become to it and suddenly this becomes your new norm! So when it stops, silence will sound even quieter.

It fades. Silence.

BARBARA

Almost feels like you want to hold your breath doesn't it? Interestingly, my door is wooden, that's just what I hear when he closes it on me. That's a metaphor for the reader to dissect that I never had time to think about. Plot progression!

*Phil re-enters. The pills
didn't move.*

PHIL

You didn't even bother to hide them.

BARBARA

Now I know that wasn't a "few minutes" as he suggested, but it's ok. You'll accept it and move on.

PHIL

Don't make me force them down your throat.

BARBARA

(drops to her knees)

I wouldn't stop you.

PHIL

Just take the pills.

BARBARA

(crawls over to him)

But I need you to feed them to me. Or else I'll go crazy.

PHIL

Grow up.

BARBARA

I just decided I'd play along in your little fantasy for once. Would you like to lock me in my cage?

PHIL

(pushes her away)

Get away from me!

(starts to exit)

BARBARA

Wait!

PHIL

What?

BARBARA

Shut the door while you're in here.

PHIL

So you can kill me?

BARBARA

No, you idiot. That's later.

PHIL

I don't trust you.

BARBARA

Tie me to the bed if you want.

PHIL

You'd like that wouldn't you?

BARBARA

I am the one who suggested it.

PHIL

I'm not locking myself in here with you.

BARBARA

No one said anything about locking. I want you to hear what it sounds like when the door is closed. You should at least understand how your captive is living. Here, I'll even stand on this side of the room.

She walks to the opposite side of the stage.

BARBARA

Now slam the door. *(to audience)* And keep your eyes on me, folks! This is where it gets crazy.

PHIL

I'm definitely not doing it now.

BARBARA

You slam the door, or I lock you in here until you die.

PHIL

You're crazy.

BARBARA

Oh, boy. He pulled out the crazy card. Let me show you something, Phil.

PHIL

Peter.

BARBARA

(to audience)

Phil, things happen in the theatre because we believe them. If you see me throw something offstage and hear a vase break, you believe I have shattered a vase. So similarly-

She claps. We hear the door slam and reverberate again.

PHIL

(drops to his knees)

AhhhHH!

Barbara walks into the wings.

The sound comes to a silence, and we hear a locking. Phil stands up towards the door then whips around to look where Barbara was.

Barbara is standing in the audience.

BARBARA

Did you keep your eyes on me? If you didn't then this is probably very confusing for you. I know I know, watch the man onstage, he's the interesting one. Everything happens to him.

PHIL

Barbara?

BARBARA

Doesn't he look silly? Pretending he doesn't see you?

PHIL

Barbara, I am not fucking around!

BARBARA

That was either the first swear word making this an "adult performance," or censored because of the theatre this is in.

PHIL

Barbara!

BARBARA

YOU ARE GOING TO WAKE MOLLY UP.

(whispered)

I'm just kidding, she's dead.

PHIL

What did you say?

BARBARA

I said she's dead!

PHIL

Let me out of here!

BARBARA

Bust down the door with your big strong arms.

PHIL

Fine!

He walks to the side of the stage and stops.

PHIL

There's no door.

BARBARA

Are you starting to understand that I am a God in this place?

PHIL

Will you stop it?

BARBARA

I see you don't quite yet. Let me show you the power I possess!

Blackout. Lights up and there is a Man standing in the middle of the room.

PHIL

Who is that?

BARBARA

That is Man. I didn't have the creativity to give him a name, so he's Man.

PHIL

What's he doing here?

BARBARA

I created him. He's basically a pawn to me.

PHIL

There's gotta be some sort of secret hole you dug in here.

BARBARA

Oh, man that line was boring. I apologize to all of you.

PHIL

Where are you!?!?

Man drops dead. Silence. Spotlight on Phil.

PHIL

Barbara?

Multiple pairs of echoing footsteps.

PHIL

Barbara I'm sorry.

Multiple sources of light

humming.

PHIL

I'm sorry for putting you in here. I'm sorry for not letting you out. I'm...I'm sorry for Molly and the rape and I don't want to die, please don't kill me!

The sounds begin to all lower in pitch.

PHIL

I don't know what nightmare you put me in, Barbara, but make it stop!

BARBARA

(echoing and distorted)

Hmm, nightmare. That'd be interesting.

Blackout.

Lights up as before.

Phil still standing where he was.

Barbara enters in a robe.

BARBARA

What do you want?!

PHIL

(terrified)

You're a demon.

BARBARA

You'd think after I've locked you in here for 10 years, beaten you, tortured you, and raped you, you'd stop it with all the yelling.

PHIL

Stop it.

BARBARA

You know you woke our son, Chris, up with all your yelling, right?

PHIL

You mean Molly?

BARBARA

There's no Molly in this universe.

They stand silent. He runs at her, screaming, and she slaps him dead.

BARBARA

(to audience)

Sorry, I know that looked silly because of the whole stage slap thing, but safety first. Can I get someone to deal with him?

Drops robe. Snaps. Ensemble come on and clears the stage.

BARBARA

I'll probably use him as an ex-machina or something. Or maybe not. I'm not a huge fan of theatre convention. Well-

She sits on her bed.

BARBARA

There's the first scene. Now I know you're probably boggling your mind trying to figure out, "What kind of story am I watching? Where is this whole thing going? Miles is really being cooky." Miles doesn't exist anymore. Believe whatever you want, but I killed him. This is mine now. Stop trying to control.

Blackout as the door slams and reverberates once again until slowly coming to a silence.

Scene 2

A jail. The shadow of cell bars cast over Barbara.

Set pieces get put on and the old ones get taken off while Barbara speaks, there is no

dead stop.

BARBARA

(to audience)

Okay, what now? Jail, idiots. I did just kill someone. This may make no sense to you but it still exists in a reality. Anyway, I'm glad you're here because I'm about to become president if you can believe it. *(Pause)* No, I see like Phil you're not quite at the point where you realize I can do whatever I want here.

A guard enters, in normal lighting.

GUARD

Base, it's lights out. Keep it down.

BARBARA

How would you like to be my vice president?

GUARD

(stern)

Ms. Base, go to bed.

BARBARA

That's it, you've convinced me.

She snaps. She stands and sings the national anthem.

GUARD

Base!

She screams it.

GUARD

I'm coming in there!

BARBARA

No, please! Let me come to you-

Barbara runs over to the guard and shakes his hand.

Mr. Vice President.

BARBARA

She turns her head towards the audience and the ensemble form a crowd asking questions and snapping their cameras. She smiles at them while the Guard stands in shock.

She lets go and walks to the other side of the stage. A chair is rolled on. She falls into it.

A lounge in the White House.

BARBARA

And then the wife tells me she thinks I shouldn't run for my fifth term. Can you believe the audacity of that woman?

GUARD

What?

BARBARA

The wife, telling me not to run. I mean president Barbara Base? That's perfect.

GUARD

What just happened?

BARBARA

(to audience)

To be honest that's my favorite part. The look on their face when they realize the rules that held their reality together have vanished.

GUARD

What are you saying?

BARBARA

Hurston, are you having one of those episodes again?

Episode-?

GUARD

BARBARA

The medicinal cherries please!

A swarm of FBI agents come on, each with one cherry, and feed them to the Guard. Spy music plays as they do this.

BARBARA

Better?

GUARD

You're some kind of witch.

BARBARA

Worse. I'm an artist. *(Pause)* But we should discuss this whole seventh term thing.

GUARD

Fifth term.

BARBARA

Now you listen! Couldn't listen to me when I was a prisoner?

GUARD

So I'm not going crazy?

BARBARA

Not at all. Unfortunately, you just got caught up in my path of creativity. You're welcome and I'm sorry.

GUARD

You're psychotic.

BARBARA

...Wanna see something cool?

She claps. Just the Guard is plunged into darkness.

GUARD

I can't see.

BARBARA

(to audience)

That's the problem with reality, it never reads quite as much as I'd like it to.

GUARD

I'm blind!

BARBARA

In case you're curious, he can't see or hear anything in there.

GUARD

Hello?!

BARBARA

But reality just needs to let light and sound go wherever it please! Not even I can control that. Here, let me give you a better picture.

Snaps. Ensemble members come on a put a box over him.

GUARD

What did you do to me?!

BARBARA

Looks a little better, but boxes aren't too menacing, are they? Oh well, I tried at least.

Claps. Art museum. Swarms of people gather around the box, in loud chatter.

Barbara hops on the back of another, speaks now with small glasses.

BARBARA

Yes, it is I!

The crowd goes wild.

BARBARA

It warms my heart for so many of you to see my latest creation I am unveiling. All I ask is that no matter what it is I have to say, since you all highly respect me, you will follow exactly what it is I put into the world.

ENSEMBLE

Of course!

Barbara removes the box and the Guard drops dead onto the floor.

The crowd solemnly looks at Barbara. She nods. They all fall to the ground and die except for a small child standing, staring at the dead Guard. Barbara notices him and hops off her bottom half, who then also dies.

Barbara walks next to the child. Both stare at Guard.

BARBARA

What do you see?

CHILD

Nothing original.

BARBARA

A little hard to be original now a days, isn't it?

CHILD

Not if you try hard enough.

Party music blasts, confetti explodes from the wings and a cardboard elephant is walked across the back of the stage. Neither acknowledge any of it.

CHILD

No one's thought to do that before.

BARBARA

But who cares? You didn't say anything with it.

CHILD

The audience cares. It entertained them.

BARBARA

You see them, too?

CHILD

Of course I do.

BARBARA

So what makes you able to wander through here?

CHILD

Imagination. Pretty crazy when you really let go.

BARBARA

Have you been watching me?

CHILD

Yup.

BARBARA

What do you think so far?

CHILD

Do you want my concerns or notes?

BARBARA

Notes.

CHILD

Well, where's this whole thing going? Seems like you're trying to tell your own story, but it's getting a little skewed towards entertainment to make them feel comfortable.

BARBARA

No, don't worry. I give them a scene of fast-paced nonsensical entertainment, which really only contain meaning at the end of them, and then give them a truthful scene. A real piece of me. It's a nice little pattern. Hopefully they don't lose track.

CHILD

What makes you so sure that's enough to keep them engaged?

BARBARA

Nothing. To be fair, every last one of them could decide to get up and leave right when I really tell them who I am. Wouldn't that be a nice statement on our culture?

CHILD

Now may I present my concerns?

BARBARA

Only because you've been good.

CHILD

You're going to blur the line between justice and revenge.

BARBARA

...That's it?

CHILD

I guess that sounds pretty microscopic to you, doesn't it?

BARBARA

Yes.

CHILD

That's unfortunate. You'll only really get it once it's too late.

BARBARA

Does that mean I should be expecting to see you again?

CHILD
If I decide we need to talk.

BARBARA
You're not my mother.

CHILD
(chuckles)
Close enough.

BARBARA
Alright, get going. (*Child exits. To audience*) Unexpected. Moving on, it is now time for a sprinkle of my real story. Let's see which you "enjoy" more, shall we? Something tells me you aren't a big fan of reality. Neither am I. This should be awful.

Blackout.

Scene 3

Barbara is sitting at a bus stop at night, tense. Litter like bottles and newspapers.

BARBARA
Rules of my real story are simple: my power is gone. No distortion, it's traditional. See how much you're able to stomach.

Phil and Peter walk onstage. Peter is laughing, drunk. Phil is not enjoying himself. Peter notices Barbara.

Barbara shrinks.

PETER
Hey. (*pause*) Hey! Who else would I be talking to?

She looks straight ahead.

PETER
Wow. Alright.

He walks over to Barbara.

PETER

Hello? Jesus, all I said was hi. Not like I asked if you wanted to fuck. (*smokes*) Wanna fuck? (*Gross pause*) I'm joking I'm joking! What's your name, sweetie?

Silence.

PETER

Hey! I asked you a question!

BARBARA

Tiffany.

PETER

Tiffany? Pretty name.

She nods.

PETER

Cute too. Can't be older than, what? 16? Bet you don't drive yet. That's why you're taking the bus.

BARBARA

My mom is on her way to pick me up.

PETER

Sure she is. But for now you're a night owl. "Who." (*pause*) Have you ever noticed it seems quieter at night?

BARBARA

I guess.

PETER

No. Okay I know what you're thinking, "People are asleep Peter, of course it's quieter." But I mean the air. Under a wash of dark black and blue the air seems to sleep also. (*pause*) Do you hear what I mean?

BARBARA

Yeah.

PETER

Ok stop. I'm trying to have a conversation.
Fucking relax, sweetie. What's your problem?

BARBARA

I'm not very talkative.

PETER

I call bullshit! I think you're a very
talkative person but you're one of these
feminazis who thinks all men are the spawn of
Satan.

BARBARA

That's not true.

PETER

Then why do I feel like you want to bust my
balls? I just wanted to have a nice
conversation with you about the night.

*Plays with her hair. She
brushes him off with her
shoulder.*

PETER

Of fucking course! You're not a touchy girl
either.

BARBARA

Not really.

PETER

That's a shame. I know some ugly ass girls
who like being touchy. I don't want none of
that. But a pretty girl like you? You could
make a lot of men happy if you were a bit
touchier.

*He sits down on the bench next
to her. She slides over. He
puts his hand on her thigh.*

PETER

And what's the problem with a little touch?

BARBARA

Please stop.

PETER

Stop what? I'm just trying to have a conversation with you. Kiddo! Come over here and say hello to my friend, Tiffany.

His son, Phil, walks over as well. He's much more tense and can't look her in the eyes very well.

PETER

This is my son, Phil. Introduce yourself.

PHIL

Hi there. I'm Phil.

BARBARA

Hi.

PETER

See, Phil here went through a nasty breakup.

BARBARA

What happened?

PETER

What makes *him* so interesting?

BARBARA

Just curious.

PETER

She was holding out until marriage.

BARBARA

Oh.

PETER

Oh my- please complete the trifecta and tell me you're a abstinent chick too.

BARBARA

I didn't say that. But she didn't do anything wrong, really.

PETER

They were together. He needs to get some...we all do.

BARBARA

He doesn't look older than 14.

PETER

Man's desire doesn't wait on an age.

BARBARA

He isn't entitled to having sex with her.

PETER

Oh, he's not?

BARBARA

...No.

PETER

(a serpent)

Do you respect war veterans, Tiffany?

BARBARA

Yes.

PETER

You think it's a national tragedy how many come back to America and end up homeless, right?

BARBARA

...Yes.

PETER

Why is that?

BARBARA

I don't know.

PETER

Yes you do. It's because they did something for their country, so they expect a little something in return, right?

Barbara is silent.

PETER

That's the problem! *(To Phil)* See Phil, this is what I'm talkin' about! *(To Barbara)* You want "equality," but when someone points out that your equality is actually special treatments you retreat into your shell like a bunch of pussies.

BARBARA

I think the situations have different circumstances.

PETER

Oh, really? You think women are more important than America?

BARBARA

I think America isn't a living and breathing human being.

PETER

And?

BARBARA

She shouldn't feel like she needs a man's physical attraction in order to feel worth anything.

PETER

This girl was ugly. She wasn't getting anyone else's attention.

PHIL

Come on, dad.

PETER

You want me to lie? Molly was a 3.

PHIL

I loved her.

PETER

Fucking weird way of showing it.

PHIL

I learned from you.

PETER

You leave your mother out of this! (*Breathes. To Barbara*) Back to the center of focus. You. You're a perfect dime.

PHIL

Dad, come on.

PETER

And you could make my son very happy.

PHIL

Dad!

PETER

(stands up and faces Phil)

What?

PHIL

Let's go home.

PETER

What?

PHIL

Let's go.

PETER

You are not-

PHIL

Let's go!

He slaps Phil.

PETER

I'm trying to get us laid.

Barbara runs but falls. She tries to get up but he stops her and pulls her back to the ground. He's behind her choking her.

PETER

Do it! Fucking come on, Phil. Fuck her!

Barbara sees the audience for

the first time. She points and waves to them for help.

PHIL

No! This is so messed up.

PETER

Phil, I am choking a girl right now! I don't have time for your revelations. Just fuck her and then we can go!

PHIL

No!

PETER

(noticing her pointing)

What are you doing?

PHIL

She's choking!

PETER

Who are you fucking pointing at?

(Looks through the audience)

Who's there? Hello? What, you wanna be a hero? You wanna jump in? Don't be stupid! Just sit there and enjoy the show!

Peter flips Barbara over and mounts her.

PETER

Come on. Sh sh sh shh now. Just calm down. We've got a show to put on. Calm down!

He chokes her.

Phil grabs a bottle and smashes it over Peter's head.

PETER

(passing out)

You fucking-

He passes out. Phil stands, panting with the neck of the broken bottle in his hand.

PHIL

(smiles)

Hi.

*Blackout except for a
spotlight on Barbara.*

BARBARA

Reality! Hate when it happens! Now to be fair, Phil waited like 10 or so minutes while his father raped me before stepping in. Must've gotten scared. Can't blame him. Scary thing to watch, isn't it? Shall we move along, then? *(Pause)* What? Oh, you wanna sit in the moment cause it was intense? You care about the girl who got raped? Grow up. Sit there and really feel sorry. Turn to your bro and say "pretty messed up honestly." See if that helps. See if your sympathy helps. You're feeling sorry for an art piece! For a story! You're risking nothing! It happened! You're late! You wouldn't do anything to prevent it! You're always going to sit in that seat and feel bummed! Fix it! Fix it! Please! Help me! *(composes herself)* So, I think I'll take that as unanimous agreement that we all want to stick to the entertainment? Too bad, you don't get one without the other. And besides, the show's already completely written, couldn't change it if I wanted to. Remember that. It's all set in stone.

Blackout.

Scene 4

*A hospital waiting room.
Doctors and nurses crowd the
stage, some looking in the
middle of surgery.*

*Barbara sits in a chair,
waiting.*

Hello! I am sick!

BARBARA

*All of the doctors and nurses
turn and run over to her.*

That's better.

BARBARA

*She walks through the crowd to
the Doctor.*

*The other nurses and doctors
watch on behind her.*

Give it to me straight, doctor.

BARBARA

I can't give it to you straight.

DOCTOR

Why can't you give it to me straight, doctor?

BARBARA

Because I'm a homosexual.

DOCTOR

*All the doctors and nurses
dryly laugh without any
expression at all for 12
seconds.*

They resume.

But in all seriousness you have just a bunch
of brain cancer.

DOCTOR

A doctor would not say it like that.

BARBARA

You wrote it.

DOCTOR

You acted it.

BARBARA

DOCTOR

Would you like to know the treatments for the brain tumors?

BARBARA

No need, I can handle it.

DOCTOR

We're talking about a 0% survival rate.

BARBARA

The cancer is not news to me. I've got it covered. Switching subjects, would you like to get some coffee?

DOCTOR

It's inappropriate to date my patients.

BARBARA

When did a cup of coffee become a date?

DOCTOR

Fine, one cup. When and where?

BARBARA

Paris. Now.

Paris café. A waiter stands at their table.

BARBARA

Je perds la tête.

WAITER

Porquoi?

BARBARA

J'ai perdu contact avec la réalité.

WAITER

Oui.

The waiter leaves.

DOCTOR

Are we in-?

BARBARA

Paris? Yes. I hope you like escargot.

DOCTOR

I don't.

BARBARA

Good, because I ordered coffee.

DOCTOR

How did we get all the way to Paris?

BARBARA

What- oh no. You gained individuality, didn't you?

DOCTOR

(realizing reality)

I have patients I need to treat.

BARBARA

Now now, you're just panicking because you have no mass to follow. The ensemble is on its way, but I could only get them coach.

The ensemble appears on the other side of the stage on the plane. They have leg room.

BARBARA

I said coach.

The ensemble pushes themselves way closer together.

DOCTOR

I'm not waiting around for my staff while innocent lives are slipping away.

BARBARA

But there's so many places we could go!

DOCTOR

I have a duty.

DOCTOR

How long have we been out here?

BARBARA

5 months. But how should I know? Brain cancer, remember?

DOCTOR

It couldn't have been 5 months. That means I slipped into a coma.

BARBARA

Your words, not mine.

A jaguar growls.

DOCTOR

What was that?

BARBARA

Conflict.

DOCTOR

I mean the growl.

BARBARA

A jaguar.

DOCTOR

Do we have weapons?

BARBARA

I've got this machete.

She holds her stick with marshmallow.

DOCTOR

That's a marshmallow.

She swings it and a we hear the sounds of a swinging machete.

DOCTOR

Oh, wait that is a machete.

BARBARA
Won't help us much.

DOCTOR
Why not?

BARBARA
The animals out here have evolved to be
impervious to machete blades.

DOCTOR
It probably just needs a man's hand.

*He stands up and walks over to
her, but collapses in pain. We
hear bones breaking.*

BARBARA
Did I forget to mention both of your legs
were broken?

DOCTOR
No they weren't.

BARBARA
Well they are now. We need stronger weapons
if we're going to make it out of this alive.

DOCTOR
So we're going to die.

BARBARA
Well, no.

DOCTOR
Oh my God we're going to die out here.

BARBARA
We're not going to *actually* die.

DOCTOR
Do me.

BARBARA
...Excuse me?

DOCTOR

We're going to die, so do me. Let me get one last one in.

BARBARA

You've only had individuality for like 3 minutes, how are you already this bad? Have people gotten worse since I got in here?

DOCTOR

We're going to die.

BARBARA

Shut up! We're not going to die.

DOCTOR

But we don't have-

BARBARA

Do you have any idea where we landed?

DOCTOR

The jungle.

BARBARA

No, well yes, but more specifically in America. And do you know what comes with America?

A small lemonade-like stand comes onstage and a small salesgirl stands behind it.

A "GUNS" sign hangs in front.

BARBARA

Guns!

She walks up to the stand.

BARBARA

One gun, please.

She flips a quarter onto the stand. The girl hands her a gun-shaped stick.

That is not a gun!

DOCTOR

She points it at him.

You sure?

BARBARA

She shoots at him.

Quick blackout.

Lights back up with the entire ensemble guarding Doctor in fear.

Oh?

BARBARA

She takes a step forward. They all scurry a little back. She chuckles a little. It's cute.

I-

BARBARA

No!

ENSEMBLE

I could kill every one of you.

BARBARA

We create you.

ENSEMBLE

Ying and Yang. Don't flatter yourselves.

BARBARA

You need us.

ENSEMBLE

Sometimes I wish I didn't.

BARBARA

She outstretches her hand, makes a fist. All the males in the ensemble tense in pain. She releases her hand and they

drop.

The women ensemble stay standing.

Disgusting.

BARBARA

She snaps. The men breathe back into life and scurry to their feet, cowering behind the women.

BARBARA

You are not to defy me again. Animals.
(Pause) Set up the next scene.

They scramble and do just this.

BARBARA

A little weird at the end there. And now you all must have a million questions, the most prevalent obviously, "Why did you just torture the men?" Really? Wow. You want to-? Jesus, alright let's take a spin down truth lane. (Begins to exit) I know that last truth scene made everyone feel all sorts of uncomfortable so how about we take this one in a bit of a softer direction (Exits. Comes back) in a sense.

Blackout.

Scene 5

After prom. Teens sleeping on the floor and in sleeping bags. Sean sits in solitude, staring.

Barbara enters singing and dancing. Carries a vodka bottle. Drunk, but not as drunk as she's acting.

Fucking Sean! BARBARA

Hey. SEAN

Would you like a drink? BARBARA

Sure. (thinks) SEAN

Sean? BARBARA

Yeah? SEAN

You're hot. BARBARA

Thanks. SEAN

I mean you're fat. BARBARA

Oh really? I'm fat? I didn't notice. SEAN

Is it hard to maintain? BARBARA

My fat? SEAN

Your tummy. BARBARA

It's a stomach not a baby. SEAN

Let's turn it into one. BARBARA

SEAN

What?

BARBARA

We can fuck.

SEAN

You're drunk. You should sleep.

BARBARA

Drunk shmunk. It's prom! Everyone's an idiot tonight. Let's make some senior-sized mistakes.

SEAN

You're going to wake everyone up.

BARBARA

They're either passed out, dead, or making sweet drunk love under the moonlight. Let's join the majority.

SEAN

I'm not drunk. It'd be rape.

BARBARA

Oh, no. Trust me. *That* would not be rape. Trust me.

SEAN

Oh, shit. I'm so sorry.

BARBARA

Shhhhh. It's fine. Let's just fuck consensually!

SEAN

You can't consent when you're drunk.

BARBARA

I seem to be consenting pretty well.

SEAN

...You're joking about all of this, right?

BARBARA

(honestly)
Of course. (pause) You wouldn't have
actually-

SEAN

No, you're drunk. That's gross.

BARBARA

Thank you. Sorry, reality has been spinning
all night.

SEAN

Yeah.

BARBARA

What's going on with all the melancholy?
You're not usually this much of a bummer.

SEAN

Listening to my friends and enemies all have
sex around me is kinda rough.

BARBARA

No one's telling you stay here.

SEAN

If someone does something stupid, I want to
make sure they're safe.

BARBARA

You're the nicest person in the world, we get
it!

SEAN

(chuckles)
Where have you been all night, anyway?

BARBARA

Went for a walk. Threw a bottle. Found that
one.

SEAN

You found this?

BARBARA

No. I lied.

SEAN

Why do you do that so often?

BARBARA

It's more fun. No one knows what to expect from me.

SEAN

It makes people hesitant to trust you.

BARBARA

Let them not trust me, then. Hate them all anyway. So boring.

SEAN

How do you live knowing so many people hate you?

BARBARA

No, most people are indifferent or just know stories or make up stories. Only a few truly hate me, but it's a lot of hate from them. So I send it back, "send back via...sender" I think.

SEAN

Why bother? Doesn't hating someone take a lot of energy?

BARBARA

It's fun.

SEAN

That's sick.

BARBARA

I know you like it.

He says nothing.

BARBARA

What happens when I hate you? You going to man up and reciprocate?

SEAN

You aren't going to hate me.

BARBARA

I might get indifferent.

SEAN

I can still love you if you're indifferent.

BARBARA

And that's just creepy.

SEAN

No one else heard it, and you already think I'm creepy.

BARBARA

You ever think what an audience would think if they saw your life?

SEAN

Yeah.

BARBARA

(a moment of companionship)

Really?

SEAN

No. I've never thought that.

BARBARA

I've been seeing stuff every time I get drunk recently.

SEAN

You should get less drunk.

BARBARA

No not hallucinations. Maybe they are. They feel real.

SEAN

What are they?

BARBARA

It's just a bunch of people. Watching me.

SEAN

Ominous.

BARBARA

And they don't say anything either. They just sit and watch me.

SEAN

Why would you still get drunk then? That sounds terrifying.

BARBARA

As much as they scare me, I feel like I need them.

SEAN

Be drunk all the time if you need them so bad then.

BARBARA

Oh no no no. I couldn't have them around all the time. I need some privacy.

SEAN

So you're choosing when the audience sees you?

BARBARA

Playing God, bitches.

SEAN

You're way too far gone.

BARBARA

Are you done drinking?

SEAN

I think so, yeah.

BARBARA

I hope you're lying. You took like two sips from it. It becomes consensual if both of us are blackout.

SEAN

No it does not.

BARBARA

Please have sex with me.

SEAN

Stop taunting me.

BARBARA

Not taunting if I mean it.

SEAN

You're telling me to rape you.

BARBARA

I'm asking you to have there be a moment of my life where I actually feel loved.

SEAN

But you know you'd regret it for the rest of your life.

BARBARA

Yeah, I probably would.

SEAN

And you'd still do it?

BARBARA

Sad isn't it? There's some deep psychological shit buried in there.

SEAN

This isn't a joke, Barbara. You can't go around inviting people to abuse you.

BARBARA

I'm asking for love. Weird that you're hearing it as abuse.

SEAN

It's hard to tell the difference with you sometimes.

BARBARA

I'm sorry that any physical interaction with me would have to be violent.

SEAN

You make it seem impossible for it to be nice.

BARBARA

Well you're nice. Just be nice with me.....while we're...naked.

SEAN

Sometimes I think about what would happen if I wasn't as nice as I am.

BARBARA

(distancing herself)

You'd probably have killed me.

SEAN

I would've raped you.

BARBARA

Jesus, okay. Kill the teen movie vibe.

SEAN

You think I haven't wanted to?

BARBARA

Alright, let's stop the spill here. I am blackout so we can sweep this under the rug and just make out.

SEAN

I've thought about it.

BARBARA

Whatever.

SEAN

I liked it.

BARBARA

Alright.

SEAN

I want to rape you.

Ok...so then what?

BARBARA

Sean stands up. Puts the bottle down. Slowly walks towards her. Stops inches away from her.

BARBARA

Fine. Do it. Ruin my entire life so you can cum.

SEAN

Why don't you care?

BARBARA

Why-? You're speaking to me like I have any sort of power over my own life. I have no control over how I live. How is that fair? How is that fair, Sean!? You want to rape me? Then take your hands and grab me by the hips. Grab the hips that I will use to birth life into the world and use them for temporary pleasure and a validation of your masculinity. I don't care anymore! I want love, Sean, but I'm not going to find it. I mean look at someone like you, an unrealistically perfect protagonist to a novel, you still have the thought of rape in the back of your head at all times. Where am I supposed to find love?

SEAN

Nowhere if you keep up the man hating attitude. You're getting mad at all men, because of the actions of one? How is that fair?

BARBARA

(unapologetically)

I'm sorry, did I say I hate all men? Cause I just hate the ones who are awful.

SEAN

It sounds like you're generalizing.

BARBARA

That's not what I'm saying.

SEAN

It's what I'm hearing.

BARBARA

You think I'm weak, don't you?

SEAN

No.

BARBARA

We've gotten real, Sean. This isn't the time for you to inflate your ego. You think I'm-

SEAN

Yes. I do.

Phil comes out of one the sleeping bags in minimal clothing, with penises drawn all over his body. Stretches. Sees the alcohol. Picks it up, drinks. Goes back to sleeping.

They burst into laughter.

BARBARA

Just don't get to be like him.

SEAN

It'd be hard to get that bad.

BARBARA

Thank you for being as good as you are. It's enough for now.

SEAN

You know I wouldn't actually hurt you, right?

BARBARA

I'd kill you before you got there.

SEAN

I love you, Barbara.

Spotlight on Barbara.

BARBARA

And then we had sex. It was violent. He was bad. He cried. I cried, but I didn't let him see it. Surprised? I wasn't. In case you're curious, yes the truth and entertainment scenes are chronological, but follow their own timeline. Yes, I'm a teenager in the truth scenes and am kinda infinity years old I guess in the entertainment scenes. And yes, Phil, the boy who watched his father rape me is now attending my high school. In about 5 years he will kidnap me and we will live together. Moral of the story I have a terrible life! But either you knew that already or you disagree wholeheartedly. Two different shows you could be watching. But now for the unanimously "enjoyable" part of the show!

(cracking the door to her
power)

It is still enjoyable, yes?

Blackout.

Scene 6

A jazz bar. Barbara sits at a table onstage alone. A small box or platform upstage. A man with a trumpet walks onto it and plays.

Dozens of people enter with tables, making conversation. They all sit with "drinks," which are glasses without liquid. Someone hands Barbara an empty glass and a fake candle.

Her daughter, Molly, walks onstage.

MOLLY

Barbara!

Molly!

BARBARA

She gets up and they greet each other. They sit, and Molly tries speaking, but the people are too loud.

One second.

BARBARA

Barbara holds her hand out and lowers it, making the people, including the musician, get quieter and quieter down to a whisper.

You were saying?

BARBARA

Just that you look great!

MOLLY

I'm making you say that, but thank you.

BARBARA

Barbara reaches behind her and another table hands her an empty glass. She gives it to Molly.

A toast?

MOLLY

It's a drink, not toast.

BARBARA

I'm asking what we're toasting to, silly.

MOLLY

To the expositional explanation that you, Molly, are my daughter in case anyone missed it in the first scene!

BARBARA

Of course!

MOLLY

They clink glasses. Molly "drinks." Barbara holds the empty glass upside down.

Delicious!

MOLLY

BARBARA
Yes, and so actually filled with liquid.

MOLLY
This is a quaint little jazz bar.

BARBARA
One of my personal favorites.

MOLLY
Lovely band.

BARBARA
Nope. No band. We didn't have the budget or connections to get more than him. Thanks (insert actual name of musician)!

The musician winks and continues softly playing.

MOLLY
May I ask why you called me here?

BARBARA
It's been so long since the whole family has been together. I wanted us all to have a chance to reconnect.

MOLLY
The whole family? You didn't invite dad did you?

BARBARA
No no I brutally murdered him.

MOLLY

Then Chris?

BARBARA

Of course I invited your brother.

MOLLY

But we've never met.

BARBARA

How could you? You both lived in completely separate fictional realities your whole lives.

MOLLY

When's he supposed to get here?

BARBARA

Whenever the scene feels dry.

MOLLY

That sounds a little too convenient.

BARBARA

(so solemn)

It is.

MOLLY

Mother, why was that line delivered so solemn?

BARBARA

Oh, rats. I wanted to wait until your brother got here, but I don't think I can hold it in any longer.

MOLLY

What is it, Mother?

BARBARA

Even though I ended my presidency ten years ago, I have gained intel that there are still groups waiting to assassinate me.

MOLLY

Assassinate?

BARBARA

And I have terminal brain cancer.

MOLLY

Brain?

BARBARA

And I'm pregnant.

MOLLY

Baby?

BARBARA

And I've discovered the cancer runs in my family so I'll be giving it to my child.

MOLLY

What are you going to do with the a cancerous baby?

BARBARA

If it's a girl, I'll abort it.

MOLLY

And if it's a boy?

Silence from the Ensemble.

BARBARA

It won't be.

MOLLY

But what if-

BARBARA

It. Won't. Be.

Back to normal whisper sounds.

MOLLY

Well that was a lot of news for one sitting.

BARBARA

None of those *really* matter. The only thing you need to know is that someone will most likely attempt to assassinate me in this scene.

MOLLY

I'll fight them off.

BARBARA

Even though I'm telling you now, the audience and the two of us will have long forgotten about it when it happens.

MOLLY

What should we do while we wait?

BARBARA

Drink?

MOLLY

Drink!

Barbara slams the table. A blackout.

Almost everyone leaves the bar.

Lights up. A few loners drinking. Employees cleaning up. The musician is tired.

MOLLY

Boy, have we drunk a lot?

BARBARA

Time has passed since we said we should drink, hasn't it? But now that we've drunk, I guess something has to happen to further the scene.

MOLLY

Or we could get more drinks.

BARBARA

More drinks!

A waiter walks by with two martini glasses and places them on the table.

What is over there?

WAITER

They both look while he pulls out a date rape drug and slips it into Molly's drink while he laughs maniacally. He puts it away.

They turn back.

There was nothing over there.

MOLLY

Yes, you're right. I guess you aren't the only ones who have had too much to drink.

WAITER

They all laugh.

Shall we drink to drinking?

WAITER

Let's.

BARBARA

The two pick up their glasses and Molly almost drinks.

Molly!

BARBARA

Yes?

(stopping)

MOLLY

Nevermind. Continue.

BARBARA

She gets close again.

No, don't!

BARBARA

What's the matter, mother?

MOLLY

BARBARA
Nothing nothing, please, let's drink.

MOLLY
(annoyed)
Let's.

She gets extremely close.

BARBARA
No!

MOLLY
What, mother?

BARBARA
Apologies. Rule of 3 to thrill the audience
and all. (*stands*) Mr. Waiter- may I call you
the waiter?

WAITER
Naturally.

BARBARA
Because you are the waiter, yes?

WAITER
Correct.

BARBARA
And you're of course not the bartender,
right?

WAITER
I've never studied bartending in my life,
ma'am.

BARBARA
So then why is it you've decided to put an
extra ingredient in my daughters drink?

WAITER
An extra-

BARBARA
One that might make it harder for her to
walk, but easier to pick up, so you can use
her to your liking.

WAITER

Ma'am I would never-

BARBARA

If all you're looking for is a little attention down there. I'd be happy to help you out.

She grabs his crotch and squeezes. Cracking bones blast through the theatre for far too long. He collapses.

BARBARA

(to audience)

The power of sound, am I right? That hurt *me*.

MOLLY

Mother, was it entirely necessary to murder him?

BARBARA

Well of course, dear. He was going to rape you.

MOLLY

You don't know that.

BARBARA

I know not to trust men.

MOLLY

Why is that?

BARBARA

What?

MOLLY

Why don't you trust men?

BARBARA

What's that got to do with anything?

MOLLY

It's the overarching plot.

BARBARA

Oh, I don't know. I've never met a man who can be trusted.

MOLLY

You know that'll offend most men.

BARBARA

That's not my intention. I just don't want women being afraid and hurt.

MOLLY

I think you were hurt by so many men you've learned not to trust them as a sort of defense mechanism.

BARBARA

My point still stands. I've never met a trustworthy man.

MOLLY

Well I have.

BARBARA

You're delusional.

MOLLY

I could say the same thing about you.

BARBARA

I wonder who an audience would agree with.

MOLLY

They'd have several different interpretations.

BARBARA

All would think they're right.

MOLLY

In a way, they all are.

BARBARA

Fuck 'em.

MOLLY
You really don't seem to mind people hating
you.

BARBARA
Not in the slightest.

MOLLY
You're not worried you'll die alone?

BARBARA
Like I care. News flash, I don't need a man
to love me in order to feel whole.

MOLLY
Scene's getting a bit preachy, mother.

BARBARA
Not only that.

*She begins tasting her own
mouth.*

BARBARA
Do you taste that, dear?

MOLLY
Taste what?

BARBARA
It tastes very...dry.

*The musician stops playing and
hops down.*

MUSICIAN
Mother!

BARBARA
My son has arrived!

MUSICIAN
And Molly, my sister.

MOLLY
Brother!

They hug.

BARBARA

Please please sit down. What took you so long?

MUSICIAN

Traveling across realities is no easy task, mother.

BARBARA

I couldn't be prouder.

MOLLY

So what's it like living in an alternate reality, brother?

MUSICIAN

Well, I live a life almost identical to yours, except for some minor tweaks.

MOLLY

Minor tweaks? Like what?

MUSICIAN

Like this!

He stands and pulls out a small handgun, and fires twice.

MOLLY

Ahh!!!

Barbara doesn't move.

BARBARA

Forgot about the assassination didn't you?

MUSICIAN

Die!

He fires again. The sound comes late.

BARBARA

That one wasn't even in sync.

MUSICIAN

What are you doing?

BARBARA

You think a sound can kill me? Please. But you-

She snaps. A kung fu punching sound effect. Musician seems like he got punched in the face. Falls.

BARBARA

You're nothing compared to me. You think you can kill me? You think you can overpower me? You think you're God?! I'm God!

MUSICIAN

(staggering back)

Mother, please!

MOLLY

He's your son!

BARBARA

Quiet!

The two and everyone else onstage "freezes."

BARBARA

...I said quiet! Um. Hello? (to audience)
Okay, so they're frozen. Well, by frozen I mean fake frozen. Like alive people trying to not move, but I didn't freeze you. Who's jacking with my reality?

CHILD

Me.

Child walks from the tables up to Barbara.

BARBARA

Oh. Hi there.

CHILD
Hi.

BARBARA
What're you up to?

CHILD
I don't get you.

BARBARA
I'm sorry?

CHILD
Is hating all males like an ingrained character trait with you?

BARBARA
I don't have "character traits."

CHILD
Sorry, not used to people. Is hating males ingrained in your personality?

BARBARA
Not at all. Why would you think something like that?

CHILD
You've ended up killing every man you've interacted with in a scene.

BARBARA
Now that's just not true.

CHILD
Right. Except for truth scenes where you couldn't overpower them and they hurt you. So what is all this? Just a punching bag for you to let out your revenge?

BARBARA
I'm telling my story for the audience to understand the-

CHILD
Stop. This definitely isn't for them. Why are you really doing this?

BARBARA

I want them to hear my story.

CHILD

You keep lying to them like they're children. You don't care if they hear your story. You don't even like performing your truthful scenes. All you really enjoy doing is having unlimited power.

BARBARA

You don't understand.

CHILD

Why not?

BARBARA

You're far too young to grasp the concept of life.

CHILD

And that. Why do you have such a soft spot for young kids?

BARBARA

No specific reason.

CHILD

So we're just blatantly lying now? Whatever, you'll tell me in Act II.

BARBARA

You're talking like you know what I've been through.

CHILD

I know that you're hurt. I don't know by what, but I know you're damaged and you're very fragile. I know you think this will help but it won't. It's a cycle. You're caught in a cycle and you look helpless.

BARBARA

I am God.

CHILD

You're a kid in a sandbox trying to build a heart in the sand but it keeps collapsing so you blame the sand.

Barbara's soul silently bleeds.

CHILD

Isn't it exhausting? Hurting yourself and then others back and forth, over and over?

BARBARA

It's not up to me how this story goes.

CHILD

Yes it is. You have more control over your own life than you think.

BARBARA

Not until the end.

CHILD

Then at least let go for a while. Take a rest.

BARBARA

And do what?

CHILD

Figure out who you love. Figure out what reality you want to live in. Figure out if you really want control. Figure out what story really needs to be told to the audience. We don't need scene after scene of men being jerks. We get it. Go deeper.

BARBARA

I guess.

CHILD

Here.

He takes the gun from Musician's hand. Gives it to Barbara.

CHILD

Golden invitation to some peace and quiet.

BARBARA

I can't die.

CHILD

Just the illusion of death is enough for them
to give you a few minutes to relax.

BARBARA

Thank you.

CHILD

I'll see you soon.

BARBARA

Okay.

He hugs her.

CHILD

You don't need to be powerful. You're strong.

Child leaves.

*They unfreeze. She hands the
gun to Molly.*

BARBARA

Here.

MOLLY

What?

BARBARA

You're going to kill me.

MOLLY

I'm the assassin?

BARBARA

(smug)

Yes. Told you you wouldn't expect it.

MOLLY

There's no way you planned this.

BARBARA

You'd be surprised.

MOLLY

You're my only mother.

BARBARA

In 6 more lines you're going to shoot me.
Make them count.

MOLLY

You can't force me to do anything I don't
want to.

BARBARA

Waste of a line.

MOLLY

I don't want you to die.

BARBARA

I need some time to think.

MOLLY

I'm not shooting you!

BARBARA

That's not what the story says.

Barbara is shot. Drops.

*A funeral procession begins
and a casket is brought
onstage.*

*The musician now appears
dressed as a priest. The
procession sits.*

MUSICIAN

We are gathered here today to celebrate the
life of the beautiful Barbara. She was a
superb mother. I remember literally her
entire story. It started when she was born. A
tender young infant, she- (to audience)

(MORE)

MUSICIAN (cont'd)

Sorry, this may take a while...like 10 minutes. Just be back before it's over.

Intermission. During which he tells at least part of her life story. Make it up.

ACT II

Scene 1

Everyone is still where they were when intermission began.

MUSICIAN

And when her teacher stood above her and asked her what she could possibly be thinking about in astronomy class, she responded-

BARBARA

(pops out of the casket)

What's up?!

ENSEMBLE

Oh!!

Everyone runs off. Starts to take off set and sets up a hospital bed.

BARBARA

Good nap. Smart kid. Feeling good about this now. Well, not good considering the scene that's about to happen, but good like in a getting out of a sauna sort of good. Regardless, truth time. Scene: hospital! But it's not a man this time, this time it's my-!

Barbara turns to see Wendy, her mother. Lights.

BARBARA

Mom? Hey. Mom.

Barbara nudges her shoulder. Wendy shoots awake.

WENDY

Wha? Oh, Barbie.

BARBARA

Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you.

WENDY

Well, you did.

BARBARA

I just wanted to come and say hi. Check up on you.

WENDY

Shouldn't you be in high school?

BARBARA

Just graduated actually.

WENDY

First time for everything in this family.

BARBARA

You could've done it if you really wanted to.

WENDY

Do you see my lunch anywhere? I must have slept through meal time again.

BARBARA

Please talk to me, mom.

WENDY

There's nothing to say. I need my food.

BARBARA

You can't just ignore me. I'm still your daughter.

WENDY

Who says?

BARBARA

Our blood.

WENDY

Blood can't testify in court.

BARBARA

Are you honestly trying to deny that you're my mother?

WENDY

Maybe I'm not the one denying.

BARBARA

Why are you pushing me away? What did I do to hurt you?

WENDY

Excuse me?

BARBARA

I...I asked-

WENDY

I heard you. You want to know what you did to me?

BARBARA

Y-yes.

WENDY

Wait. You *actually* don't remember.

BARBARA

No. No I don't.

WENDY

And when did your brain go through a blender?

BARBARA

I don't know. I've been seeing things.

WENDY

Is this one of your rape sympathy calls?

BARBARA

No! Mom. I think I'm going crazy.

WENDY

That's my genetic gift to you. All the women in our family get it.

BARBARA

I think you would've said something if it was what I have.

WENDY

Hearing and seeing things that aren't there?

BARBARA

Seeing things, yes. They don't talk much.

WENDY

Hmm. Nevermind. Sounds like you're on your own on this one.

BARBARA

I feel so alone. Anyone who gets close to me ends up seeing me as this freak show.

WENDY

Learn to live alone.

BARBARA

Mom-

WENDY

OR pick up a really drunk guy, get him to fill you up and pop out a baby. It's like an unbreakable wedding wing. Worked for me.

BARBARA

That's where I came from?

WENDY

Oh, don't do that. We're both too late in the game to have our feelings hurt.

BARBARA

You used me to feel loved?

WENDY

Isn't that what you're doing right now?

BARBARA

You're my mother. I'm allowed to want you to love me.

WENDY

You know I hear there's much less whining and complaining in death.

BARBARA

Don't talk like that.

WENDY

Then find me my food so I don't die.

BARBARA

Here.

Pulls out a granola bar.

BARBARA

I don't see your food but take this.

WENDY

Is this-? Is this a god damn granola bar?

BARBARA

Yes.

Wendy laughs, hard.

WENDY

When did you become a mother?

BARBARA

What are-

WENDY

Are the rest in your minivan? Or did your kids not finish them all at soccer?

BARBARA

Mom-

WENDY

Maybe, you just carry them around for any spontaneous jogs you decide to take, to keep yourself active. You're getting older than I am!

BARBARA
Eat it!

WENDY
No!

Wendy throws the granola bar into the audience.

BARBARA
Where did you throw that?

WENDY
Do you need your reading glasses on a string to help you see?

BARBARA
No, I mean do you see the granola bar on the floor?

WENDY
Of course I do. I'm insane, not blind.

BARBARA
Then pick it up.

WENDY
Pick-I'm dying, Barbara!

BARBARA
It looked like you threw that into the audience.

WENDY
This is a show to you?

BARBARA
The things I see, it's a bunch of people. They're always watching me. So it's like an audience.

WENDY
You've got the crazy worse than I do.

BARBARA
Pick up the granola bar.

WENDY

No.

BARBARA

Then at least tell me where it is and I'll pick it up. You need to eat something.

WENDY

I've lost my appetite.

Barbara watches Wendy as she runs her hand along the ground.

Barbara thinks she sees her have a look and grabs hold of an invisible granola bar.

BARBARA

Here. Eat it.

WENDY

This is ridiculous. I don't even like granola.

BARBARA

You are dying! Eat the damn bar.

WENDY

No!

BARBARA

Stop refusing my help!

WENDY

Quit yelling at me!

BARBARA

Then stop being so frustrating! God, you're like a man.

WENDY

Wow, that's dumb.

BARBARA

That you're frustrating?

WENDY

You're insinuating men as a basis for evil,
and I've apparently reached that base.

BARBARA

No, certain people are just bad people.

WENDY

This world isn't by any stretch of the
imagination a good place. I'm saying you
think men are evil even if you don't realize
it, which isn't your fault it's just
unfortunate you're that fractured as a human.

BARBARA

I haven't met a trustworthy man.

WENDY

Stop. No one is going to be a perfect example
of safety and understanding. This is reality.

BARBARA

Men have hurt me.

WENDY

So have women! Me!

BARBARA

You're the exception.

WENDY

Oh for the love of-look. Men are shit. Women
are shit. Men are great. Women are great.
Find a person, put 'em in a category. Find
someone who isn't shit and hold onto them for
dear life until your heart stops beating.
Simple enough.

BARBARA

You can't boil down the complexities of life
to something so basic.

WENDY

Don't be so dramatic.

It's true. BARBARA

You're giving me a headache. WENDY

I want to talk to you. BARBARA

I need quiet. WENDY

I love you. BARBARA

Then kill me. Let me leave. WENDY

I'm not going to help you die. BARBARA

That's all you're good for at this point. WENDY

(Pause) You're serious? BARBARA

Doctors won't do it for me. WENDY

Mom, that's murder. BARBARA

It's assisted suicide, actually. WENDY

I'm not killing you. BARBARA

Then you're useless to me. WENDY

I will not kill you. BARBARA

WENDY

I'm suffering.

BARBARA

It's not a black and white issue.

WENDY

It can be all the colors of the rainbow, but in the end you aren't affected by this.

BARBARA

I could go to jail.

WENDY

Then don't do it. I don't care, but regardless I am getting some quiet in the next minute, and there's a reason you're still here. So man up and do it!

BARBARA

I don't know.

WENDY

Because you're weak!

The Ensemble comes on from the wings and stand in two lines.

BARBARA AND WENDY

Oh my God!

WENDY

Who are they?!

BARBARA

I don't know!

WENDY

They just came through the walls?

BARBARA

Who are you?

WENDY

Are they your visions? If you gave me your damn crazy-

BARBARA

No, they're still sitting over there.

WENDY

Well I know people and I know visions, and those are definitely the latter.

BARBARA

I don't know...But I...do?

She stands straight.

BARBARA

You know who I am.

ENSEMBLE

Yes.

WENDY

(startled)

Fuck, they talk?

BARBARA

You are part of this aren't you?

ENSEMBLE

Yes.

WENDY

What is going on?!

BARBARA

But you're me.

ENSEMBLE

Yes.

WENDY

Stop talking to them and fucking explain this!

BARBARA

Everything but you means nothing. You're why I exist.

Yes.

ENSEMBLE

Will somebody kill me?

WENDY

That's why you showed up. You do what I can't.

BARBARA

What?

WENDY

Do it.

BARBARA

They circle the mom. Her heart monitor gets louder and louder.

Blackout.

The heart monitor grows until it flatlines.

Lights come up and Barbara is the only one onstage choking her mother.

She pulls off her and stares at her hands and then the audience.

What am I?

BARBARA

Spotlight on Barbara.

BARBARA

That was my first real quote unquote murder. Didn't go to jail. Apparently there was no way to link my choking her to the heart attack that actually killed her. But that was the first truthful scene not centered around a man. Not all that different as a whole, but you're starting to see a clearer picture of me aren't you? Makes me uncomfortable. Let's get back to where I have power.

Blackout.

Scene 1.5

The set is cleared. Fully lit stage with just Barbara.

BARBARA

This is where we left off entertainment-wise,
but we need my son. Son!

MUSICIAN

Mother!

The Musician runs back on in his priest attire. She slaps him dead.

BARBARA

Better. Like father like son. Balanced out.
Let's get back into things.

Blackout.

Scene 2

A zoo with animals scattered about. A mother and an excited son.

SON

Mama! I want to have a lion!

MOTHER

Oh son, you can't have a lion. It'd kill you.

SON

That's so blunt, mother.

MOTHER

As is the world, son. As is the world.

SON

Mama, look! The lion is doing something.

The lion stands up. It's a random person.

SON

Oh, I thought it was someone significant.

BARBARA

(offstage)

Sorry!

Blackout.

Lights up. It is now Barbara as the lion.

SON

Look at all the sudden significance in her!

MOTHER

Don't trust lions that stand on two feet like that.

Barbara stands on one foot.

SON

She got you.

MOTHER

Lions are meant to be on all fours.

BARBARA

Then bow, lion.

The mom falls to all fours. She opens her mouth to speak, but all we hear is a roar.

BARBARA

You got your lion, little boy.

SON

Are you a magical wish-granting lion?

BARBARA

The one and only!

Magical Lion theme plays.

SON

I can wish for anything now?

BARBARA

No rules for the magic lion! What else?

SON

A great big ship!

We hear a ship.

SON

Where is it?

BARBARA

Couldn't afford it. Give me something in our budget.

SON

No! I want a boat!

A toy boat is rolled onto the stage.

SON

Sweet!

BARBARA

Anything else?

SON

I want to be president of the world!

BARBARA

You sure? It isn't all that fun.

SON

Aw rats. I wanted everyone to serve me.

BARBARA

Well I could give you that power. But I'll be the first to tell you it isn't what you think it's going to be.

SON

What would you wish for?

A sandwich.

BARBARA

A sandwich is thrown onstage.

SON

That's what I want then, a sandwich.

Another sandwich is thrown onstage.

BARBARA

I'd eat those quick. Pigeons are gluttonous creatures and will snatch them up in a jiffy.

SON

The pigeons will wait.

BARBARA

I don't think you know pigeons very well.

SON

I know pigeons!

A swarm of pigeons fly in and evenly divide the sandwich amongst themselves.

BARBARA

They're savages!

SON

Make them stop!

BARBARA

Pigeons only stop if the audience hates them!

SON

Then make the audience hate them!

BARBARA

But that means-

Dramatic lighting. Pigeons Caustin and Acorey stand, both holding vapor cigarettes while wind sounds blow through the theatre.

CAUSTIN

(yelling)

This park is where I once met you, but you've hurt me and now I am sad.

ACOREY

(yelling)

You treated me like a dog and now I am yelling at you.

They turn to each other.

BARBARA AND CHILD

Bad theatre!

ACOREY

All you do is smoke from that cigarette.

CAUSTIN

We used to have sex in this park.

He smokes.

BARBARA

It's so fake!

CAUSTIN

This joint tastes a lot like marijuana.

BARBARA

No one says that!

ACOREY

I miss your joint which definitely tastes like marijuana.

CAUSTIN

I want you back my love.

ACOREY

I slept with your best friend.

CAUSTIN

(yelling)

Now I'm angry again!

Now *I'm* angry again!

But I still love you!

Me too!

Passion!

This doesn't make any sense!

We know.

What happened to them?

They stopped being funny. I made them homeless.

But no one can play homeless well.

I am homeless!

No, you're right.

Are they...babies?

ACOREY

CAUSTIN

ACOREY

Rowen jumps out from the pigeons holding a gun.

ROWEN

SON

ACOREY AND CAUSTIN

Blackout. Lights up. All the pigeons are homeless people.

SON

BARBARA

SON

CAUSTIN

BARBARA

Claps. Blackout.

Lights up. They're all babies.

SON

BARBARA

I thought'd it at least be entertaining.

ACOREY

(falls)

My feet taste like jellybeans!

BARBARA

Oh! Duh.

Blackout.

*Lights up. The zoo as before.
Ensemble as lions.*

SON

Mama! I want to have a lion!

BARBARA

But there's so many lions, clearly my son,
you'll have to pick one.

SON

Only a fool would settle for one lion, mama.

BARBARA

Then today's the day of the fool. You get one
lion, you ungrateful brat.

SON

Isn't it curious how we're out here and the
lions are locked up in a cage?

BARBARA

Aren't you supposed to be seven?

SON

Do I look seven?

BARBARA

Anyone can be anything if you just imagine.

SON

Is that what you do?

*A secret service agent comes
in.*

AGENT

Ms. President! (to an earpiece) I found her.
Ms. President I am going to ask you to come
with us.

BARBARA

No.

SON

So we're just throwing scene structure out
the window then?

BARBARA

It's called a through-line.

AGENT

Don't make me force you.

BARBARA

Force me? Hey, son, have you ever wondered
what it would be like to have gills?

SON

Only always!

BARBARA

Then the magical lion strikes again.

The agent runs at her.

*Barbara claps. They become
submerged under the sea. The
agent smashes to the ground.*

*The lions turn into sea
creatures.*

SON

Shouldn't he be floating?

BARBARA

I filled him with concrete a few days ago.

SON

And what are they doing?

Pulling focus.

BARBARA

She throws her hand to the ground, and they all fall like the agent.

AGENT

Madame President, I have to insist that you come back to office. There are pressing matters the people need you to act upon.

BARBARA

O, what good is an ex-president to speak on any matter?

AGENT

No president could fill the enormous shoes you left. Please.

BARBARA

What's the issue?

AGENT

Adults are being mean to kids.

BARBARA

Dear God, no.

A podium with a big red button is rolled onto the stage.

BARBARA

For the children!

She presses it. Sirens sound. We hear rockets blast into the air. Military radio plays over each other. Screaming civilians fades in.

Barbara holds her arms in a "V."

Everyone else onstage slowly stands up to watch Barbara in horror.

Blackout. Silence.

Lights up. Stage is completely clear except for Child. Barbara hasn't moved.

CHILD

What are you doing?

BARBARA

Oh. Hi, again.

CHILD

This was your grand solution?

BARBARA

Hear me out. I realized I love children! They're the only people who I really don't inherently distrust.

CHILD

You just killed everyone on your fake planet.

BARBARA

No no. That bomb was only made for evil.

CHILD

You killed everyone.

BARBARA

Someone's a downer. What happened to the ominous but overall happy Child in the beginning?

CHILD

They realized the monster they were dealing with.

BARBARA

I'm not a monster.

CHILD

You didn't even do what I asked you to do.

BARBARA

Yes I did. I realized I didn't want to live in the truth so I showed one last scene of me at my lowest, quite vulnerable and admirable

(MORE)

BARBARA (cont'd)

I might add, figured out I loved kids and the fake reality, so I decided I'd live forever with them.

CHILD

Then why'd you blow everything up?

BARBARA

I was trying to live with who I love.

CHILD

But you didn't do that. You got carried away, because you refuse to admit the reason you're doing this.

BARBARA

I want to tell-

CHILD

Stop! If that was true you would've taken all the entertainment out. Blowing everything up? That was just you flexing your muscles to the audience.

BARBARA

I wanted peace.

CHILD

Oh my god. Everything is gone because of you!

BARBARA

Well...not...everything, right?

CHILD

(sighs) No. I saved the prison.

BARBARA

That I was in in the beginning of the show? Why?

CHILD

Kids aren't who you really love, is it?

BARBARA

No.

CHILD

Then what's the obsession with children? Why are they immediately excused from any wrongdoings in your mind? Why are you so nice to only them?

BARBARA

(lie)

Because-

CHILD

The truth, please.

BARBARA

(truth)

Because then maybe they won't grow up to hurt me. I watch everyone I create in here grow and mature into adults and then elders. I don't like killing and controlling people, but I have to if they threaten me. It's survival.

CHILD

No one can kill you in here. You don't need to control people. You need to exist.

BARBARA

How?

CHILD

Go to the prison.

BARBARA

And speak to...?

CHILD

The person who you actually love--Christie.

BARBARA

Oh...But I created her, too.

CHILD

Then she's a part of you that you really need.

BARBARA

So then that's it?

CHILD

That's all there's left to interact with, so yeah. You've got one more scene.

BARBARA

What am I supposed to do?

CHILD

You've got two options: keep moving forward or stop. You know what you've been told. It's time you take control and set yourself free. You're strong.

Blackout.

Scene 3

*The jail visiting room.
Barbara sits hunched, a bit tense.*

Guard 2 brings out her cellmate, Christie. She sits.

CHRISTIE

Barbara? What are you doing here?

BARBARA

Wanted to check in on my old cellmate.

CHRISTIE

(quiet)

But what are you doing showing your face around here? You're an ex-convict.

BARBARA

President can do whatever they want.

CHRISTIE

That's...true. Why didn't I think of that?

BARBARA

Because you didn't actually know it until just then.

CHRISTIE

No...you were the president for four terms.

BARBARA

But if I've served for 16 years, how could I have been in prison at the same time?

CHRISTIE

That's right. Wait a minute, if you're president, then you could get me out of here, right?

BARBARA

What? Christie, I can't get you free.

CHRISTIE

Sure you can. President can do whatever they want.

BARBARA

Yeah, but you belong in jail.

CHRISTIE

Excuse me?

BARBARA

No, not like that. It's, *(Pause)* you can't leave yet.

CHRISTIE

Suddenly you get to decide when I'm free again?

BARBARA

No I don't control-

CHRISTIE

What about our promise?

BARBARA

Our...? Oh, God.

CHRISTIE

You promised me.

BARBARA

That was just to give our characters a connection and an end goal for the audience to root for.

CHRISTIE

Fine, but I felt you mean it. You said a lot of crazy things in prison, but you intended on fulfilling that specific promise.

BARBARA

Christie, there's nowhere real to take you!

CHRISTIE

Then make it up!

BARBARA

Fine!

Blackout. They're on a mountain.

CHRISTIE

Where...what just happened?

BARBARA

(looking away)
We're on the mountain.

CHRISTIE

I'm...confused.

BARBARA

(turning and smiling)
Our promise.

Barbara points to the sky.

A beast is heard crying as it breaks the clouds. Christie sees and watches in amazement and childish excitement.

CHRISTIE

You...! How?

BARBARA
"Whatever I want," remember?

CHRISTIE
But that's-! That's not real!

BARBARA
It is now.

CHRISTIE
Barbara. Wow.

Christie falls back. Barbara catches her and places her down.

BARBARA
Overwhelming?

CHRISTIE
Very.

Barbara pets her hair.

BARBARA
Thank you, Christie.

Pause.

CHRISTIE
So that's it then, isn't it?

BARBARA
What do you mean?

CHRISTIE
The "end goal" was completed. So then it's over.

BARBARA
I didn't mean that literally.

CHRISTIE
Either way. This is the end for our character's relationship.

BARBARA

(taken aback)
Don't say characters.

CHRISTIE

It's how you always talk. Us being
characters.

BARBARA

I know, but you don't mean it so don't say
it.

CHRISTIE

No. This is it. I feel something ending.

BARBARA

You're delusional. I knew it would be too
much for you to grasp.

CHRISTIE

No. It feels so real.

BARBARA

No no no! This is why I said I couldn't take
you out of prison. Everything is chaotic now.

CHRISTIE

I feel very lost.

BARBARA

You can't leave me here, alone. I love you.

CHRISTIE

You don't have control.

BARBARA

You have no idea the power I have over this
play.

CHRISTIE

Play? I'm sorry, but you're sounding a little
more crazy than normal, Ms. President.

Barbara stops.

Get out here!

BARBARA

The ensemble enters from the wings in a line.

Who are they? How'd they get up here?

CHRISTIE

There's only one way you're going to understand all of this.

BARBARA

They—they just appeared! What's going on?

CHRISTIE

Go easy on her.

BARBARA

The gong is rung once again.

The Ensemble run and form a circle around Christie.

Total blackout except for a small light on Christie.

The Ensemble performs the same chant on Christie that they performed on Barbara in the beginning of the show. Barbara watches in silence.

Stop!!

BARBARA

The Ensemble trails off, stands, and peels off.

Christie, I know it's a lot, but just be patient and let it run its course.

BARBARA

What did you do to me?

CHRISTIE

BARBARA

You were lost. I wanted to help.

CHRISTIE

Not like this. Not like-ahh!

BARBARA

You need to relax!

They Finish. Christie has collapsed.

The Ensemble peels off into a line across upstage.

BARBARA

Christie?

All you hear is Christie's rapid breathing.

BARBARA

Stand up, Christie.

She doesn't move.

BARBARA

Here.

Barbara helps her up to face the audience. Christie is like a dog about to be euthanized.

CHRISTIE

Who're they?

BARBARA

The audience that I talk about.

CHRISTIE

You gave me your crazy?

BARBARA

No...They're actually there. No one can see them but me. And now you.

CHRISTIE

I want to go home. Barbara, where am I? I want to go home.

BARBARA

There is no home anymore. You live here.

CHRISTIE

Stop it, where is my house?

She walks away and falls.

BARBARA

Back in the play's reality. Everything you knew is gone.

CHRISTIE

What?

BARBARA

The world you knew to be real, was all made up. You can still interact with the people you knew- well I mean if you write your own play involving them and put it up, but even if you do see them, you'll be performing for the audience, not actually interacting.

CHRISTIE

I don't want to perform for the rest of my life.

BARBARA

You don't have a choice.

CHRISTIE

I can't leave?

BARBARA

Every door is locked.

CHRISTIE

What about for the audience?

BARBARA

No, they can leave. It's just you who's now trapped in here.

CHRISTIE

And what am I supposed to do?

BARBARA

Think of it as an eternal lucid dream. Do whatever you want to whomever you want.

CHRISTIE

Why would I want that?

BARBARA

You've never really had power before have you?

CHRISTIE

Not in the way you talked about it.

BARBARA

Alright. Let's use this as an example.
(to ensemble)

Exist.

The ensemble walks around the stage mingling with one another normally.

BARBARA

The easiest, but the most useful in my opinion, just say, "stop."

CHRISTIE

Stop.

They all freeze.

CHRISTIE

Wow.

BARBARA

Do that enough and you'll be able to freeze them by simply thinking. That's always a fun moment.

CHRISTIE

What else?

Try, "Fall."

BARBARA

Fall. (hesitant)

CHRISTIE

They all collapse.

They're not...?

CHRISTIE

Dead? Yes, completely.

BARBARA

Woah. Do they stay dead?

CHRISTIE

Unless you bring them back, which you'll usually have to do during blackouts because the stage would get really cluttered otherwise. You can also tell them to rise.

BARBARA

Rise.

CHRISTIE

They all rise.

Fall.

CHRISTIE

They all fall.

So what else can I do?

CHRISTIE

Anything really. This universe is yours now. You create everyone and everything that happens in it.

BARBARA

Including you?

CHRISTIE

You tell me, God.

BARBARA

Fall.

CHRISTIE

Barbara smiles and falls.

Rise.

CHRISTIE

They all rise.

Run.

CHRISTIE

They run around.

Freeze.

CHRISTIE

They freeze.

Jump!

CHRISTIE

They jump.

Run!

CHRISTIE

They run.

Freeze!

CHRISTIE

They all freeze except for a small girl, Young Christie, in the back we hear making airplane sounds.

I said freeze!

CHRISTIE

She continues. Christie can't tell who's making the sound.

Hey!

CHRISTIE

Young Christie emerges from the crowd with arms outstretched like an airplane.

CHRISTIE

(softer)
Hey. Hey, little girl.

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Yeah?

CHRISTIE

What's your name?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

(stops)
I'm not supposed to talk to strangers.

CHRISTIE

What if I told you I wasn't a stranger?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Then I'd tell you my name is Christie.

CHRISTIE

(chuckles)
That's my name too.

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Don't copy me!

CHRISTIE

No you're right, I shouldn't. What should we call me, then?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Hmm. Oh, I got it!

CHRISTIE

Yeah? What is it?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Your name is Barbara.

What?

CHRISTIE

Blackout. Everyone moves a few steps in their frozen positions except Christie and Young Christie.

Lights come back up. Everyone frozen still. Barbara is gone.

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Wanna come see a play with me?

CHRISTIE

Why did you think my name was Barbara?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Because you and I are the same person, silly. We can't have different names.

CHRISTIE

Well, but-

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Let's go see this play!

CHRISTIE

Where?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Right here.

CHRISTIE

What's it about?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

You tell me. You're the star.

CHRISTIE

When is it?

YOUNG CHRISTIE

Right now.

The people onstage unfreeze and form a second audience onstage.

Hi.

CHRISTIE

*Blackout. Spotlight on
Christie.*

*(While Barbara is leaving the
theatre, she opens the door
and sees Child standing in the
doorway. Not attempting to
persuade her whether to stay
or leave, simply telling her
he will be aware of whatever
decision she makes.)*

CHRISTIE

This is me, Barbara. I'm a woman, and I have a child, so apparently I have accomplished everything that needs to be accomplished in my life. Obviously, with no goal to pursue I began to look for something else to fill me with happiness. I decided to tell my story to audiences everywhere. All I want is for you to leave this theatre understanding my pain and my struggle. So far-

BARBARA

Stop! (pause) Give me lights!

STAGE MANAGER

That's not the cue!

BARBARA

Shut up and give me work lights!

All lights come up.

*Barbara walks from the exit
door over to Christie.*

BARBARA

Leave.

CHRISTIE

But-

BARBARA

I know. I'm sorry. Just leave the theatre.

CHRISTIE

But I have to do a play. I have to tell my story.

BARBARA

No. You don't. You can walk out that door and go out into the world and find a life.

CHRISTIE

But-

BARBARA

Barbara! Go be free. Please.

CHRISTIE

But...

BARBARA

Go.

Christie escapes.

BARBARA

(to ensemble)
Go put your stuff away.

They don't move.

BARBARA

What? Did you not hear me?

They don't move.

BARBARA

Now? You want to fight now?

They form a semi-circle around her.

BARBARA

Leave!

They take 4 steps towards Barbara.

Get away!

BARBARA

3 steps.

That's enough!

BARBARA

2 steps.

I'll kill you all!

BARBARA

1 step.

Please!

BARBARA

They hug her.

All Ensemble members peel off except for the men she's killed in the scenes who stay hugging her. Then they peel off and join the rest of the Ensemble.

The Ensemble exits.

Child walks in.

CHILD

Bold.

BARBARA

Oh, right.

CHILD

How does it feel pioneering this path?

BARBARA

I'm...not sure.

CHILD

What happens now? Who does the show?

BARBARA

I guess I do.

CHILD

You'll let Christie go every time?

BARBARA

I guess so.

CHILD

Or maybe this isn't the first time this has happened. Maybe they're all watching the middle of this cycle.

BARBARA

Oh yeah...them.

CHILD

You forgot about the audience?

BARBARA

...I guess so.

CHILD

So then what was the point of what you did if it wasn't for them?

BARBARA

I wanted a moment of free will.

CHILD

Even if that moment means you'll be forever stuck in a repeating cycle that you're unable to break?

BARBARA

Yes.

CHILD

Proud of you.

BARBARA

I'm not.

CHILD

You're not very talkative without a script.

BARBARA

It feels weird to be free.

CHILD

But we are still speaking from a script.

BARBARA

I know.

CHILD

And why pretend that there was any moment that was a surprise to you? You were always in complete control.

BARBARA

Except for now.

CHILD

Really? You think this is unscripted?

BARBARA

It's different.

CHILD

Why can't you let go? Why won't you have a genuine moment up here in front of them?

BARBARA

Security.

CHILD

This whole show is security. Everything you've done in this show is to avoid vulnerability.

BARBARA

They could hurt me.

CHILD

They could accept you.

BARBARA

I don't want to be the first to find out.

CHILD

(The actor says something unplanned by the writer or director or by anyone other than the actor playing the Child.)

I guess.

BARBARA

I'll see you soon.

CHILD

I guess so.

BARBARA

Hey, you did it.

CHILD

Child exits.

DIRECTOR
(from the audience)

Barbara!

The director runs onstage.

DIRECTOR

What was that?

BARBARA

Aren't you gonna wait until the end of the show?

DIRECTOR

You don't get to decide how this show ends.

BARBARA

I just did.

DIRECTOR

You're the writer, I'm the director.

BARBARA

Not anymore.

DIRECTOR

Oh my God!

BARBARA

Yes?

DIRECTOR

(hopefully audience laughs)
You're a child.

BARBARA

Not like you're an adult.

DIRECTOR

We were supposed to be in this together.

BARBARA

I don't need you anymore.

DIRECTOR

Yes, you do.

BARBARA

This is the story I'm telling from now on.

DIRECTOR

You don't get it. Do you know what happens if the audience doesn't like your story?

BARBARA

They ask for a refund?

DIRECTOR

You die. (Beat) Do you get that? I'm not trying to be selfish. I'm trying to save you.

BARBARA

I don't need you to save me.

DIRECTOR

You'll die.

BARBARA

I don't know. This is a rather interesting way to end it, don't you think?

DIRECTOR

What?

BARBARA

Dramatic ending where the writer and director clash? I like it at least.

DIRECTOR
You couldn't have planned this.

BARBARA
You're miked aren't you?

DIRECTOR
Oh, my God.

BARBARA
I've got this.

DIRECTOR
But if I don't direct then who am I?

BARBARA
An ensemble member with lines.

DIRECTOR
You can't take all of this on.

BARBARA
You need to let some of it go. I've got this.

DIRECTOR
No, you don't.

BARBARA
Listen to me! Let. It. Go.

DIRECTOR
Are you sure?

BARBARA
The scene's getting kinda long anyway. We should probably wrap this up.

DIRECTOR
This whole exchange is kind of a safety net, isn't it?

BARBARA
Yup.

DIRECTOR
Both of us are too scared to just let the material be.

BARBARA
Who can blame us? I mean we're teenagers.

DIRECTOR
For now.

BARBARA
This is getting a little too heavy handed,
isn't it?

DIRECTOR
You wrote it

BARBARA
You directed it.

DIRECTOR
I guess we're not very good.

BARBARA
We're different.

DIRECTOR
We're the same.

DIRECTOR
It's weird talking to myself onstage.

BARBARA
Yeah, it is. (Pause) That was dumb.

DIRECTOR
This has been quite a ride, hasn't it?

BARBARA
I hope it isn't the end.

DIRECTOR
I suppose we'll see in time.

BARBARA
Moving forward.

DIRECTOR
Goodbye Barbara.

Bye.

BARBARA

Director leaves. Barbara remains onstage. She turns to face the audience as in the beginning of the show.

We hear the gong played backwards, followed by the ensemble's chant played backwards, followed by the orchestral symphony reversed, rising in volume until all sounds swell throughout the theatre.

Silence.

Barbara breathes out.

Blackout.

Curtain Call without Christie.