

SC276: ...*Ring, the fuck are you doing.* You haven't been reading the last three months or so of riffs like the rest of us, you're supposed to be *sane*.

Ringmaster: What do you mean? It's October, and I thought that it'd be fitting to run an infamous fic that has a somewhat related theme.

SC276: "Somewhat" is right, given this fic is so infamous enough across all fandom barriers that riffing it is like Let's Playing *Super Mario 64*. Why the hell would- wait. Is this about how the alleged author came out and said part of this thing *isn't* a trollfic, even though that's as consistent as an *Ace Attorney* witness's testimony? Which isn't even reason enough, given we riff incomplete fics when you manage to find something *special* about it.

Ringmaster: What could be more special than someone claiming to have written one of the most infamous fics ever made coming out and saying that the first couple chapters of her "magnum opus" were actually genuine even though there's so much evidence to the contrary?

SC276: *Klonoa 3* being released. Someone managing to find Minus World's flagpole. Us riffing a published work. I could go on.

Ringmaster: It's certainly a strange occurrence, is it not? Especially since there was a whole memoir planned to be released around the subject of her using the fic to find her long-lost brother, but it's been canceled after the brother resurfaced and debunked all of it himself, it's been pretty crazy.

Crazy56U: ...*poop*. And here I am, having preordered the damn thing...

Ringmaster: Also, it's been almost exactly one year since that time when we riffed *Caveat Lector*, give or take a week.

SC276: Yeah, and we still haven't freakin' finished it.

Ringmaster: ...Which is a bit odd to me, looking back, considering that it was easily one-shot length. Anyway, without further ado, "My Immortal" by xxxbloodyrists666xxx.

CaptainPipsqueak: Clearly you know you're dealing with a stellar author when they have a name like someone on a messageboard.

SC276: You know *exactly* why, Monokuma. You guys have fun with the overtreaded grammatical nightmare. I'm out. *whoomp*

Crazy56U: *YOU COWARD*

Nox: It feels so weird riffing this in 2017.

Mono: *deeply inhales. Exhales* This is the big one, guys. Let's do this.

BittplexMutt: Let's go guys.

Topher: *pops up through a hatch in the floor, wearing a Halloween costume consisting of a brown robe and grey beard* Hodor! Hodor Hodor! *reads the title* *shits a brick* Ok, fuck this dumbass bit, RING WHAT THE FUCK? I THOUGHT I WAS SAFE FROM THIS, I THOUGHT WE DID PONIES!

ThatUnknownPony: Oh yes! This is the kind of literal shit I signed up for! What better October riff than "The Room" of all Fanfiction!

SuperMapslover: *Is this a joke?*

Chapter 1.

AN: Special fangz (get it, coz Im goffik)

Crazy56U: *You are the reason we have laws, Tara.*

Nox: He he he. I don't get it.

Mono: ...Fangs, thanks. It's a really subtle joke. And by "subtle", I mean as subtle as a nuclear explosion.

BittplexMutt: As subtle as subtle can be.

ThatUnknownPony: Yeah, you are pretty goofy, alright.

SuperMapslover: Oh, that's cute, the Author's trying to do a pun.

2 my gf (ew not in that way)

Crazy56U: (is now just mad)

ThatUnknownPony: Oh, good ol' early 2000's homophobia, we seriously don't miss that shit nowadays.

Mono: I choose to interpret that the way I interpret it.

Topher: [Author] "I have a very special announcement."

raven, bloodytearz666 4 helpin me wif da story and spelling. U rok!

Crazy56U: Okay, just because this is actually a troll fic does *not* make this any less painful, *fuck you.*

SuperAquaLuigi: I refuse to believe anyone helped with the spelling (or story). I'd sooner believe Ring has mercy.

Justin ur da luv of my deprzzing life u rok 2! MCR ROX!

Crazy56U: You know, I never thought I would need to be *glad* that a band disbanded, but My Chemical Romance's death in light of this fic does invoke that emotion.

ThatUnknownPony: I didn't even know they disbanded, but they weren't Linkin Park, so...

SuperMapslover: I don't know who "MCR" is and I don't care.

Mono: The more you know, Maps.

CaptainPipsqueak: ... These... these are *words*, yes?

Crazy56U: *I honestly do not fucking know.*

Hi my name is Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way and I have long ebony black hair

JofY: Suddenly, Tangled.

Crazy56U: *GET IT?!*

Nox: Yes I did, now how to I get rid of it?

CaptainPipsqueak: Fire. Fire solves everything.

PanzerThiefZero: So she has hardwood hair. Got it.

Topher: Hello Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way! My name is Topher Bana'na Trea'kel Sirprize Topherrson!

Crazy56U: Meanwhile, my name is Stephen Severance, and my name is arguably the dumbest of the lot.

(that's how I got my name)

JofY: Her parents knew exactly what color hair she'd dye it, even before conception.

Crazy56U: Because "Broken Condom" just seemed a bit much."

ThatUnknownPony: And "Hate Sex" was a little too much on the nose."

CaptainPipsqueak: What about "Pity Fuck"?

PanzerThiefZero: That's racist. (ding!)

BittplexMutt: "And that's how Equestria was made!"

with purple streaks and red tips that reaches my mid-back and icy blue eyes like limpid tears and a lot of people tell me I look like Amy Lee (AN: if u don't know who she is get da hell out of here!).

JofY: Fine. *leaves*

Crazy56U: (grabs JofY by the collar) *Don't.*

JofY: *already gone* Enjoy my clothing!

Crazy56U: (balls up clothing in a rage) *I AM NOT FUCKING DOING THIS SOLO, GET THE FUCK BACK HERE!*

Topher: WHOO! ANOTHER EXCUSE TO DO THIS! *rips his clothes off* **NAKED PARTY!!**

ThatUnknownPony: Since I won't even bother googling it, see ya! *leaves*

Mono: Don't worry, I did the Googling for you!

SuperMapslover: (pats Crazy56U's back) Don't worry, at least you have me.

PanzerThiefZero: And me.

CaptainPipsqueak: And Maps and Panzer.

SuperAquaLuigi: And me, though whether or not that's a good thing is highly debatable.

Crazy56U: (deadpan) Thanks, I feel oh so much better.

CaptainPipsqueak: Oh, like you care when I'm here *any other* time...

BittplexMutt: "Although it's only the people I paid to say that."

I'm not related to Gerard Way

Crazy56U: Who, based on my own understanding of the world, is probably your imaginary friend...

BittplexMutt: Nor does he want to be related to you.

but I wish I was because he's a major fucking hottie.

Crazy56U: (annoyed) Please keep it in your pants.

Topher: *looks down* What pants?

Crazy56U: Not you, dumbass. ... (scoots several inches away from Topher)

BittplexMutt: You want to be related but have the hots for him? Ew.

ThatUnknownPony: *comes back* **WOAH, INCEST AHOY!**



Mono: ...I have many questions about your definition of a "major fucking hottie"...

Crazy56U: He looks like Hipster Meatloaf.

I'm a vampire but my teeth are straight and white.

Crazy56U: Because her health care included dental.

CaptainPipsqueak: Good thing, too; Lisa needs braces.

ThatUnknownPony: Are you sure it's only your teeth?

I have pale white skin. I'm also a witch,

Crazy56U: (loudly to the ceiling) *ONE BREAK! ONE FUCKING BREAK! WAS THAT TOO FUCKING MUCH TO ASK?!*

ThatUnknownPony: We don't get nice things here, that's pretty much the golden rule of this place.

CaptainPipsqueak: Vampire witch... Witchpire...? *VITCH. We call her Vitch.*

Mono: Does this mean we can drive a stake through her hard and then burn her on said stake?

BittplexMutt: Even better, we stab her with a burning stake.

CaptainPipsqueak: *strongly holds in urge to make a crude joke, and you know exactly what it'd be*

Topher: *hs no scruples to speak of* Mono wants to shove his hard, hot wood into Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way until he feels a burning sensation.

CaptainPipsqueak: I don't *either*, but the character's technically underage, and I think I got crap for making a joke like that in that case.

Crazy56U: Thanks guys. Now we are going to jail. *WHY THE FUCK DO I KEEP HAVING THIS CONCERN*

Mono: Like I wasn't going to jail already...

**Giginss: She weighs as much as a duck, therefore she's a witch! Burn her!!!
...Whoops, I did that out of order.**

and I go to a magic school called Hogwarts in England

Crazy56U: As opposed to the Hogwarts in Kentucky.

BittplexMutt: As opposed to the Hogwarts in Detroit.

Nox: As opposed to the Hogwarts in space.

SuperMapslover: As opposed to the Hogwarts in Scotland.

Mono: As opposed to Hogwarts in Bulgaria.

CaptainPipsqueak: No, the place is actually *called* "Hogwarts in England". Confuses the hell out of everyone.

Topher: As opposed to the hogwarts in the basement.

where I'm in the seventh year (I'm seventeen).

Crazy56U: I have not read Harry Potter, and it's been years since I saw the movies, but I think the minimum age requirement is 12. *No one fucking correct me, this fic doesn't deserve it.*

CaptainPipsqueak: Well, I have the bonus of *utterly despising* Harry Potter, so...

BittplexMutt: Nice that she had to put her age as an aside note, because that was totally necessary.

I'm a goth (in case you couldn't tell)

Crazy56U: NO! *REALLY?!*

ThatUnknownPony: Is your superhero name "Captain Obvious", by chance?

SuperAquaLuigi: You're the self-insert of an author called "xxxbloodyrists666xxx."
You're an emo, and you can't convince me otherwise.

SuperMapslover: NO SHIT, SHERLOCK!

Topher: HOLY SHIT, EBONY DARK'NESS DEMENTIA RAVEN WAY IS A GOTH?

BittplexMutt: Gee, I never saw that coming!

CaptainPipsqueak: Until now I thought she was a circus clown.

and I wear mostly black.

Crazy56U: As opposed to all the colors in the wind.

Nox: As opposed the the color out of space.

CaptainPipsqueak: You leave Lovecraft out of this.

BittplexMutt: "And sometimes a little bit of gray."

I love Hot Topic and I buy all my clothes from there.

Crazy56U: This riff is sponsored by Goodwill. Because fuck Hot Topic.

ThatUnknownPony: Because you're the textbook definition of a loser.

Nox: Doesn't matter since I'm pretty sure you can only wear you wizard robes when out and about during the school day.

Mono: Not in this fanfic. 'Cause dress codes are a myth.

Topher: [Snape] "Miss Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way, your clothes violate the dress code. Fifty points from Slytherin." By the way, calling it now, she's a Slytherin. Once again my house is shamed.

For example today I was wearing a black corset with matching lace around it and a black leather miniskirt, pink fishnets and black combat boots.

Crazy56U: If I wanted clothing porn, *I'd read a Macy's catalogue.*

ThatUnknownPony: But this is the opposite of porn, more like watching those terrible sex scenes in slasher films.

BittplexMutt: Oh, so that means she will be killed soon.

CaptainPipsqueak: So, the sort of outfit everyone would want you to take of *for no sexual reason whatsoever*. Or at least wear a trenchcoat over.

Mono: And this sequence inspired Mykan Jr.'s everywhere...

I was wearing black lipstick, white foundation, black eyeliner and red eye shadow.

Crazy56U: (loud stage whisper) *Spoilers, it's actually blood.*

CaptainPipsqueak: To give you an idea of its source, the stray cat population has taken a drastic dive since she moved in.

Topher: Because Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way adopted them and gave them a loving home?

CaptainPipsqueak: Sure; let's go with that.
BittplexMutt: Seconded.

I was walking outside Hogwarts. It was snowing and raining so there was no sun,

Crazy56U: Because time finally collapsed.
SuperAquaLuigi: For it had been nuked earlier.
PanzerThiefZero: Technically, there was. It was the day.
ThatUnknownPony: But if she's a vampire, why is she outside on the middle of the day?
Mono: Ask Edward Cullen.
CaptainPipsqueak: Or Marceline Abadeer.
BittplexMutt: Or third thing.

which I was very happy about. A lot of preps stared at me. I put up my middle finger at them.

Crazy56U: Luckily, *My Immortal: The Web Series* is a thing.



SuperAquaLuigi: *Her eyes, what's wrong with her eyes? I can feel my soul draining from my body...*
ThatUnknownPony: Oh dear God, that was pretty much "*The Room: The Webshow*".
BittplexMutt: Because that was a thing that needed to happen.
SuperMapslover: Pretty sure that's against Hogwarts' rules.
Mono: *scoffs* What are you, a prep?
CaptainPipsqueak: More like a perp.

"Hey Ebony!"

Topher: "-Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way!"
Crazy56U: "THINK FAST! (throws a brick)"

shouted a voice. I looked up. It was.... Draco Malfoy!

Crazy56U: Oh, goddamnit, not Julian Albert... *Go back to the Flash CW show, you pleb!*

Mono: And get ready for the biggest character raping ever! Oh, wait, that's Vampire Potter...

CaptainPipsqueak: ... I thought we didn't *do* those sort of stories. ... Oh. *Character* rape.

Crazy56U: "Didn't do those sort of stories", he says, flat out refusing to acknowledge that the LTD riff happened...

CaptainPipsqueak: Oh like *you're* not blotting it out, too.

"What's up Draco?" I asked.

"Nothing." he said shyly.

Crazy56U: Wrong! *The sky* is up! (cheerfully flips off the fic)

BittplexMutt: And you know what else is up? The clouds!

CaptainPipsqueak: Also stars and planets.

Topher: WRONG! Up is an illusion when the whole of space is considered!

Giginss: Draco Malfoy. *Shy*. Now, where did I put my disbelief-o-meter?

CaptainPipsqueak: Well, I think I heard *someone* say "Fuck this shit, I's out," so that might have been it. Barring that, check between the cushions on the sofa. That or underneath it.

SuperAquaLuigi: Check the oven. Someone always leaves *something* there, for some reason.

Topher: I believe it. He's shy because he's awestruck by the beauty of Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way.

But then, I heard my friends call me

Crazy56U: A) Imaginary friends don't count and B) that technically means you are schizophrenic.

ThatUnknownPony: *Please don't tell me this is the second time we deal with a schizophrenic protagonist...*

Crazy56U: Is it a day that ends in "Y"?

Topher: [Friends] "Hey! Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way! C'mon, it's time to go!"

and I had to go away.

BittplexMutt: For good?

Crazy56U: If only, if only, the woodpecker sighs.

AN: IS it good? PLZ tell me fangz!

Crazy56U: I will repeat myself: *you are the reason we have laws.*

ThatUnknownPony: Well, it was riffed on literally every site imaginable, take a guess.

Mono: ...I want to punch you in the fangs now.

Topher: *hands Mono silver brass knuckles* I know the name is confusing, but I think it'll work on vampires. I don't know, the mythos is pretty damn inconsistent.

CaptainPipsqueak: If it doesn't, keep trying. It'll be cathartic at the very least.

BittplexMutt: What do you think?

Chapter 2.

AN: Fangz 2 bloodytearz666 4 helpin me wif da chapta!

Crazy56U: "Help" is a fucking subjective term, here...

ThatUnknownPony: Help is what you should've gotten when writing this.

SuperMapslover: As opposed to *not* helping her with the chapter, which is sadly true.

BTW preps stop flaming ma story ok!

Crazy56U: Wah wah wah waaaaaaaaaaaaah...

Nox: No.

Mono: Make me.

SuperAquaLuigi: From our point of view, writing this story *is* flaming.

CaptainPipsqueak: If anything, we're *helping*.

BittplexMutt: More like fanning the flames.

CaptainPipsqueak: ...which doesn't make my point any less valid...

The next day I woke up in my bedroom. It was snowing and raining again.

Crazy56U: The same weather two days in a row?! Well, I never!

ThatUnknownPony: I blame global warming.

PanzerThiefZero: The snowplows were, unfortunately, broken down. School was canceled that day.

SuperAquaLuigi: I'm not sure what kind of temperature anomaly it would take for it to snow *and* rain at the same time. I guess I'll blame wizards.

CaptainPipsqueak: Ah, snain. My old nemesis.

SuperMapslover: *How does this fic even weather?*

I opened the door of my coffin and drank some blood from a bottle I had.

Crazy56U: That blood is probably stale because you did not make it clear that it was closed prior, you are disgusting.

ThatUnknownPony: Blood, cherry *Kool-Aid*, same thing.

SuperAquaLuigi: Of course, it was her blood, since no one told her that wasn't very effective.

My coffin was black ebony

Crazy56U: *GET IT?!*

Nox: If I say yes, can I leave?

PanzerThiefZero: Oh, you poor, naive fellow. I've given up hope of escaping early a long time ago.

SuperAquaLuigi: I know they say you're supposed to feel good about yourself, but this is ridiculous.

Topher: I get it! Because her name is Ebony Dark'nness Dementia Raven Way!

CaptainPipsqueak: As opposed to hot pink ebony, I guess.

and inside it was hot pink velvet with black lace on the ends.

BittplexMutt: You know, for aesthetic purposes.

Crazy56U: That is coffin abuse. You should be fucking arrested.

CaptainPipsqueak: Yeah; she's dead to me. ... Waitasec...

I got out of my coffin and took of my giant MCR t-shirt which I used for pajamas.

Crazy56U: Along with using it for napkins, bandages, paper, a stuffed animal, a noose-

CaptainPipsqueak: -a picnic blanket-

Topher: -A jizz rag-

Instead, I put on a black leather dress, a pentagram necklace, combat boots and black fishnets on.

Crazy56U: *Macy's. Catalogue.*

ThatUnknownPony: *Wrong. Slasher. Film.*

PanzerThiefZero: So she's a fisherwoman?

Giginss: At this point, are we reading a story or a recipe for goth clothing?

I put on four pairs of earrings in my pierced ears,

Topher: "The weight tore my ears off."

Crazy56U: No, Ebony, earrings go *on* your ears. You do not shove shit *into* your ears. Trust me, I pissed off a doctor once as a kid by shoving a Tic Tac into my ear. Don't ask why I did this, I kind of forgot why.

and put my hair in a kind of messy bun.

BittplexMutt: A cinnamon bun.

Crazy56U: Think this:



My friend, Willow

Crazy56U: And Joss Whedon is spinning in his grave.

CaptainPipsqueak: ... *He's not dead yet.*

Crazy56U: Ever since *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, he's been so to me.

(AN: Raven dis is u!)

Crazy56U: And now he's spinning at the speed of light.

CaptainPipsqueak: ... *He's still not dead yet.*

Crazy56U: (pats Pip on the head) No one asked you.

PanzerThiefZero: I bet 'Raven' really regrets writing this now, does she.

ThatUnknownPony: Depends if she's an actual person or just the author's schizophrenia.

woke up then and grinned at me.

BittplexMutt: A glasgow kind of grin.

Crazy56U: [Willow] ":DDDDDDDDDD"

She flipped her long waist-length raven black hair with pink streaks and opened her forest-green eyes.

Mono: After she woke up, that is.

Crazy56U: And then her laser vision kicked in, taking off Ebony's fucking head. THE END.

BittplexMutt: Her eyes contain an entire forest?

She put on her Marilyn Manson t-shirt

Crazy56U: She had 500 in her sock drawer alone.

SuperAquaLuigi: I now pronounce you Charles Manson because fuck you.

with a black mini, fishnets and pointy high-heeled boots.

Crazy56U: *MACY'S. CATALOGUE.*

ThatUnknownPony: *Slash-* Fuck it, not worth continuing the joke.

We put on our makeup (black lipstick white foundation and black eyeliner.)

Crazy56U: I care?

Topher: Nope!

"OMFG, I saw you talking to Draco Malfoy yesterday!" she said excitedly.

BittplexMutt: Because people talk in text all the time!

Crazy56U: [Willow] "Why the fuck did you do that, the fuck is wrong with you?!"

CaptainPipsqueak: "OMFUG!"

"Yeah? So?" I said, blushing.

Crazy56U: I agree.

Mono: Never question the behavior of stereotypes, Crazy.

BittplexMutt: Oh, she's a tsundere as well.

CaptainPipsqueak: "I-it's not like I like him, baka!"

"Do you like Draco?"

Crazy56U: Like, or *like* like, that's an important distinction.

SuperAquaLuigi: [Charles Manson] "You made a basic human interaction with him! You *must* love him!"

CaptainPipsqueak: "You looked at him once; you *must* be fucking!"

she asked as we went out of the Slytherin common room and into the Great Hall.

BittplexMutt: Where everyone stared.

Crazy56U: They pointedly ignored the insane person ranting about trolls in the dungeon.

"No I so fucking don't!" I shouted.

Crazy56U: *Ha.*

ThatUnknownPony: Just wait a couple moments...

Mono: Just wait until he puts his thingie into your you-know-what...

Topher: [Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way] "NOBODY LIKES DRACO, PEOPLE ONLY TALK TO HIM BECAUSE HE'S RICH!"

"Yeah right!" she exclaimed. Just then, Draco walked up to me.

Crazy56U: "And then he pulled out a stake--"

CaptainPipsqueak: "-or at least it *looked* like one." Fuck it. I'm not denying what I am.

"Hi." he said.

"Hi." I replied flirtily.

"Guess what." he said.

"What?" I asked.

Crazy56U: Chicken butt.

"Well, Good Charlotte are having a concert in Hogsmeade." he told me.

Crazy56U: ...who?

ThatUnknownPony: Apparently a pop punk band... Who actually released a new album last year, just in case someone else gives a damn.

Topher: Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way does.

BittplexMutt: Weren't they on iCarly one time?

CaptainPipsqueak: Does anyone on the planet watch that?

ThatUnknownPony: My brother does. He's a moron, like twice the moron I am.

CaptainPipsqueak: Wow. That's *pretty* moron.

"Oh. My. Fucking. God!" I screamed.

Crazy56U: I agree.

BittplexMutt: Me too.

SuperAquaLuigi: Don't you mean "OMFG?" *bangs head against wall*

CaptainPipsqueak: Stop getting blood on the wall.

I love GC.

Crazy56U: Never fucking mind.

PanzerThiefZero: Me too. I love Gamecube.

ThatUnknownPony: It deserved to sell more.

Mono: *shrugs* Wii is better.

Crazy56U: Debatable. Carry on.

CaptainPipsqueak: Wii didn't have Metroid Prime. Your argument is nullified.

PanzerThiefZero: I'd say '*Metroid Prime 3* and the trilogy', but, to be fair, I was never the hugest fan of motion controls themselves, so...

BittplexMutt: This was all a set up just so kids can buy Gamecube.

They are my favorite band, besides MCR.

Crazy56U: *Gee. I did not pick up on that.*

Mono: ...*God*, you have poor taste.

BittplexMutt: So.. My Crummy Rectum?

CaptainPipsqueak: Marcel's Car Rentals.

Topher: Meaty Crab Rumps

"Well.... do you want to go with me?" he asked.

BittplexMutt: [Draco] "As in outside? You're really pale."

Crazy56U: He says, not even having a ticket.

I gasped.

Crazy56U: [Ebony] "*YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE!*"

Nox: [Ebony] "(gasps) No."

ThatUnknownPony: [Ebony] "**flips the middle finger**"

Crazy56U: Dude, please. Allow me.



BittplexMutt: Dun Dun Dun!

SuperAquaLuigi: Then she passed out, unable to breathe.

This is dedicated to:

BittplexMutt: "My ego."

Crazy56U: "Nobody."

Giginss: Crazy, why would you dedicate it to Nobody?

CaptainPipsqueak: [Nobody, Alicorn Princess of Sadness] "You...you...*bastard*...
bursts into wracking sobs"

The granddaughters of the witches you could not burn

Crazy56U: Because they were indestructible. And now you know the *real* cause of the Black Death.

BittplexMutt: Because they had an invisibility spell.

Topher: -and they are totally real and not the result of mass hysteria.

and for all those who believe in Magic.

Crazy56U: ...so, Merlin?

Nox: "Because believing *is* magic."

ThatUnknownPony: No, that's next week, I think.

Mono: In a young girl's heart.

BittplexMutt: I guess you could say you got the magic in me..

Giginss: I believe in Friendship, but if Friendship is Magic, does that mean I believe in magic too?

CaptainPipsqueak: Sure. Ruin it for everyone.

Chapter 3.

AN: STOP FLAMMING DA STORY PREPZ OK!

Crazy56U: No. :D

ThatUnknownPony: *Make us.* *lights up a match and throws it at the story*

Nox: Okay. (pours gasoline on the flaming ~~garbage~~ story)

Mono: *eagerly throws molotov cocktails across the room*

BittplexMutt: *casts fire on da story*

odderwize fangs 2 da goffik ppl 4 da good reveiws! FANGS AGEN RAVEN!

Crazy56U: *SPEAK LIKE A FUCKING ADULT*

SuperAquaLuigi: "Good reviews?" What?!

BittplexMutt: Her sockpuppet accounts.

CaptainPipsqueak: She's so pathetic she has to invent friends. ... Think she knows Mykan?

Topher: Aaand a Lightning Dawn X Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way shipfic is now being written.

oh yeah, BTW I don't own dis

Mono: Good to know you don't own this fanfic...

Crazy56U: Tara just admitted she stole the story from someone else. Alrighty then.

SuperAquaLuigi: No, this is just her attempt to say that she's not at fault for this blatant war crime.

BittplexMutt: Original story Donut steel!

or da lyrics 4 Good Chralotte.

Crazy56U: Fuck you, I'm not singing alternative lyrics, *you don't deserve it.*

BittplexMutt: Hmm, never heard of that band.

ThatUnknownPony: Oh fuck, I forgot if this actually had songs on it.

SuperAquaLuigi: Thankfully, she could still be sued for pretending she owned the lyrics of *Good Charlotte*.

On the night of the concert I put on my black lace-up boots with high heels.

BittplexMutt: To crush my enemies.

CaptainPipsqueak: And hear the lamentation of their women.

Crazy56U: Two pairs of shoes at the same time. What a daredevil.

Underneath them were ripped red fishnets.

BittplexMutt: To catch fish?

Crazy56U: Because not having them torn would make her look stupid.

Topher: Technically, the net now has fewer holes.

Then I put on a black leather minidress with all this corset stuff on the back and front. I put on matching fishnet on my arms.

Crazy56U: How many fucking times do I have to say "Macy's catalogue" before you fucking get it?

ThatUnknownPony: You would yell at her with a pile of megaphones and she would still not listen.

Mono: All I can say is thank God there are no two-colored tight-fitting pants.

BittplexMutt: Or baggy pants.

I straightened my hair and made it look all spiky.

Crazy56U: That's... ..not how that works.

SuperAquaLuigi: You'd think someone who spends all of this time writing about how her characters look would understand how hair works.

CaptainPipsqueak: You're silly.

I felt a little depressed then, so I slit one of my wrists.

Mono: You know, because she wants to.

Crazy56U: (sarcastically; two thumbs up) TASTEFUL!

ThatUnknownPony: *This legit makes me glad the Emo movement died for good...*

Giginss: Note: This does not make you look cool, it only gives you a slit wrist.

Topher: See, this is just not healthy. Why can't Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way bury her sadness in empty calories and mindless, lethargic entertainment like normal people do?

CaptainPipsqueak: Does this mean she spends the next seventy pages bleeding to death? If so, does that mean we can go, knowing how this ends?

I read a depressing book while I waited for it to stop bleeding

Crazy56U: "Five days later, I am still waiting."

BittplexMutt: "I then died due to blood loss."

SuperAquaLuigi: Specifically, *Living Your Worst Fucking Nightmare*.

CaptainPipsqueak: Hey, we have a literal *site* full of stories that fit the bill.

and I listened to some GC. I painted my nails black and put on TONS of black eyeliner.

Crazy56U: There's a joke here that I don't want to be the one to make...

SuperAquaLuigi: At this point, it looked like she got punched in the eyes.

Topher: Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way knew the people in the tavern would LOVE her blackface routine!

CaptainPipsqueak: There was then a wet tearing noise and a shriek of agony as her eyelids fell off due to the weight.

BittplexMutt: And now she's blind.

Then I put on some black lipstick. I didn't put on foundation because I was pale anyway.

Crazy56U: You know, what with all the blood loss...

BittplexMutt: And yet she's still alive.

ThatUnknownPony: Besides, I doubt anyone would notice with the tons of black make-up on you.

PanzerThiefZero: She's practicing nighttime camouflage.

I drank some human blood

Mono: "Which I obtained from killing a Hufflepuff."

Crazy56U: As opposed to Monster Blood.

BittplexMutt: As opposed to Pony Blood.

ThatUnknownPony: As opposed to Unicorn Blood.

SuperAquaLuigi: Slitting your wrists and drinking your own blood is not a healthy habit. Vampires need other people's blood.

CaptainPipsqueak: Well, technically *being a vampire* isn't that healthy. 'Cause you're dead.

so I was ready to go to the concert.

BittplexMutt: of pain!

Crazy56U: You need to pre-game in order to enjoy a concert, dear fucking God.

I went outside. Draco was waiting there in front of his flying car.

Crazy56U: (intentionally poorly sings the *Back to the Future* theme)

Giginss: So, Draco somehow stole the Weasley's car after it came out from the Everfree Forbidden Forest and got it working again? Mildly impressive. My disbelief-o-meter is reading a 20.4.

CaptainPipsqueak: You found it, then? Just be careful: the last couple have exploded, and you're cleaning up the mess if it happens.

He was wearing a Simple Plan t-shirt (they would play at the show too),

Crazy56U: Spoilers: Simple Plan broke up earlier that day.

Mono: You know what's coming, everybody...

baggy black skater pants, black nail polish and a little eyeliner (AN: A lot fo kewl boiz wer it ok!).

Crazy56U: *What did you fucking say?!*

PanzerThiefZero: 'A lot of cool boys wear it, OK'? Yeah, keep telling yourself that, pal.

ThatUnknownPony: I knew the fashion of the early 2000's was a complete disaster, but come on.

SuperAquaLuigi: Even if that were true, do you really think Malfoy would do that? He'd probably bully a boy who wears it!

"Hi Draco!" I said in a depressed voice.

BittplexMutt: [Draco] "Uh.. should I call an ambulance?"

Crazy56U: [Ebony] "(depressed) This is going to fucking rock, I was waiting in anticipation for tonight, can't you tell?"

CaptainPipsqueak: [Ebony] "*sobbing* I just can't wait, this'll be *amazing!*"

"Hi Ebony." he said back. We walked into his flying black Mercedes-Benz (the license plate said 666)

Crazy56U: (beyond mad) *I hope a cop fucking pulls you over.*

PanzerThiefZero: As opposed to 420.

Mono: Actually, it was 999 but it's upside-down.

Crazy56U: Someone *else* remembers that movie?

BittplexMutt: Ow, the satanic edge.

and flew to the place with the concert. On the way we listened excitedly to Good Charlotte and Marilyn Manson. We both smoked cigarettes and drugs.

Crazy56U: Ah, yes, "Drugs". I hear that's as popular as "Food" and "Beer".

BittplexMutt: And smoke.

CaptainPipsqueak: [Fluttershy] "Don't look at *me.*"

ThatUnknownPony: Because all the "cool kids" do that, right?

Giginss: Thus shortening their lifespans. Don't do drugs, kids!

SuperAquaLuigi: Unless you're a character in this fic, in which case: carry on. We won't miss you.

Topher: Remember kids: If you see someone doing drugs, let them die!

CaptainPipsqueak: And then steal their wallet!

When we got there, we both hopped out of the car.

Crazy56U: While it was still in mid-air, but luckily, the ground broke their fall.
ThatUnknownPony: Too bad for them they landed on their necks. It makes a loud noise when it cracks on the floor.

We went to the mosh pit at the front of the stage and jumped up and down as we listened to Good Charlotte.

Crazy56U: Here is one of their songs.
Mono: That's... fairly accurate.
SuperAquaLuigi: -ignoring the people they were jumping on.
BittplexMutt: Who were killed in the process.

"You come in cold, you're covered in blood

Crazy56U: "We should probably call the hospital."
CaptainPipsqueak: "Unless it's someone else's blood."

They're all so happy you've arrived
The doctor cuts your cord, hands you to your mom

Crazy56U: Oh, wait, this is about birth, let me play a different song.
ThatUnknownPony: *...screw you, I'm still traumatized by that shit.*
Crazy56U: Oh, suck it up you wuss, at least it's the safe version.
BittplexMutt: "And then she yells, 'That's not my baby!'"
Topher: "And then the dad asks 'Why does it look like the mailman?'"

She sets you free into this life." sang Joel

Crazy56U: GRAND DAD?!
BittplexMutt: "And then you die!"
CaptainPipsqueak: Joel? From Gizmonic Institute?

(I don't own da lyrics 2 dat song).

Mono: No shit...
Crazy56U: Fucking duh.
BittplexMutt: Obviously.

"Joel is so fucking hot." I said to Draco,



Crazy56U:
...eh. 7/10.



Nox:
...He doesn't look too different from you or me.
Topher: Just another face in a red jumpsuit.
CaptainPipsqueak: How could someone not like him?
BittplexMutt: He makes robots. Ladies love robots.

pointing to him as he sung, filling the club with his amazing voice.

BittplexMutt: drowning everyone out in the process.
Crazy56U: He sounded like a dying cat, but goddamn was he hitting those notes...

Suddenly Draco looked sad.

BittplexMutt: Depression kicked in.
Crazy56U: He dropped his pot.
CaptainPipsqueak: He realised where he was and how much of a waste his life has been.

"What's wrong?" I asked as we moshed to the music. Then I caught on.

Crazy56U: She suddenly realized what fic this was.
ThatUnknownPony: She realized the drugs had kicked in.
Mono: She suddenly realized she had a pie in the oven.
BittplexMutt: Other thing.

CaptainPipsqueak: "And then *I* was depressed over how much of my life I'd wasted."

"Hey, it's ok I don't like him better than YOU!" I said.

BittplexMutt: *Soujia Boy playing in the distance*

Crazy56U: [Ebony] "FUCK, I STUBBED MY FUCKING TOE!"

"Really?" asked Draco sensitively and he put his arm around me all protective.

Crazy56U: A romance for the ages. ...of 4 to 6.

ThatUnknownPony: Nah, maybe from 2 to 3.

Mono: Or from age Mykan to Mykan.

BittplexMutt: Or from age blank to blankity.

"Really." I said. "Besides I don't even know Joel and he's going out with Hilary fucking Duff.

Crazy56U: Yeah, remember Hilary Duff, she used to be a thing.

ThatUnknownPony: *And I just so happen to have a mom who still listens to her...*

hides face in shame

SuperAquaLuigi: No, not Hilary Duff, Hilary *Fucking* Duff, her twin sister that nobody likes to remember after that one scandal.

CaptainPipsqueak: I thought that meant he was going out with Hillary, who was fucking Duff?

I fucking hate that little bitch." I said disgustedly, thinking of her ugly blonde face.

Crazy56U: Meanwhile *you* are the prettiest lass in the land.

ThatUnknownPony: Yeah, her face is what's wrong and not her songs...

Mono: Joel Madden and Hilary Duff broke up in 2006, by the way. Isn't the future wonderful?

BittplexMutt: "Ugh, she's such a prep!"

Giginss: No, Ebony, that's your own face that you are thinking of.

The night went on really well, and I had a great time. So did Draco.

Crazy56U: (tired) Is there a point?

ThatUnknownPony: Make us lose out time.

SuperAquaLuigi: [Malfoy] "(thinking) Please kill me, please kill me, *please kill me.*"

After the concert, we drank some beer and asked Benji

Crazy56U: Who?

ThatUnknownPony: The band's guitarist, apparently.

Mono: And the lead singer's twin brother, by the way.

BittplexMutt: and a dog.

CaptainPipsqueak: Nah; all three at once.

and Joel for their autographs and photos with them. We got GC concert tees.

Crazy56U: [Ebony] "This is sooooo going on eBay..."

Topher: [Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way] "Can you make that out to 'Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way?'"

CaptainPipsqueak: [Joel] "No. Now go away, you creepy bitch."

Draco and I crawled back into the Mercedes-Benz, but Draco didn't go back into Hogwarts,

Crazy56U: Because GPS is a myth.

Mono: Instead they fucked off to America.

CaptainPisqueak: Also, they *literally* crawled.

instead he drove the car into... the Forbidden Forest!

Crazy56U: And he promptly wrapped his car around a tree. *THE END.*

ThatUnknownPony: And then Aragog the Giant Spider sent his children to eat them. *THE END.*

Mono: And then they got killed by Voldemort drinking unicorn blood. *THE END!*

Topher: And then Hagrid showed up and they all had a lovely evening drinking tea and eating cakes.

CaptainPipsqueak: And then the poison kicked in and Hagrid laughed as they died vomiting up blood. *THE END.*

SuperAquaLuigi: All in all, not the best place to go after a date.

BittplexMutt: Unless you plan on murdering your lover.

Foreword

Crazy56U: ...okay, I see where you are coming from, Tara...

ThatUnknownPony: This put things on a new perspective.

BittplexMutt: Rather than backward.

CaptainPipsqueak: I refer a sideward. Then I can get a word in edgewise.

Chapter 4.

BittplexMutt: Connect Four.

Crazy56U: Aka. the memorable one.

ThatUnknownPony: Oh please, let this be *the* chapter.

AN: I sed stup flaming ok ebony's name is ENOBY nut mary su OK!

Crazy56U: Whatever you say, Tara.

ThatUnknownPony: So Enoby Nut Mary Su it is!

PanzerThiefZero: So, is it Ebony, ebony, or ENOBY then?

Mono: Yes.

DRACO IS SOO IN LUV wif her dat he is acting defrent!

Crazy56U: No, this is merely a case of you bastardizing the source material. Case in point, a certain "hedache" suffering motherfucker appearing in this chapter...

BittplexMutt: Sure, keep telling yourself that, author.

SuperAquaLuigi: Why do they all like him anyway? He's a major dick, and by the end of the series, he's basically evil!

Topher: Who couldn't resist the charms of Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way?

SuperMapslover: That doesn't excuse him from being out-of-character, Author!

CaptainPipsqueak: *Everybody's* out of character! *We're* out of character!

dey nu eechodder b4 ok!

Crazy56U: *WHAT?!*

ThatUnknownPony: According to the "Bullshit" translator, she just said "they knew each other before." You know, like how Serena was Ash's childhood friend before he even met Misty and Brock...

Mono: Isn't retconning wonderful?

CaptainPipsqueak: You know what else is wonderful? The English language. We appear to have lost it, however.

"DRACO!" I shouted. "What the fuck do you think you are doing?"

Crazy56U: [Draco] "lol idk"

ThatUnknownPony: [Draco] "I want out, this is the closest place for a quick death."

Nox: [Draco] "Look, there's this yellow pegasus in the first that sells these awesome brownies."

Mono: [Draco] "I just had beer and smoked drugs. YOU TELL ME!"

SuperAquaLuigi: [Malfoy] "What do you mean 'think?'"

Draco didn't answer but he stopped the flying car and he walked out of it.

BittplexMutt: Somehow.

CaptainPipsqueak: And fell a hundred feet to the ground.

Crazy56U: Bitt, you *know* what a door is, yes?

CaptainPipsqueak: Let him have this.

I walked out of it too, curiously.

Crazy56U: And they fell from mid-air again.

SuperAquaLuigi: Seriously, you'd think they'd eventually learn. ...nevermind, I just remembered what fic we're reading.

"What the fucking hell?" I asked angrily.

"Ebony?" he asked.

"What?" I snapped.

Draco leaned in extra-close

Crazy56U: "-and then Ebony felt the sensation of something sharp entering her stomach. She looked down and, to her horror, the culprit was a wooden stake in Draco's grasp."

Nox: [Draco] "*Am I too intense?!*"

BittplexMutt: "Ebony."

CatainPipsqueak: ...and ivory?

and I looked into his gothic red eyes (he was wearing color contacts)

Crazy56U: Whatever you say, I don't fucking care.

BittplexMutt: Me too.

ThatUnknownPony: No, I'm sure he just has pink-eye.

Nox: My eyes are red too, because they got cut by dat edge!

which revealed so much depressing sorrow and evilness

Mono: Oh teh edge!

Crazy56U: *That better have been an unintentional typo, dude.*

and then suddenly I didn't feel mad anymore.

And then... suddenly just as I Draco kissed me passionately.

Crazy56U: (deadpan) Wooo, I give a shit, I guess...

ThatUnknownPony: *Oh boy, here it comes...*

Draco climbed on top of me and we started to make out keenly against a tree.

Crazy56U: I hope the two of you get termites...

Topher: Oh my god, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH HORROR FILMS TO KNOW WHERE THIS IS GOING! GO MALFOY GO! A MURDEROUS MONSTER WILL COME MOMENTS AFTER YOU DO!

SuperAquaLuigi: That poor tree. It doesn't deserve this.

CaptainPipsqueak: Meanwhile in Equestria, Fluttershy decides that she never wants to be a tree.

He took of my top and I took of his clothes. I even took of my bra.

Crazy56U: *Wooo, I'm going to jail now, I am so glad everyone else abandoned this riff.*

Nox: I didn't abandon this riff.

BittplexMutt: Me either.

Crazy56U: And that's why you are currently my new best friend.

Mono: 'Sides, this isn't the worst thing you riffed.

Crazy56U: *Do you want to die tonight?*

SuperAquaLuigi: Why are you worried? This is hardly sexually explicit! We can't get in trouble! ...I think...

ThatUnknownPony: *And in 3... 2... 1...*

Then he put his thingie into my you-know-what

Crazy56U: Because Sex Ed is merely a suggestion.

CaptainPipsqueak: Who's Ed, and why on earth would he want to have sex with her?

Nox: "He put his stake into my heart" I love this version of Mad Libs!

SuperAquaLuigi: Meanwhile, the Whomping Willow was busy trashing their car.

Topher: [Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way] "Oh yeah, SAY MY NAME!"

[Malfoy] "OH, EBONY DARK'NESS DEMENTIA RAVEN WAY!"

and we did it for the first time.

ThatUnknownPony: *BEHOLD! The Worst Line in a Fanfic ever!*

Crazy56U: No, that title still belongs to "Now I'm worried about being raped, by a female pony."

SuperAquaLuigi: I wasn't aware it ever changed from "This time, you will have a lot to think about... my former student."

CaptainPipsqueak: AND THEN THEY FUCKED. THE END?

"Oh! Oh! Oh! " I screamed. I was beginning to get an orgasm.

Crazy56U: I want to eat glass.

Nox: I want to bleach my eyes.

BittplexMutt: I want to die.

ThatUnknownPony: I want to drink booze.

PanzerThiefZero: I want out.

Mono: I want candy.

Topher: I want to be an Oscar Meyer Weiner.

We started to kiss everywhere and my pale body became all warm. And then....

ThatUnknownPony: *And again, in 3... 2... 1...*

Crazy56U: Hope you brought your Tylenol. (snaps fingers)

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING YOU MOTHERFUKERS!"

Crazy56U: (deadpan; waves) Hi, Dumbledore.

ThatUnknownPony: (breaks into laughter) Every time... Every single goddamn time, that line manages to crack me up.

CaptainPipsqueak: ...

It was.....

Crazy56U: JOHN CE- wait, why are there more ellipses?

Nox: Did the formatting break again?

ThatUnknownPony: *Ring, what the fuck is happening?!*

SuperMapslover: Wait, *what*?

Mono: ...It seems we have a few technical difficulties.

Topher:Guys, help! The punctuation got me!.....

[illegible]

Nox: What's going on?
BittplexMutt: That's going on.
PanzerThiefZero: Oh my God, the DOTS ARE INVADING!
Mono: THE ORPHANAGE! SOMEONE CHECK THE ORPHANAGE!
SuperAquaLuigi: This is why I hate Google Docs- wait, this is part of the story?
Topher: ...O..H...GO.....D.....I.....T.....B.U...R..N...S

BittplexMutt: That's going on.
PanzerThiefZero: Oh my God, the DOTS ARE INVADING!
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SuperAquaLuigi: This is why I hate Google Docs- wait, this is part of the story?
Toph: ...O..H...GO.....D.....I.....T.....B.U...R..N...S

PanzerThiefZero: Oh my God, the DOTS ARE INVADING!
Mono: THE ORPHANAGE! SOMEONE CHECK THE ORPHANAGE!
SuperAquaLuigi: This is why I hate Google Docs- wait, this is part of the story?
Topher: ...O..H...GO.....D.....I.....T.....B.U...R..N...S

Mono: THE ORPHANAGE! SOMEONE CHECK THE ORPHANAGE!
SuperAquaLuigi: This is why I hate Google Docs- wait, this is part of the story?
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SuperAquaLuigi: This is why I hate Google Docs- wait, this is part of the story?

Topher: ...O..H...GO.....D.....I.....T.....B.U...R..N...S

Topher: ...O..H...GO.....D.....I.....T.....B.U...R..N...S

[illegible][illegible]

Nox:!
BittplexMutt: ...
SuperMapslover: Ring, are you playing a practical joke on us?
Mono: *is currently drowning in dots*
Topher: *sinks into the dots*

BittplexMutt: ...

SuperMapslover: Ring, are you playing a practical joke on us?

Mono: *is currently drowning in dots*

Topher: *sinks into the dots*

SuperMapslover: Ring, are you playing a practical joke on us?

Mono: *is currently drowning in dots*

Topher: *sinks into the dots*

Mono: *is currently drowning in dots*

Toph: *sinks into the dots*

Topher: *sinks into the dots*

[illegible]

JofY: *suddenly appearing* Damn periods, always being so bloody hard to get through.

PanzerThiefZero: This is an April Fool's joke, isn't it. It's not even April, you're not supposed to do that yet.

Ringmaster: So, you don't remember that time that we rified *Caveat Lector*, I take it?

PanzerThiefZero: I wasn't there when you guys rified it.

Mono: Be glad, Panzer. Be really fucking glad.

It cannot be explained by science or the rational mind; therefore, it must be supernatural...

Crazy56U: *Oh, goddamnit, I just got over Season 12...*

ThatUnknownPony: Or you simply need to make more experiments.

BittplexMutt: Or you're not thinking rationally.

Topher: Oh really? Can your reason explain how I do THIS? **Pulls his own thumb off, and puts it back on.* ... *The thumb falls off again**

CaptainPipsqueak: Fine. I'll go get the Krazy Glue. *Again.* **glares at Topher**

or magic.

SC276: ...The difference being...?

Crazy56U: Yes.

I've known Lani; that's Lani Sarem for a few years now.

SC276: That last name looks like someone from Japan talking about witch trials.

ThatUnknownPony: Lanipator, you said?

Crazy56U: Rose Christo, got it.

BittplexMutt: Liz Salem.

PanzerThiefZero: (Googles) Oh God, this is going to involve real life people, won't it.

SuperAquaLuigi: I don't care enough to learn who this is.

It is Laannee

SC276: First name Looiiss.

JofY: It is pronounced as annoyingly as possible.

ThatUnknownPony: So yes, Lanipator.

Crazy56U: ...Rose Christo, got it.

Mono: Meanwhile, I choose to call her Himiko, because magicians.

ThatUnknownPony: Nah, Best Girl is *too good and pure* to be involved in this.

Mono: Good thing I haven't played Danganronpa 3 yet, so I know fuck all about her.

Topher: What the strawberry fuck are you people babbling about?

CaptainPipsqueak: A robotic bear and a slow version of Superman's girlfriend. And other stuff. I dunno.

or as she would say Annie with an L, just in case you were also wondering.

ThatUnknownPony: Oh, so it's a *she*... Okay, Lana it is.

SC276: I was wondering if this author has a screw loose. Thank you for confirming that.

Crazy56U: I care?

CaptainPipsqueak: Somebody should.

BittplexMutt: So, LAnnie.

At first, I wasn't even sure of the pronunciation of her name... was it Lae-nee or Lan-ee?!

JofY: Maybe it was Lahitler, or Lastalin. Sure, they didn't make any sense, but that was just how quirky she was.

Crazy56U: I repeat: *I care?*

Mono: Maybe it was pronounced "Leni"?

BittplexMutt: Nah, it was more like "Lane-eeeey."

**Giginss: THE WORLD WILL END IF THE PRONUNCIATION ISN'T CORRECT. DOOM!
DOOOOOOOOOOM!**

CaptainPipsqueak: [GIR] "Don't crib my job. Bitch."

In the subsequent years, I've learned how to pronounce her name,

SC276: "And immediately regretted it."

CaptainPipsqueak: "It's turned out her name was pronounced 'Fuck'. Kinda embarrassing."

ThatUnknownPony: "And then I stopped caring."

Crazy56U: "I flunked out of kindergarten, you see."

SuperAquaLuigi: You're acting like this is important.

Topher: Turns out it was "Phil."

and throughout our friendship I've also learned she's a bit of a gypsy soul.

SC276: She's been burned at the stake multiple times?

JofY: She's an easy stereotype for mystic crap?

ThatUnknownPony: She's actually just a performer desperate for money to survive?

Crazy56U: She's friends with Crow and Tom Servo?

PanzerThiefZero: 'Gypsy' is now considered a slur, therefore, that's racist. (Ding)

Topher: Are you saying I was raised by slurs?

CaptainPipsqueak: You were raised by indistinct mumbles?

She's always traveling around

Crazy56U: *I've been roaming around, always looking down at all I see!*

with the bands she works with while living the nomad life and getting amazing views of the dumpsters near the tour buses parked behind the venues.

SC276: Second-hand dumpster diving?

Crazy56U: Clearly she is succeeding at life.

BittplexMutt: Dumpster diving is how you get through life.

Mono: Go a few extra miles and she'll be performing in an IHOP on a regular basis.

ThatUnknownPony: I'm almost sure that's an entire different job than a gypsy.

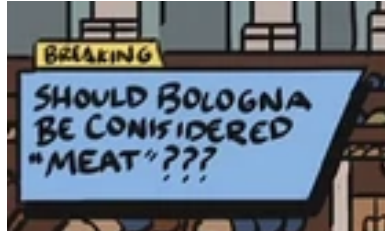
SuperAquaLuigi: WOOHOO! I LOVE LOOKING AT DUMPSTERS!

Though we are very different people with different outlooks, political beliefs,

Crazy56U: (loudly clears throat; tugs at collar)

ThatUnknownPony: *Not the time nor place to bring this up, guys...*

Mono: She had a radically different viewpoint on important governmental decisions:



SuperAquaLuigi: Debating on the ever-present question of whether or not writing fanfiction should be illegal.

CaptainPipsqueak: I think it's something you should have a license for. That way it's fair to people who *can* write.

PanzerThiefZero: Whenever (insert tragic villain from any single piece of media here) did nothing wrong.

and one of us is technically a Catholic who doesn't believe in or practice a lot of the hoopla associated with it (so Christian is how they're titled)

JofY: You could also title them as 'religious, but only privilege so'.

ThatUnknownPony: Wait, but I thought it was the other way around, the Catholic not doing all the practices the Christian does?

Crazy56U: Meanwhile, I'm from New Jersey, and I don't give a fuck.

and the other is Jewish, we're also very much alike.

SC276: Oh good, so I can dislike you both equally.

ThatUnknownPony: In that you both are humans.

Crazy56U: In that you both have thumbs.

PanzerThiefZero: In that you two are both trapped in hell together.

We met in quite an unprecedented way.

JofY: They sat across from one another in separate colliding planes.

CaptainPipsqueak: They met in the hospital after coming out of their respective comas.

Crazy56U: Chatroulette.

Mono: Omegle. She roleplayed as a Moose from Finland.

BittplexMutt: On OKCupid.

You see; this bestselling young adult vampire series

Crazy56U: *i swear to fuck if you are talking about who i think you are talking about*

ThatUnknownPony: *Fuck me, is this seriously related to the Twilight Saga?!*

Mono: *i can feel my will to live draining, story!*

CaptainPipsqueak: *Cool! I'm talking bendy-like again!*

SuperAquaLuigi: *Ooooooooooh, noooooooooooooo...*

PanzerThiefZero: Worse, it's a Twilight copycat!

BittplexMutt: NOOOOO!

was filming the final two of the five films in the series near my home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

SC276: Gee, I wonder which.

JofY: I bet it was that Divergent series.

Crazy56U: Yep, Fifty Shades of Grey...

Because my friends were superfans of the series *and* one the actors in the films,

SC276: They *what* the actors?

Crazy56U: They ate the actors. (two thumbs up) Cannibalism! :D

BittplexMutt: Fun for the whole family!

CaptainPipsqueak: Until they get eaten!

ThatUnknownPony: So that's why I haven't heard a lot of them lately.

SuperAquaLuigi: A fact that immediately discredits anything they say.

I started a Facebook page for fun.

JofY: HOW STRANGE!

Crazy56U: *You fucking monster.*

ThatUnknownPony: That's considered a crime by today's standards.

Mono: Just because I fucking felt like it.

BittplexMutt: And to stalk them.

What started as a humorous moment between friends quickly became a sensation, and within a few days there were thousands of "fans" on the site.

SC276: But, what, they weren't *true* fans?

Crazy56U: Nope, these are the true fans. (places a desk fan onto the table)

BittplexMutt: Nice, I'm its biggest fan!

SuperAquaLuigi: Only true fans would be willing to blow who they're fans of.

***walks toward the corner* If you need me, I'll be here for the next few days.**

CaptainPipsqueak: *hands Luigi a wooden sword* **TAKE THIS; IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE!**

Crazy56U: THAT'S NOT HOW THE LINE GOES! (brings Pip with the fan)

Within a week and a half, the fan count was up to the tens of thousands.

JofY: Another week and a half after that, in the millions, a day after that, maybe 2 entirely separate individuals.

BittplexMutt: She lost count.

Crazy56U: The virus was expanding exponentially. Quarantine soon followed.

ThatUnknownPony: There was nothing they would do, so they set up to nuke it before it would leave the Quarantine zone.

CaptainPipsqueak: Atomic hellfire fixes everything.

Blogs,

Crazy56U: Specifically Tumblr blogs.

BittplexMutt: And vlogs.

Topher: *is sporting wooden shoes* And clogs.

Mono: *looks at Topher* ...I feel offended.

Topher: Well it was either the shoes or pour flex-seal down the shower drain.

CaptainPipsqueak: Does anyone else find it apt that the term 'blog' sounds just like the noise you'd make before throwing up?

Facebook pages,

Crazy56U: Specifically Tumblr Facebook pages.

Mono: Fanfiction.net accounts, LiveJournals...

BittplexMutt: MySpace pages...

Topher: Pornhub premium accounts...

CaptainPipsqueak: DeviantArt accounts...

and entertainment publications dedicated to this series were now following my page.

SC276: [foreward lady] "I'd tell you about it, like what its title is, but I've since deleted it. That's totally why you can't find it and it's not because I'm lying through my teeth."

BittplexMutt: "Or that I'm being sued."

Crazy56U: Specifically Tumblr entertainment publications dedicated to this series.

Giginss: Something on the Internet blowing up to huge proportions? That happens literally every day here, m8. THAT'S WHAT MEMES ARE!

PanzerThiefZero: [The narrator] "Mommy, I'm famous!"

In a twist of fate, people from the film crew reached out to me.

JofY: And started strangling her using ghostly hands.

ThatUnknownPony: And begged me to stop harassing them.

Crazy56U: "And gave me a C&D."

Several of the actors began following the page.

Crazy56U: Because Robert Pattinson had nothing else going for him.

ThatUnknownPony: To be fair, even he hated acting as Edward and that's why he made him even more of an asshole... Too bad mid 2000's teens were so dumb.

CaptainPipsqueak: ...if only to see how much more of a train-wreck it could become.

Various people associated with the film began communicating with me, giving me little morsels of information and exclusive content to share with the fandom.

Crazy56U: No, no, *please*, keep on licking your own lollipop, honey, I care *so much*...

Mono: This guy gives the author of "My Little One" a run for his money...

ThatUnknownPony: And that's how you ended up marrying a member of the staff, didn't you?

BittplexMutt: Was there any doubt?

SuperAquaLuigi: Do you remember that guy from *Friendship Isn't Magic*? Because I do. And if this also ends with the protagonist in a psychiatric ward, I'll be perfectly content.

CaptinPipsqueak: What about dead? Or do you subscribe to the belief that death means the pain goes away?

This is how I came to know Lani.

SC276: That sounds like bullshit, but the reason why will have to wait.

Crazy56U: As opposed to Lori, Leni, Luna, Luan, Lynn, Lincoln, Lucy, Lana, Lola, Lisa or Lily.

Mono: *coughandLaceycough*

One afternoon, I received a message on the page from Lani.

JofY: It was a demand to be made a mod of the page, or else she'd get her totes boyfriend 'That person who owns facebook' to ban her.

ThatUnknownPony: It was a C&D message telling me to close my Facebook account and take off her life.

Crazy56U: "CLICK LINK TO FREE IPOD"

PanzerThiefZero: "The next statement is true. The previous statement is false."

CaptainPipsqueak: "I am a Nigerian Princess..."

She told me she represented the band that one of the actors from the film was a member of.

SC276: I don't know if that's accurate, and I don't give enough of a shit to check.

Ringmaster: It is, actually. It'll actually be a pretty important detail in regards to how fucking stupid this thing is.

ThatUnknownPony: I think I know where this is going, and I feel it's gonna be stupid.

Crazy56U: You know, that guy.

CaptainPipsqueak: I remember him. He owes me a donut.

I'd advertised some of the locations that the band was playing around town on my page.

Crazy56U: "Facebook then terminated my account because of spam."

We started messaging back and forth and within a very short time I realized what a genuine person she was.

Mono: As in, a genuine person of flesh and blood. Not like the chatbots he befriended before all of this.

ThatUnknownPony: He always wondered why they never answered back after sending the links to the webcam sites they promoted.

CaptainPipsqueak: *ding* That's racist. Bots are people too.

BittplexMutt: That's a red flag right there.

JofY: She was so genuine in how sh- HOT GIRLS!!! HOT SEX!!! AT www.com!

Crazy56U: Okay. (head inflates and pops)

SuperAquaLuigi: It was very different from the imaginary friends he was used to.

Our friendship was formed.

SC276: I question that. Did you two blast the incarnation of envy + midnight with a giant rainbow?

Crazy56U: That is actually a *worse* friendship origin than “a group of fuckheads gathered to make fun of fanfiction”. *Wow.*

Mono: Why can’t anyone make a book out of *that*?

ThatUnknownPony: Because that would actually be interesting, for one.

While filming was happening the band played a concert in town to raise money for a local school in need.

Crazy56U: Specifically, School University.

BittplexMutt: A place called Learning University.

Mono: Nope, “State University”.

CaptainPipsqueak: No, the place was *called* ‘A Local School In Need.’

JofY: Crap, Ring put on a shitty children’s film.

ThatUnknownPony: Oh shit, not a Disney Channel “Original” Movie!

PanzerThiefZero: I’m a man. Real manly man. Not a kid anymore.

Lani offered me tickets and backstage passes as a “thank you” for all of the posts about the band and the film.

Crazy56U: Lani was later arrested for scalping.

BittplexMutt: The tickets are fake, by the way.

This was the first time we actually “met”.

SC276: “Soon, I would learn to suppress the instinct to murder people for being idiots.”

Crazy56U: Plot twist: Rose doesn’t actually exist, and the Narrator is schizophrenic.

ThatUnknownPony: And it turned out he actually downloaded a virus and crafted all the weird shit happening on his PC.

Filming eventually wrapped in Baton Rouge and things went back to normal, or as close to normal as it ever was here at home.

SC276: What, it’s Baton Rouge, not Lake Woebegone.

Crazy56U: At most, all you need to worry about is alligators.

CaptainPipsqueak: Don’t you be grievin’ alligators; they got families!

I had been a freelance journalist and editor for independent authors

Crazy56U: Just admit you write fanfiction already, you ain’t fooling anyone.

ThatUnknownPony: If that’s the case, then I’m also a freelance journalist.

before the craze of the fan page had taken over and I went back to that life while staying in touch with my new friend, Lani.

Crazy56U: For some reason, she kept changing phone numbers.

ThatUnknownPony: Lana was starting to freak out when he always found her newest number.

Soon, I decided to take the plunge from editing other author's books and decided it was time to write *the* book I'd been creating in my head for the past ten or so years.

SC276: For at least that long, I've got at least twenty full video games going in my head in various states of development. You are a little baby.

ThatUnknownPony: In those ten years, I've got hundreds of prompts for fanfics and original stories... Getting to write them is another story, but at least it's better than just one.

Crazy56U: ...okay, fuck it, I'm calling this as her admitting she writes fanfiction.

PanzerThiefZero: ...that's it? 'She writes fanfics'?

Mono: What more do you need as a shit author?

BittplexMutt: An ego?

CaptainPipsqueak: Hands. Hands are helpful.

I wrote my book.

JofY: Good job, but stories usually have a bit more than two words.

Crazy56U: "The Zebra and the Toaster".

Giginss: So, we're reading a fanfiction of someone writing a book, and...it's completely dull and boring. What is this even a fanfiction of? Or have we upgraded to riffing real life? **ILLUMINATI CONFIRMED!**

SuperAquaLuigi: "Or at least I tried. Every time I touched a key, my computer would burst into flames."

A book about a rock star and the woman he left behind.

SC276: "Sk8er Boi" is not a book.

Crazy56U: Well, it is now. Also, fuck it, the Narrator's Avril Lavigne now.

Lani offered to read the book

Mono: "And promptly began burning it."

ThatUnknownPony: "And I never heard from her after that."

Crazy56U: (scoff) Yeah, right, *she* knows how to read. Uh huh...

SuperAquaLuigi: Then she ran off with it and sold it as her own.

CaptainPipsqueak: Didn't really do herself any favours as it was panned for the crap it was.

and give insight and feedback since I was not in the music business and could only write what I thought things in the music business would be like but that business was actually her life.

Crazy56U: Too bad Lani's *actual* profession is scalping.

SuperAquaLuigi: "Never write about a topic you know nothing about. Ever. -Lani"

That book became an International Bestseller within one week of its release.

SC276: "What was its name? Uhhhhh, it was, um, *This is Totally a Real Book that Actually Happened.*"

Crazy56U: "And it was called *Steven Spielberg Presents: Back to the Future, a Robert Zemeckis Film.*"

Mono: *coughduetofraudcough*

She gave me the edge I needed with her real world insight into the world of musicians.

Crazy56U: "Specifically, she gave me a box cutter."

ThatUnknownPony: "Especially, she told me about *Hybrid Theory* by Linkin Park and *Sinner* by Drowning Pool."

JofY: She helped tell the author what a flat D sounds like.

CaptainPipsqueak: "She played really loud music and shouted lyrics at me."

She's since helped me on several of my other "music" novels.

SC276: *Songs are not novels.*

Crazy56U: Yeah, well novels are not songs. Ball's in your court, bitch.

ThatUnknownPony: And fanfiction neither is a novel nor a song.

One of the things I learned about Lani through our texts, phone calls, and infrequent visits as she returned to the bright lights of the West Coast

SC276: Unless the frequent earthquakes knock the power out.

CaptainPipsqueak: Or they go on a power-saving thing again and turn off the lights when nobody's using them..

Crazy56U: Specifically, Washington.

Mono: Nope. Boring, Oregon.

BittplexMutt: Nope, Detroit.

Topher: ...Wasn't this a Harry Potter fanfic?

(where she lived and worked when she wasn't traveling with the bands she worked with,

SC276: Some "gypsy soul."

ThatUnknownPony: Maybe because she was fired.

Crazy56U: Because she often gets homesick and misses her dumpster behind the IHOP.

and I settled into my life as an international bestselling adult romance author in Smalltown, Louisiana)

SC276: "-I state as if that's still a relevant point-"

ThatUnknownPony: Totally not related to Smallville, Kansas.

Crazy56U: Annnnd a quick Google search proves that that town doesn't exist, fuck you Avril.

Mono: Ah, I wonder if she moved there from New Zaragoza.

PanzerThiefZero: What, is it next to Largecity?

BittplexMutt: Right across from Middletopia.

Topher: As opposed to The City.

CaptainPipsqueak; Townsville.

was that she wrote screenplays.

About two years ago, she asked if she could send me this screenplay she'd been working on for years. I, of course, said "yes"

SC276: "I needed kindling and was too lazy to go out to the woods to get more."
ThatUnknownPony: "I then realized she was working on a script for a movie about emojis."
Crazy56U: And that is how Avril became the proofreader for *The Book of Henry*.
Mono: "Granted, I drank way too much that night..."

and sat down to dive in and try to understand this new thing for me.

JofY: The narrator didn't know what screenplays were.
Crazy56U: Or LiveJournal for that matter.
SuperAquaLuigi: [Narrator] "I'm supposed to be 'constructive?' What?"

That screenplay was Handbook for Mortals.

SC276: ~Hello! My name is Elder Price / and I would like to share with you the most amazing book...~
Crazy56U: ...oh.o-oh oh nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo... Ring, this isn't- you wouldn't fucking- *is this riff actually what I think it is?*
JofY: Yep. Butter.
PanzerThiefZero: And now I wish I wasn't right.
Mono: *gulp*
ThatUnknownPony: I'm feeling confused, and somewhat scared.
Topher: I have no idea what's happening right now.

She asked me for my opinion on it and though it was vastly different from the novels I write and the process, layout, and depth of description are nothing alike,

SC276: -which should be like a giant-ass red flag.
ThatUnknownPony: -which means your opinion might be biased and not really trustworthy.
Crazy56U: Which I call as being bullsh- *no, seriously, Ring, is this what I fucking think it is?*
SuperAquaLuigi: [Lani] "To sum things up: it's way better than anything you've ever written."

I devoured the plot.

JofY: I was joking about the butter!
Crazy56U: Like it was hot garbage.
Topher: *eyebrows waggle*

The story was *good*.

SC276: In the same way *Wand of Gamelon* is.
Crazy56U: In the same way the *Iron Fist* Netflix series is.
Mono: In the same way as *Sonic Boom: Rise of Lyric* is.
BittplexMutt: In the same way as *Once Upon a Time* was.
ThatUnknownPony: In the same way as *Monsters vs Aliens* was.

PanzerThiefZero: "See, mom? *My fans* love my stories! What do you mean 'that's cute, honey'? SHUT UP, MOM!"

I gave her my thoughts on the plot, characters, and important points and that was that.

Crazy56U: Doubtful, there are more words.

Sometime later we were talking, just catching up on life and everything in it.

JofY: Just talking about the natural elements of life like carbon and oxygen.

Crazy56U: "These new petitions against tax were really intriguing to the two of us."

She told me that she was converting the screenplay into a book

SC276: [author] "I tried to get people to act it out, but then the police told me that I couldn't hold them at gunpoint."

ThatUnknownPony: [Author] "And then back into a screenplay for the movie adaptation."

Crazy56U: And then converting the book into a breakfast bagel.

Giginss: Wait a minute, don't you usually convert books to movies?

PanzerThiefZero: The zillions of 'novel-of-the-movie' books say otherwise... to the despair of somebody avoiding spoilers by some jerk who just peeks into the book, which comes out weeks before the movie, uncovers all plot points, and leaks it all on Twitter. You know who you are.

and that she was thinking of publishing it.

SC276: [author] "What else could I do with it?"

[foreword lady] "Level a table?"

Crazy56U: "I tried telling her 'No', but the future refused to change."

She asked a few questions about the process and I shared what'd I'd learned about the "book world"

Crazy56U: (stomach ulcer pops) *fuck you*

Ringmaster: It's worth noting that the person writing this foreword is pretty much known for writing "romantic" Kindle trash that goes for 99 cents a piece.

SC276: So, I've finished a fanfic and bought books off Kindle. I have more experience than this chick.

ThatUnknownPony: *Good to know at least someone has finished a fanfic before me...*

Mono: Yaaaaaay...

while she worked on the conversion. As she traveled the country with various bands,

SC276: At the same time?

BittplexMutt: Yes.

Crazy56U: Specifically "Band", "Musician", and "Nickelback Tribute Group".

Mono: Which actually exists, believe it or not.

spending most of her time either on the road,

Crazy56U: Literally, she slept on the highway.

on the West Coast, her primary residence, or on the East Coast,

Crazy56U: Meanwhile, *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* can go fuck itself.

where she found herself working she found enough time to complete the book.

SC276: So from East to West, she's a joke.

Crazy56U: Or halfass it, either or.

ThatUnknownPony: Yeah, I call bullshit on that.

Not very long ago, Lani trusted me to read her baby,



SC276:



ThatUnknownPony:



Crazy56U:

JofY: Boy, the father must have been very confused when she gave birth to a book.

Crazy56U: *oh god, the papercuts*

the result of years of dreams, ideas, and work and provide honest feedback. I did.

SC276: [foreward] "Scrap it and start over."
Crazy56U: "I used it to line my bird cage and laughed in her face as she cried."
ThatUnknownPony: "I used the pages to wipe my ass clean."
Topher: "IT STINKS!"

The world she'd created was spectacular.

Mono: Suuuuuuuuuuuuuure...
SC276: You didn't make Earth.
ThatUnknownPony: This Lana ain't Lauren Faust.
Crazy56U: Clearly you were dropped as a kid, Avril.
JofY: Given how we're here, I doubt that.
SuperAquaLuigi: Congratulations, now the word "spectacular" is meaningless!

A young woman from Nashville with dreams of making it big as an illusionist in Las Vegas.

Crazy56U: *Showgirls 2: The Sorcerer's Stone.*
Mono: *Mary Sue: The Book.*
BittplexMutt: *Mary Sue Does Vegas.*
Topher: "How her dreams came crashing down, and she was forced to sell her body..."

Two men she's drawn to, who both call to her on different levels.

Crazy56U: Specifically, one has a 4G plan and the other uses a phone from 1984.

Secrets that come to light. Intrigue, romance, twists and turns, and above all else... *magick*.

SC276: I've only read like three chapters of *Ghost of a Gamble* by Sue Ann Jaffarian so far, and I can already tell I literally own the better story.
Crazy56U: "But mostly bullshit."
ThatUnknownPony: "And many scenes ripped off *Twilight*"
SuperAquaLuigi: Because Magic™ is trademarked now.

I was completely enthralled.

SC276: So this crazy author laces her first drafts with mind control, got it.
Crazy56U: SC, why are you coming up with better stories in this riff?
ThatUnknownPony: Because it's our job to put the authors to shame with more creative prompts they can come up with.
Mono: Clearly, this guy hasn't read a book in all of his lifetime.

I told Lani that I enjoyed this book far more than other books of the genre that have exploded.

SC276: So, you're a hipster.
Crazy56U: Specifically, the "Genre" genre.
Ringmaster: She means that literally, the draft that she was sent was laced with gunpowder.
JofY: The best books send you to the hospital as you're reading them.
BittplexMutt: And that they're sealed with a kiss.

Mono: ...Okay, this only solidifies my previous comment.

That wasn't idle talk or a friend telling another friend something nice so as not to hurt their feelings. It was real and it was honest.

SC276: -ly bullshit.

Crazy56U: This is a flat out lie, you cur.

**ThatUnknownPony: Even I'm not afraid of saying when I feel an idea is bullshit.
*Sometimes embarrassing myself doing pointless temper tantrums....***

I could not be more excited to introduce Lani Sarem and Handbook for Mortals to you.

SC276: Hey, you ain't takin' my job!

Crazy56U: (loudly; angrily; to the ceiling) *FUCK*

As an author myself, I tend to be a bit snobbish about books.

Crazy56U: Gag me with a spoon, you ass.

Mono: As a riffer, I am more than happy to tear this shit apart.

Topher: BACK TO BACK, WE SHALL FACE THE FIRES OF HELL BROTHERS!

While I enjoy a good many books for their entertainment value and I absolutely respect every single author that has the gumption to take a chance and put themselves and their work out there, I rarely "love" a book.

JofY: Oh mai.

ThatUnknownPony: Maybe because you might suffer Narratophilia.

BittplexMutt: Geez lady, keep your kinks to yourself.

Crazy56U: *oh god, the papercuts*

This is a book I loved.

SC276: That more calls your credentials into question.

Crazy56U: Very unhealthy, it seems.

Handbook for Mortals is a book I cannot wait for you to read.

SC276: "So you too can suffer as I have."

Crazy56U: *Go eat a rake.*

I see big things ahead.



SC276:



Crazy56U:



Mono:

After all, who can resist succumbing to a little *magick*...
- Skye Turner

SC276: The people who recognize how stupid it is for a *young adult novel* to have a foreword. ***WELCOME TO THE REAL RIFF.***

Crazy56U: *I hate you and I hate Ring, carry on.*

Ringmaster: Okay, I know that some of you are likely very, very confused right now.

SC276: Basically, we're going to do something that several editors have wanted to do - riff a published work. Well, a part of a published work that's been made freely available by Amazon as a preview. And guess what's been making the rounds enough that leading everyone on with *My fucking Immortal* makes perfect sense.

Ringmaster: Yes, it just so happens that said supposed author of *My Immortal* came out of the woodwork before the proper announcement of her memoir just to confirm that she didn't write this. Of course, a day or two before we actually posted this, said memoir was canceled because of falsified info, which the author *claims* to be

totally unrelated to the MI thing, but still, the whole thing's really sketchy now. Definitely look that particular situation up on your own time, however, it's pretty goddamn ridiculous. Especially with how *Spyro* gets involved...

SC276: But we're pretty sure this book still exists. Despite all known laws of literary decency. At this point the memoir shit's basically sideways to the entire Katamari of crazy that is the actual story we're riffing.

Ringmaster: And, I just want to clarify: We are not riffing this because of any sort of bandwagoning. The editors all agreed that this was entirely riffable on its own merits, the insane story behind it is just... well, it's not just the icing, it's the entire top layer of the multi-level shit-cake that is *Handbook for Mortals*. SC, take it away.

SC276: If you know the name, you probably know the story: the publisher schemed to get this thing on the New York Times best-seller list through selective forced purchases and *succeeded* for all of 23 hours. Which is apparently now a selling point.

Ringmaster: But even that's not the end of it. For one thing, the author flat-out stole the cover art from a print called "The Knife Thrower".

SC276: Though given that apparently this is also another case of 50 Shades of Avoiding Copyright with the source being a Wattpad fic from 2013, that sounds exactly like what a FF.net author would do for *their* cover art.

Ringmaster: But it gets even weirder, because not *only* is this pretty much a self-insert/famous person shipfic, it's a self-insert/famous person shipfic *written by the manager of the band that the famous person is from*.

SC276: Like Yoko Ono, only with no reconciliation and less talent. *Substantially* less talent.

Ringmaster: Except in this case, rather than get the guy that she was after and cause the band's downfall in the process, she never succeeded beyond "being a bit of a creep", eventually moving on to managing other bands, such as the Plain White Ts and inexplicably Blues Traveler, who fired her for frequently pulling shit like that little NYT stunt mentioned above. Now, I could go on all day about the weird shit that happened with this book-

SC276: -but we only got a week to handle what was posted free on Amazon's preview.

Ringmaster: Right, right. But, for one last thing, SC, can you explain what Lani used to call her claim to fame before *Handbook*? Even more than the whole "managing popular bands" thing?

SC276: She was an extra in *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2*. And apparently *that's* clout enough to star in the "upcoming" movie adaptation of *this* book. Oh my god, Mykan and Chat are annoying enough, and now here's someone with the money to do *worse*.

Crazy56U: Also, she's friends with the guy from *American Pie*, who not only is severely pushing for the fucking movie adaptation (what with him gunning for one of the lead roles and all), but is known for going to airport bookshops with his copy of the book and tweeting photos of lies.

SC276: *We're at full bullshit, people.*

Ringmaster: Without further ado, the (rest of the) Amazon preview of "*Handbook for Mortals*".

SC276: Steel yourselves. This is gonna *hurt*.

Nox: *It already does.*

BittplexMutt: Prepare for the pain!

ThatUnknownPony: Into the rabbit hole with this!

PanzerThiefZero: Bring it.

Mono: Welcome to die!

Topher: ...I wanna go home.

Some people are magic...While others are just the illusion of it.

– Beau Taplin

SC276: Like this author.

Crazy56U: So, does that mean I'm a myth?

BittplexMutt: Maybe.

ThatUnknownPony: Can we confirm?

It's still magic even if you know how it's done.

– Terry Pratchett

SC276: I will get to your books eventually, good sir. For now, I apologize.

Crazy56U: You have no fucking right to associate Pratchett with this book, Avril.

ThatUnknownPony: I'm sure he's actually spinning on his grave right now.

BittplexMutt: Is it still magic if I know how to tie my shoe with one hand tied behind my back?

Topher: THE NAME IS *SIR*
TERRY PRATCHETT YOU
UNCULTURED
HAYSTACK
HUMPER!

I like the night. Without the dark we would never see the stars.

– Stephanie Meyer

SC276: [Meyer] "It's also when the kids go to bed and stop burning my lawn."

Crazy56U: Irony is dead. You-you fucking quoted Stephanie Meyer unironically, *irony is fucking dead*.

BittplexMutt: Why would you even quote Stephanie Meyer?

Mono: Because bullshit potatoes.

ThatUnknownPony: Dumbass writers need to validate themselves mutually.

PanzerThiefZero: But without the sun we wouldn't even be around to see the stars in the first place. Check and mate.

Some journeys take us far from home.

Some adventures lead us to our destiny.

– CS Lewis

SC276: Some stories are so shitty they scar you for life. Like the last three months.

BittplexMutt: Or even last year.

Crazy56U: And that's someone *else* who doesn't need to be associated with this, *go fuck yourself*.

PanzerThiefZero: The next riff is telling the truth.

– PanzerThiefZero

Mono: Fuck you.

–Mono.

Topher: "Fuck, now I want corn."

–Topher

Chapter 0

BittplexMutt: Error: This chapter does not exist.

Crazy56U: You know a book is going to be good if the Foreword is Chapter -1...

ThatUnknownPony: This is already looking like an amateur's work.

PanzerThiefZero: So, we can call it quits for the week?

The Fool

Crazy56U: Specifically, on th- (is C&Ded by Apple Records) *OH COME ON*

SC276: *Ohhh*, so we're going to play *this* game! Well *guess who else is a fucking card fanatic*. (fans out cards and waves them) With a rank of either 0, 22, or unnumbered, The Fool is not the predecessor to the playing card joker as many think, but nonetheless served an interesting role in the trick-taking games the tarot deck was originally made for - it can never win the trick, but it was always a valid play. The card usually depicts a male youth carrying a bindle, usually accompanied by a dog and observing the boundless infinity of the sky, failing to notice he's about to go over the edge of a cliff. Element: Air. Upright: innocence, new beginnings, and infinite futures. Reversed: recklessness, naivety, distrusting own instinct, and fearing quiet. When the Major Arcana are interpreted as a narrative, the Fool is the main protagonist. Ponder these themes as this chapter boasting the name progresses, and let's see how it matches up.

Ringmaster: It also sends you back to the spawn room upon use.

JofY: And gives you more personalities.

BittplexMutt: And now the author is ripping off Stardust Crusaders.

ThatUnknownPony: And yet she's starting out with The Fool instead of The Star.

Crazy56U: Uh... ...go fish?

Nox: ...Can I counter that?

Topher: *looks at cards* Hit me.

PanzerThiefZero: Gladly. (hits Topher with a mallet)

Topher: Would've been funner if you had hit me with a blackjack, but whatever.

I've always envied those with normal lives.

Crazy56U: And the story is already dead in the ground.

ThatUnknownPony: First sentence and the protagonist is established as a Mary Sue.

BittplexMutt: Yeah, how dare those people get to have food, shelter and happiness in their lives!

PanzerThiefZero: "Oh, woe is me, I'm so unabashedly perfect I want to be like a commoner! WHY ME?"

I don't think I've ever even had a normal month, a plain week, or an average day.

SC276: How about a bland hour?

Mono: Or a dull second?

JofY: The life of a Walmart employee.

Crazy56U: "I live my life, one day at a time. Most of the idiots in my town live life three days at a time, morons."

BittplexMutt: "I did, however have an insane month, a crazy week and a mediocre day."

Topher: And eight crazy nights. ...I'm sorry, that reference was terrible.

At best, I've had brief normal moments here and there.

Crazy56U: Like when she mugged that gas station attendant.

BittplexMutt: Or when she went shopping for pumpkins. In the winter.

ThatUnknownPony: Or when she had to eat cheap Cup Noodles. Without water.

Mono: Or that one time she flew to Detroit with the power of magic artichokes.

They tend to be few and far between.

SC276: You're just not paying attention.

Crazy56U: So your life is fucking dull, got it.

ThatUnknownPony: Or so "fucking perfect" you're bored of it.

BittplexMutt: What else is new?

I'm sure most people would envy me, but some days I think I'd trade places in a heartbeat.

JofY: "Some days, I just don't feel like summoning Cthulhu would actually be worth it."

Crazy56U: And then *Freaky Friday* happened.

To me, those moments of feeling normal or getting to do average things have always felt like a cool sparse breeze on the hottest summer day, or the first breath you take after holding it underwater for as long as you can.

SC276: *We get it, you're fucking "special," stop overselling.*

BittplexMutt: I don't do any of those things.

ThatUnknownPony: It does sound like someone tried to drown you, though.

Crazy56U: (checks time on iPhone)

Isn't it true we always want what we can't have?

JofY: Well, I don't want an STD, and I know I can't get that.

Topher: Uh, yeah. No way you can. *kicks an empty syringe under a sofa*

Crazy56U: I wanted Season 12 of Supernatural to be good. ...so I *guess* you're right, Avril...

Mono: *hums a song*

The grass is always greener, so to speak.

BittplexMutt: Let me guess, someone once told you?

Crazy56U: The light is always brighter when friends surround the nights of wonder.

ThatUnknownPony: *Thanks for bringing that song, I needed my happy place for this madness...*

Of course, if you really checked out the other side, you'd probably find out that the grass is Astroturf—fake and brittle and lifeless.

SC276: Much like your narration.

Mono: Or your character.

BittplexMutt: So wait, you're in outer space?

Crazy56U: No, the other side is concrete, asphalt and sidewalk.

ThatUnknownPony: ...so that means she decided to take a shortcut and ended up creating an alternate dimension?

It sure is pretty from your side of the fence, though.

SC276: Hard to tell why the foreword girl would like the plot when it *isn't here yet*. (taps watch) Is this thing broken?

Crazy56U: "Or, is it the bagel?" *No, seriously, this is a constant series of random fucking tangents, can we have a point?*

BittplexMutt: Jokes on you author, I don't even have a fence.

I won't cover everything that has been crazy

Crazy56U: *EBONY I NEED YOU AGAIN*



or unusual in my life.

BittplexMutt: Because we can't have anything entertaining here.

Crazy56U: It's right up there with good things, after all.

Mono: The book would be too short if that were the case.

If I did, this would end up being a much larger book and would take entirely too long to read.

Mono: That's god-damn bullshit and you know it.

ThatUnknownPony: Perhaps too long for you, for us it would take five more minutes and that's being generous.

SC276: First-person already grinds my gears a little as it is. The fact that this supposedly interesting person that never has a dull moment - which would be monotonous and annoying - has a writing style like someone who overdosed on purple doesn't make me want to know this person.

Crazy56U: Avril says, desperately pretending the story didn't barely fit on a Post-It before she remembered padding existed.

Topher: *jerks awake* Eh? Wha? Is the author done jerking herself off yet?

Instead, I'll start on the day I left home. It marked a turning point—a fork in the road, if you will.



SC276:

Crazy56U: As opposed to fork in the brain, fork in the brain, fork in the brain, fork in the brain, fork-

Mono: I can quote Green Day too! **clears throat** "Dickhead, Fuckface, cock smoking mother fucking asshole, dirty twat, [CENSORED], I hope you die, HEY!"

ThatUnknownPony: And you're gonna make us wish you had taken the alternate path.

BittplexMutt: Author, we know what that is. Stop assuming we're goldfish.

I knew I was choosing a path, and hoped it was the right one.

JofY: They didn't know the difference between left and right.

Crazy56U: *ROLL FOR INITIATIVE!* (gets snake eyes) Aw, damnit...

BittplexMutt: So she chosed poorly.

ThatUnknownPony: Yep, you're making wish you picked the other path.

Either way, I knew that once I made my choice that was it.

BittplexMutt: No take-backsies?

Crazy56U: Because after all, the plot (as paper thin as it is) *needed* to happen.

Mono: Stupid-ass logic brought to you by Dakari-King-Mykan!

I couldn't double back and try again. It was to be how it was to be.

SC276: And we're stuck with you for the entire goddamn thing.

Crazy56U: YEAH, FUCK YOU ZZ TOP!

BittplexMutt: Like it was almost meant to be.

ThatUnknownPony: Because otherwise we would have an interesting story instead.

I personally believe some things in life are chosen by Destiny

Crazy56U: Which one, I heard the new one came out last month...

BittplexMutt: Destiny's Child?

and some things are your choice.

JofY: Destiny is a micromanager.

SC276: What I got from that is "I'm wishy-washy and blame things that are my fault on the universe. I'm the victim here."

Crazy56U: "And sometimes the universe just decides to spite you for the sake of spiting you."

BittplexMutt: "Or sometimes you just spite yourself."

ThatUnknownPony: "And sometimes it's just the consequence of a bad choice in life."

Mono: Or you could be like Mykan and blame anyone but yourself for the miserable idiot you are.

You have options in most situations, but there are certain paths that you have no choice but to go down.

Crazy56U: *Okay, I was fucking joking earlier, is there a fucking plot in this?*

BittplexMutt: For example, you have to actually go outside to buy food.

Mono: An accurate description of any visual novel ever.

ThatUnknownPony: Too bad this seems to be a shovelware VN instead of something actually engaging like *Danganronpa* or *Zero Time Dilemma*.

Ever try really hard to make something happen, but no matter what you do you can't seem to make it work?

SC276: You haven't seen the preproduction for this riff, sister.

Crazy56U: I tried teaching myself how to use Blender before I got mad and gave up.

ThatUnknownPony: Sounds like me trying to write something.

BittplexMutt: Like how to use a toaster?

Topher: Or an escape hatch out of a room full of fanfiction?

You fight and kick and scream,

Crazy56U: Because you're five.

BittplexMutt: No, like a toddler.

ThatUnknownPony: Yes, a five month old toddler.

PanzerThiefZero: Like the majority of us when we get forced to riff these.

Topher: -because it's fun

but you end up right where you are supposed to be—which might not be where you want to be.

Crazy56U: Avril, stop trying to be existential, okay?

ThatUnknownPony: Or maybe you end up where your actions lead you to. If you don't like it, maybe you should've thought things twice.

That's when Destiny has grabbed your hand and said, "Hey! You're coming with me!"

ThatUnknownPony: No, that's the consequences of your acts saying "Bitch, this is all your fault and you better like it."

SC276: So, the author railroading the plot despite all logic.

Crazy56U: And that kids is how Destiny got a restraining order.



Mono:

My advice? Don't fight it.

JofY: If Destiny wants you to be the victim of a horrible crime, accept your life breaking trauma with a smile.

BittplexMutt: Just embrace the madness.

ThatUnknownPony: Why embrace hope when you can delve in despair?

Crazy56U: Someone's a defeatist.
PanzerThiefZero: Xenoblade says hi.



Topher:

Destiny will always win. I'm pretty sure Destiny doesn't play fair, either,

SC276: Destiny and I tried playing poker once. It totally claimed my full house of 8s and kings lost to 5 kings. At least two of those were *Yu-Gi-Oh* cards.

Crazy56U: Especially if she grabs you by the hair and repeatedly punches you in the kidneys, the *fucking* ass.

but I don't think that even matters here.

JofY: So, first few paragraphs, and it's already admitting that they're padding.

SC276: We don't know the main character's name yet. *Ya think?*

Crazy56U: Because after all, since a plot refuses to manifest, there is no need for conflict.

BittplexMutt: And that means no story.

People say some memories will stick with you forever.

BittplexMutt: Like Elmer's Glue?

Mono: Like Kragle?

ThatUnknownPony: Like bubblegum?

Crazy56U: So, like that time I almost burned the house down as a kid by microwaving yogurt?

Topher: ...I'm not even going to TRY and guess your reasoning.

They burn brightly in your mind and each detail is as clear as the day it happened.

Crazy56U: So, like that time I went out to get the mail, missed the last step on the stairs, and fell head over heels onto my ass on the sidewalk?

Each color, each smell, the way things felt, the way *you* felt—it all pierces your mind each time you think about it.

SC276: Yes, it's called PTSD.

JofY: *spear flies into JofY's head* Ah, sweet memories.

Crazy56U: So, like that time broke my leg doing the "Cha Cha Slide"?

BittplexMutt: Or like that time we rified from Mykan Jr.?

Mono: Or that time we rified... literally anything else?

ThatUnknownPony: Or that time I made an ass of myself and wrote the stupidest and most immature shit possible and called it a "rant" and then linked it to everyone else to see?

SC276: ...OK, moving on.

You can practically place yourself there at that moment, as if it were happening all over again.

SC276: I'm pretty sure memory literally does not work like that.

Crazy56U: I want to keep listing memories I have, but I don't fucking care anymore.

Close your eyes and breathe in deep and all of a sudden you are back in that time and that place.

SC276: That's called a "happy place." Mine is still Lightning Dawn knocking himself out with a wheelbarrow.

Crazy56U: This is called "Mental Time Travel", for the unaware.

Nox: Unless you're like me and have a shit memory, or have amnesia, or have dementia.

Topher: -Raven Way. NO, I'M NOT LETTING IT GO, GOD DAMMIT! IT WAS A GOOD GAG!

For me, I will never forget one particular July morning;

JofY: July the... somedate.

BittplexMutt: Fourth of July?

Crazy56U: "I accidentally blew my dad's thumb off with a bottle rocket."

the grey clouds that hovered over the ancient trees lining the street;

SC276: [ancient tree] "Back in *my* day, we had to add riffs to the docs using comments, and the editors had to copy-and-paste every single conversation, and we *liked* it!"

BittplexMutt: They were really spooky.

Crazy56U: So, you live in "Tales from the Darkside"?

the wind that blew swiftly through my blonde hair.

JofY: Ruining the hours spent getting it done.

Crazy56U: Plot twist: she's actually a redhead with a hair dye problem.

Mono: And then the murders began.

BittplexMutt: A typical Tuesday.

Topher: ...She couldn't at least have Ebony black hair?

It also spun about the chunky pieces on the lower half of my long hair,

Crazy56U: EWWWWWWWWWW, brush your fucking hair you scumbag!

ThatUnknownPony: When was the last time you washed your hair?!

BittplexMutt: Her hair is pieces of meat!

Nox: Okay, so she dyed her hair with chunky salsa.

which I had dyed to be a multitude of fun colors.

JofY: She hangs dyed meat with her hair?

BittplexMutt: Yeah, that's what I think.

SC276: I think if your hair is clumping together like that enough it could be described as "chunky," you're not dying it right.

Mono: Fun colors like puke green, shit brown and ash grey!

ThatUnknownPony: So her hair is a Season 7!Changeling, who knew?

Today they were pink, purple, blue, and a turquoise green, but I have a habit of changing the colors frequently.

SC276: You know that gag in *Yu-Gi-Oh Abridged* where Dartz's hair changes color every shot? She's basically trying to do that.

BittplexMutt: Like a horse of a different color.

PanzerThiefZero: "And subsequently strain my parent's credit card debt to its limit."

My perfectly cut bangs stayed mostly unaffected by the wind except for a few squirrely pieces.

JofY: I guess she does hang dyed meat with her hair.

BittplexMutt: So, she's part squirrel?

SC276: *You leave furies out of this!*

The smell of rain was strong and crisp; it's a smell I love so much I wish I could bottle it up.

SC276: Guess what, asshole?

Even though it wasn't raining yet—and you couldn't even hear the thunder—you could see the lightning.

SC276: If you're smelling rain when it hasn't *rained* yet, I'm pretty sure reality is broken and you need to exchange it for a new one.

BittplexMutt: Maybe it's Allergy Season.

Mono: The Lightning at the Dawn, to be precise.

You knew the storm was coming. It was exciting; the energy from the storm that ran through my veins felt electric.

JofY: It was then that she realized she forgot her umbrella.

ThatUnknownPony: That's when she realized she had been struck by lightning.

SC276: *~I can smell a storm in the air, WELCOME TO WINDY CITY~*

The hairs on my arms stood up and goose bumps popped up all over my skin.

BittplexMutt: "I looked really ridiculous."

PanzerThiefZero: (imagines what the goosebumps the author is describing as actual *Goosebumps* books and snickers)

I've always loved thunderstorms.

SC276: That's nice, person-we-still-don't-know-the-name-of.

Crazy56U: "I just loved how lightning can fucking destroy things. Like, do you know what happens to a toad when it's been struck by lightning?"

Mono: ...The same thing that happens to everything else?

Crazy56U: (gives Mono a cookie)

Most people prefer sunny days and puffy white clouds, but not me.

JofY: "I like it miserable!"

BittplexMutt: "I love despair!"

SC276: I prefer overcast, personally, because I live in a desert climate.

ThatUnknownPony: I prefer the night, personally, gives me more time to get shit done.

Mono: Suddenly, Garbage in garbage!

I hope for thunder so loud it makes the ground shake, and lightning so bright it illuminates the whole sky.

JofY: "I want mother nature to ruin all of mankind!"

ThatUnknownPony: "I want to die when a lightning falls on me!"

SC276: "It distracts me from hearing the voices in my head."

BittplexMutt: If you feel the ground shake, then that's probably an earthquake.

Those types of storms are rare and magical in my mind. They have an air of danger and mystery, and it always feels like something exciting could happen at any moment.

JofY: Like a tree falling on you, or getting electrocuted, or having your house flood!

Mono: Or a fourth thing!

I paused briefly to watch the streaks of bright light spiderweb across the sky.

SC276: And then she got struck by lightning.

I wished I had the time to stop and just watch the storm, but this day was important and I had to keep moving.

SC276: ~Got to move / with my groove~

BittplexMutt: On this treadmill.

I took comfort in the fact that day storms are not nearly as magical as the nighttime ones.

SC276: ...Why do you need to be comforted by that?

BittplexMutt: Because a night storm is better than a day storm.

Mono: That's daystormcist! *ding*

I'd lived in that one-horse southern town my whole life, practically a quarter of a century.

SC276: *~I've been through the desert on one-horse with no name~*

My family has owned land in this place since the early 1700s and my ancestors basically established the little town called Centertown, Tennessee.

JofY: A town that exists... But also doesn't have any Census data till 1960.

SC276: So, she's claiming to be an Apple.

Crazy56U: Uhhhhhh, the Declaration of Independence wasn't a thing until 1776, and Tennessee wasn't a thing until 1796. ...i-is there something you're leaving out, Avril?

Mono: Silly Crazy, Himiko is a time traveler!

ThatUnknownPony: I thought she was a magician.

It's about an hour or so outside of Nashville and smack dab in the middle of the state, hence the over-obvious name, Centertown.

Mono: *googles* Bullshit, that town is called Murfreesboro.

JofY: Ehh... Middle, yes. Smack dab middle? No.

Crazy56U: Founded by Center Townson.

BittplexMutt: She can't call it Middletown because the playwrights would sue her.



SC276:

Crazy56U: Dude, no, it was announced that the new season is the last one, too soon...

Old people say that it was the capital of the state for one whole day before Andrew Jackson decided that the capital should be moved to Nashville.

JofY: But those people are insane, and have no real life data to back that up.

BittplexMutt: Because let's screw history up even further.

ThatUnknownPony: That's like saying Christopher Columbus was the first man to discover America. Spoilers: *Leif Erickson did it first.*

Topher: And that's ignoring the Native Americans who were there THE WHOLE DAMN TIME.

Mono: Sure, and three teenage girls founded the Spanish empire...

PanzerThiefZero: "Those same people believed the Earth was flat and the Sun revolves around it. Subsequently, they were the same people who often refused to take their happy pills."

I guess it's true, though I've never really been able to confirm that, nor do I guess it really matters.

BittplexMutt: Even you admit that this is pointless.

SC276: *Then why are you bringing it out, Ms. No-Name?!* In fact, that's your name from now on. Ms. No-Name. That's how fucking mad I am at the fact that you introduced your interests in fate and weather and that your town that is a literal contradiction before *your fucking name*.

Crazy56U:meanwhile, because self-insert, I'm still calling her Avril Lavigne.

Mono: Still calling her Himiko.

ThatUnknownPony: ...fine, guess I'm sticking with Lana.

It makes the people who live there and tell that story really proud, though.

JofY: Ignorance is bliss, kids!

BittplexMutt: Because they don't have to live that lie.

PanzerThiefZero: So, that town from *We Happy Few*?

My mother is the area tarot card reader

Crazy56U: (confused) Why am I being reminded of Grunkle Stan's mom?

BittplexMutt: Hence why the chapters are all Tarot cards.

and spell caster.

BittplexMutt: Because every state must require a mage and a card reader.

SC276: You probably don't know *her* name either.

Crazy56U: Also, she's got it going on.

People come from all over the state—and sometimes farther than that—to see her when they are heartbroken mostly.

JofY: "Give it to me straight... Will I ever fuck a hot chick again? I don't care about the cost, damn it!"

BittplexMutt: "Will I ever be able to smite my enemies?"

ThatUnknownPony: Something tells me they don't *exactly* go there to have their tarot read...

SC276: Before we start today's show, I need to tell you something very important that you might not want to hear...

Topher: Because apparently no other state has a shitty two-story-townhouse psychic.

In small towns like ours a lot of people believe that folks like my mother come from the devil.

JofY: But she showed them; she turned them all into newts.

BittplexMutt: They got better though.

SC276: "So what if she lost a gamble to him once and had to repay it by killing all his other debtors?"

Crazy56U: Makes sense, what with her smelling of fire and brimstone.

Mono: Nooooo, the devil went down to *Georgia*, not Tennessee.

PanzerThiefZero: Satanists tended to flock our house daily.

It's the silliest thing I've ever heard.

SC276: You've clearly never been to Camelot.
Crazy56U: "My mom came from the Void, there's a difference..."
Mono: "But it does explain the horns..."
BittplexMutt: "And why she likes things to be hot."
ThatUnknownPony: "And why she has goat legs."

People who can see the future are in the Bible.

BittplexMutt: I can't believe that Jesus was a psychic.

All the kings of the Bible talk to soothsayers, including the most revered king of all, King David.

SC276: Yes, David is *totally* the one that showed that there are people messed-up enough to accept *half a baby* and sealed 78 corruptive spirits in a vessel of brass.
Crazy56U: Well, to be fair, he only *threatened* to cut a baby in half, it's not like he was gonna do it. ...not sure about the 78 brass ghosts thing, though...
BittplexMutt: Because that's who most religious people talk about the most: David.

Even so, it's hard to convince people of anything otherwise.

BittplexMutt: "Even when I kick and scream."
ThatUnknownPony: "Even when they pay her to have their fortune read".

Those judgmental, stuck-up snobs are the same people who still sneak out to us and come see my mom when things in their life get bad.

SC276: Sister, hypocrites are nothing new.
ThatUnknownPony: *I was joking.*

That might be the worst part, knowing they actually believe in it as well but they are all just afraid to admit it.

SC276: Like how you know this story is crap deep down?

Though if they really knew what we actually were they'd probably end up reopening the old "burning people at the stake" idea.

JofY: "But it'd be too late for those punny mortals!"

Something our family is quite familiar with.

SC276: Yer a wizard, 'Arry.
Mono: "My dad burned on a stake last week."

Regardless, it's been hard for me because of it. Growing up, some kids weren't allowed to be friends with me and some wouldn't even talk to me.

SC276: Yes, that's totally because of something that's not your void of personality.
ThatUnknownPony: And not because of your behaviour and elitist attitude.
BittplexMutt: Or because you have meat in your hair.

Nox: Or because fourth reason.

I've had boys like me and then be told they aren't allowed to take me on a date.

SC276: Interesting how they all independently came up with the exact same excuse.

It's hard to be looked at not for who you are but for what people think you are.

JofY: Suddenly, tumblr.

SC276: You dye your hair in different colors, and not even ones that probably even go together with *blonde*, much less each other. What they think you are is a walking disaster zone.

Mono: Cry me a fucking river, miss "daughter of the devil".

After one long, deep breath I pushed myself off of the top step of the huge porch that wrapped around the antique house and

Ringmaster: "-felt the rope tighten around my neck, freeing me from this mortal coil."

BittplexMutt: "-then died."

Mono: "-promptly fell through the step into the Negative Zone."

Crazy56U: "-floated into the sky."

PanzerThiefZero: "-RELEASED THE KRAKEN!"

Topher: "-Shit my pants a little from the sheer physical exertion."

pounded down the wooden steps that led away from the house my family has owned for more than 150 years.

BittplexMutt: The house was old enough to be someone's grandpa.

SC276: Thus why the vibrations from stomping on the steps brought the whole thing down.

My well-worn and once brightly colored (but now badly faded with dirt spackle) Converse high-top sneakers

JofY: Handbook for Mortals: sponsored by needless brands.

Mono: And then the Author got C&D'ed.

BittplexMutt: Because we needed to know what shoes you are wearing.

Topher: I know, it's ridiculous! *bends over to tie his Red Wing 3507 Men's

Supersole 2.0 6-Inch boot with Slip, puncture, and electrical-hazard resistant sole*

made a quick tapping noise on each step.

BittplexMutt: Aaaaandd tap break! *tap dances wildly*

Topher: *Is pathetically trying to do a one-man kick line.*

I had just replaced the laces on them so at least they looked somewhat decent.

BittplexMutt: Who cares? They're just laces. Aglets on the other hand...

My favorite high-waisted Levi's dark denim skinny jeans—ripped in all the right places—

JofY: Read: She cut them herself b/c hip.

Mono: Read: there is barely any denim left.

BittplexMutt: "So yeah we're going down."

Topher: Ladies and gentlemen: The dumbest fashion trend to ever happen, and YES I AM INCLUDING PARACHUTE PANTS.

made the swishing noise as I lifted my legs and my perfect flowy Lucky's top that I wear far too often billowed around me.

BittplexMutt: Because clothes can make those noises?

SC276: *You're walking down steps.* For fuck's sake, a thesaurus is *not* a part of this balanced breakfast.

Topher: *Stops eating a thesaurus* But it's such an invigorating forenoon repast!

I rarely think this but I wish a photographer had taken my picture at that moment as the outfit and the background and I may have produced a cool-looking photo.

BittplexMutt: Yeah, with your hair in your face and your slightly dirty shoes.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "You'll be able to see it once the movie comes out."

Mono: Trust me, it wouldn't. Not with you in it.

The house is big, old, and four stories high, made of wood with large framed-glass windows.

BittplexMutt: So, a stereotypical Minecraft house.

SC276: You probably don't know what *its* name is either.

Mostly the house is well kept, the white paint is slightly faded and cracking in a few places due to the hot and humid muggy weather in the summer.

BittplexMutt: Also, because it's over 150 years old.

Topher: What's her face confirmed to live in Washington DC.

It's still nice, though, and the picket fence around the house lends to its antiquated Southern look.

BittplexMutt: Because all Southern houses look that way.

Not quite as big or grand, but reminiscent of the O'Hara's estate in *Gone with the Wind*.

Crazy56U: Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

SC276: And given we know you're going to Las Vegas, it doesn't matter in the fucking slightest.

Mono: Hey, at least we know what her house looks like now! That might be important later!

BittplexMutt: Not really.

I pushed my long, many-hued hair out of my way the best I could, as I threw my luggage into my car.

JofY: Isn't this storm causing wind just grand in how it messes with your meat ridden hair as you try and put your luggage in a car?

A dark blue streak caught the light with a shimmer.

BittplexMutt: Sonic, No!

I glanced at myself in the reflection of the car side mirror.

SC276: This story gained infamy because of a corrupt publisher zeroing in on stores reporting to the New York Times and forcing copies on them, and not one that cares about releasing quality material. This can be told because this thing is about to tell *How NOT to Write a Novel* to suck it.

People tell me I'm pretty all the time, beautiful even.

Mono: "Mostly blind people."

I'm not sure I see what they see. I think I'm more of a cute, average-looking girl.

SC276: "But I totally look like myself- I mean... crap."

I'm slender

SC276: OK, obvious jokes, out of the system now.

but I do not believe most would say skinny. Not "hot-girl skinny," at least.

JofY: Just enough that [insert actress here] can play her.

I have long legs that are toned but I think my thighs are too large and I do *not* have a thigh gap.

SC276: So, occasional blisters from your legs rubbing together? That happens sometimes.

Tophers: Don't worry, ever since the Samura Jack reboot, everyone loves a girl who's EXTRA THICC!

My arms are kinda flabby and while I do have an hourglass figure

SC276: At this point, I'm not sure story writers really know what that is.

I have always felt my butt is a little too big

SC276: *have you SEEN an hourglass*

BittplexMutt: Stop making me feel awkward, author.

Tophers: You're kidding right? Have you been on the internet lately?

and my face is a bit too round. Maybe people are just being nice.

Mono: ...Sure, you keep telling yourself that...

BittplexMutt: Maybe they're into that kind of stuff.

Topher: ...These are normally traits I find attractive, but somehow she is achieving the "Tommy Wiseau" effect, which causes someone with a reasonably attractive body to somehow still be unattractive, note that this has little to do with the face, in which case it's a simple matter of being a Butterface.

In a small town where everyone looks like they fell out of Mayberry,

SC276: -whatever the fuck *that* means.

BittplexMutt: I don't get it.

Crazy56U: "No one was making fun of Andy Griffith. I can't emphasize that enough."

I think I look different.

SC276: You *don't* look like a complete contradiction?

JofY: The camera is focusing on you right now?

Maybe just the fact I stood out was what they were seeing.

SC276: With that garish hair? Exactly.

I know how the neighbors described me as sweet and kind, but rough around the edges.

JofY: And be amazed, readers, as she almost never demonstrates any of those traits!

Topher: She has now taken SEVERAL FUCKING PAGES TO LEAVE THE FUCKING HOUSE. GET ON WITH IT YOU POMPOUS PURPLE PROSE PENNING PUERILE PISSANT!

I've just always thought I was a determined free spirit and tough only when necessary.

SC276: "Basically, I'm a blank slate so that nothing that happens in this book can possibly contradict itself."

Mono: "I act how I want whenever the plot needs me to!"

I turned around just in time to see my mother, Dela, coming down the steps.

SC276: OH YEAH SURE **NOW THERE'S A NAME**

Crazy56U: ...Stacy's Mom, got it.

Mono: ...Mommykins, got it.

Even when she was in a hurry she never looked like she was rushing or running but instead floating gingerly.

SC276: Like the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?

JofY: Her mom traveled everywhere on a hoverboard.

Mono: For she was a ghost.

PanzerThiefZero: She was merely standing on her own toes.

I am my mother's daughter, an exact replica.

SC276: She came out of a Xerox machine.

JofY: Her dad doesn't even exist.

Crazy56U: Avril Lavigne is a clone of Stacy's Mom. Confirmed.

BittplexMutt: She had her mother's eyes.

Topher: In a jar.

Pictures of her when she was my age look like they are of me.

SC276: *That's* how creatively bankrupt the author is.

Crazy56U: Imagine the look on Avril's face when she learns what Photoshop is...

Mono: "Including the clothing and colored hair."

She still looks younger than her years, though.

JofY: But she only looks 90!

Crazy56U: Which is odd, given how she's as old as the Earth itself...

There's something about her that says "old soul."

JofY: Maybe it's the tattoo over her forehead that says "old soul".

SC276: The part of the mother will be played by Old King Cole.

It's something that you can see in her eyes—she says you can see it in mine, too.

Mono: "I am actually 5000."

BittplexMutt: "I'm a mind-melder."

She says it means we've lived many lives.

Mono: And they all sucked.

But I haven't felt like I've been able to live much in this one.

BittplexMutt: Because you haven't done anything yet.

That's all I am trying to do, I guess. Just live.

SC276: Riff terrible MLP fanfiction weekly for almost two years straight. *Then* we can talk about living.

My eyes darted to her dark blonde hair, which shone despite the lack of sunlight.

SC276: *We get it, you live in a paradox. Stop beating us over the head with it.*

I took a deep breath and decided to cut her off before she was able to speak. "Mom, what would you like me to do? Stay here and read cards with you for the rest of my life?"

Mono: [Mommykins] "...Yes."

My exasperated question was sincere and sounded more like a plea than a question.

SC276: You *want* to stay here?

Sheepishly, my mother replied, "But, Zade,

JofY: *bursts out laughing* Okay book, what's her *real* name?

SC276: *FUCK YOU, YOU REMAIN MS. NO-NAME.*

Crazy56U: AVRIL LAVIGNE, GOT IT

Mono: HIMIKO IT IS!

PanzerThiefZero: LOUD NOISES!

I thought you liked reading cards.

SC276: Given the only Fool here is us for choosing to read this, I seriously doubt that.

Crazy56U: Well, to be fair, there *is* a secondary Fool at play here, being how he's the one who bought this fucking book...

Ringmaster: \$10 is nothing compared to the months of abject suffering that will result from you all going through this travesty with me.

I thought you liked this kind of life."

SC276: The life that involves being accused of being with the devil?

JofY: [Mother] "You can't possibly read cards anywhere else!"

Mono: [Himiko] "...Except for all the times I said that I fucking hated this kind of life."

I contemplated my answer for a moment before I responded.

JofY: [Bella] "Damn! Why didn't I actually think this decision through?"

I shoved my last bag, my favorite Dakine duffle with it's bold pattern into the car, struggling to make it fit.

SC276: Boy, you really aren't thinking this through, are you.

BittplexMutt: Because you need all those bags.

She was right. A big part of me loved the place and being there with her. It was *comfortable*.

JofY: Even if every house was slanted.

And, as much as I wasn't always completely accepted by everyone in the town, I still belonged.

BittplexMutt: "Even if I had no friends."

Mono: "Even though I didn't belong..."

It was home.

SC276: ...Nah, this fic doesn't get the benefit of that discourse.

I also really loved helping people and guiding them through difficult hardships and to a new place in life where they could be happy.

Topher: Specifically, onto a meat hook in the basement.

My mom and I had enlightened some people in town and taught them to understand that not everything we are brought up to believe in the world is true.

JofY: Like this story is most certainly not true.

SC276: Namely, that every book that becomes a New York Times bestseller is good.

BittplexMutt: Like third thing.

Topher: Like the Earth is flat, and life has any meaning in an uncaring universe.

Some were starting to see things differently and, in a few years, maybe I would even be treated like everyone else.

SC276: First step: ditch the hair dye.

Mono: Step two: grow a personality.

Regardless of all these things, I knew if I stayed I would regret it for the rest of my life. I had to do more.

JofY: Explore [hobby] or study [interest]. Those kind of personal things.

SC276: In order to do more, you would have to do *something* first.

My mother's glare and words caused me to drift for a moment into an almost daydream state of "what ifs" about staying.

SC276: Watch out, she's trying to hypnotize you!

JofY: If it takes this little for you to start daydreaming, I don't see you driving far.

While those thoughts circulated through my mind, my eyes caught the part of the concrete driveway that had been repaved when I was around eight years old. I had written my name into the wet cement, mirror image backwards. Due to my dyslexia, I could write things perfectly—but I wrote them backwards.

SC276: ...OK. OK. Hold on, I got a tab open about that... OK, it seems mirror lettering is a thing, but *entire words mirrored*? Like, even *spelled backwards*?

JofY: And written perfectly?

Mono: So it's obvious that this author doesn't know what words mean.

BittplexMutt: It took you that long to figure it out?

Topher: bəʊ ou wʌ □ə^ə□

It wasn't till I was nine almost ten I could write the proper way without a lot of thought.

SC276: (Googles) Uh, your mom sucks at taking care of you.

Crazy56U: You're surprised?

Topher: This lady believes in TAROT CARDS FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!

It baffled my teachers but was something "normal" for me.

BittplexMutt: "I didn't care that people stared."

It was also a cool trick at school as I learned to write fast in either direction.

SC276: Like being ambidextrous in the wrong direction.

JofY: It was a cool trick that makes you look like you spent hours doing something meaningless.

BittplexMutt: Yeah. "Cool trick."

Mono: Again, that's the complete fucking opposite of dyslexia.

Not all my memories of this place were bad and all my history was here, which made it hard to leave. Flashes of raising my own children in that house floated in my head for just a few short moments.

SC276: "We can probably find some no-name child actors for these brief flashes."

I pushed those thoughts quickly away and knew I needed to snap back into the hurried pace I was trying to keep.

SC276: Hah! "Hurried pace!" That's the best joke yet!

She's the most persuasive person on this planet

JofY: [Bella] "I wanna go."

[The Mother] "Please don't."

[Bella] "Damn you're good."

—and possibly other planets—and I knew that if I stayed a minute longer I might not leave.

SC276: You say that as if that's a bad thing.

I chewed hard on my lip, a nervous tic of mine that I did so often I had a permanent dent on my bottom lip.

Mono: And then Himiko bled out and died.

I looked at her and said, as matter-of-fact as I could,

Mono: "Get fucked."

"Sure, it was fine when I was sixteen and wanted a job so I could buy a motorcycle, but it can't be my life. I need to go somewhere where people don't know.

JofY: ...Don't know... Well? Don't know what?

BittplexMutt: "Well, there is this underwater city called Rapture.."

Topher: [Andrew Ryan] "HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! ...You're serious? NO! YOU'RE NOT GETTING IN, WE ONLY LET COMPETENT PEOPLE IN!"

Where they don't whisper and stare like I have horns growing out of my head.

JofY: Even if she does, she shouldn't be *judged* for that fact. She's special.

Where I can meet new people and just be a normal person for once."

SC276: [the mother] "Honey, you were reversing letters going into *fourth grade*. You'll never be normal. In fact, if the author had any actual skill, you'd be a dead ringer for BoJack Horseman."

I stood in front of my mother and looked into her deep eyes.

JofY: An olympic dive team was practicing with them.

She looked back into mine.

SC276: What is with this author and mind control?!
Mono: Suddenly, we're riffing Life Change!

I don't think she had ever wanted normal.

JofY: She wanted to be a cat dragon.

I think to her it was a dirty word.

SC276: She called black people normal.

I probably insulted her for even mentioning it and she probably loathed that I had said it was something I wanted.

SC276: [the mother] "You're not supposed to know that 'normal' means I should've raised you better!"
BittplexMutt: Normal's a curse word. Confirmed.

She had often quoted me one of Dr. Seuss's famous sayings—so many times I had lost count. "Why try to fit in, when you were born to stand out?"

SC276: That saying can mean basically anything and has never definitively been attributed to Dr. Seuss.

JofY: She's talking about the Dr. Seuss that worked on squirrel posters.
BittplexMutt: Oh I love squirrels.

I always retorted with, "Why would I want to stand out?"

Mono: [Mommykins] "Because, as a sue, you were born to stand out."

People who stand out get things thrown at them.

BittplexMutt: Heavy things.
Topher: Things colloquially called "pineapples."

People who stand out get called names and shoved into lockers.

SC276: People who stand out get their names remembered by us.

JofY: "People who stand out get attention, and love, and respect, and lots of money, and movie licenses! Who would ever want that!?"

Topher: "I don't want to stand out!" *Glues chunks of neon-colored meat into her hair*

If the people who don't stand out are too cowardly to do any of the previously mentioned options

SC276: Moody teenagers running away from home don't talk like that.

JofY: Moody teenagers don't speak in the exposition diletic?

then they just awkwardly whisper about you—the people who do stand out—as you walk by." I waited to see if she would try and quote Dr. Seuss one more time.

SC276: Like a parrot.

After a couple of moments of waiting, she asked, "What do you see yourself doing instead?"

Mono: [Himiko] "...Fuck if I know."

It was technically a question, but the tone in her voice led me to believe she already knew the answer.

JofY: I wonder if there's a word for it?

SC276: Girl, she's a tarot card reader, not a lawyer.

Topher: [Zade] "I'm going to be a hooker."

For a moment I pondered whether I should tell her the truth, but I didn't spend a lot of energy with that thought.

JofY: I'm sure you don't spend energy with plenty of thoughts.

Long ago, I learned that I couldn't lie to my mother.

SC276: The post-hypnotic suggestion wouldn't let her.

JofY: What about half-truths? POV truths? I think you're just not being inventive enough.

Mono: "Or to anyone, for that matter."

She knew the instant the words came out of my mouth that whatever I was saying wasn't true, and lying always made things worse.

SC276: And yet this book exists.

To this day, whenever I tell a lie, my mother will purse her lips and widen her eyes and glare directly at me.

SC276: ...Isn't that a meme face?

She will firmly ask for another answer without missing a beat.

SC276: And yet this narration goes on forever.

BittplexMutt: And ever.. And ever.. And ever.

JofY: [Bella] "...Would you believe a quart?"

I'm a pretty good actress,

JofY: She played Tree #2 four times in high school. That's how good she was for the roll!

Mono: As indicated by that extra in that mall cop movie thing.

BittplexMutt: That no one went to see.

Topher: Are you all going to ignore the time she was cast in the Title role of *Waiting for Godot*?

but I'm not good at telling my mother a lie—no matter how mad I am at her. I slammed the trunk of the car shut before answering her, so I had a reason to have my back to her and didn't have to be looking at her when I responded.

SC276: I know this was converted from a screenplay, but *stop giving stage directions*.

JofY: *SC276 throws his hands in the air in disgust*

Crazy56U: What the fuck is going on, scratches head in confusion?

BittplexMutt: I think.. Pause for moment.. This is taking forever.

I ran my fingertips over the edge of the trunk before muttering quietly, "I have an audition."

JofY: [Mother] "You see yourself having an audition if you leave?"

[Bella] "It'll be wonderful! A singular audition, with no actual guarantee of getting the job!"

BittplexMutt: She's a Sue. She doesn't need to worry.

There was a long pause and the wind rustled through my hair while I waited on her to respond.

JofY: I'ma time this pause. One, two, three, four, five, wow... six, sev-

Crazy56U: (whistles the *Jeopardy* music)

"You're going to audition for *that show*?"

JofY: The unstable show?

Mono: ...America's Got No Talent?

Crazy56U: The Jake Paul Variety Hour?

she asked—another question she sounded like she already knew the answer to.

SC276: Yes, that is what asking for confirmation is.

I was still facing the opposite direction and couldn't see her face but

SC276: "-I knew the camera could, so-"

I still knew she was grinding her teeth.

JofY: But she needs those to eat!

I couldn't tell if she was asking me or just announcing it out loud.

BittplexMutt: Maybe you're just thinking out loud?

I took one deep breath and spun around to look at her when I answered.

JofY: Accidentally tripping and hitting her head.

SC276: Face towards, face away, *Harry Potter's at Hogwarts by now.*

Mono: This is basically "Turning Around: The Book."

"Yes, Mom. You know what? I don't know how you ever got away with keeping me out here for so long, anyway."

SC276: Have you *seen* this economy?

JofY: [Bella] "Fuck the suburbs!"

BittplexMutt: Because she's your mother.

My eyes narrowed as I confronted the issue we had never really talked about.

SC276: *ok was this written by that fucking RPer from last week*

I looked down again as I finished my sentence. It was a hard subject for both of us, and something we both seemed to usually avoid.

SC276: Much like you're avoiding anything actually happening.

"I had my ways," she said so quietly I barely heard her.

SC276: OK, *now* I'm getting the impression that you're trying to pull a Chat!Celestia here on keeping a character contained and stupid at all costs for your own personal power, which doesn't help me feel good about Ms. No-Name.

JofY: [Mother] *fires gun*

I looked up to see she wasn't even looking at me as she answered. She was looking off into the distance.

JofY: [Bella] "Mom, my eyes are up here!"

Crazy56U: You're never too young to have a Vietnam flashback.

Mono: [Mommykins] "Ooh, pretty bird!"

I knew that she really didn't want me to hear her answer.

SC276: Then why did she stage whisper?

JofY: [Mother] "Why did I raise a failure?"

I sighed deeply as I glared at my mom, waiting for her to look at me again before I answered.

SC276: They were there for three days.

I ran my hand over my head trying to soothe the tension headache I was starting to get.

SC276: From what I understand, that should be the *back* of the head.

I wanted her to know that I wasn't the naïve little girl I had been when I was younger.

JofY: Given how she's so good at detecting lies, this explains why it hasn't worked.

Mono: Clearly, you have matured a great deal...

When you're five, your parents make decisions to protect you. Except the problem sometimes is, as much as their hearts are in the right place, the decisions don't always protect you.

SC276: [Gumball] "DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP ABOUT IT! PARENTING IS HARD!"

JofY: Apparently, giving your children weapons is a bad idea.

Topher: *Is holding a bazooka* Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat?

Sometimes they hurt you and mess you up and even make you angry at them—and at the world.

JofY: Sometimes those facts are put into stories as a vain attempt to connect with teenage girls.

BittplexMutt: And failing miserably.

Mono: And that's where emo's come from!

I think she noticed I hadn't said anything and she probably felt the icy glare from me so finally she looked up, allowing her eyes met mine. My words were slow and deliberate.

SC276: "Slow" is right!

I was about to call my mother out, something that rarely (if ever) happened.

SC276: Yeah, sure, you're only about to throw yourself out into Las Vegas in the wake of a tragic shooting, go on and burn all the bridges.

"Actually, I know. What do you think started this?" I said firmly.

SC276: You writing smut about your own band?

Mono: The brainfart that inspired you to write this book?

JofY: [Bella] "You never accepted my emo culture!"

"Uh—" she started, but her voice trailed off. My mother, the woman who always has an answer for anything, didn't know what to say to me.

SC276: Which is kinda sad, given all the things we have to say.

I wanted an explanation.

JofY: For what? Her mother caring about her daughter?

SC276: Your author is an idiot.
Mono: Potatoes.

I rubbed my hands together nervously. She said nothing. I edged myself closer and directed my words so closely that she could feel my breath on her face.

SC276: Was it the breath of the wild?
Topher: NOW KISS- wait, no!

I wanted to be harsh this time.

SC276: Anything but this babbling narration.

"For the record, I can't believe you would stoop to anything so low."

SC276: As... what, exactly?
Mono: Yes.
JofY: [Bella] "How dare you do [regular parent thing]! That ruined my life!"

"I was looking out for you! I didn't want you to ever go through—"
My anger erupted,

SC276: "-which is why it'll be another paragraph before it actually comes out."

Crazy56U: [Avril Lavigne] "

A black rectangular box with green text that reads: "hey champ let's play a game it's called 'fuck you'"

if she hadn't been my mother I probably would have punched her. I couldn't believe she was pulling such nonsense again.

SC276: What, it's not like it's bigger nonsense than your name only being mentioned once in like ten pages or something.
JofY: Can we please have an explanation of what is so terrible here? Being raised in the suburbs? Did the mother not let her go to college? Did the mom constantly berate her dreams? Actively sabotaged any previous attempt to leave?

It was an age-old excuse: "I want to protect you from making the mistakes I made."

SC276: Yes, how dare she give a shit about you.
Mono: The bitch!

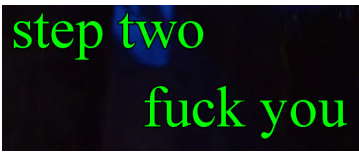
I started to grind my teeth. If I had been a cartoon, smoke would have come out of my ears.

SC276: OK, that is *exactly* what I imagined myself doing when I was picked on in elementary school, and reactions like that were *exactly* part of the reason I was picked on.
Topher: It's entirely possible for it to happen though, look! *Shoves a smoke bomb up his nose*

I began to wave my hands in exasperation, a habit I had gotten from her.

Crazy56U: [Avril Lavigne] “”

“Stop!” I shouted in anger.

Crazy56U: “”

“I don’t want to hear it.

JofY: Then how would you like your explanation? Seen? Felt? Smelled?
Mono: Touched.

I’m not you, okay?”

SC276: I literally saw this episode of *Kamen Rider Ghost* yesterday.
Crazy56U: I thought you said you were her clone, Avril.

I inhaled deeply and tried to relax. “I have my own life,

JofY: Tell us one actual unique thing about you. Not just liking something, but something you actually do.

SC276: “One filled with inane babbling description!”

Mono: [Mommykins] “That’s bullshit and you know it!”

and I think you were really selfish for what you did.” She winced, wounded. The truth hurts, or so she’d always told me.

SC276: And yet the author keeps promoting this nonsense.

Mono: [Mommykins] “...Excuse me for being a mother...”

I walked around the car and opened the driver’s side door. “I gotta go. I’m too upset to continue this conversation.”

SC276: And yet not upset enough to speed the narration up.

I couldn’t deal with it anymore. If I let my wall down I would just stay. Forever. I couldn’t do that.

SC276: No. Do that. Stop the plot before it happens.

We both stood, staring at each other.



Crazy56U: [Avril Lavigne] “



[Stacy's Mom] “

JofY: This made things hard as she tried to buckle her seatbelt and start the car.

Mono: Menacingly.

Part of me wanted to push my mom out of the way and jump in the car,

SC276: Aren't you right next to the door? Why do you need to push her? Space is warped and time is bendable.

but I couldn't be that mean to her. It felt like we stood there for hours.

SC276: Three days does consist of hours, yes.

Finally, she just said, "Please . . ." It was all she could say.

BittplexMutt: "Please just leave."

Her voice cracked and pain showed on her face.

SC276: She's sick of this stupidity already.

Mono: ...So we just had a forced conflict out of fucking nowhere?

The next words that came out of my mouth didn't sound like me at all,

JofY: Who dubbed over the fic?

but before I knew what happened I had snapped back at her, "Please, what? Haven't you ruined enough of my life?"

SC276: No, because she hasn't killed you. For reasons I don't understand.

I immediately wanted to take it back. I didn't mean it. Why had I said that?

SC276: Because the author is making this up as she goes.

JofY: Because the author wants to vainly connect with teenage strife.

Mono: Because edgy teenage emo angst bullshit.

I looked down, ashamed of myself. I heard my mother's voice crack again.

"Is that how you really feel?" she asked. She was on the verge of crying. My mother never cried.

SC276: The part of the mother will be played by a 50's man.
Mono: Or Applejack.

The anger in me was gone. My face softened and I smiled weakly. I grabbed her hands and stared at the bold veins that ran through them. I sighed deeply before I met her eyes.

SC276: I I, I. I? I!
Topher: And sometimes Y.

I shook my head lightly. "No. You haven't ruined my life, Mom,

JofY: So what was that massive outburst earlier? Is she actually supposed to be a teenager or not?
Mono: A fucking borderline one, yeah.

but you also have to let me go live it now. I need to—" I choked, unable to finish. She grabbed me tightly

Crazy56U: Oh, goody, the mom is about to do the Lord's work and end the story early!
BittplexMutt: "Mom.. can't breathe..."

and hugged me. She was still holding back tears and swallowing hard; she kept her eyes closed. She whispered in my ear, "Shh. I know.

SC276: It's like psychic twins.

I love you." She kissed me on the forehead. I closed my eyes and hugged her back fiercely before whispering, "I love you, too." Before I could change my mind I jumped into my car, quickly fastened my seatbelt and backed out of the driveway.

SC276: She backed right up into the neighbor's house across the street.
Topher: Wait, did they ever explain WHAT THE MOTHER DID?

I turned the radio on right after I threw my car in drive and the most appropriate song came blaring through the speakers of my car.

SC276: What a happy coincidence.
Mono: And then Himiko realized she was playing a tape.

It was the opening lyrics to the Dixie Chicks's song "Wide Open Spaces."

JofY: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait... I've got to reiterate something. This is a book. A published book. One that legally, you should have to buy to read. One that is sold in actual stores... If I may go off into a tangent for a bit, want to know the reason why I just hate it when stories use songs? BECAUSE THEY ARE ALMOST ALWAYS EMOTIONAL EXPOSITION DUMPS! Everyone always uses them to try and signify how smart and deep they are. It's lazy, pointless, and worst of all, obvious! The reason why songs are okay in other media such as shows, movies, and musicals, is because

THEY ACTUALLY HAVE A SONG! You know, music, melody, that kind of thing? There isn't anything like that in text. Don't tell me that it is okay for someone just post a link to their song, or just post the lyrics of a real world song, because then you're either treating me as a moron, or you're a moron who needs supplemental material to have your book 'work'. There is no work that goes into text only songs, there is no effort. And for someone to think that it is okay to just dump an entire song into a story just for the sake of "DAH EMOTIONS!" especially in a work that is supposed to cost money is disgusting.

Crazy56U: Exactly. If a story feels the need to have a song for the sake of having a song, and I mean just dumping lyrics into the narrative for no damn good reason, then it's being fucking lazy. Which is why I do what I do whenever it happens. If the story can't be bothered to have actual content, (opens up Youtube) then I can't be bothered to make actual riffs.

Mono: Indeed. And that's why I stay silent. Plus, I can't be fucked to search for a song right now.

SC276: Just the opening lyrics? They couldn't get the rights to the full song? Also, let me guess: if she can't get the rights to this, the movie is cancelled.

BittplexMutt: Yes.

Crazy56U: *Very yes.*

I couldn't help but laugh at how truly that was my anthem at the moment.

SC276: Unfortunately, twelve lines is too short to do "The Anthem."

Crazy56U: As opposed to the song I just found?

BittplexMutt: It's almost like fate was mocking you.

I took it as a sign I was doing the right thing, as I drove away, I sang along to the song.

Crazy56U: Speaking of... (clears throat) *Ladies and gentleman, Garfield and Friends!*

BittplexMutt: "Granted I was off key, but I didn't care."

Who doesn't know what I'm talking about

Crazy56U: *Friends are there... To help you get started, to give you a push on your way!*

Who's never left home, who's never struck out

Crazy56U: *Friends are there... To turn you around, get your feet on the ground for a brand new day!*

To find a dream and a life of their own

Crazy56U: *They'll pick you up when you're down!*

A place in the clouds, a foundation of stone

Crazy56U: *Help you swallow your pride, when something inside's gotta break on through, to the other side!*

Many precede and many will follow

Crazy56U: Friends are someone you can open up to...

A young girl's dreams no longer hollow

Crazy56U: When you feel like you're ready to flip!

It takes the shape of a place out west

Crazy56U: When you've got the world on your shoulders...

But what it holds for her, she hasn't yet guessed

Crazy56U: Friends are there to give you a tip!

She needs wide open spaces

Crazy56U: Friends are there when you need them, they're even there when you don't!

Room to make her big mistakes

Crazy56U: For a walk in the park, or a shot in the dark!

She needs new faces

Crazy56U: Friends are there... (I don't care...) But friends will care...

She knows the high stakes

Crazy56U: For yooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooU! (song ends)

No truer words could be spoken as I headed for my own wide-open spaces out west.

JofY: Or, the author never actually studied writing, and doesn't know how to properly convey character.

Crazy56U: What about "You folks have this confused, I'm real and you're animated"?

BittplexMutt: Into the desert.

Even the "high stakes" reference was perfect, considering that I was headed toward Las Vegas.

BittplexMutt: Because of gambling and nothing else.

Crazy56U: "And this is the story of how I had my thumbs broken by the mob."

Mono: Nope. This is the story on how she got that STD.

SC276: Author, you need to remove your masturbatory comments *before* sending the book to the printers.

I had a long road ahead of me—and an even longer road when I got there—

SC276: *That's because you babble on for five hours without doing anything plot related. In the actual movie, this would be three minutes tops.*

Mono: At least you know where you're going. But, you don't know where you've been...

but it was what I knew that I needed to do, without any doubt.

SC276: And then when she recovered consciousness, she was in a room with a corpse pinned to the wall wearing a rabbit head.

Chapter 1

The Magician

Crazy56U: Hail Atlanta.

SC276: Each of the Major Arcana depicts an archetype - a pervasive image imprinted upon the human consciousness across generations. For the first of trumps, the Magician, the archetype is a confident master of his domain. He is often given a table, upon which sits a cup, a pentacle, a wand, and a sword - the suits of the four Minor Arcana in the tarot deck. He is often depicted with an infinity sign above his head, confirming the great power he has over that he surveys. Element: Air. Upright: Intention, resourcefulness, and creativity. Reversed: lacking ability, trickery, and "writer's block."

Ringmaster: It also gives you psychic homing tears.

JofY: And is a cat.

Crazy56U: ...Uno?

BittplexMutt: Magician's Red!

Giginss: ...my royal flush beats your hand?

Mono: Checkmate!

Topher: You sank my battleship!

I pushed open the heavy front door of the theater that led back into the incredibly lavish casino.

SC276: Which one? (points in a nonspecific direction) That one.

BittplexMutt: The one they called Circus Circus.

The bright red and purple carpet immediately caught my eye.

JofY: [Bella] "My eyes!"

I couldn't believe that after years of thinking about moving out there, I had finally done it.

SC276: ...Nah, the joke I got here would be *horribly* offensive and I'd never forgive myself.

JofY: "I finally convinced people I was employable! Suckers!"

Mono: "I snuck into a casino while underage!"

The cast and crew of the show must have totaled close to two hundred people and they were an overwhelming bunch—especially when they were all standing in the foyer of the theater. I quickly tried to assess this large group who had been waiting on me.

SC276: Waiting for just you? How do you know? They could be trying to find the buffet.

JofY: [Others] "Where's this chick that we're supposed to kidnap!? I've got a date in an hour!"

Luckily, it was fairly easy to tell what they did for the show by what they wore and how they acted.

SC276: And now two straight pages or so of describing exactly that.

Several of them were dressed in nothing but black from head to toe.

JofY: She *is* joining the emo troupe!

BittplexMutt: They even wore sunglasses that were tinted black.

Topher: So, how long is it going to take for her to say "They're stage crew?"

In this kind of situation, all-black attire says

JofY: "I want attention!"

Mono: "We protect the earth from Aliens."

"I'm supposed to blend in."

BittplexMutt: No, that's if you're doing theatre.

Creatively called "show blacks,"

Crazy56U: Uh oh!

JofY: Ah, a name that took 5 seconds to make.

Mono: Not touching that one...

the uniform of a stagehand or stage tech tends to be black Dickies with extra pockets.

JofY: Ring, a porno is starting!

Topher: Well that's just not true. None of us are mature enough to handle wearing something called a "Black dickie."

Depending on the show, techs could be wearing anything from a black t-shirt to a formal button-down.

SC276: So, the popular image of the ninja.

Topher: Admittedly accurate.

I have to admit that I've always found something handsome about a man in show blacks.

Topher: *Is currently typing this during his intermission break* ...Really?

Perhaps it's the artsy answer to a man in uniform, or maybe I'm just odd.

SC276: Do you *really* want me to answer that question?

Mono: ...No.

Either way, I noticed that several guys in their show blacks were handsome; one in particular caught my eye for some reason.

JofY: 'He was moving much slower than everyone else.'

Mono: He was wearing a show white.

He wasn't the most traditionally handsome one out of the bunch but there was just something really striking about him.

SC276: He had been marked separately by the author.

If I hadn't been so nervous I would have probably paid more attention to him. Despite my distraction, how he carried himself still registered with me. I once read an article that said you can tell someone's personality by the way they walk and carry themselves.

JofY: Well, you can tell by the way I use my walk, I'm a woman's man, no time to talk.

SC276: What walk indicates someone who babbles on about details no one cares about in a desperate attempt to hit the word count required to publish a novel?

Mono: *does a silly walk* This?

SC276: Hmm... nah, that one indicates something more like "please put me out of my misery."

Since then I've always paid attention to that and it's astonishing how accurate it really is—

JofY: Bella for example, constantly moves like a drunkard.

and how few people walk with a confident stride and step—

SC276: Those people understand the concept of "reality."

but this guy did in spades, though he also seemed closely guarded, which is an odd combination.

JofY: He's a cool dude, but he has insecurities. You hear that girls? HE HAS INSECURITIES YOU CAN USE TO HELP ~~CONTROL~~ HEAL HIM! IS THAT FACT APPARENT YET!? WELL!? DO YOU GET IT!?

Mono: Something tells me this book isn't gonna be all that subtle.

(Most of the time, super-confident people are much more open and free.)

JofY: Most super-confident people are usually buck naked.

SC276: What if they're confident in their security?

Mono: Most of the time, shit authors write stuff like this in brackets.

I also noticed several people in various stages of readiness for the show.

**SC276: That are in the lobby instead of backstage where that shit actually happens.
Topher: Somewhere in the building, the stage manager is ABSOLUTELY FUCKING LIVID.**

Some were already in full costume, with hair and makeup done. Others had their costumes on one half of their bodies but the other half in street clothes.

JofY: Some asshole ripped and sewed them together.

Mono: Some of them didn't even have any clothing on!

A small group of them were hanging out in more normal clothing—the management, I guessed.

SC276: [author] "Actors always wear at least part of their costume at all times, right?"

They had all formed little clusters and some seemed to be deep in conversation, speaking of work or something else that they were passionate about.

JofY: "Dude! Go Onizuka is going to have his own episode length duel next episode!"
"Yeah man! That looks totally awesome!"

Most of the performers looked bored. No one seemed to have noticed that I had opened the door and was standing in front of them all.

BittplexMutt: "Now I knew all their deepest secrets."

Topher: "WHY IS NOBODY PAYING ATTENTION TO ME?"

I cleared my throat and softly said,

JofY: "Which way is the restroom? I need to pee."

Mono: "I don't think I'm supposed to be here..."

"Thank you for waiting. I'm ready." I smiled nervously and pushed the door open even wider to welcome them back into their theater.

SC276: Didn't you just come in from the casino?

The crowd hushed and seemed to part a little. A tall man with dark hair walked toward the door. That man was the infamous magician to whom the theater basically belonged, Charles Spellman.

SC276: Really. Really. What's next, a dog named Poodle?

BittplexMutt: Or a duck named Bill?

JofY: Steve Jobname.

Mono: Scrapped Ace Attorney Character.

Crazy56U: ...Charlie Kelly, got it.

Charles was older,

JofY: By 2 years!

Crazy56U: In the sense that all the paint he drank gave him a short life expectancy.

but still a very handsome man. I would describe him in a similar way that one might describe Harrison Ford.

SC276: Old as fuck and probably biting it this year?

JofY: Already taken?

Mono: Flying through space with a giant hairball?

Topher: Always shooting first if you catch my drift?

He was dressed in what were obviously expensive clothes, black slacks that fit him perfectly and a button down that was the exact length it needed to be to hang out un-tucked.

JofY: So he's a slob.

Topher: Just like his di-*gets hit with a brick*

The shirt was tailored and had wide stitching with beautiful and intricate cufflinks that complimented it perfectly and looked to be made out of pure gold.

JofY: She had never seen gold before. Not even fool's gold.

How effortless he made casual and confident look.

SC276: How the fuck is slacks and a button-down shirt "casual?"

Mono: This way. *flips off the fic*

Topher: Everyone knows TRUE casual requires the removal of pants. *Is rocking the casual look*

He looked like someone who always has an air about him that says he's the most important person in the room—and he usually is.

SC276: When he's not, he throws a tantrum.

Charles was one of the most well-respected magicians in history;

JofY: That's why you've never heard of him.

Mono: Even though Himiko is the Ultimate Magician...

he'd been famous since he was in his twenties.

SC276: What's with the past tense? Does he not survive the story?

He'd had TV specials and won countless industry awards,

JofY: I forgot how classy and formal the magic industry is.

and his shows consistently sold out arenas when he was on tour all over the world. A few years ago, The Wynn Casino

SC276: Man, you didn't even *try* with the non-celebrity names, did you.

Mono: Still ain't got nothing on the Gateway Hotel.

Craazy56U: Isn't that where Nichard Rixon stayed that one night?

in Las Vegas made him an offer to have a show on the strip. Steve Wynn

**Crazy56U: GET IT BECAUSE IT SOUNDS LIKE "STEPHEN",
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA**

himself called and said they'd build him his own 2,000-seat theater for his show and would build it to his specifications—anything he wanted and no expense would be spared. You have to be a pretty big deal for Steve Wynn to call you himself,

SC276: Big enough to be completely unrealistic.

BittplexMutt: And impossible.

Crazy56U: Meanwhile, because fuck you, I'm calling him "Snacky Cakes".

Mono: "I'm still waiting for his call..."

so he agreed—and the rest is history.

JofY: Boring as fuck?

Mono: Bloody and horrible?

Topher: Honestly not including enough nuclear detonations?

Tickets typically have to be purchased three months in advance to have any chance of getting to see the show.

SC276: "And by the time it gets there, you've lost interest so you scalp them off to someone else so you can get a Switch."

The theater is "in the round" as it's called, meaning the seats circle the whole stage (that is also round) and the seats closest to the stage are basically level with the stage.

JofY: "In which the seats in the round have been rounded to round out the roundness."

SC276: "Imagine a wrestling ring, only about two degrees less interesting."

The rows get bigger as they go up and the farther from the stage they are the higher they are,

SC276: ...what?

Mono: So, like an actual stage?

which means the stage is at the bottom of the room. It was designed way so there would be no bad seat in the house. And, honestly, with the prices people pay to see the show,

JofY: 2 entire dollars.

Mono: A sandwich and a ball of string.

there had better not be a bad seat in the house.

SC276: A bad seat snuck in once. Many profits were lost. Because the seat robbed the casino.

I knew going in that, from the time they opened, they had done two shows a night, five nights a week, with an additional matinee on Saturday. Charles was known for being a workaholic and expecting nothing less from his cast and crew.

SC276: They had to fully replace them three times a month. Eventually they started recycling once their souls were completely destroyed.

Standing next to Charles was a much-younger woman who could easily have passed for his daughter, had she not been so tightly coiled around his arm.

BittplexMutt: Sucking the life out of her like a boa constrictor.
Mono: His arm looked oddly blue...

Granted, I knew very little about my father—and even less about father/daughter relationships—

SC276: I'm pretty sure by the end of this, I'll be sure you know very little about relationships in general.

JofY: Oh god... First thought that popped into my head... I really hope this isn't true, but it very well possibly is... He's the father.

but even I knew that daughters don't stand like that next to their fathers.

SC276: Except for the ones that like fucking with people.

She was undeniably beautiful, but she also looked extremely stuck-up,

JofY: It was right then that Old Interest magically produced a stick from her ass!

and looked to be around my age. I can't stand stuck-up people.

Mono: I can't stand bland characters.

You can't judge her yet, I kept telling myself.

SC276: Sure, if you want to be *dull* about it.
BittplexMutt: "I still gotta look good in this."

She was obviously a performer as well, and I got the vibe instantly that she wasn't even one bit happy that I was there.

SC276: [sensible lady] "Four different hair dyes that don't even match? Are you trying to become the definition of 'tacky?'"
BittplexMutt: "At last, I have a rival!"

She looked right at me and didn't even bother to fake a smile; she just gave me the look of death instead.

SC276: The worst part is I just *know* she's going to be written as the one-dimensional bitch.
BittplexMutt: Unfortunately.

I smiled back anyway and I pushed her out of my mind for the moment.

BittplexMutt: She's not that important.

I had more important things to worry about.

SC276: I highly doubt that.

Mono: "Like how to get out of this story..."

"Zade," Charles greeted me.

BittplexMutt: [Charles] "What the fuck kind of name is that?"

Mono: [Max Galactica] "Get the fuck out of my sight."

"It is wonderful to have you here. I'm very excited to see your performance."

SC276: [Charles] "Having to hire completely new cast and crew three times a month has lowered my standards *that* much."

"Thank you," I said sheepishly, "for giving me the chance, Mr. Spellman.

JofY: You sure this isn't a parody name?

I'm honored to be here." I paused, flustered, before blurting out nervously,

SC276: OK, so the author has never taken a job interview in her life.

"You're one of the greatest magicians of all time.

JofY: [Old Interest] "Please, you can suck my cock later."

It's like you, David Copperfield, and then everyone else."



SC276:

Mono: Everyone else like Criss Angel and Bob Saget.

Topher: David Blaine anyone? No? He's done some crazy shit...

Nox: Are we seriously doing this without mentioning Harry Houdini?

I was babbling and didn't really know what to say. It's something I always do when I'm nervous

SC276: Boy, you must be fucking *terrified* writing this.

and the only thing that really makes me nervous is meeting important people.

SC276: And apparently writing your life story.

And this person was *really* important—maybe the most important person I'd ever met.

SC276: Because the *actual* important people have a chance to turn down your movie role offer. And have lawyers that would sue your ass off.

To my relief, Charles chuckled. "Don't tell David that and, please, call me Charles."

BittplexMutt: "Just call me Mimic." said Mimic.

Crazy56U: Whatever you say, Charlie Kelly.

Mono: Sure, Max Galactica.

At this, the beautiful woman next to him cleared her throat as if to remind him she should be introduced; I had actually forgotten she was there.

SC276: Despite being the only character so far that has shown to actively hate you. Sloppy.

BittplexMutt: Because she's that one-dimensional.

Charles glanced at her. "This is Sofia Austin.

JofY: The most realistic name so far!

She's one of our lead performers."

SC276: (Googles) ...Well I guess she needed something to do after her one movie?

"Hi, nice to meet you," I said, thrusting my hand out awkwardly.

BittplexMutt: Because quirky.

She took it, but only grasped it for a moment before loosing her grip and dropping my hand, like I'd burned her.

SC276: OK. OK. Even bitches feigning politeness are capable of handshakes. The only reason for this reaction is if Ms. No-Name is a witch and *actually* burned her on contact.

BittplexMutt: She probably did.

"And his girlfriend," Sofia said coldly, and *mean* even, placing emphasis on the last word.

BittplexMutt: [Sofia] "So don't try and steal him, you hussy!"

JofY: [Old Intrest] "Man, I just love the way how she immediately burns each of my bridges."

Topher: Charles, buddy, listen: I know I'm supposed to hate you and wish Ill on your entire house just for being in this story, but I'll give you one piece of advice: DON'T STICK YOUR DICK IN CRAZY.

Crazy56U: (angrily clears throat)

"Awesome," I muttered.

SC276: ...I'm sorry, were you trying to imply you have enough personality to be *sarcastic*?

Mono: I choose to not interpret that as sarcasm.

For a moment I wasn't sure what to do next

SC276: Boy, for a production with a high turnover rate for literally every position besides lead, they sure suck at getting auditions done smoothly.

so I basically just stood in the doorway. One of the many techs in black (whose name I would learn later to be Tad)

SC276: His parents hated him.

JofY: Honestly, I don't see a single loving parent with these names.

Mono: Tad Late, I presume?

Nox: No, that would imply the author has even one one-billionth of wit.

must have noticed the awkwardness and grabbed the door from me and pulled it open as far as it could go.

JofY: And off it's hinges apparently.

He let it catch on the hook that's made to hold the door open when even larger crowds are pouring in for a show.

JofY: Congrats, he is now an unpaid intern.

Everyone began to head back inside the theater.

SC276: OK. Let's make this clear: despite this originally being a screenplay, *the author has no idea what space consistency is.*

I stood there and watched them walk past me, each seeming to give me a once over; I'm sure most of them judging me in their own way as they made their way past me and into the theater.

SC276: And also *time consistency* because I have no idea if she actually had the audition or not yet!

Mono: It's almost like she's a terrible author!

Nox: "Terrible" is putting *very* mildly.

Suddenly I realized that while I was mentally making notes of their behavior I was doing the same exact thing, I didn't want them to do.

SC276: Well *you're* the one that made the point of divining everyone's personalities from their *walks*.

BittplexMutt: And their looks.

Topher: And general gut feelings.

I was judging them as well, so I couldn't really hold that against them too much.

BittplexMutt: You're one to talk.

I guess it's just human nature and what we, as people, do.

SC276: It's almost like seeing a girl whose hair is literally five different colors instinctively makes people throw up.

JofY: Don't forget about the squirrel meat that's on there.

Topher: It's almost as if people automatically start to form impressions the moment they clap eyes on someone.

I made an extra mental note that it was something I should probably try to work on, since I didn't like the fact that I was guilty of it, too.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "Clearly, my life can only improve by making myself a worse judge of character!"

BittplexMutt: "Oh no, I'm feeling guilt!"

Walking closely with Charles and Sofia was the handsome tech who had caught my eye earlier.

BittplexMutt: "My eye has been falling out lately."

Mono: Handsome tech? That's a pretty fancy computer, then.

Probably in his late 20s, he was also wearing show blacks, and frowning.

SC276: Fuck, he's self-aware.

His sandy-blondish brown hair framed his face perfectly, and his hazel eyes seemed to sparkle.

BittplexMutt: Oh no! It's Edward Cullen!

JofY: EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!!!

Mono: *RUN! HIDE YOUR GOOD TASTE!*****

He was slender

JofY: And repetitive.

SC276: *~I'd offer ya pizza, but aren't ya trying to stay slender?~*

and tall, definitely six feet if not an inch or so more, with just the right amount of muscle in his arms.

BittplexMutt: It had to be the right amount, or else it would be abnormal.

You know,

JofY: Just enough to hold up the tower of pisa.

just enough to grab you and hold you tight—but not enough to look like he was stung by a bee and was allergic.

SC276: What kinda fucking simile is that.

BittplexMutt: Because bees are known for hugging people.

I overheard Charles call him Mac.

Crazy56U:fuck it. You're Sweet Dee now. We have Charlie, we have Mac, you're Sweet Dee, fuck it, "It's Always Ebony in Las Vegas" is the name of this story now. FUCK IT.

BittplexMutt: He's a Mac, and I'm a PC.

Mono: "Hamburger" it is!

I noticed that he carried a clipboard, and learned shortly after that he was the technical director for the show.

Crazy56U: "I tried taking a glance at what he had written down on said clipboard, but I'm even sure if what he was writing was English."

BittplexMutt: "He was so important he didn't even get to speak."

Next to Mac was another man; thin, with reddish hair,

JofY: Ginger, but not quite.

he looked to be close to the same age as Charles.

BittplexMutt: Guess who's the love interest?

Mono:Mommykins?

Nox: Charles Lee Ray?

He also looked unhappy to be there and gave me quite the stare when we did catch each other's glance.

SC276: [old Archie Andrews] "...Is that hair for real?"

BittplexMutt: He was repulsed by her.

Another man in a headset and show blacks followed closely behind them.

BittplexMutt: And his name was Headset Man.

Topher: Let's see, interacting closely with and working in the same general space as talent, but wearing a wireless headset meaning direct communication and mobility is important, I'm gonna guess... Assistant Stage Manager.

JofY: There are no women who work backstage.

I saw a piece of tape stuck to his oversized radio that read "Trig."

SC276: Sine, cosine, or tangent? Probably one of the first two; the entire story's a tangent.

Mono: "-ger happy"

Again, I looked back to Charles, who was flanked by Sofia and Mac.

BittplexMutt: Suddenly, ponies!

JofY: No! We are not doing TwilightXTwilight!

I overheard my name being spoken between Charles, the red-headed man,

SC276: By gods, he *is* magic! He talked with someone after they left the room!

BittplexMutt: That is truly amazing!

Mono: Clearly, this man deserves the title of Ultimate Magician!

and Mac and decided to fall into the crowd as close behind them as I could as they walked through the lobby of the theater.

BittplexMutt: Stage directions!

SC276: *Space is warped and time is bendable!*

Everyone was so caught up in themselves that they didn't notice me staring at them.



Crazy56U: [Sweet Dee] "

SC276: Creep.

They certainly didn't realize I could hear them.

JofY: Her corporate espionage was going off without at hitch.

I'm not sure that—if they had realized—they would have cared anyway.

SC276: I mean, *you're* talking and *I* don't care.

Mono: This entire book has been nothing but white noise to me so far.

JofY: Huh? Did someone say something? I can't hear you!

Charles suddenly stopped walking and called out in just a general direction,

SC276: (points in a nonspecific direction) Over there.

yet somehow knowing I could hear him. "Oh, Zade," Charles called. "This is Mac Kent,

Crazy56U: No, Charlie, his name is Ronald McDonald, "Mac" for short. ...I swear to fuck, I'm not joking.

Topher: *grabs Crazy by the lapels* DOES HE HAVE THE MEME SAUCE?

Crazy56U: HOW DARE YOU BRING UP THAT SHIT SHOW?! (spits in Topher's eye)

Nox: And I thought Game Theory was the only show that could inspire that reaction here.

Topher: *ignoring Nox, shaking Crazy* I WANT MY MULAN DIPPING SAUCE!

Crazy56U: (while being violently shook) MOTHERFUCK, GET OFF!

my esteemed technical director.

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "Although actually, to be fair, none of us here are that good with wires and shit, so he just duct tapes everything."

He's been with me for all eleven years of working in this theater."

BittplexMutt: "And he hasn't gone insane yet."

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "Um, on and off, right?"

[Mac the Knife] "(broken twitchy smile) Nope."

I peeked out around the group of people who were directly in front of me and approached Mac.

BittplexMutt: Well, pushing all of them aside but eh.

"Eleven years?" I said incredulously. "You look too young for that. How many shows is that?"

BittplexMutt: Oh come on, you don't know how to math? Come to think of it, I'm also bad at math.

Crazy56U: [Mac] "Uhhhhhhh..."

[Charlie Kelly] "Oh, fuck you for bringing math into this..."

Mono: [Hamburger] "Five."

"Well, I didn't start out as the TD eleven years ago," he replied, looking me square in the eye.

BittplexMutt: You weren't always the Total Drama?

"I was only eighteen.

BittplexMutt: But still, that is very young.

Mono: Duh. He's the Ultimate Technical Director.

SC276: He's a technical director for a *Las Vegas magic show* with *no college education*? Gheeze, either Magic-boy or Casino-boy have no fucking standards.

JofY: So, our two love interests are 50+ and 29...

But yeah, forty weeks a year, two shows a night, five days a week with an extra matinee on Saturdays. Still here 4,800-plus shows later."

SC276: $11 \text{ yr} * 40 \text{ wk} / 1 \text{ yr} * (5 * 2 + 1) \text{ shows} / 1 \text{ wk} = 4840 \text{ shows}$. Show-off.

BittplexMutt: "And I haven't gone completely insane yet."

Topher: THAT IS ENTIRELY NOT POSSIBLE.

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "Kill me."

"Wow, that's incredible."

BittplexMutt: "Incredibly lame."

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "NERRRRRRRRRD!"

I was genuinely impressed by how he had worked his way up,

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "It's quite admirable, given I cheat my way to everything."

but before I could say anything more, Mac had already turned away.

JofY: [Love Interest] "Now go, clearly I'm not going to be interested in you any more."

Standing behind Charles was that thin man with wide-set eyes and reddish hair. He looked at me solemnly.

SC276: [old Archie] "No, seriously. Do you actually abuse your hair like that?"

Charles turned back slightly and waved the man to come forward. "This is Zeb Zagan,

Mono: ZZ Top, Got it.

JofY: Zapp Brannigan.

head illusion technician—or head magi; he has been with me for over twenty years—basically for as long as anyone has called me famous."

SC276: [Magic-boy] "Basically, he does all the *actual* work while I look good."

I had done enough research before reaching Vegas to know that Zeb had designed or helped design a lot of Charles's illusions and was well known in the magic community himself.

BittplexMutt: Really? Because I've never heard of him.

Mono: Her "research" consisted of skimming a troll-edited wikipedia page, by the way.

Yet everything about him was mysterious

JofY: So the surprising 'depths' are still a surprise.

and—even in the magic community—very little seemed to be known about him.

SC276: Well yeah. Do *you* know the name of the crew manager for a play you went to recently?

Topher: Well, My SM is named Megan. Does that count? Also, you'd know if you READ YOU FUCKIN' PLAYBILL!

I stuck out my hand and said, "Hello. Nice to meet you." He looked at me and stared hard directly at me till I felt uncomfortable

SC276: So far this guy is the best character in the entire book.

before he finally stuck out his hand rigidly. His handshake was stiff and he didn't smile at all when he spoke.

SC276: Calling it now, he's a robot.

"Hello. I do hope you can get this going soon; we all have other things we need to do."

JofY: [Zapp] "Ugh! Work is totally uncool!"

SC276: [old Archie] "Preferably not involving No-Name Unit."

I didn't know what to say. He didn't seem to be happy about me being there and yet at the same time there was something odd about his coldness.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "Why do you not love me immediately?"

I half smiled and weakly said, "I'll do my best and I hope you like it. I respect your work and opinion so much."

SC276: [old Archie] "This unit has detected failed attempt at sarcasm. No-Name Unit should avoid trying to hurt herself."

I made sure to reference that I did know who he was.

Topher: Okay, I admit that if I was working a show I'd really appreciate that.

JofY: "Well good fucking doo-too-loo! You know a co-worker."

Zeb made a sort of grumbling sound and sat down in one of the nearby seats

SC276: In the lobby?

Topher: Oh fuck off Zeb. Normally you're just fine print in a playbill and someone just acknowledged your work. Say "Thank you."

and began to stare at his phone with impatience written all over his face.

Mono: [ZZ Top] "Man, this is a nice phone..."

After my exchanges with Sofia, Mac, and Zeb I was starting to wonder if I was ever going to fit in.

SC276: Three guesses how I hope it goes, and the first two don't count.

JofY: "What am I going to do if my co-workers aren't immediately pleasant to me!?"

I'm not sure if Charles even witnessed the awkward exchange between Zeb and me.

JofY: "Hey boss! I'm not seeing eye to eye with my co-workers! This is *really* hard!"

Charles was already on to something else

SC276: Much like I wish we were.

and had grabbed the man I had seen with the headset labeled Trig.

That man, Trig,

SC276: Trig Trig, Trig. Trig? Trig!

pressed one of the large buttons on the battery pack resting on his hip and spoke into the mic on his headset. "C.S. says it's a go. Can I get all stage crew in place, and then I'll give Zade the clear."

SC276: By which he means he's gonna make her "disappear."

Topher: NEVER SAY G-O ON HEADSET UNLESS YOU'RE GIVING A G-O, CUNTPRODDER! Also, there's no such thing as a CS, unless you're referring to center stage, Which is usually referred to as SC

SC276: ...Center stage is giving approval? What crazy plays are *you* in?

He turned to me and pushed his mic off of his face and introduced himself.

JofY: [Headset] "Trig? You there? There seems to be a bit of an iss- OH GOD THERE'S A MASSIVE FIRE! SOUND THE ALARM! TRIG!? TRIG!?"

"Zade, hi. I'm Pete Trigger,

SC276: TRIGGER MAXIMUM DRIVE

Mono: Whatever you say, Trigger Happy.

but some people call me Trig.

SC276: [Cosine] "Mostly the math nerds."

I'll answer to Pete or Trig just not Mr. Trigger cause that's my dad and it sounds like a dead horse.

SC276: How about Mr. Thingy?

Mono: ...Mr.Ed?

I'm the head stage manager, and I call the show.

SC276: -out for dinner.

Topher: FUCK! My guess was So close. But if you're stage manager, WHY THE FUCK ISN'T YOUR ASS UP IN THE BOOTH? RUNNING AROUND BACKSTAGE IS THE ASM'S JOB, THEY ARE YOUR HANDS! ...I love getting a chance to show off my know-how, can you tell?

You know what that means, right?"

BittplexMutt: "Ya better not be one of those brainless buzzards."

Topher: If you don't know what a stage manager is, you don't belong backstage.

That particular question could have sounded very condescending but the way it came out of Pete's mouth it just sounded like he wanted to make sure I knew what that meant.

BittplexMutt: In a condescending way. Seriously, he's not paying you to be stupid.

Mono: Nope, he really thinks you're that stupid.

JofY: "I mean, you do know how a show works, right?"

I made the snap judgment that I would call him Pete, as that seemed to suit him more to me, at least for now.

BittplexMutt: "I always pictured him as this big anthro creature."

SC276: Does he have one leg?

He was average height with short light-brown hair and looked a bit older than Mac.

BittplexMutt: Somehow in a way.

I guessed late 30s or early 40s.

BittplexMutt: Jokes on you, he's actually immortal! And a toon!

He had small wrinkles around his eyes, especially when he smiled, but he still had a very boyish round, kind face.

BittplexMutt: Despite him being almost a senior citizen.

Mono: The things plastic surgery can do for you...

I nodded and confidently said, "Of course. You call the cues, keep everything happening when it's supposed to happen."

JofY: "Here, let me explain it to the entire class."

The plays I did in high school also had a stage manager, who also "called the show."

SC276: -late for dinner.

Topher: Okay, I'll give you that. You know what a stage manager is.

I'm sure Pete was much better at calling cues than they were, after all, this show was like the difference between playing pro baseball in the World Series and playing t-ball in kindergarten.

SC276: *Fuck you*, t-ball is awesome!

Mono: ...If you say so.

Nevertheless I got the general idea, and that was all I needed at the moment.

SC276: Minimum effort, as she had always done.

Pete nodded. "I knew I liked you." He glanced down at a piece of paper he'd pulled from a pocket.

JofY: [Pete] "It is nice to meet you, name. I can't wait to know you more."

"By the way, I am saying your name correctly?"

SC276: [Cosine] "Or at least what I *assume* your name to be because you left it blank on your application. Or rather, there was a paragraph talking about how much you like rain."

"Yep. Like 'aide,' but add a Z." I grinned; I appreciated it immensely when people took the time to learn how to say my name properly. I hated it when people called me "Zaad" or something like that,

SC276: The only people that would spell Z-A-D-E like that are people who don't know English 101.

Ringmaster: Huh, I feel like I remember this book making a big deal about names earlier as well, almost as if the author fucking hates when people mispronounce her name and transferred that quality over to her self-insert.

Mono: C'mon, Himiko! Get used to it! Almost everyone mispronounces my name, so I just stopped giving a shit about it.

Topher: Thank you for giving me primo nickname fodder, General Zaad of Krypton!

which sounded more like a car or a super villain than an actual person.

SC276: And how is that assessment inaccurate?

JofY: Do you think she's that fast?

I was instantly fond of him for the warmth.

SC276: Your standards are low too. *Everyone* has crap standards in this story.

Mono: The warmth of his delicious hot body... .. the fuck did I just type?

Pete gestured that I should follow him. We walked over to another group of the crew, who were already chatting.

"Are we really going to let her do this?" I heard Mac ask Charles.

SC276: Look it's painful enough with *amateurs not getting paid for it* ignore they're in first-person, *come the fuck on*.

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "For the last fucking time Mac, it's going to be fine, okay? Trust me, I'm the brains of this operation."

[Mac] "Charlie, last night you got trashed on paint and pissed in the broom closet."

[Charlie Kelly] "...and?"

It sounded much more like a statement than a question especially because he didn't pause for an answer before continuing. "I haven't been able to do any safety checks on her equipment. I don't even know what's been put in!"

JofY: Oh, this is the Las Vegas version of Turn off the Dark!

SC276: Well if *that's* not a giant telegraph.

Mono: Please tell me she's gonna die...

Topher: *Is eating a bucket of popcorn* Whether she does or not, it's gonna be one helluva show.

Mac sounded frustrated and leaned in to Charles.

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "Mac, look, j-just calm the fuck down, okay? If her equipment explodes or some shit, it'll, like, make the show all the more better and, you know, people love explosions."
[Mac] "Not indoors, Charlie!"

Most people seemed a little afraid of Charles, but not Mac.

SC276: ...Duh? Not even the Bastard Operator from Hell goes after the CEO.

I could already tell that Mac would stand toe to toe with him—or probably anyone, for that matter—if the subject mattered to him.

JofY: He could solve all of his problems with violence!

A strong will was an admirable quality to me and I had been taught to see that as being something to appreciate about someone.

SC276: "Unless they're talking bad about me, in which case fuck them."

Really stubborn and thickheaded, though, usually goes hand-in-hand with strong willed and is something to always keep in mind.

SC276: I can't believe the author is someone that both believes this and knows mirrors exist.

I realized that I was supposed to be listening to Pete and the others but instead I kept paying attention to Mac and Charles.

SC276: Because god forbid you listen to your more immediate supervisor in a place where *everyone* is expected to do their jobs all the time.
Topher: The latter of whom is now named "Cheese."

"Zade signed a waiver,"

JofY: And? Signing a waiver does not mean that any injury she gets they're no longer liable for. Gross negligence can still apply if it's proven that important safety measures weren't being done and guess what a very important measure for safety is in show business. HAVING THE CREW KNOW WHAT THE PERFORMERS ARE DOING! If they crew doesn't know exactly what is supposed to happen, they don't won't know how to respond. Imagine saying to a court that "Oh, sure the victim never got any harness for that leap, the crew didn't know what her plan was, and we never bothered to rehearse this trick and make sure it could be done perfectly, but she signed a waver!" They would get laughed right into prison! It would ruin careers and lives!

Charles replied calmly before beginning to head down the stairs to get seated.

SC276: Such is the degree of this story's padding that I've already forgotten their conversation.
Mono: ...Who are these people again?

Topher: Mac and Cheese, Sofa, and General Zod! Keep up, Mono! Christ, it's ametur hour...

Mac followed after Charles and Sofia along with another man I hadn't met yet. Charles nodded at that man before sitting down in the third row of the theater directly in front of where Zeb sat, still looking annoyed to even be there.

SC276: Join the club.

Mac turned around to Zeb. "Zeb, don't you agree with me?"

Mono: [ZZ Top] ""*is nodding off*"

Zeb glanced up from his phone to respond to Mac. "Charles is well aware of my thoughts.

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "*That is not an answer.*"

Mac, do you really think you are going to persuade him of anything at this point? Why are you wasting your energy?"

JofY: "Why are you bothering to make sure our new performer doesn't die during their first performance?"

SC276: It's not *my* fault nine idiots voted for that fucking rewrite instead of something I would enjoy reading to the point the last three months *drained me dry*.

BittplexMutt: [Zeb] "You should be using it for... other reasons."

Mac turned back around, crossed his arms in a huff, and slid farther down into the seat with his legs completely stretched out. I could tell that he knew Zeb was right and, even though he didn't like it, he took Zeb's advice and stopped "wasting energy."

JofY: "What's the worst that could happen?"

SC276: By dying.

Movement close to me caught my attention

SC276: The part of the main character will be played by a T. rex.

and I saw Pete reach his arm out toward possibly the most handsome guy I'd ever met in person.

Mono: Gerard Way.

He really wasn't my type, but I was still amazed at how much he looked like a movie star.

SC276: Which he totally will be in the movie.

Mono: Guess who's the love interest...

Topher: Specifically, Steve Buscemi.

He was pretty, too pretty, *beautiful* even. I don't think I could ever date a guy that was prettier than me. That does sound selfish, but I just would rather be the "at least slightly prettier" one in any

relationship—and he was just too perfect: the chiseled jaw, not a hair out of place, and a bright, white smile. I really never thought a guy could be *that* perfect looking.

SC276: (checks watch) *An hour?!*

Pete continued, "This is Cam Carter, our head rigger.

SC276: [Cosine] "We snatched him up from the casino staff."

Mono: Camcorder it is!

Topher: Jimmy Carter it is!

JofY: [Pete] "He makes sure all the nooses work."

Cam is going to take you up into the grid

SC276: When suddenly *TRON*.

Topher: There is literally no reason for an actor to be on the grid during a show.

They're sure as hell not flying her in from there, the grid is what you attach the fly system to!

and get you in position." I shook Cam's hand and he cracked an even larger smile.

SC276: And then everything above his jawline fell off.

His eyes were as kind as they were beautiful.

Mono: He has beautiful eyes...

I couldn't help but gush a little—

Topher: "-In my pants."

I might not want to date him but

Topher: "-I definitely wanted to fuck 'im."

I did like him immediately.

I heard Sofia's voice as we walked away. I strained to hear her saying to Charles,

SC276: I'm never going to trust a first-person story again...

"You remembered her name. You *never* remember names."

SC276: Which means the main character is either Chatoyance, Kudzuhaiku, Dakari-King Mykan, or NerfSonicRD - Books.

Crazy56U: ...Avril Lavigne is me? *What?*

I turned my eyes toward them and caught Charles's reply, "Most people's names aren't worth remembering."

SC276: Terrible time to try and get into our good books, magic-boy.

JofY: Yeah, tell em... Um... Er... What's your name again?

I was impressed by his clear, measured answers.

BittplexMutt: Just don't ask them how to convert them though.

He never seemed to "over speak," which most people—especially me—are guilty of.

SC276: YOU DON'T SAY

Topher: YOUR ACTIONS HAVE NOT AS OF YET INDICATED THAT YOU PONTIFICATE FREQUENTLY!

It was like someone had written his dialogue for him.

SC276: Yes, that is the definition of a fictional character.

The man oozed charm the way most normal people sweat in the Vegas heat.

JofY: Thanks for that image.

Topher: And THAT, ladies and gentlemen, is why I will NEVER work in Vegas. Fuck the desert.

I'm pretty sure James Bond would look like your average bumbling Joe in comparison.

SC276: Well yeah, James Bond isn't supposed to be seen.

Mono: Even though he manages to be seen every time...

Next to Charles, I noticed a younger, mousy woman with glasses who looked to be an assistant of some kind.

Mono: Sci-Twi?

She looked focused and anxious.

Mono: It is Sci-Twi!

She had a note pad and seemed to be writing down everything Charles uttered.

Crazy56U: Even when he went off on tangents about shit like milk steak and goblins.

SC276: Why does this chick's screenplay include the possibility of the assistant director wandering into the shot?

"So," Charles said loudly to her, "we will want to work it into the show that she will start on the floor and make her way to the top.

SC276: [Magic-boy] "And the faster it's done, the more accurate the metaphor is."

I want them to see the jump in its entirety." I liked that he had already put some thought into adding my illusion into his show.

SC276: That just tells me he's probably going to brand it as something he or his robot came up with and leave you penniless.

The rest of what Charles said I couldn't hear as I moved farther out of earshot. I had to try not to worry about what was being said and focus my attention on what I was about to do.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "But I don't *wanna* be a responsible employee!"

After lots of climbing, Cam and I had made it to the lower catwalk, which was forty to fifty feet above the ground.

SC276: Insert second case of *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney: Spirit of Justice* here.

There were a few other catwalks above us, the highest, according to Cam, being a hundred feet up. Heights make some people nervous, but not me.

SC276: *We don't care. Stop talking about yourself for two seconds.*

Mono: *You are not an interesting character!*

JofY: *YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A PERSONALITY!*

I love the feeling of being off the ground and as high up as possible.

JofY: Perfect for pushing.

When I was ten years old I told my mom that one day I would live in a tree house. That still sounded like a good idea to me.

SC276: And then she learned trees were a myth. They had all been exterminated by dwarves.

Mono: And then The Lorax happened.

I quickly realized I needed to check on where the prop I'd requested was. I had to have a bright red rose for the illusion

SC276: -that you're romantic.

JofY: -that #classy.

and I had asked for it to be brought up and waiting for me. I turned toward Cam and politely asked, "Where is the rose?" hoping he knew what I was talking about.

BittplexMutt: [Cam] "Some beast came and took it. Said it was urgent."

Topher: Learning the locations of props, reason #1273 to PLAN AND REHEARSE YOUR FUCKING SHOW, KNOBSLOB!

Cam pointed to it, smiled sweetly, and commented,

SC276: [Camera] "Boy, you're blind."

JofY: "Fuck if I know."

"You ready, girl? You nervous? Need something to keep your mind off of it?"

SC276: *who says that to someone they just met*
Toph: [Camcorder] *“*Pulls out a flask*”*

I shrugged and softly said, “I’m fine.” The only thing that was running through my head was how any girl could ever date him, because

SC276: *-he’s a fucking creep?*
Mono: *-he’s a fucking flat character like you?*

he was prettier than all of us put together.

SC276: *Or, y’know, the sexist answer.*

It was a good thing he couldn’t read my mind.

JofY: *He could read her loins, however.*

My mind drifted about in a way where it focused on everything and nothing at the same time

SC276: *Look, I know living with your mom gave you experience with being under mind control, but come on.*

while I waited for the cue from Cam to drop the rose to the ground. Cam smiled again and leaned in slightly to ask me if I needed any help from him. I shook my head

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] *“It’s dropping a rose. What could I possibly need help with?”*

but couldn’t help but smile at him. *Too pretty for his own good—and mine*, I thought.

SC276: *You’d think people forced into being workaholics by their crazy boss would be more professional.*

Trying to focus on what I was doing,

JofY: [Bella] *“I should have asked for help in dropping the rose. I should have asked for help!”*

I climbed onto the top bar of the catwalk and turned around on my toes. I breathed in to relax a little. I was starting to think something was wrong

SC276: *No, you’re not allowed to be that self-aware.*

when Cam pressed the release button on his radio.

Mono: *And then Himiko died.*

“Go for Cam,” he said.

Topher: And then the entire theatre exploded because Cam said "G-O" all the crew heard a "G-O", thought it was their "G-O" and pushed their respective buttons.

After a moment's pause, likely listening to a voice through his headset, he responded, "Copy that." He grinned at me. "Okay, love," he said. "Ready when you are."

SC276: *will you please stop talking you fucking creeper*

I nodded to show that I understood.

SC276: I doubt it's to write with brevity.

Before doing anything else, I picked up the rose and, after examining it for a moment, glanced at Cam; then, with a devilish grin I tossed the rose over railing.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "WHERE'S YOUR ROSE NOW?! (evil laughter)"

It took several moments for it to strike the metal stage below.

Topher: Why would you make the deck out of metal? That thing is going to ring like a bell whenever someone walks on it!

JofY: And it's going to make the trapdoors heavy as fuck!

It was a long way down, and when it finally crashed to the ground a couple of petals broke off from the flower and sprung into the air.

SC276: That is *some* bounce that metal's got.

JofY: Screw the metal, that's some bounce the petals have!

Hopefully everyone in the audience would understand that the point of the rose was to show that the stage was solid and that something else should not be able to go through the stage—

SC276: Why that couldn't be demonstrated with something not as prone to stray air conditioners and duct fans is the *real* secret.

Mono: Glad you explained how magic works...

JofY: Yeah, there could only be a false bit right where the rose strook.

that "something else" was, in fact, me.

JofY: Well, you sure are "something".

I took a deep breath and leaned slowly back over the bar, bending backward until I had flipped myself over the edge. Once my body had inverted into mid-air, I began to "fall" toward the stage, like a high diver would.

SC276: ...I'm sorry, the immense amounts of prose are just making my memory suffer buffer overflow. Did she ever get strapped into anything that ensures she doesn't die? I mean, I would prefer if she *would*, but the narration shouldn't.

Mono: Nope! She's plummeting to her death!

Topher: On the one hand, Cuntly McCuntface is about to die. On the other, YOU INCOMPETENT FUCKTARDS!

I stretched and tensed so that my body was completely vertical as I flew toward the ground. I was falling fast, and there was nothing below me to break my fall.

BittplexMutt: "I began to then accept my death with open arms."

The audience of cast and crew gasped.

JofY: A puppy walked on stage, and it was so adorable!

A regular audience might think "trapdoor" but this group knew better because they knew the theater so well.

SC276: They knew she was gonna die.

JofY: Today she got the people who like to see the same shit over and over again.

As I plummeted toward the stage, brightly colored sparks began to shoot from my outstretched hands.

SC276: Author, she's falling from the ceiling, not reentering the atmosphere.

The sparks fell and hit the ground ahead of me, becoming a roaring fire directly beneath me.

SC276: Me me, me. Me? Me!

The fire burned a brilliant red, spreading and growing below me. As the fire burned, it changed color from bright red to a vibrant blue.

SC276: Hooray, the building has a gas leak and everyone's gonna explode! :)

Mono: And nothing of value will be lost.

Topher: [Audience Member] "So am I allowed to yell 'fire' in a crowded theatre now?"

I could hear the audience murmuring again,

JofY: Boy, it's taking a real long time for her to fall if they have enough time to murmur about what's going on.

but I couldn't get cocky yet. I was near the ground and still falling fast.

SC276: And yet you're narrating like you're on a leisurely stroll. Gheeze, not even fake danger can speed this prose up.

The ground beneath the flames seemed to pool as if it had become liquid,

JofY: That is not what it means for something to pool!

and the fire melted into waves that started to lap the stage, as if a pond had formed where the stage had been just a moment before.

SC276: OK. OK. Either the author, despite being a stage actor before as I understand it, never worked on a magic show, or *actual magic* exists in this setting and I wish the story would just fucking tell us already instead of going on about old houses and impossibly handsome men and weather patterns.

In full Olympic-diving position with my fingers and toes pointed, I dove straight into what looked somewhat like “water.” It splashed as I made impact, but as the droplets of liquid came back down toward the Earth to meet the ground, the stage had become solid once again. The rose and I had disappeared within the lapping water.

SC276: Does that mean she’s now sealed in a bodily of liquid with no surface and no way to breathe?

Mono: Yep!

About twenty feet away from the site of my impact was an open area where there was actual, real water—basically a pool, which was used in several other illusions.

SC276: Awww man, now she’s not gonna drown! :(

Mono: Dammit!

I popped my head out of the water and pumped my left fist victoriously in the air as I used my right arm to grab onto the edge of the pool

JofY: Wait, wait, wait... What!? Let me see if I’ve got this trick done right. First thing’s first. She stands above the stage on a catwalk, and tosses a rose down. It hits the stage proving that the stage is real. Then, she jumps down, producing sparklers. However, she’s not actually jumping down to the stage, she’s jumping down to a pool, where the image of her jumping to the stage was replicated by... And that’s how the magic trick works!

—the rose safely clenched between my teeth.

SC276: In case she needs to emergency tango.

I felt a wild smile engulfing my face

SC276: -and eating it whole.

even as I waited for them to applaud.

BittplexMutt: But no applause was ever made.

The entire theater seemed in shock.

Crazy56U: And then the pitchforks came out.

SC276: [audience member] “Witch!”

It was silent for what seemed like an eternity. Did they hate it?

SC276: Well we hate you, so fair's fair.

Mono: Well, the subsequent booing can be an indication...

My smile started to fade and I was beginning to panic when they all applauded thunderously, and the whole cast rose to their feet.

SC276: They saw the "Applause or else" sign light up.

JofY: "Yay! We think a woman is dead!"

I sighed deeply in relief. I grabbed the rose from my mouth and tossed it to Sofia, winking at her. I laughed as I said, "For the pretty lady." Sofia glared in response and smiled with the fakest smile I had ever seen.

SC276: OK, there's "making a character a hate sink" and there's "making a character that's a living contradiction." Must be from her hometown.

She wasn't amused—nor did she find me funny, in the least.
"That was perfect! Just as I expected," I overhead Charles say excitedly.

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "She looked like she was having a fucking seizure, if that don't sell tickets, then I don't know what will..."

"Beth, let's have her sign that contract. That goes into the show right away.

SC276: THAT WAS HER AUDITION?! (screams into a pillow)

JofY: *explodes*

Wait until Copperfield sees this one!

JofY: Yeah, he'll laugh his ass off!

We'll put out a press release immediately." Beth Ford was the assistant I hadn't recognized before.

SC276: The mousy one, or yet another plot detail materializing out of nowhere?

Mono: Yes.

She nodded fervently at Charles and rushed off to get on the phone with the publicist for the press release.

I quickly spotted Mac again. He had found a place to stand next to two of his crew guys, also in stage blacks. One was Tad, who helped me with the door earlier.

SC276: I tawt I taw a puddy Tad!

He looked to be about Mac's age, though shorter than Mac. Tad was slightly stockier with dark brown wavy hair and brown jovial eyes. I would soon learn

SC276: And we learn it sooner, because you have *no sense of pacing*.

that Tad was Mac's best friend, an all-around good guy who worked well with everyone.

SC276: Because he mind-controlled everyone he talked to.

Mono: Ah, the real life equivalent of Cookie Dough.

In theory, Mac was Tad's boss, but they had been working together for a long time and had been friends for much longer.

SC276: Because why not, it's not like anyone respects formal relationships around here.

Tad was the kind of guy to always tell it like it is.

JofY: [Tad] "That sucked!"

He never believed in sugarcoating anything.

SC276: Having a riffer as a character doesn't help your case!

Topher: We don't sugarcoat, but we do dust with arsenic.

He'd always tell us that his motto was, "Why take anything seriously? No one gets out alive anyway."

SC276: He also had a penchant for white facepaint and green hair dye.

He said it often, and meant it.

SC276: He's wanted in fifteen states. He's only in Vegas because Nevada has a legal loophole that keeps them from arresting him.

Very little got him worked up. He was the epitome of easy going.

SC276: Always laughing as he stabbed people.

Tad was also one of those people who was naturally good at most of the things he tried.

SC276: So he's also a Stu?

Mono: Everyone's a Stu here.

Topher: Except, ironically, for Stu. Who was fired after he ordered too many eggs.

I often wonder if a lot of it had to do with his attitude. I've concluded that it must be that, and being born under a lucky star. I'd probably envy him if I didn't adore him so much.

SC276: "And wasn't frightened as fuck of his criminal record."

Standing next to Tad was Riley,

JofY: Why are there so many unimportant characters? Is there going to be a test on this later?

one of the youngest of the crew at the show.

BittplexMutt: Riley was called that because he was always so riled up.
SC276: Fuck it all, he's a winged dragon alien thing now.

This was his first real job as a tech, and he'd only been working for the show about a year.

BittplexMutt: So really, nothing new here.
Topher: Yeah, NO. You do not jump from college to Vegas.

"That was crazy freaking awesome!" he blurted out excitedly, practically jumping up and down when he said it.

BittplexMutt: Meh, it was not that special.
JofY: 7.8/10 -too much water.
Mono: 6/10, really.

Even Tad, who wouldn't jump up and down if he had won the lottery, still looked pretty blown away.

BittplexMutt: That's because he hasn't won the lottery in over 10 years.
SC276: [The Joker] "(slams into the opposite wall)"

"Jesus! That was quite the magic trick," Tad agreed.

BittplexMutt: [Tad] "A stupid magic trick, but still!"

"Holy moly! No wonder C.S. gave her free rein of the theater.

BittplexMutt: "It's like she breathes magic or something!"

Mac, how in the hell did she do that?" Tad looked at Mac, who seemed to be in a daze.

BittplexMutt: You utter fool! Don't you know a magician never reveals their secrets?
SC276: The resident jealous bitch can't even jealous bitch right, you really think they're going to keep *that*?!

It took a couple of moments before Mac finally looked up at Tad and then stared at him for another couple of moments before responding. "I don't know."

BittplexMutt: He said in a Christopher Walken voice.
Mono: Killer response...

Tad scrunched up his face and cocked his head to the side with disbelief; he eyed Mac for a moment before speaking. "The man who knows more about how magic tricks are done than Houdini doesn't know?"

SC276: This chick knows more about Houdini than Mac the Knife:



Mac sighed deeply and shook his head. "Tad, what do you want? I said I don't know. Why don't you ask Zeb; shouldn't he know?" It was obvious that Mac was annoyed and disturbed that he didn't know how it was done.

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "Why do I not know everything?!"

He didn't even have an inkling.

SC276: He didn't even have a Wii U.

Mono: Or an octoling?

He looked over in my direction and was staring right at me pretty intensely and directly.



Crazy56U: [Mac] "

Topher: I've been meaning to ask, what's with the Garfield stills?



Crazy56U:

He didn't even try to pretend that he was looking at something else.

JofY: Yeah, he's looking directly at the thing behind you.

My eyes briefly caught his and he didn't even look away.

SC276: Congrats, your company now includes another jealous bitch.

I thought it best to pretend not to notice. I wondered if he thought if he stared at me long enough that it would click with him how the illusion was done.

BittplexMutt: "My mind could meld with his other mind in order for that to work."

The reality is none of them could have known.

SC276: Yer a wizard, 'Arry.

JofY: Why should they!? It's not like a crew actually helps with the trick!

It wouldn't have made logical sense no matter how hard they tried to figure it out because it was beyond anything a mortal could do.

SC276: I'm sure if I tried hard enough, I could write something as terrible as this.

Topher: Ah, so there's real magic in this story. Fantastic, as if this character couldn't be any more of a Mary Sue.

Tarot cards weren't the only unique skill that my mom had taught me—or that ran in the family.

SC276: Yeah, sure, tell us ahead of time about the personality and relationships of a random side character, but hold off on telling us about the main character actually being a fucking wizard until the last second.

Mono: She can also fuck with reality, apparently.

And, for the first time, I was starting to realize it was going to be harder to keep our secret from everyone.

SC276: It took ya until *now* to figure it out? It's almost like this entire thing wasn't thought through at all.

Topher: YOU HAVE ACTUAL FUCKING MAGIC, WHY HAVE YOU NOT TALKED TO A SCIENTIST?

They were going to want to know, and I was going to have to keep dodging questions.

SC276: And she has a crap Dexterity score.

JofY: IF YOU DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW, WHY DO YOU SHOW IT OFF?

This was a problem I was going to have to work out when I had more time to think about it.

SC276: Well you lived in Tennessee or something before now, right? You had plenty of time on the... (Googles) 27-hour drive of 1,849.2 miles to do just that!

I finally couldn't take the feeling of being stared at any longer

SC276: *Then why are you in show business?!*

Mono: Because wish-fulfillment or some shit.

and looked over in Mac and Tad's direction just in time to see Tad grin at Mac and laugh. "Hey, don't take it out on me. I'm gonna go introduce myself to the girl who stumped you.



SC276:

She's definitely worth knowing," Tad retorted as he slapped Mac on the back. Tad locked eyes with me, smiled, and even winked at me

SC276: [The Joker] "Mind if I call you 'Harley?'"

before starting to walk toward where I was standing. I could tell how much he was enjoying giving Mac a hard time.

BittplexMutt: Because he was an asshole like that.

"I'm coming with you; that was so cool," Riley added as he chased behind Tad.

SC276: [Ridley] "So cool that I in fact have to take a lava bath right now."

Tad gingerly made his way over to me and put his hand out to shake mine. I noticed his huge grin and pearly white teeth right away.

SC276: Which distracted her from seeing the joy buzzer.

Tad Fletcher, head of automation,

SC276: Renowned curator Jacques Saunière...

rocked back on his heels as he talked. Calm, collected, sweet, kind and confident cascaded out of his being.

SC276: Dude, you already got a paragraph. Don't be greedy.

Mono: Hey, we need to talk about someone other than Himiko in this book...

I would slowly learn that was Tad all of those things through and through, which is why he was so well liked.

SC276: Except by people with brains.

He also introduced Riley Wates, the youngest and newest member of the rigging crew, who seemed very nervous to meet me.

SC276: [The Joker] "Honestly, we mostly hired him because he could fly."

JofY: Didn't we already introduce these characters?

Riley was young and wide-eyed, and though he was also very sweet, he lacked the confidence that came effortlessly to Tad.

SC276: Thus indicating that he is not a love interest.

Mono: Or an important character.

Even so, Riley's energy was youthful and energetic and he had a big bright smile, which made me immediately like him.

SC276: And easier to cast for.

"Actually youngest member of the crew, *period*," Riley was quick to explain.

SC276: Why would you lord that over. That's just begging for people to pick on you.

"That was incredible. I hope we can be friends," Riley gushed.

Mono: [Himiko] "Nope!"

I smiled back and responded, "Thanks. I think we should be friends, too."

SC276: [author] "This is totally how real-life friends work, right? Just like Facebook friend requests?"

He jammed his hands in his pockets, rocked back on his heels in a very "Tad" sort of way,

SC276: Which you are somehow able to identify after knowing him for all of three hours.

and blushed. I was excited to meet more of the crew who all seemed really nice.

SC276: Except, y'know, Sofia.

More of them came up and crowded around me to talk and say hello, but I caught myself looking back toward where Mac was still standing.

SC276: In case you forgot he's one of the *main* love interests.

I watched him fume for a moment before storming off. I didn't understand why he was so angry at what seemed to be just my mere presence in his world.

SC276: Fuck, he's getting self-aware.

I would have to look into that later, I decided,

SC276: -like a visual novel protagonist.

because I didn't have time to concentrate on it in the moment.
I had so many people talking to me all at once I thought my head was going to explode.

SC276: Were we so lucky.

Mono: Nope. We're unlucky, seeing as her head doesn't explode.

When the excitement had died down just a touch, Beth came back over and said we had a bunch of things that needed discussing. There was a lot to figure out:

SC276: Though obviously none more important than a crowd treating her like a sideshow.

things like my contract, discussions on how to put my illusion into the show, and even where else to fit me into the show's running order. The list was long and dizzying

SC276: Oh how cute, she's pretending she can't handle being the center of attention.

as Beth went over it with me, making notes before saying she would get back to me once the issues had been addressed with the whole creative team. She also basically told me what Charles was willing to offer me with regards to the show. It was quite generous

SC276: Well Target starts at a dollar above minimum wage, so that THAT.

Mono: A whole 5 bucks.

and even Beth commented that while I should retain an attorney to look my contract over she doubted an attorney would find issue with anything it said.

SC276: [Beth] "So, y'know, pledge your soul to be trapped here working for eternity."

[Ms. No-Name] "Wait, what?"

[Beth] "Oh yeah, that's completely legal in Vegas. It's also the only way any employees come back after they're worked to the bone. Don't tell Riley - it's a surprise~"

Beth even confided in me it was the best offer she had ever seen Charles make to anyone.

SC276: She was fired two days later for breaches of confidentiality.

She said she would have the contract drawn up if I was okay with the general terms, adding that it would take a couple of days for their legal department to draw them up and that would give me time to find a good entertainment attorney to represent me.

SC276: [Phoenix Wright] "Ma'am, for the final time, I only do *murder charges*."

I appreciated her candor, but I also took Beth's word that it was a great offer.

JofY: It's not like Las Vegas is known for taking advantage of others.

I mean it seemed fantastic, but what did I know?

SC276: You know how to babble. You know how to cheat at auditions. That's about it.

I decided I would double check with whatever lawyer I went to, and I'd ask the cards.

BittplexMutt: Because the cards will tell the past, present and the future as well.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "(flips card over) Summoned Skull. That's not good."

I wasn't really concerned with it that much. I already had what I wanted;

SC276: Absolute power.

Mono: Supernatural powers.

I had made myself a new life:

A somewhat normal life.

Crazy56U: Or, in other words...

BittplexMutt: Somewhat.

SC276: Yes, you're going to be headlining a magic show by using actual magic. *Totally fucking normal.*

Chapter 2

The Hermit

SC276: Ohhh, you ain't trippin' ME up, sister. Perhaps the other most obvious archetype besides the Fool, the Hermit is rank 9 in the suit of trumps. The old man, living reclusively in the mountains, swathed in a gray coat, leaning on a long walking stick, and holding up a lantern. He is nonetheless wise, and has retired from the outside world to further explore himself. Element: Earth. Upright: introspection, wisdom, and guidance. Reversed: loneliness, antisocial, and feeling lost.

Ringmaster: It also teleports you to the Shop.

JofY: And helps bring the main plot back in.

Crazy56U: You have the Old Maid, I win.

BittplexMutt: Hermit Purple.

Mono: Uno!

Giginss: Guys, I'm not the werewolf, I'm the bodyguard!

After what felt like hours of small talk and business conversations,

SC276: YOU'RE TELLING US

I finally found myself sitting in the theater, off on my own for a moment. Everyone else was still there hovering around,

Mono: Literally.

Topher: You'll float too...

mingling, but they had all moved on to other conversations amongst themselves.

SC276: Workaholics, everyone!

I had been told by Beth to wait for her to come back with paperwork I needed to fill out, so I had sat down in one of the theater seats.

SC276: Three days passed.

I felt my legs relax a little and let my body sink into the cushion. I breathed in deeply as I leaned back.

SC276: For fuck's sake, even *I* find this amount of mind control to be gratuitous.

I had been so nervous about the audition that I had barely slept. Sitting down, I realized how tired I actually was.

SC276: Of this story? Supremely.

I thought how lovely I would feel if I had a blanket I could wrap around myself. I'd just curl up in a ball and no one would ever know I was there.

Mono: Oh hey, she thinks she's a hedgehog!

SC276: Or an armadillo. Or a pangolin.

SuperMapslover: Or a penguin.

SC276: ...Penguins don't curl into balls.

Crazy56U: Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

I could feel myself starting to doze off but I was trying to fight it, since the last thing I wanted was to be asleep when Beth returned.

SC276: [The Joker] "Dammit, why isn't she being subdued by my evil plan?!"

That would be pretty embarrassing—and not be the best first impression to make on anyone.

SC276: Wouldn't your *audition* be the first impression?

Even so, I'm pretty sure despite all my fighting that I had actually drifted off for a second

SC276: Side effect of indiscriminate wave-dashing.

before Cam walked up.

"Hey there, Sleeping Beauty,"

SC276: Beth is a *jerk*.

Mono: And then the author got C&Ded by Disney.

SuperMapslover: It could be worse. She could've been C&Ded by Viacom.

SC276: Explain to me how that is worse in this situation.

SuperMapslover: Viacom is pretty notorio-

SC276: No, I mean why the fuck would *this story being C&D'd* by someone different make *anything* worse.

Cam said softly after lightly touching my shoulder and sitting down next to me. "It looked like you met everyone that works here today.

SuperMapslover: As opposed to nobody who works here.

SC276: As opposed to everybody that works over there twenty years ago.

Crazy56U: As opposed to Billy the Janitor, but then again he only graces the Earthly realms when the moon is waxing.

The line to say hello to you after your performance resembled an autograph signing by a boy band.

SC276: Consisting entirely of girls that don't have their own incomes?

Crazy56U: [Avril Lavigne] "Thanks for making me feel like shit, dude."

I don't really know what the latest one is, but Backstreet,

Mono: Ha ha ha, please stop it.

SuperMapslover: *Don't bring Backstreet Boys into this.*

Crazy56U: Oh, goody, Backstreet's back.

Five Directions,

Mono: I said stop it.

SuperMapslover: Not even *One-freaking-Direction* deserves to be brought into this.

Crazy56U: North, South, East, West and Dennis.

One Second of Winter,

Mono: I'm serious, stop.

SuperMapslover: Okay, maybe they deserve to be brought into this.

Crazy56U: *Fucking lucky...*

98 Celsius,

Mono: This isn't funny, fucking quit this shit!

BittplexMutt: 50 Fahrenheit.

SuperMapslover: *STOP IT, NOW.*

Crazy56U: I'm hot blooded, check it and see.

O-city,

Mono: You're single handedly killing the art of music, please fucking stop now!

SuperMapslover: **PLEASE. NO.**

Crazy56U: You know, that band with that hit song, "F-flies"?

NSYNC Boys

Mono: *90's pop is rolling in it's god-damn grave!*

SuperMapslover: **DON'T.**

Crazy56U: Rather appropriate, given how NSync and Backstreet Boys *are* kind of interchangeable.

or Old Kids on a Curb

Mono: ***STOP!***

SuperMapslover (loud, primal scream of rage)

Crazy56U: Swing and a miss. (eats an Oreo)

or something like that."

Mono: Jesus Christ, those were the worst references to musicians I've heard since...

Mick Swagger.

Crazy56U: What about Bieber?

Mono: It's not fun to joke about him anymore after he got "good".

I laughed hard at his combo of wrong boy band names and his clear indication that he knew all the boy bands; he purposely had made the small wrong switches in their names.

Ringmaster: *yes that is literally the joke you don't need to fucking explain it that's like the first goddamn rule of comedy*

Crazy56U: Comedy's been dead for months now, shut up you ass.

SC276: [Camera] "Yes, that was totally on purpose. Totally."

Topher: THE JOKE WAS HUMOROUS. I LAUGHED BY EXPELLING AIR OUT OF MY LUNGS.

What perhaps made it funnier was the fact that he was pretty enough to be in any of those bands.

Mono:I fucking doubt that.

SC276: Yeah, autotune can only do so much.

"It feels like I met enough people to fill a concert for all those bands put together. It'll take a bit for me to learn everyone's names, though."

SC276: Apparently the greatest number of people a human will remember on a personal level in their lifetimes is three hundred. This chick is how old now and she hasn't even gotten to ten.

"Of course," Cam nodded. "They all just met one person. You just met *two hundred* people. No one's expecting you to know all their names yet.

SC276: Or ever.

You just have to know the important ones, like mine."

Mono: "And the rest of the main characters."

Cam smiled and flashed his full set of pearly whites.

BittplexMutt: Geez, show off much?

Topher: He kept them in a jar.

"Uh . . . who are you?" Cam frowned and pretended to look hurt.

SC276: Right. "Pretended."

I laughed again before proving that I did remember his name at least. "Your name I remember.

SC276: [Ms. No-Name] "I know I do because the narration said so."

How could I forget, Cam? Is it short for Cameron?"

He nodded. "Yeah, it is.

SC276: My name's betterer.

Most of us get our names shortened or get nicknames around here. See?

Topher: And like that, the very concept of nicknames is ruined. From now on, everyone backstage must call me Christopher. I'm sorry, but this dipshit ruined nicknames.

SC276: [Camera] "Yours, by the way, is 'No.' It would have been 'Blank' but no one wanted to insult *No Game No Life*."

You're good, then. Well, maybe you should know Charles's name too. Then you're definitely good."

BittplexMutt: Good, good, good. Good? Good!

Cam shrugged a little and nudged my arm.

SC276: [No] "Stop touching me."

"Yep, I'll just start calling everyone else 'darlin',' like any good southern girl would."

BittplexMutt: How very stereotypical of you.

Mono: And then Rarity sued for copyright.

Cam chuckled at my response. "Sounds like a plan. Are you staying tonight to watch the show?"

"Yeah, I think so. I was told I should stay and see it tonight.

SC276: [No] "No one said anything about anyone but me paying for my ticket, but I'm sure that'll work itself out."

Right now I'm waiting on Beth to bring back some paperwork I have to fill out, and then I think my first official day is next week. Just waiting on drug tests and stuff . . ."

Mono: Drug tests for a magic show?

SC276: You'd be surprised how high you can get on top hat dust.

"Ahem." Cam and I both looked up to see Mac standing directly in front of us, holding a clipboard pressed against his stomach.

Topher: [Mac] "I just got stabbed, this clipboard is the only thing holding my intestines in."

He still looked angry and bothered for reasons I had yet to figure out.

SC276: *Even though you clearly overheard him. God, I fucking hate first-person...*

I looked at him with my eyes narrowed and he puckered his lips together in a manner that resembled a very fake smile.

SC276: I'm not sure that's physically possible.

He looked down at his clipboard as if he was reading something important before looking back at me, and then Cam. "Cam, don't you have work to be doing?" Mac suggested, his tone swift and surly.

Mono: [Camcorder] "Nope. I'm just dicking around."

Cam grinned, unbothered. "Just checkin' on the new girl."
"She seems to be fine," Mac snapped.

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "No one here's stupid enough to hurt her."

I wanted to ask him if it had been absolutely necessary to be so rude, but figured Cam was a big boy who could stick up for himself.

SC276: Yes, you are totally a feminist icon.

As annoyed as I was, I couldn't help but notice how piercing Mac's deep hazel eyes were when he looked at me, despite the anger that was engulfing him. Cam stood up, looking a little confused. I could tell he wasn't accustomed to Mac acting that way,

SC276: What, analyzing everyone's walks let you understand subconscious communication from standing up?

confirming that Mac's odd behavior was related to me.
"What's up with you?" Cam said to Mac in a hushed whisper with a glare that resembled the unspoken word, "chill."

SC276: How the fuck doesn't he know? If Mac's skill in sussing out magic secrets is as big a deal as Joker made it out to be, the fact he *doesn't* know how No's trick worked should've spread across the cast like wildfire, especially since everyone's still here and talking to each other.

Cam then loudly said, "Right, boss," in a very sarcastic manner before turning to me, "Well, Zade, glad to have you aboard.

SC276: [Camera] "Mostly because you make my hair look normal by comparison."

I look forward to working with you."

"Thanks, darlin'," I smiled as I winked. "Me, too."

SC276: She then got sued by every Southern belle character ever. Mostly for being as north as South can be.

Cam began to walk away. After only a few steps he turned around and called back, "Feel free to come hang out on the grid with me during the show tonight. It's a cool view from up there." He pointed up towards the grid directly above us.

Mono: Little did Himiko know Camcorder was about to murder her.

Topher: Except no, the grid is a pretty shit view. It's like watching the stage through a sewer grate.

SC276: So... yeah, she's gonna die.

I smiled again and nodded. "Sounds good." Cam waved and winked at me before turning back around and disappearing through one of the stage entrances, which in this scenario was an exit.

Topher: Yes. That is how doors work.

SC276: Boy, this author has like no faith in her audience.

I turned back to face Mac, who was looking at me with still visible annoyance that hadn't seemed to lighten one bit.

SC276: He doesn't have enough character depth for that.

"Hopefully I wasn't interrupting something important," Mac said, with no attempt at feigning actual sincerity. I could tell he didn't care that he had interrupted, or that he had been rude.

SC276: Good, then you don't mind how rude we've been for the last hundred or so pages.

"Just kindness." I responded. I don't think he expected my answer to be truthful, and he looked taken aback.

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "You tell the truth?"

He had probably expected me to say "Oh, no worries! Nothing important."

SC276: ...Why is there a random italicized quotation mark here?

He made no comment, but backed off a little. When he continued talking, he had a bit less snap in his voice.

SC276: Boy, the screenplay must be a hodgepodge of micromanagement.

"I'd like to schedule a crew call for you once your contract has been signed. You, me, and all of our techs, so we can go over your trick and map out how it will be safely implemented into the show." He knew that calling what I had done a "trick" instead of an illusion I would take as a slight.

Topher: Blah Blah, *Arrested Development* joke, MOVING ON!

It's sort of like telling someone who had just won an Olympic gold medal and was proudly wearing it around their neck, that their necklace was cute.

Mono: So he's just being a patronizing dickhole, good to know.

SC276: If you ask me, he's not being *enough* of a dickhole.

Mac kept incessantly tapping his Sharpie on the side of his clipboard and shifting his weight between his feet.

BittplexMutt: He was confused.

SC276: He was playing *Wii Fit U*.

I stood up slowly and calculated, looking him square in the eye, which probably surprised him a bit, since he was at least six feet tall.

BittplexMutt: The perks of wearing heels.

I've always enjoyed the luxury of being a tall girl.

SC276: "It makes intimidation checks easier."

BittplexMutt: "I could ride all the rollercoasters I wanted."

Topher: "And when I hugged a guy their face would go straight in my boobs."

I'm five foot nine inches

Topher: *Guffaws in 6'1"*

SC276: 5'11".

and so while I don't usually tower above any guys I know, I can definitely look them directly in the eye.

BittplexMutt: "Sometimes I get really close enough to make them uncomfortable."

Most girls who at five feet five inches (which, I believe, is an average height for a woman) have to look up.

BittplexMutt: Unlike me, who has trouble looking at people, who aren't my family, because of anxiety.

Topher: Why did you include research notes in your FUCKING STORY?

My height was an advantage that I never took for granted

SC276: Enough so to elaborate about it while *interrupting the fucking story to do so*.

and here, again, I was happy that I didn't have to look up to him—figuratively or literally.

BittplexMutt: Not even mentally?

Mono: Or metaphorically?

Topher: Or hypothetically?

In heels I could even be as tall or taller than him and I've always loved that part about being the height I am.

BittplexMutt: "I loved to cower over people that dare have a different opinion than me."

I half smiled and slowly spoke, "Maybe you misunderstood.

SC276: OK, this couldn't be more of an Intimidation check if it *tried*.

I don't show anyone how it's done. That wasn't just for the audition. I handle this illusion on my own."

BittplexMutt: "Now begone peasant, I have to continue gloating about myself."

Topher: uh, NO. YOU ARE NOT FALLING OUT OF THE FUCKING CEILING WITHOUT HOURS OF REHEARSALS AND TECHING. IT'S JUST NOT GOING TO FUCKING HAPPEN. EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENS WHEN, OR YOU'RE PUTTING BOTH YOUR LIFE AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS IN DANGER.

Mac held still for a moment, and then glanced up from his clipboard, looking irritated.

BittplexMutt: He speaks for all of us.

Mono: Yep. Couldn't agree more.

SC276: Finally, an author considerate enough to make a hatesink character we can actually relate to.

He pursed his lips and flared his nostrils.

Crazy56U: So, basically... (tapes nose to forehead)

BittplexMutt: Like a cartoon character.

Mono: Or a horse.

Topher: Or a cartoon horse.



SC276:

The tapping stopped. He dropped the clipboard from his stomach and held it in his hand

SC276: ...what?

while pointing his finger directly in my face.

BittplexMutt: Poking her eye in the process.

"Listen, lady, I don't know who else you worked for, but we don't do that Lone Ranger stuff around here.

BittplexMutt: [Mac] "We stopped that ever since that movie flopped in the box office."

Topher: HELL YEAH, BRING THE HAMMER DOWN, MAC!

I'm the technical director and in charge of everyone's safety, no matter how stupid you want to be. You do what I say, and I keep your pretty self from getting hurt. Got it?"

SC276: I don't agree with the "pretty" line, but otherwise, Mac just proved he's like the best character we ever riffed ever.

I'm fairly certain he growled at me as he spoke.

SC276: And then he started barking.

Myriad thoughts ran through my head and I'm pretty sure several seconds passed in silence as we stared each other down.

BittplexMutt: It was the most intense staring contest ever.



Crazy56U: [Sweet Dee] " "



[Mac] " "

SC276: (badly sings that song)

I could feel my hands tightening into fists. I really did want to punch him. I could see it happening.

Crazy56U: Sweet Dee vs. Mac (It's Always Ebony in Las Vegas) | DEATH BATTLE!

Mono: Please for the love of fuck punch him.

SC276: For what, wanting the show he works on to go through three shows a night for forty months a year to happen without *anyone dying*?

Mono: *Because I want someone to get punches so something interesting happens!*

I'm not strong by any means but I'm also not a wimp.

Crazy56U: After all, you *are* a Hundred Dollar Baby.

I wouldn't have broken anything, but he would have been bruised and sore.

BittplexMutt: Like your ego.

Topher: And you would've been fired... DO IT.

I quickly ran through the possible outcomes

SC276: "I have looked up everything about the enemy."

of punching the technical director on my first day of work.

BittplexMutt: "Removing all the negative consequences though."

It didn't really seem to be the best idea.

Mono: *Nooooooooooooooooooooo!*

I leaned into him so closely that it might have looked like to an outsider that I was about to kiss him.

SC276: "Y'know, to fake out the audience."

I huffed a little and my words were slow and deliberate. "I understand this is your job and all, but I don't think you're listening to me," I hissed.

BittplexMutt: "What part of "I want to work on my own and I don't care about anyone." did you not understand?"

Topher: "HOW DARE YOU CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY OF YOUR CAST AND CREW, YOU INCOMPETENT FUCK!"

SC276: Meanwhile the DM's yelling "Will you stop doing Intimidation checks for this scene already?!"

I tapped his chest with my finger and he jolted a bit at my touch. He looked at me like I was speaking some kind of foreign language.

SC276: It doesn't surprise me that this character doesn't know sanity.

"I'm not listening? Lady, you need your ears cleaned," he snarled back. He turned around to walk away, as if that was the end of our conversation.

SC276: Why?

If he was trying to piss me off more, it was working.

I grabbed him by the shoulder, stopping him in his tracks and swinging him around to face me.

SC276: Despite not being strong.

My face had flushed and I'd raised my voice to a full yell.

SC276: Like a child throwing a temper tantrum.

Mono: And then she got fired.

"And you need to get some manners. I'm not showing you how it's done, okay? If we have a problem I can go to another show where the technical director doesn't have a God complex. I'm not a girl who needs a knight in shining armor." I was practically snarling at him.

SC276: What does that have to do with *anything*?!

Topher: He's not trying to be a knight in shining armor, he's trying to be a technical director, and any other TD would tell you the same! GO SEE HOW YOUR POWERS GO OVER IN SALEM, YOU PRETENTIOUS DIVA!

Mac gritted his teeth and looked like he might hit me, but I knew that wasn't really an option for him. Guys like him didn't hit women, no matter how mad we made them.

SC276: You mean guys with *respected jobs that are trying to do them*?

He laughed loudly. "Ha! Good luck finding a Technical Director who will treat you like the princess you clearly think you are. If I found you locked in a tower, I promise I'd leave you there."

Mono: Not that you'd be the only one...

Mac whipped around again and this time saw Riley, who had been standing just a few feet away from us the whole time.

SC276: He wasn't brought up until now because he wasn't important to Harry's journey.

Riley was pretending not to be paying too much attention, but you could tell that was all he had been doing. I couldn't blame him.

SC276: [Ridley] "Man, seeing a Sue being chewed out is a better show than the one we put on!"

Mac glowered at Riley and barked, "Where's C.S.? Riley, go find Charles. Now!"
"On the move," Riley replied with a nervous, almost panicked look on his face as he ran off to the side and disappeared.

SC276: Off-camera.

Everyone standing within earshot suddenly seemed to be looking at the floor, but I could tell that they had been listening to every word.

SC276: They also think that seeing a Sue being chewed out is a better show than the one they put on.

It was almost comical how they all tried to look like they were doing other things. One petite, pixie-like girl

Topher: she had a square head and sunglasses?

who I knew was in the cast, though I didn't know her name, was standing the nearest to me.

**SC276: And now a paragraph about a character we have no reason to care about.
Mono: Oh hai, main character number 234283!**

She had really bright red hair that was short and framed her face. I glanced her way and she immediately looked down at her arm and pretended to scratch it over and over with her bright-colored nails that were a beautiful shade of teal. She continued to stare at her arm as if there was something wrong with her perfectly tan skin. She squinted and narrowed her eyes never looking up or meeting my gaze, but I am pretty sure she felt me looking at her the whole time. I could feel my face reddening, and I started breathing hard.

SC276: That was when she realized she was a lesbian.

I was angry and embarrassed to be so shaken up in front of everyone.

SC276: Some "shaken" with how many Intimidation checks you've been making.

Mac could have at least tried to talk to me in private; not in front of people I didn't even know yet.

SC276: He wanted witnesses in case you flew off the handle like you're doing right now.

I was back in his face, stern and loud. "Look. It was part of my deal, end of story. I didn't know Joffrey Baratheon worked here now."

**SC276: [Mac the Knife] "Who?"
BittplexMutt: Shhh, spoilers lady!**

I wondered if Mac even watched *Game of Thrones*, but hoped he would get my reference to the child king from the first two seasons who acted like, well, a child given power he didn't deserve or know how to handle.

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "Oh, he does. He just joined us and is waiting on his contract now. *HINT HINT.*"

BittplexMutt: We get it. Look, I don't even watch or read Game Of Thrones but I at least know some of the memes.

Topher: Hodor. Hodor Hodor.

HOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOR!

I didn't know if Mac was really a spoiled brat, and I knew I might have been overreacting,

SC276: "Might?"

but I had to protect certain things—and my secrets were definitely among them.

SC276: Then don't use them when you're auditioning to be part of a magic show that requires a team of two hundred people to pull off! What did you fucking expect?!

I turned around and began to storm off. I'm not even sure where I was going to go. I just wanted to leave as fast as I could.

SC276: If you didn't want unwanted attention and wanted to keep your secrets to yourself, don't apply to an entry-level position in a two-hundred men BIG STAGE VEGAS MAGIC SHOW! You want to eat your cake and lock it in a safe too!

I couldn't bear talking to him for one more moment. The anger inside of me was bubbling and I could feel my blood pressure rising to unhealthy levels.

Mono: And then she died.

I had only taken four or five pounding steps when

SC276: "-the floor collapsed beneath me."

Charles appeared from behind one of the black curtains that hung down and around every stage entrance. I didn't even really see him walk out but I felt his presence—he is definitely that kind of man.

SC276: Doesn't shower for weeks on end?

He had quite possibly been standing behind the curtain this whole time we had been arguing, just listening.

SC276: And doing fuck-all about the new hire engaging in a screaming match with his technical director. How has he been going on this long again?

Charles called out in a calm, direct, and somehow soothing voice,

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "Why don't you come here for a second, okay, you dumb bitch?"

"Zade, come back here, please." I instantly stopped.

SC276: The worst part about this entire contradiction in the fantasy is the part of No will be played by Lightning Dawn, the part of Mac the Knife will be played by Principal Celestia, and the part of Magic-boy is inevitably being played by Grandruler.

My body felt like it was on fire.

SC276: So that's what being under his mind-control spell feels like.

I swallowed, took a deep breath, and nodded my head slowly before turning around. I walked slowly over to Charles with my head down. I felt horrible for causing a huge scene.

SC276: [No] "Who would've thought constantly making Intimidation checks would have consequences?!"

I had wanted to look professional and put together and I instead ended up looking like a five-year-old child throwing a temper tantrum.

SC276: I'd say "at least you admit it," but this is *published*.

It's not even technically my first day yet and I've already made this huge fool of myself,

Mono: You've been making a fool of yourself ever since the beginning of the story...

SC276: What else to be expected of a girl from a living contradiction of a town...

I thought as I edged my way towards Charles. I was more than mortified and I couldn't even look him in the eye so I looked down at the floor as I shuffled my feet. What was he going to say? I wouldn't blame him if he changed his mind right there and just had me leave his theater.

SC276: You don't have to worry about that, No, that's what would happen in real life.

My heart was pounding so hard it felt as if it was going to beat out of my chest and my hands fidgeted, nervously.

Everyone in the entire theater had stopped to focus solely on Charles, Mac, and me.

Crazy56U: "A tumbleweed rolled across the floor."

They now weren't even pretending to be doing anything else.

SC276: Some of them pulled out popcorn.

Even those who had previously not cared about the spat Mac and I were having, were now also watching all of us. Charles looked angry, but his voice was firm and calm. He slowly leaned down and forced his eyes to mine. He reached his hand out and pulled up my chin.

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "What the fuck i- hey, Mac, come here, is this thing on her neck a mole or a cyst?"

Mono: And broke her neck.

SC276: Doesn't that count as workplace harassment?

I hate it when people do that. My mother does that to me, too. I finally allowed my eyes to look up and straight into his eyes. He gazed directly at me for what felt like ten years.

SC276: It was actually fifty. He was dead for forty-three of them.

Once he secured my attention he dropped his hand that had been holding my chin and glared at Mac.

SC276: And there goes Grandruler.

His words were spoken slowly and as a matter of fact. "When I auditioned Zade, I guaranteed her the privacy to set up her own act."

SC276: Because you just do that with random unproven girls with no sense of color coordination. Honestly, you're lucky this isn't reality so there's no way her side of the deal involves the only color on her *being* her hair.

Mac calmly answered him, "Charles, that isn't up to O.S.H.A. requirements. I can't run a show like this.

Crazy56U: [Charlie Kelly] "Oh, what the fuck is your deal, man? Since when do you care about that shit? Last night we got trashed on PBR and took a shotgun to the stage lights!"

[Mac] "Yes Charlie, but if you recall correctly, that was because we needed to *change* those lights, and we forgot where the ladder was, but that's not important right now!"

BittplexMutt: Why is it that the sane ones are often portrayed as evil?

SC276: Because sanity doesn't agree with Sue girl power fantasy.

People on this crew have to know how it's done. We have to be involved in the production of it. She needs help with it, I'm sure. How will we even know if something is wrong?

SC276: [Mac the Knife] "How will we know if something she does, whether accidental or otherwise, won't hurt someone else? *Epecially* since it involves pyrotechnics. Did you forget what happened to Siegfried and Roy, or does about fifteen years ago count as 'over a chapter ago?'"

This is crazy. We would *never* do things that way. You've got to agree with me."

Topher: YEAH! YEAH YOU FUCKING DO!

Zeb, who had been talking to the show's lighting director, was just a few feet from us and shot Charles a look. I got the feeling that Zeb was the only person who could have just joined the conversation at will, and, in fact, he decided to pipe in. "Charles you know how seldom I agree with Mac, but in this case I would have to say that he *is* right."

SC276: Well that's a new twist. *Two* people opposing the Sue.

Charles nodded at Zeb and looked as if he was giving serious thought to what Mac had just said. I can only imagine the look on my face as I began to panic about what Charles's response would be. *My mother was right. What was I thinking?*

Mono: You were thinking?

Charles looked directly at Mac before speaking again. "Mac, you raise very good points, and you are correct." I had no idea what I was going to say. What could I say to turn this back around? I was still searching for words when Charles continued,

SC276: She let the timer to choose an option run out.

"So Zade will tell me, and *only* me.

SC276: [Magic-boy] "And I totally won't steal it."

Right, Zade?" He didn't look at me until he finished his sentence.

Topher: YOU UTTER ASSHAT.

I think it took me a couple of moments to process what he was saying. I didn't really love his idea either, but I could deal with it. I knew that he would never push to know the way it was truly done. I could give him just enough information to comply. I could make it work.

SC276: I'm still calling this being Unreasonably Adamant, A.K.A. when a Sue or Stu being faced with someone who provides a reasonable argument is bailed out by someone who agrees with them against all reason pulling authority on them. Congrats, author, you pulled a Mykan. Thanks to Ring for help figuring that name out. I'm sure we we will eventually see why.

The discussion definitely could have gone a whole lot worse.

SC276: No, not really.

I finally nodded my agreement. The entire theater was watching me. I could hear whispering. I was used to some of that from where I grew up, but even so I wanted to melt into the floor.

SC276: The part of No will be played by a Shadow Siren.

Finally, I mustered the words, "Sure. I'll tell you anything you want to know. But only you."

BittplexMutt: "I can only mind control someone one at a time."

My words were soft, but I looked directly at Charles when I said the "only you" part.

SC276: And this couldn't be inset during the quote because screenplays don't work like that.

Charles began to look around the room. "See, children? We can all play in the sandbox at the same time."

BittplexMutt: I used to play in the sandbox, that is until the stray cats kept shitting in it.

Topher: And by Stray cats, we mean General Zaad over there.

It felt more like a command than a comment. What he really meant was, "Show's over, folks. Get back to work now."

BittplexMutt: "Wait, we were working?"

Charles looked back at me. "Come into my office and we can talk about this more."
I nodded and was about to walk offstage, but I realized he wasn't done talking.

SC276: Boy, you're fucking impatient.

I froze in place. It felt like one of the longest moments in my life. Charles looked at Mac, who seemed to want to be done with this display as much as I did.

SC276: PREACHIN' TO THE FUCKING CHOIR

"Mac, please talk to Zeb and Beth about how we are integrating Zade's act into the show." He started to turn, but paused mid-motion. "Oh, and we are cutting the Dance Illusion."

SC276: [Magic-boy] "Some idiot sold our Wii Motion Plus controllers for drug money."

Mono: Oh no...

Sofia, who had been standing off to the side with another performer, looked indignantly at Charles.

BittplexMutt: As she should.

I watched her redden, as her eyes got wide. She looked as if she was going to kill someone. I wondered if that someone was Charles or me—or maybe both of us.



SC276:

She gave me one terrible death stare, so I'm guessing it was me, before storming up to Charles.

Topher: And cutting his throat.

"You're cutting my main illusion?" she huffed angrily.

SC276: She's acting like this is a goddamn theater troupe and she's not just the beautiful assistant character in *his* show.

Charles met her gaze and raised his eyebrow just slightly. I could tell that she didn't intimidate him.

SC276: [DM] "Sure, *now* you stop with the Intimidation checks."

Everything was always on his terms, including his relationships. I doubt the word “compromise” was in his vocabulary.

SC276: Except, y’know, just now, when he compromised between the two of you.

Mono: I doubt every word with more than two syllables is in his vocabulary.

Charles walked closely to her, stroked her face, and took her hand in his. I’m guessing it was meant to be loving, but looked more like he was brushing her off.

SC276: To your shipping goggles.

“This will give us a chance to develop a new illusion for you to be in, my dear. I’ve been doing that silly illusion for way too long, anyway.”

SC276: Yeah, call her main illusion silly, *that’ll* totally keep her from wanting to murder you.

Charles smiled briefly before dropping her hand rather abruptly and walking off. He shouted back toward me. “Come, Zade. I’d like to get this ironed out before the first show tonight.

Mono: He’s referring to his shirt, by the way.

Back to work, people. The show must go on, if you hadn’t heard.”

SC276: Then why does each chapter consist of only one plot point each surrounded by loads of padding?

Charles was walking fairly quickly so I began to follow behind. I had to pick up the pace to almost run to catch up with him.

SC276: Because he was walking on stilts.

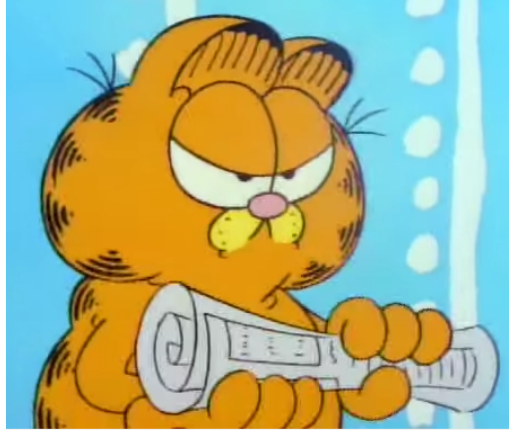
I was very grateful that I was able to get away from everyone that had been staring at me for the past few minutes.

Crazy56U: Specifically, like this:



Topher: Why are you here, Garfield? Your presence confuses me.

Crazy56U: You just don’t get it, do you?



It truly had felt like an eternity.

Mono: You tell me.

SC276: (dead-eyed glare)

Though at the same time I was dreading what was going to happen. Was I going to be able to handle this? Nervous waves crashed over me and rippled through my entire body.

SC276: She was then washed away and smashed into a cliff face.

A million thoughts rushed through my head and I felt dizzy and sick to my stomach.

SC276: She's not used to thinking this hard before.

I could feel everyone watching us as we walked toward his office offstage. As we approached his office door no one said anything until they heard the door thud to a close.

SC276: [crew member] "Oh thank fuck, he's gone. I'm gonna go get some tacos and gamble with them."

It was a big heavy door that made a hard pounding noise when it shut, and then I was alone with him.

Mono: And fuck knows what happens from there on...

Topher: Fuck happens.

SC276: Exactly.

Charles told me to sit down. I did so, slowly feeling my heart pound again and my chest tighten. I swallowed hard.

SC276: Congratulations, you just found a guy harder to lie to than your mother.

He was facing the wall, but he spoke deliberately. "Well, my dear. Tell me everything."

SC276: [Magic-boy] "Or I shall be forced to bring out Mr. Thingy."

Ringmaster: Before anyone asks, yes, we plan to continue this past the point of this free excerpt. However, obviously, we can't just publicly riff this entire thing, that'd most likely get us into a shit-ton of legal trouble. While this part will stay public permanently due to the nature of the excerpt, others might only be public for a limited time, only be available for editors and veteran commenters to riff, or other methods like that. For those upcoming parts, after the week is through, a couple editors will get together to create a "recap" that uses choice excerpts of each riff between sections explaining the less-riffable stupidity that happens in between. The recap will remain public permanently, even if the riff itself does not.

Crazy56U: K. So, anyways, next time on "Bring Me to Life", more Vegas bullshit!

BittplexMutt: With that being said, I have a feeling that things will take a turn to the batshit insane levels of insanity.

PanzerThiefZero: Oh good. I did need a break, anyway.

Mono: I don't know what happened in this book and I don't give two shits about it.

Topher: *groan of deep mental agony* Fuck this, I'm gonna make my own *My Immortal* riff, with blackjack and hookers! *climbs down a hatch in the floor*

SC276: God, is this what reading *Twilight* is supposed to be like? Was *Twilight* this stuffed with padding? While it's not a hate-Stu fantasy like Mykan or even Chat is, it's not that far removed. This is so far the most generic Sue story I've seen. There's some interesting stuff happening, I guess, but it's buried in paragraphs of babbling about the most irrelevant things. It's beholden to visual writing, doesn't think through the implications of anything it says, and contradicts itself in multiple places. Why the fuck does a girl, trying to keep the fact she's a wizard secret and is clearly uncomfortable being the center of attention, auction to be in by all estimates the *biggest magic show in Las Vegas*? Mac is clearly meant to be antagonistic, but trying to keep a safe show - *extra* important if it's as big as the story claims - just makes him the most right person. Already my head's buzzing with ideas of how this story could be improved, cut the babbling, include some time when the main character's alone so we get her thought processes where they don't actively grind the plot to a halt - like, she's living a hotel or something, right? They can take place there - focus the description, cut the nonsensical hair, and *give us a reason to root for this character*. Oh and also *mention* her name earlier and more often. And put it in third-person so that we don't have entire bits that are only there because she "overheard" them, for Christ's sake. I don't think I'm fully angry, I only felt my temper rise at the gratuitous padding, but who knows if that'll change as the book progresses and probably gets worse.

Crazy56U: Well, hey, look on the bright side. *It ain't My Immortal*.