

TRAGEDY

Written By

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance):

ETHAN - (Male, 30s) - A Guide

TEIRESIAS - (Female, 50s) - A Blind Soothsayer

JULIET - (Female, 12) - A Young Lover

YOUNG ETHAN - (Male, Early 20s) - A Younger Guide

YOUNG MALLORY - (Male, Early 20s) - A Younger Guide

ROMEO - (Male, 14) - A Young Lover

TYBALT - (Male, 15) - An Aggressive Member Of The Capulet Family

MALLORY - (Female, 30s) - A Guide

OEDIPUS - (Male, 18) - A Man Destined For Tragedy

KING LAIOS - (Male, late 30s) - The King of Thebes

MINOTAUR - (Male, any age) - A Half Man, Half Bull

In spite of the number of characters, this Commedia-inspired play can be performed with as little as 5 actors, 3 men and 2 women. They would be cast as follows: One male actor for Ethan and young Ethan. One female actor for Mallory and Young Mallory. One male actor for Romeo and Oedipus. One female actor for Juliet. One male actor for Teiresias, Tybalt, King Laios and Minotaur.

The world of this play has a somewhat cartoonish feel and logic, and the characters tend to default to heightened emotional states, but not at the expense of the emotional core that runs throughout the story.

Specific locations in the play include castles and courtyards, balconies and cemeteries. In short, a bare stage and a healthy dose of imagination should do the trick.

Lastly, though Tragedy is not a musical, there are a handful of songs in the show. Demos of the songs can be heard at the following link:

<https://soundcloud.com/oded-gross/sets/tragedy>

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Ethan and the love of his life, Mallory are problem solvers. Curiously enough, the people whose problems they are hired to solve are famous fictional characters throughout history. What these characters want, though they don't realize it, is to get to the end of their story. What Ethan and Mallory want is to avoid Tragedy. Easier said than done, when you're working with people like Romeo and Juliet and Oedipus Rex.

ACT 1

CHAPTER 1 - TEIRESIAS' VISION

Hello and welcome to our story. What you are looking at, imagine if you will, the inside of a very large book. White pages. Lines across. Typical book stuff. It is within these pages that you will find yourselves transported around the world to castles and courtyards, cemeteries and libraries. All that is required from you is a little imagination, as we flip through the pages of this book.

In the center of the book, in the spine, there is a door. This is less typical. This door leads... somewhere.

On the top left side of the book is written the word, TRAGEDY. That is the title of the book and therefore you will find it on every page. In the top right are the words, CHAPTER 1: TEIRESIAS' VISION.

TEIRESIAS, a blind but all-knowing soothsayer sits on a stool throwing bread crumbs onto the ground. ETHAN approaches.

ETHAN

Excuse me, are you the blind but all-knowing soothsayer Teiresias?

TEIRESIAS

Yes. Yes I am? You must be... Joanna.

ETHAN

...No.

TEIRESIAS

You're not Joanna?

ETHAN

No.

TEIRESIAS
Are you Diana?

ETHAN
No.

TEIRESIAS
Diane?

ETHAN
No.

TEIRESIAS
Joanne?

ETHAN
No.

TEIRESIAS
Is there an Anne in your name?

ETHAN
No.

TEIRESIAS
Is there an N in your name?

ETHAN
Yes.

TEIRESIAS
Is your name... Kimmie?

ETHAN
No. My name is Ethan. You called for me.

TEIRESIAS
Ethan. Of course. Thank you for coming. Let me look at you.

Teiresias continues to stare off into the distance.

TEIRESIAS
You're a handsome man.

ETHAN

...Thanks.

TEIRESIAS

(Flirty)

Do you fancy old, blind soothsayers, Ethan? Or is there a someone special waiting for you at home?

ETHAN

Let's go with someone special.

TEIRESIAS

Wife? Girlfriend? Other?

ETHAN

Roommate.

TEIRESIAS

A special roommate. Curious.

(Then)

We've never met before, have we?

ETHAN

I think I'd remember meeting you. Though I do meet many people in my line of work.

TEIRESIAS

Helping people.

ETHAN

That's right, I'm a facilitator of sorts, helping people overcome certain problems and get the things they want. Is that why you called for me? Is there something you want?

TEIRESIAS

Perhaps.

(Then)

Would you say you are good at your job?

ETHAN

I would let my track record speak for me. My success rate is currently 100 percent. I haven't had a tragedy in 10 years.

TEIRESIAS

10 years?

ETHAN

(With a hint of melancholy)

That's right. Since... Romeo and Juliet.

TEIRESIAS

I don't know them. That case must have been good luck for you.

ETHAN

I learned a lot from it.

TEIRESIAS

You learned how to avoid tragedy?

ETHAN

Yes.

TEIRESIAS

So, that's the lesson of Romeo and Juliet then?

ETHAN

Sure.

TEIRESIAS

And here I thought tragedy was unavoidable.

ETHAN

(Impatiently)

Listen, if you have a job for me, let's hear it. Then I'll go back to my office, give it some consideration, and let you know tomorrow if I can take it.

TEIRESIAS

You don't take every job?

ETHAN

No.

(Then)

So, do you have a job for me? I assumed you called me here because you had a problem.

TEIRESIAS

No. I had a vision.

(Ominously)

I'm afraid it doesn't matter what you learned from this Romeo and Juliet. Tragedy is coming. It's coming for you.

Music begins to play.

The remaining members of the ensemble come from the audience scrutinizing everyone they pass. They begin to sing, dividing the lines of the song appropriately.

ENSEMBLE

(Singing)

IS THAT A SMILE ON YOUR FACE
SOON THAT MAY WELL BE REPLACED
THIS IS VERY SERIOUS
JOY AND THEATRE RARELY MIX

THERE'S JUST NO PLACE FOR LAUGHTER HERE
THE SIGNS ARE CLEAR, AND WHAT THEY SAY
TROUBLE'S ON THE WAY

CAUSE THIS IS TRAGEDY
PREPARE TO BE
PARALYZED BY DARKNESS AND DESPAIR
THERE'S PAIN AND GRIEF
AND NO RELIEF
CAUSE HERE'S THE THING WITH TRAGEDY
IT TYPICALLY
INVOLVES SOMEONE THAT DIES

SOMEONE DIES, SOMEONE CRIES
SO MAYBE NOW YOU REALIZE
YOU'VE BEEN FED A STRING OF LIES
TO GET YOU HERE TONIGHT

WE KNOW YOU THOUGHT YOU'RE HERE TO SEE
A DELIGHTFUL LITTLE COMEDY
WHOSE TITLE SEEMS TO BE
A PLAYFUL STAB AT IRONY

(BUT IT'S) TRAGEDY
PREPARE TO BE
PARALYZED BY DARKNESS AND DESPAIR
IT'S ALL BECAUSE
THERE'S TRAGIC FLAWS
AND TYPICALLY IN TRAGEDIES WITH TRAGIC FLAWS
(MORE)

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

IT MEANS SOMEONE WILL DIE

SO EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SMILING NOW
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SMILING NOW
THINGS ARE GOING TO GET WORSE
MAJOR SHIT IS GOING DOWN

AND UNFORTUNATELY
YOU WILL NOT KNOW WHEN
YOU WILL NOT KNOW HOW
IT CAN HAPPEN EVEN NOW

TRAGEDY
THE IRONY
IS HOW IT ALWAYS TAKES YOU BY SURPRISE
YES, EVEN THOUGH, IT'S TYPICAL
HERE'S THE THING WITH TRAGEDY
IT'S UNPREDICTABLE-

The music cuts off suddenly. An unexpected roar of thunder strikes as the stage goes black.

CHAPTER 2 - 10 YEARS EARLIER - JULIET IN LOVE

The projection on the top right wall changes to correspond to the latest chapter, and will continue to do so throughout the story. It currently reads: "CHAPTER 2 - 10 YEARS EARLIER - JULIET IN LOVE"

A castle in Verona. The sounds of a masquerade party can be heard.

JULIET enters. She sees and quickly approaches ETHAN who is standing in a corner, looking 10-years younger, and wearing a pink carnation on his lapel.

JULIET

Are you Ethan DeMille?

YOUNG ETHAN

I'm wearing the pink carnation. Are you Juliet Capulet?

JULIET

I have the panties on my head.

Juliet does indeed have panties on her head.

JULIET

Thank you for coming to my home to meet me.

YOUNG ETHAN

It sounds like you're having a party. You're not worried I might be seen?

She hands him a mask.

JULIET

Wear this. Everyone's wearing them. No one will notice you.

YOUNG ETHAN

This mask has no eye holes in it.

JULIET

None of them do. That's why no one will notice you.

He puts the mask on, then proceeds to face the wrong direction.

YOUNG ETHAN

So... I received your message.

JULIET

Then you know why I sent for you?

YOUNG ETHAN

I do. The hollow muscular organ that lies within your chest is inflamed with a passionate fire for the young heir of Montague.

JULIET

(Slightly confused)

Yes.

(Then, brightly)

And also, I'm in love with Romeo!

He takes off his mask.

YOUNG ETHAN

I see. And how long have you known this Romeo?

JULIET

Two days.

YOUNG ETHAN

Two days? How can you possibly be in love?

JULIET

It was love at first sight.

YOUNG ETHAN

(Scoffs)

Love at first sight is a myth.

JULIET

(Discouraged)

I don't want to work with someone who doesn't believe in love at first sight!

YOUNG ETHAN

(Back pedaling)

And like all great myths it is based in truth.

JULIET

(Relieved)

Yes. Like the sword in the stone.

YOUNG ETHAN

And the Earth is flat!

JULIET

I hope so. Because I don't know if I can live without my Romeo, I love him so much.

YOUNG ETHAN

Not to worry, Juliet. Love jobs are easy.

JULIET

I'm not sure if he loves me back.

YOUNG ETHAN

That makes it more complicated.

JULIET

Furthermore, my family doesn't approve of him and his family doesn't approve of me.

YOUNG ETHAN

Harder still. Why doesn't your family approve of him?

JULIET

He's not Jewish.

YOUNG ETHAN

Why doesn't his family approve of you?

JULIET

I'm not Jewish either.

(Then, in tears)

Oh Mr. DeMille, will you help me?

YOUNG ETHAN

I couldn't turn down a love job even if I wanted to.

JULIET

I don't have much money.

YOUNG ETHAN

I may I have to turn you down.

JULIET

I know you can't be cheap.

YOUNG ETHAN

Quality never is.

JULIET

So you're good?

YOUNG ETHAN

(Haughtily)

Am I good?

(Then)

I let my track record speak for me.

JULIET

What is your track record?

YOUNG ETHAN

(Proudly)

Forty percent.

JULIET

...So... you're not good?

YOUNG ETHAN

On the contrary, Juliet, in this line of work, 4 out of 10 successes is considered excellent.

JULIET

Oh.

YOUNG ETHAN

But I don't wish to be a braggadocio.

JULIET

(Impressed)

Braggadocio? My, you have a way with words.

YOUNG ETHAN

I have a very way with words. You won't find a more qualified person for this job. I'm smart, poetic, insightful-

JULIET

I have no doubt of your abilities, Mr. DeMille, but I fear hiring a person of your caliber probably costs a fortune.

YOUNG ETHAN

I can't do this job for any less than 50,000.

JULIET

50,000?

YOUNG ETHAN

50,000! But consider what you get.

JULIET

(Nodding)

Someone smart. And... smart. And... Smart. and...

YOUNG ETHAN

Poetic?

JULIET

(Excitedly)

I know and I wasn't even trying.

YOUNG ETHAN
50,000, Juliet. Don't try to talk me down, it won't work.

JULIET
I can pay you 25.

YOUNG ETHAN
45.

JULIET
25.

YOUNG ETHAN
35.

JULIET
25.

YOUNG ETHAN
15.

JULIET
25.

YOUNG ETHAN
Here's 10, I'll give you 10 more when the job is done.

JULIET
You got yourself a deal.

YOUNG ETHAN
Let's shake!

They shake.

YOUNG ETHAN
(Realizing)
Dammit!

JULIET
Oh Ethan, with you helping I'm more optimistic than ever that I'll have my happily ever after.

YOUNG ETHAN
The odds are definitely, almost, half way in your favor.

JULIET

I used to think happy endings were just for Fairy Tales or massage parlors... But now I'm forty percent certain there is a happy ending in store for me.

(Then)

Who says love at first sight isn't real?

The lights go out on Juliet. A spotlight shines on Ethan.

YOUNG ETHAN

Love at first sight isn't real!

CHAPTER 3 - LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Ethan acknowledges the chapter change, but continues his thought.

YOUNG ETHAN

I don't say this to minimize her chances. Her odds are what they are. I'll certainly do my best. But it's absurd! How can you possibly know you want to spend your whole life with someone based on one glance? Love is about intimacy, commitment, passion, traits developed only in established relationships that have withstood the test of time. Love at first sight pre-supposes that you know how you're going to feel a month from now, or year from now, or a thousand years from now. Someone crosses your path and suddenly you're a fortune-teller? It's not possible.

A woman approaches him.

YOUNG MALLORY

Excuse me, are you Ethan DeMille?

YOUNG ETHAN

Yes.

(Then, immediately to himself)

Oh my God! I am in love!

YOUNG MALLORY

My name is Mallory. I heard you might have a room for rent.

YOUNG ETHAN

...yes.

YOUNG MALLORY

Is there an application I should fill out?

YOUNG ETHAN

I'll get it for you.

Ethan goes inside his house to retrieve an application. Did I mention we are now at Ethan's house? During the time when he was ranting how he doesn't believe in love at first sight, prior to falling in love at first sight, he walked from Verona to his house, where he met this woman and now goes to retrieve for her an application.

YOUNG ETHAN

(To himself)

I've never been one to see the future, but now I can't see a future without her. She is the one for me. She is my purpose and it can not be quelled, intermitted or interrupted in any-

YOUNG MALLORY

Do you have the application?

YOUNG ETHAN

Yes. Right here.

He hands her the application to fill out.

YOUNG ETHAN

Do you need a pen?

YOUNG MALLORY

I have one.

She pulls a pen from her hair and proceeds to fill out the application.

YOUNG ETHAN

(To himself)

I don't read palms or tarot cards or crystal balls, but somehow she's made a psychic out of me because I see clearly! She and I are meant to be! Astrology, leaves of tea, I've never had a gift for any of those, and yet, I might as well be Nostradamus right now because the future is plain. There is no fighting it. There is nothing that needs to be done. It is so written.

Mallory has finished filling out the application. She hands it to Ethan.

Here you go. YOUNG MALLORY

Excellent. YOUNG ETHAN

The room is still available, right? YOUNG MALLORY

Absolutely. YOUNG ETHAN
(Then, re: her application)
Provided you qualify.

I have a job, if that's your concern. YOUNG MALLORY

Oh? YOUNG ETHAN

I help people. I'm a facilitator of sorts. YOUNG MALLORY

As am I. What is your success rate? Mine's 4 out of 10, which I'm sure you know is nothing to be embarrassed about. YOUNG ETHAN

6 out of 10. YOUNG MALLORY

Wow! That's... YOUNG ETHAN

Less to be embarrassed about. YOUNG MALLORY

If we worked together, we'd be 10 out of 10. We'd be perfect. YOUNG ETHAN

I don't think it works that way. YOUNG MALLORY

Still, might not be a bad idea. You and me. Otherwise, the two of us living here, competing for the same clients... could be a problem. YOUNG ETHAN

YOUNG MALLORY

If it is then I'll have to live elsewhere because I work alone.

YOUNG ETHAN

I don't think it'll be a problem.

YOUNG MALLORY

Good.

YOUNG ETHAN

Why do you work alone, if I may ask?

YOUNG MALLORY

Well, for one thing, I tend to make more money.

YOUNG ETHAN

I charged my latest client 50,000.

YOUNG MALLORY

50,000? Impressive. But it's not just about the money.

YOUNG ETHAN

Good because she haggled me down to negative 10.

YOUNG MALLORY

What?

YOUNG ETHAN

Nothing.

YOUNG MALLORY

I also like happy endings.

YOUNG ETHAN

Who doesn't?

YOUNG MALLORY

I've had a string of good luck, and I don't want to ruin it by working with someone whose cases tend to end in tragedy.

YOUNG ETHAN

Only slightly more than half the time.

YOUNG MALLORY

I have a reputation to uphold, a standard to meet. I helped Tiny Tim, that was good.

YOUNG ETHAN

I helped Anna Karenina. Not that good.

YOUNG MALLORY

I helped Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy, that was good.

YOUNG ETHAN

I helped Willy Loman. Not that good.

YOUNG MALLORY

I helped Orlando and Rosalind, that was good.

YOUNG ETHAN

I helped Henry The 6th once, twice then a third time. Now he's dead. Not that good?

YOUNG MALLORY

Not that good, Mr. DeMille. You work your cases, I'll work mine!

(Then)

I trust that won't affect my application status?

YOUNG ETHAN

The status of your application is approved. The room is yours.

YOUNG MALLORY

Excellent.

YOUNG ETHAN

Just uh, you know, clean up after yourself. Keep it down after 10, and... Oh, don't go in the attic, it's haunted.

YOUNG MALLORY

Haunted?

YOUNG ETHAN

By ghosts, yes.

YOUNG MALLORY

There's no such thing as ghosts.

Ethan opens the center door in the spine of the book. This door evidently leads to the attic... among other places. *Ghostly sounds emanate from within.* He shuts the door.

YOUNG ETHAN
I'm sure you're right.

YOUNG MALLORY
It's probably just a rat.

YOUNG ETHAN
Or... the spirit of a dead rat.

YOUNG MALLORY
Nothing to be afraid of.

YOUNG ETHAN
Or... something absolutely terrifying.

YOUNG MALLORY
You should learn to face your fears.

YOUNG ETHAN
Or... we should go to dinner. I can tell you about my latest client. She's a young girl named-

YOUNG MALLORY
I probably shouldn't hear about your latest client. We don't work together. Confidentiality and all.

YOUNG ETHAN
Of course.

YOUNG MALLORY
Besides I have a prospective client of my own I have to meet.

YOUNG ETHAN
Duty calls.

(Then)
Here's a key. Welcome to the neighborhood, Mallory.

YOUNG MALLORY
I'll see you later, roommate.

Mallory grabs the key and heads to the exit.

ETHAN
(To himself)
Roommate indeed. The future is set, my sweet love. We are destined to make quite a pair!

The lights go out on Ethan and come up once again on Mallory.

YOUNG MALLORY

We will never work together, Mr. Demille and I. Never.

Mallory takes out a pink carnation and starts to pin it to her shirt.

YOUNG MALLORY

I mean, Ethan seems nice but I don't need a partner. You have to be quick on your feet in this line of work. There's no time to make decisions by committee. You have to be fast and flexible and I do that better alone.

(Then, ruefully)

And yet even then, I fail almost as often as I succeed. And he's worse than I. Four out of ten? Good grief. I mean, it's a tough industry, to be sure, but I couldn't tolerate any more failures. I can barely endure the ones I have.

(Then)

It's terribly painful when things go wrong. Things that seem to be out of my control. I don't understand, I was born to serve, born to be a helper, that's how I define my life, and it's a rewarding way to make a life, save for the simple fact that some people it seems can not be helped? I refuse to believe that. And yet... 6 out of 10 is still a failing grade. Somehow, I must do better. And clearly working with someone who fails more often than he succeeds is not better. So Mr. DeMille and I will never work on a case together.

A young man approaches Mallory. He is wearing a pair of underwear on his head.

YOUNG MAN

Are you Mallory?

YOUNG MALLORY

Yes. You must be... Romeo?

CHAPTER 4 - WHEN I SAY WHEREFORE

Juliet is pacing nervously on her balcony. From off stage we hear a woman's voice call:

NURSE (O.S.)

Juliet!

JULIET

(Calling off stage)

I'm on the balcony, good nurse. I'll come in soon!

(Then)

What's taking him so long?

Young Ethan enters slightly out of breath.

YOUNG ETHAN

Juliet, I'm here.

JULIET

Ethan! Oh thank God! Did anyone see you?

YOUNG ETHAN

No. Well... your mother... and your father... and your cousin, Tidbit.

JULIET

Tybalt?

YOUNG ETHAN

Tidbit.

JULIET

Tybalt?

YOUNG ETHAN

He said Tidbit.

JULIET

His name is Tybalt.

YOUNG ETHAN

Very small?

JULIET

He's tall.

YOUNG ETHAN

Very hairy?

JULIET

He's bald!

YOUNG ETHAN

Likes to lick your face and wag his tail?

JULIET

That's my dog!

YOUNG ETHAN

Tidbit?

JULIET

Poochie!

YOUNG ETHAN

Poochie! That's right! That's what he said.

JULIET

Well good thing you didn't see Tybalt. He's a real hot head!

YOUNG ETHAN

Duly noted.

Ethan sits and takes out from his bag a small tin box with many index cards inside. He starts to write on a few blank ones.

JULIET

What do you have there?

YOUNG ETHAN

This? Oh, well... Do you know what you're going to say to Romeo once you see him?

JULIET

No.

He points to the box.

YOUNG ETHAN

You will.

He pulls out some cards he's prepared and looks them over.

YOUNG ETHAN

All you need do is read off the cards I give you.

JULIET (cont'd)

Oh.

Juliet looks through the box of cards.

JULIET

There's a lot of cards in here.

YOUNG ETHAN

These are from all the different jobs I've worked. I've worked quite a few.

Juliet pulls one of the older cards out of the tin box and reads the front.

JULIET

"Maria"

YOUNG ETHAN

A former client.

She flips it over and reads.

JULIET

(Reading)

"Hold my hand and we're half way there. Hold my hand and I'll take you there. Somehow, someday, somewhere."

(Then)

Beautiful. I bet things worked out for her.

Ethan grabs the card from her.

YOUNG ETHAN

Yes, well... let's just focus on you, and getting your love.

JULIET

I'm nervous.

YOUNG ETHAN

Don't be. It's all taken care of. I've thought of everything. I've even prepared some music, in case things go really well.

JULIET

I love music! I love to sing! I love Romeo!

YOUNG ETHAN

As soon as he shows up, he's as good as yours.

Juliet peers down at the courtyard below.

JULIET

You're certain he'll show?

YOUNG ETHAN

He'll show. I sent him an anonymous letter that will definitely intrigue him.

JULIET

A letter? What did it say?

Down below, a light shines on Romeo as he reads a letter he is holding.

ROMEO

(Reading)

"Dear Romeo, if you want to be intrigued. Go to the courtyard of Juliet Capulet."

(Then)

Intriguing.

Young Mallory enters.

YOUNG MALLORY

Romeo!

ROMEO

Mallory, you made it.

She pulls him aside.

YOUNG MALLORY

Of course I did. Today is the day that you get your love.

ROMEO

(Showing her the letter)

She sent me a letter. An intriguing one. That's why we're here at the Courtyard of my angel.

YOUNG MALLORY

Good. It's just as well we are here. It's time you talk with her.

ROMEO

I'm scared.

YOUNG MALLORY

Don't be. I've thought of everything.

ROMEO

I hope so. I love her so much; I just... I don't know how to tell her.

YOUNG MALLORY

I understand.

ROMEO

I want to say But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun - But I don't know how to put that into words, you know?

YOUNG MALLORY

Fortunately for you, I do.

Mallory pulls out a tin box just like Ethan's.

YOUNG MALLORY

I've written numerous conversation starters and countless responses to anything she might do or say. Even if she breaks into song.

ROMEO

You don't think she'll do that, do you?

YOUNG MALLORY

All you need to do is read off these cards.

She hands him some cards.

ROMEO

(Looking through them)

They're in verse.

YOUNG MALLORY

Women love verse.

ROMEO

I hardly understand them.

YOUNG MALLORY

Just read them and you will have your true love.

ROMEO

Whatever it takes. Because I can't imagine life without her, I love her so much. From the moment I saw her. You don't think that's foolish, do you?

YOUNG MALLORY

I've never experienced such love, so who am I to say if it's foolish. If it is folly, I envy it. And in any case, I've certainly been hired for much more foolish reasons. Greed. Revenge. I've even had some guy want to hire me to kill his baby.

ROMEO

(Horrified)

Who would want you to kill his baby?

YOUNG MALLORY

Some nutty old king. I don't ask questions. Suffice it to say, I don't take jobs from people that want me to kill their baby... Anymore.

ROMEO

...Good.

YOUNG MALLORY

Anyway, just read the cards. I'll be hiding in the bushes over yonder in case you get stuck.

ROMEO

Thank you, Mallory. I will forever be grateful.

Back up on Juliet's balcony, Juliet peers over
and sees Romeo.

JULIET

(Nervous)

He's here. Oh my God, he's here!

YOUNG ETHAN

Settle down.

JULIET

I'm freaking out.

YOUNG ETHAN
Don't.

JULIET
What if he doesn't like me?

YOUNG ETHAN
Juliet, you and he are written in the stars!

JULIET
What if he doesn't read stars?

YOUNG ETHAN
Relax! You're a beautiful, sweet, wonderful woman. What's not to like?

JULIET
...I'm 12 years old.

Ethan tries to process that for a moment. No luck.

YOUNG ETHAN
Just say these words, you'll be all right.

Ethan hands Juliet some note cards.

JULIET
Thank you, Ethan!

YOUNG ETHAN
Good luck.

Juliet musters up some confidence, stands up and says:

JULIET
(Reading)
Now is the winter of our discontent-

Ethan quickly grabs the cards from Juliet.

YOUNG ETHAN
Sorry. My bad! These words.

He hands her a different set of cards.

JULIET

Thank you, Ethan.

YOUNG ETHAN

Good luck.

JULIET

(Reading to Romeo)

Oh Romeo, Romeo. Wherefore art thou Romeo?

Down below, Romeo hears Juliet's call.

ROMEO

(To himself)

Oh my God! This is happening! This is really happening!

JULIET

(Reading)

Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

She speaks! Yet she says nothing, what of that?

(Then)

No matter! I can do this. I can do this.

Romeo takes one of the cards.

ROMEO

(Calling back to her)

Juliet!

JULIET

Romeo!

ROMEO

(Reading)

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew- This can't be right...

JULIET

Romeo?

ROMEO

Sorry! Hold please!

JULIET

(Reading off card)

How camest thou hither, tell me and wherefore? The orchard walls are high and hard to climb and the place death, considering who thou art, if any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Romeo finds the right card.

ROMEO

Oh, here we go!

(Reading)

With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls. For stony limits can not hold love out, and what love can do, that dares love attempt. Therefore thy Klansmen-

JULIET

What?

ROMEO

What?

(Then, seeing his mistake)

Sorry. I'm very nervous. Thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

JULIET

(Reading)

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO

(Reading)

Alack there lies more peril in thine eyes than twenty of their swords.

JULIET

(Reading)

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO

(Reading)

I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes.

JULIET

(Reading)

By whose direction found'st thou out this place.

ROMEO

(Reading)

By love, that first did prompt me to inquire.

(Then, excited)

I think it's going really well.

JULIET

I think so, too. I have a big monologue.

ROMEO

Lucky. Though, truth be told, I actually have no idea what we're talking about.

JULIET

No? Wherefore, Romeo?

ROMEO

I'm right here.

JULIET

Not where. Wherefore. That means why.

Music starts to chime in.

ROMEO

Wherefore is that music coming from?

Juliet leaves her balcony and comes down to the courtyard.

JULIET

(Starts to sing)

WHEN I SAY WHEREFORE
I MEAN WHY AND THEREFORE
I'LL NEVER SAY WHEREFORE
WHEN I WANT TO SAY WHERE.
IF I WISH TO SAY ALLOW
VOUCHSAFE IS THE WAY HOW
AND IF I MUST PEE NOW
THE PRIVIES ARE THERE.
AND THOU IS DIFFERENT FROM THEE.
AS COLD IS DIFFERENT FROM HOT.
AND WHITHER IS DIFFERENT FROM
HITHER AND THITHER
WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT.
AND MY VISAGE IS REALLY MY FACE.
I KNOW IT SOUNDS SILLY BUT TRUE.
AND WHEN I SAY FAIN,
IT'S GLADLY I MEAN.
AND WHEN I SAY ROMEO -
I MEAN I LOVE YOU.

ROMEO

(Speaking)

You love me, Juliet?

JULIET

With all my heart.

ROMEO

I don't know what to say to that... yet.

He rifles through his cards looking for the right one. He finds it.

ROMEO (cont'd)

Here we go!

(Singing)

JULIET, JULIET,
EVEN THOUGH WE JUST MET,
I DO BEGIN TO GET
WHAT YOU DO MEAN.
CUCKOLD MEANS CHEAT
AND BOSOM MEANS TRUST
AND WELL, YOU HAVE THE NICEST
TRUSTS THAT I'VE SEEN.

JULIET

(Singing)

ALACK OR ALAS! THAT'S A SIGH.

ROMEO

(Singing)

PRITHEE! THAT'S I BEG OF YOU.
SOMETIMES WHAT I SAY,
MY THOUGHTS THEY BETRAY,
BUT WHEN I SAY JULIET -
THAT'S I LOVE YOU, TOO.

They dance.

BOTH

(Singing)

IF THE WORDS THAT WE SPEAK SOUND REHEARSED.
IT'S BECAUSE OF THE WAY THAT WE SPEAK, IT'S IN VERSE.

(MORE)

BOTH (CONT'D)

SOMETIMES WHAT WE SAY,
OUR THOUGHTS THEY BETRAY...

JULIET

(Singing)

BUT WHEN I SAY ROMEO...

ROMEO

(Singing)

AND WHEN I SAY JULIET...

BOTH

(Singing)

WHEN WE SAY... ROMULET...
THAT'S I LOVE YOU!

The young lovers kiss.

Up on the balcony, Ethan is packing up.

YOUNG ETHAN

Looks like my work here is done. And my success rate has just improved by one. I wonder if that will be the tipping point that will make Mallory realize she and I are meant to be. Love is definitely in the air!

He exits.

Down below Romeo and Juliet are still embracing.

ROMEO

Marry me, Juliet.

She beams.

JULIET

I will! I will, I will, I will.

ROMEO

Tomorrow at high noon.

JULIET

High noon is for gun fights.

ROMEO

Tomorrow at 12:03. Right after the gunfight.

JULIET

And we'll have a Jewish wedding to satisfy the folks.

ROMEO

I'll bring the Rabbi.

JULIET

And I'll bring the Moyel!

Juliet kisses Romeo again. Romeo tries to
decide if having a moyel is a good thing.

JULIET

I love you!

ROMEO

I love you!

JULIET

Tomorrow can't come soon enough. Every second we're apart will seem like an eternity!

ROMEO

(He smiles)

I especially love you when you hyperbolize.

She smiles sheepishly.

JULIET

Well... Good night.

(Then)

A thousand times good night!

She exits. Romeo stands there in bliss. He starts
to sing a Capella.

ROMEO

(Singing)

SOMETIMES WHAT I SAY
MY THOUGHTS THEY BETRAY
BUT WHEN I SAY JULIET
THAT'S I LOVE-

You!

TYBALT

Tybalt has entered.

...Tybalt.

ROMEIO

TYBALT

Romeo. A bit far from home, hey Montague?

ROMEIO

Not really. Just 3 short blocks.

TYBALT

And here you are on Capulet property. A crime punishable by death.

ROMEIO

I was just leaving.

TYBALT

Too late for that, me thinks.

Tybalt draws his sword.

ROMEIO

Put your sword away, Tybalt. I'm not going to fight you.

TYBALT

Good.

Tybalt charges swinging his sword wildly, swish! Swish, swish! Romeo only barely manages to avoid, evade, elude, shun and duck the flashing blade.

ROMEIO

Tybalt. Please! I have no qualm with you. You are like my kinsmen.

TYBALT

What?

ROMEIO

My kinsmen! I meant kinsmen!

TYBALT

Villain!

Tybalt attacks more aggressively now. Romeo is forced to grab a sword of his own and fight back.

Clink! Clink, clink, clink! Clink, clink, clink!
Clink, clink, clink, clink clink, swoosh, STAB!

In the heat of the moment, Romeo has fatally stabbed Tybalt.

As Tybalt slumps to the ground, only then does Romeo realize the implications of what he's done.

ROMEO

Oh no. Tybalt. My true love's cousin! What have I done?

Tybalt dies.

ROMEO

I am fortune's fool!

Suddenly music kicks in and the ensemble returns to the stage where they begin to sing.

ENSEMBLE

(Singing)

TRAGEDY
FINALLY
SO ARE YOU PARALYZED BY DARK DESPAIR?
NO? NOT YET?
WELL DON'T YOU FRET.
CAUSE HERE'S THE THING WITH TRAGEDY
THERE ALWAYS CAN BE
SOMEONE ELSE...
THAT DIES

Black out.

CHAPTER 5 - THIS HAS TRAGEDY WRITTEN ALL OVER IT

Mallory returns home where Ethan is uncorking
a bottle of wine.

YOUNG MALLORY
(Angrily)

Ethan!

YOUNG ETHAN
(Excited to see her)

Mallory!

YOUNG MALLORY
(Angrily)

You were up on the balcony!

YOUNG ETHAN

What?

YOUNG MALLORY

You were helping Juliet!

YOUNG ETHAN

That's right.

(Then, excited)

Were you down below? In the bushes?

YOUNG MALLORY

Dammit!

YOUNG ETHAN

I had a feeling Romeo was getting help.

YOUNG MALLORY

Why didn't you tell me?

YOUNG ETHAN

You told me not to. Confidentiality and all.

YOUNG MALLORY

I work alone!

YOUNG ETHAN

(Happily)

Not this case, you don't. And frankly, I think it went off quite well. You thought we wouldn't make a good team. We're perfect together. This went off without a hitch!

YOUNG MALLORY

Really?

YOUNG ETHAN

Except for you were sitting in poison ivy.

YOUNG MALLORY

What?

YOUNG ETHAN

And poison oak.

YOUNG MALLORY

No-

YOUNG ETHAN

And poison Johnson.

YOUNG MALLORY

Ethan!

YOUNG ETHAN

Very rare.

YOUNG MALLORY

Romeo Montague killed Tybalt Capulet!

Beat.

YOUNG ETHAN

...What?

The smile fades from his face.

YOUNG MALLORY

You didn't see? Tybalt showed up. Romeo killed him. He'll be banished from Verona for sure. Unless the Capulets catch him, in which case they'll hang him.

YOUNG ETHAN

There's nothing worse than a hung lover. I mean a lover who's hung. I mean, a lover with a big-

YOUNG MALLORY

Dammit Ethan! This has tragedy written all over it!

(Losing it)

Why didn't you tell me you were working this case? I told you I work alone!

Beat.

YOUNG ETHAN

(Confused)

...Are you blaming me because your client killed someone?

(Then)

I'm sorry he did that. I didn't know.

Pause.

Mallory realizes she is behaving unreasonably.

YOUNG MALLORY

No. I'm sorry.

(Then)

It's not your fault. It's mine.

YOUNG ETHAN

I don't think it's anyone's fault.

YOUNG MALLORY

I saw them fighting. Why didn't I intervene? Why didn't I stop them?

YOUNG ETHAN

You could've gotten hurt.

YOUNG MALLORY

These cases start going south, I see them going wrong and I feel powerless to help.

YOUNG ETHAN

I'm sure you've helped plenty.

YOUNG MALLORY

And plenty others have seen their dreams crushed because I was unable to act.

YOUNG ETHAN

I doubt that many.

YOUNG MALLORY

More than I care to remember. Hamlet.

The Dane?
YOUNG ETHAN

Macbeth.
YOUNG MALLORY

The Scott?
YOUNG ETHAN

Othello.
YOUNG MALLORY

The... black guy?
YOUNG ETHAN

Moor.
YOUNG MALLORY

More than black? What do you call that?
YOUNG ETHAN

I worked for all of them. Beautiful love stories, each and everyone.
YOUNG MALLORY

Didn't Othello kill his wife?
YOUNG ETHAN

At least, they should have been. Back then, everything had the possibility for love. Including me.
YOUNG MALLORY

What does that mean?
YOUNG ETHAN

Tragedy takes its toll, doesn't it?
YOUNG MALLORY
(Despondently)

Mallory, you're being too hard on yourself?
YOUNG ETHAN

Am I? Romeo is a wanted man. When they catch him, they'll kill him. I'm responsible for what happens to him.
YOUNG MALLORY

YOUNG ETHAN

What if you're not?

YOUNG MALLORY

Not responsible? How could I not be responsible?

YOUNG ETHAN

What if someone else was to blame?

YOUNG MALLORY

Who else would be to blame if not me?

YOUNG ETHAN

Listen, I want the same thing that you do. To avoid tragedy. But don't you feel sometimes that no matter what you do it is unavoidable? Some of these people just might be meant for tragedy.

YOUNG MALLORY

Meant for tragedy?

YOUNG ETHAN

I'm starting to think so. Pre-ordained by some higher power for something horrible.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Accusingly)

That's what you think?

YOUNG ETHAN

I mean, it's still in the theory phase.

YOUNG MALLORY

You don't want to avoid tragedy. You want to avoid feeling responsible when things go wrong! This theory you're developing is so you can push the blame on to something else. Some "higher power."

YOUNG ETHAN

You said yourself you sometimes you feel powerless. Maybe you feel powerless because you have no power. Neither of us do. Someone else is in charge. Calling the shots.

YOUNG MALLORY

Baloney!

YOUNG ETHAN

What if it's not?

YOUNG MALLORY

It is.

YOUNG ETHAN

I'm just afraid we've been blaming ourselves for no reason.

YOUNG MALLORY

You're afraid if you take responsibility for these people you'll feel the pain when things go wrong.

YOUNG ETHAN

I've felt the pain, Mallory. I know the pain. I'm not afraid of the pain. I'm not afraid of anything.

YOUNG MALLORY

You're afraid to go into your stupid attic.

YOUNG ETHAN

Am I?

Ethan opens the door leading to the attic.
Ghostly noises emanate from within.

He quickly shuts the door. He's afraid.

Pause.

YOUNG ETHAN

Maybe I am.

(Then)

You're not?

YOUNG MALLORY

I'm afraid of many things. Including your attic.

Mallory opens the door to the attic.
Ghostly noises emanate from within.

YOUNG MALLORY

But I'm not afraid to face them.

She goes through the door and disappears into the darkness.

YOUNG ETHAN

Mallory. Mallory!

He goes in after her.

CHAPTER 6 - THE ATTIC

In the black we hear the ghostly noises.

YOUNG ETHAN

(Whispering nervously)

Mallory, we can't be in here. We have to go.

YOUNG MALLORY

It's fine.

YOUNG ETHAN

It's not fine!

YOUNG MALLORY

I'm not leaving.

YOUNG ETHAN

There could be ghosts. Demons. Lord knows what evil resides here.

Mallory finds a switch and turns on the lights. We find ourselves in a pleasant looking room, lined with shelves upon which rests hundreds and hundreds of books. The ghostly noises now appear to be just a wind from an open window in the corner of the room.

Mallory shuts the window. The noise stops.

YOUNG MALLORY

It was just the wind.

Mallory notices the books.

YOUNG MALLORY

Look at all of these books.

Mallory approaches the mysterious texts.

YOUNG ETHAN

Careful...They might be... evil books.

YOUNG MALLORY

They look like normal, non-evil books to me.

(Then)

They're not yours?

YOUNG ETHAN

Mine? No.

YOUNG MALLORY

But you've been living underneath this.

YOUNG ETHAN

Not very long. I bought the house from the bank a year ago. It was a foreclosure. I don't know anything about these books.

Mallory sees a book that's particularly curious.

YOUNG MALLORY

Look at this one. Jane Eyre. She was one of my clients.

YOUNG ETHAN

Really? There's a book about one of your clients?

Mallory reads the back cover of the book she's just pulled off the shelf.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Reading)

"Orphaned into the household of her Aunt Reed at Gateshead, subject to the cruel regime at Lowood charity school, Jane Eyre none the less emerges unbroken in spirit and integrity..."

(Then)

Yeah, with my help!

YOUNG ETHAN

Hey, look at this one.

Ethan grabs a book off the shelf.

ETHAN

(Reads)

“Quasimodo, the hunchback of Notre Dame loved Esmerelda until she was murdered by his adopted father. So, grief stricken, Quasimodo starved himself next to the remains of her dead body.”

(Then, brightly)

He was one of my clients.

YOUNG MALLORY

What’s going on here?

YOUNG ETHAN

You think someone is documenting all of our cases?

YOUNG MALLORY

I’m sure I haven’t had this many.

She picks up another book.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Bewildered)

And how can they document the cases we haven’t finished yet?

YOUNG ETHAN

What?

YOUNG MALLORY

Look at this.

She shows him the book.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Reading the cover)

“Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare.”

YOUNG ETHAN

Who the hell is William Shakespeare?

YOUNG MALLORY

I don’t know.

YOUNG ETHAN

Look! Here’s his complete works.

Ethan grabs The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare off the shelf.

YOUNG MALLORY

Holy smokes! That book is huge! What the hell is going on here?

Ethan lays the book on a table and opens it.

YOUNG ETHAN

Oh no!

YOUNG MALLORY

What? What is it? What are you looking at?

YOUNG ETHAN

(Ominously)

The table of contents.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Frightened)

The table of contents! Oh my God!

(Then)

Wait. The table of contents? Is that bad? I don't understand.

YOUNG ETHAN

I think... I think I was right.

YOUNG MALLORY

Right about what?

YOUNG ETHAN

About why we have trouble helping some of these people.

YOUNG MALLORY

Why?

YOUNG ETHAN

Because I don't think we're here to help the people. I think we're here to help the story.

Ethan starts flipping through The Complete Works of William Shakespeare.

YOUNG MALLORY

What story?

YOUNG ETHAN

These stories. Hamlet. Macbeth. Othello... Romeo and Juliet.

YOUNG MALLORY

Those aren't stories, they're people. What do you mean? They're people. They're the people that hired us.

YOUNG ETHAN

These people, they're... I don't think they're like us. They're...

YOUNG MALLORY

They're what? What are you saying? They're fictional? Because they don't seem fictional to me. They're as real as you and I.

YOUNG ETHAN

But they are in these books. They are linked to these stories. These people, they have an immutable destiny. Ironclad, unalterable and inflexible. We're simply... guides.

YOUNG MALLORY

What do you mean we're guides? Where are we guiding them?

Ethan looks up, horrified.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Understanding)

No. You don't know that.

YOUNG ETHAN

I think it's pretty clear.

YOUNG MALLORY

We're supposed to lead these people to their doom?

YOUNG ETHAN

(Still thumbing through the book)

Well... I mean, not all of them.

YOUNG MALLORY

I don't want to do it for any of them.

YOUNG ETHAN

Neither do I.

YOUNG MALLORY

So what do we do?

Beat.

YOUNG ETHAN

I tell you what I'm going to do. Next time some client wants to hire me, I am going to come up here first. Find their story, Make sure it ends the way I want before I agree to take their case.

YOUNG MALLORY

You won't take cases that have bad endings?

YOUNG ETHAN

No.

YOUNG MALLORY

What will happen to those people?

YOUNG ETHAN

There are plenty of other folks in our line of work who I'm sure will have no problem leading clients to their doom.

YOUNG MALLORY

That's horrible.

YOUNG ETHAN

I agree. And I for one can't do it any more.

(Then)

I'm afraid of the pain.

YOUNG MALLORY

What about our current clients? What about Romeo and Juliet? Are they headed for their doom.

YOUNG ETHAN

(Knowingly)

Well... They're a Shakespeare.

He places The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare down on a table and shows it to Mallory.

YOUNG ETHAN

You want to know how the story ends for them, check the table of contents, see where their name falls.

Mallory looks through the table of contents.

YOUNG MALLORY

They're not a Comedy... They're not a History... They're not a Sonnet...

She sees it.

YOUNG ETHAN

(Sadly)

It's tragedy.

YOUNG MALLORY

Why does it have to be tragedy? They're so young. They love each other. Who would do that?

YOUNG ETHAN

Some higher power. I don't know. I don't understand it either. But perhaps it's not our place to understand.

YOUNG MALLORY

We're not even allowed to understand? What are we meant to do?

YOUNG ETHAN

I think there's only one thing we can do.

Ethan points to the book Mallory is still holding,
The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.

YOUNG MALLORY

No.

YOUNG ETHAN

(Re: The book)

The play's the thing. It's the only thing.

Mallory looks off deeply pained by this.

YOUNG ETHAN

It's out of our control. We will guide Romeo and Juliet to the end of their story, and then we will never lead another soul to tragedy again.

Black out.

CHAPTER 7 - THE PLAN

Young Ethan is still standing there, only now we are in a cemetery. Juliet enters.

JULIET

Ethan!

YOUNG ETHAN

Juliet, thank you for coming.

JULIET

Why did you bring me to this cemetery? I got your message but it was unclear and incomplete. Something about Romeo... And Tybalt... and Romeo killing Tybalt... and Romeo is banished and I may never see him again... Something about how you thought getting Romeo and I together would be easy, but it's been harder than you could ever imagine and for reasons you can't fully comprehend. Something about how fate sometimes deals a cruel hand, but you have to make the best of it like that time you were going to England so you bought that book "How to Survive in England on 20 pounds a day" but the book cost you 40 pounds so you had to postpone your trip for two days. And finally, something about how that last little anecdote had nothing to do with my problem, so you're sorry for bringing it up. Was there anything else you wanted to tell me, Ethan?

YOUNG ETHAN

Yes. We don't have much time.

JULIET

(Desperate)

What are we going to do? Things look so bleak! Will I ever be happy again?

YOUNG ETHAN

Not to worry, Juliet, I have a plan.

JULIET

(Happily)

A plan! A plan! Ethan has a plan!

YOUNG ETHAN

The plan goes something like this: I'm gonna kill you.

JULIET

That sounds like a good plan.

YOUNG ETHAN

I don't mean really kill you. I mean fake kill you.

JULIET

That sounds risky.

YOUNG ETHAN

Your parents will discover your dead body and bury you alive.

JULIET

That sounds like a good plan.

YOUNG ETHAN

Then they'll go off and see some theater.

JULIET

That sounds risky.

YOUNG ETHAN

What with you dead and Romeo banished, that's the end of Romeo and Juliet... They think! What they don't know is my colleague, Mallory, is reaching out to Romeo right now. Telling him the plan, telling him you're not really dead. In two days, he'll come here, find you, dig you up, revive you with a kiss and then bang.

JULIET

Bang? You think we'll have time?

YOUNG ETHAN

You run away and live happily ever after.

JULIET

I like the sound of that.

YOUNG ETHAN

All you have to do is die.

JULIET

I like the sound of that less.

YOUNG ETHAN

Here. Take this potion. It will make it appear as if you're actually dead.

He hands her a vial.

JULIET
(Worried)

Does it taste like medicine?

YOUNG ETHAN
A little. It's either that or I fake your death with the shovel to the back of the head technique.

JULIET
Does that taste like medicine?

YOUNG ETHAN
No. But I actually have to hit you more in the face area for it to really work.

JULIET
I'll take the potion. Whatever's required! I'll do anything if it means I get to live... with my love.

Ethan looks away.

YOUNG ETHAN
(Sadly)
...Here's hoping.

Juliet turns to Ethan.

JULIET
Hope? No need for that, we have a 40% chance of success, you said so yourself.

YOUNG ETHAN
...Just take the potion.

JULIET
Why do I suddenly feel like my odds are not as good as they once were?

YOUNG ETHAN
(Unconvincingly)
It'll work.

JULIET
It has to! I can't live without him.

He nods.

YOUNG ETHAN

I know.

(Then)

Good luck.

He exits. Juliet examines her potion. Music begins to play.

JULIET

How did things get to be so uncertain? It wasn't so long ago we were so happy. I was with my love. I was singing! And now I fear...

JULIET

(Singing)

I'LL NEVER SING AGAIN
MY HEART'S BROKEN
AND MY HEART'S CONNECTED TO THE THING
I USE WHEN I'M INCLINED TO SING

AND ANYHOW
WHAT WOULD I SING ABOUT
I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING
SO I GUESS I JUST WON'T SING AGAIN

I USED TO LOVE A MELODY, IT'S TRUE
BUT CIRCUMSTANCES MADE ME CHANGE MY TUNE
I JUST CAN'T DO IT ANYMORE
THERE'S SIMPLY TOO MUCH PAIN
AS MUCH AS I MAY WANT TO SING
I GUESS I'LL JUST REFRAIN

I'LL NEVER SING AGAIN
MY HEART'S BROKEN
SO NOT ANOTHER VERSE OR PHRASE
THERE MUST BE OTHER WAYS

TO TELL THE WORLD
WHAT'S INSIDE MY HEAD
BUT IT WON'T BE MUSIC FROM MY THROAT
MAYBE JUST A SIMPLE NOTE INSTEAD

(MORE)

JULIET (CONT'D)

I WONDER HOW I'LL BRIDGE THE HOLE INSIDE
THE VOID WITHIN
FROM NO SINGING

I WONDER HOW I'LL FILL MY DAY
WHAT WILL I DO NOW WHEN
I HEAR SOME MUSIC PLAY

I SURE WON'T SING AGAIN
DON'T THINK I CAN
IN FACT I'M SO AFRAID THAT I
JUST MIGHT BE PARALYZED

WHAT IF THAT'S TRUE
WHAT IF I'M THROUGH
IT'S CLEAR THAT I WON'T EVER SING
WHAT IF I CAN'T DO ANYTHING... AGAIN

I FEAR I CAN'T DO ANYTHING
WITHOUT MY LOVE I'LL NEVER SING AGAIN!

The music swells to it's conclusion as Juliet takes the potion and then slumps over "dead".

CHAPTER 8 - THE PRESENT - ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

We are back in the present. Present day Mallory is in the library reading. Present day Ethan enters.

Hey. ETHAN

Hi. MALLORY

Did you book a case? ETHAN

Sort of. MALLORY

Sort of? ETHAN

Ethan takes the book from her hand.

ETHAN

Romeo and Juliet? We did this case.

MALLORY

I know.

ETHAN

10 years ago.

MALLORY

I know. I was just thinking about it.

ETHAN

That's funny. So was I.

She looks at him.

MALLORY

What do you remember?

ETHAN

The last thing I remember is Juliet's hopeful gaze as I handed her that potion that would make it appear as if she's dead.

MALLORY

That was the last time you saw her?

ETHAN

I didn't have to go back, did I. We know what happened next.

He holds up the play to Mallory.

ETHAN

I went off to inform her parents of her "untimely demise." I wrote a note, a "suicide" note that I supposedly found on her "dead" body explaining her "death" to her "family."

(Then, realizing family doesn't need air quotes)

I mean... to her family.

(Then)

And that's when everything went wrong. Or right, as it turns out.

MALLORY

(Remorsefully)

I was supposed to find Romeo. Tell him the plan, tell him Juliet was not really dead.

ETHAN

That was never going to happen. You know that. That's not how it was written.

On the other side of the stage, we flash back 10 years ago. Romeo appears. He is in the cemetery.

ROMEO

Tybalt! It's me, Romeo.

ETHAN

Romeo ends up at that cemetery, not having heard the plan.

ROMEO

I don't suppose you can hear me, buried as you are, but I've come to pay my respects. I also genuinely like to come to cemeteries. I like to think here. The dead people don't interrupt as much.

MALLORY

If only. If only I had...

ETHAN

If only you had what? There's nothing you could have done. It was meant to be.

ROMEO

I didn't mean to kill you, Tybalt. It was an accident. I think. What is an accident, really? If I make... in my pants... that is an accident. If I make in someone else's pants, that's pretty much something I'd have to plan out. I didn't plan to kill you and yet here you lie dead by my hand. Accident? Intentional? How will the powers that be perceive my actions? And how will my actions affect my fate?

ETHAN

He was always going to see Juliet lying there.

He sees Juliet's "dead" body.

ROMEO

(Sadly)

I see.

ETHAN

He was always going to think she's really dead.

ROMEO

(Sadly)

My sweet love.

ETHAN

One could hardly blame him for what he would do next.

ROMEO

We never really had a chance, did we? This is our fate... our destiny... our... part. To be, or not to be? It seems there never really was any question.

Romeo takes out a pistol and points it to his head.

ROMEO

The Gun!

(Then)

Too noisy.

He puts the pistol down and picks up a dagger and places it to his heart.

The dagger!

(Then)

Too messy.

He places the dagger down and picks up a clown horn.

ROMEO

The clown horn!

(Then)

Too funny.

The horn honks.

Romeo picks up a bottle of poison.

ROMEO (cont'd)

Poison!

He pops the cork.

ROMEO (cont'd)

Perfect!

He drinks.

ROMEO (cont'd)

That's... good poison!

He drops the bottle.

ROMEO

When I was younger I used to think the world is my oyster, which I guess explained why I was so horny all the time. But I was wrong. The world is not an oyster. As it turns out... all the world's a stage.

He slumps over and dies.

ETHAN

He was always going to kill himself. It couldn't be helped.

(Then, disdainfully)

And of course, it would be at that moment that Juliet just had to wake up.

Juliet wakes up.

JULIET

Where is my lord? I do remember well where I should be, and there I am. Romeo? Romeo? Rom-e-

(Seeing his dead body)

Oh.

ETHAN

She sees Romeo's dead body lying on the ground.

JULIET

He's dead!

ETHAN

She sees the poison lying next to him.

JULIET

Poison has been his untimely end!

ETHAN

She is consumed by grief.

JULIET

I should drink some.

The bottle is empty.

JULIET

(With a hint of facetiousness)

But oh no, all gone. I can't.

ETHAN

She is resolute.

She crosses back to Romeo's dead body.

JULIET

(Then)

I will lift him up and kiss his lips. Maybe there's still some poison there I can suck from his-

She starts to lift up the dead Romeo but is grossed out by the dead body.

JULIET

Dead body, dead body, dead body!

She drops him back down.

ETHAN

There is simply no stopping her. She knows what she has to do.

JULIET

I don't know what to do.

ETHAN

She finds a dagger.

She sees a dagger.

JULIET

A dagger!

She picks it up.

ETHAN

And says her final goodbyes.

She places the blade against her chest.

JULIET

This is thy sheath. There rust and let me die.

She raises the blade about to thrust it into her chest. The lights go black on Juliet.

ETHAN

I didn't have to go back to that cemetery. I knew everything that would happen next, and it was too painful to bear. Truth is, I don't like to think about it much. And even though it was 10 years ago, I certainly don't need this book to remember it. I'm surprised you do. You come up here to grab this book and dig up that horrible memory, you must be a glutton for punishment. I for one am glad we put those terrible stories behind us. No more tragedies. Not for you. Not for me. Not ever again.

MALLORY

I didn't come up here to get that book.

ETHAN

No?

MALLORY

I came up to get this one.

Mallory pulls from her pocket another book she has. It is titled "Oedipus Rex."

ETHAN

"Oedipus Rex?" OK. Who is he? What does he want?

Beat.

MALLORY

I think he wants to kill me.

An ominous music sting swells. Black out.

Intermission.

ACT 2

The ensemble comes out and begins to sing.

ENSEMBLE

(Singing)

WAS YOUR INTERMISSION NICE
DO YOU FEEL THE SNACKS ARE OVERPRICED
THERE'S NOT MUCH WE CAN DO
THE THEATER NEEDS THE REVENUE

BUT WE WON'T MAKE CONCESSIONS HERE
TO BE CLEAR, AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED
WE'RE JUST SO GRATEFUL YOU'VE RETURNED

TO TRAGEDY
PREPARE TO SEE
A RESOLUTION LIKE YOU WON'T BELIEVE
TENSIONS SWELL
BUT THERE'S JOKES, AS WELL
CAUSE EVEN THOUGH
IT'S TRAGEDY
WE WANT YOU TO HAVE FUN
BUT MORE FOLKS DIE

WE WISH IT WASN'T SO
BUT IT'S KIND OF OUT OF OUR CONTROL
YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO GET THE HEARSE
CAUSE PEOPLE WIND UP DEAD OR WORSE

THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE
THE DIE IS CAST, THE WHEEL IS SPUN
THE GENRE IS THE ONE TO BLAME
AND EVERYBODY KNOWS ITS NAME

IT'S TRAGEDY
WHY DOES IT CONSTANTLY
HAPPEN TO THE PEOPLE THAT WE LOVE
I GUESS IT'S CAUSE
WE LOVE OUR LOVE
IT WOULDN'T BE A TRAGEDY
IF SOMEONE THAT WE HATE
JUST UP AND DIED

WAS THE LADIES ROOM LINE LONG

(MORE)

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

THE BATHROOM BACKSTAGE DOESN'T RUN
CAUSE I REALLY HAVE TO GO
SHOULD HAVE WENT BEFORE ACT ONE
NOW I'M SO AFRAID BEFORE THE CURTAIN DROPS
MY BLADDER WILL JUST POP
AND MY BEATING HEART WILL STOP
SHE'LL JUST DROP DEAD ON THE SPOT
THE AUDIENCE WILL GO IN SHOCK
REVIEWS WILL CALL THIS SHOW A FLOP

IT'S TRAGEDY
DON'T YOU SEE
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN ANY TIME
THE QUESTION THEN
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
TRAGEDY COMES KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR
AND YOU FIND OUT
SOMEONE WILL DIE

The song ends. On the wall is projected:

CHAPTER 9 - THE BABY'S REVENGE

Present day Mallory and present day Ethan are
right where we left them.

ETHAN

What do you mean this Oedipus Rex wants to kill you?

MALLORY

I went to see this old blind soothsayer this morning. Teiresias. I thought he had a job for
me.

ETHAN

I just came from Teiresias. I thought he had a job for me, too.

MALLORY

He told me tragedy is coming.

ETHAN

Yes. He told me the same. He's obviously a kook.

MALLORY

(Re: Oedipus Rex)

He's a character from this book.

ETHAN

Precisely. What would a character from the book Oedipus Rex know about what's coming for you? Or for me for that matter?

MALLORY

He is a soothsayer.

ETHAN

(Correcting her)

A character. Like you said.

MALLORY

I don't like it.

ETHAN

There's nothing to worry about. A character from Oedipus Rex says tragedy is coming, you take that to mean this Oedipus Rex wants to kill you? Why? Give me one reason.

MALLORY

I did try to kill him.

ETHAN

...What?

Beat.

MALLORY

I was hired to kill Oedipus Rex.

ETHAN

When?

MALLORY

Years ago. Before Romeo and Juliet.

ETHAN

Before we knew about these books.

MALLORY

Before we knew about anything.

(Then)

I was approached by a King Laios of Thebes. He said he had a job for me. He wanted me to kill a baby.

ETHAN

Why would he want you to kill a baby?

MALLORY
(Holding up the play)

It's complicated.

ETHAN

I'd think the baby's father would have something to say about that.

MALLORY

He IS the baby's father.

ETHAN

It IS complicated.

MALLORY

He wanted me to kill his baby; he said he was prepared to pay me handsomely to do it.

ETHAN

What did you say?

MALLORY

I said I was prepared to receive the money in an equally attractive manner.

ETHAN

You took the job?

MALLORY

It was before Romeo and Juliet. I didn't know. I needed the cash.

ETHAN

(Shaking his head)

You needed the cash?

MALLORY

But I couldn't kill a baby.

ETHAN

I should hope not.

MALLORY

Babies... are very hard to kill.

ETHAN

So what did you do?

MALLORY

I had a plan. I took the baby and left him at the home of Polybos and Merope, a husband and wife living in the land of Corinth, miles away from Thebes. I left a note.

ETHAN

A note?

MALLORY

"Dear kind sir and madam, I am under strict orders to kill this baby! Common decency, however, prevents me. So, I am asking you folks to show a little mercy, and please... YOU kill the baby!"

ETHAN

That was your plan?

MALLORY

It was before Romeo and Juliet! I was very young. I didn't know any better.

Ethan leafs through the pages of Oedipus Rex.

ETHAN

I assume they didn't kill the baby.

MALLORY

(Sheepishly)

I assume not.

ETHAN

And now that baby is a man.

MALLORY

I assume so.

ETHAN

And you think that man wants to kill you?

MALLORY

He must have found out what I tried to do. He probably wants revenge. This is Greek Theater! They are notorious for wanting revenge!

ETHAN

Mallory. These characters have an immutable destiny. They are limited to what is written.

(Then, re: Oedipus Rex)

Did you read this book?

MALLORY

Of course.

ETHAN

Does Oedipus Rex kill you in this book?

MALLORY

Of course not.

ETHAN

Then you have nothing to worry about.

MALLORY

And yet I'm still worried. Why did Teiresias say, "tragedy is coming?"

Beat.

ETHAN

I don't know.

(Then)

I'll find out.

He goes to exit.

MALLORY

Ethan.

He stops.

MALLORY

I don't think that's a good idea. You're my friend. If trouble is coming for me, I don't want you to get in the middle of it. I don't want anything bad to happen to you.

ETHAN

Nothing bad is going to happen to either of us.

(Then)

Stay here. Don't do anything. I'm on the job!

Ethan exits. A spotlight on Mallory.

MALLORY

Don't do anything? Stay here while Oedipus Rex hunts me down to get his revenge? I don't think so. I've given up giving up control a long time ago. I take charge of my own fate.

(MORE)

MALLORY (CONT'D)

(Then)

Ethan doesn't know the greeks the way I do. It's a terrible genre! Filled with horrible stories and despicable characters that are completely unpredictable. So... I need to be unpredictable myself. Before Oedipus Rex finds me, I'll find him and finish the job I was hired to do. I'm going to kill Oedipus Rex!

The light goes out on Mallory. On the other side of the stage, a spotlight on Ethan.

ETHAN

I'm not worried. I don't think there's a reason to worry. Since the moment I met Mallory I have loved her, confident in the fact that she and I are meant to be. It's only a matter of time.

(Then)

It has been ten years, I didn't think it would take this much time. But if I've learned anything in my adventures, it's that destiny is not to be questioned. When things are written, you can't unwrite them. It is this knowledge that gives me faith. I don't care what Teiresias says. Nothing is going to happen to Mallory, save for the fact that one day she will realize that she loves me too, and we will be together.

(Then)

Nevertheless, I shall talk to Teiresias again and see if I can find out more information, while my sweet love stays at home, safe and sound.

CHAPTER 10 - A PRE-ORDAINED DESTINY

Mallory is no longer at home safe and sound. She arrives Where Three Roads Meet, a famous intersection on route to Thebes. She is armed with a gun, a knife, and a curious sack slung over her shoulder.

MALLORY

Where Three Roads Meet! This is where I'll find Oedipus Rex. He passes this way to fulfill his destiny, preordained to return to Thebes and kill his father King Laios and sleep with his mother Queen Jocaste. A horrible destiny, to be sure. When he gets to this crossroad, however, he will have a change of fate. To something even worse!

The sounds of a bustling crowd can be heard. Mallory looks out trying to find Oedipus among the many people that can now be heard.

MALLORY

Assuming I can figure out which person he is. It's a lot more crowded here than I thought. How will I know which one is Oedipus Rex?

Oedipus enters singing.

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

I WANT A GIRL JUST LIKE THE GIRL THAT MARRIED DEAR OLD DAD...
JUST NOT THAT SPECIFIC GIRL.

MALLORY

(To herself)

Excellent. This will be easier than I thought.

She looks at the weapons in her hands.

MALLORY

(Hesitatingly)

Or will it? I've never actually killed anyone before. Not personally. Never had to. Never wanted to. All I've ever wanted to do is help people. If only I had helped King Laios when he asked me to kill his baby, but no, I couldn't kill a baby and now that baby wants to kill me, so toughen up Mallory! How hard can it be? All it requires is the right tool.

She once again examines her weapons.

MALLORY

The pistol! The dagger! Both... unreliable.

She places the weapons down.

MALLORY

No. I think it's to be the old poisonous snake in a sack full of money method.

She takes off the sack she's wearing and examines the deadly contents.

MALLORY

No one can resist it.

Mallory approaches Oedipus.

MALLORY

Oedipus Rex?

OEDIPUS

Yes?

MALLORY

Hello. My name is Mallory and today is your lucky day. I'm from your home town of Corinth and you just won a sack full of money.

She holds out the sack with the snake inside.

OEDIPUS

I'm sorry, did you say you were from Corinth?

MALLORY

Yes.

OEDIPUS

Then stay back! I can have no more dealings with you.

MALLORY

But I have a sack full of money.

OEDIPUS

I don't want your sack.

MALLORY

It's not my sack. It's your sack. It's full of money.

OEDIPUS

Keep it.

MALLORY

I couldn't.

OEDIPUS

You must. Donate it, if you have to. To an orphanage.

MALLORY

An orphanage?

OEDIPUS

Or a foundation... that helps find a cure... for orphans.

MALLORY

But it's so much money. And it's a free sack. I'd think you'd be dancing in the streets.

He turns on her suddenly.

OEDIPUS
You're from Corinth?

MALLORY
So you think.

OEDIPUS
Then you must know my parents.

MALLORY
(Under her breath)
You probably mean Polybus and Merope?

OEDIPUS
And perhaps you'll tell them where I am?

MALLORY
I don't see the harm.

OEDIPUS
I can't see my parents anymore! Do you understand? Now be gone with you!

Oedipus breaks down and begins to cry.

OEDIPUS
Have you not heard of the prophesy that plagues me?

MALLORY
(To herself)

My God! He's as sensitive as a little girl.

(Then)

I like that in a man. Cares for orphans, too. That's nice. Polite, honest. Gorgeous, to boot!

(Then)

Pity I have to kill him.

She approaches him one more time.

MALLORY
Oedipus.

OEDIPUS
Please. Just leave me in peace.

MALLORY
I just want to help.

OEDIPUS

You can't help! I have a pre-ordained destiny.

MALLORY

That's good.

OEDIPUS

I have to kill my father.

MALLORY

Not that good.

OEDIPUS

Then take over his kingdom.

MALLORY

That's good.

OEDIPUS

Then marry my mother.

MALLORY

Not that good.

OEDIPUS

Then we have sex.

MALLORY

That's good.

OEDIPUS

Then we have kids.

MALLORY

Not that good.

OEDIPUS

Then I poke my eyes out with my mother's broach.

MALLORY

That's good... ?

OEDIPUS

Then I have tea.

MALLORY
Not that good?

OEDIPUS
So you see why I'm distraught.

MALLORY
A little tea never killed anyone.

OEDIPUS
I have to kill my father!

MALLORY
Killing your father never killed anyone.

OEDIPUS
(Striking a pose)
I have to have sex with my mother.

MALLORY
In that position.

OEDIPUS
The oracle was very specific.

MALLORY
Good Lord. Just because an Oracle told you to? If the Oracle told you to kill your father, would you?

OEDIPUS
Yesterday everything was different. I didn't know my fate. I would have been dancing in the streets. But now, what's the use of all that money?

MALLORY
And the sack. Don't forget about the sack.

OEDIPUS
I'm still destined to kill my father.

MALLORY
It's a Marc Jacobs Crocodile sack.

OEDIPUS
And though you are the most beautiful woman I've ever seen...

MALLORY

I beg your pardon.

OEDIPUS

I'm still pre-ordained to marry my mother.

MALLORY

The most beautiful woman you've ever seen?

OEDIPUS

Where were you yesterday? I would have held you in my arms, kissed your lips, had your lips kiss mine.

MALLORY

I was in the bath.

OEDIPUS

I would have... ffff... fornicated you. No wait, that's too vulgar.

MALLORY

Not really.

OEDIPUS

I would have made fornicate with you.

(Then)

But that can't happen now.

MALLORY

It can't?

OEDIPUS

What would be the point?

(Then)

Come, I'll lighten your load. You're just doing your job, after all. Besides, I've never seen a sack full of money before. Give it here.

He reaches for the bag... Mallory quickly pulls it away.

MALLORY (cont'd)

Wait! What's your hurry? I mean, you've seen one sack of money, you've seen them all.

(Then)

You really think I'm the most beautiful woman you've ever seen?

OEDIPUS

I've never met someone quite as lovely as you.

MALLORY

Oh please... elaborate.

OEDIPUS

If only things were different.

MALLORY

Let's suppose for the next 5 minutes they are.

He grabs her and hugs her squashing the bag in
between the two of them.

OEDIPUS

I would take you in my arms, never let you go, thrust my hips into yours and have you
say the words I long to hear.

MALLORY

I've just been bitten by a large snake.

OEDIPUS

Yes! And it wants to do more than bite you.

She pulls away and drops the bag.

MALLORY

No, Oedipus, I've been bitten by a snake. A poisonous snake!

She points to the bag.

OEDIPUS

There was a poisonous snake in the bag?

MALLORY

Evidently.

OEDIPUS

Good thing I didn't donate it to the orphanage.

MALLORY

I'm going to die!

OEDIPUS

NO! Not if I gently suck out the poison with my warm lips and moist tongue. Where did he bite you?

Mallory raises an eyebrow.

Black out.

CHAPTER 11 - A VENGEFUL KING

Ethan enters.

ETHAN

Teiresias! Teiresias!

Teiresias slowly enters.

TEIRESIAS

I'm coming. I'm coming. Who's there?

ETHAN

Teiresias, it's me!

TEIRESIAS

Jenny?

ETHAN

No.

TEIRESIAS

Jennifer?

ETHAN

No.

TEIRESIAS

Jen?

ETHAN

No. It's Ethan.

TEIRESIAS

Ethan. Of course. Long time no see.

ETHAN

I have to ask you something.

TEIRESIAS

I can't tell you anything about the future. I'm sorry, but it's not my place to interfere in the destiny of others. When those children frolicking in the street were trampled by that run away chariot, I knew it was going to happen, but I did nothing. And you may ask, why did I not intervene? How can I live with myself and not interfere? What the hell is a blind person doing driving a chariot in the first place?

ETHAN

Teiresias!

TEIRESIAS

I'm sorry, Ethan. I can't say a word.

ETHAN

You already told me tragedy is coming for me.

TEIRESIAS

I did? Well the cat's out of the bag then. What's up?

ETHAN

You met with a woman this morning named Mallory.

TEIRESIAS

Yes. Lovely girl. Bright future.

ETHAN

You told her tragedy is coming for her.

TEIRESIAS

Oh that Mallory. Yes. Sad.

ETHAN

Why? Why is tragedy coming for her?

TEIRESIAS

You ask about her tragedy but you don't ask about your own? Curious.

ETHAN

She's a client. I always put my clients first.

TEIRESIAS

Mystery solved.

ETHAN

Now tell me. Why is tragedy coming for Mallory? You do know, don't you?

TEIRESIAS

I'm a soothsayer. I know everything.

ETHAN

Is it because Oedipus Rex wants to kill her?

TEIRESIAS

Oedipus Rex wants to kill her?

ETHAN

You're the soothsayer. You tell me!

TEIRESIAS

Right.

(Then)

Oedipus Rex does not want to kill her.

ETHAN

So tragedy is not coming for her?

TEIRESIAS

King Laios wants to kill her. That would be tragic.

ETHAN

King Laios?

TEIRESIAS

Oh yes. He hates her. The mere mention of her name drives him crazy.

ETHAN

Why?

TEIRESIAS

Because she didn't kill Oedipus. The way she was hired to do. Laios paid her good money.

ETHAN

What if we give Laios his money back?

TEIRESIAS

Too late for that, I think.

(Then)

You understand Oedipus Rex has a pre-ordained destiny to kill his father, King Laios, and sleep with his mother, Queen Jocaste. That's why King Laios hired Mallory to kill Oedipus. Now years later, Laios learned that Mallory did not kill Oedipus as she was hired to do, he knows his days are numbered and he thinks, "If I'm going to die, I'm going to take this Mallory with me!"

ETHAN

How vengeful and petty.

TEIRESIAS

Don't judge him too harshly. He's not all bad.

ETHAN

He wanted to kill his baby!

TEIRESIAS

I mean, he's mostly bad.

ETHAN

He's not going to kill Mallory. I won't allow it.

TEIRESIAS

That's the spirit.

ETHAN

He hasn't found her yet, which would suggest he doesn't know how to find her.

TEIRESIAS

He doesn't even know that she is a her.

ETHAN

How's that possible?

TEIRESIAS

She was young when he hired her. Not fully developed. Her hair was short.

ETHAN

He thought she was a boy?

TEIRESIAS

(Nodding)

Mallory is one of those gender neutral names. Like Jennifer.

ETHAN

That's good. Because if Laios can't find Mallory in time, Oedipus will eventually kill Laios.

TEIRESIAS

(Nodding)

True. In fact, Oedipus is destined to kill Laios today. The two have a fierce battle Where Three Roads Meet.

ETHAN

Once they have that battle, Laios will be killed and Mallory will be out of danger.

TEIRESIAS

If you say so.

ETHAN

I just need to keep her away from Laios a few hours more. I'll head to her straight away. I won't let her leave the house.

TEIRESIAS

Wonderful idea. Though, she's already left the house.

ETHAN

What? How do you know?

TEIRESIAS

I'm a soothsayer. I know everything.

ETHAN

Where is she?

TEIRESIAS

I'm not one hundred percent.

ETHAN

Teiresias!

TEIRESIAS

(Looking in her mind's eye)

I know she left her house. I see she's with Oedipus.

ETHAN

What? She's with Oedipus? What are they doing?

TEIRESIAS

(Looking in her mind's eye)

It looks like they are... Yes, sucking out poison.

ETHAN

Sucking out poison?

TEIRESIAS

(Looking in her mind's eye)

She was bit by a poisonous snake. He had to suck out the venom.

ETHAN

Oh my God. Where was she bit?

TEIRESIAS

(Looking in her mind's eye)

She was bit on the finger. Then on the upper thigh. Then on the... Oh.

ETHAN

Is she OK?

TEIRESIAS

(Looking in her mind's eye)

The snake bit her 37 times in all. She's lucky to be alive.

ETHAN

And Oedipus?

TEIRESIAS

The snake bit him once then he fell asleep.

ETHAN

Why did she go to see Oedipus?

TEIRESIAS

Hard to tell.

(Then)

I think she likes him.

Beat

ETHAN

What do you mean she likes him?

TEIRESIAS

What's not to like? He's super cute.

ETHAN

I'm super cute.

TEIRESIAS

Has intellectual prowess.

ETHAN

Intellectual what?

TEIRESIAS

Wonderfully mysterious.

ETHAN

I think it's time I told you my real name.

TEIRESIAS

And completely confident.

ETHAN

...me.

TEIRESIAS

I think she loves him.

ETHAN

That's... not possible.

TEIRESIAS

Love at first sight. It happens all the time. But I'd think you'd know that in your line of work.

ETHAN

Where are they? You have to tell me. If she stays with Oedipus long enough, Laios will show up and he and Oedipus will fight, and she may get caught in the crossfire. Please!

TEIRESIAS

(Looking in her mind's eye)

I'm trying to see where they are. It's difficult. I have an aerial perspective so I can't see the street signs. I don't know how to toggle the point of view, I'm afraid.

ETHAN

Can you tell me anything?

TEIRESIAS

I can tell you it's an intersection where three roads meet.

ETHAN

Are they Where Three Roads Meet?

TEIRESIAS

(Trying to see)

They are... Where Three Roads Meet. I just figured out how to toggle it.

ETHAN

I have to go.

Ethan exits.

TEIRESIAS

Good luck, Ethan. I see great things for you.

(Then)

Oh wait. No I don't. I still see Tragedy.

Black out.

On the wall is projected:

CHAPTER 12 - WHAT'S IN A NAME

Mallory is getting dressed. Oedipus is resting against a tree, enjoying his afterglow from an afternoon of sucking out poison.

MALLORY

Oedipus, there's something I need to tell you, but I'm not sure how you're going to respond.

OEDIPUS

I have a feeling I know what you're going to say.

MALLORY

You were adopted.

OEDIPUS

I also have chlamydia- What?

MALLORY

You were adopted!

(Then)

Your real parents are Laios and Jocaste, King and Queen of Thebes.

OEDIPUS

Laios and Jocaste? Why would they...

MALLORY

They learned of your prophesy. They learned of your pre-ordained destiny, and your father in response, fearing you'd kill him, voted to have you killed.

OEDIPUS

I'll kill him.

MALLORY

And your mother, fearing you'd have sex with her, agreed.

OEDIPUS

Screw her!

MALLORY

Luckily, the plan to eliminate you failed, and you ended up under the care of Polybos and Merope, whom you thought to be your real parents. When you learned of the prophesy, you ran away from them.

OEDIPUS

And headed directly towards Laios and Jocaste of Thebes. My biological parents!

MALLORY

So you mustn't go there.

OEDIPUS

That much is clear. I can't go to Thebes. I can't go back home.

MALLORY

You can go back home. The prophesy doesn't refer to them.

OEDIPUS

Doesn't it? Polybos and Merope, they raised me, fed me, clothed me, washed me, taught me how to walk, talk, eat, drink, kiss and make love. They are my parents!

(Then)

I don't know this King Laios and Queen Jocaste.

(MORE)

OEDIPUS (CONT'D)

Finding out about them now might be great luck, a huge thorn in the side of pre-ordained destiny or... it might be destiny's way of tricking me back to Corinth, so I can screw up the lives of people I do care about.

MALLORY

I'm quite certain they are safe.

OEDIPUS

I can't take that chance!

(Pointing to the left)

I can't go that way. There lies my past, one I wish to preserve.

(Pointing to the right)

And I can't go that way. There lies a future that's been set for me, one I want to avoid. I don't know where to go. Maybe it would have been better if I was killed.

MALLORY

Well I was the one hired to kill you. So you have me to blame.

OEDIPUS

You?

She nods.

OEDIPUS

Why didn't you?

MALLORY

You were a baby. Killing babies seemed wrong.

OEDIPUS

And now? I'm not a baby anymore. What's stopping you now?

MALLORY

I don't know. I think... Love.

OEDIPUS

You love me?

MALLORY

(Nodding)

For a long time I didn't think I was capable of loving anyone anymore. I closed myself off emotionally to everyone I met because I never knew when I'd be leading them to their doom. So I put up walls to protect myself. But for some time now, things have changed. And I got to thinking that maybe it's safe again. Maybe I can start taking down some of those walls. Maybe I can let myself feel.

(MORE)

MALLORY (CONT'D)

And the next thing I know I'm watching you suck out the venom from my inner thigh, and I thought I will follow this person where ever he goes.

OEDIPUS

It's not a good idea, Mallory. I'm Oedipus Rex. We know where I'm headed. My destiny-

MALLORY

Your destiny can be changed and for that matter so can your name.

Mallory recalls something and smiles.

MALLORY

Tis but thy name that is your enemy;
It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O! Be some other name:
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Oedipus would, were you not Oedipus call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which you owe
Without that title. Oedipus, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Beat.

OEDIPUS

I didn't understand a word you just said.

Unnoticed, Ethan arrives but stays out of view.

MALLORY

Run away with me. I love you. Let's just run away. Let's start over. Change our names, I don't care. All I care about is you.

OEDIPUS

I care about you, too.

(Then)

I'll do it. I'll change my name! I'll be new baptized; Henceforth I never will be Oedipus Rex. I'll be... I'll be...

He tries to think of a replacement name, but none comes to mind.

MALLORY

You needn't think of it now.

OEDIPUS

I'm not good at thinking up names, but I will think of something, I promise. Something good.

MALLORY

I know you will.

OEDIPUS

I'll change my name! It's the least I can do, because you have changed everything.

Music begins to play.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(Singing)

I'VE HEARD MY FUTURE'S LOOKING GRIM
BECAUSE I'M SUPPOSED TO KILL MY FATHER
AND THEN I'M TOLD I'LL CUCKOLD HIM
BUT NO WHERE HAVE I SEEN IT WRITTEN
THAT I'D BECOME JUST SO SMITTEN

MALLORY

(Singing)

TRUE, I DON'T THINK THIS WAS PLANNED
IT'S NEW, BUT SOMEHOW SO FAMILIAR
IF YOU ASKED ME FOR MY HAND
THEN MRS. REX IS WHO I'LL BE!

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

SO LONG AS YOU'RE NOT HER TODAY!

BOTH

(Singing)

AT LAST I THINK SOMETHING'S GONE RIGHT
STANDING HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT
MY FUTURE'S LOOKING NORMAL
AND I NO LONGER HAVE THE FATE I HAD
AND YOU KNOW WHAT MAKES ME GLAD
WHEN THE CHILDREN THAT WE HAVE

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

WON'T CALL ME BROTHER-DAD

MALLORY

(Singing)

COULD THIS BE REAL OR IS IT JUST A DREAM

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

I'M JUST SO GLAD SHE'S NOT MY MOM.

MALLORY

(Singing)

I PRAY IT LASTS FOREVER

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

I HOPED SHE WOULDN'T SHARE MY GENES

MALLORY

(Singing)

I'M GLAD TO BE IN LOVE AT LAST

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

I'M JUST AS GLAD IT'S NOT INCEST

BOTH

(Singing)

AND NOW AT LAST I THINK SOMETHING'S GONE RIGHT

STANDING HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT

MY FUTURE'S LOOKING NORMAL

MALLORY

(Singing)

I FEEL SO FORTUNATE THINGS TURNED OUT FOR THE BEST

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

I'M ALSO FEELING BLESSED

YOU DON'T KILL BABIES.

BOTH

(Singing)

NOW AT LAST I THINK SOMETHING'S GONE RIGHT
STANDING HERE WITH YOU
TONIGHT AT LAST
IT'S HOW IT'S MEANT TO BE
I'VE WAITED
PATIENTLY AT LAST NOW EVERYTHING'S GONE RIGHT
STANDING HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT
MY FUTURE'S LOOKING NORMAL
TRAGEDY WAS WHAT MY LIFE WAS ALL ABOUT
BUT IT'S DIFFERENT NOW SOMEHOW
UNLESS I LIVE WITHOUT ALL YOUR LOVE

They kiss.

Ethan, who is still looking on, is grief-stricken.

As Oedipus and Mallory pull apart, Mallory is crying tears of joy.

MALLORY

You've made me very happy.

OEDIPUS

(Facetiously, re: her tears)

I can tell.

(Then)

Why are you crying?

MALLORY

I don't know. I've never felt this way before. But I've always wanted to. I guess I never thought anyone could feel this way about me.

OEDIPUS

Well, I do.

(Then, re: her tears)

I think I have a handkerchief in my bag.

MALLORY

It's fine. It's fine. But I should pack a bag, if we're to run away. Just a few things.

OEDIPUS

Of course. We'll go back to your place and get whatever you need.

MALLORY

No, I'll go back. You wait for me.

OEDIPUS

As you wish. I'll wait for you here.

MALLORY

Wait for me in Dionysia. It's not safe for you here.

OEDIPUS

Dionysia.

MALLORY

I'll find you there. And then we'll never be apart again.

Mallory kisses Oedipus.

OEDIPUS

I love you!

MALLORY

I love you, too!

She goes. Oedipus starts to get dressed.

ETHAN

(Despondently, to himself)

How is this possible? She can't love him. She's supposed to love me. I don't understand. Oedipus is supposed to kill King Laios and then marry his mother, he's not supposed to steal my girl! Everything is all wrong.

(Then)

I have to make it right. For Mallory's sake, I have to make it right.

He approaches Oedipus who has just finished dressing.

ETHAN

Oedipus Rex.

OEDIPUS

Yes.

ETHAN

I'm Ethan. Mallory's friend. She told me to come find you.

OEDIPUS

Mallory just left.

ETHAN

I know. She's heading back to her place to pack some things. You two are running away together.

OEDIPUS

That's right. We love each other.

ETHAN

How lucky.

OEDIPUS

She told me to meet her at Dionysia. I can hardly wait.

ETHAN

There's actually been a change of plan.

OEDIPUS

Oh?

ETHAN

She thought about it and felt Dionysia might be risky. She said you'd be better off staying here, after all.

OEDIPUS

Here? You're certain?

ETHAN

(Nodding)

Where Three Roads Meet. Absolutely. Don't move from this spot. She'll come find you soon.

OEDIPUS

Very good. I'll stay here. Did she say anything else?

ETHAN

She said that if anyone were to come here, it might be best if you don't tell them who you are.

OEDIPUS

She suggested as much to me. Told me I should change my name. I just can't think what to change it to.

ETHAN

She had a suggestion for that, as well. If someone should come and ask your name... Just tell them it's... It's Mallory.

OEDIPUS

Mallory?

ETHAN

It is a gender neutral name.

OEDIPUS

I know. Like Jennifer. But then they'll be two of us.

ETHAN

It's just for the short term. Just until you're safe.

OEDIPUS

Very good. I'll tell everyone I meet that I'm Mallory.

ETHAN

Excellent.

OEDIPUS

It was a pleasure meeting you, Ethan.

ETHAN

Farewell.

Ethan goes to leave, but before he does:

ETHAN

(To himself)

This is the way it's supposed to be. I'm just making things right.

As Ethan leaves, a chariot rolls onto the stage.

KING LAIOS

(To Oedipus)

Peasant! Get out of my path!

Oedipus turns to see Laios.

OEDIPUS

Are you talking to me, old man?

KING LAIOS

You're standing in the middle of the road like you own it, which you obviously don't. How's a chariot supposed to cross?

OEDIPUS

And that's how you ask? You yell, "Peasant! Get out of my path!"

Laios exits the chariot and draws his sword.

KING LAIOS

I'll ask any way I want. Do you not know who I am?

OEDIPUS

Yes! I not know who you are. But I was instructed by the woman I love not to move from this spot, so not to move from this spot is what I intend to do.

KING LAIOS

This stupid woman that you love is going to get you in trouble.

OEDIPUS

I'd watch how you talk about her.

KING LAIOS

She might even get you killed.

OEDIPUS

Quite the contrary. If you want me to move, you're going to have to move me.

Oedipus draws his sword.

KING LAIOS

Impudence! You dare draw your sword at me.

OEDIPUS

I do more than draw it! En Garde!

They fight.

Clink, clink! Clink, clink, clink! Clink, clink,
clink, clink clink!

The fights gets even more heated.

OEDIPUS

You can not beat me, old man.

KING LAIOS

I will run you through you insolent fool!

OEDIPUS

You're not running anyone anywhere.

Clink, clink, clink, swoosh!

Oedipus disarms King Laios and pushes the old
man to the ground. He approaches the frail king,
his sword raised.

KING LAIOS

Begging your mercy.

Beat. Finally, Oedipus lowers his sword.

OEDIPUS

Mercy given. No one needs to die today. I just wanted some respect.

KING LAIOS

You've earned it, the way you handle that sword.

OEDIPUS

I would have beaten you sooner, if I hadn't pulled my rotator cuff.

KING LAIOS

I could use a man with your skills. Are you looking for work?

OEDIPUS

My girlfriend and I are looking to start a new life.

KING LAIOS

Then let it be with me. You both will be welcome in my kingdom.

OEDIPUS

Perhaps my fate has just taken a turn for the better.

KING LAIOS

Mine as well.

OEDIPUS

Provided you learn to control your temper, and not raise your sword in battle so quickly.

KING LAIOS

Lesson learned, my friend. Lesson learned.

(Then)

What do I call you, by the way?

OEDIPUS

You can call me... Mallory.

KING LAIOS

Mallory!

At hearing the name, the King is suddenly and inexplicably enraged.

KING LAIOS

I'll kill you!

The King once again raises his sword and aims to plunge it in Oedipus' chest.

Oedipus blocks Laios and with a quick counter, instinctively thrusts his sword through Laios' midsection.

He starts to slump, clutching his fatal wound.

OEDIPUS

I'm... sorry. You came at me with your sword... I'm sorry!

KING LAIOS

You've killed me, Mallory. You killed me. Then the prophesy was wrong.

OEDIPUS

(Suddenly realizing)

...Prophesy?

KING LAIOS

I was supposed to be killed... by my son... Oedipus...

OEDIPUS
(Urgently)

...Oedipus who?

KING LAIOS

Oedipus... Rex.

He dies.

OEDIPUS
(Sadly)

No. I am fortune's fool!

Music begins and a lone ensemble member
begins to sing.

ENSEMBLE
(Singing)

IT'S TRAGEDY
THOUGH NOT REALLY
WHEN PEOPLE DIE YOU BARELY EVEN KNOW
THERE'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS
BUT WHO REALLY CARES
STILL HOPEFULLY
THIS MAN WILL BE
THE LAST ONE IN THIS PLAY
THAT DIES

Black out.

CHAPTER 13 - MALLORY'S SECRET

Ethan returns to Where Three Roads Meet.
Mallory is already here, looking over the dead
body of King Laios.

ETHAN

Mallory. I didn't expect to find you here.

MALLORY

No? Where did you expect to find me?

ETHAN

Home. Where I asked you to stay and do nothing.

MALLORY

King Laios is dead.

ETHAN

(Sarcastic)

What? No! What a tragedy. He was such a nice guy apart from wanting to kill his baby.

MALLORY

What did you do?

ETHAN

What did I do?

MALLORY

I received a note. By messenger.

She holds up a note.

MALLORY

(Reads)

“Dear Mallory, I got your message from Ethan that you wanted me to stay Where Three Roads Meet. I know you thought it would be safer there. Unfortunately, fate intervened. King Laios showed up. I was drawn into a duel, and now he lies dead by my hand. I know we had other plans, but I can run from my destiny no more. I’m sorry. I love you. Oedipus.”

(Then)

You told Oedipus to stay here?

ETHAN

I did.

MALLORY

And now Laios is dead and Oedipus is off to Thebes to marry his mother. This wouldn’t have happened if it weren’t for you.

ETHAN

Of course it would have. Did you not read the book?

MALLORY

King Laios didn’t have to die.

ETHAN

Yes, he did! That’s what it says in the book. And by the way, King Laios wanted to kill you! That’s why tragedy was coming for you. I was just trying to keep you safe!

MALLORY

I am going to Thebes.

ETHAN

What? Why?

MALLORY

Oedipus is headed there to fulfill the rest of his pre-ordained destiny. I'm going to stop him.

ETHAN

Why do you want to stop him? He's not a client. He hasn't hired you. He hasn't paid you.

MALLORY

I love him!

ETHAN

You can't!

(Then)

You can't stop him. It's written. He sleeps with his mother. He pokes his eyes out. That will happen. You can not change that.

MALLORY

Nothing is so impervious to change.

ETHAN

Mallory-

MALLORY

My grandfather taught me that. His final words to me were, "Over time even gentle stream can shape strongest rock."

ETHAN

Those were his last words?

MALLORY

(Nodding)

Yes. Then he choked on a fortune cookie.

ETHAN

Mallory, you know as well as I do, Oedipus is a character in a book. These books can not be re-written.

MALLORY

They can, Ethan. I've been doing it for years!

Ethan is dumbstruck by this.

MALLORY

Goodbye.

She exits.

CHAPTER 14 - A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Ethan sits at a bar drinking. A bartender, wiping down the bar, half listens to Ethan's lament.

ETHAN

I believe in destiny. Some things are just destined to be. They can't be helped. They are written by the creators and there's no changing that.

He goes to take a sip of his drink, but then:

ETHAN

She's been doing it for years? That makes no sense. Why would she say that? Why would she go to Thebes? How can she love him? It's not possible.

(Then)

I don't think I could be more confused than I am at this moment.

A woman enters and makes a beeline for the bartender.

WOMAN

Hello, I am supposed to be meeting someone here. My name is Juliet Capulet.

ETHAN

Holy shit.

An older Juliet looks over at Ethan.

JULIET

Ethan?

ETHAN

Juliet?

JULIET

So nice to see you.

She gives him a hug. Ethan is in shock.

ETHAN

You're dead.

JULIET

Do I look dead?

ETHAN

You look very much alive. But... you killed yourself.

She smiles at him.

JULIET

Oh Ethan... You're funny.

But she sees he's serious.

JULIET

Did Mallory never tell you?

ETHAN

Never tell me what?

The lights suddenly shift as we are transported to:

CHAPTER 15 - RE-WRITING SHAKESPEARE

It is 10 years earlier. Romeo lies on the floor dead. Not far from him is Juliet. Young Juliet. Also lying on the floor. Young Mallory enters.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Mournfully)

The plays the thing.

She reads from her copy of The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.

YOUNG MALLORY

(Reading)

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head:
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

She crosses to Romeo lying dead on the floor.

YOUNG MALLORY

Romeo. I am so sorry. I was supposed to go look for you. Tell you the plan. But I read this book, and it said I didn't find you. So... I didn't even try.

She starts to cry.

YOUNG MALLORY

Why didn't I try? Because I didn't know where to find you? Hell, I could've come here! I knew you'd be here! But I did nothing! And now you're dead!

She looks at Juliet also lying motionless on the floor.

YOUNG MALLORY

Juliet is dead!

(Then)

I should have tried!

She crosses to Juliet.

YOUNG MALLORY

I wish there was something I could do now. Anything to bring you back. I would shock life into you with a lightning bolt if I could but I've tried that once already and it didn't work out too well. Why do you have to be dead?

Suddenly Juliet sits up.

JULIET

Hello.

Mallory, startled, jumps back and screams.

YOUNG MALLORY

Holy Mother!

(Then)

You're not dead?

JULIET

What's the matter?

YOUNG MALLORY

What's the matter? You... I thought...

JULIET

I was taking a nap.

YOUNG MALLORY

A nap? You didn't kill yourself?

JULIET

I was going to.

YOUNG MALLORY

Do you need another minute? I'll give you some more time.

Mallory starts to exit.

JULIET

I don't need another minute. I'm not going to-.

(Then)

Wait! Who are you?

YOUNG MALLORY

I'm Mallory. Ethan's friend.

JULIET

Where is Ethan?

YOUNG MALLORY

He uhm... I don't know- I mean, I think he assumed you had killed yourself, so-

JULIET

How did you both know I was going to kill myself?

YOUNG MALLORY

Well... That's how it ends in the play.

JULIET

What play?

Mallory hands her *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*.

JULIET

(Reading the cover)

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare?

(To Mallory)

I don't know what this is.

YOUNG MALLORY

It's a book written about your life.

JULIET

But it's wrong. I'm not going to kill myself.

YOUNG MALLORY

I think you have to. It's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. If you don't kill yourself then... it's just the tragedy of Romeo. That wouldn't be very fair.

JULIET

Life isn't fair, is it. Romeo's dead. What did he do wrong?

YOUNG MALLORY

He did kill Tybalt-

JULIET

All I did was fall in love, yet that book still ends badly for me! Why?

YOUNG MALLORY

I don't know.

JULIET

Why is that?

YOUNG MALLORY

That's just the way it's written.

JULIET

Well... I'm re-writing it!

She hands her back the book.

JULIET

I'm leaving. I'm getting the hell out of here. I hate this town, everyone's always fighting.
CAN'T A GIRL FALL IN LOVE IN PEACE?

Beat.

YOUNG MALLORY

Where are you gonna go?

Juliet looks right. Then looks left. Then turns to
the door in the spine of the book upstage center.

JULIET

That way.

YOUNG MALLORY

What's there?

JULIET

I don't know. Hopefully people that don't hate all the time.

YOUNG MALLORY

What are you gonna do?

Beat.

JULIET

I'm 12 years old, Mallory. I'm gonna do everything.

She exits.

CHAPTER 16 - THE REAL TRAGEDY

Ethan and present day Juliet are once again at
the bar.

ETHAN

You just left?

She nods.

JULIET

I have an aunt who lives in Padua. She took me in. The last 10 years I've been able to
travel the world. Get an education. Find new love. Sing.

(MORE)

JULIET (CONT'D)

A few months ago, I got back in touch with my mother. She was surprised. And remorseful. She's supposed to be meeting me here soon.

ETHAN

I didn't know you could leave.

JULIET

We never know the things we can do, until we do them.

ETHAN

And Mallory's known this whole time?

JULIET

She's been corresponding with me for years. I think she wanted to make sure I was all right. She said that day at the cemetery was a pivotal moment for her.

ETHAN

I bet. We're not tied to how the books end.

JULIET

No.

ETHAN

I've been turning down cases for 10 years because I didn't think I could help.

JULIET

And she's been taking them on.

ETHAN

She's been what?

JULIET

Taking the cases that you turn down. Turning tragedies... into comedies.

ETHAN

Why didn't she tell me?

JULIET

I don't know.

ETHAN

I can't believe we can change the endings!

JULIET

Maybe that's why she didn't tell you.

ETHAN

Well, why would I think we could? The endings are written.

JULIET

Not written in stone. Just books.

ETHAN

We get everything we need to know from books.

JULIET

But it's up for interpretation, isn't it? Some people open a book and find ways to improve their lives, and the lives of those around them. Others just find ways to rationalize all the things that scare them.

Beat.

ETHAN

I wish I had known. About you. That you didn't...

JULIET

That I didn't kill myself?

Ethan nods.

JULIET

I nearly did. But something stopped me. Something inside. Something told me that there was more to my life... than what's written.

Beat.

JULIET

I see my mother waiting outside. I should go. It's nice to see you, Ethan. I can't believe it's been 10 years. You look the same.

ETHAN

I don't feel the same. I feel old. Everything is starting to hurt. I wake up every morning my neck is stiff, my back is stiff. Morning stiffness meant something very different when I was younger.

Juliet smiles.

JULIET

Farewell.

She goes to exit.

ETHAN

Juliet...

She stops.

ETHAN

I'm sorry. I should have been there. At the cemetery. I should have stopped you. I wanted to help but I believed....

JULIET

Did you? Believe? Is it faith that keeps you from doing the things you want? Or is it fear?

Ethan considers this but says nothing.

JULIET

For most people, I think it's fear. That's the real tragedy.

(Then)

Farewell.

She exits.

CHAPTER 17 - THE MINOTAUR

Ethan is urgently heading towards Thebes.

ETHAN

(Calling)

Sphinx. Sphinx?

A figure with the body of a man and the head of a bull approaches Ethan. He is startled.

ETHAN

Good Lord! You're not the Sphinx.

MINOTAUR

No. I'm not the Sphinx. Are you going to Thebes?

ETHAN

You've got the head of a bull.

MINOTAUR

(Sarcastic)

Oh my God, do I? I had no idea.

ETHAN

Sorry. I just read that the Sphinx would be here. The creature with the head of a human and the body of a lion.

MINOTAUR

I'm familiar with the Sphinx. Thank you. She's off today. I'm the Minotaur. Are you going to Thebes?

ETHAN

How'd you get the head of a bull?

MINOTAUR

You wanna hear my story? Well let's see, my mother was from Crete, and my father was A BULL! He was from the fields! They fornicated and I am the product of their love. Where are you from?

ETHAN

Well I was born-

MINOTAUR

That's fantastic! Are you going to Thebes? Because if you are I ask you a riddle. If you get it wrong, I kill you. Not wonderful for the tourist industry, I agree, nevertheless, that's how it's done.

ETHAN

(Desperately)

I'm looking for a woman. Her name is Mallory. Did she come this way? You didn't hurt her, did you?

MINOTAUR

No. I didn't hurt her.

ETHAN

She answered your riddle?

MINOTAUR

We made a different arrangement.

ETHAN

What arrangement?

MINOTAUR

She fancied herself a bit of a matchmaker, said she'd set me up if I let her pass.

ETHAN

Set you up?

MINOTAUR

With a lady. It's lonely when you have the head of a bull. She said she knew a nice girl. I said, "Is she a dog?" She said, "She's half dog." I said, "Go on through!"

(Then)

It was only after she left that I realized that there is no half lady, half dog. She was lying to me just to get through. Can you imagine that?

ETHAN

I would never do that. I can set you up. I know a nice girl.

MINOTAUR

I'm not going to fall for that again.

ETHAN

I know plenty of nice girls.

MINOTAUR

How many do you think I need? I'm half bull not half sea horse. Horny little bastards.

ETHAN

I have to pass. I have to find her.

MINOTAUR

Then I have to ask you my riddle, and I warn you, once I ask it, I can't un-ask it. And if you get it wrong, I kill you.

ETHAN

Please let me pass! I'm in love with her and she's headed to Thebes to run away with another man.

MINOTAUR

(Coldly)

What a tragedy.

ETHAN

It would be a tragedy! And I am trying to prevent that tragedy from happening!

MINOTAUR

Well then prepare for disappointment because there is no preventing tragedy from happening.

ETHAN

I used to think the same. But it's not true.

MINOTAUR

Oh it is, my friend. Can you imagine life without tragedy? People die, love is lost, dreams go unfulfilled. It happens everyday. If there is one thing you can count on, in everyone's life there will be tragedy. You can't prevent it. The only thing you can hope to do is postpone it, starting with your own by walking away. Because as it stands now, you're just digging yourself into a hole.

ETHAN

I'm good at digging my way out of holes.

(Then, with resolve)

I have to find her. Ask your riddle.

MINOTAUR

And now the hole is dug. There's no turning back anymore.

The lights shift so that only the Minotaur can be seen. The creature positions himself center stage in a grandiose fashion to present his riddle.

MINOTAUR

What has four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon and three legs in the evening? If you want to enter Thebes, you will answer my riddle. And if you don't answer it to my liking, you will die. I wonder, little man, how will you dig your way out of this one?

ETHAN

With a shovel.

Wham!

While the Minotaur was reciting his riddle, Ethan found a shovel, picked it up and hit the Minotaur over the head.

CHAPTER 18 - GIVE YOUR MAMA SOME LOVIN'

MALLORY

It's amazing what you can accomplish with a shovel.

Mallory is here at the Palace of Laios. She is also holding a shovel.

MALLORY

I just beat the crap out of Queen Jocaste. Knocked her out cold. Then I switched clothes with her, left her unconscious at a dairy farm. I feel bad. I hit her really hard... four or five times. Thankfully, she probably won't remember anything when she wakes. And I had no choice. I had to do it for my love. When Oedipus Rex arrives here at the Palace of Laios, he'll find me, disguised as his mother. He'll think I'm the Queen and I will convince him to have sex with me. I can be pretty convincing when I need to be. I even prepared some music to really set the mood. Having "fulfilled" the prophesy, I will then suggest that he return to the one he truly loves, Mallory, and get on with his life. The prophesy will remain unfulfilled. We'll be together, and all will be well.

Lights off on Mallory.

Lights up on Oedipus.

OEDIPUS

All is not well! Here I stand at the Palace of Laios. The palace of my father. The man I murdered. I didn't want to kill him. I didn't know he was my father. Of course, if I know I'm supposed to kill my father, I probably shouldn't go around killing men old enough to be my father. I'm an idiot! A pre-ordained joke! A puppet... controlled by the Gods, to do their every whim.

(Then)

No!

Oedipus pulls out a knife.

OEDIPUS

Not their every whim.

He places the dagger against his chest.

OEDIPUS

I could kill myself. Then the oracle would be wrong. I would have never lied with my mother.

He stands there with the knife against his chest,
trying to find the will to follow through.

He doesn't find it.

OEDIPUS

(Sadly)

And I would have never lived to love my Mallory again.

He slowly lowers his hand holding the knife.

OEDIPUS

That sacrifice I can not make. She gives me the courage to do what I must do.

Mallory, now fully dressed as the queen, enters.

MALLORY

Hello... my son.

OEDIPUS

Hello... mother.

MALLORY

This is the second time I've been expecting you.

OEDIPUS

You heard of father's demise, then.

MALLORY

I heard. You are now heir to his throne. And I am your Queen.

OEDIPUS

That doesn't bother you?

MALLORY

I've come to terms with it. I say what the hell, let's have a little fun. What say you give
mama a little kiss.

OEDIPUS

I wouldn't kiss you if you were a mezuzah! And no God or Oracle will tell me otherwise.

MALLORY

Pride breeds the tyrant violent pride, gorging, crammed to bursting with all that is overripe and rich with ruin.... Can such a man, so desperate, still boast he can save his life from the flashing bolts of god?

OEDIPUS

...What? I didn't... I'm sorry, I didn't understand a word you just said.

MALLORY

Then let me speak more plainly.

Music begins.

MALLORY

(Singing)

DO YOU KNOW THAT I MISSED YOU
I'M GLAD TO HAVE YOU HOME
I'M SO EXCITED TO SEE
JUST HOW MUCH YOU'VE GROWN

I DON'T NEED NO
R E S P E C T FROM YOU
BUT IF YOU SIT DOWN ON MY LAP
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO

GIVE YOUR MAMA SOME LOVIN
A LITTLE KISSIN AND HUGGIN
A LITTLE PUSHIN AND SHOVIN
LIKE 2 MONKEYS IN THE ZOO

DO YOU THINK I'M A BIG WHORE
CAUSE I LET MY OWN SON SCORE
DON'T CARE IF YOU DO CHORES
LIKE TAKE OUT THE TRASH
BUY A QUART OF MILK
GIVE THE DOG A BONE
JUST GIVE YOUR MAMA

LOVE LIKE YOUR DADDY GAVE ME
HE KNEW WHAT TO DO
WHAT'S GOOD FOR DADDY
SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU

(MORE)

MALLORY (CONT'D)

THEY SAY THE ACORN DOESN'T
FALL FAR FROM THE TREE
SO STOP YOUR PETTY WHINING BOY
AND SATISFY ME

GIVE YOUR MAMA SOME LOVIN
A LITTLE KISSIN AND HUGGIN
A LITTLE PUSHIN AND SHOVIN
LIKE 2 MONKEYS IN THE ZOO

YES I KNOW THAT I MADE YOU
NOW I WANT TO MAKE IT WITH YOU
AND I WANT IT TO CONTINUE
ALL NIGHT LONG...

GIVE YOUR MAMA SOME LOVIN...

Mallory continues to sing her refrain, as
Oedipus joins in with his own chorus.

OEDIPUS

(Singing)

AND NOW AT LAST
IT'S TIME TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT
HERE WITH HER TONIGHT
TO MAKE MY FUTURE NORMAL

WITHOUT MY LOVE
I FEAR I'LL SEAL MY FATE
TRAGEDY AWAITS
AS MY POOR HEART GETS BROKEN

BOTH

(Singing)

WITHOUT MY LOVE
I FEAR I'LL SEAL MY FATE
BUT THE CHOICE IS MINE TO MAKE
AND I CHOOSE NOT TO LIVE
WITH...

Without warning, Oedipus takes out his knife
and stabs Mallory.

OEDIPUS
(Singing)

TRAGEDY!

He drops the knife to the ground.

OEDIPUS
I'm not a puppet. I will not lie with you. The oracle is wrong. I love Mallory and will marry her.

Oedipus exits.

Mallory clutches her wound.

Black out.

CHAPTER 19 - TRAGEDY

Ethan arrives.

ETHAN
(Looking for Mallory)

Mallory?

He sees Mallory slumped in her chair. He rushes to her.

ETHAN
Mallory!

MALLORY
Ethan. What are you doing here?

ETHAN
I have to tell you something?

MALLORY
You going to tell me, "I told you so?"

ETHAN
No. I want to tell you-

He notices her wound.

ETHAN

Oh my God!

MALLORY

It's all right. I'm all right.

ETHAN

Did Oedipus do this?

She nods.

MALLORY

Just when I thought I knew everything that's going to happen. I didn't see this coming. Though I probably had it coming all along.

(Then)

I've been changing the endings of the stories.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

Why didn't you tell me?

MALLORY

Because I know you are afraid of the pain. And I couldn't guarantee there wouldn't be any. Most of the stories turned out better. Some didn't.

(Then)

In the end though, I guess tragedy awaits us all.

ETHAN

Not today.

MALLORY

To be or not to be. That... is the only question. Now throw tragedy in as a constant... makes the choice harder. Gets you to appreciate just how brave some people really are.

ETHAN

You're going to be all right.

MALLORY

You think so?

ETHAN

I know so.

MALLORY

How can you possibly know that? Do you know what's written for me?

ETHAN

I know what's written for us. Written in the stars.

MALLORY

I can't see the stars. Can you?

ETHAN

Oh Mallory, I was blind but now I see everything.

(Then)

There's never been too many things I knew with such certainty, but you've given me a divine ability to see the future, and you must believe me when I tell you it's a beautiful one. It's so beautiful.

He turns away from her.

ETHAN

I want to tell you something I should have told you 10 years ago, but I was scared. I'm not afraid anymore, so I'm telling you now. Mallory...

He turns back to face her. She is slumped over.
Lifeless. She is dead.

ETHAN

(Grief stricken)

...I love you.

Teiresias enters.

TEIRESIAS

It's a tragedy... what happened to her. Some fates, I'm afraid can't be avoided. Like Oedipus', for example. He will go off to search for his love. Mallory. Of course he won't find her. So he will eventually return to Thebes, where he will be crowned king. Having no Queen on the throne, he'll have the opportunity to choose one to his liking. He chooses a simple woman, simple if only because she can't seem to remember her past. But she somehow reminds Oedipus of his lost love. Perhaps it's her clothes. He meets her at a dairy farm.

ETHAN

Why did everything go so wrong?

TEIRESIAS

Everything went just as written.

ETHAN

That's not true. There is no Mallory in the story of Oedipus Rex.

TEIRESIAS

What makes you think this is the story of Oedipus Rex?

Pause.

ETHAN

I thought we end up together.

TEIRESIAS

You do.

Teiresias takes out a pistol and places it on a table in front of Ethan.

TEIRESIAS

Tragedy always befalls those who have such tragic flaws.

ETHAN

Tragic flaws?

TEIRESIAS

Hers was thinking she could control everything. Yours was thinking you had no control at all. You wasted your time waiting for destiny to hand you the things you want, instead of going out and getting them for yourself.

(Then)

I wonder if you had told her you loved her years ago if any of this would have ever happened.

ETHAN

You're saying it's my fault she's gone?

TEIRESIAS

I'm saying now's your chance to finally take action, and fulfill your true destiny.

Ethan looks over at Mallory. Dead.

ETHAN

I thought we'd have a happy ending.

TEIRESIAS

This is the only ending any of us ever have. This is where it's been headed from the start.

He looks up at Teiresias, a realization dawning on him.

ETHAN

The start? You set us down this path. You knew this would happen?

TEIRESIAS

I'm the guide. I know everything.

ETHAN

And yet you led us down the path all the same? It didn't have to go this way!

TEIRESIAS

It did. Somethings I'm afraid are just not meant to be.

ETHAN

To be or not to be!

TEIRESIAS

That's not a choice you get to make. This is how your story ends. It's been my job to get you to the end of your story.

Teiresias goes to grab the gun off the tray. Ethan grabs it first. He points it at Teiresias.

ETHAN

Not anymore. It's my job now. It's my story, after all.

Ethan cocks the gun.

ETHAN

I no longer have any use for you.

He places the gun against the soothsayer's chest.

TEIRESIAS

...That's not what's written.

ETHAN

I'm re-writing things.

Ethan starts to squeeze the trigger.

TEIRESIAS

Please don't!

Ethan and Teiresias both brace for the shot.

Then, Ethan lowers the gun.

ETHAN

Bang. You're dead to me.

Ethan tosses the gun away and heads for the door in the spine of our book.

TEIRESIAS

Where are you going?

ETHAN

I'm leaving.

TEIRESIAS

You can't! I'm the guide! How will you know which way to go without me? Who will you follow?

ETHAN

I'll find my own way.

TEIRESIAS

You'll be lost without me! What will you do then?

Ethan turns to Teiresias one last time.

ETHAN

I'm gonna do everything.

Ethan exits through the door.

The end.