

BOY FALLS FROM SKY

Written by

Hunter Toro

*Inspired by the true story of Broadway's most expensive disaster --  
SPIDER-MAN: TURN OFF THE DARK.*

*All song lyrics referenced are taken directly from the show.*

ARTISTS FIRST  
Corrine Aquino

CAA  
Darian Lanzetta

Please don't sue me.

Pretty please?

EXT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - BROADWAY - NIGHT

A Broadway marquee for SPIDERMAN: TURN OFF THE DARK glows against the night sky. It's so beautiful you understand why people strive their whole lives to see their work up there.

But as he looks at his own creation, GLEN BERGER (30s, suit and tie, mad-scientist hair, wiry glasses) looks nauseous.

GLEN  
(sigh)  
Fuck.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS LOBBY - NIGHT

It's opening night for TURN OFF THE DARK. Well-dressed PATRONS mingle and drink in the lobby, waiting for the show. Glen and his wife, EMMA, 30s, get drinks from a BARTENDER.

EMMA  
Thanks.

As they walk away, Glen finishes his drink before Emma's had her first sip. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
You good?

GLEN  
Sure. Just wish I wasn't conscious.

EMMA  
Hey, cheer up. At least she's not here.

GLEN  
I'm gonna get another drink. What do you want?

Emma holds up her untouched drink.

EMMA  
Still fine.

As Glen moves towards the bar, he keeps his head down, embarrassed to pass celebrities like MATT DAMON, CINDY CRAWFORD, and even former president BILL CLINTON.

*If he can just get one more drink...* Glen gets to the front of the line. One of the bartenders nods.

GLEN

Another gin and tonic. Even stronger than the last one, please.

The bartender refills Glen's glass. Glen takes a big sip, and that's when he spots her.

JULIE FUCKING TAYMOR (late 50s, arresting). She's here. In the flesh. Glen's so shocked he chokes, coughing loudly, spilling his drink on himself.

Julie turns and takes Glen in with unblinking, predatory eyes. She says nothing but the message is clear -- *Fuck. You.* She smiles and walks inside the theater.

The bartender offers Glen a napkin.

BARTENDER

(smiling)

Don't worry, you can't be any more of a train wreck than what you're about to see, right?

The OTHER BARTENDER smacks him on the arm.

OTHER BARTENDER

That's the writer, dude.

BARTENDER

Oh, shit.

But Glen barely notices. He's too busy watching Julie snake her way inside the crowded auditorium, laughing, radiant, and completely fucking radioactive. Glen is going to be sick.

**TITLES: BOY FALLS FROM SKY**

INT. PBS WRITER'S ROOM - DAY

6 YEARS EARLIER. There are cardboard cutouts from the kid's cartoon ARTHUR all around the room and more PBS tote bags than should be legal.

Around the conference table sit the WRITERS who, naturally, are dressed like shit. Glen is no exception. The SHOWRUNNER, 50s, sits near a whiteboard full of notecards.

SHOWRUNNER

It's too unmotivated. We need to give Arthur a better reason to want to share his new toy.

Glen's phone buzzes on his desk. He ignores the call.

SHOWRUNNER (CONT'D)

But no food pitches, please. I don't want this episode to tread any of the same ground as Scary Dentist. Scary Dentist walked so that we could run, people.

Glen's phone buzzes again. It's a text from his friend/Julie Taymor's assistant, MEGAN.

MEGAN (ON TEXT)

JULIE TAYMOR NEEDS A WRITER FOR HER NEXT PROJECT. CALL ME NOW, DUMMY!!!

Glen looks up.

EXT. PBS OFFICES - DAY

Glen paces on the sidewalk, phone to his ear.

GLEN

I'm at work so I can't talk long--

MEGAN (O.S.)

Fuck the cartoon! This is your dream job!

He should be offended, but he can't help himself.

GLEN

What's she doing next?

MEGAN (O.S.)

A musical based on Spider-Man.

GLEN

Wait like Spider-Man Spider-Man?

MEGAN (O.S.)

Yep. You familiar?

GLEN

Yeah. My kid loves the movies.

MEGAN (O.S.)

Great. Then be in her office by 4.

GLEN

Today?

MEGAN (O.S.)  
 Their last writer got shitcanned.  
 They're in a rush to find a  
 replacement.

GLEN  
 Okay. I'll be there... I can't  
 thank you enough for thinking of  
 me. I know the chances are slim-

MEGAN (O.S.)  
 Yeah, I mean she's out there but I  
 don't know she's out there enough  
 to go with a nobody.

GLEN  
 I'm not a nobody! I have 2 Emmys.

MEGAN (O.S.)  
 ...Daytime Emmys--

GLEN  
 They look the same!

MEGAN (O.S.)  
 (considering)  
 She has seen your play.

Glen is stunned. He stops pacing.

GLEN  
 Are you serious?

MEGAN (O.S.)  
 Alright, keep it in your pants. But  
 yeah, I guess she goes to weird off  
 off Broadway stuff sometimes.

Glen is so astonished that the insult misses him.

MEGAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 You might have a real shot, Glen.  
 Don't fuck it up.

Glen hangs up. He can't help but fist pump.

INT. PBS WRITER'S ROOM - DAY

Glen bursts in the room. The writers stop what they're doing.

GLEN  
 I have a tummy ache and have to go  
 home for the day. Sorry.

Glen leaves. After a beat, he walks back inside.

GLEN (CONT'D)

That's a weird thing for an adult man to say isn't it? Should've just said stomachache.

The Showrunner nods.

SHOWRUNNER

Go home, Glen.

GLEN

Yep. Thank you.

Glen scurries away.

INT. BERGER HOME - KITCHEN - CONNECTICUT - DAY

Emma's serving food to three small KIDS. The oldest, KAYLA, looks up when the door opens and Glen rushes in.

KAYLA

Daddy!

EMMA

You're off early.

Glen surprises her by coming in for a passionate kiss.

GLEN

Not off. Have to change for a VERY important meeting. No time to talk.

Glen starts the coffee maker. He assembles some snacks.

GLEN (CONT'D)

It's Julie Taymor. Can you believe it?

He laughs, delighted. Emma wipes off the baby's face.

EMMA

The actress from Seinfeld?

GLEN

No! The Macarthur Genius Grant winner? The director of the stage production of Lion King?  
(off her blank look)  
She was the first female director to win a Tony. You watched it on TV with me.

(MORE)



GLEN (CONT'D)

When I made a big deal about it you lectured me about how women also want a chance to just be the best director and not the best "lady director."

EMMA

(shrug)  
Sounds like me.

Glen pours himself a cup of coffee.

GLEN

You get my point! She's a fuc-  
(remembering kids)  
--freaking genius. Certifiably so.  
And this is my chance to work with  
her on Broadway. Not off Broadway.  
Real, grade-A actual Broadway!

Glen, balancing his snacks and coffee, kisses Emma again before leaving the room.

EMMA

Wish Daddy good luck.

GLEN

Never good luck! Wishing good luck  
is bad luck! Always break a leg!

KAYLA

Break both your legs, Daddy!

GLEN

That's my girl!

EXT./INT. TAYMOR'S OFFICE - A FEW HOURS LATER

Glen sweats before a door. He takes a deep breath and knocks.

TONY (O.S.)

Come in, come in!

Glen enters. He takes in the back of a WOMAN'S shiny head of perfect, dark hair. She does not turn to greet him. On the couch across from her sits film and theatre producer TONY ADAMS, 50s, extremely Irish. He's warm, lovable, and perpetually in a rush.

GLEN

Hi. Hello. I'm Glen.

Tony stands with a big smile and an outstretched hand. He speaks with a heavy accent.

TONY

Glen, my boy! Come in, come in.  
Take a seat. I'm Tony, Julie's  
producing partner.

They shake hands and sit. Glen finally takes in Julie Taymor, perched opposite him with a slight, mysterious smile on her face. Glen's frozen in place. Julie is... a god. Magnificent and otherworldly. He can't look away.

TONY (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking the time to meet  
with us today.

GLEN

Thanks for having me. I'm excited  
to meet you both. I'm a big fan of  
yours, Julie. I've seen every show  
you've done in New York. Twice.

Julie does not respond.

TONY

Could you start by giving us a bit  
of a rundown on your background.  
You're a TV writer as well as a  
playwright, correct?

GLEN

Yeah. I've been writing for some  
PBS kids shows for a couple of  
years now and then have put up  
quite a few plays off Broadway.  
I've been fortunate enough to get  
to tour some of them as well.

Glen looks up to see Julie studying him. He swallows.

TONY

A tour, that's exciting!

Glen is grateful for the excuse to look away from Julie's eyes. They see too much.

TONY (CONT'D)

Well, I'm sure you've heard a bit  
about what we're working on, but  
let me give you the overview. We're  
doing a Spider-Man musical, we've  
already had preliminary meetings  
with Marvel about--

JULIE  
--When I was 20--

Tony stops. He and Glen look at Julie.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
I had a fellowship in Indonesia for experimental puppetry. They sent me to a small, remote village, where an active volcano stood towering above us at all times.

Tony takes a deep breath and gives Glen a polite smile. He has heard this story too many times before.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
One night, the volcano awoke and blotted out every star. A friend and I decided we had to get up close to really experience it. So right then and there we began to climb the mountain directly next to the volcano. With no flashlights, no gear. I was wearing sandals. But there was no stopping us. We ascended. And once we were at the top we could see nothing but the smoke and ash raining down. We could hear nothing over the blasts of lava. The heat was so thick I could reach out and grab it-

She grabs a fistful of air before her, making Glen jump.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Amidst all this, my friend decided to leave without telling me. So I found myself completely alone up there. Watching. Living. *Being*. Once I saw what I needed to see at the top of that crater, I took off my sandals. I set down my camera. I got on my stomach and crawled, in the dark, in the dirt, back down the mountain. I never stopped moving forward. Inch by inch. One hand then the other, until I reached the bottom.

A beat. Tony smiles and clears his throat.

TONY  
I think what Julie's trying to say--

JULIE

He knows what I'm trying to say.  
Don't you, Glen?

GLEN

I think I do.

Julie nods. Tony looks completely lost.

TONY

Okay then.

JULIE

I caught your last play. Your brain  
is weird, Glen. We need to bring  
weird to this project.

Glen beams.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I have no interest in remaking the  
Spider-Man movies. The truth is,  
what I hope to do with the Spider-  
Man musical is to not write a  
musical at all. I want it to be a  
rock and roll circus drama.

Julie looks at Glen. No, *into* him.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Glen, I want you to write a scene  
for me--

EXT. NEW YORK SIDEWALK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Glen, deeply unathletic, sprints on the sidewalk.

BEGIN ANIMATED SEQUENCE

The scene is animated in the style of a traditional comic book. The sharp spire of the Chrysler Building stands tall against the New York City night sky. On its roof, the GREEN GOBLIN has hoisted up a grand piano. Obviously, green. His claws tickle the ivories. And damn, he is good.

GREEN GOBLIN

(singing)

*I'll take Manhattan, and then I'll  
flatten all of Queens, I dig those  
kind of scenes/I can't help it,  
it's in my genes.*

(MORE)

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

*A little bat, and some scorpion,  
you get the picture/I'm old  
fashioned, that's why I'm keen on  
family things, like... killing  
whole families!*

Frowning, Green Goblin smashes the keys. He pulls himself together.

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

(singing, smiling)  
*My dear Manhattan, I'll have you  
down to--  
(slamming keys)  
Miserable smoldering black cinders!  
(singing, smiling)  
And I'm greeeeen...*

His talons dance across the keys to end the song. Something in the distance catches Goblin's eye. He claps his claws with joy. Goblin speaks with a HEAVY SOUTHERN DRAWL.

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

Well, if it isn't my favorite  
little bug boy!

SPIDER-MAN lands in a crouch on the piano. He shoots Goblin with a web. Goblin picks it off like it's a dirty tissue.

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

Careful now, this piana is on lend.  
Though something tells me the owner  
won't be wanting it back. Murder  
kind of has a way of killing the  
music inside, you know?

SPIDER-MAN

Goblin.

Green Goblin lifts a champagne flute.

GREEN GOBLIN

Guilty. Have a drink, take off your  
mask, stay a while.

Goblin leans forward, menacing. With his webs, Spider-Man shoots Goblin's glass and shatters it on the ground.

SPIDER-MAN

No thanks. I'm doing dry January.

There's a loud SCRAPE as Green Goblin shoves away from the piano bench. Spider-Man poses, ready for a fight. But Goblin only walks towards the edge of the building.

GREEN GOBLIN

Those people look like ants all the way down there. Hell, up close they look like ants too. They're beneath us, Bug Boy.

SPIDER-MAN

No, Goblin. You're beneath *them*.

GREEN GOBLIN

(laughing)

You and I are in our own species now. We're more than human. We're super human. *That's* why we should work together, not against each other. Think of the power!

SPIDER-MAN

I'd rather die than work with you. With great power, comes great responsibility, Goblin.

GREEN GOBLIN

(buzzer sound)

EHHHH wrong answer! Try again. With great power, comes great... POWER!

Goblin cups his hands to his inhuman mouth.

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

(shouting down)

Hello you little ants down there! I've got you a gift. Have a piana!

He shoves the piano off the building with a laugh.

SPIDER-MAN

Aw, Goblin. *This* is why we're *not* the same. I would never push off a piano I was webbed to.

Goblin looks to see the webbing around his waist starting to tug at him. His eyes go wide.

GREEN GOBLIN

No!

SPIDER-MAN

Buh-bye! Have a safe flight!

Goblin is flung off the building. He falls down and down and down, until he smacks the pavement below. Blood leaks out of his head to form a comic bubble. It reads "SPLAT!"

INT. BERGER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma puts down the pages she was reading. Glen watches her, nervous.

EMMA  
Why is he southern?

GLEN  
That's the *only* thing you took away? His accent?

EMMA  
I just don't remember him crawling out of the Bayou in the movies.

GLEN  
Well we're not just *repeating* the movies, Emma! We're-we're trying to break new ground here!

He takes back his pages.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
Anyways, he's Bush. That's why the accent.

EMMA  
What?

GLEN  
(embarrassed, explaining)  
I see Green Goblin as President Bush.

EMMA  
Why didn't you just say that then?

Glen groans.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Okay, no no, I'm sorry. Don't worry. It was... good!

GLEN  
Good?? Oh fuck. I'm fucked!

EMMA  
What's wrong with good?

GLEN  
"Good!" Christ.

EMMA  
It was... funny?

GLEN  
Please stop. Please. You're making  
it so much worse.

He sits at the table, putting his head in his hands.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
(muffled, sotto)  
Oh God, why did you turn it in  
early. You miserable little  
teacher's pet.

His phone starts ringing. Glen peeks through his fingers to see who's calling. He scrambles to answer.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
Oh shit. Oh fuck. It's her.  
(into phone, cool)  
Julie. How are--?

JULIE (O.S.)  
--Goblin as Bush?

Glen's heart melts right through his stupid little ribcage, it drips down into his stupid little stomach, warming his entire stupid little body.

GLEN  
(whisper)  
Exactly. That's exactly it.

JULIE (O.S.)  
I could kiss you. It's perfect. I  
don't know how I didn't see it  
before.

GLEN  
I can't tell you how happy I am to  
hear that.

JULIE (O.S.)  
It's you, Glen. It has to be.

GLEN  
Does this mean--?

JULIE (O.S.)  
As far as I'm concerned, you've got  
the job.



Glen nods at his wife. It looks like he could cry. Emma grips his arm, ecstatic.

JULIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

All you've gotta do now is convince the boys. Then it's a done deal.

GLEN

The boys?

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

From a window inside the limo, Glen watches thousands of loud, black-leather-clad FANS shuffle towards a massive amphitheater. Glen's wiry Harry Potter glasses and reasonably-priced cardigan stand out even more than usual.

Tony, also in the back of the limo, looks up from his phone to see how nervous Glen is.

TONY

You'll be fine, Glenny. What Julie wants, Julie gets.

Glen tries to smile.

TONY (CONT'D)

That's why she fired the last writer. Even though he was the boys' best friend. It's still a bit tense between them all, actually.

Glen loses his smile again. After a quiet beat--

GLEN

I only know like one of their songs. They're not going to ask me about their catalogue are they?

But Tony has gone back to his phone.

INT. AMPHITHEATER BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Backstage, Julie, Tony, and Glen sit waiting. Across from them sit THE EDGE and BONO, wearing his red sunglasses inside. "The boys" are the super-Irish, super-famous band U2, and they are currently studying Glen's paper resume.

THE EDGE

I like the font.

BONO  
It's a good font.

Glen is trying to sit still. But this is torture.

GLEN  
It's been a while since I needed a  
resume! Ha.

BONO  
(politely)  
Hm.

The Edge looks up, slightly disappointed.

THE EDGE  
Always better to be prepared.

Bono silently points to a line on the resume. Their dutiful, perpetually judgy ASSISTANT, 20s, Irish as hell, leans over his shoulder to take a closer look.

ASSISTANT  
(smug)  
Arthur is an American children's  
program about a bookish aardvark...

BONO  
Thank you.

Bono goes back to the resume. The Edge thinks for a moment.

THE EDGE  
What's the difference between an  
aardvark and an anteater?

The assistant goes to respond, then panics. *WHAT THE FUCK IS THE DIFFERENCE??*

GLEN  
Aardvarks are native to Africa,  
Anteaters to South America.

THE EDGE  
Oh, right. Thanks.

The assistant glares at Glen, feeling one-upped.

ASSISTANT  
Yeah. Thanks a lot.

Glen shifts in his chair, sipping the champagne he was handed. The bubbles fizz so loudly, he feels secondhand embarrassment.

JULIE

I appreciate how thorough you two are, but let me assure you, Glen comes well credentialed. He is a distinguished playwright and an Emmy-award winning TV writer.

Bono and the Edge look over at Glen.

GLEN

(weakly)  
Daytime Emmy.

Tony winces.

JULIE

And most importantly, I hope, is that he has my full support and my trust. He *is* the only writer for this project.

BONO

...You're absolutely sure this time?

THE EDGE

We don't want a repeat of the unpleasantness before.

Julie's smile doesn't waver.

JULIE

I am sure.

Bono looks deep into Glen's eyes.

BONO

Glen, this musical has to be brilliant.

It almost sounds like a threat.

GLEN

It will be. You have my word.

Bono stares him down, then decides he believes him.

BONO

Okay.

JULIE

Okay?

They both look to The Edge. He sighs, smiles.

THE EDGE

Yeah, fuck it. Okay. Welcome to  
Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark!

Tony slaps a smiling Glen on the back.

TONY

Welcome, mate.

GLEN

(confused)  
Turn off the...?

BONO

Yes the show is called Spider-Man  
colon Turn Off The Dark. It was  
Edge's idea. He's brilliant with  
titles.

Glen looks over to Julie to see what she makes of it. But she  
just keeps her same smile.

THE EDGE

I had just finished making love to  
my wife. We're lights-on-during-sex  
people. The more lights, the  
better, really. Incredible body, my  
wife, would be a crime to not see  
every inch-

From where she sits furiously typing on her laptop, the  
assistant nods supportively.

ASSISTANT

She's really lovely.

THE EDGE

--So we had just ravaged each other  
real good, which is why her brains  
were kind of scrambled and she  
asked me to turn off the *dark*  
instead of turn off the *light*.

He stares at Glen with eyes that say "*you see now? Genius.*"

THE EDGE (CONT'D)

Then BAM. It hits me in the face  
like a metal fucking bat. That's  
what this whole show is about.  
That's who Spider-Man is. We turn  
OFF the dark to turn ON the light.

Bono nods. Tony nods. So Glen forces himself to smile and  
return the nod. He raises his glass.

GLEN  
 ...Okay then, to Turn Off The Dark!

JULIE  
 Cheers.

THE EDGE  
*Sláinte.*

They CLINK their glasses. Glen and Julie share a smile. She winks at him.

Behind them the assistant stands at attention as the printer churns out pages on aardvarks and anteaters. She has some research to do-- Glen Berger will never one up her again.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

Glen watches Bono and the Edge perform in the amphitheater that night in awe. Glen is drunk on getting the job, drunk on being in the crowd, drunk on all the expensive champagne. Glen CHEERS and CLAPS.

Tony sways to the music, but doesn't look up from where he types on his phone. Glen watches Bono and the Edge absolutely *crushing* on stage.

GLEN  
 (pleasantly surprised)  
 They're pretty good!

TONY  
 Yeah, they're fucking U2!

Tony takes in the sweet, naive idiot before him.

TONY (CONT'D)  
 Glen, this is going to be a bumpy ride. Whatever happens, you need to stick with Julie.

Glen watches Julie dance in the crowd, unencumbered. The stage lights bounce off her glossy hair, her perfect skin. *How could he not stick with her?*

GLEN  
 Always.

Tony pats a hand on Glen's back.

TONY

Enjoy tonight. Cause you'll need to work like hell this week. I'd like some pages before Friday.

Glen laughs until he realizes Tony's not kidding.

TONY (CONT'D)

Marvel wants their first treatment soon or they're not going to sign over the licensing deal and then we lose everything we've worked for.

It feels daunting until Julie looks over at Glen with a smile. Suddenly, Glen is sure he can do anything. Everything.

GLEN

We won't let you down.

On stage, Bono and the Edge start "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." The audience goes crazy, no one louder than Glen. Then--

GLEN (CONT'D)

(shouting over music)  
There's no wiggle room on the title?

TONY

(shouting over music)  
Let it go, Glenny. I lost that battle a long fucking time ago.

INT. TRAIN - THE NEXT DAY

Glen cheerily commutes from CT to NYC.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

As he walks through the stinky, crowded, loud streets, Glen gleefully imagines an ANIMATED SPIDER-MAN swinging by and giving him a high five. Glen never breaks his stride.

JULIE (PRE-LAP)

Do you know why I picked you, Glen Berger? Out of the many, many writers I met with?

INT. JULIE OFFICE - DAY

Glen sits on Julie's couch, a notebook and pen in his lap. Julie stands gazing out her window. Even in a simple turtleneck, she looks almost supernatural.

JULIE

You're in the perfect Venn Diagram for creativity. You're talented, but you haven't had Capital S Success yet. And what they don't tell you is that success makes people fucking cowards. You start thinking too much about what you stand to lose.

GLEN

It hasn't made you a coward.

Julie smiles.

JULIE

I don't allow it to. When I feel my fear stir inside me, that's when I know I must do whatever it is I'm afraid of.

She turns to Glen.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Because art should fucking terrify you. The line between good and bad is so, so very thin. Tony doesn't get it. He's an angel, but he doesn't get it. Creation must require the potential to humiliate yourself. And if there's no chance of it, you're taking no risk, and therefore making nothing at all.

Glen is not just drinking the Kool Aid. He is ready to milk the Kool-Aid Man for a steady supply.

GLEN

Yes. Exactly.

She fixes Glen with her intense eyes.

JULIE

So, you ready to scale an active volcano with me wearing the wrong shoes and see if we can figure out how to get back down?

Glen smiles.

GLEN

There is genuinely nothing I want  
to do more.

Julie nods. She picks up a large stack of Spider-Man comics  
and drops them before Glen.

JULIE

Have at it.

Glen is delighted. He starts flipping through a particularly  
old, well-kept comic from the pile.

GLEN

This is amazing. The quality is--

RIP. He looks up to see Julie has torn a page from the comic.  
Glen is horrified.

JULIE

What?

Glen shakes his head.

GLEN

I'm sure it's fine it's just that,  
you know, people collect these.  
They're worth quite a lot of money.

Julie waves a hand, unbothered. She tacks up the torn page to  
a cork board. She studies it.

JULIE

So he's always bit by a radioactive  
spider? In every version?

It takes a second before Glen realizes she's not kidding. She  
looks at him, waiting for an answer.

GLEN

Oh. Yes, he is.

JULIE

Huh. I like that. It says a lot  
about fate and chance.

GLEN

Did... you not see the movies?

Julie shakes her head no.



JULIE

I never cared for superheroes.  
Honestly, when Tony first  
approached me about this, I was  
hesitant.

She smiles at Glen, cocky.

JULIE (CONT'D)

But he reminded me I hadn't seen  
THE LION KING before I pitched THE  
LION KING so...

Glen is amazed.

GLEN

Wow. I want to be like you one day.

Julie laughs.

JULIE

The key is to be upfront. It's  
served me well up to this point,  
even if it doesn't make me the most  
popular. I know I have a reputation  
for being "difficult."

GLEN

I actually heard the craziest rumor  
about you before we met.

Julie's look encourages him to go on.

GLEN (CONT'D)

They said that when you pitched the  
stage production of LION KING to  
Disney, you pitched the story we  
all know from the animated movie -  
where the Lion king is defeated by  
his brother, then the lion prince  
has to win his father's throne  
back. But then you supposedly told  
Disney that's only act one. Act two  
was going to be: the animals leave  
Africa and go to Vegas.

Glen laughs.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Can you believe that?

Julie gives him her mysterious smile, her eyes dancing. Glen  
stops laughing.

JULIE

Yeah, because that's exactly what happened. We just didn't end up going that way.

Glen swallows, but Julie is unbothered. In fact, she seems tickled by it.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Lava isn't supposed to be snug and comfortable, Glen. It's supposed to melt the skin from your bones and cause your organs to fail.

Julie checks her watch.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Tony, what are we thinking for lunch?

INT. BERGER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

When Glen crawls into bed late that night, Emma stirs.

EMMA

How was your first day?

Glen gives her a kiss on the cheek.

GLEN

Amazing. Sorry it's so late.

His wife snuggles into him.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Probably because it's the first day. Won't be like this for long, I'm sure--

He's wrong, of course.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-Glen, Julie, and Tony work at all hours. Sometimes afternoon, sometimes night, sometimes daybreak. Sometimes it rains, sometimes it snows. The only constant is their never-ending snacking, drinking, scribbling, and talking. Glen and Julie's conversation is alive, electric.

-Glen types furiously on his laptop as he rides the subway late at night. Imaginary animated Spider-Man hangs upside down from the ceiling to read over his shoulder.

-Glen crawls in bed with his wife, giving her a kiss when she stirs. Eventually Emma stops waking up when Glen crawls in. Glen stops kissing her and just collapses, fully clothed, into a deep sleep.

-As Glen makes coffee, his house is empty. His family is already gone for the day. Imaginary animated SPIDER-MAN, wearing a pink apron, hands Glen a to-go thermos and Glen's backpack. He gives Glen a kiss on the cheek.

INT. JULIE'S OFFICE - A FEW HOURS LATER

Empty Chinese take out boxes cover the table. Tony is doing his best to clean up the mess. Glen offers no help as he drums with his chopsticks.

Julie stands before a white board of scribbles, thinking. She shakes her head.

JULIE

This should feel more...eternal. We have to think of all of this as a mythology of sorts. Spider-Man, and the rest of the superheroes of today, it's sad, but it's basically our culture's Greek mythology. Our gods and heroes just wear spandex.

GLEN

The Greeks got the better end of the deal.

JULIE

Oh, absolutely. But if we understand that these men in tights are *our* myths we can dissect more clearly what they represent about human nature.

GLEN

There is always a hero and there is always a villain.

Julie gets an idea. She stops Glen's chopstick drumming.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Sorry.

JULIE

In the movie, do they always focus on the same villain?

GLEN

No, they cycle through a different one each movie.

JULIE

Then let's do all the villains.

She turns to Glen and Tony, a fire in her eyes.

TONY

I like the merchandising potential. Means more toys to sell.

JULIE

Oh, don't be crass, Tony.

TONY

It's my job, darling.

GLEN

(considering)

It certainly would be a different approach from the movies.

JULIE

Exactly. And why would we do the thing that's already been done? For money? Fuck money.

Tony, smiling, rolls his eyes.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I've got more than I can ever spend... No, I won't eat Marvel's ass for money. Only for love.

Glen looks at a comic book page. In it, Peter Parker shows true anguish. He could actually be in a Greek tragedy.

GLEN

I think you're right about superheroes being our Greek myths.

Julie's whiteboard marker keeps squeaking as she writes.

JULIE

Of course I'm right.

She is not bragging. This is just a fact.

GLEN

Off that. What if the show was narrated by a Greek chorus?

Julie's marker stops, intrigued. She turns.

GLEN (CONT'D)

No-- a GEEK chorus.

It's electric. The two laugh, the idea coming to life.

JULIE

Glen Berger. That's pretty good.

Tony looks at all the trash still scattered around the room.

TONY

I need another trash can.

Tony leaves.

JULIE

Peter's story has so many levels to it, puberty, desire, guilt, grief. I wish we had a female character with even an ounce of that richness.

GLEN

Mary Jane?

Julie snorts.

JULIE

Mary Jane is an object. She's the victim, the one saved, the one loved, the damsel who finds herself in constant distress.

GLEN

Yeah. Shit. You're right.

JULIE

Don't get me wrong, I'm desperate to subvert it. It's exactly what's *expected* to have this be a man's story.

Glen nods.

JULIE (CONT'D)

It's a shame because spiders are feminine in nature. Weaving has always been a woman's work.

Glen spots the time. He stands.

GLEN  
Oh crap, so sorry but--

Julie waves her hand.

JULIE  
No, no it's your anniversary. Go.  
I'll bore Tony with this.

GLEN  
Thank you!

JULIE  
Have fun.

Glen scrambles out. Julie goes back to the board.

INT. GLEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Emma's already halfway through a bottle of wine. Glen enters.

GLEN  
I know, I'm sorry.

Emma nods, sad.

EMMA  
Come up with anything good today?

GLEN  
Yes. A lot of great stuff.

He kisses her.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
I really am sorry, Em.

EMMA  
You still like me more than Spider-  
Man?

GLEN  
Way more. You're a much better  
kisser.

She kisses down his neck.

EMMA  
And Julie?

Glen hesitates half a second.

GLEN  
Of course.

EMMA  
Then we're okay.

Glen puts her face in his hand.

GLEN  
I am so lucky to have you--

EMMA  
Yeah, you are. Now shut up and kiss me.

INT. BERGER HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's the middle of the night. Glen and Emma sleep peacefully, naked and tangled in each other. Glen's cell RINGS, jogging him awake. He answers.

GLEN  
Hello?

INT. TAYMOR'S OFFICE

Julie has her phone on speaker. Tony sits nearby.

JULIE  
Are you sleeping?

INTERCUT WITH GLEN AND JULIE

GLEN  
No. Well. Yes.

JULIE  
I didn't know you went to bed so early.

Glen checks the time, it's 3AM.

TONY  
What she means to say is we apologize for waking you--

JULIE  
--Glen, I got it. The answer to our prayers.

She looks down at a page in a Spider-Man comic. She drags her finger across a word bubble coming from Peter Parker's mouth, where the word ARACHNE stands suspended.

BEGIN COMIC BOOK ANIMATED SEQUENCE

A woman in a toga sits weaving before an intricate gold LOOM.

JULIE (V.O.)

In Greek mythology, Arachne was the greatest weaver in her land. Some say, even the world. Her tapestries were renowned by all. But none admired her work more than Arachne herself. She loved her tapestries like they were her children.

The goddess ATHENA, massive, intimidating, ethereal, floats down into the room. The two women nod at each other.

JULIE (V.O.)

Arachne took such pride in her art that she dared to challenge the goddess Athena to a weaving match. Stunned by this mortal's hubris, Athena accepted.

Athena conjures a magical loom for herself. She and Arachne begin to weave.

JULIE (V.O.)

The goddess weaved a gorgeous, complicated tapestry about the majesty and power of the gods. Arachne meanwhile weaved an ornate depiction of the gods in their most degenerate form-- delighting in their abuse of mankind. Her tapestry was an act of defiance, a slap in every god and goddess' face. On seeing what Arachne created, Athena flew into a rage and destroyed Arachne's work.

Athena waves her hand, shredding Arachne's tapestry. As it cascades to the ground, Arachne SCREAMS. She falls to her knees, pulling the threads into a tangled heap on her lap.

JULIE (V.O.)

Devastated by the loss, Arachne uses what is left of her tapestry to hang herself.



Arachne ties the threads tightly around her neck. She secures the knot. She will not fail. Arachne jumps. She does not struggle against the rope.

JULIE (V.O.)

But just before Arachne dies,  
Athena takes pity on this human  
woman with such a gift. So the  
goddess changes the noose around  
her neck into a cobweb, and  
transforms Arachne from a human  
into a spider, so that she may  
weave in peace, forever.

Arachne transforms into a large, black spider. Her rope becomes silvery spiderweb. Arachne scurries up her web and out of sight.

INT. MARVEL OFFICES - DAY

Julie's passion is contagious. As Glen watches her speak from his seat at a large conference table, he beams. Next to him, Tony looks a little less enthusiastic.

JULIE

Arachne will be our main villain,  
the leader of all of our other  
villains. This is how we help the  
audience see that superheroes are  
our greek myths. By tying them  
together.

You know who doesn't share Julie's passion? The male MARVEL EXECs sitting at the table. They force on smiles.

MARVEL EXEC 1

Wow.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Yes, wow indeed. WHAT a... unique  
voice you have, Julie.

MARVEL EXEC 1

We NEVER would have thought of your  
take in a million years.

MARVEL EXEC 2

That's why we hired you! For a  
fresh take. And not to use a "but--"

MARVEL EXEC 1

We would never *dream* of using a  
"but" with you!

MARVEL EXEC 2

But we were thinking... is it a bit too fresh of a take?

MARVEL EXEC 1

It's leaving us with a few tiny concerns. Nothing huge.

MARVEL EXEC 2

The teeniest and tiniest.

Julie says nothing. Tony steps in.

TONY

We're all ears.

The Execs look at each other.

MARVEL EXEC 1

For one, the musical is a bit... darker than we'd like for a family-friendly affair.

JULIE

As I said earlier, it's not a musical. It's a rock and roll circus drama.

MARVEL EXEC 1

...Right. My mistake.

JULIE

But the show itself is not dark. It's about turning OFF the dark. So it's really about hope.

MARVEL EXEC 1

It opens with a with a woman hanging herself, right?

JULIE

Yeah, but she doesn't *succeed*.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Spider-Man is one of our most precious properties. Peter Parker is practically his own institution. So while we LOVE the experimental aspects of your work, Julie--

MARVEL EXEC 1

--I mean just ADORE. If I could leave my wife and kids, marry it and put a baby in it I would!

MARVEL EXEC 2

--we do have to make sure that Spider-Man's image is protected. There's so much... rich... history at stake--

Money.

MARVEL EXEC 1

So.much.history.

Money. They mean money.

JULIE

I didn't realize I put Mr. Parker in such danger.

The execs politely laugh. Marvel Exec 1 consults his notes.

MARVEL EXEC 1

It's just little things. Like having a joke alluding to Peter Parker quote, "jerking it" and fearing that webs will quote, "come out of his penis."

Glen swallows. Julie smiles, unruffled.

JULIE

Spider-Man's powers are a clear metaphor for puberty. His body is changing and is out of his control. His moods are unpredictable. His webs are transparently a stand in for his semen.

MARVEL EXEC 2

I fear there's been a bit of a miscommunication. Peter Parker can't be sexual. Or have sex.

MARVEL EXEC 1

Or even think about sex. Or have it implied that he thinks about sex.

JULIE

He's a teen boy with his first girlfriend...

MARVEL EXEC 2

Shall we also take a look at the potential lyrics you submitted?

MARVEL EXEC 1

Yes, there was some foul language we wanted to flag--

GLEN

I believe he says shit one time.

MARVEL EXEC 1

(smiling)

Peter Parker cannot curse. Ever.

Julie scoffs.

JULIE

Any other censorship we should know about?

MARVEL EXEC 2

(sincere)

Yes. Thank you for asking.

MARVEL EXEC 1

No drinking, no smoking, no killing--

MARVEL EXEC 2

Unless deemed forgivable enough and/or from an accident that he spends the rest of his life regretting. And/or you make it seem like someone is dead but then you bring them back, say using a time travel device so therefore there were actually no stakes all along.

Julie looks at Tony, incredulous. He subtly shakes his head.

GLEN

(impressed)

How do you guys remember all these rules without a list?

MARVEL EXEC 2

Also, no political sentiments of any kinds. Unless they are Peter Parker expressing gratitude for his American citizenship. For instance, "wow! I am so glad to be a citizen of these United States!"

Julie gives a dry laugh.

MARVEL EXEC 2 (CONT'D)

Unfortunately those rules are hard and fast.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
They come from Mr. Marvel himself!

GLEN  
(quietly)  
There's a Mr.--?

Tony shakes his head.

TONY  
These are all very helpful things  
to be aware of, gentlemen. Thanks.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
One more thing. Arachne.

MARVEL EXEC 2  
We just want to know... why?

MARVEL EXEC 1  
I mean we love the idea of all the  
villains being involved. Great  
merchandise potential. I see why  
you're a certified genius, Julie!

MARVEL EXEC 2  
But that myth seems to have almost  
nothing to do with Peter Parker's  
story, other than... they're both  
spider people?

Julie takes a deep breath. She stands.

JULIE  
Gentlemen, if you don't like my  
vision, then there's no need to  
waste any more time.

Glen's eyes widen in fear. He looks over to Tony, who still  
maintains his tight smile.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
(cooing)  
Please don't get us wrong! We ADORE  
you and are so excited to see what  
new, original places you can take  
this story.

MARVEL EXEC 2  
We just also want to keep the  
property traditional and unchanged  
in any way, shape, or form.

JULIE

Thank you for your time. Have a good rest of your day. And lives.

She leaves. Tony smiles apologetically at the execs.

TONY

Give us a minute, will you?

Calmly, he stands up.

EXT. MARVEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Glen and Tony jog through the hallway, RATTLING, as Tony struggles to open a prescription pill bottle.

GLEN

Here.

A sweaty, out of breath Tony hands it over, grateful. Glen opens the ZOLOFT, which recommends 1 per day. Tony pops three and dry swallows, waving off the water bottle Glen holds out.

GLEN (CONT'D)

You okay?

Tony nods, dabbing at the sweat on his forehead.

TONY

Never better.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Julie shoves open the Marvel doors and advances onto the street. Tony and Glen come outside a moment after.

TONY

Julie, wait! Christ on a bike.

Julie stops. They approach, Tony catching his breath.

TONY (CONT'D)

I will handle this, Julie. You know I will handle this. I always do.

JULIE

How can you handle *that*? They were practically spitting in our faces.

GLEN

Was it... that bad? I didn't get the sense they--

JULIE

If they want someone to jerk off their big swinging IP dick they should call their mothers. They asked me for *my* take and that was *my* take. I'm an artist not a fucking factory.

Tony puts a hand on Julie's tensed shoulder.

TONY

You're right. If they don't want what you're offering, they can kindly fuck right off.

GLEN

Well maybe not right off, right? We still want the job...?

TONY

(ignoring him)

Those guys can't understand you because they're terrified, all the time, trying to protect themselves, their jobs, their million-dollar properties. They're afraid to take a risk, even if they know deep deep deep down, down in the crevice of their very anus, that that's what they need to do.

Julie softens. Tony smiles.

TONY (CONT'D)

(to Julie)

There is no taming the Taymor. And they're gonna have to learn that.

Tony heads back inside. Julie breathes a sigh of relief.

JULIE

He's a godsend. I don't know how he does it.

Glen does now, so he says nothing.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Glen, giddy, stands with an exhausted Tony in the champagne section.

GLEN  
I can't believe you pulled it off.  
I thought they hated us.

TONY  
Don't jinx us. Not a done deal  
until the last signature dries.

Glen holds up a bottle of cheap champagne.

GLEN  
Oooh this label is pretty.

Tony swipes the bottle from Glen, laughing.

TONY  
We are not bringing that cheap shit  
to The Edge! We'll take this one.

He swaps the bottle out for another, much fancier looking one. They go up to the register. Tony pats his pockets.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Christ. Wallet's in the car. Mind  
spotting me?

GLEN  
Yeah, of course.

Glen gets his wallet out.

TONY  
I've been forgetting things left  
and right lately. It's driving my  
wife crazy that my mind's been all  
over the fucking place.

The cashier rings the bottle up.

CASHIER  
\$321.08.

Glen is startled. The cashier has to yank his card out from his grip. On the ceiling, the buzzing fluorescent light is covered in spiderwebs. The SPIDER pauses, sensing Glen. Then, she goes back to work.

INT. EDGE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A luxury apartment. The Edge looks over his contract. Tony, sweating at an alarming rate, POPS the champagne. He pours three glasses. Glen silently calculates how much money is going into each glass. Tony tries to hand the Edge a glass.



THE EDGE

I don't do champagne. Gives me the toots something nasty.

TONY

More for me and Glenn-o then.

Glen takes the glass miserably. He gives Tony's glass a half-hearted cheers.

TONY (CONT'D)

To finally sealing the deal.

He takes a small sip. He sets his flute down and watches the Edge do his final signature with a flourish.

THE EDGE

All set. And with that, we officially have a show, gentlemen! Consider my Broadway cherry popped.

Tony smiles and flashes a thumbs up. Then he has a stroke.

Tony keels over, knocking his champagne glass to the floor. Glen and the Edge rush to him.

GLEN

Oh my God.

THE EDGE

What the fuck! Tony! Tony!

INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT

Glen rides with a SKETCHY CROWD. He holds the opened champagne, sobbing. No one so much as glances at him.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

An elaborate funeral: flower arrangements everywhere, a crowd of MOURNERS in black. Bono and The Edge sit in the pews (Bono still wears sunglasses inside, a funeral's no exception. Out of respect, though, they are black).

Seated before them are Julie and Glen, who hold hands. Julie's eyes are bloodshot from crying.

JULIE

We will make him proud.

Glen nods. Julie puts her head on Glen's shoulder.

JULIE (CONT'D)

We must remember, now more than ever, that what matters is *saying* something with our art. Honoring the people we love, honoring life itself. Money be damned.

GLEN

Yes.

JULIE

We need to start working harder, Glen. There's no time to waste.

GLEN

Of course.

JULIE

I'm glad to hear you agree, because I think it's time you get an apartment in the city.

Glen is completely caught off guard.

GLEN

What?

JULIE

Your commuting is taking away valuable writing time. Why would you want to keep doing that?

GLEN

...Because of my family? I already barely see them--

JULIE

You'll see them plenty. Especially after this initial push is over.

Glen blinks. He shakes his head.

GLEN

I don't--

JULIE

It really is necessary now if we're going to continue working together, Glen.

Glen realizes this is not a suggestion.

JULIE (CONT'D)

We can find you an apartment tomorrow.

GLEN

I thought we were off the rest of the week because of--

He looks around at the funeral.

JULIE

They sent over new notes today with their condolence muffin basket...

An ORGAN begins to play. The funeral is starting.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Death waits for no man but Marvel.

INT. BLACK BOX STAGE - NIGHT

On a BLACK BOX STAGE, Glen sleeps in a bed. From the ceiling descends an upside down SPIDER-MAN. He moves down slowly. He stops above the bed. Glen sits up.

They kiss passionately UPSIDE DOWN, in the trademark Spider-Man position. But Spider-Man never removes his mask. Finally, they pull apart. Spider-Man tilts his head.

SPIDER-MAN

(chipper)

Are you ready to get fucked, Glen Berger?

INT. GLEN'S ROOM - MORNING

Glen wakes with a start. He hears his family downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Glen comes down dressed. His kids sit at the table, his son banging a Spider-Man sippy cup. Emma gives Glen a hug.

EMMA

I thought we could all use a picnic in the park today.

Glen runs his fingers through his crazy hair.

GLEN

I can't. I have to work.

EMMA  
What? A man *died*.

KAYLA  
Like my goldfish?

EMMA  
Yes, honey.

GLEN  
It's not up to me. More notes came  
in.

Emma thinks about saying something, but doesn't.

KAYLA  
Can I watch when you flush him?

GLEN  
They don't put people in toilets.

Emma looks at Glen long and hard. Something's off.

EMMA  
What else are you not telling me?

GLEN  
Nothing. We'll talk later.

EMMA  
Glen.

Glen hesitates. Then weakly-

GLEN  
I... may need to rent a place in  
the city for myself. Commuting is  
taking away valuable writing time.

Emma gives a dry laugh.

EMMA  
You barely have *any* time that isn't  
writing time. We never see you,  
Glen.

GLEN  
I'm sorry, but I have to do this. I  
have to think about what the show  
needs.

EMMA  
Are you sleeping with her?

GLEN

What? Are you kidding me? I would never do that. You know me.

EMMA

I'm not sure I do.

GLEN

Em. Please. This is my dream come true, the one I've worked my whole life towards. Please don't ask me to throw it away. Please.

Emma studies his face. She believes him. He takes her hand.

GLEN (CONT'D)

We can make this work. I promise. It's just a couple more months.

EMMA

...You'll come home on the weekends?

GLEN

Every weekend.

EMMA

And you're not cheating on me?

GLEN

No.

EMMA

(sigh)  
Okay.

He pulls her in for a hug.

GLEN

Thank you. It'll be worth it.

EMMA

It has to be.

INT. GLEN'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

The studio is as sad as it is tiny. Though Glen's only moved in a few BOXES and a FUTON, he's drained. Glen turns to his over-gelled LANDLORD, 50s.

GLEN

And it's okay that I put the rent on my credit card, yeah?

The landlord shrugs.

LANDLORD

Yeah, sure. You know, you're the first married man I've seen who owns a futon. Thought that was only a divorced guy thing.

Glen smiles tightly and walks the landlord towards the door.

GLEN

Thanks again.

He shuts the door and breathes out, tired in his bones. From the couch Imaginary animated Spider-Man opens his arms. Glen collapses into them. Imaginary Spider-Man holds Glen, rubbing his back.

Glen's phone PINGS on his phone. He sits up as he reads--

JULIE (ON TEXT)

WE GOT THE THEATRE!

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

As he looks around the historic Foxwoods Theater, Glen has no words. Julie walks up, smiling. She knows this feeling. She squeezes his hand.

JULIE

Just wait until Spider-Man flies out of those wings.

Glen can see the stage transform before him. ANIMATED BUILDINGS erupt out of the ground and grow to the ceiling. The sounds of New York City-- honking, shouting, sirens-- fill the theatre.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Through the sky. Over the audience.

An ANIMATED SPIDER-MAN shoots webs and crosses the stage, not bound by gravity, time, or reality. Animated Spider-Man breezes past Glen and Julie, blowing back their hair.

JULIE (CONT'D)

And the final fight between Arachne and Spider-Man will happen right above our heads, so everyone here can't help but feel part of it.

They crane their necks up to see ANIMATED ARACHNE descend from the ceiling by her web.

She weaves a magnificent, elaborate net above their heads. It bounces when animated Spider-Man lands on it in a fighting crouch.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Just like we dreamed it.

The theatre around them returns to normal. Julie sees Glen is tearing up.

GLEN  
Sorry. I just always wanted to be on Broadway.

Julie hugs him.

JULIE  
It won't be your last time, either. We have a lot more to make together. And Tony will be with us every step of the way.

Glen nods and takes off his glasses to wipe his eyes.

GLEN  
Yeah.

JULIE  
I think we can finish the first draft this weekend if you stay in the city.

GLEN  
Absolutely. Whatever you need.

She smiles and jostles his shoulder.

JULIE  
Remember this feeling. Don't let it go.

Glen laughs, disbelieving. He nods.

EXT. BROADWAY - NIGHT

In TIMES SQUARE, lights flash and tourists pose for pictures. Taxis honk and a drunk guy shoves another drunk guy. An ad for a foot cream lights the sky.

It's the most beautiful thing Glen's ever seen.

INT. CASTING ROOM - DAY

A bunch of babyfaced 20-something GUYS straight out of NYU cycle through the room. They hop onto their mark, they look into the camera and all say in the same nerdy, high pitched, high energy way --

NICE GUY 1  
I'm your--

CUT TO:

NICE GUY 2  
Friendly--

CUT TO:

NICE GUY 3  
Neighborhood--

CUT TO:

NICE GUY 4  
Spider-Man!

Julie and Glen smile.

JULIE  
Thank you.

GLEN  
Thanks.

JULIE  
We'll be in touch.

We hear footsteps as the last clean-cut kid exits. Julie loses her smile once the door SHUTS.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
I said no theater kids! We can't let our show be about the singing Spider-Man!

GLEN  
But it is.

Julie rolls her eyes.

JULIE  
But he can't BE that even if he IS that.



GLEN

...Right.

Julie sighs.

JULIE

Just send in the next one. Reeve.

The next guy enters. He is immediately different. This is REEVE CARNEY, 20. He has bushy eyebrows, broody, sad boy eyes, and a jaw that could be wielded as a weapon.

Glen watches, surprised, as Reeve saunters to his mark. Next to him, all the other actors look like virgins. Julie is intrigued.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Reeve?

REEVE

Hi.

JULIE

I don't seem to have a resume for you, I'm sorry. What performing arts college did you attend?

Reeve shakes his head.

REEVE

College isn't really for me. I'm in a rock band.

Julie smiles.

JULIE

Start whenever you'd like.

Reeve looks into the camera like he's trying to make it climax.

REEVE

Hi. I'm your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man.

Glen looks alarmed. Julie looks certain.

JULIE (PRE-LAP)

He's the one.

INT. EMPTY CASTING ROOM - LATER

Glen is startled.

GLEN

I thought we were going with the more traditional bumbling, sweet and awkward Peter Parker. Reeve was great but he kind of...

Drips sex. Glen isn't sure how to put that.

GLEN (CONT'D)

--He just isn't very dweeby is he?

Julie waves her hand.

JULIE

Our Spider-Man fucks.

Julie walks away.

GLEN

Does Marvel know that?

JULIE

(shrug)

They will.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - DAY

A reading with the new CAST seated around a long table. ALAN CUMMING sits before his sign announcing that he's the GREEN GOBLIN. EVAN RACHEL WOOD plays MARY JANE, and Reeve Carney sits next to her, in front of his "Spider-Man" sign. Reeve is clearly trying to flirt with Evan.

From his spot at the table, Glen takes all this in, thrilled.

GLEN

I still can't believe we got such an incredible cast.

Julie is too focused to celebrate.

JULIE

Mark down anything that doesn't sit right. Really pay attention to the way the words feel in the actors' mouths.

Her face changes to a smile as she waves at the Marvel Execs. They match her smile and wave. The second she turns, the execs and Julie both frown.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
It's ridiculous that frick and  
frack insisted on coming.

GLEN  
I'm sure they're just excited.

Julie scoffs. The READER takes his seat at the table and everyone quiets down.

READER  
Welcome to the first table read of  
Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark!

Everyone claps. Glen whistles loudly.

READER (CONT'D)  
"Act one. Interior classroom - day.  
A bell rings. Peter Parker rushes  
through the hallway."

Reeve affects a dweeby voice.

REEVE  
"Oh gosh, why did I think I should  
do my presentation on Arachne? I'm  
probably the only person in the  
whole world who loves spiders. Most  
people are terrified of them!"

Julie nudges Glen, who nods. *Reeve's pulling it off.*

READER  
"Peter accidentally bumps into a  
letterman jacket-wearing, perfectly  
coiffed-haired BULLY. This guy  
*definitely* has a car."

The cast laughs. Julie offers Glen a subtle high five for his joke. Glen smiles.

BULLY ACTOR  
"Move it, Parker! You're in my  
way!"

READER  
"The bully shoves Parker."

REEVE  
"S-sorry, I was just--"

BULLY ACTOR  
"I think someone needs to teach you  
a lesson!"

READER

"The bully shoves Parker around. Everything moves in slow motion as Peter sings. Note: There will be a song here about bullying."

The Marvel execs eye each other. The reader turns a page.

READER (CONT'D)

"Scene two. Peter Parker stands before his mythology class."

REEVE

"Arachne is a tragic figure. An incredible artist torn down by her hubris, her own belief in her work."

READER

"Above Parker's head, ARACHNE descends from the ceiling. Note: There will be a song here about her origin and downfall--"

That dreaded line again -- *there will be a song*. In the audience, the Marvel Execs stiffen.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - LATER

The Marvel Execs approach Glen and Julie after the reading.

MARVEL EXEC 1

We just LOVE the space.

MARVEL EXEC 2

When you first said you wanted the most expensive theater on Broadway we were really not sure. But now we LOVE.

MARVEL EXEC 1

I'm getting it pregnant as we SPEAK.

JULIE

I'm glad you like it.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Reeve is such an... interesting choice for Spider-Man. Very different.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
We've heard his voice is  
incredible. It's a shame we didn't  
get to see it in action today.

JULIE  
We're working on it! Trust me.  
Great songs take time.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
When can we expect to hear the  
music?

Julie smiles tightly.

JULIE  
U2 is currently touring and a bit  
difficult to get a hold of.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
No, no of course.

MARVEL EXEC 2  
Yes, preach, girl.

JULIE  
They have a tour break coming up  
soon, so hopefully we can get more  
info then. But I promise you  
everything they've sent along so  
far is really, really great.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
That is really great!

MARVEL EXEC 2  
So great.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
You know, we wonder if it isn't  
worth looking into visiting them on  
their break?

MARVEL EXEC 2  
Especially with the investor  
presentation right around the  
corner.

JULIE  
Of course. Well, we appreciate you  
stopping by--

MARVEL EXEC 2  
One more thing.

Julie freezes her smile.

MARVEL EXEC 1

We felt the Arachne storyline was still a bit too...

MARVEL EXEC 2

Loud. It felt too loud.

JULIE

Too loud.

MARVEL EXEC 1

Yes, exactly. Maybe we can look at quieting it down a bit?

MARVEL EXEC 2

But otherwise GREAT job today. We are so excited for this!!

JULIE

Thanks. So are we!

GLEN

Yeah, thanks. See you soon!

The Execs leave.

JULIE

God, I wish Tony were here.

GLEN

Me too... Hey can I hear what U2 sent? I didn't know we had any music yet.

JULIE

They haven't sent a goddamn thing. I just didn't want Marvel to know that. Actually, I had to send *them* stuff. I burnt a cd of 60 of the most famous songs from musicals. Not sure they listened though, they haven't said anything.

GLEN

(laughing)  
Why did you do that?

JULIE

They've never seen a musical.

Glen freezes.

GLEN

What?

JULIE

Never seen a single one.

Julie checks her watch. She doesn't see the fear on Glen's face.

JULIE (CONT'D)

We probably should go to them though. I hate when the suits are right.

GLEN

Really?

JULIE

It's our best shot at getting the songs sooner rather than later.

GLEN

I've never been to Ireland.

JULIE

(shrug)  
It's green.

GLEN

Will Marvel book it for us?

JULIE

Just get the ticket yourself. I'll send you the flight info.

GLEN

They'll pay us back though?

Julie walks away.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Glen carries too many things as he heads to the back of the plane. His phone RINGS. Emma is FaceTiming, but his hands are too full to answer.

He sits beside a TIRED MOM and a CRYING TODDLER. Glen smiles at them. He goes to call Emma back when he gets a text.

EMMA (ON TEXT)

Kids going to bed. We can try again tomorrow.

Defeated, Glen puts his phone down. He looks at the raging toddler next to him.

TIRED MOM  
Sorry in advance.

GLEN  
How old is she?

TIRED MOM  
Three and a half.

GLEN  
My son's that age.

His eyes start to well up. He waves at the little girl, trying not to cry.

EXT. IRELAND COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Glen and Julie hike up a long, grassy cliff filled with loud SHEEP. Glen is tired. He's still carrying too much and is wearing the wrong shoes.

GLEN  
We should've had the taxi take us  
all the way.

Julie, however, looks invigorated by the walking.

JULIE  
Don't be ridiculous, this reminds  
us we are ALIVE!

Glen trips and falls on his knee, making a grass stain in his khakis. A dead-eyed SHEEP stares at Glen, chewing. It is unmoved by Glen's struggle to get back up.

INT. BONO'S HOUSE - DAY

In the living room, Bono, sunglasses on (duh), holds up his burned CD from Julie. She labeled it MUSICALS TO KNOW.

BONO  
Thanks for this, love.

JULIE  
Did you get a chance to listen?

THE EDGE  
Yeah. Don't love a lot of the songs  
to be honest.



BONO

Feels a bit... mundane sometimes? I don't know. All sounds the same to me.

GLEN

(helpfully)

Maybe that's because they're playing to traditional forms?

THE EDGE

Nah. Think they're just boring. Hammerstein is a sick name though. He's just missing "the" before it. With a "the" he'd be a legend.

GLEN

He is a legend...

A CELL rings. Bono's ASSISTANT approaches.

ASSISTANT

It's time.

BONO

So sorry, have to take this. It's the UN.

(into phone)

Barack, you son of a b, how the hell are you?

Bono exits.

THE EDGE

(proudly)

He's very passionate about his AIDS work.

JULIE

Amazing.

GLEN

That's great for AIDS...

Julie, Glen, the Edge, and Bono's assistant sit in awkward silence for a moment.

ASSISTANT

Shall I make tea?

THE EDGE

Yes, great thanks. Earl Grey for me, love.

JULIE  
Green if you have it. No sugar.

ASSISTANT  
Sure.

GLEN  
And I'll--

The assistant quickly leaves. *Cool.* Julie clears her throat.

JULIE  
So, Edge, how's the music for the show going?

THE EDGE  
Well, you know.

Julie and Glen wait for an answer.

THE EDGE (CONT'D)  
...We haven't written anything. The tour's been pretty all consuming.

JULIE  
I can imagine. It's only-- do you think we could get some music before the investor meeting next month? I, of course, trust your process completely. But unfortunately it's super important for investors to feel this show is really ready to go before they'll want to spend their money on it.

The Edge nods.

THE EDGE  
Yeah, I hear you. That makes sense to me, but I don't really wanna get too deep in the details without Bono here to get a say, you know? It's our rule -- we make all our decisions together. Big and small. He's even the one who helped me pick out this beanie here.

He points at the beanie on his head.

THE EDGE (CONT'D)  
Isn't it nice?

JULIE  
Very nice.

He looks at Glen, expectantly.

GLEN  
Oh. Yeah, very nice.

The Edge nods, proud.

JULIE  
I respect your partnership  
immensely. We'll wait.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The assistant assembles tea cups on a tray.

GLEN  
Hey there--

The assistant sighs at Glen's presence.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
No rush, but do you have any sense  
of how long Bono has left on the  
call? We don't want to start  
without him.

ASSISTANT  
No idea.

GLEN  
(gently)  
Is there a way you could find out?

The assistant spins to face him.

ASSISTANT  
I don't know, Glen, is your little  
meeting more important than the  
global AIDS crisis? Because if not,  
I don't really think I should be  
interrupting the life-changing work  
he's doing right now. So what do  
you think, hm? You or AIDS? What's  
more pressing?

Julie pops her head in the kitchen and the assistant is  
suddenly all smiles.

JULIE  
Glen, let's head back to the hotel  
for now and start fresh tomorrow.  
I'm beat from traveling.  
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)  
 (to assistant)  
 Could you call us a cab?

ASSISTANT  
 Of course! Anything you need, Ms.  
 Taymor. I should have my second  
 phone in here somewhere...

She searches through her bag, but can't find it. She dumps out the bag's contents. It's one phone, and a BUNCH of sunglasses for Bono.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
 A-ha. Got it.

INT. PUB - THE NEXT DAY

A small dark pub. It's not too crowded as Bono and the Edge, all smiles, flip through some pages. Julie and Glen watch.

BONO  
 It's brilliant.

THE EDGE  
 And so helpful. Really. It gave us  
 a lot to work with last night.

BONO  
 We were very moved by the idea you  
 had about superheroes being our  
 Greek myths today.

THE EDGE  
 The image of Icarus' flying and  
 falling through the sky once his  
 wings go all melty came to mind.

BONO  
 It's kind of the mirror image of  
 Spider-Man swinging through the sky  
 too, right?

JULIE  
 Fuck. I love it.

GLEN  
 Yes!

BONO  
 So we're calling this one "Boy  
 Falls From The Sky."

The Edge bangs out a beat on the table.

BONO (CONT'D)

(singing)

*You can change your mind/But you  
cannot change your heart/Your heart  
knows when you're hiding/Your heart  
knows where you are/I'd be myself  
If I knew who I've become/You don't  
have to fly too high to get too  
close to the sun/See the boy fall  
from the sky.*

The Edge sways along. It could easily be cringe, but somehow, it's kind of magical. Julie and Glen are enraptured.

GLEN

Oh my God!

JULIE

I don't have words. I love it,  
guys. I really do.

Bono and the Edge are pleased.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Can you finish it by next month so  
we can go to the studio with it?

BONO

Love, we're U2. We can fucking  
finish it tonight!

They all cheers their beers to that.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - DAY

On stage, a set is being built for Peter Parker's bedroom.

Some costumed Spider-Men BACK UP DANCERS practice crouching and shooting webs. But they move less like superheroes and more like theater kids: jazz hands, over-exaggerated movements, too many pirouettes. In front of them, though, Reeve moves like he's in MAGIC MIKE.

Glen, jet-lagged as hell, shakes his head from where he writes in the theater seats. He goes back to the script on his laptop. Julie approaches, looking like a model.

JULIE

He's here. Shall we?

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - BACKSTAGE

PAN UP from a pair of worn cowboy boots all the way to a mouth spitting tobacco in a coffee cup. The mouth smiles. It belongs to SCOTT, the aerial stunts designer, who speaks with a heavy southern accent.

JULIE

Scott.

He greets Glen and Julie with a handshake.

SCOTT

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

JULIE

You as well. We've heard a lot of good things.

SCOTT

That's because I'm the aerial stunts designer to beat all other aerial stunts designer. Cirque du Soleil can give my ass a good licking, cause they're nothing on me. Y'all saw my stunts in the Spider-Man movies. They *wish* they could do that.

JULIE

Yes, Glen has seen the movies, he spoke highly of them.

GLEN

Yeah. You did a great job.

SCOTT

Shucks! I like this guy already.

He pulls Glen in for an unwanted side hug and jostle.

GLEN

Okay.

JULIE

The most important thing to us, Scott, is that since Spider-Man the character isn't bound by gravity, we don't want our stunts to feel bound by gravity either.

SCOTT

I couldn't agree with that more. That's why I have assembled a team that basically serves as a human "fuck-you" to gravity. We got the most advanced technology possible to achieve this.

He spits dip in his cup.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Let me put it simply. My guys will eat, sleep, breathe, shit, and pee your dreams, Miss Taymor, until they are a reality.

GLEN

Do you have any live theater experience?

Scott's smile tightens. He takes in Glen for too long.

SCOTT

No, but that's no problem when you're the best, curly. And I'm the best.

Glen is not satisfied with this answer.

JULIE

The last person we interviewed said it wasn't possible to have the above-the-audience aerial stunts we outlined in our proposal up and working by the first preview 6 months from now.

SCOTT

Well whoever said that was, respectfully, a complete and utter fucking moron. I can have your stunts ready in 4,5 months, tops. In fact, I'd like to show you some choreography I worked on earlier.

He claps loudly, startling Glen, and runs off.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - STAGE

Two male ACTORS are on stage strapped into harnesses that hang from the ceiling.

SCOTT

One on the left is your green gobs.  
One on the right is your Spider-  
Man. And ACTION-

The two actors circle each other. Then Green Goblin shoots up into the air. Spider-Man shoots into the air after him. And at the last second Spider-Man does a flip in the air between Green Goblin's cables, right over his head. Spider-Man lands on the stage in his signature crouch.

Scott looks at Julie and Glen smugly.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Pretty cool, huh?

Julie and Glen clap, impressed.

JULIE

Wow!

SCOTT

Now just you wait until that's  
happening over the audience's  
heads.

GLEN

Amazing.

SCOTT

Hope y'all got the budget to be  
changing out the seats daily, cause  
people are bound to be shitting  
their pants left and right.

Julie shakes Scott's hand.

JULIE

Welcome to the team.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - CROSSWALK - LATER THAT DAY

A gray, cold day. Julie checks her phone as she and Glen cross the street with a crowd of people. She rolls her eyes. She shows him the dramatic subject line on the email Marvel sent: "WHY MARVEL'S BRAND IS GOING TO BE HARMED IF OUR NOTES ARE NOT ADDRESSED."

GLEN

Where's this coming from?



JULIE

They're probably just in bad moods because the stock market's crashing and they're worried investors will pull out of the show.

Glen is shocked.

GLEN

Wait, what? The stock market is *crashing*? Right now?

JULIE

(smiling)

What kind of world do you live in, Glen? You need to get a life.

She shakes her head, smiling.

JULIE (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

Glen stops on the sidewalk. People pass him as he watches the news ticker on the side of the building. He's not the only person nearby who looks like they could cry.

GLEN

(quietly)

I pay two rents.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - THE NEXT DAY

On stage is CHRIS TIERNEY, 20, bright-eyed as he's hooked by STAGEHANDS into a harness. Scott walks Julie and Glen over.

SCOTT

Y'all, meet Chris.

CHRIS

Hi!

He shakes their hands with both of his.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So pumped to meet you guys.

JULIE

Likewise.

SCOTT

Chris' one of our stunt spidermens and he's kindly agreed to test out our first over-the-audience aerial.

JULIE

Marvelous.

GLEN

Yeah, thank you!

CHRIS

Of course! I'm thrilled to be here. I've loved Spider-Man since I was a little kid, way before I became a stuntman. This is a huge deal for me to get to play him. Or... one of eight of him. You get what I mean.

Chris smiles. Slowly, the harness begins to raise Chris into the air.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Actually, I bet I can find a photo of me dressed up as Spider-Man when I was little...

Midair, he pats his pockets. He struggles for his phone.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's here somewhere.

JULIE

Oh that's okay. Don't hurt yourself--

CHRIS

A-ha!

He pulls it out, nearly dropping his phone. He searches through. It takes too long.

Then he struggles to hand the phone down to Julie. On her tiptoes, she politely accepts it and smiles at the photo.

JULIE

Oh, that's precious.

She hands it to Glen.

GLEN

Oh my gosh! That's amazing.

Chris beams. Glen barely reaches the phone back up to Chris. Scott then gives Chris a hearty SLAP on the butt that sends him rocking in the air.

SCOTT  
 Ready Freddy?  
 (to Julie and Glen)  
 Right this way.

As they walk, Glen watches how high Chris is lifted towards the ceiling.

GLEN  
 And we're sure this is safe, right?

SCOTT  
 Oh yeah. We beat the shit out of a sack of flour in the harness first to make sure a person can take it.

In the TECH BOOTH, Scott has his team of NERDY CODERS. Scott sits at a desk displaying framed PHOTOS of GEORGE W. BUSH and JESUS H. CHRIST. Glen takes it in.

Scott props his feet up on the desk and takes in Glen taking in his photos. He smiles and spits tobacco into his cup. Scott points to a nerdy coder, BEN, 20s.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 While I was sleeping like a fucking baby last night, Ben was here working his tail off. I know he's dying to show you what he's got.

Ben's glazed-over face implies a different kind of dying.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 Ready?

The STAGE MANAGER pulls out a walkie talkie.

STAGE MANAGER  
 (into walkie)  
 We're rea--

SCOTT  
 (cupping hands, shouting)  
 WE'RE READY!

Glen braces. On STAGE Chris Tierney gives a little wave to the booth. Ben pushes a button. Via his harness, Chris is moved forward in the air, edging towards the end of the stage, towards the audience, at an extremely slow pace.

Then Chris JERKS to a stop and does one tiny, forward flip at a tortoise pace. Chris' smile never fades. Chris moves a few more inches forward before jerking to a STOP to do the same small, excruciatingly slow forward flip.

Another few inches, then STOPS. This time, midway through his small flip, Chris gets stuck upside down. Ben furiously types.

BEN  
(quietly)  
No, no, no. Ben, you piece of  
absolute dog shit.

Scott smiles as he puts a tight hand on Ben's shoulder.

SCOTT  
Technical difficulty. Normal at  
these early stages!

Glen and Julie nod politely.

GLEN  
When do you think we'll be able to  
see the stunts with the harnesses  
hidden under the costumes?

SCOTT  
Afraid that won't be possible.  
Ever. It's not safe.

GLEN  
What? You mean we'll have to see  
the harnesses the whole time? But  
it looks so...

He looks at upside-down Chris, in his giant, awkward harness.

SCOTT  
Yes.

JULIE  
Fuck. There's nothing else we can  
do?

SCOTT  
Afraid not.  
(shouting, cupped hands)  
YOU OKAY, CHRIS?

An upside-down Chris flashes them a thumbs up. Which, of course, looks like a thumbs down.

A bunch of STAGE HANDS approach Chris with long sticks. They start to gently prod him.

JULIE

Scott... if that coding took all night, how long will it take to get him fully swinging through the audience?

Scott smiles tightly. He takes off his hat, rubs his head.

SCOTT

Now how set in stone is our first preview night?

Julie's face hardens.

PRE-LAP the sound of intense BULGARIAN CHANTING.

EXT./INT. JULIE'S OFFICE - FOXWOODS THEATRE - DAY

Glen walks down the hallway looking for the source of the blaring, unsettling CHANTING. It's coming from inside Julie's office. He knocks on her door.

GLEN

(over music)

Julie?

She doesn't respond. Carefully, he opens the door. Julie sits at her desk molding clay with a fury.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

With her messy hands, Julie pushes forward a stack of papers. Glen picks it up. The pages are from a BROADWAY BLOG, printed out in a SUPER large font.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Why is it so big?

JULIE

I was too angry to spend time finding my fucking glasses, Glen! Just read it!

GLEN

(reading)

"Broadway's Spider-Man is a real tangled web." A bit low hanging--

Julie yanks the computer plug out of the wall, turning the music off. The room now feels too quiet.

JULIE

We're having technology problems, we're over budget, and we're going to push our preview again.

GLEN

Isn't... that all true?

JULIE

Of course it is, that's part of the process. But you're missing the point. *They* shouldn't know that. We have a fucking rat! In our sacred space of experimentation!

She rips the pages from Glen's hands.

JULIE (CONT'D)

This "insider" also said that no one in the show likes Arachne. It's "forced" and "too high brow."

Glen's face shows he doesn't necessarily disagree.

GLEN

You know, Julie, maybe we should--

JULIE

I am going to make whoever did this wish they never shot out of their dad's lumpy little dick in the first place.

A STAGE HAND passes by in the hallway.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Was it you, no-chin? Huh?

The Stage Hand freezes.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Are you the rodent responsible for this?

Julie throws the papers. The Stage Hand scurries away.

GLEN

...You know what? I'll come back later. Yeah. I can just--

Julie marches out of her office without another word. Glen, a bit shellshocked, collects the scattered papers. A COSTUMER walks over to help clean up. She hands Glen a stack.

COSTUMER

I've been with her on her last four shows. That was nothing. When she's really pissed she's like a one woman Spanish Inquisition.

The costumer walks away, leaving a shaken Glen behind.

INT. MARVEL OFFICE BOARD ROOM

Julie and Glen, frozen smiles, sit before the male execs.

JULIE

Everything's going good.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Good.

MARVEL EXEC 1

So good.

JULIE

Of course, there are some complications. But that's to be expected.

MARVEL EXEC 1

We've read.

JULIE

The good news is we're learning a lot on the fly.

GLEN

Yes. Absolutely. With a bit more tweaking this could be a real artistic triumph.

MARVEL EXEC 1

You know, we aren't concerned so much with "art."

MARVEL EXEC 2

LOVE art of course. We're big art fans. I mean ask him! He's been to the Louvre twice.

MARVEL EXEC 1

The paintings were really... big. It was something.

MARVEL EXEC 2

But as much as we love art, at the end of the day, money is what really gets us going.

MARVEL EXEC 1

It's our aphrodisiac. Which is why we aren't too horny for the numbers we're seeing.

MARVEL EXEC 2

We're gonna need those costs cut down. Immediately.

MARVEL EXEC 1

Especially since we've lost quite a few investors with the whole "recession thing."

JULIE

I don't know what to tell you. There's a reason no one has flown like this on Broadway before. If we want to be the first, we have to pay the price.

GLEN

You know what they say, quality over quantity.

MARVEL EXEC 1

We believe that way of thinking is outdated.

GLEN

Oh.

JULIE

I actually asked for this meeting to talk to you about something else.

MARVEL EXEC 2

(hopefully)

Losing Arachne? Love where your head's at.

JULIE

No. To request another push for our preview.

MARVEL EXEC 1

That is really not on the table, Julie. The cost alone--



JULIE

I understand, but I don't think any of us want this out there before it's ready. You already wouldn't let me do our testing out of state, as is the usual standard--

MARVEL EXEC 2

The budget doesn't allow for it.

Julie holds up her hands.

JULIE

I get it, I do. I am just telling you it's not ready. And I, more than anyone, don't want the Marvel brand to suffer because of that.

The execs look at each other.

MARVEL EXEC 2

If we give you the preview push, IF-

JULIE

Yes?

MARVEL EXEC 1

Will you consider cutting Arachne?

Glen grips his seat, waiting for Julie to tear them apart. After a second Julie nods.

JULIE

Absolutely.

Glen tries to hide his shock. The Exec nods.

MARVEL EXEC 2

You can push, but this is the final push. This baby needs to come out.

EXT. MARVEL OFFICES -

Before they're even out of the building, Julie dials her phone. Glen struggles to keep up with her pace.

GLEN

Were you serious about Arachne? Because I've been thinking--

She holds up a finger to Glen.

JULIE (ON PHONE)

Hi darling, just wanted to give you an update that we're actually going to extend Arachne's song... Mhm. At least a minute or two longer... And you know what? Let's go tap...

She hangs up the phone.

JULIE (CONT'D)

What were you blathering on about?

GLEN

Nothing. Never mind.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - DAY

Eight bright red TAP SHOES clack on the stage floor. Long, thin spider legs fill each shoe. The actress playing ARACHNE stands inside in a huge black spider costume on stage, puppeting the legs in their strange tap dance.

Glen watches, unhappy. He writes something down in his notebook. Julie watches, too. She is smiling, but there is an edge to it.

Suddenly there's COMMOTION backstage. The rehearsal and psychotic spider tap dancing stops.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Call the medic!

Julie and Glen hop up and run BACKSTAGE --

A harnessed Spider-Man holds his wrist on the floor. A few STAGEHANDS try to get him out of the harness without hurting him further.

JULIE

What happened?

STAGE MANAGER

Computer freaked out and he crashed into the wall.

GLEN

Oh no.

A MEDIC approaches and assesses the hurt Spider-Man. Julie spies Scott in the wings and guns for him. Glen follows.

JULIE

You.

SCOTT

Julie. I'm doing everything I can.

JULIE

It's not nearly fucking enough.

SCOTT

I need more time. Between the flying and the net you want for the finale, we're swamped. The net alone is going to take two months of us working full time and is gonna cost at least a million.

GLEN

Dollars??

JULIE

I am not interested in your little excuses. Just fix whatever caused this crash. Now.

SCOTT

Of course.

JULIE

We cannot have anything else like this happen again. Not ever agai--

BEGIN MONTAGE:

-On stage a Spider-Man moves through the air on a harness, but then is SLAMMED to the ground. Crew members rush out.

-A bag of flour EXPLODES as it hits the wall

-A Spider-Man hangs upside down, his foot trapped in the harness.

-A bag of flour EXPLODES as it slams into the floor

-A Spider-Man kicks a seat, the harness not lifting him fast enough

-A bag of flour EXPLODES as it pounds into the unsuspecting stage manager

-The Arachne actor, in full spider costume, sings on stage until she's DECKED in the head by a swinging metal hook.

The actress goes down, unconscious, all eight legs splaying. People GASP. EMTS, who now wait in the wings, run up. No one has to call for them.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The Arachne actress holds an ice pack to her head, still in her spider costume. She looks dazed and a little bloody as she WEEPS loudly.

Sympathetic crew and cast hover around her. Julie and Glen come in.

ARACHNE ACTRESS  
(sobbing)  
This production is CURSED!

JULIE  
Oh, sweetie... No it's not.

But the other cast and crew around Arachne nod too.

SPIDER-MAN ACTOR  
She's right.

JULIE  
Of course I understand why you're upset. I know a lot of... unfortunate things have been happening lately. But we are not cursed. We are simply being thrown into the lava because we're trying new things.

The Arachne actress whimpers.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
I get it. Nerves are high because of the first preview tomorrow night, but we will make this work. I have complete faith in you all.

REEVE  
I agree.

JULIE  
Thank you, Reeve.

REEVE  
No, I agree that we're cursed. Even though, like, nothing bad has happened to me.  
(sigh)  
I guess I'm just like really lucky.

The crew all starts to agree.

CREW

Yeah it has to be cursed/we are  
fucked!

STAGE MANAGER

Hey!

Everyone quiets down for the no-nonsense Stage Manager.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

I've worked on Broadway for over 35  
years. And I can tell you, without  
a doubt that this place... is  
cursed.

Everyone turns to Julie.

JULIE

(almost laughing)

I don't know what you want from me.

STAGE MANAGER

I know an energy healer who could  
come cleanse the space before we  
open for previews tomorrow.

The Arachne actress sniffs.

ARACHNE ACTRESS

Please, Julie? We need it.

Behind them, out of nowhere, a light CRASHES to the ground.  
The cast stares at her: see? Julie takes a deep breath.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

A woman with wild curls and glasses, the ENERGY HEALER,  
stands silently in the spotlight on the stage, her eyes are  
closed. She hums. Around her the cast and crew sit in a  
circle, enrapt.

ENERGY HEALER

Hold hands. Close your eyes. Be one  
with the space.

Glen raises his eyebrows at Julie. Julie smiles before  
closing her own eyes and taking his hand. The energy healer  
moves around the stage.

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)

Yes. I see why you called me. I can  
feel the negative energy in this  
place. Everyone, breathe with me.

The crowd does. The healer waves her arms as she walks.

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)  
We will now turn off the dark--

ARACHNE ACTRESS  
(gasp)  
The name of our show!

ENERGY HEALER  
--and we will usher in the light. I  
BANISH you, negative energy!

She turns and spins viciously.

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)  
BANISH!!!

She pauses, calmed and quiet.

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)  
I invite in only the most radiant,  
warm, beautiful light.

SCOTT  
Amen.

ENERGY HEALER  
SILENCE PLEASE!

Eyes closed, the energy healer moves, almost by another power, towards the edge of the stage. She stops and opens her eyes, looking down into the dark orchestra pit.

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)  
This. This is why you have had your  
bad luck. *This* is the source of  
your negative energy.

A few actors crawl over towards her and look into the pit.

ARACHNE ACTRESS  
I've always said that.

DANCERS  
You have/she's so right.

Julie rolls her eyes. The energy healer pulls out a bundle of sage and lights it, leaning over the dark pit. The healer tilts her head.

## ENERGY HEALER

Darkness, you have no hold over  
this place now. You are not welcome  
here.

She waves the fragrant bundle, like she is writing a secret message. Once it is done smoking, she leans over the pit and drops it in.

She turns back to the to the cast and crew, peppy.

## ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)

The package you bought also  
includes positive vibe jade  
bracelets. Let me grab them from my  
car.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - BACKSTAGE - THE FOLLOWING NIGHT

An AUDIENCE fills in, talking among themselves. It is the first night of previews. A few little KIDS in Spider-Man costumes run through the aisles. The Marvel execs are seated front row, unsmiling.

Glen watches all this backstage, nervously fiddling with his cheap jade bracelet. The entire cast and crew wears them. Julie spots Glen.

## JULIE

Courage, dear Glen, courage. You  
can't let yourself care about what  
they think... Did your wife make it  
tonight?

Glen shakes his head.

## GLEN

She and the, um, kids are busy  
tonight. But she'll be there  
opening night for sure.

Julie straightens his coat.

## JULIE

Oh right, I always forget you have  
a whole, you know, "family."

She smooths out his collar. She takes a deep breath.

## JULIE (CONT'D)

The show is far from perfect. I  
more than anyone wish I had more  
time, but... It's out of our hands.

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

All we can do now is keep ourselves open. The show will tell us what we need to fix if we just listen.

They hug.

GLEN

I am so grateful to be doing this with you. It's all a clusterfuck, but I wouldn't want to... fuck a cluster like this without you.

Julie hugs him tighter.

JULIE

Well said. I feel the same.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. The first preview of Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark will begin shortly.

The crowd claps and cheers, excited. The dark orchestra pit waits, ominously.

LATER-

Glen and Julie stand in the back of the theater watching the stage as the show goes on. Glen makes a lot of notes in a notebook, constantly checking Julie's face. She is unreadable.

High above the stage, Green Goblin stands on the roof of a makeshift CHRYSLER BUILDING. Spider-Man swings into view on his harness and lands next to Goblin.

GREEN GOBLIN

Well, well. If it isn't everyone's favorite bug boy!

SPIDER-MAN

Goblin! I thought I told you to leave my city alone!

GLEN

(mouthing)  
Goblin! I thought I told you to leave my city alone!

Spider-Man shoots his webs into the air. There's a fight sequence on top of the building where Goblin does some flips and Spidey shoots some webs. It all actually WORKS.

The audience is thrilled. Glen and Julie are too. Glen puts out his hand for a high five.



On stage, Spider-Man twirls. Then he dives off the Chrysler building and into the air above the stage and-

Free falls down. The hook for his harness remains dangling in the air like a noose. No one is attached to it now.

Nothing slows Spider-Man down as he falls 10 feet. 20 feet. 30 feet -- down into the concrete PIT, out of sight.

OFFSCREEN there is a sickening CRUNCH as his body smacks the concrete floor. The audience freezes. *Is this a part of the show?* The music stops. Someone from the pit SCREAMS.

MAN (O.S.)  
CALL 911!

EXT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

Unconscious, his Spider-Man suit torn, a neck brace on, Chris Tierney is loaded on a stretcher into an ambulance. There is a crowd around him. People take pictures. Media swarms.

EMT  
Move! Give us some fucking room!

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Julie and Glen are horrified.

GLEN  
Was he... did anyone see if he was breathing?

No one responds. Scott, pale, walks in. Julie stands and points at him.

JULIE  
I will disembowel you with my bare fucking hands, Scott, I swear to God.

SCOTT  
You can't pin this one on me. I checked everything, it wasn't the tech. That stunt was just a regular harness trick.

STAGE MANAGER  
Chris wasn't clipped in. That's the only way he could've fallen like that.

Julie takes a deep breath.

JULIE

I want whoever was supposed to clip him in fired. Immediately. And then I want the rest of his life ruined.

The stage manager nods.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You make sure they understand they may have just killed or, best case scenario, paralyzed a man. Glen, get up. We're going to the hospital.

They walk.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(to Glen)

I need Bono and the Edge on the phone. They have to hear about this from us.

Glen dials Bono.

ASSISTANT (ON PHONE)

What do you want?

GLEN (INTO PHONE)

It's an emergency. I need to talk to the guys now.

ASSISTANT (ON PHONE)

I--

GLEN

And YES! It IS more important than AIDS!

There's a beat.

ASSISTANT

...I was just going to tell you that you're already on speaker with Bono and the Edge.

Glen takes a deep breath to keep from screaming.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A room filled to the brim with flowers, muffin baskets, balloons, teddy bears, and Spider-Man cardboard cutouts.

A bruised Chris Tierney sits in bed wearing a neck brace. He has casts and slings all over his body. He looks AWFUL, but the smile on his face is massive.

CHRIS

(to Bono and Edge)

Did Julie and Glen tell you that I used to dress up as Spider-Man as a kid? I can show you a picture--

He reaches for his phone on the tray table. It's excruciating for him to move this much. He MOANS as he wiggles his fingers. No one can stomach it.

JULIE

That's alright, Chris. We told them.

Chris stops, out of breath.

CHRIS

Oh good. Thanks. You guys are so nice for coming. Really means a lot. Wish I could look at you but you know. Can't turn my neck with the broken vertebrae and all.

Julie, Glen, Bono, and The Edge all nod.

BONO

Of course, mate.

THE EDGE

Save your strength.

CHRIS

Is it true that Evan Rachel Wood and Alan Cumming dropped out of the show cause of this? Huge bummer.

Julie nods her head.

JULIE

We'll be fine. All that matters now is that you're okay and taking the time to heal.

CHRIS

It's so crazy. The doctor said if I didn't dive at the last second before hitting the concrete, I would've been paralyzed and/or killed.

He looks up at the fluorescent lights.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm so blessed to have just fractured my skull instead. And have some internal bleeding. And have broken some vertebrae. And--

BONO

We're all very grateful you're alright, Chris. It was a very scary thing that happened. But turns out you're a real life super hero.

Bono puts a hand on Chris' wrist. Chris turns incredibly slow to look at him, and then winces as he nods.

CHRIS

Thank you. It means so much that you've come to visit. I love U2.

He turns excruciatingly slow to look and nod (painfully) at The Edge too.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Everyone's just been so nice. Marvel even sent a lawyer to visit me! They were the first ones here when I woke up.

He takes a deep breath.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm so lucky.

EXT./INT. HOSPITAL GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Glen is leaving the hospital when something catches his eye in the gift shop. On a magazine stand he sees a copy of the NEW YORKER. The cover has multiple Spider-Men illustrated in casts and slings, all laid out in hospital beds.

Glen picks up the magazine and flips to the review, titled "LOOK OUT." There is a cartoon of a sad looking JULIE dangling from a tangled spiderweb.

The first line: "New Yorkers excel at Schadenfreude--"

INT. STAGE - FOXWOODS THEATRE - DAY

Glen watches a rehearsal of the final scene. Arachne, in her monstrous spider costume points one of her 8 legs at Reeve, dressed as Spider-Man from the neck down, his face exposed.

ARACHNE ACTRESS

There's only two ways this can go.  
Leave her--

REEVE

No! Never!

ARACHNE ACTRESS

Fine. Then ATTACKING!

An electric guitar riff begins. Spider-Man Reeve and the Arachne Actress begin their fight. The harnesses lift the actors into the air, they move around each other in a circle.

REEVE

(singing)  
*Let her go!*

ARACHNE ACTRESS

(singing)  
*Love me or kill me!*

The actors land on stage and grab each other by the throat. They choke each other, faces inches apart as they belt in harmony--

REEVE/ARACHNE ACTRESS

(singing)  
*Let her go/Let her go/Let her go--*

But even their beautiful voices can't save this. It's all so on the nose that Glen stares, frozen. Arachne turns, and it's like she's looking right at Glen.

ARACHNE ACTRESS

Finish this! Kill me!

Glen can't ignore it any longer; *Arachne must go.*

The music stops. Suddenly Julie is next to Glen. He jumps.

GLEN

Jesus! Sorry, I didn't see you.

JULIE

It doesn't work. It doesn't fucking work.

Glen hesitates.

GLEN

Really? Oh my God. I'm so relieved  
to hear that. I feel the same.

Julie blinks, confused. She points up where a net covers the  
whole ceiling.

JULIE

I'm talking about the finale net.  
The one we gave a redneck a--  
(shouting so he can hear)  
MILLION FUCKING DOLLARS FOR IT TO  
NOT WORK.

Everyone in the theater watches Julie, their eyes wide.

JULIE (CONT'D)

So what the fuck were you talking  
about, Glen?

Glen feels the cast's eyes on him.

GLEN

Let's talk about it later.

JULIE

You have 30 seconds to tell me  
before I take you out back and *Of  
Mice and Men* you.

GLEN

I'm...Lenny?

JULIE

Of course you're fucking Lenny.  
Jesus, Glen, look at how stupid  
that question was!

Glen swallows. He eyes the cast and then looks at Julie,  
lowering his voice.

GLEN

The ending wasn't working even  
before the net. I think it's time  
we finally admit defeat and cut it.  
We can move the Green Goblin piano  
scene from the end of act one to  
the end act three, it could be a  
more fitting ending.

Julie laughs.

JULIE

You want to cut out the climax of Arachne's story to give your scene the ending spotlight?

GLEN

It isn't like that--

JULIE

I really thought you were different.

GLEN

Please, just think about it. It's tighter. We already have the set and Marvel's approval of the scene. They would be happy to see it--

JULIE

If you want to suck Marvel's dick please do that in the privacy of a movie theater, just like everyone else.

Julie walks away.

GLEN

I'm trying to save the show, Julie.

JULIE

That's my fucking job. If I need a dialogue tweak, I'll let you know.

She flings open the doors and exits. Glen looks up to find the whole cast staring. Reeve, on stage, nods in solidarity.

REEVE

Here if you need to talk, man. That was brutal.

Glen sits down in a theater seat.

GLEN

Just move on to the next scene.

REEVE

Cool.

Reeve moans sexually as he hops into his Spider-Man crouch. Glen sits, thinking. Stewing.

EXT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - LATER THAT NIGHT

There's a long line at the TURN OFF THE DARK ticket booth. It's so long it snakes around the corner. Glen blinks.

EXT./INT. JULIE'S OFFICE -FOXWOODS THEATRE- NIGHT

Glen walks towards Julie's door when the MARVEL EXECS walk out with a bottle of champagne.

GLEN

What's going on out there? It's a zoo!

MARVEL EXEC 1

The man of the hour! Congrats on your first sold out performance!

GLEN

What? We sold out?

Marvel exec 2 POPS the champagne, startling Glen. He hands Glen the bottle.

GLEN (CONT'D)

I don't understand. We got panned. A man almost died.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Exactly!

MARVEL EXEC 1

Apparently people are desperate for a chance to see disaster unfold in front of them! Drink!

He tips the champagne into Glen's mouth. Glen swallows.

GLEN

You're not... mad? What about Spider-Man's legacy?

MARVEL EXEC 1

(waving him off)

Money speaks louder than branding.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Keep this up, my friend, and you will find yourself a very rich man! Everybody's gonna want some of you.

He smacks Glen on the back and the Execs exit. Glen laughs, shocked. He knocks on Julie's door with a big smile.



He ENTERS to find Julie sitting at her computer, the room otherwise dark. She barely looks up at Glen when he enters.

GLEN  
I can't believe it.

JULIE  
It's the way of the world. People have always packed the coliseum to see the gladiator match.

GLEN  
I know it's a weird time and all that, but it's a good thing, Julie, right? We sold out!

JULIE  
Tell that to the guy inside the lion's stomach.

Glen nods, knowing he won't convince her otherwise.

GLEN  
You okay?

JULIE  
I have a 65 million dollar noose around my neck right now. What the fuck do you think?

GLEN  
Anything I can do to help?

Julie just laughs. Glen nods, stung.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
...Okay then. I'll leave you to it.

He shuts the door, standing still for a moment. He takes a swig of the champagne. As he swallows, he makes up his mind.

It's time for Glen Berger to grab fate by the balls.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

Spider-Man swings above us in the packed audience, untouched by gravity. His movements are beautiful, graceful. He spins, and you forget he is a man in a spandex suit. He is a spider.

Cirque Du Soleil can suck a big fat one because here is grace incarnate. Motion with meaning. He is twirling. He is flipping. He is-

Stuck. Oh shit. OFFSCREEN the audience LAUGHS and CHEERS.

ANNOUNCER (ON SPEAKERS)  
Please pardon this difficulty.  
Momentary hold.

Some members of the audience WOOP. Some take pictures. The dangling Spider-Man sighs. Waits.

ANNOUNCER (ON SPEAKERS) (CONT'D)  
No photos please.

More flashes. We hear FOOTSTEPS OFFSCREEN. A stick starts poking at Spider-Man from below, like he's a piñata. The stick knocks Spider-Man a bit, swinging into the sky and the audience CHEERS again.

From the audience, Bono and the Edge take this in. They are decidedly not happy.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Julie, Glen, Bono, The Edge, and their assistant sit backstage. Julie finally breaks the silence.

JULIE  
It certainly isn't perfect.

Bono laughs.

THE EDGE  
You can say that.

Julie is unruffled.

JULIE  
But we'll keep working it until it's right. This is all very common in theater. It just usually happens in a nice, small town where there's a more forgiving audience who don't have the same taste for blood New Yorkers do. It's important to remember that this is still a work in progress-

BONO  
I think, by this point, actually, it should be done.

JULIE

(shrug)

Then we have a difference of opinion.

The stage manager enters.

STAGE MANAGER

The MacArthur Grant people want to say hi before they go.

Julie stands.

JULIE

I'll be right back.

She exits. Bono and The Edge look at each other, worried. Bono shakes his head.

BONO

This is not good.

THE EDGE

I know. I'm all hot and bothered, and not in a sexy way.

Glen spots his opening.

GLEN

I can fix the show.

Bono and the Edge take in Glen, having nearly forgotten he was there.

GLEN (CONT'D)

I know I can. But... Julie doesn't like my idea. She doesn't like it, but it works. You understand?

They do.

THE EDGE

Go on.

Glen steadies himself. This is his chance.

GLEN

You know the scene at the end of act two where the Green Goblin falls off the Chrysler building? We make that the ending instead of Arachne. We change it so Goblin's the main villain throughout.

(MORE)

GLEN (CONT'D)

He'll be the one who keeps coming back for Peter, who creates the other villains in his lab, who kidnaps Mary Jane. And we fade out Arachne by the end of act two, top of act three at the latest.

U2 thinks this over.

BONO

That's good. The Arachne stuff never made much sense to me anyway.

THE EDGE

And ending on the Goblin is kind of like the movie, which is fun. Why break something that works?

BONO

Could you type that idea up? So we have something to look over?

GLEN

Of course. And maybe we wait to loop in Julie till you're sure you like it?

BONO

Right, no need to add stress 'til we're sure.

GLEN

Exactly. Cause nothing *real* is happening yet. It's not even a plan B, honestly. It's so far from that.

THE EDGE

Yeah. It's practically a Plan...X.

GLEN

Right.

BONO

(thinking, then)

If this works, man, you're going to be a hero.

THE EDGE

Fuck that. If this works you'll be The Hero.

This lands on Glen. He tries to fight a smile.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Bono shuts his menu with a SLAP. He hands it to a nearby WAITER.

BONO  
Let's do a bottle of Veuve.

GLEN  
What? No way! This is a big moment.  
We need a bottle of Dom. Thanks.

The waiter leaves. The table is set for four. One seat is still empty.

THE EDGE  
You ready?

Glen nods, confident.

GLEN  
Absolutely.

Just then Glen spots someone approaching.

GLEN (CONT'D)  
Hi.

He stands to hug the MARVEL EXECS.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
If it isn't Spider-Man's saving grace!

GLEN  
("please keep going")  
Oh, stop.

BONO  
They're bringing over another chair for you shortly.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
NOT a problem.

MARVEL EXEC 2  
Sharing is caring.

Both grown men perch on the same chair.

MARVEL EXEC 1  
We LOVE your changes. LOVE.

MARVEL EXEC 2

It feels so good to finally feel heard and respected in this process. Thank you, Glen. Really. Honestly gave me a lot of insight into how minorities must feel.

Marvel Exec 1 nods and holds up a "solidarity" fist.

MARVEL EXEC 2 (CONT'D)

We think your vision is absolutely the way to go. So the million dollar question is--

MARVEL EXEC 1

The 65 million dollar question--

MARVEL EXEC 2

--Do you think you'll be able to get Julie on board? Or if not...

Glen smiles.

GLEN

That won't be a problem.

MARVEL EXEC 1

My guy! You'll talk to her tomorrow?

Glen hesitates and everyone notices.

GLEN

Tomorrow's the Ides of March.  
(off their blank looks)  
"Beware the ides of March?"  
Shakespeare? It's the day Brutus stabbed Caesar in the back.

MARVEL EXEC 1

So creative, this one. Wish I could be in that brain.

He muffles Glen's wild hair.

INT. JULIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Julie laughs for too long. A dry, hysterical laugh where she doesn't find anything particularly funny. Bono goes to speak but Julie laughs again.

JULIE

No.

GLEN

I think you're--

JULIE

I don't disagree that the show isn't working. It has huge problems that I'm working to fix, while you all meet behind my back.

BONO

Julie--

JULIE

I don't know how, but it seems you all have forgotten that I'm the director. I have the authority here. And I am telling you that I am not going to throw away Arachne because you want to copy what the movies have already done. I'm sorry, but I won't. You need to trust me and trust the process.

THE EDGE

There's not time--

JULIE

Time is meaningless. We can make more time.

BONO

Actually, that's one of the only things you *can't* make more of.

JULIE

Oh please. Save it for your AIDS songs.

The Edge GASPS.

BONO

Don't. She's trying to hurt us right now. That's what she wants.

THE EDGE

(nodding)

Hurt people hurt people.

GLEN

You're not listening, Julie. We want Arachne's ending out. Not fixed, not tweaked, not workshopped, out.

Julie shrugs.

JULIE

I don't know what to tell you.  
Arachne's staying. It's not the  
show's problem if you don't get it.

Bono and the Edge look to Glen. It's time.

GLEN

Julie, you need to rest. You're  
exhausted. We know how much you've  
got on your plate.

JULIE

I don't need a goddamn nap, I need  
to finish my show.

GLEN

Let me rephrase. We insist you take  
some time away. Starting now.

JULIE

Are you fucking serious right now?  
You're FIRING me? ME?

Glen stands. Bono and the Edge follow suit. Julie looks into  
Glen's eyes. He can feel the volcano.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You are nothing without me.  
Nothing.

GLEN

Thanks again for all your hard  
work, Julie. We hope to see you  
there opening night.

Julie laughs. She moves to the door and opens it for them.  
Bono and the Edge exit first. Glen stops just outside the  
doorway, but Julie cuts him off.

JULIE

On the fucking Ides of March?  
You're a hack.

She shuts the door in his face.

EXT. JULIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Glen catches up to U2 walking away.



GLEN  
Well. Shit.

BONO  
Yeah. Brutal.

THE EDGE  
You hate to see it. But it needed  
to happen though.

GLEN  
For the good of the show. She'll  
see that eventually.

BONO  
It's all on you now, Glenn-o. You  
ready?

Glen beams.

GLEN  
Never been more ready.

BONO  
"Glen Berger's SPIDER-MAN." Has a  
nice ring to it, no?

THE EDGE  
Let me tell you, as the title guy?  
That's nice.

Bono gives Glen a hearty slap on the back. Glen can't stop  
smiling. The Killer's song "I'M THE MAN" PLAYS OVER--

INT. GLEN'S APARTMENT - A WEEK LATER

Glen getting himself ready for the day. In the SHOWER, Glen  
loofas himself. In the BATHROOM, Glen wipes the fog off the  
mirror. He combs his wet curls.

In his ROOM Glen slides on a knit cardigan. He slings on his  
messenger bag.

Glen holds up his glasses for Imaginary Spider-Man to breathe  
on. Glen wipes his glasses on Spider-Man's chest. Glen pops  
his lenses on and slaps Spider-Man's tight ass as he exits.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - A WEEK LATER

The song continues as Glen enters, (in SLOW MO, naturally) a  
huge smile on his face. He nods and smiles at the crew.

## THE KILLERS

(singing)

*Who's the man? Who's the man? I'm  
the man I'm the man, Who's the man  
with the plan? I'm the man--*

Across the theater he sees the Marvel execs fawning over two NEW GUYS. One of the guys is the DIRECTOR, 50s, in a creepy newsboy cap. Next to him is a MYSTERY MAN, 40s.

Chris Tierney hobbles by Glen on crutches. Glen gives him a big, hearty handshake.

GLEN

Chris! Good to have you back, man.  
We've missed you.

CHRIS

Good to be back. Met the new guys  
yet?

GLEN

No. But I've heard great things  
about the director.

CHRIS

The new writer's pretty cool too.

The song stops abruptly. *What the fuck did he just say?*

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Glen swallows his fury before Bono, The Edge, the new director, and the writer.

GLEN

Don't get me wrong, I'm happy to  
meet you, it's just that no one  
mentioned hiring a new writer. You  
can see why I'm concerned, I hope.

WRITER

Of course.

DIRECTOR

(exaggerated sympathy)

Completely understand. Really, we  
do.

The Edge puts a soothing hand on Glen's arm.

THE EDGE

But like we said, your job is not in *any* danger, mate. We need you. You're the savior of this show!

BONO

The new director just thought it would be helpful to get fresh eyes on the material, that's all.

Glen nods, calming down a bit.

DIRECTOR

Absolutely. We wouldn't dream of making any changes you didn't approve of--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - DAY

Trashy European club music blares, strobe lights flash. Glen, completely fucking miserable, shirt wrinkled, hasn't slept in god knows how long, watches the stage.

Green Goblin dances with six other ridiculously dressed VILLAINS (a whip-toting man in cheetah pants, a swarm of bees, and a giant inflatable lizard to name a few).

CHORUS

(singing)

*A freak like me needs company--*

Between the villains, a few hip hop dancers gyrate, vogue, hop, and flash their jazz hands. Basically the choreography of any mediocre bar mitzvah dancer.

GREEN GOBLIN/CHORUS

(singing)

*All the weirdos in the world are here right now in New York City/All the brazen boys and girls dressed to kill without pity/All the weirdos from out of town and all the freaks always around/All the weirdos in the world are here in New York City tonight/Here in New York City tonight.*

Glen can't take another second. He stands, deadpan, and walks out of the theater. On his way out, he passes the director and new writer who clap along to the song.

INT. GLEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sirens blare outside as Glen enters his dark apartment. He fumbles with a shitty lamp by the door to get some light.

The light illuminates a DADDY LONG LEGS scurrying along the wall. Glen seethes. He removes his shoe and chucks it at the spider, scuffing the wall and knocking shit off a table.

He slams his other shoe on the wall over and over again, knocking over his lamp, putting a hole in the wall.

The spider keeps running. Glen tears through his apartment, tipping things over, spilling water, turning over furniture.

The spider finally escapes into the ceiling. Safely out of sight. Glen screams. On the couch, Imaginary Spider-Man shakes his head, disappointed.

GLEN

Fuck this.

Glen throws some of his things in a bag, grabs a bottle of whiskey, and slams the door as he leaves. Imaginary Spider-Man watches him go.

INT. BERGER HOME - NIGHT

Glen stumbles in. Emma's drinking a glass of wine and scrolling on her phone. She looks up briefly, surprised that he's home, but says nothing.

EMMA

Little early to be drunk.

Glen BURPS and fills her glass all the way up to the brim. He chugs. He sits. She doesn't look up from her phone.

GLEN

They really fucked me this time,  
Em. Truly another level of fuckery.

He looks at her for a response.

EMMA

Oh, no thanks.

GLEN

What?

EMMA

I don't want to talk about Spider-Man anymore. I'm sick of it.

GLEN

How are you sick of it? I haven't seen you in two weeks!

EMMA

Exactly.

GLEN

Oh, I'm sorry, is my life boring you? Is that it?

Emma laughs. She gets up and gestures around her.

EMMA

No, Glen, this is your life. That's the problem.

Emma grabs her wine glass back from Glen. She dumps it out in the sink and furiously scrubs it with a sponge.

GLEN

Do you even know how much it sucks to put your whole soul into something and they just throw it away like, like you're nothing!

EMMA

(laughing)

Yeah. I actually do.

GLEN

Don't, Emma. I am doing this FOR our family!

EMMA

Oh come on.

GLEN

Do you want me to apologize that my work is important to me? Is that what you want?

EMMA

Please. You write about a teenager who turns into a spider to fight crime.

GLEN

Are you out of your mind? He NEVER turns into a spider!! He has the powers of a spider but he never turns into one!!

She turns to face Glen.

EMMA

Do you hear yourself? Glen, it's a job. A fucking job.

This finally lands on Glen. He starts to cry. It's pathetic. And loud. He covers his face.

GLEN

I fucked up.

Emma hands him the towel she's using to dry dishes. He weeps into it.

GLEN (CONT'D)

(muffled)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

EMMA

I know you've been struggling but so have I. This has been very, very hard, Glen. I'm on my own. All the time. I love those kids, but also sometimes I hate them, too.

Emma looks into his eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm tired of only getting whatever crumbs Spider-Man hasn't stolen from you. I need you here, Glen. Really here. With us.

GLEN

I'm done, Em. I swear. I'm not gonna do that anymore. I'm moving back home.

EMMA

Really?

GLEN

Yes. That fucking show cannot be my life. They can't have any more of me.

Emma, still a little stiff, hugs Glen, her wet hands on his shirt. Glen clings to her. He kisses her once, cautiously. Twice. His tongue slips inside her mouth. She lets him in.

INT. BERGER HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

Glen and Emma fuck. In the reflection of a painting above the bed, something catches Glen's eye. Imaginary Spider-Man stands on the other side of the room, naked. Watching Glen.

Spider-Man jerks off, mask on, dick out. Glen closes his eyes, keeps pumping. *It's not real. Its not--*

He opens his eyes to find Spider-man still there, still going at it. Spider-Man is close. He's almost there. He's going to--

INT. BOARD ROOM - MARVEL OFFICES - DAY

Framed on the wall is a comic page where Spider-Man holds a lasso of white webbing. Glen stares at it, haunted. Next to him are the director and writer, both smiling. The Marvel Execs beam at them from where they sit.

MARVEL EXEC 1

You two are fucking heroes! We are thrilled with the new direction.

The director and writer laugh. Glen sits next to them, forgotten.

MARVEL EXEC 2

The idea to make the musical follow the story of the existing movie...

He does a chef's kiss on his hand.

MARVEL EXEC 1

Who would have thought to use existing IP on a separate piece of IP in the same IP family? You guys are geniuses.

MARVEL EXEC 2

I don't think we'll ever make something original again!

MARVEL EXEC 1

No one should!

DIRECTOR

So happy to hear it. We're loving it too, aren't we guys?

The writer nods. Glen can't muster enough energy to fake it. The Execs stand to shake everyone's hands.

MARVEL EXEC 1

Alright, get out of here. We'll see you at the opening tonight.

MARVEL EXEC 2

I know it's bad luck in the theater to wish you good luck so we'll just say break a leg! But don't take let the crew take it so literally this time okay?

The execs and the writer and director all bark a laugh. Too loud, too long.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - LATER THAT DAY

Glen sits in the audience playing a game on his phone. Nothing matters anymore. He looks up to see the stage manager approaching, followed by a DELIVERY MAN with ROSES.

STAGE MANAGER

Apparently there's at least one person excited about our opening.

DELIVERY MAN

Glen Berger? These are for you.

Glen takes the flowers, almost smiling. He sniffs them.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

They're nice, right?

GLEN

(nodding)

Is there a note?

The delivery man gives Glen a large yellow envelope.

DELIVERY MAN

You've been served.

GLEN

What?

DELIVERY MAN

...Can I get those flowers back?

Glen sadly hands them over.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(proudly)

Thanks. Those were my idea.

(MORE)



DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Thought it would help my disguise with the opening and all. The wife's gonna be real happy.

Glen opens the envelope: Julie Taymor is suing Glen and the rest of the Spider-Man production.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Good luck tonight!

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - OPENING NIGHT

BACK TO THE PRESENT, OUR OPENING. Glen, frowning, walks with Emma to their seats. A tuxedoed Chris Tierney turns stiffly in his neck brace to wave at Glen. Glen waves back.

Glen and his wife sit. He watches Bono and the Edge take photos with the new writer and director on stage. He scans around for Julie but can't find her.

EMMA

Your suit looks good. It should work for court too.

GLEN

(tightly)

Yeah. You found the perfect in-between.

Glen's knee bounces as people file in around him.

EMMA

Glen? Promise me this is the last time you do something like this.

Glen laughs.

EMMA (CONT'D)

No, I mean it. Nothing this big or stressful ever again. Or I'll leave you. I'm serious.

GLEN

You think I'd sign up for this again?

EMMA

Glen, please. Promise me.

The lights dim. People clap politely. Glen looks at his beautiful wife. He takes her hand.

GLEN

I promise.

The opening song begins. Glen tries to sit still, but it's excruciating. He needs another drink. He stands and exits, annoying everyone in the aisle he has to pass.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE LOBBY - NIGHT

Glen enters the empty lobby. Seated on the carpeted floor, leaning against the wall sits JULIE. Glen freezes.

JULIE

I couldn't watch it either.

GLEN

...You want a drink?

She nods. Glen goes to the bar.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Two whiskeys. Neat. Make them extra large, please. We made this show.

The bartender nods and pours accordingly. He slides the drinks over.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Glen brings Julie their drinks and slumps onto the floor with her. They clink glasses half heartedly and sip.

JULIE

You look like shit.

GLEN

Yeah. I feel like it too.

JULIE

Good.

Julie swirls a finger in her drink.

JULIE (CONT'D)

My lawyer told me not to come tonight. But some sickness made me. I had to see it. And now, I can't even go in.

GLEN

I get it.

JULIE  
I definitely shouldn't be talking  
to you.

GLEN  
Julie, I'm so sorry-

Julie gently holds up a hand. She doesn't want to hear it.

JULIE  
That's not what this is.

Glen nods. After a beat--

JULIE (CONT'D)  
Is it better? Did they make  
something better than we would  
have?

GLEN  
Not by a fucking long shot.

Julie half smiles. She finishes her drink and stands,  
offering a hand to Glen. He stands and she searches his face.

JULIE  
Goodbye, Glen.

GLEN  
Goodbye, Julie.

She heads back inside the theatre. Glen watches her go.

MAN (O.S.)  
Glen! There you are!

Glen turns to an unknown sweaty MAN, 50s, clomping over.

MAN (CONT'D)  
You're a hard man to find. Good  
thing I had to piss like a fucking  
camel. God bless diabetes, right?

He laughs and shakes Glen's hand.

MAN (CONT'D)  
Would love to pick your brain. I'm  
a big fan of the show. The few  
seconds I just saw was great stuff.

GLEN  
Thanks. You are--?

PRODUCER

I'm a producer. I'm actually trying to get a massive King Kong show up on Broadway. Your name's at the top of my list to write it.

GLEN

...Really?

PRODUCER

You kidding? Absolutely!

GLEN

Amazing! I would love to be considered!

PRODUCER

Happy to hear it.

He claps Glen on the back.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)

I'll be in touch.

GLEN

I'll be waiting! Thanks.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Glen sits next to Emma, a huge smile on his face. Emma puts a hand on Glen's leg. Then a giant hairy black GORILLA HAND lovingly pats Glen's other leg. Glen puts his hands over both as he watches the show.

The camera moves past the actors on stage, and looks up into the rafters. There, a Spider-Man in a harness waits, crouched. He breathes heavy under his spandex suit, his chest rising and falling.

**SUPER: TURN OFF THE DARK** only ran on Broadway for three years. In total, it lost an estimated \$75 million. Julie, Glen, and the rest of the producers settled their lawsuit outside of court. Glen has not had a show on Broadway since. **Spider-Man**, however, has gone on to have 7 more movies, 2 animated TV shows, and feature in 3 other Marvel films.

It's his cue. Spider-Man does the sign of the cross before diving into the air, falling down.

**THE END**