

MIRANDA BRANSON BRANSON MIRANDA

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Miranda, F, just trying to figure some stuff out
The Magician, M, a little rough around the edges
Barry, M, clueless enough to be cute
Penelope, F, makes out with the youth group boys
Head & Legs, F, stunning performers
Mother, F, a sort of Ozark Sarah Bernhardt

I.

AT RISE: A spotlight hits MIRANDA automatically as if she were about to perform a magic trick.

MIRANDA

This is, slash, was my father.

(The Magician appears. He wears a top hat. He pulls a quarter out of Miranda's ear.)

MAGICIAN

Don't spend it all in one place.

MIRANDA

This is Barry. He was my boyfriend.

(Barry has an awkwardly cool haircut.)

Barry's a local musician. He thinks his band "Blonde Unicorn Project" is artsy.

BARRY

What does it take to get a drink in this town?

MIRANDA

You're not old enough to drink.

BARRY

So, I guess it takes a couple years then.

MIRANDA

This is Penelope.

(Penelope has on a "Young Life" t-shirt cut rather, um, revealingly)

PENELOPE

Hi guys.

MIRANDA

Penelope was my friend but she hooked up with Barry. Barry was my boyfriend but he's not anymore because we broke up. The Magician was my father because I left home. This is how it happened. I wish I knew where my mother was.

MAGICIAN

What's that, Miranda?

MIRANDA
Nothing.

MAGICIAN
Good. The game's on. Can you keep it down?

MIRANDA
Barry's coming over.

MAGICIAN
I'm not changing the channel.

MIRANDA
I really wish I knew where my mother was.

(Barry enters, clothed with a towel tied around his waist.)

BARRY
I'm tired.

MIRANDA
Okay.

BARRY
How was that makeout sesh?

MIRANDA
Great. Did you take a shower?

BARRY
No.

MIRANDA
Why are you wearing a towel?

BARRY
It shows that I'm comfortable.

MIRANDA
You have clothes on under it.

BARRY
I'm very good at making out. I think I might list it on my resume.

MIRANDA

Resume for what?

BARRY
Taco shack.

MIRANDA
Barry.

BARRY
What?

MIRANDA
Doesn't You-know-who work there?

BARRY
I'm just taking the job so I can get more time to work on my music.

MIRANDA
Your ex is the manager.

BARRY
I promise I'm not doing it for that. Maybe I'm just trying to save up a little money for a really sweet birthday present for you.

MIRANDA
You remembered my birthday?

BARRY
What's your favorite kind of airplane?

MIRANDA
Uh, I haven't put enough thought into it to have a favorite.

BARRY
Well, that knocks out one present.

(The Magician enters. Barry hides under the covers.)

MAGICIAN
Hello pumpkin seed.

MIRANDA
Dad! I'm 18 can't you knock?

MAGICIAN
Do you have a visitor?

BARRY
Ssssh. I'm not here.

MIRANDA
Yes.

MAGICIAN
I sense another presence in this room.

MIRANDA
Barry, come out here. This is my Dad.

BARRY
Hi.

MAGICIAN
Well Hello.

MIRANDA
Barry's my boyfriend.

MAGICIAN
I should hope so. How's the steel industry?

BARRY
The steel industry?

MAGICIAN
You keep passing along those stock tips to Miranda, all right, Bear-Bear?

BARRY
I'm sorry for do-ing your daughter, sir.

(The Magician pulls a quarter out of Barry's ear.)

MAGICIAN
Don't spend it all in one place.

(The Magician exits. So does Barry.)

MIRANDA
Don't let this exchange surprise you. My Dad isn't a bad person. It's just...he has a very high tolerance for sexually explicit material. And let's be honest, that wasn't that explicit. You've done worse, I'm sure. See, my Dad would fuck anything he could saw in half.

(The Magician fucks a pair of legs in a box.)

I didn't really have what you would call a "nuclear family." Not that I mind, really. I was just as happy to have him off screwing a box of legs as I was to have him home. I really didn't care where he came or went. Or when for that matter. Which was good because often he would come home very late at night.

MAGICIAN

Hey pumpkin seed, you going to school?

MIRANDA

I just got home. It's 4 o'clock.

MAGICIAN

So it is.

MIRANDA

Barry gave me a ride. He took my virginity last night.

MAGICIAN

That's nice. Did he like my trick?

MIRANDA

Yes.

MAGICIAN

I like this "Barry." Want some eggs?

(The Magician makes a Blood Mary and puts eggs in it.)

MIRANDA

Barry didn't take my virginity. I had been saying that someone had taken my virginity since someone told me what it was. Certain right-wing Christian church groups have these things called "Purity Balls" where a girl gives her virginity to her father in the form of a ring. The father then gives the ring to the husband when his daughter is married. Penelope was in a Purity Ball. She also goes to Christian Youth Group 3 times a week. They wouldn't let me in because they think my Dad is a member of the occult. My dad is a shitty magician. He's good at making people look the other way.

PENELOPE

You'd get more boys to pay interest in you if you'd change your hair.

MIRANDA

Ugh, like I want teenage boys taking interest in me.

PENELOPE

Barry seems to like you.

MIRANDA

Yeah.

PENELOPE

I mean, you could probably go out with him if you wanted.

MIRANDA

We've been going out for like 6 months.

PENELOPE

God, you're so lucky. Barry is so attractive.

MIRANDA

He's pretty cute.

PENELOPE

Get a grip. The boy is attractive. He has such a nice jawline.

MIRANDA

I hate his hair.

PENELOPE

OMG. You totally made out with him.

MIRANDA

Whatever.

PENELOPE

I'm putting this shit on my Myspace.

MIRANDA

You make out with boys every weekend at Youth Group.

PENELOPE

That's different. It's Christian.

MIRANDA

No it's not.

PENELOPE

Miranda, have you ever been to Youth Group?

MIRANDA

No.

PENELOPE

Then how would you know? News Flash! Simon's having a party this weekend, because his parents are in Guatemala helping flood victims. He wants us to go. Should be a big shindig.

MIRANDA

By "us" do you mean "you"?

PENELOPE

Mir! Of course not. Simon thinks you're totally hot if you'd change your hair and don't think about moving in on him, because I'll claw your fucking eyes out and eat them on my Special K. He wants you to come. If you drive.

(The Magician shows up in his tighty whities eating one of those phallic things of summer sausage.)

MIRANDA

I'm borrowing the car, Dad.

MAGICIAN

No!

MIRANDA

You always let me borrow the car.

MAGICAN

You can't tonight.

MIRANDA

Why?

MAGICIAN

You're grounded.

MIRANDA

For what?

MAGICIAN

Insubordination.

MIRANDA

We don't live in a submarine.

MAGICIAN

I sold the car.

MIRANDA
Bullshit.

MAGICIAN
Oh yeah it's all Bullshit to you, huh? Don't you give a shit for your old man? Don't you give a shit for what I'm going through, huh? Huh? HUH? The legs ran off with the head.

MIRANDA
What?

MAGICIAN
Don't you listen? The legs ran off with the head!

MIRANDA
That's why I'm grounded?

MAGICIAN
When I saw the woman in half, it's two women. One gets in the box and plays the head and one plays the legs. I was doodling the legs and getting head from the head. I guess they got to talking and they ran off. Little do they know I placed them both under a little trance so I can summon them at anytime.

MIRANDA
I was going to go to a party.

MAGICIAN
Filthy carpet box munchers.

MIRANDA
Can I get bus fare?

MAGICIAN
On my way home the car ran out of gas. Into a cliff. Well, it ran into a cliff first and then ran out of gas. It ran out of gas because the car exploded.

MIRANDA
Why'd it run into a cliff?

(The Magician pulls bus fare out of his ear.)

MAGICIAN
Here. Don't go thinking I'm made of money.

(Miranda holds a red plastic cup at the party.)

PENELOPE

Mir, isn't this party *chill*?

MIRANDA

I don't know what that means.

PENELOPE

God, get in the 21st century. Barry's looking at you.

MIRANDA

So?

PENELOPE

Because he had sex with you.

MIRANDA

No he didn't.

PENELOPE

Mir, we all read the f-ing blog.

MIRANDA

Who posted a blog?

PENELOPE

Just own up to it. A lot of the college guys are looking for a girl with no standards.

MIRANDA

Do you believe everything you read on the internet?

PENELOPE

Yes.

MIRANDA

You are dumber than I thought.

PENELOPE

I don't need you to be my friend. It's not like you picked me up in a car or anything.

MIRANDA

My dad had an accident.

PENELOPE

He can't make your car better? Isn't he a warlock?

MIRANDA

Those are just tricks.

PENELOPE

Do you know how embarrassing it was to come be picked up in a bus? You didn't even pick me up. I met you. At a bus stop.

MIRANDA

Your dad sells cars. Why doesn't he just buy you one?

PENELOPE

God, you have no sense of decorum. I'm peacing.

(Barry comes over.)

BARRY

You look nice.

MIRANDA

Did you blog about hooking up with me?

BARRY

I can if you want me to.

MIRANDA

Penelope said that you said that we had sex and, by "said," I mean posted a blog about it.

BARRY

You look nice.

MIRANDA

You said that.

BARRY

Are you in a bad mood or something?

MIRANDA

Yes.

BARRY

Do you want to make out?

MIRANDA

Get lost, Barry.

BARRY

Cool. Yeah. I was just about to go.

MIRANDA

Good.

BARRY

Cool. I'll go talk to someone else. Like that person.

MIRANDA

Okay.

BARRY

They look very interesting. Perhaps I will converse with them.

MIRANDA

Vamoose.

BARRY

My band's playing tomorrow.

(Barry leaves. Penelope comes over.)

PENELOPE

Did you break up?

MIRANDA

No.

PENELOPE

Oh.

MIRANDA

(out) Then the strangest thing happened.

PENELOPE

Can I date him if you do?

MIRANDA

No, not that. This.

(The Magician appears. Miranda cannot see him. He conjures this: From nowhere, two boxes - one with a head sticking out and the other with the pair of legs that the Magician was previously copulating with - wheel onto stage. Vegas show music. The Legs and Head pop out of their boxes.)

They are glamorous: sequins, perfect hair, T&A. They speak with perfect harmony.)

HEAD & LEGS

Hello, Miranda. We're your Mother!

(With a flourish the Head and Legs return to their sealed compartments and are wheeled offstage.)

MIRANDA

I swear to God. Or whatever you believe in. When your dad's a magician, you see some out of the ordinary stuff. But that... Did you get the significance? We may have to go back a bit for that one. DAD! Could you pull yourself out of your drunken stupor long enough to do a flashback?

(The Magician, having not been found out from his previous trick, responds.)

MAGICIAN

Sure, pumpkin.

MIRANDA

Five years ago. I was 13. I had braces to correct a small overbite. The Hamner Barber Theater. Branson, Missouri. The Family-friendly Las Vegas. All the shows none of the sleaze. Little did they know how sleezy my father is.

(The Magician appears in his full regalia. He blows fire. He makes doves appear out of his sleeves. He's very impressive.)

MAGICIAN

And for my next trick. I'll need a volunteer from the audience.

(A beautiful woman who we don't see walks up.)

MAGICIAN

What's your name, gorgeous?

MOTHER

...

MAGICIAN

Lovely name. Step right over here. Ladies and Gentlemen, you've heard the legends of the Bermuda Triangle. You've heard of the elusive Yeti and the diabolical chupacabra. These mysteries of your senses...these creatures of the netherworlds have been alive for

ages. I have learned of the power of disappearance and have been granted that power through the lineage of shamans that I descend from. Please step into this box.

(The Woman steps into the box. The light catches her for the first time, just as we are about to see her face, the Magician closes the box.)

And now you will see the spirit of the Navajo make this woman disappear!

(When the box is opened, she's gone. The Magician takes a deep bow.)

MIRANDA

Of course the whole thing was an act. The woman was my mother. She was a plant in the audience every night. She had one of those faces: she looked like everyone. When they were afraid that someone might recognize her, she wore wigs, fat suits, anything to disguise her appearance. She was a chameleon. Only the manager of the theater knew she was a plant. And the only reason he knew was because my father left a ticket for the same name every night: Carmen San Diego. Which was a popular video game from back then. Usually the box was positioned to obscure the sightlines of the audience. My mother would walk out of the box, behind a curtain and to my father's dressing room where I would wait for her eating braces-appropriate finger foods. But on that night, when they opened the curtains, there was no one there.

(The curtains open. The stage is bare.)

MAGICIAN

Carmen? Carmen?

MIRANDA

She didn't show downstairs. The security guards at the stage doors hadn't seen her. Her clothes weren't found in the dumpster in the back alley. There wasn't a note or hair samples or parts of skin to do DNA tests on. My mother had vanished.

MAGICIAN

Where is she? Where's Carmen?

MIRANDA

Dad.

MAGICIAN

What?

MIRANDA

Don't.

MAGICIAN

Don't what.

MIRANDA
Don't say it.

MAGICIAN
Say what?

MIRANDA
You know what I mean.

MAGICIAN
I wasn't going to say anything.

MIRANDA
This is *my* flashback.

MAGICIAN
Can I finish?

MIRANDA
Fine.

MAGICIAN
Carmen? Where are you? Where in World is Carmen San Diego?

MIRANDA
Get off the stage.

(The Magician walks toward the back where Miranda can't see him.)

Anyway...

(The Magician re-conjures the boxes of the Legs and Head, which wheel back on. They emerge again to suitable music.)

HEAD & LEGS
Hello Miranda. We're your mother!

MIRANDA
Is anyone else seeing this?

(The Magician casts a pall over the eyes of those at the party.)

LEGS
Honey.

HEAD
We're still here.

MIRANDA
At the party?

HEAD
No.

LEGS
But we're real.

HEAD
And, not only that, we're your mother.

MIRANDA
No you're not.

HEAD
Yes, we are.

MIRANDA
My mother disappeared.

LEGS
And now she's back.

MIRANDA
Look, I don't want to burst your bubble but even if you were my mother, how can two women be one person's mother?

LEGS
I'm not sure what you mean.

HEAD
It seems improbable, huh?

LEGS
We birthed you.

MIRANDA
Aren't you both my dad's former assistants who ran off together?

HEAD & LEGS
Yes.

MIRANDA

Then why can no one else see you?

HEAD

How many people see the truth, Miranda?

LEGS

Existential.

HEAD

Right?

LEGS

Wait, how can we be her mother if we're both in Puerto Vuerta right now?

HEAD

Maybe it's magic.

MIRANDA

Magic is all tricks.

HEAD

Says you.

LEGS

Then what about this sombrero?

(Legs puts on a sombrero.)

MIRANDA

Why are there two of you?

LEGS

Hold that thought. There's the cabana boy.

(The Head and Legs vanish.)

MIRANDA

I shouldn't have been worried, right? Stranger things have happened at parties. In the 60s.

(The Magician enters on a bike.)

MAGICIAN

Hey butternut squash.

MIRANDA
Dad?

MAGICIAN
How else were you planning on getting home?

MIRANDA
I just saw the two women that you used to saw in half and they said they were my mother.

MAGICIAN
I would've figured they'd left the country by now.

MIRANDA
They're in Mexico.

MAGICIAN
Of course, two dykes can't elope in the states. Don't talk crazy, apple strudel. C'mon.

(The Magician and Miranda bike off.)

(The chime of a txt message.)

PENELOPE
sup?

BARRY
Who's this?

PENELOPE
penELOPE.

BARRY
What's with the caps?

PENELOPE
O. Sorry, new iPhone.

BARRY
k.

PENELOPE
wat time 4 yr band?

BARRY
9ish

PENELOPE
chill. r u upset?

BARRY
y?

PENELOPE
Mir.

BARRY
No.

PENELOPE
Didn't u break up?

BARRY
No.

PENELOPE
u think she's as cute as me?

BARRY
In what way?

PENELOPE
Everyway.

BARRY
I feel uncomfortable.

PENELOPE
It's chill. I'm her friend.

BARRY
Thot u had a fight.

PENELOPE
We made up.

BARRY
k.

PENELOPE
I heard u 2 did it.

BARRY
Did what?

PENELOPE
Is she a good kisser?

BARRY
I don't know what yr criteria is for that.

PENELOPE
Does she bite yr lower lip?

BARRY
That doesn't sound pleasant.

PENELOPE
It can be.

BARRY
I use a lot of chapstick.

PENELOPE
Yum. Wat kind? Strawberry?

BARRY
Regular. I have to go.

PENELOPE
y?

BARRY
cuz.

(Barry txts Miranda)

BARRY
Hi.

MIRANDA
Barry can't you talk on the phone like a normal person?

(Barry calls Miranda.)

BARRY
Hi.

MIRANDA
I just read that.

BARRY
What's up?

MIRANDA
Nothing.

BARRY
Are you still mad?

MIRANDA
I don't have enough time to be mad at you.

BARRY
You got trig homework or something?

MIRANDA
I think my mom came to see me.

BARRY
Cool.

MIRANDA
No. Not cool. It wasn't my real mother. It was two women that my father had been sawing in half only they weren't in the same place I was. They were in Mexico. But I saw them like they were there.

BARRY
If you cut two women in half all you get is one woman.

MIRANDA
Don't be an asshole.

BARRY
You have mood swings.

MIRANDA
It was really weird, Barry.

BARRY
How can two people be one person's mother, anyway?

MIRANDA
I don't know.

BARRY

I had a dream I slept with Heather Locklear. That didn't mean anything. It wasn't like I cheated on you or anything.

MIRANDA

Heather Locklear's old enough to be your mother.

BARRY

So? Lots of older women have younger male lovers. Ever heard of a cougar?

MIRANDA

You don't have a chance with Heather Locklear.

BARRY

My mom went to high school with her.

MIRANDA

You're making it weirder than it already is.

BARRY

I like older women.

MIRANDA

Things not to tell your girlfriend.

BARRY

I don't really have a filter.

MIRANDA

I've got to go.

BARRY

See you tonight.

MIRANDA

Bye.

(Miranda hangs up.)

BARRY

I meant that as a question.

(The Magician shows back up with his bike. He has a bag of groceries in the basket on the front.)

MAGICIAN

I thought that instead of moaning over the car and those dykes that left me we could make some pasta.

MIRANDA

I don't feel that hungry.

MAGICIAN

Is it your womanly time?

MIRANDA

No.

MAGICIAN

We can make some cucumber sandwiches.

MIRANDA

No thanks.

MAGICIAN

You love cucumber sandwiches.

MIRANDA

Where's mom?

MAGICIAN

She disappeared, Mir.

MIRANDA

Do you expect me to believe that?

MAGICIAN

Why would I lie to you?

(The Head and Legs appear. They sip on margaritas.)

LEGS

Now dear.

HEAD

He's your family.

MIRANDA

Why would she leave me?

MAGICIAN

The trick got out of hand.

HEAD

Maybe you pushed us away.

LEGS

You didn't love your mother enough.

MIRANDA

Those goddamn magic assistants are back.

MAGICIAN

I'm over it! Do you have to keep bringing it up? Today was going to be a good day. The insurance company's going to, essentially, write us a blank check after the car accident. I told them the brakes didn't work.

LEGS

My, this drink is quite strong.

HEAD

Yes. It's going straight to my...head!

(Head and Legs begin to laugh uncontrollably. Then they start to make out.)

MAGICIAN

I thought we could have some bonding time.

MIRANDA

I need to know.

MAGICIAN

I was doing the trick and the next thing I knew, she had disappeared.

MIRANDA

Now they're making out with one another!

MAGICIAN

They're gone! I said not to rub it in.

(The Magician leaves.)

HEAD

He never was totally stable.

LEGS

Of course look at you.

HEAD

True.

LEGS

All you've succeeded in doing is driving away everyone who really cares about you.

HEAD

Penelope, Barry, the Magician, your Mother.

LEGS

Why did you let that boy sleep with you anyway?

MIRANDA

We didn't sleep together.

HEAD

Come now. Don't hide things from your mother. I mean we can read Google, Miranda.

LEGS

What would we do with out Google?

HEAD

I have no idea.

MIRANDA

My mother is not a lesbian. So she's not either of you two bitches.

LEGS

Our little girl's so saucy.

HEAD

You think any woman could be with your father for any length of time and not turn, ultimately, to other women for comfort.

LEGS

He's not stable.

HEAD

Really, Miranda it's up to you. You can either let this relationship fizzle like all your other ones or you can take a chance and finally reconnect with that mother you've spent all your life wondering about. How hard can it be?

LEGS

O and don't call us. We'll call you.

(The Legs and Head disappear.)

(The chime of a txt message.)

MIRANDA

Shit! Barry's band.

(The Magician's show.)

MAGICIAN

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen. Well, really is there any need to say welcomes? You all know why you're here. You all know why I'm here. To titillate. To excite. To astound your eyes with wonders heretofore unseen by modern man. That's right my dutiful spectators, you are here to witness a knowledge passed down to me from the ancients. From the Navajos and Hopi and Nostradamus and Nosfaratu and Eskimos. Parchments from King Tut's tomb, rocks from the Parthenon. I have seen the Rosetta stone. Stood in concert with the sacred spheres. Yes! I was at the final Jimi Hendrix concert. I witnessed the death of Pope John Paul II. I felt the sands of ancient Persia against my cheeks while tripping balls on mushrooms harvested by Hare Krishnas from the dung of the Sacred Cow. I am, in short, kind of a big deal. And you are lucky to be here.

(The Magician produces a gigantic saw.)

And for my first trick. Aw, who am I kidding? I have been exiled, Ladies and Gentlemen. Not a literal kind of exile but a forced exodus of the spirit. A metaphysical trail of tears. An existential flight out of Egypt. I've been abandoned like the baby Moses to live in a wicker basket of my own making though I was a babe and could not weave properly so the whole fucking ship is taking on water and all I have to bail myself out is a couple Dixie cups and those things don't hold much. My beloved wife. I have no idea where she is. The women I used to cut in half and copulate with on alternate nights in my dressing room have gone to Mexico and my poor daughter is left to me. I am a single parent living on a magician's wage which is no way to live. I ought to take this saw and cut my own heart out in front of you but the stage crew would have to clean up the blood. Once I was a prince! Now I have been informed that this will be my final show. Management is letting me go. What am I? A trickster. A fool. A hack. Laugh you hyenas. Eat your fucking hearts out.

(A gigantic burst of flame. The Magician is no longer there. Wild clapping.)

(A house show. Barry plays an acoustic guitar under his moniker "Blonde Unicorn Project." He wears a single horn in the middle of his forehead. He sounds like he's trying too hard.)

BARRY

Saw you exiting the room like the lights went off
my night vision isn't what it used to be
fumbling tumbling rumbling in my stomach
what once was love, ooh ooh ooh yeah.

(Penelope is enraptured. She mouths words to the song. Barry comes off stage.)

BARRY

Hey.

PENELOPE

You guys are so hot.

BARRY

I'm the only one in the band.

PENELOPE

But it sounds so full. Can I get that last track for my ipod touch?

BARRY

We're not really, uh, on itunes.

PENELOPE

Do you have a demo? My dad wants to play it in his store.

BARRY

Where's Miranda?

PENELOPE

She couldn't make it.

BARRY

Damn. I was going to play a new song for her. It's called "I Didn't Blog about Having Sex with You Because We Haven't Gone that Far, but I Will if You Want Me to, and I'm Talking about both the Sex and the Blogging, Baby." I. D. B. A. H. S. W. Y. B. I. W. H. G. T. F. B. I. W. I. Y. W. M. T. A. I. T. A. B. T. S. A. T. B. B. for short.

PENELOPE

You don't love her, Barry.

BARRY

I was going to get her a model airplane for her birthday. But she doesn't have a favorite.

PENELOPE

Would you listen to yourself?

BARRY
What's your beef?

PENELOPE
I don't have any "beef." It's just you know "love" shouldn't be thrown around, like, lightly or whatever. I worry about you. Miranda's great. I love her. She's fantastic. But, she's not in a very healthy place right now. I'm her BFF so she tells me stuff.

BARRY
What stuff?

PENELOPE
She doesn't have a mother, Barry.

BARRY
Yes she does. It's two dykes in Mexico.

PENELOPE
And what kind of family is that? You know my ancestors came over on the Mayflower.

BARRY
I love their bread.

PENELOPE
Call me old fashioned, but I think you need to have your spiritual life sorted out before you can commit emotionally to someone.

BARRY
I guess.

PENELOPE
You're so sensitive.

BARRY
Not really.

PENELOPE
No you are. Look, you're about to cry.

BARRY
This horn kinda hurts.

PENELOPE
You don't have to shield me from your emotions, Barry.

BARRY
I'm not.

PENELOPE
Prove it. Look at that dark corner. Let's see what's over there.

(They move to the dark corner and begin to make out. Miranda enters.)

MIRANDA
Penelope! WTF!

BARRY
You made it!

PENELOPE
Hey, Miranda.

MIRANDA
What're you doing?

BARRY
I was un-shielding my emotions.

PENELOPE
Don't get upset with us.

MIRANDA
That's my boyfriend.

PENELOPE
Hardly.

MIRANDA
Penelope.

PENELOPE
That all depends on how you define boyfriend, Mir. Do you think you can satisfy him in the way that he needs to be satisfied? Emotionally.

BARRY
I had something in my teeth and she was getting it out with her tongue.

PENELOPE
You're not stable.

MIRANDA

I thought you were my friend.

PENELOPE

I am.

BARRY

I'm sorry.

MIRANDA

Take that stupid horn off your head.

PENELOPE

You're waving from an island in the sea. You're in shifting sands. You're aboard an airplane with all the fat people on one side.

MIRANDA

What does that mean?

PENELOPE

You're not stable. How can you even hope to commit to a relationship if you don't know who you are? Give it a rest, Miranda. From a friend: sort yourself out before you go and cast judgments on others.

(Head and Legs appear. They drink from pineapples.)

HEAD

Maybe it's left over from your fucked up childhood.

LEGS

Childhood. Adolescence. You name it. You're not well.

HEAD

She's your friend.

LEGS

Listen to her.

HEAD

You know she's right.

MIRANDA

Can you let me deal with this?

PENELOPE

What's there to deal with? Barry loves me. Because I give him what he needs.

BARRY

Uh.

MIRANDA

I wasn't talking to you.

PENELOPE

You might as well have been.

LEGS

She is prettier than you.

HEAD

And probably smarter.

LEGS

Look how she used you.

HEAD

You let her walk all over you.

MIRANDA

I did not.

BARRY

Mir? Are you all right?

MIRANDA

I don't know.

BARRY

Do you need some water?

PENELOPE

She's fine. She just needs to grow up.

LEGS

Like you didn't know that would happen.

HEAD

This drink is really good, don't you think?

LEGS

The real pineapple makes it.

(They slurp at the bottom of their drinks.)

MIRANDA
I need to go.

PENELOPE
Good.

BARRY
You don't have to.

MIRANDA
Yes, I do.

PENELOPE
TTYL. Talk to you later.

(Miranda goes. The Head and Legs follow her home.)

LEGS
Sucks to be you, I guess.

MIRANDA
Shut up.

HEAD
Don't blame us.

LEGS
We're trying to help.

HEAD
We are.

MIRANDA
I don't need your help; you're not even real.

HEAD
Of course we are.

LEGS
We were daddy's little helpers.

HEAD
And now we're your mother.

LEGS

Literally. Not metaphorically.

HEAD

Yeah. Sorry. I should've made that clearer.

MIRANDA

I'm getting out.

LEGS

Go as far as your legs will carry you, lady. You're not going to escape us.

HEAD

Word.

(Head and Legs vanish.)

(We hear the opening bars of The Boss's "The River." The Magician sits in a chair with a bottle, waving his hands to the melancholic harmonica. Miranda comes home.)

MAGICIAN

Didn't you have something going on tonight?

MIRANDA

Yeah.

MAGICIAN

Yeah. I had something too. Do you want something to drink?

MIRANDA

No.

MAGICIAN

I don't mind if you drink, so long as you do it at home.

MIRANDA

I mind when you drink.

MAGICIAN

Oh, I meant do you want some orange juice then.

MIRANDA

Dad. Who am I?

MAGICIAN

What do you mean?

MIRANDA

I mean. I don't know. I just, I guess this is my early onset quarter life crisis or something.

MAGICIAN

You think too much.

MIRANDA

I need to know something.

MAGICIAN

What is it?

MIRANDA

What did you do to Mom?

MAGICIAN

I told you.

MIRANDA

She can't have actually disappeared.

MAGICIAN

Well, she did.

MIRANDA

That's impossible.

MAGICIAN

Ever heard of Amelia Earhart?

MIRANDA

What does that have to do with anything?

MAGICIAN

They never found her.

MIRANDA

I have a right to know.

MAGICIAN

Maybe it wasn't my fault.

MIRANDA

Then what happened?

MAGICIAN
She disappeared.

MIRANDA
She was supposed to meet me.

MAGICIAN
Maybe that's just what women do.

MIRANDA
I'm going to find her.

MAGICIAN
You won't be able to. She vanished, Mir. I made her vanish. And there's nothing that you can do to bring her back.

MIRANDA
I can find her.

MAGICIAN
It's not like she's hiding out someplace. She's gone! She slipped into the ether, all right? I made her vanish and you know why I did it? So you wouldn't end up like her. So you wouldn't turn into this chameleon that has no sense of self.

MIRANDA
What kind of a man would do that to a woman?

MAGICIAN
Not a very good one.

MAGICIAN
Why can't you make friends with your new mothers? They're just as good. They're probably better. Stay here and be happy.

MIRANDA
Give me money for a bus.

MAGICIAN
You'll never find her.

MIRANDA
If I don't look then I'm going to be just as bad as you are.

MAGICIAN

Take this. So, I'll know where you are.

(He holds out a credit card.)

MIRANDA

I'm going to the last place she was.

MAGICIAN

You're going to Branson?

MIRANDA

Yes.

MAGICIAN

Do you want to ride bikes or something?

MIRANDA

Let me go, Dad.

II.

AT RISE: A gigantic door outside a blight of a subdivision home. Miranda rings the doorbell. She waits. For a while. Evidently this is a very big house.

MIRANDA

This is, slash, was my mother.

(She holds up a new photo. The photo becomes the door. She presses the doorbell, again. We hear footsteps inside.)

MOTHER

(from inside) Who the hell is it?

MIRANDA

It's your daughter.

MOTHER

Miranda?

(The Mother opens the door, golden light streaming behind her. It's angelic, but we can't see her face, still.)

One second. I was doing my makeup.

(The Mother reaches behind her and flips the light. We can finally see her face. Half of it is rather garishly made up.)

MIRANDA
Mom?

MOTHER
Miranda.

(Miranda embraces her. A strong hug.)

What are you doing?

MIRANDA
Hugging you.

MOTHER
I noticed.

MIRANDA
I left Dad. I had to find you.

MOTHER
I don't take visitors when I'm not properly made up.

END OF EXCERPT
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