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The Bold, the Young, and the Murdered

A comedy in two acts

By Don Zolidis

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Cast of Characters

Note: Eight actors play the parts of eight characters inside the long-running Soap Opera, The Bold and the Young.

JAKE STRONG	played by	MORRIS NYBORG
SEBASTIAN STRONG	played by	BILL WILEY
VALENCIO DI CARPATHIO	played by	JOHN BURKE
MONA JEFFRIES	played by	CYBIL DANE
EILEEN SILVERSTEDT	played by	AMY WHITE
JESSICA SILVERSTEDT	played by	DANIELLE FARRIS
DOCTOR WILLIAM BRADLEY	played by	TYLER TRIPODO
SEQUOIYA	played by	LILY BAUMGARTNER

Other characters:

OLI, the director
KAITLIN, stage manager
KERI, the intern
BROOKE, the camerawoman
MILES, the producer

Cross Casting: OLI, KAITLIN, BROOKE, and MILES may be either gender. The names may be changed as follows:

OLI stays the same
KAITLIN is TODD
BROOKE is LOUIS
MILES is MARY

Setting: The television set of the Bold and the Young. Present Day.

Originally performed in Muskego,WI on May 21, 2011
by the Tri-Arts Academy

Cast of Characters

JAKE STRONG / MORRIS NYBORG	**Matthew Wiemer**
SEBASTIAN STRONG / BILL WILEY	**Connor Loessin**
VALENCIO DI CARPATHIO / JOHN BURKE	**Josh Wilke**
MONA JEFFRIES / CYBIL DANE	**Sadie Stoiber**
EILEEN SILVERSTEDT / AMY WHITE	**Lyssa Lee**
JESSICA SILVERSTEDT / DANIELLE FARRIS	**Alyson Robinson**
DOCTOR WILLIAM BRADLEY / TYLER TRIPODO	**Sam Robinson**
SEQUOIYA / LILY BAUMGARTNER	**Beekah Madia**
OLI, the director	**Brittany Zimmer**
KAITLIN, stage manager	**Lauren Wundrock**
KERI, the intern	**Amanda Smith**
BROOKE, the camerawoman	**Maija Lee**
MILES, the producer	**Robert Somers**

Act One

(Soothing piano theme music. Lights up on the set of The Bold and the Young. A room in the mansion of VALENCIO DI CARPATHIO, 60ish, who reclines on a couch with a glass of sherry in his hand. VALENCIO is well-dressed, with silver hair, and is pretty obviously evil. He also speaks with a mysterious Eastern European accent. JAKE STRONG, 35ish, and devastatingly handsome, enters. He speaks with a very handsome accent (mostly this involves trying to sound really tough all the time). Just off-stage, and barely visible to the audience, are BROOKE, the camerawoman, and OLI, the director. For the moment, they are silent.)

VALENCIO

Ah, Jake Strong. How nice of you to join me.

(he sips his sherry evilly)

JAKE STRONG

What do you want from me, Valencio Di Carpathio?

VALENCIO

Why are you so suspicious? Can't I invite my friend over for a nice little chat? Sherry?

JAKE STRONG

The last time I touched your Sherry I ended up in a mental hospital for three months. Then you convinced my half-brother to steal my father's fortune. So I think I'll decline the sherry this time. Even though it looks pretty good and I'm quite thirsty from riding my motorcycle over here.

VALENCIO

As you wish, Jake Strong. As you wish.

(he sips the sherry again, perhaps even more evilly than before)

JAKE STRONG

I'll ask you again, what do you want?

VALENCIO

Have a seat.

JAKE STRONG

The last time I sat in one of your chairs I was poisoned by an Amazonian tree frog and woke up hallucinating in a Nigerian diamond mine, so I think I'll stand, thank you very much. Although I appreciate the sentiment.

VALENCIO

Very well. Although standing can get…

(dramatic pause)

uncomfortable.

JAKE STRONG

So can my fist to your face.

VALENCIO

Oh please. Must you always make these threats? I'm an old man, Jake Strong. I may not last long. In fact, there is the very real possibility that I'm dying of something very secretive. I don't know yet, and we might not find out for some time, but it's a definite possibility. So I'm going to make amends. You remember your wife, Nina?

JAKE STRONG

YOU MONSTER WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?!

VALENCIO

I just asked you if you remembered her.

JAKE STRONG

Oh. Yes. We're quite happy together. She's the light of my life.

VALENCIO

I'm glad to hear that.

JAKE STRONG

What are you getting at, Valencio?

VALENCIO

Oh nothing. Except maybe… you know there is something in her history you might not know.

JAKE STRONG

If it's the part about her spending a year in clown college after high school, I know all about that. She was young. And she liked big shoes. They brainwashed her. If I ever get my hands on those clowns…

VALENCIO

Oh no this is something completely different.

JAKE STRONG

I also happen to know about her evil twin sister, Deborah, who you brainwashed into thinking she was my wife while Nina was undergoing a secretive nose job in South America. And who later became pregnant, but lost the baby and was kidnapped by pirates and hasn't been seen from again.

VALENCIO

I forgot about that time. That was fun. No I have something even more disturbing to tell you. Your wife, Nina, is my daughter.

JAKE STRONG

Noooooo!

OLI *(from off-stage)*

CUT!

(JAKE and VALENCIO drop out of character immediately. JAKE puts on glasses and becomes MORRIS NYBORG; his voice changes completely. VALENCIO drops his accent and becomes JOHN BURKE, a crotchety old guy.)

JOHN

Could we please turn the heat on in here, I'm freezing my tuckus off.

MORRIS

How was that, Oli?

(OLI leaps up on to set. OLI is a ball of energy.)

OLI

Having a good day, Morris?

MORRIS

I've got a little bit of a cold right now, but I'm not really –

OLI

I don't really care. Okay? Good.

JOHN

Anybody got soup?

OLI

Nobody's got soup, John.

JOHN

I demand soup.

OLI

No you can't demand anything –

JOHN

I've been on this show for forty-seven years and I want soup. Cream of asparagus. Cream of asparagus or I go home right now.;

MORRIS

Was I not gritting my teeth enough, was that it? I've got a problem with one of my incisors, so I'm not really able to clench my jaw like I used –

OLI

Morris. Morris. Morris. Morris.

MORRIS

What?

OLI

Shut up. All right listen up. That was wretched, okay? Wretched. Where was the intensity? Where was the drama?

JOHN

There'd be drama if I had soup.

OLI

Hey hey attention up here Grandpa. You get soup after you nail the scene, all right?

JOHN

It's in my contract that I get soup whenever I want –

OLI

Do you want me to have Valencio's personality downloaded into a computer again so I can fire you and replace with you with a See-n-Say? Cause I can do it. All right? We're doing the scene again.

MORRIS

The whole thing?

OLI

Yes the whole thing!

MORRIS

Aw jeez.

JOHN

This is ridiculous. I want double soup now.

(KAITLIN, the stage manager, rushes over to OLI)

OLI

There's no such thing as double – what is it, sweetheart?

KAITLIN

My name's not sweetheart, it's Kaitlin.

OLI

Ask yourself one question: do I care?

KAITLIN

I just got the –

OLI

The answer is no.

KAITLIN

I just got the ratings for last week.

(She hands them to OLI.)

OLI

Aw dang it. I thought the plotline with the escaped mental patient with the poisonous fruit tree would really bring in the viewers.

KAITLIN

I don't think people really understood the radioactive mango thing –

OLI

I'm not asking for your opinion, all right babe? Why don't you do your job and set up the props again. We're re-doing the scene.

KAITLIN

Fine.

(KAITLIN rushes to re-fill the glass of Sherry.)

JOHN

We haven't addressed the soup issue.

OLI

There is no soup issue!

JOHN

There is most definitely a soup issue!

MORRIS

John, we'll deal with it after, okay? But before we do that, can I make some adjustments to my costume?

OLI

No.

KAITLIN

Places! I think.

OLI *(to BROOKE)*

Brooke, you ready?

BROOKE

No.

OLI

You're not ready?

BROOKE

I just stand here, what do you think?

OLI

Love the attitude, Brooke. And, from the top, and Five Four Three Two…

(Lights brighten on the stage again. JOHN and MORRIS resume their characters perfectly, except this time they are even more passionate and intense. Extremely, extremely intense.)

VALENCIO

Ah, Jake Strong. How nice of you… to join me.

(he sips his sherry evilly)

JAKE STRONG

What do you want from me, Valencio… Di Carpathio?

VALENCIO

Why are you so suspicious? Can't I invite my friend over for a nice little chat?

(dramatic pause)

Sherry?

JAKE STRONG

The last time I touched your Sherry I ended up in a mental hospital for three months. Then you convinced my half-brother to steal my family's fortune. So I think I'll decline the sherry this time. Even though it looks pretty good and I'm quite thirsty from riding my motorcycle

(dramatic pause)

over here.

VALENCIO

As you wish, Jake Strong. As you wish.

(he sips the sherry again, perhaps even more evilly than before)

I would offer you soup but I don't have soup.

JAKE STRONG

I don't want your… soup.

VALENCIO
Too bad. Because I could really use some… soup.

OLI
CUT!
(They break out of character)
What in the heck are you doing?!

MORRIS *(putting glasses on)*
I really wanted to fill out the backside of these pants, so I was kind of standing more like this - is there a way we could sew some padding -

OLI
Not you, idiot.

JOHN
Do you think you scare me? I've seen fourteen directors on this show, okay? I'm going to my trailer and having my soup and if you don't like it you can put it in a letter and mail it to someone who cares.

OLI
No one writes letters any more you fossil!

JOHN
Bye.
(JOHN leaves.)

OLI
That's the way you want to play, huh? Your character is going to end up dead one of these days! You know that! Dead!
(JOHN returns.)

JOHN
My character has been killed nine times already, all right? I'm not scared about ten. I keep coming back.
(He leaves again.)

(MORRIS approaches, holding a copy of Soap Opera digest.)

MORRIS
The reason I'm concerned is that I'm not on the list of daytime TV's sexiest hunks – and I was on it last year, and I'm wondering what happened – so I'm thinking we need to increase my appeal, you know? So what if we did some swimsuit scenes where we got a body double –

Skipping Forward

I know where I am. Thank you.

OLI

And five four three two –

(Soap Opera music again.)

(EILEEN SILVERSTEDT, the heroine, (played by AMY) is sunnily cleaning up, perhaps humming a sweet little song as JESSICA, an angry teenager, (played by DANIELLE) enters in a huff.)

EILEEN

Oh you're home!

JESSICA

Hello, mother.

EILEEN

I was just cleaning up a little bit for dinner. You said you were bringing your new fiancé.

JESSICA

Clean all you want, it won't make a difference.

EILEEN

Sweetheart –

JESSICA

Don't you understand, mother? You've lost. The game is over.

EILEEN

I just want you to be happy.

JESSICA

Do you?

EILEEN

Of course I do honey, you've been through so much, with the kidnapping by pirates, and the mind erasing by that Swedish psychiatrist, and the complete personality change you've undergone, I'm just glad that everything is back to normal.

JESSICA

I'm glad to hear that, mother. I'd like you to meet my fiancé.

(SEBASTIAN STRONG (played by BILL WILEY), wearing an eyepatch, but still looking devilishly handsome, enters.)

EILEEN *(gasping)*

Sebastian Strong!

SEBASTIAN

Nice to see you again, Eileen.

EILEEN

It can't be! This isn't possible!

JESSICA

We're in love, mother. We'll be married in three days.

EILEEN

You can't do this! You don't understand who this man is!

SEBASTIAN

I've changed, Eileen. I'm no longer the man who poisoned your goldfish. Although I will say, their screams were exquisite.

EILEEN

Goldfish don't scream!

SEBASTIAN

Yours did.

EILEEN

You monster!
(to JESSICA)
Darling I won't let you do this.

JESSICA

You just don't get it, do you, mother? You're the monster, not Sebastian! I don't care that he has an eye patch, I wouldn't care if he wore two eye patches and stumbled around and bumped into things, I love him! And I'll be the one looking out his passenger side rear view mirror so he can see objects that are closer than they appear to be!

EILEEN

I raised you better than this!

JESSICA

You didn't raise me, the nanny raised me!

EILEEN

HOW DARE YOU?!

JESSICA

This relationship is over!

EILEEN

You can't say that!

JESSICA

I just did!

EILEEN

You ungrateful child!

JESSICA

You're not my mother any more, do you hear me?! Do you hear me? Next time I see you you'll just be some nice lady in a kitchen who likes to do the dusting every once in a while and occasionally bakes brownies. And I might take a brownie or two, but… I'll. Pay. You. For. Them. I'm leaving! And I'm not even going to have dinner! We'll go out to Kentucky Fried Chicken!

EILEEN

Their chicken is substandard!

JESSICA

That's good enough for me! Come fiancé!
(she exits. SEBASTIAN remains for a moment.)

SEBASTIAN

Oh one more thing.
(dramatic pause)
Would you like chicken… or fish at the wedding?
(he laughs evilly and exits.)

OLI

CUT!
(EILEEN returns quickly to talk to AMY.)

DANIELLE

Oh my gosh you were so amazing in that, look at my skin, I've got goosebumps!

AMY

Yeah, whatever.
(BILL WILEY comes back in as AMY addresses OLI.)
Can I say something other than "their chicken is substandard"? That's a really stupid line.

OLE

You're a stupid line. And no we can't change the script!

AMY

How about their chicken is godawful?

OLI

No – just –

DANIELLE

Ooh! Causes cancer in rats!

BILL *(to DANIELLE)*

Hey kid. That was spectacular.

DANIELLE

Really?

BILL

First-rate work. You know what I like about you? Your hair.

DANIELLE

I love my hair too!

BILL

How about you and me go in the other room and rehearse?

AMY

Bill – could you please refrain from hitting on the actresses for a moment?

BILL

Stuff it, Amy. You're just jealous.

AMY

Oh yeah I'm jealous of a washed-up has-been mediocre slimebag.

DANIELLE

What did you just call me?

AMY

Not you, idiot.

OLI

People! Hey! Save it for the cameras! All right, it's five o' clock and that means today is –
(The intern, KERI, sprints in.)

KERI

Oli hold on!

OLI

Who are you again?

KERI

I'm Keri the intern, hi everyone. It's my first day!

DANIELLE

Hi!

(No one else acknowledges her presence.)

KERI

I'm so excited to be here! I'm a huge fan of the show and this is such an amazing opportunity for me! I'm dreamed about this my whole life!

AMY

You've dreamed about being an intern on a Soap Opera. You need better dreams.

KERI

This could be like a stepping stone for me –

AMY

Look, what's your name – Carly – internships exist to give family members of the production staff something to do, all right? You're not going anywhere.

KERI

Oh but I have something important to say!

OLI

Can you please spit it out because I'm about to die of boredom listening to you talk.

KERI

There's a guy here to talk to you – in a suit – um… Milo?

OLI

Miles?

KERI

That's it!

(a hush falls over everyone)

He's like the excellent producer or something -

OLI

Executive producer, sweetheart. Aw dang it!

KAITLIN

Everyone get out here!

(MORRIS enters.)

MORRIS

I didn't think we were going back to that scene –

(LILY BAUMGARTNER, a young, troubled-looking woman, enters.)

LILY

Kaitlin. You don't have to yell. We all heard you.

KAITLIN *(yelling)*

Everyone get out here now!

JOHN *(off-stage)*

I'm still having my soup!

OLI

John get out here!

JOHN *(off-stage)*

I will throw your body in the river when I'm done with you!

(CYBIL, who has been on the show since it began, 50 years ago, enters, wearing a dressing gown. She's been on the show so long she has trouble distinguishing when she's on or off camera.)

CYBIL

Darlings, it's five o' clock and I'm beginning to turn into a pumpkin, so this better be quick! I also have to go home to feed President Bush and Laura Bush.

KERI

You have them trapped in your house?

CYBIL

Pomeranians. I also had one named Senator Arlen Spector.

KERI

What happened to him?

CYBIL

Her. She ran away. I don't like to speak about it. Kidnapped, really. Held for ransom. It was a dark night, and I received a phone call –

JOHN

We did that episode twelve years ago, Cybil.

CYBIL

Then I don't know what happened to my dog. I'm worried.

(TYLER enters on a cell phone.)

TYLER *(talking into the phone)*

Tell them I'm not doing it for less than 2 million. I don't care if Matt Damon is in the picture, that's my rate. Well I don't care Jimmy. It's not like I'm going to be doing soaps forever. Yeah, I know slumming it with the little people – have you talked to Spielberg? Well get him on the phone –

OLI

All right everyone look!

TYLER *(to OLI)*

Do you mind?

(back into the phone)

Jimmy. Jimmy. I want two cases of mineral water in the trailer. Always. I drink one bottle, I want a new bottle instantly, got it? And aromatherapy candles. I know I don't have the part yet but when I do -

OLI

Tyler!

TYLER *(to OLI)*

Try not to be rude, okay?

(back to the phone)

Nobody important. Like I was saying.

(OLI grabs the phone and tosses it. TYLER stares at him.)

Are you KIDDING me? Are you KIDDING ME? You just signed your death warrant, buddy. DEATH WARRANT.

OLI

Try it, poser. Have a seat everyone.

(JOHN enters, with napkin.)

How nice of you to join us, John.

JOHN

Hmph.

OLI

First things –

KERI

Hi I'm Keri I'm the new intern! This is my first day!

OLI

No that is not the first thing.

KERI

Oh I thought we were introducing ourselves.

DANIELLE

You're going to love it here, Keri!

BILL

You like to party?

OLI

Hey! HEY! Please.

CYBIL

Darlings! I need to make an announcement!
(everyone looks at her)
I get a little loopy at night. Just so you know.

JOHN

You're a little loopy during the day too.

CYBIL

That's how I met my first husband! It was dark night, raining, I had just seen the ghost of…

AMY

You did that one twenty-eight years ago.

OLI

Okay, thanks for that. But what I'm trying to tell you is –
(MILES, in a business suit, enters.)

MILES

I'm glad you're all here.

KERI

Hi I'm Keri!

OLI *(changing personality suddenly)*

Oh hello sir now nice of you to join us. Let's give Miles a round of applause!
(DANIELLE claps happily. She's alone.)

MILES

I don't have a lot of time so I'll make this brief. I know you guys have been hearing a lot of rumors about the future of the show.

DANIELLE

There are rumors?

MILES

Most of them are true. Look – we're just not reaching our audience – so the network is thinking about killing the show.

BILL

What!

AMY

You can't do that!

TYLER

It's about time.

MILES

Hey hey – no need to get upset just cause you probably won't have jobs any more.

KERI

Do I still have a job?

OLI

Wait a minute! I know we've had a bad run lately but we can come back – we can do another story with cannibals, everybody loved that! We'll all get lost in South America or something –

MILES

Hey –

JOHN

You need us, suit boy. You think that hour slot every day is gonna fill itself. Ha!

MILES

This isn't 1954 anymore, grandpa. I can replace this show in five minutes with a cheaper soap opera made in China. They got entire script factories churning out low-cost, high quality television entertainment – You want to see efficiency on a set? They film three episodes a day. They pay their actors in birdseed and still everybody sings songs about how happy they are.

OLI

This is insane. You can't just –

MILES
Hey! Nothing's final yet. But unless you can show me some gain in productivity –

AMY
What are you talking about?

MILES
Here's the deal: You guys are the slowest-shooting soap out there.

OLI
That's because we do quality.

MILES
No it's because you argue about everything.

JOHN
That's not true!

AMY
Yes it is!

JOHN
I'll hunt you down!

MILES
You are proving my point. We can't afford to spend this much time on this show. You've got to speed it up. Here's the deal: give me a high quality, top-notch episode by tomorrow morning and I'll recommend that we keep the show running.

KAITLIN
We have to finish the show tonight?

JOHN
Oh come on I get cranky at night.

TYLER
You're cranky all the time!

JOHN
And I have a right to be!

BILL
And Amy gets less attractive as the night goes on. Trust me, I've been there. High five?
(no one gives BILL a high-five.)

Skipping Forward

Here it is! I am not that stable! You do not want me in the rest of society! There's only one career where a person with as many personality disorders as me could possibly make a living! And that's acting! So if you take this away from me, I promise you, I will be the bag lady screaming outside your house at three in the morning! Okay? I know where you live!

MILES

And I know where you live!

KERI

I know where everyone lives!
(everyone looks at her.)
Freedom of information act. You can find this stuff out.

MILES

Look, I'm on your side. I don't want a Chinese Soap Opera. They sing in that really weird way.

AMY

That's Chinese Opera.

CYBIL

My Pomeranians love Chinese Opera. Really gets `em howling.

MILES

Either way. But you guys gotta show it to me. Otherwise, you're all fired. Except Danielle because I think I've got a spot for you in the Chinese show. If you can learn the language.

DANIELLE

I can totally do that! I have no standards at all!

BILL

Perfect.

MILES

That's what I like to hear. Until tomorrow then – Sayonara.

KAITLIN

That's Japanese.

MILES

Oh. Goodbye then. In Chinese.
(he leaves.)

(TYLER looks up from his Ipad.)

TYLER

Wait, what's going on?

AMY

Oh wake up Tyler.

TYLER

I am awake, thank you very much, I just have more important things to think about: like myself and how awesome I am.

(he thinks about how awesome he is for a second)

Nice.

OLI

We're all gonna get fired if we can't finish the shoot tonight.

TYLER

Okay. Thanks. Now I know.

OLI

All right gather round everyone. I'm not one for emotional speeches. But you know where I got my start?

JOHN

No. And I don't care either.

OLI

I was eight years old. My parents got me a videocamera for Christmas – it ran on my imagination – but later I got a real one – I used to make movies in my room, little shows I'd put on, put my teddy bear in a dress –

JOHN

You're sick.

OLI

Put a stuffed duck in a tuxedo – stage a wedding between them, and then have a panda show up and just starting throwing punches – screaming and tearing at each other – sometimes I'd take my father's razor – he always used Bic disposables, and then I'd shave little parts out of my stuffed animals and say they were injured during the fight and I'd have them in a hospital with a frog doctor and the doctor would fall in love, but there'd be another frog who looked the same and was also in love -

AMY

Does this story have a point?

DANIELLE

Shh! What happened to the frog doctor?

OLI

My point is this: I am soap opera. When I'm in the shower in the morning I'm thinking about soap opera, when I'm having breakfast, I'm thinking about soap opera, when I'm asleep I'm having weird and disturbing dreams about soap opera – I don't have a wife, I don't have friends, I don't have anyone who loves me, I'm really kind of alone and sad in the world but I have this! Who's with me!?

KERI

I AM!

OLI

Okay. Good.

AMY

Can I change some of my lines?

OLI

NO YOU CAN'T CHANGE YOUR LINES!

AMY

I would not say the word substandard!

TYLER

Can I just say something here? I've had a great time working with you people but I'm really poised to be a lot more famous than everyone, so –

OLI

You're staying here!

TYLER

You just signed your DEATH WARRANT buddy!
(everyone looks at him)
It's a line from the film I'm auditioning for. Death Warrant. With Matt Damon.

MORRIS

And I'm insecure about my body image!

OLI

Shut up all of you! We're doing this! We're doing the show! No one is going anywhere until we are all dead or this episode is finished! Got it? Places for scene three!

KAITLIN

Places for scene three!

JOHN

I'll get you for this.

OLI

Oh put a sock in it.

JOHN

I will. And then I'll get you.

(JOHN, AMY, MORRIS, and DANIELLE exit grumbling. BILL comes over.)

(KAITLIN sets up a hospital bed.)

BILL

Hey there boss man.

OLI

I don't have time, Bill.

BILL

I know, right? Who has time these days? Anyhoo, I've got a date tonight with a smoking hot –

OLI

No.

BILL

In fact, I have three dates –

OLI

No. You're not leaving.

BILL

Can I invite them to the set?

OLI

No. Go to your dressing room.

BILL

Man you used to be cool. Now… you disgust me.

(BILL walks off.)

I'll remember this.

(KAITLIN sets up a hospital bed.)

KAITLIN

Places in the hospital!

(MONA JEFFRIES (played by CYBIL gets in to the bed.)

OLI

And Five Four Three Two…

(Stirring soap opera music plays.)

(MONA lies in bed, shaking her head back and forth in some kind of hallucinatory fervor.)

MONA

No… no… please… You can't do this to them…

(she shakes herself awake.)

Oh. It was just a dream.

(DOCTOR WILLIAM, (played by TYLER) enters in a lab coat.)

DOCTOR WILLIAM

I see you're feeling better Mona.

MONA

Doctor, I had the dream again.

DOCTOR WILLIAM

It's just a result of the sedative I gave you.

MONA

No it's not! They're in trouble! I know they are.

DOCTOR WILLIAM *(passionately overacting)*

You need to get a hold of yourself, Mona, there's a great big world out there that needs you, it needs your spirit, your energy, you can't let yourself be dragged down into the malaise of this swamp – I tell you to Get up and Live! Live like you've never lived before! And then all those people who doubted you – you're going to sign their death warrant–

OLI

CUT!

TYLER

What!

OLI

Stop adding lines! This isn't an audition for your movie!

TYLER

Did we get that take though? Can I have that for my reel?

OLI

No you cannot have that for your reel!

BROOKE

I already deleted it.

TYLER

Are you kidding me?!

OLI

Take it back and do it again!

KAITLIN

And Five Four Three Two

DOCTOR WILLIAM *(still overacting)*

You need to get a hold of yourself Mona.

MONA

I'm trying, Doctor, but the dream seemed so real. I have to warn my grandchildren.

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Shhhh. This will help you sleep.

MONA

No please! I need to get out of here!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

You need to sleep.

(He administers a drug and MONA falls asleep.)

You need to sleep for a long, long time.

(He smiles evilly. SEQUOIA, a naïve hippy (played by LILY) enters.)

SEQUOIYA

William!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Sequoiya! I thought I told you never to come to me here!

SEQUOIYA

I just needed to see you! They're saying such terrible things about you!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

No!

SEQUOIYA

Yes!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

No!

SEQUOIYA

It's not true, is it?

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Of course it's not true!

SEQUOIYA

You didn't give someone a hamster kidney instead of a real kidney in a bizarre transplant scam?

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Where would I even get a hamster kidney? I don't even think hamsters have kidneys.

SEQUOIYA

You didn't steal a hamster from a kindergarten class and use it in experiments? And then sold the real kidneys on the black market to Serbian gangsters who in turn financed an independent film about Dungeons and Dragons?

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Darling, darling, it's me. It's Doctor William. I would never harm a hamster. And I don't like independent film or Serbians.

SEQUOIYA

Oh I was so worried!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Don't be. Remember – there's a great big world out there that needs you, it needs your spirit, your energy, you can't let yourself be dragged down into the malaise of this swamp – I tell you to Get up and Live! Live like you've never lived before! And then all -

OLI

CUT!

TYLER

Dang it! You have crossed me for the last time!

OLI

Go back!

KAITLIN

And Five four three two –

SEQUOIYA

Oh I was so worried!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Don't be. Here – take some of these pills and you'll feel better.

SEQUOIYA

What do these do?

DOCTOR WILLIAM

DON'T QUESTION ME!

(he stops)

I'm sorry. They'll calm you for a time. Take them now.

SEQUOIYA

Okay.

(she takes the pills)

I already feel better and am no longer concerned about your possible organ harvesting.

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Excellent. Now why don't you lie down over here? Oh – you look so lovely today –

SEQUOIYA

Thank you. Can I just sleep here?

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Sure. You can sleep for a long, long time.

(he smiles evilly.)

Oh nurse – I believe we have another candidate for a kidney transplant.

(he laughs evilly.)

OLI

I don't buy the laugh!

TYLER

Are you kidding me?!

LILY

That laugh was pathetic. It should be like

(she laughs evilly)

BROOKE

Or more like

(she laughs evilly)

Skipping Forward

stalker I'm just really, really enthusiastic – like I'm not gonna wear the same clothes as you but wouldn't it be fun if we did that for Halloween?! Like you could be the intern and I'd be the director and then we could fool all of our friends –

OLI

Leave me now freak girl!

KERI

Yes. Leaving now! Leaving. I'm going. Bye!

(she leaves, then comes back.)

I just wanted to say that I'm leaving.

(she leaves.)

Are you lonely?

OLI

No! Go away!

(she leaves again.)

(OLI sighs, then picks up a cell phone and dials.)

OLI *(into phone)*

Yeah I'm not going to make it home tonight, so you'll need to water the plants. They need it every day. I don't care if you're busy, I've got orchids – they are demanding -

(The lights go out.)

That's weird. Power just went out. It's an old building I guess.

(There's a loud Thump somewhere in the room.)

Hello? Hello? I gotta let you go.

(He hangs up the phone.)

Is there anyone in here?

(Someone attacks OLI in the darkness. We hear a loud WHUMP and OLI falls to the floor. The mysterious figure tries to dart away.)

OW! That really hurt! Why would you –

(The mysterious figure returns to finish the job. We hear WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP)

OW! OW! OW!

(The mysterious figure runs around, pulls something off a table and hits OLI again. The figure waits for a second to make sure he's really dead, then darts off.)

(The lights come back up. OLI is lying dead on the floor.)

(Moments later, DANIELLE enters happily.)

DANIELLE

All right I'm ready for my next fight scene! I put on the long nails just like you said!

(She stops and looks around.)

Oli?

(She sees him on the ground.)
Gosh when you said take five you really meant take five.
(KAITLIN enters from the opposite side of the stage.)

KAITLIN

You ready Danielle?

DANIELLE

Psyched!

KAITLIN

All right let's get Bill out here. Bill! Scene Four! Places!
(re: OLI)
What's he doing?

DANIELLE

Power nap.

KAITLIN

I wish I could do that.
(BILL enters. He has lipstick on.)
Bill.

BILL

What?

KAITLIN

Who was it this time?

BILL

What are you talking about?

KAITLIN

Lipstick. Wipe it off.

BILL

I can't help it if I give off a certain animal magnetism. I also use musk ox spray. Awesome pheromones. You don't even realize you're going wild for me but you are.

KAITLIN

I'm not.

BILL

Your mind says no but your pheromone receptors say yes.

DANIELLE *(flirty)*

Hi Bill.

BILL

What's up babe?

DANIELLE *(flirty)*

You smell nice.

BILL

I know.

KAITLIN

Put your hormones in your pocket for a minute.

BILL

In my pocket?

KAITLIN

Oli are you ready? OLI. Wake up.

DANIELLE

Man can that guy sleep.

KAITLIN

Oli. OLI.

DANIELLE

Maybe somebody killed him.

KAITLIN *(examining OLI)*

Ah!!!! Somebody killed him!

BILL *(screaming like a little girl)*

EEEEEEEEEEEE!

(Everyone comes running. MORRIS and CYBIL come from the direction of their dressing rooms – KERI comes in holding a coffee – AMY enters in a huff. Moments later, TYLER enters, again on his cell phone, followed by LILY and JOHN. Finally, BROOKE saunters in.)

BILL

Oli's been murdered!

(DANIELLE slaps him.)

Ouch!

DANIELLE

Snap out of it!

BILL

I snapped out of it already!

DANIELLE

Oh. Sorry.

JOHN

Just what in the heck is going on here?

KAITLIN

Someone murdered Oli!

JOHN

Hmph. Bout time.

CYBIL

This is the last thing I needed today! The last thing! Wait what's happening?!

MORRIS

Murder.

CYBIL *(falling into character)*

Murder?! Here? I'll stop them! You won't make me talk!

MORRIS

We're not filming right now Cybil.

CYBIL

Oh. Oh this is real? Strange.

TYLER *(into the phone)*

I can totally play eighteen. Yeah. Absolutely. I've got a really young face and I know a great plastic surgeon who – hello? Hello?

(He looks around in shock and horror.)

I just lost my service.

AMY

I just lost *my* service!

TYLER

Everyone check your phones!

DANIELLE

Hey -

TYLER *(panicking)*

Check your phones!

(Everyone starts checking their phones. None of them have service.)

KERI

I can't even get my email!

TYLER

Help! Hellllllp!

MORRIS

All right shut up! Can we focus for one second on the director that's been murdered!

JOHN

How do you know he was murdered, huh? Maybe he just choked to death on his own stupidity.

KERI *(helpful)*

Something could have fallen on him!

MORRIS

I can answer that. Some of you don't know this, but I had a cameo on Law and Order.

KERI

Oh thank heavens!

MORRIS

Let me examine the body.

(everyone clears the way for him.)

This man… is dead. By unnatural causes. As a result of trauma.

DANIELLE

What do you think as a professional?

MORRIS

He's been murdered.

BILL

Aaaaah!

DANIELLE

Bill –

BILL

Please don't slap me again!

CYBIL

It's not all that gruesome. I've seen a lot worse murders in my day. I remember when our assistant producer was killed back in seventy-nine – cats. Drowned in cats. Darndest thing you ever saw. Sometimes I close my eyes and I can still see the furballs.

LILY

That was on the show, right?

CYBIL

No I think that was real.

LILY

Why would you kill someone with cats?

JOHN

Because they can't talk afterwards. Not that I know anything about that unfortunate event because I happen to have an alibi and I was cleared of all charges.

KERI

Do you think Oli was killed with cats?

MORRIS

No he was definitely not killed with cats! That's the stupidest way to kill someone ever!

JOHN

But effective. And they can't trace it. Not that I would know.

MORRIS

We have a situation here – Oli has been murdered – the doors are locked from the outside, I can only conclude… that one of you did it.

(KAITLIN grabs OLI's hat and puts it on her head.)

KAITLIN

And that is pretty terrible. Still, we have a production schedule to go through and an entire episode to shoot, so I suggest we film the rest of the episode and then talk about this.

AMY

WHAT?!

BILL

Who died and made you director?

KAITLIN
He did. I was the assistant director. Now I'm the director. And I say we move on from this sad event and pick up what's left of our lives.

MORRIS
He's still right here!

KAITLIN
And I expressed my condolences, but let's be fair, nobody really liked him and he wasn't getting great performances out of you guys, so he was expendable.

MORRIS
This is a murder investigation!

KAITLIN
No this is the set of a soap opera!

AMY
Wait a minute! Why are you in such a rush to get back to filming?

BILL
And so quick to take over!

TYLER
Maybe you killed him!

JOHN
Hmph. Just like a woman. Murderer.

KAITLIN
Whoah, hold on, that's ridiculous –

MORRIS
May I remind some of you that you threatened to kill him several minutes ago? John?

JOHN
So. I had good reason. Just so you all know: if I don't get soup, somebody dies. Not that I did it.

MORRIS
And Tyler?

TYLER
It was a line from a movie, you moron. You think you're so smart but you just signed your DEATH WARRANT.

MORRIS

Are you still rehearsing?

TYLER

No that was actually a real threat against you. Watch yourself.

DANIELLE

And I heard Bill threaten him later!

BILL

Oh come off it. If anyone's the killer here, it's Danielle.

DANIELLE

Me?

KERI

Yeah! It all makes sense! It was Danielle! She's the killer!

DANIELLE

I'm the nicest person here.

AMY

But how do we know it's not all an act?! You could have been *acting* this whole time! That's what you do for a living, right? You're an *actor!*

DANIELLE

We're all actors!

TYLER

You people are actors, I'm a star.

MORRIS

Where were you when he was killed?

DANIELLE

I was in my dressing room. Playing dress-up!

CYBIL

But you look behind you – who's that face in the mirror? A man, a strange man -

DANIELLE

No! I was alone! You can't think I would kill him! I don't have a motive!

LILY

Here's a motive for you! You're a washed-up has-been at age twenty-three and you've been in and out of acting camps every summer since you were twelve – secretly you're aware that you're not very talented and not as attractive as you think you are – you've got one chance left to prove yourself – to give the best acting performance of your life, so what do you do? You kill the director and act like you didn't kill him. If you can sell that, you can sell anything. Well, sweetheart, the Oscar for being a lying murderer is called prison, and that's where you're headed.

(stunned silence)

DANIELLE

You're saying I killed him for acting practice?

KERI

And to think I trusted you!

DANIELLE

I didn't kill him!

(LILY starts a slow clap.)

LILY

Bravo, Danielle. Bravo.

BILL

Danielle didn't kill him.

LILY

How do you know?

BILL

I was listening to her door the whole time.

AMY

I thought you were making out with me the whole time!

BILL

I was making out with you and listening to the door at the same time.

AMY

What?!

KERI

That's so romantic!

AMY

Why do I keep falling for you?

BILL

Because I'm a matador of love, baby. A matador of love. And you're the bull. Charge for the red flag. Whoops. It's gone. And I dance around you and wear tight pants at the same time.

AMY

We are so over.

BILL

So be it. But that means Bill is on the prowl, ladies.

LILY

I'll lock my door.

BILL

Your door says no, and your heart says probably not, but your feet say maybe.

KAITLIN

People. Can we focus for a second here? I know we're all concerned about who murdered Oli, but we have a deadline here. This episode has to be in the can by eight a.m. tomorrow or heads are gonna roll. More heads. And not in the literal sense.

MORRIS

Let's hope.

AMY

Look, I'm not going to go out there and act in a soap opera after the director has been killed – I can't do it –

KERI

I'll take her part!

AMY

All right fine I'll do it.

KERI

But seriously, if you need me for anything I'll do it. I'll even be the director!

KAITLIN

That's okay I've got the director's hat, that makes me the director, and that means I'm angry with all of you! Let's go to places for scene four!

MORRIS

Can I point out that we haven't even come close to discovering the killer?

KERI

Skipping Forward

KAITLIN

Brooke. Try it again Keri.

KERI

Thank you so much for giving me another chance! Between you and me, you're so much better than Oli ever was. I really really think it's great that strong women are getting ahead in this business – like, my whole career, I want it to model right after you. Are you a size six? Cause I could totally wear those clothes. Oh Sorry! And Five Four Three Two –

(Lights up on JAKE STRONG (played by MORRIS) sitting on the couch in EILEEN's living room.)

(EILEEN enters.)

EILEEN

Jake Strong!

JAKE STRONG

Thought I'd find you here.

EILEEN

It's my house!

JAKE STRONG

That's why I thought I'd find you. How are you, Eileen?

EILEEN

You can't just walk back into my life like this!

JAKE STRONG

I can and I am. Doing it. Walking. You always liked the way I walked, didn't you?

EILEEN

Please leave. It's too painful to see you. Too painful!

(she starts to cry.)

JAKE STRONG

Is it any more painful that being massaged with porcupines? Because that's what I feel when I look at you. Look at me.

EILEEN

No.

JAKE STRONG

Look at me!

EILEEN

No!

JAKE STRONG

Look. At. Me.

(She looks. It's even more painful.)

EILEEN

Arrrghghg!

JAKE STRONG

You're still beautiful, Eileen.

EILEEN

Please Jake Strong. You're married. I was at your wedding in secret.

JAKE STRONG

I know. But there's something you never told me.

EILEEN

I told you my whole heart!

JAKE STRONG

I spoke with Valencio Di Carpathio today.

EILEEN

No!

JAKE STRONG

Yes! And you know what he told me about my darling wife? My wife that I loved constantly for the past one and half years after rescuing her from gypsies?!

EILEEN

I know.

JAKE STRONG

You couldn't tell me?!

EILEEN

How could I tell you? You wouldn't listen!

JAKE STRONG

She's the daughter of my arch-enemy! I can't even look at her now! Every time I look at her I see his evil face.

EILEEN

Just turn her around then.*
*(*this line may be cut.)*

JAKE STRONG

It's just so terrible!

EILEEN

She might be his daughter, but she might not be evil. You could give her a chance.

JAKE STRONG

No! It's over! My marriage is over!
(he turns to her.)

EILEEN

What does that mean for us?

JAKE STRONG

Eileen.

EILEEN

Jake Strong.

JAKE STRONG

No! I can't do it! I can't do this!

EILEEN

I can't live knowing you're with another woman!

JAKE STRONG

You must!

EILEEN

I can't!

JAKE STRONG

You must! I shouldn't have come here. I can't see you. It's too painful.
(he looks at her and the pain is intense.)
Aarrrhghg!

EILEEN

Your brother was here today.

JAKE STRONG

Gary?

EILEEN

No. Sebastian.

JAKE STRONG

Sebastian Strong is not my brother. He's a genetic experiment gone wrong.

EILEEN

My daughter is going to marry him.

JAKE STRONG

Nooooo! I'll kill him!

EILEEN

Don't try Jake! He's been trained by Navy Seals! And he also went to ninja school! You don't stand a chance.

JAKE STRONG

He must be stopped.

EILEEN

I know. But how?
(Pause.)

KAITLIN

CUT! What are you waiting for?

AMY

There's supposed to be a doorbell there. Sequoiya comes in.

KAITLIN

Sequoiya you ready?

LILY *(off-stage)*

Mmmgh.

KAITLIN

Where's Keri?

MORRIS

Probably with Bill.

KAITLIN *(Calling out)*

Bill I will murder you with my bare hands!

MORRIS
Maybe let's do something new today and not make any more death threats?

KAITLIN
Bill leave Keri alone!

AMY *(calling off)*
You are a sad pathetic man and I never loved you but if you change your mind I'm still available!

MORRIS
You know Amy I'm single.

AMY
That must be very nice for you.

KAITLIN
Let's keep going. And Five Four Three Two –

JAKE STRONG
He must be stopped.

EILEEN
I know. But how?
(short pause)

JAKE STRONG
I hear the doorbell.

EILEEN
I didn't hear it.

JAKE STRONG
I have amazing ears.
(JAKE STRONG strides to the door and opens it. LILY tumbles to the floor.)

KAITLIN
CUT! Lily this isn't time to fake one of your fainting spells for a party game again!
(LILY is lying there on the floor.)

AMY
She seems a little out of it.
(MORRIS leans down.)

MORRIS

She's dead! I'm sure of it!

KAITLIN

What the heck is going on around here?!

AMY

Well she was in poor health.

MORRIS

She wasn't in poor health, she was murdered!

AMY

You can be in poor health and be murdered at the same time. It happened to my Aunt. Get a life.

MORRIS

Someone killed her. Look.

(he takes a knife out of her back.)

This is a knife.

AMY

It was Morris!

MORRIS

I was standing in front of you when it happened!

AMY

It could have been a slow-acting knife.

MORRIS

There's no such thing as a slow-acting knife! There's a murderer loose backstage! Round everyone up!

KAITLIN

I hate to interrupt your little witch hunt, Morris, but I'm still the director here. And I make the decisions on whether or not we round everyone up so you can freak out and interrogate everyone.

MORRIS

There are two dead people now!

KAITLIN

Think about how many people die on this planet every day and you'll see what a ridiculous statement that was. Have a little perspective, please.

(Other cast members are entering. BILL enters with DANIELLE, followed by CYBIL and JOHN, in the middle of an argument.)

JOHN *(arguing)*
No that was in seventy-two! I remember I had gout, and you thought I said goat, and for some reason you loved goats –

CYBIL
I never loved goats you senile old codger!

JOHN
Your third husband was a goat –

MORRIS
People! Please. Where's Tyler?
(TYLER enters, freaked out.)
We have a crisis.

TYLER
I know that!

MORRIS
So –

TYLER
WHY ISN'T ANYONE DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THE CELL PHONE SERVICE?!
(AMY slaps him.)

AMY
That was fun.

MORRIS
Are we missing anyone?
(They look around. After a second, KERI enters sunnily.)

KERI
Hi!

MORRIS
Where were you?

KERI
I got lost! It's so amazing back there!

MORRIS
All right – We've had another murder.

CYBIL
Oh come on didn't we just do a murder? Do we have to use the same plots over and over again?

MORRIS
Someone killed Lily.

BILL
EEEEEEEEE!!!

AMY
Oh put on some pants Bill.

BILL
You'd like that, wouldn't you?

AMY
You are disgusting and sad and pathetic.

BILL
And yet… you are drawn to me, like a parking cop to a flashing parking meter.

AMY
…yes.

DANIELLE
Hey!

BILL
Sorry. I can't help myself.

MORRIS
Bill – cool it.

KAITLIN
Or someone's gonna kill you.

MORRIS
No no no – stop making threats! There are people getting killed!

TYLER
But she didn't even have a major role.

MORRIS
It doesn't matter!

TYLER

To you, maybe.

MORRIS

There is a murderer amongst us!

JOHN

Listen to college boy using a word like amongst.

MORRIS

This is like herding cats. Everyone sit.

(Everyone sits. AMY and DANIELLE sit on either side of BILL.)

JOHN

I want a cushiony chair.

MORRIS

JUST SIT DOWN!!

(JOHN does.)

We're locked in. Someone has cut our cell phone service – get a grip Tyler – Oli was bludgeoned to death, and now Lily has been stabbed. The killer is sitting right here.

KERI

This is exciting!

KAITLIN

And also we have to finish filming our episode –

MORRIS

No we don't! We can stop filming the episode because that's what any sane, decent human beings would do!

KAITLIN

Which is precisely why we'll continue to film the episode – the killer would expect us to stop, so we won't.

MORRIS

Have you been replaced by a robot or something? You used to be nice!

KAITLIN

That was before I assumed power. And now I've been corrupted.

KERI

That sounds great!

KAITLIN

You wouldn't believe.

DANIELLE

I'm up for anything, really. I could talk about the murderer or I could film another scene.

KAITLIN

That's a great attitude Danielle.

MORRIS

No it's not no it's not!

KAITLIN

Morris – If we allow the killers to change who we are and prevent us from filming this show, then they're already won.

MORRIS

No actually if they *kill people* and *get away with it* then they win!

JOHN

I know a thing or two about murder. And it's this: If a murderer wants to be caught, he'll be caught. If he doesn't want to be caught, you won't catch him. Especially if he's careful and uses a technique no one's thought of before. But I don't know anything about that.

BILL

I think John's right. No use going after the killer.

DANIELLE

Yep.

(Everyone Ad libs in agreement except for MORRIS.)

KAITLIN

All right that's settled. Moving on. We need to film this scene, but Lily is dead.

KERI

I'll play her part! I already had her costume altered to fit me and I memorized all of her lines backstage!

DANIELLE

You are so enthusiastic!

KERI

So are you!

(They hug)

KAITLIN

Great! Okay – places for Sequoiya's entrance. Nice work, Keri.

(MORRIS can't contain himself.)

MORRIS

Don't you find it slightly suspicious that she already has the part memorized?

KAITLIN

No. I don't. And I don't like those insinuations. Places!

(KAITLIN returns to her director's chair. AMY gets back in position. Everyone else leaves. MORRIS looks to BROOKE for help.)

BROOKE

Don't look at me, I'm just the cameraperson. And I don't like you.

(MORRIS shakes his head and gets back to his spot.)

KAITLIN

And Five Four Three Two –

(Lights up on the set.)

JAKE STRONG

He must be stopped.

EILEEN

I know. But how?

(the doorbell rings.)

It's the doorbell.

JAKE STRONG

I know.

(EILEEN answers the door. SEQUOIYA (played by KERI now) is there. (KERI is absolutely confident and over-the-top as an actor.)

EILEEN

Sequoiya?

SEQUIOYA

You're probably wondering why I look different. It was Doctor William.

EILEEN

I don't trust him.

SEQUOIYA

Yes, but I changed my appearance for him because I thought he would like me better… this way.

(She strides into the room.)

EILEEN

What are you doing here?

SEQUOIYA

I have to tell you something. Something I've never told anyone. A secret.

JAKE STRONG

Maybe I should go.

SEQUOIYA

No! Stay. It concerns you too. Please. I feel just awful.

(she stands and gives an impassioned monologue that is most certainly not in the script.)

Sometimes, when I'm alone and staring at the moon, I think about what it would be like to be weightless, to float above the earth and see all the problems here on this planet like an alien would, in some strange, incomprehensible language, maybe that alien wouldn't even have ears they'd just have sort of holes in the sides of their head that they would also breathe through – but I would twirl, oh how I would twirl out there in space, a spinning star of my own, giving out light and life to my own universe – and then here on this planet I could see the –

JAKE STRONG *(trying to cut her off)*

That's nice but –

SEQUOIYA *(cutting him off)*

No don't you see, Jake Strong! Don't you see the world around us?! The dazzling, mad, insane little place we call Earth? Sometimes I wish I was an octopus so I would have eight arms and be able to do lots of things at the same time, and also have suckers cause those would be pretty cool too although I imagine you might get stuck against a wall.

EILEEN

Maybe you could tell us what's bothering you?

SEQUOIYA

Oh. Okay! Remember how when your baby was six months old I was your babysitter?

EILEEN

Yes.

SEQUOIYA

Well when I was babysitting I switched the baby with another baby I had in the back of my car and no one noticed.

EILEEN

What?

Skipping Forward

JAKE STRONG

What did you do?

SEQUIOYA

I switched the babies!

EILEEN

That's impossible I would have noticed that –

SEQUOIYA

No! You didn't! Because…
(with suspense)
I hypnotized you!

EILEEN

So – you're saying – the girl we believe is Jessica… isn't our daughter?
(SEQUOIUA nods.)

JAKE STRONG

Noooooo!

KAITLIN

CUT!
(Lights change.)
Hey that was all right. Keri – there was a lot more suspense in that.

KERI

Yeah I was just inspired you know? I had no idea where that idea came from!

KAITLIN

Maybe it was when I told you to have more suspense in it.

KERI

Who can say?

KAITLIN

All right – Brooke? What's next?

BROOKE

Well, let's see, that was scene four, so I'm guessing that the next scene will be scene five. I'm going out on a limb there, though.

KAITLIN

All right, scene five. Ooh we need the gun. Keri?

KERI

On it!

(She exits.)

MORRIS

Kaitlin – maybe sending Keri to go get the gun is not the smartest –

KAITLIN

You just can't move on with your life, can you?

AMY

Hey there. I'm looking at the script for my next scene – some of these lines are pretty stupid. Like this one: How are you? Who says that?

KAITLIN

No you cannot rewrite the script.

AMY

Are you kidding me?! ARE YOU KIDDING ME you snot-nosed twit! I will eat you for breakfast with a side of hash browns! I've been on this show for fifteen years I know a good line when –

(MORRIS tries to escort her away.)

MORRIS

Amy. Amy. Deep breaths.

AMY

I'm still not dating you Morris.

MORRIS

That's not what I'm –

AMY *(to KAITLIN)*

This isn't finished! You hear me?! I am not done with you!

KAITLIN

Stuff a sock in it Amy! Stuff two socks in it!

MORRIS

Ladies –

(AMY storms off)

BROOKE

I love your touch with the actors.

MORRIS

Kaitlin, we have to stop filming –

KAITLIN

You're really obsessing about this and it's beginning to worry me.

(Calling out)

Let's get Sebastian and Valencio out here! And can we do something about this lighting? It's way too clear. I'd love to have a few more fake guns around too! Is there any way we can put live bullets in any of them? Morris – I need you backstage in the dark away from everyone else. People! As much as possible I'd like you to be alone, in the dark, confused, with a fake weapon! Can we try that?!

MORRIS

What is the point of that?

KAITLIN

I want some real authentic fear in these scenes. Let's do it!

(The lights get dim.)

Morris. Time for you to go be alone – here take this fake gun.

(she hands him a gun.)

MORRIS

I don't want the gun.

KAITLIN

It might be real, I don't know, I haven't checked. Off-stage now.

MORRIS

This is crazy!

KAITLIN

Hey! We've got new leadership okay? Crazy is how I do things. Let's go!

(MORRIS exits, muttering. BROOKE and KAITLIN remain on-stage alone.)

Is there any way we can get some sound effects?

(Thunder BOOMS.)

Nice.

BROOKE

That wasn't me.

KAITLIN

I don't care.

(Another BOOM of thunder, followed by a GUNSHOT. Off-stage DANIELLE screams.)

Save it for the cameras Danielle!

(BILL bursts on to the stage, clutching his chest.)

BILL *(dying)*

It was…

KAITLIN

It was what? Finish your sentence!

(BILL points off-stage as DANIELLE runs on stage.)

BILL

It… was…

(he dies.)

(Everyone comes out on stage. A couple of them wave fake guns.)

KAITLIN

Bill? Are you acting?!

DANIELLE

He's been shot!

(Everyone puts their fake guns behind their backs.)

Aaaaaaaaah!

(Everyone looks at her.)

Well someone needs to scream now that Bill's dead.

KAITLIN

He's dead?

MORRIS

That's what happens when you get shot!

JOHN

I've been shot four times and I'm not dead.

CYBIL

And I even did it once. And I apologized for it. Wait. Was that on the show or in real life?

MORRIS

What's going on here is that three people have been murdered tonight!

DANIELLE

Is it three? I lost count.

KERI *(helpful)*

Oli, Lily, and Bill.

DANIELLE

Thanks!

AMY

There's something pinned to him. It's a note!

DANIELLE

Aaaaaaaaah!

AMY

It's a note.

DANIELLE

I thought you said something else.

AMY

What do you think I said?

MORRIS

Does it matter? Read it!

JOHN

Don't touch it that's evidence.

AMY

Fine – I'll just look at it.
(she gets close to the body.)
Dear cast members of The Bold and the Young – Tonight –
(she stops)

TYLER

Tonight what?

AMY

That's all it says. Tonight –

KERI

Maybe there's something written on the back!

DANIELLE

Ooh that's a possibility!
(AMY gingerly lifts the note and tries to read the back of it.)

AMY

Tonight – I am going to kill you all.

(Thunder BOOMS.)

MORRIS
NOW can we try to figure out who the murderer is?!

(Lights down.)

Act Two

(Dramatic soap opera music.)

(BROOKE is still filming. KAITLIN is in the director's chair. Lights up on the set of the show. VALENCIO DI CARPATHIO (played by JOHN) is sitting on his lounge chair, sipping sherry. JESSICA (played by DANIELLE) enters, holding an umbrella.)

VALENCIO

Ah. I see you found your way here.

JESSICA

I held my nose the entire time, Valencio di Carpathio.

VALENCIO

Such venom. I enjoy your hostility. Would you care for some sherry?

JESSICA

Never!

VALENCIO

It's been aged twenty years. Just like you.

JESSICA

Okay then I'll have some.

VALENCIO

I'll have to see some I.D.
(he laughs evilly)

JESSICA

You're so evil.

VALENCIO

Correct. But I believe we must all embrace our true nature, isn't that right, Amelia?

JESSICA

My name is Jessica!

VALENCIO

Of course it is. Of course it is.
(he smiles evilly again.)
Would you like to join me in a game of checkers?

JESSICA

Never!

VALENCIO
Are you sure? I find checkers to be soothing to the soul.

JESSICA
What did you bring me here for?

VALENCIO
Curious, are you? Curious like a monkey.

JESSICA
Don't you mean like a cat?

VALENCIO
I don't like cats.

JESSICA
You monster!

VALENCIO
Indeed. Indeed. If you do not want to play checkers, perhaps we could play the Wii. I have some excellent games I've stolen from the internet.

JESSICA
How dare you download free content from the internet?! Don't you know those people work for a living! All the time they slaved –

VALENCIO
Spare me your morality lesson. I will not be swayed by a child.

JESSICA
What made you so evil?

VALENCIO
Do you want to know? Sit. And I will explain it to you.
(JESSICA sits.)

(VALENCIO stops and breaks character.)

JOHN
Do I have to say this?

KAITLIN
CUT! What is the problem?

JOHN
I wouldn't use the new script to have my hamsters poop on.

DANIELLE
You have hamsters?!

KAITLIN
Well we had to make some quick changes to make this thing make sense –

JOHN
Quick changes don't involve a three-minute monologue by me.

DANIELLE
Oh please do it! I just love listening to you act for three minutes!

JOHN
Maybe you could try acting too, for a change.

DANIELLE
Okay!

CYBIL
I'm gonna tell you what I told my last ex-husband: Quit whining and just do it.*
*(*This line may be cut.)*

TYLER
Can I have a three minute monologue?

KAITLIN
No! Do the scene.

JOHN
Over my dead body!

KAITLIN
That can be arranged!

MORRIS
Maybe that's something we shouldn't be saying?

JOHN
Fine. I'll do it.

DANIELLE

Yay!

KAITLIN

Thank you. And Five Four Three Two

(Lights change back to the set.)

VALENCIO

Do you want to know? Sit. And I will explain it to you.

(JESSICA sits.)

KAITLIN

Can you sit more dramatically please? Take it back!

VALENCIO

Do you know what to know? Sit. And I will explain it to you.

(JESSICA sits very dramatically.)

It began when I six. I was a little boy then. My family was poor, my father dressed us up like monkeys and made us dance in the streets. But on my sixth birthday he promised me something: he would take me to a place called the Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Floreeda. It sounded magical. Mostly because it had the word magic in its name. So we saved all of our coins, and I danced a little bit harder than ever before, and I made my squeaking noises more realistic than ever, and we saved, and we saved, and soon, we had enough money to begin our journey. On our travels my father made amusing sketches of tourists driving racecars and after only five months, we reached the magic land: Floreeda.

(he takes a dramatic stroll)

Oh how it glorious it looked to me then. The spires of the blue castle, the robot figures of the hall of presidents, the giant chipmunk in a dress. I was in heaven. And that's when I saw him: An enormous rodent the size of my great uncle Supka, an animal so powerful he looked like a god from mythology – made flesh, with saucers for ears and a smile that could swallow the world – he looked right at me, and I was made anew. I followed him – I would have followed that rodent to the edge of the universe, but when he thought no one was looking…

(chokes up)

When no one was looking… He. Removed. His. Own. Head.

(he can barely continue)

…his… Head! He was no god! He was a pimply-faced teenager! Right then and there, I dedicated my life to evil. Later that night, I gathered a small group of street urchins and we ambushed the rodent as he was returning to the castle – He was large, but clumsy, and we toppled him quickly, our tiny fists raining blows of rage upon his battered body – when he lost consciousness we tore off his head and held it aloft in triumph – my reign of terror had begun. I spent the next few days stealing purses from old ladies and used the profits to hire a gang of Albanian dock workers – we held Snow White captive for days before they gave in to our demands. Five hundred thousand U.S. Dollars and a plane ticket to Italy. I left my father there to draw sketches and dance his monkey dance.

From there it was easy to become overlord of an international crime syndicate. All because of the rodent.

JESSICA

Wow.

VALENCIO

So you see, your pathetic little concerns are of no importance to me. You can either stand with me, or I will destroy you. Because I am evil.

JESSICA

I'll never join you.

VALENCIO

Certainly. You are disappointing. But let me tell you something else:

JESSICA

There's nothing you can tell me!

VALENCIO

Your fiancé, Sebastian Strong?

JESSICA

Leave him alone!

(VALENCIO laughs evilly.)

VALENCIO

My darling, he has been working for me for years.

JESSICA

I don't believe it!

VALENCIO

And in fact, his name is not Sebastian Strong at all – it is Samantha Strong!

JESSICA

WHAT!

(SAMANTHA STRONG, wearing an eyepatch, (played by KERI) enters.)

SAMANTHA STRONG

It's true, Jessica.

JESSICA

Sebastian, is that you?

SAMANTHA STRONG

Yes.

Skipping Forward

TYLER

My phone!

(He leaps up and down and answers it.)

Tyler Tripodo. Really? Really? No that's okay. No we're all fine. Thanks.

(he hangs up.)

MORRIS

Who was that?

TYLER

The police or something. Wanted to know about the screaming and gunshots.

MORRIS

And you didn't tell them *three people were murdered!?*

TYLER

Oh. Slipped my mind. I'll just call them back.

(checks his phone.)

My service is out again! Oh no!

MORRIS

You know what? Enough of this!

(MORRIS stands up.)

TYLER *(standing up in front of him)*

You're right! I'm mad as heck and I'm not going to take this anymore! You can take away our phones but you can never take away… our FREEDOM!

(The other actors applaud.)

DANIELLE

That was amazing.

TYLER

Brooke?

BROOKE

What.

TYLER

Did you get that on camera?

BROOKE

No.

TYLER *(starting his speech again)*
You're right! I'm mad as heck and I'm not going to –

BROOKE
I'm not going to film you.

KAITLIN
But I am. Let's go to the next Doctor William scene.

MORRIS
Fine! Let's just film the show then! Who cares that there's a murderer on the loose!

KERI
Yay!

MORRIS
No not yay! I was being sarcastic!

KERI
And you're doing great at it.

KAITLIN
Morris. It seems like the murders have abated.

MORRIS
Excuse me?

KAITLIN
There was a time when it seemed like people were getting killed all the time, but that period has passed and now we're free to move on. Right?

MORRIS *(flabbergasted)*
I just – I –

KAITLIN *(deep)*
Remember – the show must go on.
(brief pause.)
Places for scene seven! Back to the Hospital!
(DANIELLE approaches and lays a comforting hand on MORRIS' shoulder.)

DANIELLE
If you need to talk, I'm here for you. `Kay? But I'm not interested in a relationship right now, just so we're clear about that. I'm trying to be single for a while.
(MORRIS tries to walk away from her.)
My last boyfriend was killed.

KAITLIN
We need Doctor William, Mona, and Sequoiya!

JOHN
If anyone needs me, they can go to hell.*
*(*line can be changed to "If anyone needs me, they can stuff it.")*

(JOHN exits, grumbling.)

DANIELLE *(sunnily)*
I better go check on him.
(She exits)

JOHN *(off)*
Leave me alone you vacant female!

MORRIS
Maybe we should all stick together in case - ?

AMY
I'm gonna go be backstage alone with a variety of dangerous items.
(she starts to leave)
What? Oh don't be a wuss.
(she exits.)

KAITLIN
Morris. Off-stage.

MORRIS
Can I just wait here?

KAITLIN
Off!

MORRIS
Fine.
(He exits.)

KAITLIN
Okay, Cybil, I want you to really be crazy in this scene.

CYBIL
What?

KAITLIN

Like crazy?

CYBIL

Like a cow?

KAITLIN

Yes. Sure. Just like a cow. Just keep doing what you're doing.

(CYBIL gets dressed in a hospital gown and messes up her hair to appear "Crazy.")

KAITLIN

And Five Four Three Two –

(Creepy soap opera music plays as lights come up on the hospital. MONA (played by CYBIL) bolts upright in bed.

MONA

Oh no!

(she gets out of bed.)

It can't be true! It can't!

(she scrambles and examines a bottle of pills near her beside.)

What is this? What can this be? It's…. drugs. It can't be!

(DOCTOR WILLIAM (played by TYLER) enters quickly.)

DOCTOR WILLIAM

You're up?

MONA

Yes I'm up you terrible man! You've been feeding me drugs this whole time!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Well this is a hospital.

MONA

Don't touch me! Get your hands off me! You're an evil doctor!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

You found out my secret, old woman, but it won't save you now.

(He grabs her.)

MONA

Noooo! Help! Help!

(SEQUOIYA (played by KERI, still overacting) enters).

SEQUIOYA

What's going on here?

DOCTOR WILLIAM

She's having a hallucinatory episode! You have to help me restrain her!

MONA

No! He's evil!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

She's hallucinating!

MONA

He's been drugging me! Please!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Darling, you must choose between us. Do you believe the ramblings of a crazy old woman, or the words of your one, true love, who also happens to be a doctor and is wearing a doctor's lab coat? Choose correctly, or you could be signing your DEATH WARRANT.

SEQUOIYA

I'm so confused! Doctor William – I love you, and I completely changed my appearance and personality for you, but…

DOCTOR WILLIAM

And I love you too – in fact –
(he gets down on one knee)
Will you marry me?

MONA

Help! Ack!
(MONA begins to feel ill.)

SEQUOIYA

I – I – I don't know what to say –

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Say yes.

SEQUOIYA

But you have to explain something to me first –
(she pulls up the side of her shirt)
How did I get this strange scar on my the side of my stomach? Did you harvest my kidneys?

MONA

Aaaackkck!
(MONA starts really getting into it now, thrashing about, choking.)

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Darling, I can explain about your kidneys. I can give you one back, don't worry.

SEQUOIYA

You stole my kidney!

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Only for a little while, and you don't need both of them –

(MONA collapses.)

Woman I'm trying to have a love scene here!

MONA

Garhrhhghg…

(MONA dies.)

DOCTOR WILLIAM

Cut!

(he breaks out of character)

You can't just pretend to die in the middle of the scene Cybil!

KERI

I thought it was really realistic though!

KAITLIN

Cybil that was totally the wrong time to do that. Cybil?

BROOKE

She's probably dead.

KAITLIN

Can you hear us?

TYLER

Stand back everyone! I'm playing a doctor!

(TYLER examines the body)

She's been poisoned.

KAITLIN

In real life or in the show?

KERI

She's such a good actor -

TYLER

Either that or she just died of old age. In which case it's quite a coincidence.

KERI

Wow.
(MORRIS bursts on to the stage)

MORRIS

There! You see! Someone else has been killed!

KAITLIN

How did you know she died?

MORRIS

I heard you say it! Everyone get out here!
(the other cast members enter.)

JOHN

All right how many times do we have to go through this?

MORRIS

Everyone! There has been another murder!

DANIELLE

Aaaaaaaaaaaah!

AMY

Really, kid?

MORRIS

But I know who the killer is!

AMY

Hold on there, little taco, I'm running this show.

MORRIS

No actually I'm the only one who's –
(AMY takes out a badge.)

AMY

Amy Millhouse. F. B. I. Read it and weep.

KAITLIN

You're an FBI agent?

DANIELLE

That is so cool!

KERI

I want to be an FBI agent!

AMY

Sorry we don't let chicks in.

JOHN

Good.

MORRIS

No, I'm sorry, you are not an FBI agent, you've been on this show for fifteen years.

AMY

Deep undercover.

MORRIS

For what reason?

TYLER

This is awesome – I made out with an FBI agent.

AMY

What you don't realize is that the FBI has a lot of secret agents. A lot. Close to two million. In most every situation a crowd gathers, one of you is a secret informant sending vital information back to the government. I don't care where you are: pre-school, church, a theatre attending a show – several of the people around you are undercover government agents recording and transmitting your every word, thought, and deed. Why? Because your government loves you.

MORRIS

This is insane!

AMY

Insane? Or all too sane?

DANIELLE *(raising hand)*

All too sane!

AMY

That's right. My job is to solve these murders.

MORRIS

So where were you say, while the last three people were being killed?

AMY

My job is to solve murders, not stop them. If I would have stopped the murders I wouldn't have any murders to solve, now would I? Then I wouldn't be doing my job. That's how the government works – efficiency, efficiency, efficiency.

KAITLIN

I am so blown away by this.

AMY

So let's all have a seat and bring the criminal to justice.

(Everyone sits obediently except for MORRIS.)

KAITLIN

Sounds good.

JOHN

Finally some justice around here.

TYLER

At least someone is doing something.

KERI

I'm excited!

MORRIS

Excuse me?! EXCUSE ME?! NOW YOU SIT?! NOW YOU LISTEN?! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CONVINCE YOU PEOPLE THAT THERE'S A KILLER ON THE LOOSE FOR AN HOUR! THREE MORE PEOPLE ARE DEAD!

KAITLIN

But we shot some great scenes.

MORRIS

How do you know she's FBI?! Maybe she's the killer!

DANIELLE

She's got that little badge thing. It says FBI on it. That's how you know.

MORRIS

It could be fake!

DANIELLE

Um… hello? FBI agents don't lie. It's in their rules.

MORRIS

All right genius, who's the killer?

AMY

Not so fast, Morris. There's an order to this. We have three murders.

MORRIS

Four.

AMY

I thought there were three. Oli. Bill. Cybil.

MORRIS

You forgot Lily.

KAITLIN

Would you just let her do her job?!

AMY

Okay – four murders. The question is: were they all killed by the same person, or do we have four separate murderers?

(short pause)

Or two murderers who killed one person each and one who killed two?

DANIELLE

I never thought of it that way.

KERI

This is like scrabble!

JOHN

You and your fancy pants technology.

AMY

Or one murderer who killed three people and two murderers who teamed up to kill a fourth person?

MORRIS

I know who the killer is!

AMY

No you don't!

MORRIS

Yes I do! It was Keri!

(Gasps from everyone.)

Skipping Forward

Oh. Then I don't know then.

JOHN

Allow me to shed some light on this. I think I understand female psychology better than anyone here. You see – when two youngish attractive females are placed within a cage, they inevitably begin a struggle to the death to compete for the attention of the dominant male, which in this case would be me. Most of the time this battle surfaces in snide looks, comments about clothing bought at the Gap, and the occasional devastating text message, and also knives.

DANIELLE

No I liked Lily even though she was cruel and terrible to me! She was my friend!

JOHN

Which is why she had to die.

AMY

John's theory makes a lot of sense – I think we know why she wanted to kill Bill. He had spurned her attentions and begun to flirt with other women on the cast –

MORRIS

No that's *your* reason to kill Bill.

AMY

Sorry I'm out of practice at this whole secret agent thing.

DANIELLE

I can answer this one. I did want Bill dead.

KERI

You monster!

DANIELLE

You ever really like someone a lot?

KERI

I like most people!

DANIELLE

Right, and I like most people, and I'm a great person on the outside. And really, to be fair, I thought Bill was a tremendous actor and just a really gentle soul –

AMY

He wasn't gentle all the time –

DANIELLE

And he'd talk about how much he enjoyed watching sunsets and walking on beaches and making out and everything – and that sure was nice, but…. I hated him with the white-hot intensity of a thousand suns. I mean I really wanted to kill him. In horrible, horrible ways – I had dreams about, making a pool of acid and dipping him into it extremely slowly while he begged for forgiveness, and then his toes would melt and he would scream and his screams would sound like angels singing in my mind and then I would –

(she snaps out of it)

But I didn't kill him I just wanted to kill him every second of every day!

KAITILN

So why were you dating him?

DANIELLE

I have a hard time saying no to guys.

MORRIS

So there's one question I have, Danielle –

DANIELLE

I am not interested Morris. We're just friends okay?

MORRIS

I wasn't asking you out on a date!

DANIELLE

I just feel how I feel.

AMY

Which brings us to Cybil, which if you ask me, was just overkill. She was old, why would anyone want to kill her?

JOHN

Cause she was an evil old witch.

AMY

Quiet, John.

KAITLIN

I think I understand it. If she killed Oli to practice her acting, what if she killed Cybil… to practice her acting some more?

(A hushed gasp from KERI, TYLER, and AMY.)

KERI

It all makes sense!

MORRIS

You're saying she killed two people, not one, but two, just to prove she could act like she didn't kill two people?

AMY

It's all so simple! If acting innocent after killing one person was difficult, acting innocent after killing two people would be even more difficult! You're going away for a long time, Sunshine, to a place without much sunshine except for the few hours you're allowed to walk the yard. Confess!

DANIELLE

I didn't do it! Please, doesn't someone believe me!

MORRIS

I believe you!

DANIELLE

Thanks Morris but I know you're just saying that because you're interested in more of a relationship than I can give you –

MORRIS

Danielle didn't kill anyone! Think about it! She's not that good of an actress!

(AMY considers this.)

AMY

I see your point.

DANIELLE

That's hurtful, Morris.

AMY

So if it wasn't Danielle, that focuses the lens of justice on…

(she spins)

MORRIS

Keri.

AMY

Shhh! I'm focusing.

(she rotates slowly)

MORRIS

How about Keri since she's the killer?

AMY

On… Brooke!

BROOKE *(not impressed)*
I didn't do it because I was out here the whole time, I had no motive, and I don't care about you people enough to bother with murdering you. Although I will add that today's killings have in no way perturbed me.

AMY
Okay it wasn't Brooke. That means it was most likely… John!

JOHN
What!

AMY
The old man!

JOHN
This is preposterous!

AMY
We all heard you threaten Oli with death over a cup of soup –

JOHN
I stand by those comments.

AMY
Which leads me to the conclusion that you are a man who enjoys his soup, which leads me to another conclusion that you enjoy the comforts of warm food, which leads me inevitably to my final conclusion that you killed Oli.

JOHN
That's some fancy reasoning for the FBI.

AMY
I learned from the best: the internet.

JOHN
I don't even know what that is!

AMY
But it wasn't enough to kill the director because he wouldn't let you have soup, was it? Oh no, that wouldn't stop your murderous rage, would it, old-timer?

JOHN
Blast you and your rhetorical questions!

AMY

Next on the list was Bill -

JOHN

Lily.

AMY

It was Lily?

JOHN

Lily was second.

AMY

Really? How do I keep missing that?

MORRIS

Because you're a terrible, stupid human being!

KERI

I like him!

AMY

So it was Lily. Why kill Lily? Oh sure there are the obvious reasons: she was annoying, she had questionable grooming habits – she was a mouth-breather, but that wasn't it, was it, John? No…. that wasn't it at all.

JOHN

What are you getting at?

AMY

You killed Lily because…
(dramatic pause)
She took your parking spot!

JOHN

How did you know about that?!

AMY

F. B. I. John. Federal Bureau of Investigation. That means I know stuff. You had the prime parking spot on the lot, a parking spot you had kept since 1973 when you stole it from Cybil –

KERI

No!

AMY

Yes! You think we wouldn't find that out? You held that spot for decades – under the big tree, close to the ramp, it was the perfect spot for a crotchety old man because not only was it close, but it provided you a view of the basketball court across the street so you could make grumbling comments about the youth of today –

JOHN

I hate those youth of today.

AMY

Exactly! But the good times couldn't last, could they John, because onto the set came a person who got up even earlier than an old man! A person named…

(dramatic pause)

Lily!

(shocked gasps from DANIELLE and KERI)

She was crazy, so she never slept, so she got here at 6:00 a.m. which was a full fifteen minutes before you arrived – and she took your precious parking spot. And in fact I overheard a confrontation you had with her only three days ago! I will now choose actors to recreate that conversation.

KERI

Ooh can I be John!

DANIELLE

I'll be Lily!

(KERI and DANIELLE switch into re-creation mode. KERI gets crotchety.)

KERI

I couldn't help noticing young lady that you have taken my parking spot. And as I am a kind elderly man I would appreciate it -

DANIELLE *(with unnecessary British accent)*

Buzz off wanker! I'll park wherever I want and no one can stop me! NO ONE! Ha ha ha ha!

KERI

Why you whippersnapper – Someday soon I'm going to take a knife and stab you in the back with it.

DANIELLE

You try it!

KERI

And scene.

(They bow.)

BROOKE

That was spectacular.

AMY

Motive established. Set and match.

MORRIS

There's still two more murders.

AMY

I'm getting to it! Bill you killed because he took two muffins at breakfast when we were clearly allotted one, and you took out Cybil because you were just plain cranky and needed attention.

(JOHN claps slowly.)

JOHN

Bravo, agent Amy. Bravo. An excellent performance. Unfortunately: bunk. Did I want to kill Oli? Yes. Did I want to kill Lily because she stole my parking spot? Of course. Did I want to see Bill die because he took two muffins when we're only supposed to get one? Who wouldn't? And did I want to kill Cybil because I'm generally a cantankerous old coot who doesn't like anybody – Yes. You're forgetting one thing, though: I'm also lazy. And to kill that many people takes a lot of work. Besides, with the four of them dead I don't have as much to complain about, so that makes me unhappy. And crankier still. So, would I have liked to go on a killing spree? Sure. Did I do it? Nope. I'd rather eat soup.

AMY

Dang it! Well that means the only logical murderer is…

MORRIS

Keri.

AMY

Tyler!

TYLER

I'm sorry?

AMY

Tyler!

TYLER

Sorry I haven't been paying attention. The internet came back on so I've been googling myself. I also have a twitter feed to attend to. See?

(KERI gets a message on her phone.)

KERI

Ooh! "Bored, why doesn't anyone notice me? Can't wait to get out of TV." That's funny!

TYLER

You follow me on Twitter?

KERI

Yeah!

JOHN

What the heck are you people talking about? Twitter?

AMY

It's a new technology that's completely entranced everyone and will be gone within three years.

JOHN

Hmph.

TYLER

But please go ahead – I'm sorry I haven't been following this closely.

AMY

To recap, there are three people dead –

MORRIS

Four –

AMY

Four people dead, I'm a secret FBI agent, John, Danielle, Keri, and Brooke have been cleared, and you're the only logical suspect left.

TYLER

Except for yourself and Morris.

MORRIS

I don't think I'm a suspect here, actually.

TYLER

Oh really! Oh really?!

(he sets up his phone to record himself as he begins to cross-examine MORRIS.)

Allow me to present a picture of a man to the jury. A picture of a man so obsessed with the truth, that he would kill for it. A man… named Morris Nyborg. This man right here!

MORRIS

I was actually on camera during one of the murders.

TYLER
That's awfully convenient, isn't it? Too convenient. Let's examine this man for a moment, shall we? A man playing the part of Jake Strong, the romantic, dashing soap opera hero. A soap opera hero who did not make Soap Opera Digest's list of the ten hunkiest daytime stars! A soap opera hero so insecure that he would sew padding into the backside of his pants in order to make his buttocks more shapely! A soap opera hero desperately, madly in love with the woman who played his daughter on the show, Danielle Farris!

DANIELLE
That's me!

MORRIS
Why does everyone think I'm in love with her?

DANIELLE
You're in love with me? Oh Morris – I don't feel the same way about you.

MORRIS
I KNOW THAT!

TYLER *(continuing)*
A man also in love with the woman who played his ex-wife on the show, Amy White!

MORRIS
How can I be desperately in love with two women at the same time!

TYLER
How indeed? How indeed. Pathetic, isn't it, Ladies and Gentlemen? Truly pathetic. So what does this aging, not terribly hunky daytime star do to win the love of the women who played mother and daughter, which is sick by the way, he sets out to prove his manhood. Prove it the only way he knows how: By killing people. In his own mind, in the twisted logic used by those who are desperate for attention and shapely rear ends, only through brutal, vicious killing can a man be a man. Think of hunters. Or the NRA. Unfortunately, the ladies didn't come around, did they Morris? After Oli you figured one of them would fall into your arms, but you didn't count on Bill –

DANIELLE
He was dreamy.

AMY
We used to call him, El Matador.

TYLER
So you dispatched him with a gunshot – and through an ingenious ninjitsu technique known as "slow knife" you killed Lily *while you were on camera*. Amazing, isn't it?

MORRIS

Slow knife? What is slow knife?

TYLER

Shall I show you? Watch carefully everyone. I shall appear to do nothing, but in fact, slow knife will be occurring. Brooke, when I tell you to, duck.

BROOKE

Why?

TYLER

Because the slow knife is coming.

BROOKE

Why not just hit the door or something?

TYLER

It's more dramatic this way. Now: Slow Knife.

(TYLER bows his head.)

(Pause.)

(Pause.)

(Pause.)

Duck!

(BROOKE ducks and TYLER drops a knife on the ground.)

MORRIS

You just dropped a knife on the ground! That wasn't Slow Knife!

TYLER

Because I am not a ninja! But only a ninja would know that I had not executed Slow Knife properly! Therefore: Ladies and Gentlemen: The Killer.

End of Excerpt.
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