

A Stage-play Called RATS

by

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CHARACTERS

SPLINT	26. Petty criminal. Suspicious, but warms up quickly to others. Likes to think he only looks out for himself, but can't help looking out for those he loves and respects.
WENDY	27. Owner of a diner. A good reader of character. Uses her stature as a business owner to deflect attention away from the shady underbelly of her life circumstances.
MATTHEW	26. Wendy's brother. Both smart and a smart-ass. Would really prefer that everyone listen to him, though he won't take initiative.
ZED	25. Splint's slightly doofy friend. Warm-hearted, lover of blueberry pastries.
RAT COPS 1-4	Varied ages. Cops of the Rat City police force. Stupid and abusive.
TIN LIPS	Old. Magic rat who can change the circumstances of the play.
CAPTAIN MALARKEY	45. Captain of Tin Lips' created spaceship. Authoritative, emotionally vacant voice.
THE GENERAL	62. General of Tin Lips' space universe. Wendy's father, once the story gets there. Mob boss vibes.
BLUE	20s. Obedient crew member of Captain Malarkey's spaceship.
MARKUS	20s. Crew member of Captain Malarkey's spaceship.
LEIGHANN	20s. Waitress at Wendy's diner.

GUARDS 1 AND 2

20s. Guards.

SETTING

Rat City.

TIME

Ambiguous fantasy time.

## SCENE 1

(Lights up on a quaint diner. Sunlight floods in from its many windows. SPLINT, wearing a brown and inconspicuous coat, sits at a booth alone, drinking coffee, eating a croissant. A squadron of 4 RAT COPS boisterously enter the diner. They're nasty, dirty, and rude. Their uniforms look like they haven't been washed in months. When they enter, SPLINT notices and puts his hood up and head down. The RAT COPS survey the place, until RAT COP 1, the de facto leader, speaks to his troop.)

RAT COP 1

Coffee? Anyone want to get us some coffee?

RAT COP 2

Yeah. I'm feeling pretty pecknish.

(RAT COPS 3, and 4 burst out laughing.)

RAT COP 3

Hahaha! Pecknish, he says!

RAT COP 4

(mocking)

'pretty pretty pecknish, sittin' in a tree'

RAT COP 1

It's *peckish*.

RAT COP 2

Alright, well I'm a cop, not a fuckin' crossword editor.

(RAT COP 1 sniffs the air suspiciously.)

His nose points in the direction of  
SPLINT's booth)

RAT COP 1

Are ya pickin' that up, boys?

RAT COP 2

What's that? Something spicy?

RAT COP 3

What's got yer nose, chief?

RAT COP 1

I'm gettin a certain stench.

(RAT COPS 1, 2, 3, and 4 all take a big  
sniff in unison, and mimic RAT COP 1's  
nose point to SPLINT's booth.)

RAT COP 3

Oh, now I got it.

RAT COP 4

What is that? Bog rot? I'm getting whiffs of dirt  
sponge.

RAT COP 2

Hints of idiots and DUMB.

(All of the RAT COPS approach SPLINT's  
booth, nose-forward. They gather around  
it. SPLINT remains hooded with his head  
down, but is visibly shaking.)

RAT COP 1

Hey. Hey buddy.

RAT COP 2

Hey pal.

RAT COP 4

Bubbo. Bubby.

RAT COP 3

Rat.

RAT COP 1

Haven't we met before? Huh? Look at me.

(SPLINT doesn't stir.)

RAT COP 4

He's not lookin, sir.

RAT COP 1

Look at me when I'm talkin to you, Slimp.

(SPLINT finally looks up, shrugs his hood off, makes eye contact with RAT COP 1.)

SPLINT

Look, I don't know any Slimps. You must have the wrong guy. What's my name? I'm Jam.

RAT COP 2

Your name is jame?

SPLINT

...Yes.

RAT COP 1

No, it's, it's Splant or something.

RAT COP 3

Sir, he said it's Jame.

RAT COP 2

Jam, sir.

RAT COP 1

(to the COPS) You-- look at him! He's the one we brought in last week about the stealing.

RAT COP 4

Hmmm. He looks like he'd do a stealings.

RAT COP 3

I could see it.

SPLINT

Oh yeah? What makes you say that?

RAT COP 2

Watch yer attitude, Stamp. You got something you're trying to hide?

SPLINT

No.

RAT COP 3

You seem hidden. Big hood of yours.

SPLINT

The hood's off.

RAT COP 4

Big hood was on when we got here.

SPLINT

I can dress how I like.

RAT COP 2

Sounds just like something a Jame would say.

(SPLINT speaks in frustration before realizing that he's given away his name.)

SPLINT

It's SPLINT! My name is-- I mean Jame, it's--

RAT COP 1

Right! That was it. Splint. Thank you. How does it feel to be named after something so broken?

SPLINT

What does that mean?

RAT COP 1

A splint.



SPLINT

Splints are used to heal things. Set them in place.  
God, you're dull.

(The RAT COPS 2, 3, and 4 begin to get  
excited, tails flicking, teeth bared.)

RAT COP 4

OOoh, now he's got some fight in him!

RAT COP 2

Certainly little wicked.

RAT COP 3

'n got puny little arms.

RAT COP 1

(to SPLINT)

And yet, yer broken. A broken, lying, thief. Scummy,  
too.

SPLINT

Scummy. Really? You can't do any better than that?

RAT COP 3

Good ears, this one.

RAT COP 4

Plenty listening in him.

RAT COP 1

Do you have a problem with what I said, Splintee?

SPLINT

If I did... what would that mean for us?

RAT COP 1

What would it MEAN, he asks. What. Would. It.

RAT COP 2

Whatwoulditmean-ahhhh.

RAT COP 3

What a wouldita meean.

SPLINT

You guys suck.

RAT COP 2

Woah hey! Now we're offended.

RAT COP 3

You're a bully. And we make sure bullies make'n get their dues. Right chief?

RAT COP 1

That's right.

(SPLINT surveys his surroundings. There's really no plan of escape for him; he prepares to take the beating.)

SPLINT

You're all doing God's work, you know that?

RAT COP 4

Yeah, yeah. On with it then.

(The four RAT COPS dramatically raise their bats above their heads in position to strike; SPLINT guards his head with his arms; millisecond of a tableau; when suddenly:)

WAITRESS (WENDY)

Four coffees!

(RAT COPS and SPLINT recoil from the unexpected pleasant voice. The COPS stand to either side to reveal: WENDY, a waitress, a small rat with a big smile, holding a platter with four cappuccino-style cups of coffee. WENDY wears a yellow apron. She ignores the staging, seeming as if she has walked upon a table of friends. The astonished RAT COPS all drop their bats on the floor,

startled. A moment of stillness and  
silence, followed by:)

RAT COP 1

Oh lady, you're too kind!

RAT COP 2

Too kind!

(The RAT COPS each take a coffee, sip  
it, and exhale contently in unison. They  
seem to forget SPLINT is there.)

RAT COP 3

MMMmm, delicious!

RAT COP 4

Extra tips for YOU tonight!

WENDY

(still smiling)

You never tip me.

RAT COP 1

And that's why I love you, Wenzy.

WENDY

Love's a strong word, Frank. I'd be careful with words  
like that.

RAT COP 1

Oh, I'm careful.

RAT COP 2

We're careful alright.

RAT COP 3

Meticulous.

WENDY

Well I'm glad to hear that. But everything's alright  
around here, officers. May I walk you to the door?

RAT COP 1

Oh no no, that won't be necessary. Glad you keep this place so clean, Wenz.

WENDY

I couldn't do it without your help!

RAT COP 2

She's so kind.

RAT COP 4

Really, the lady, so kind.

RAT COP 3

You gotta give it to her.

RAT COP 1

Truly, a pleasure as always.

WENDY

It's all mine. Bye now!

(The RAT COPS mumble-grumble and sip their coffees while they leave. WENDY continues to stare in their direction as they walk through the door and exit the establishment. She is lost in thought for a moment, looking out the window.)

SPLINT

They took your mugs.

WENDY

Huh?

SPLINT

Their coffees. Your glassware.

WENDY

Oh. Yeah.

SPLINT

Thank you.

WENDY

mm?

SPLINT

You kind of saved my ass right there.

WENDY

Yeah, I guess I did.

SPLINT

I appreciate it.

WENDY

That's no problem at all.

(A beat of shared silence.)

SPLINT

Would love some more coffee / when you--

WENDY

I'm Wendy.

SPLINT

--Your name's Wendy?

WENDY

Yep.

SPLINT

I, uh... I see.

(Beat. WENDY sits as she begins her next line.)

WENDY

Mind if I have a seat? My break's actually just starting.

SPLINT

Oh, uh, I don't know, I did just ask for some--

WENDY

(*shouting to the kitchen*) Leighann! Two more coffees please!

LEIGHANN (O.S.)  
Comin' right up!

WENDY  
She'll get the coffees.

SPLINT  
Ok.

WENDY  
Cute coat.

SPLINT  
Huh?

WENDY  
The earthy tones suit you. It's nice is all.

SPLINT  
Oh. Uh, yeah.

WENDY  
Yeah?

SPLINT  
Sorry. Thanks. No one ever compliments my clothes.

(Beat.)

WENDY  
Sooo, what did those guys want from you?

SPLINT  
What's it to you?

WENDY  
It's my diner. You're my patron. Call it a rat's right to know.

SPLINT  
You own this place.

WENDY  
I wear many hats.

SPLINT

That's great. Don't see why that entitles you to my business.

WENDY

I've been serving you coffee for a year now and you've never even asked my name!

SPLINT

I don't like to do smalltalk about my transactions.

WENDY

Well that's certainly a fancy way to talk about being closed off.

(LEIGHANN approaches the table with the two coffees as SPLINT says his next line. He doesn't notice her at first.)

SPLINT

(to WENDY) What's your problem, lady?

WENDY

My name is Wendy.

SPLINT

I know what your name is.

LEIGHANN

Two coffees?

(SPLINT and WENDY turn to face LEIGHANN.)

WENDY

Thanks, hon.

(LEIGHANN sets the two coffees on the table.)

LEIGHANN

Everything alright over here?

WENDY

We're doing great, thanks. These look perfect.

(LEIGHANN exits.)

WENDY (cont.)

The coffee's on me, alright? I just-- I was asking around. I've got some 'business' of my own, and I, uh, got the good word that I might be able to employ your services.

(SPLINT's ears perk up.)

SPLINT

Oh yeah?

WENDY

I mean, unless it's all just rumors. People love to talk.

SPLINT

We're talking right now.

WENDY

I'm one to keep my mouth closed, personally. About. Personal matters.

SPLINT

Mhm. Okay. What is it exactly? Theft? Blackmail? You need someone roughed up?

WENDY

Well-- we probably shouldn't talk about it here.

(WENDY glances offstage, in the direction LEIGHANN walked off.)

WENDY (cont.)

I, uh--

SPLINT

You far from here?

WENDY

The restaurant?



SPLINT

Yeah, do you live nearby?

WENDY

Oh. Sort of.

SPLINT

Hm. I guess I could stop by tonight to continue this conversation.

WENDY

Really?! Oh, that would mean the world.

(WENDY grabs a pen out from her pocket, and quickly writes her address on a napkin. She slides it to SPLINT.)

WENDY (cont.)

Here's my address. I'm by the Wind Tunnels.

SPLINT

How's 9 work?

WENDY

That's perfect! I'll see you there.

(WENDY stands up from the table and clears dishes.)

WENDY (cont.)

Glad to have made your acquaintance.

(She reaches out her hand to shake his. They do.)

SPLINT

Likewise.

WENDY

Until later, then.

(WENDY picks up her mug off coffee and exits. SPLINT watches her walk away, and then takes a sip of his coffee. The

coffee is too hot-- he recoils and  
curses to himself. Lights fade.)

## SCENE 2

(WENDY's house. Red brick walls, a tangle of pipes snaking their way across the ceiling, scuba gear and scuba paraphernalia, a staircase to the second floor, and a heavy bolted door. WENDY is sitting on the couch reading a book titled "Running from Rats who are Running For President." SPLINT can be seen on the other side of the house's door being chilled by strong winds. SPLINT checks his watch, knocks from outside. WENDY, hearing SPLINT knock, fumbles to dog-ear the page she's on as she rushes toward a secret spy window that faces the doorway outside. Once she confirms that it's SPLINT, WENDY undoes all of the door latches, and lets him in.)

WENDY

Splint!

SPLINT

Wendy.

WENDY

Come in, come in. Have you got a a wind cloak? It's a downright necessity in a place like this.

SPLINT

I don't own any.

WENDY

Well you have to let me lend you one for your trip home. Remind me about that later.

SPLINT

That's, really alright--

WENDY

(yelling to O.S.)

Matt! Dinner's ready!

(to SPLINT)

You're going to love him!

SPLINT

Who?

WENDY

Matt's short for Matthew.

SPLINT

I'm sorry-- we should discuss whatever it was you were getting at in the diner today. I don't like to dwaddle, you know. Got things. And people who... need me... for things. (*trails off*)

WENDY

Oh of course! Just a drink and some hot food and you'll be right on your way.

SPLINT

That's not necessary. I appreciate your niceties, Wendy, but there's no need to woo me.

WENDY

Woo-ing? How do you mean?

SPLINT

Dinner's not what I had in mind.

WENDY

Well, you know, expectations can be a dangerous thing!

(Beat of silence as the two fight with their eyes. WENDY wins.)

SPLINT

Okay. Could I sit.

WENDY

I wish you would!

(SPLINT takes a seat at the table. WENDY fusses about the kitchen: checks the oven, stirs a pot of tomato soup.)

SPLINT

So-- what are we talking about?

WENDY

Business so soon?

SPLINT

That's why I'm here.

WENDY

But you only just arrived.

SPLINT

For the meeting we scheduled to talk about business.

WENDY

That's fair. I have a project. Idea. And I can't complete it on my own. I think you can help me.

SPLINT

If you're looking for an arsonist I know a great guy. I'm myself am a little low on fluid at the moment.

WENDY

No! No arson, no thank you. It's actually kind of the opposite of arson.

SPLINT

...Dousing something in water?

(MATTHEW enters from down a staircase. He stops mid-step at the bottom of the stairs when he sees SPLINT.)

MATTHEW

Who's this?

WENDY

(To MATTHEW) A guest? Someone we don't berate when we see them? (To SPLINT) Splint, this is my brother Matt.

He's the project I was mentioning.

MATTHEW

Excuse me? Who is this guy, Wen?

SPLINT

Hi, yes, please fill me in too.

WENDY

Matt, c'mon.

MATTHEW

You brought a stranger into our house and just called me a project.

WENDY

Right. You're right. Sorry. Splint, Matt is-- well he's kind of like you, actually.

MATTHEW

Wendy.

SPLINT

How's that?

WENDY

(To MATTHEW) You wanna tell him?

(MATTHEW sighs.)

MATTHEW

Please.

WENDY

Thank you. Matt's in a bit of hot water is all. He... do you remember, four months ago, when those leaks came out? The Rat Panama Papers?

SPLINT

Oh yeah! That was wild. Didn't that implicate celebrities and oligarchs from all around the rat world in tax evasion schemes that were never prosecuted?

(WENDY, MATTHEW, and SPLINT's heads all

turn to face the audience with confused looks on their faces, breaking the fourth wall for a moment to let that last line sink for a second. They then return to the scene, unphased.)

SPLINT (cont.)

It's so weird, I feel like everyone totally forgot about that right after it happened.

WENDY

Well, everyone except for 15 members of the rat city legislature. Their names were on the list too.

SPLINT

Okay. So what does this have to do with Matthew?

MATTHEW

I, was the one who leaked it.

SPLINT

You-- oooooooh. Shit. And what, you didn't cover your tracks?

MATTHEW

I did. But someone sold me out. The city's got their paws everywhere. Last time I ever trusting a rat journalist.

WENDY

Every precinct in the city has Matt's picture. The senators want blood. He's been hiding out in my attic ever since the leak.

SPLINT

Jesus. And you need me to... do what exactly?

WENDY

Help us escape. Me and Matt have a friend, one Fortuno Verdini,--

SPLINT

Great name.

WENDY

yeah, really-- and he lives on the other side of the city gates. He's got a cabin. He grows beansprouts! Do you like beansprouts?

SPLINT

Beansprouts are fine.

WENDY

Sure. It depends on how you prepare them.

SPLINT

So-- sorry-- you want me to get this runaway hacker, with a giant target on his back, through the most well-guarded section of Rat City.

WENDY

Yes?

SPLINT

Wendy, there's no amount of money that could--

WENDY

We're not offering money.

(Beat.)

MATTHEW

We're not?

SPLINT

You're not? How do you plan on paying me, then?

WENDY

With a way out, Splint. If we make it beyond the gate, you won't have safe passage back into the city. Especially if the cops catch wind that you're helping us.

SPLINT

Right.

WENDY

So... if you get us there, you can stay with us. Live



off the land.

MATTHEW

He can?

SPLINT

I barely know you two.

WENDY

Well, get to know us! It's nice to meet you!

(WENDY invites SPLINT to shake her hand.)

MATTHEW

Wendy.

(WENDY quickly retracts her hand.)

SPLINT

You want me to abandon my entire life for you and your brother?

MATTHEW

I told you, Wendy. This is never going to happen.

SPLINT

He doesn't even believe in your plan! How do you imagine we pull this off?

WENDY

Well, figuring that out would be your job, I *imagine*.

SPLINT

This is ridiculous. Asking me to risk this kind of capture, for a *chance* at your escape. I don't do jobs this size. I've got a life in Rat City.

(WENDY finally hits a wall of frustration.)

WENDY

Do you really? I'm sorry Splint, but exactly what do you have going on in this city, anyway? A bad

reputation? A friend who's known for lighting things on fire? You've been coming in and out of my restaurant for a while now. You learn a lot about a person by watching how they drink their coffee.

SPLINT

You watch me eat my breakfast?

(WENDY blushes.)

WENDY

I, um-- I just meant, you know, like--

SPLINT

Forget it.

(SPLINT gets up from his chair, pushes it back into the table. WENDY rushes over to him, speaking quietly and closely.)

WENDY

Splint, please. I have to protect my younger brother. He's all I've got. You can't imagine what I'm risking by keeping him holed up in my house. It's not a permanent solution-- I've never been good at those. That's why I need someone with your cunning, and confidence, and... pickpocket know-how. Matt may be a wanted criminal, but he's mostly just a nerd. This might be our last chance.

SPLINT

Wendy--

MATTHEW

She's just a couple months older. "Little brother" is an overstatement.

(WENDY, without looking, picks up a roll of paper towels off of the table and throws it at MATTHEW. It bumps off of his body with little effect.)

WENDY

Please ignore him.

MATTHEW

Don't ignore me. Guy, look, we can work out the details later, but my sister's right. If I stay here much longer... I'm rat toast. At least consider it. For Wendy.

SPLINT

I can't help you. I wish my circumstances were different, I really do--

WENDY

They can be!

MATTHEW

Buddy, come on, just--

SPLINT

I'm leaving.

(SPLINT turns around.)

WENDY

WAIT!

(SPLINT humors WENDY one last time.)

WENDY (cont.)

Wind cloak. You forgot to remind me, but. Here. As a token of good fortune.

(WENDY retrieves the cloak from the couch and throws the cloak at Splint. He catches it.)

SPLINT

Goodbye, Wendy.

(SPLINT eyes MATTHEW, then exits.)

## SCENE 3

(SPLINT enters his loft apartment. The space manages to feel wide and open while also maintaining a crowdedness and messiness brought about by SPLINT's piles of books, boxes, an old mattress resting up against the wall, lots of posters, a step-ladder, clothes strewn about, and general knick-knack clutter. He's wearing the wind cloak WENDY lent him. He slams the door shut, and takes the cloak off. He admires it for a moment. He tosses the jacket onto his bed, followed by tossing himself down next to it. He huffs in a breath, puts his hands to his temples, and lets a long a squeaky exhale out from his cute little rat nose. Suddenly, a triple-knock on the door. SPLINT quickly sits up.)

SPLINT

Huh?

(Three more quick knocks.)

SPLINT (cont.)

Yeah, who is it?

ZED (O.S.)

It's me, man!

(SPLINT squints.)

SPLINT

Zed?

ZED (O.S.)

Dude, yes!

(SPLINT falls back on his bed, stares at the ceiling, forlorn.)

SPLINT

(loudly)

You may enter.

(ZED immediately swings the door open, Kramer-style. He's wearing baggy clothes, a beanie, spectacles. He's jumpier and more energetic than SPLINT.)

ZED

Hey!

SPLINT

Mhm.

(ZED slams the door shut. He throws his coat onto a nearby hanger.)

ZED

What's good?

SPLINT

Nothing. Nothing is good. My brain is full of beans, Zed.

ZED

Oh, Okay!... well I brought you something!

(ZED tosses something wrapped in tin foil out from his pocket and onto SPLINT's bed, rustling him. SPLINT sits up, making eye contact with ZED for the first time. SPLINT grabs the tin foil thing and starts to unwrap it.)

SPLINT

What is this?

ZED

Just some of Fampy Mampy's hot and hardy blueberry buckle.

SPLINT

Oh. You... shouldn't have? I've never had buckle before.

ZED

It's like a cake. Or like, coffee cake without the coffee. Do they put real coffee in coffee cake? They must either crush it or stir coffee into the batter. I wonder what translates into more flavor.

(ZED is lost in thought.)

SPLINT

Zed.

ZED

Mm? Yeah so what's up man?

SPLINT

I, uh,--

(SPLINT begins tearing pieces of buckle off to munch on while he talks.)

SPLINT (cont.)

I don't know. I got this job offer earlier today. It's bunk though.

ZED

What's the job?

SPLINT

It's a movement job. People movement. Or, like shuttling. I'd essentially be a shuttle bus.

ZED

Okay.

SPLINT

And this woman-- I don't even know this woman! Well, I know her name. She watches me drink coffee.

ZED

That's hot.

SPLINT

No, it's not. And she's promised a new house, a new life--

ZED

Woah woah woah. You're moving?

SPLINT

She's upending my entire situation, man! The whole nine. And it's not even *for* her. She's doing this all to save her younger brother. This is why I stay away from family, Zed. Too complicated. Who leaks a database?!

ZED

Splint I'm having trouble keeping up.

SPLINT

It's-- here. You're a smart guy. You know what's what. What's good.

ZED

Sure I do.

SPLINT

If someone offered you a one-way ticket out of the city... and you got to live out in the country, beyond the gates, where no cops can catch you, where you get to grow bean-sprouts for the rest of your short, beautiful life... would you take it?

ZED

Beyond the gates? No one's allowed through those things unless they got the papers. And they don't give those to anyone anymore. No one gets through.

(Beat.)

ZED (cont.)

Do you... you don't have one of these tickets, do you? Is that what this lady is offering? She got papers?

SPLINT

Not necessarily, I mean--

ZED

Is it someone I know?

SPLINT

No, Zed--

ZED

That'd command a tall price, a trip like that. Outside the city! When I was a kid, I didn't even know there was an outside of the city. So, what's the job? I'm lost again.

SPLINT

This lady, she wants me to get her and her brother through to the other side. Where I would then live with them and their friend, who has a farm and an unusually cool name. I can't believe she'd even ask.

ZED

So... They're on the lam or something?

SPLINT

The brother is wanted by the state police. He's actually quite smart. He leaked the Rat Panama Papers, dude!

ZED

*(feigning excitement)* What! No way! *(end feigning excitement)* I don't know what those are.

SPLINT

God, nobody does! Incredible.

ZED

Splint, baby...

*(ZED takes a seat next to SPLINT on his bed, puts his hand on SPLINT's shoulder.)*

ZED (cont.)

You know how I'll always be on your side, no matter



what?

SPLINT

Well, you've never said anything like that before, but I grant your premise.

ZED

Well right now, something's telling me that, if I'm to truly be on your side... I gotta let my birdy fly.

SPLINT

I'm your little birdy?

ZED

That's correct. And you have to fly free, lil buddy. All you do is complain about how much you hate this place. Now you've got an opportunity to escape, and you don't want to take it? What gives?

SPLINT

It could be an "opportunity" for the cops to put me away for good. Too risky.

ZED

Oh, you know they don't really need a reason to do that. You're two "**was seen near the crime scene**"'s away from death row already.

SPLINT

That's why I've been trying to stay more low-key. This job is the opposite of low-key.

ZED

You and your excuses!

SPLINT

I don't want to die, Zed!

ZED

Hardly anyone wants to die, Splint! Look. You and I have been through thick and thin. We have a such a tremendous back story. You know it. I know it. Remember when we backstabbed Jimmy Two-tails? You almost lost

yours!

SPLINT

Of course I do.

ZED

And, and remember when we broke out of prison with just a hair dryer and a bag of nickles?

SPLINT

That was creative of us.

ZED

Oh my god! And the time we were hanging by a phone line over a perilously deep abyss, and you said "How you hangin' in there?" and I said "It's funny you should ask!?" Remember!?

SPLINT

Yeah, those were great times. Zed, what are you trying to say?

ZED

You face death every morning, every time you decide to get out of bed. So I don't want to hear it. You've risked your life before for even smaller beans, Splint. Don't you want your risk to mean something?

SPLINT

Of course I do!

ZED

Don't you want more than our bad puns?

SPLINT

But I like our bad puns.

ZED

Everybody does, Splint. That's why we have so many friends.

(SPLINT chuckles.)

ZED (cont.)

And I mean, of course it would be hard to replace you. Except for with maybe one of the hundreds of other rats that participate in this same petty crime ring, doing the same stuff that you do, living the same desperate lives.

SPLINT

So you wouldn't miss me.

ZED

I'd miss you plenty. I'm just worried that you'd miss out on a whole lot more if you didn't take this leap. You should at least consider the job. You said yourself they're not stupid people.

SPLINT

No, they're not.

ZED

So. Think on it. Have more buckle. They call it 'brain food.'

SPLINT

Is that right?

ZED

Who cares. I gotta run, though. Got an old guy on my ass about collecting insurance on some unusable property. It's fire time, baby!

SPLINT

Be safe.

(ZED claps twice in earnest excitement, heads to the door.)

ZED

Let me know if you end up taking that job. I'd love this apartment.

SPLINT

It's all yours.

ZED

DOPE! See ya dude!

SPLINT

Yeah, see ya.

(ZED exits.)

## SCENE 4

(WENDY's diner, 10:05pm. All of the patrons have left; WENDY is sweeping, putting chairs on tables, packing up the leftover baked goods. SPLINT, wearing WENDY's wind cloak, enters through the front doors, which creak and sway. WENDY turns to face him.)

WENDY

Oh.

(She returns to sweeping, turning away from SPLINT.)

WENDY (cont.)

We're closed.

SPLINT

Can I help?

WENDY

Ha!

(WENDY packs up a plate of scones.)

WENDY (cont.)

You want a job *here*?

SPLINT

Just wanted to offer a hand. And return this.

(SPLINT approaches WENDY as he takes off the cloak. He holds it out towards her.)

SPLINT

Thanks. For the coat.

WENDY

Cloak.

SPLINT

Yeah. It worked wonders, so. I really appreciate it.

(Beat.)

WENDY

Well I'm always pleased to see a happy customer.

(WENDY makes her way behind the bar, begins putting dishes and cups into cupboards. SPLINT follows her with his eyes, his hand still extended.)

SPLINT

So should I leave it here / or do you...

WENDY

That's all you came back for, then? To return it?

SPLINT

I-- no. I wanted to talk to you. About your brother.

(SPLINT puts the cloak down on a table.)

WENDY

What about him?

SPLINT

I'm sorry for the way I left last night. It wasn't very professional of me.

WENDY

No, it wasn't. But I may not have made that easy on you, either. It was stupid to have you for dinner. You're a busy rat.

SPLINT

Yeah--

WENDY

And I didn't mean all those things I said. About having no life here. I don't know you, and--

SPLINT

Well I think you actually *did* mean those things, but

that's okay. They were true things. You're very... truthful. I admire that. I'm usually surrounded by liars and thieves, so you're kind of a breath of fresh air.

WENDY

Oh. Well that is very nice of you to say, Splint. But I understand if you don't want to help my brother.

SPLINT

It's not that, exactly. If I do this, if I help you,--

WENDY

--if you are successful at helping me--

SPLINT

--right., I'll never see Rat City again?

WENDY

Not unless there's another revolution. And the last one was so recently, everybody's tired.

SPLINT

Huh. Okay. Look, I do, I do want this job. I just need to know that your uncle-- this Vincenzo Ralducci--

WENDY

--Fortuno Verdini--

SPLINT

--that once we get to his barn, or *whatever*, that we'll be unscrupulously safe. No scruples, alright?! Can you guarantee me that?

WENDY

Guarantee, I mean--

SPLINT

Because if you can't, Wendy, then I'm walking.

WENDY

Oh, what's guaranteed?! I can tell you what I know.

SPLINT

Which is?

WENDY

That my uncle told me we would be safe in his stead. I trust him. And if you trust me, then that's the closest thing to a guarantee that I can give.

(WENDY approaches SPLINT. She puts her face close to his. Tension.)

SPLINT

Why should I trust you, then?

WENDY

Don't you already? I know you've been watching me pour your coffee for 5 straight months. Checking me out when my back is turned. None of that bullshit about your "transactions". You're very astute. But! I am astuter! What if I've been poisoning you?

SPLINT

I have a good nose for stuff like that.

WENDY

You also have a good (*pokes SPLINT in the chest*) **heart** for trustworthy people. And you're looking at one.

(SPLINT about faces and covers his face in thought, before spinning back to WENDY and saying:)

SPLINT

Fine. You've earned my trust, for now. But trustworthy people don't usually go on about how much you should trust them.

WENDY

I'm trying my best here.

SPLINT

I get it. We all are. Everything's rotten.

(Beat.)



SPLINT (cont.)

That is to say, I accept your offer. I want to help you.

WENDY

Oh, Splint!

(WENDY runs up to SPLINT and tackles him with a hug.)

WENDY (cont.)

You have no idea how much this means to me! Gosh, I was about to call Zed. That would have been a mess.

SPLINT

WHAT? You know Zed?

WENDY

That guy can eat 4 scones in one sitting. I've seen him do it. He's a regular here. And he's the one who gave me your name in the first place.

SPLINT

Jesus Christ, he can't keep his mouth closed for shit.

WENDY

No, no he can't. What a good friend.

SPLINT

How much did Zed tell you?

WENDY

Not much. That you two were friendly, that he mainly stuck to arson, and that I should seek you out for any non-arson related business.

SPLINT

Sounds just like him.

WENDY

Yeah, yeah. Small world. Any-who. Let's talk... business.

SPLINT

Right. Is this place secure?

(WENDY scuttles to the front door and locks it with a key she pulls out of an apron pocket.)

WENDY

Yes! So!

(WENDY rushes behind the counter to locate documents that she brings to SPLINT. She moves as she speaks.)

WENDY (cont.)

So I've been doing a little preliminary research. The library had this dusty map of the city's tunnels, but they've been definitely been renovated since...

(WENDY attempts to read the date on the map.)

WENDY (cont.)

"Quite old." Hm. That's all it says.

SPLINT

What are you gonna do. Public funding. Still, it'll at least give us a head start. Could I take this with me?

WENDY

Of course! Take it all, if you want.

SPLINT

Happily.

(SPLINT grabs the maps and papers and stuffs them into his pockets.)

SPLINT (cont.)

I'll start drawing up plans tonight.

WENDY

I almost can't believe you're doing this all for us.

SPLINT

Oh, it's definitely for me too. When do we need to be

out of here?

WENDY

It's hard to say. I caught wind that some cops have narrowed down Matt's location to the *wrong* neighborhood, so we should be okay for at least another week. If not for you, he was just going to try this on his own.

SPLINT

And fail, no doubt. Thank god for me, I guess.

WENDY

Thank god for sure! Oh, here.

(WENDY takes a wad of cash out of her pocket and hands it to SPLINT.)

WENDY

Call this our discretionary fund. Whatever you need to prepare-- or any parting gifts. It's yours.

SPLINT

Wow.

(SPLINT thumbs through the stack of money, impressed by its quantity.)

SPLINT (cont.)

This will definitely come in handy, thank you.

WENDY

Of course. Anything you need. just let me know.

SPLINT

When should we next meet?

WENDY

We can convene back at my place in a weeks time. We'll head out at the crack of dawn the following morning. It'll be like a little slumber party!

SPLINT

Sure.

WENDY

Sorry. Professional, professional.

(WENDY grabs the wind cloak that SPLINT set down on a table and throws it at him. She begins rushing out.)

WENDY

Can't forget this! I've really gotta go. Matthew can't cook, but he won't eat anything raw either, so he's always having me boil something.

SPLINT

Oh. He sounds low maintenance.

WENDY

Ha! Tell me about it. You'll see for yourself very soon.

SPLINT

Guess I will.

WENDY

Bye, Splint. The door locks behind you. Just hit the lights for me, okay?

(WENDY exits. SPLINT stands there, staring at the door, at the cloak. He turns off the lights and exits.)

## SCENE 5

(One week later. WENDY's house. WENDY is frantic about the kitchen, grabbing snacks and utensils, plastic bags, rags, whatever necessities she deems light enough or essential enough to travel with. The house is a mess. MATTHEW comes down the stairs, lugging luggage, looking noticeably less nervous than WENDY.)

MATTHEW

What's all this?

WENDY

What's all-- all of this?

(WENDY waves her hands in the air, gesticulating to the room incredulously.)

WENDY (cont.)

All of-- the, our lives, this is our lives!! All around me! My life! All of these things!

(WENDY ruffles through a pile on the floor, picks out something that could be a dog toy, sex toy, or a statue.)

WENDY (cont.)

This! This is who I am!

MATTHEW

Okay, Wendy.

WENDY

I never planned on... owning this much STUFF. Is this bad? All these belongings? ... Is that... a suitcase?

MATTHEW

This is a suitcase.

WENDY

Matt, I've got your knapsack right here.

MATTHEW

You expect me to carry a knapsack?

WENDY

You expect to live? Take the sack.

(WENDY passes MATTHEW his knapsack.)

WENDY (cont.)

If you need to change anything about the sack, let me know.

MATTHEW

Change anything?

WENDY

Yes. The fitting or the items inside.

MATTHEW

I trust you've set everything up fine.

WENDY

Aw, you do?

MATTHEW

Yeah, if you're not weird about it.

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. SPLINT is at the door. He's wearing WENDY's wind cloak.)

WENDY (cont.)

Shit! Shit shit shit.

MATTHEW

Aren't we expecting him?

WENDY

Yes, but not like this! Who brings a guest into a house that looks like this?

MATTHEW

Um, us? He's a street rat, Wen.

WENDY

You're a street rat.

(MATTHEW smirks, taken aback at his sister's childishness.)

MATTHEW

No *you're* a street rat.

WENDY

You're an asshole. (*to the door*) Be there in a minute!

MATTHEW

What's his name? Spank? Spliff?

WENDY

Splint.

(WENDY, in a frenzy, attempts to clean up her entire living room in 10 seconds flat. Shoving stuff under the table, couch, back into counters, throwing items this way and that. She also throws things upstairs, or at MATTHEW.)

MATTHEW

Right. I really don't think Splint will mind.

(SPLINT knocks again.)

MATTHEW (cont.)

So should we...

WENDY

You get it if you want to open the door so bad!

MATTHEW

Alright, I will.

(MATTHEW opens the door. Faces SPLINT.)

MATTHEW

Splroof! Hello.

WENDY

*SPLINT!* I just told you.

SPLINT

Oh, that's quite alright Wendy. Hi, Matthew?

MATTHEW

Matt's fine.

SPLINT

Can I come in?

WENDY

Let him in, Matt!

MATTHEW

Please, come in.

SPLINT

Thanks.

(MATTHEW awkwardly shuffles to the side, giving SPLINT a narrow frame of space to enter, in which he promptly does. The two stare suspiciously at one another.)

WENDY

Okay, that's quite enough guys. Get over whatever this is. Splint, come *in in!* Can I make you a coffee?

SPLINT

That'd be great, thanks.

MATTHEW

Oh, are we doing coffees?

WENDY

Well would YOU like one, Matt?

MATTHEW

I-- if everyone's having one, I mean--



WENDY

Jesus christ.

(WENDY begins working on the coffees.)

WENDY (cont.)

Splint, I'm so sorry about the mess, you understand.

SPLINT

Of course. I mean, you should have seen my apartment.  
The other day my friend called me a street rat.

(MATTHEW grins and makes big eyes at  
WENDY, who strikes back with big eyes of  
contrasting features.)

SPLINT (cont.)

What?

WENDY

Nothing.

MATTHEW

It's just that--

WENDY

Nothing. It's just that nothing, ha HAHA ha. Do you  
take cream or sugar in your coffee?

SPLINT

Both, please.

MATTHEW

Hey now, sweet-tooth, am I right?

SPLINT

Hm?

MATTHEW

You like sweet things.

WENDY

Matt.

MATTHEW

It's good to like things that taste good. Splint has good taste. Because he likes things. That taste good.

(Beat.)

SPLINT

...What?

MATTHEW

I don't know, I'm just talking 'till our coffee's ready? Is coffee ready?

WENDY

*(from the kitchen, holding mugs)* Coffee's ready!

MATTHEW

Coffee time.

(WENDY distributes the coffees. She made one for herself. The three stand next to one another facing the audience: MATTHEW left, SPLINT center, WENDY right. They all take a nice, slow sip of coffee in unison, followed up by an 'ahhh' in unison.)

WENDY

Oh, it's like we're a little team!

MATTHEW

Wendy, this isn't a game.

WENDY

Yeah but kind of isn't it though?

MATTHEW

I know you're being silly, but--

SPLINT

Yo! Are you guys about ready? We're on kind of a tight schedule here.

MATTHEW

We are?

WENDY

How tight?

MATTHEW

Do I still have time to shower?

WENDY

God dammit.

MATTHEW

I didn't know we were tight!

SPLINT

We're-- go do that. You're fine, just be quick.

MATTHEW

You got it boss.

SPLINT

Please don't call me that.

MATTHEW

Roger!

SPLINT

You don't need to--

(MATTHEW walks away before SPLINT can complete his sentence. SPLINT stops, turns to WENDY, takes another sip of his coffee.)

SPLINT (cont.)

Delicious!

WENDY

Yep. Good stuff. French roast.

SPLINT

Hazelnut?

WENDY

A splash, yeah. You know, I'd love to take a look at whatever you've brought. Plans. Anything, I don't know!

SPLINT

Oh! Yeah, of course.

(SPLINT takes his backpack off and rifles through it, grabbing papers, scrolls, and tools. He shows WENDY a map.)

SPLINT

This here is us. There's actually a giant valve in the wind tunnels that leads to an underground river. Which is (*points to specific point on paper*) right here.

WENDY

That's... oh wow, that's just a couple blocks away.

SPLINT

Yeah, turns out The Wind Tunnels are a major port of entry to the rest of the system. But that's only step 1. (*SPLINT points as he explains*) We have to jump these access tracks, and then scuttle underneath some ancient piping. (*looks back up at WENDY*) Zed, of all people, knew this guy who built the system a hundred years ago. Can you believe it?

WENDY

No, I can't! This is very impressive.

SPLINT

We can only get so far underground; there's a manhole exit in an alley by the Bread District, *which*, due to bread's high value as a smuggled carry-on, operates just half a mile north of the city gates.

WENDY

We have a bread district?

SPLINT

And I spoke to one of our city's top black market bakers. And I gave him a lump sum of your cash to cover

the cost of the bread we're replacing.

(WENDY squints at SPLINT, confused.)

SPLINT (cont.)

We're being smuggled out the city as bread! Can you believe it?

WENDY

Wow. No. You're sure?

SPLINT

Wendy, we'll smell delicious.

(SPLINT pulls things out of his backpack and quickly displays them to WENDY as he names them, before dropping the object back into the bag.)

SPLINT (cont.)

But let's not worry about that yet!. Bungee cord, look! For you know, holding things.

WENDY

Right.

SPLINT

And uh, allen wrench! Doors.

WENDY

Mhm.

SPLINT

We got paper clips, paper bags, some Ratvil.

(SPLINT shakes prescription bottle of Ratvil [advil].)

SPLINT (cont.)

And I looked it up, Ratvil is to take fine with alcohol, it's Tailenol that's the issue. ... I get headaches.

WENDY

Sure! I mean, I don't, but, great! This is great.

SPLINT

Right? I think I did a pretty good job packing. Really hope I didn't forget anything.

WENDY

Well-- oh! Did you grab any food?

SPLINT

Hm?

WENDY

Is it in this side pocket here? Snacks for the road. Like I requested. Crackers, or jerky, or...

(WENDY begins to rifle through his bag, not finding what she's looking for.)

WENDY (cont.)

Maybe a jelly or jam, some sweet bread, veggie broth, a carrot cake, uh, SPLINT!..., where is our food?

SPLINT

It's very possible that food had slipped my mind. I... used all the money you gave me to bribe the baker, and after that I felt like I had done so good, and--

WENDY

Are you serious?

SPLINT

Don't you run a diner?

WENDY

Well I used to. But I just transferred ownership of that property to a college friend of mine. She's taking over while I (*WENDY does finger quotation marks*) "learn more about myself" at a "retreat." So no, I no longer run a diner.

SPLINT

Shit. Okay. Do you have any food in the house?

WENDY

I don't like to waste food, and I thought you were bringing our rations or whatever!

SPLINT

Maybe, somehow we can make a pit stop diner? For, I don't know, a scone?!

WENDY

What is with YOU and your friends and these god damn scones?

(FOUR LOUD KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.)

RAT COP 1 (O.S.)

(*from behind door*) POLICE! Open up.

WENDY

Fuck.

(SPLINT hurriedly puts all of his gear back into his backpack.)

SPLINT

(*hushed*) What the hell? What are they doing here?

RAT COP 2 (O.S.)

(*from behind door*) Wenddyyyy! You in there? We just wanna chat.

WENDY

They must have caught wind about the diner. News moved quicker than I thought. They know I'm Matthew's sister, and Splint--

(FOUR MORE LOUD KNOCKS. WENDY gets quieter.)

WENDY (cont.)

I know these guys. I don't think they're here just to chat.

SPLINT

Yeah, no shit, Wendy.

WENDY

They can't know Matt's here.

SPLINT

He's still in the shower. We're fine. We'll just throw 'em off our trail.

WENDY

Okay? Well, you're the professional after all, so.

(WENDY steps behind SPLINT and pushes him forward. SPLINT grabs a hat from the floor to cover his face with and puts it on.)

(FOUR MORE LOUD KNOCKS.)

RAT COP 1 (O.S.)

(*from behind door*) This is your final warning! We are preparing to destroy the door if necessary.

(SPLINT rushes forward and swings the door open slightly, greeting the officers, RAT COP 1 and RAT COP 2.)

SPLINT

That certainly *won't* be necessary, officers. Hello. How, can I be of assistance today?

RAT COP 2

Do I know you?

SPLINT

Hm? Probably not.

RAT COP 2

Yeah, you wanna let us in then?

SPLINT

Um--

(SPLINT peeks behind him, eyes the messy, torn apart household.)



SPLINT

Could you just give me a minute?

RAT COP 1

That won't be necessary. Move it.

(WENDY rushes up to meet SPLINT at the door, still guarding her apartment from the COPS.)

WENDY

Gentlemen! Uniforms looking so spiffy today. Hi again!

RAT COP 1

Hello Wendy. I hope it's not an issue if we have another look around the place. Still wanna be careful of that serial killer brother of yours, right?

WENDY

Right, of course! Maybe tomorrow? We're just--

RAT COP 1

No, today!

(RAT COPS shove WENDY and SPLINT out of the way, barge into the apartment. The inspect the place.)

WENDY

I'm so sorry about the clutter. I lost this ring of mine. Well misplaced it would be a better word. It was my mother's--she gave it to me on her death bed-- and it's very sad, oh officers, I'm very sad about it. And I was just up all night looking for it and, uh, well, ipso facto here we are! What a mess, right?

RAT COP 2

Uh huh.

(RAT COP 2 peeks at SPLINT's backpack. RAT COP 1 is sifting through piles of clothes, and notices the knapsacks. He picks one up.)

RAT COP 2

You guys planning on going somewhere with these bags?

WENDY

Huh?

RAT COP 1

Kinda looks to me like you were plannin' a little trip.

RAT COP 2

Anywhere fun?

SPLINT

Oh, no, nothing like that. My friend, he's sick, and he's real far, all the way on the south end, stuck in one of those public facilities, you know, down on his luck, AND sick, like no lungs, so we just wanted to bring him some things.

WENDY

Apple a day.

RAT COP 2

You got apples in here? Can I have one?

WENDY

Um-- they haven't ripened yet. They'll ripen on the way, and when we get to him they'll be perfect!

SPLINT

He hasn't eaten anything besides mush in who knows how long. So sad.

WENDY

So sad. AND sick.

(The toilet flushes upstairs, and water can be heard rushing through pipes.)

RAT COP 1

What the hell was that? Is there someone else here?

WENDY

What? No, just old plumbing, just some old pipes. I'll

replace them. Do you officers need anything else?

RAT COP 1

I think we need to see what you're hiding.

WENDY

Hiding? I--

RAT COP 1

(to his partner) Mutt, stay here. Keep an eye on these two.

(RAT COP 1 approaches the stairs, puts his foot on the first step when SPLINT screams:)

SPLINT

NO!

(Everyone freezes and looks at SPLINT.)

SPLINT (cont.)

That's where... it's our... we use it for sex. Sex room.

RAT COP 2

What?

WENDY

WHAT?

SPLINT

It's our-- upstairs is our... well what would you call it, honey?

WENDY

I don't know, Splint. What would we call it.

SPLINT

I'm really sorry, she's just embarrassed. It's our playroom, and there's, well, there's a lot of toys, and most of the surfaces are pretty sticky, to be honest.

WENDY

(to herself) Oh, my god.

(The two COPS stare at SPLINT. WENDY makes the biggest eyes at SPLINT, unhappy and confused.)

SPLINT

I could show you around if you'd like but I might have to move some equipment around.

RAT COP 1

Oh, I don't know if--

SPLINT

(gestures at RAT COP 2) Which you could definitely help me with, it's some pretty heavy stuff. I see you got some muscle on you!

RAT COP 2

Uh, boss?

RAT COP 1

Yeah, you know what, I think that's alright.

SPLINT

Really? Dang. You know, now that it's all out there in the open, I think I have something that you especially might appreciate. (points at RAT COP 1.)

RAT COP 1

Definitely not, definitely not. Sorry for the misunderstanding, I don't want to get in your folks' way.

SPLINT

Are you sure? Last night, she and I were throwing around the idea, and I don't know. If you're any interested in... getting in our way.

RAT COP 2

Oh my god.

RAT COP 1

Yeah, you know what, that's quite alright. We should

probably be going.

SPLINT

If you say so!

(As the COPS turn to leave, MATTHEW appears, towel wrapped around his head, and takes a single step down the staircase. It loudly creaks. The COPS whip their heads in his direction. SPLINT and WENDY look at MATTHEW, then each other, then the COPS, then MATTHEW again. MATTHEW stares at the cops, wide-eyed.)

MATTHEW

Officers.

(Suddenly, **ACTION SEQUENCE!** RAT COP 1, in pursuit, darts up the staircase for MATTHEW, who jumps around the railing and quickly climbs/falls to the first floor. RAT COP 2 dives onto SPLINT, who gets knocked over and thrown against a wall before WENDY takes the bungee cord from SPLINT's bag. WENDY swiftly and sneakily hooks RAT COP 2's belt with the cord, who is too busy crawling after SPLINT to notice. While MATTHEW runs around the trashed room dodging RAT COP 1, WENDY trips RAT COP 1 such that he falls opposite his partner. She then pulls the same move with the other end of the bungee cord, latching it to RAT COP 1's belt. The two COPS strike in opposite directions, trying to apprehend SPLINT and MATTHEW, when the bungee cord between them causes them to lurch backward towards one another. They bonk heads and fall to the floor, unconscious, piled on top of one another.)

Oh my god.

WENDY

Wendy, I--

SPLINT

Are they out?

MATTHEW

I don't know!

WENDY

They look it to me.

SPLINT

Well we need to go.

MATTHEW

What if I killed them?!

WENDY

You didn't. They're just unconscious. Right?

MATTHEW

Wendy, that was amazing.

SPLINT

Well, no one grabbed at me. I was underestimated, I guess.

WENDY

You guess?! Wendy, that was amazing!

MATTHEW

Isn't this, like, your job though?

WENDY

Matt, there's no time for critiques. You're right. Let's go.

(They all hurriedly grab their things, making sure to tiptoe around the unconscious COPS. They gather at the

door.)

WENDY (cont.)

We're headed to the valve, right? On Rat Montague Street?

SPLINT

That's right. Let's go.

(SPLINT and MATTHEW swiftly exit. WENDY takes on last look at her messy, unconscious cop-full house. She breathes in and sighs.)

WENDY

Sorry!

(WENDY turns and slams door without looking back. She exits.)

## SCENE 6

(The valve tunnels. SPLINT leading, with WENDY and MATTHEW behind. The trio tiptoe their way through a long and winding maintenance tunnel. Small streams run on either side of the walkway. There is ick and slime coming from the walls and ceilings, which themselves are lined with exhausts, pipes, tubes, and plumbing machinery of all sorts. The gang stops when they approach a minor clearing: LIGHTS UP on 3 doors. Each door is accompanied by a colored light: from left to right: red, yellow, green.)

SPLINT

Huh.

(SPLINT takes his map out of knapsack.)

MATTHEW

Which way?

WENDY

He's looking.

SPLINT

Yeah, one second.

MATTHEW

I think we should go right. The green door.

WENDY

Why would we do that? The green door *seems* the safest. So it obviously has to be a trap.

MATTHEW

Why is that so obvious?



SPLINT

Guys, really, it's gotta be / here somewhere...

WENDY

I think we should choose yellow if we're uncertain.

MATTHEW

I'm certain. It's green.

WENDY

Well now that you say that... I'm growing a fondness for red.

MATTHEW

I never left green. He's my choice.

WENDY

What does your map say? Is the green a trap? I'd like to know if yellow is off the table.

SPLINT

Why would there be a trap? These are maintenance tunnels.

MATTHEW

Well what **does** it say, then?

SPLINT

It... this room isn't on the map I have. We should be at least halfway to Bread by now.

WENDY

We must have went the wrong way. We need to go back.

SPLINT

But I followed our map exactly.

WENDY

The outdated one?

SPLINT

This had to be built recently. That old plumber I talked to never mentioned anything like it.

(The colored lights flicker momentarily.)

WENDY

Wait! We don't know what's behind that door. What if it's dangerous?

SPLINT

Well whatever it is, we don't have much of a choice. I have no doubt those cops woke up and alerted the force by now. They're probably swarming the whole system.

MATTHEW

So there's not really any turning back, is there?

WENDY

Oh gosh, oh gosh. Okay then. Which door?

MATTHEW

I'm flip flopping now because red honestly seems like the ironic choice that turns out to be most correct.

WENDY

What are you TALKING about, Matt? Green, obviously.

MATTHEW

Oh so suddenly you're gung-ho about the green.

SPLINT

Guys, I think we choose yellow.

WENDY

What? Why?

SPLINT

If we're being cautious, then we would choose the middle path, which is also the yellow path, which as a color is a symbol for caution.

MATTHEW

Foolproof.

SPLINT

Do you have a better idea?

WENDY

Green means go!

MATTHEW

Yes, everyone already knows what green means!

SPLINT

That's it!-- You hired *me*, right?

(WENDY and MATTHEW nod.)

SPLINT (cont.)

Then I am making a decision... cautiously.

(SPLINT grips his hand around the yellow-lit door. MATTHEW and WENDY gasp. SPLINT slowly and carefully opens the yellow door. At first, nothing. Dark, silent nothing. Suddenly, TIN LIPS, a rat wearing black-tinted spectacles and a wizard's robe, pops out like a madman. He speaks quickly and strangely.)

TIN LIPS

Hey, it's me Tin Lips!

SPLINT & WENDY & MATTHEW

AHHH!

(SPLINT, WENDY, and MATTHEW all startle and fall back. MATTHEW scrambles and hides behind WENDY. SPLINT grabs a shiv out of his back pocket and holds it out at TIN LIPS.)

TIN LIPS

PLEASURE to make acquaintance!

SPLINT

Stay back, fiend!

WENDY

Fiend?

TIN LIPS

Nothing to worry about with me! Put that dagger away!  
Only danger yer causing causing danger yourself. Haha,  
Oh boy, alright, name's Tin Lips, gotta go!

(TIN LIPS reaches out and grabs the door  
handle, slams it back shut on himself.  
Moments of silence.)

WENDY

What just happened to us.

MATTHEW

I assume that's not on the map either?

SPLINT

No. Tin Lips was not on the map.

WENDY

That was insane. Right? Who is that guy?

SPLINT

I have no idea.

MATTHEW

Have you ever heard of him?

SPLINT

Are you kidding me? No, no no no, that's probably just  
some pup trying to mess with us.

WENDY

That definitely wasn't a child.

SPLINT

Are you sure? I didn't really a good look. Hey, Tin  
Lips!

(SPLINT raises to attention, marches  
back to the middle, yellow-lit door. He  
whips it open, to find: a flush brick  
wall.)

SPLINT

Whuh... wasn't he just--

(SPLINT is cut off by the left-most, red-lit door whooshing open, revealing TIN LIPS once again. SPLINT falls backwards.)

TIN LIPS

Whoops! Right here! You're a Monty hall problem, and I'm the goat! Step right up, win a car!

(TIN LIPS "baaaaa"s like a goat.)

SPLINT

What the hell, dude! Who are you?

TIN LIPS

More like WHAT am I! Just kidding, who am I is the better question. I am TIN, **LIPS!**

MATTHEW

We got that already.

TIN LIPS

I keep these greasy gears turnin'!! Make a world go round! Friends, fiends, go on, keep it loose, make 'em special how I like 'em, bye!

(TIN LIPS slams his door shut.)

WENDY

Uhh--

(TIN LIPS quickly reappears from within the right-most, green-lit door, which is swung open.)

TIN LIPS

Just kiddin'! If you're seeing me, that means that I'm seeing you! And if I'm seeing you, then that can only mean one thing.

SPLINT

Okay? What's that?

TIN LIPS

That you have found yourself in a space wherein you have and never had no idea where you're goin'.

SPLINT

What are you implying?

TIN LIPS

Well I don't mean to imply, I mean to infer! Cause if you're seeing me, if I may repeat myself, then that means you've got no other choice. Step right UP!

MATTHEW

Spliff, what is he talking about?

WENDY

His name is Splint.

MATTHEW

(to WENDY) I actually don't care. (to SPLINT) I thought your plan was foolproof!

SPLINT

I never said that! Tin Lips, what do you mean we're out of choices? What's stopping me from pushing right past you?!

TIN LIPS

That's a good question. I've been wondering it myself. Splint, were you not tricked by that baker, you were'd be... would not... we wouldn't be having this here conversation.

WENDY

Oh no. I knew the bread district was too good to be true.

MATTHEW

Bread district??! This is the first I'm hearing about this?

WENDY

God, Splint was conned by a bread man.

SPLINT

No. No that's not possible... he said... he said bread was like gold in the country.

TIN LIPS

And Why would country folk prefer city bread? You just got conned, son.

SPLINT

Motherfucker. That son of a bitch. That's..... wait, how do you know that? How do you know any of that?

WENDY

He must have been following us.

TIN LIPS

I never had a need for that. You all led me right to you, who led yourselves right to me. And here we are.

MATTHEW

I knew it.

TIN LIPS

You may be smart, but you're a bunch of know nothing. And that's coming from a Know-It-All.

SPLINT

Excuse me?

TIN LIPS

I am one of an uncountable quantity of Know-It-Alls. Us, we, quite literally, know everything. What a burden, oh, to control a universe.

WENDY & SPLINT & MATTHEW

WHAT?!

TIN LIPS

Oh dear, I'm afraid I've exposed you to too too much of my canon. It can be hard to keep in. Speaking of, you've got a bit of a choice to make.

(All of the lights above the three doors turn the same shade of neon purple.)

MATTHEW

Woah.

TIN LIPS

The cops.

(From the hallway they came from, yells  
of RAT COPS are heard.)

RAT COP 1 (O.S.)

HEY! You rats down there!

RAT COP 2 (O.S.)

We can smell ya!

WENDY

That's them.

(The middle door opens automatically.)

TIN LIPS

My cue! One moment please!

(TIN LIPS rushes into the open door and  
disappears.)

SPLINT

Guys.

WENDY

Splint...

RAT COP 1 (O.S.)

We can stiiiiil smell ya!

MATTHEW

I'm going with this Lips guy. Those cops will kill me  
on sight.

SPLINT

Matt, I don't know, I was supposed to be leading this  
thing. All of a sudden we get interrupted by a  
wackadoodle and no one can think straight.



WENDY

Splint, I'm with Matt. We need to go now.

(SPLINT runs to the left and right doors, frantically checking their knobs, but they're locked shut.)

SPLINT

How are we supposed to trust this guy?

WENDY

Do you still trust me?

SPLINT

I trust that you'll do anything to keep your brother out of harm's way.

WENDY

Okay, well wasn't that supposed to be YOUR job?

MATTHEW

Wendy--

TIN LIPS (O.S.)

Oh, and you'll need these!

(TIN LIPS speeds back into one of the doors, and comes out with 3 astronaut helmets. He throws them like the Grinch in the live action Grinch movie in that scene where he's sneaking around the back of the mail office and saying "Jury Duty! Jury Duty! Jury Duty!" while throwing fake mail in people's mailboxes.)

TIN LIPS

Baby, we're goin' to space!

MATTHEW

You don't need one??

TIN LIPS

(with tremendous emphasis)

I--- can't---- breaaaaaaathee!!!

SPLINT

I'm so lost.

RAT COP 2 (O.S.)

We are mere seconds away from apprehending all three of you!

WENDY

It's now or never, Splint! You can stay in the city if you want, but you'll be living in a cell for the rest of your life!

TIN LIPS

Come onnnnn! The portal's bouta blow!

(TIN LIPS rushes back through the middle door. The audience can't see what's on the other side. The three rats put their helmets on.)

SPLINT

FINE! Fine what the fuck what the hell.

MATTHEW

That's the spirit!

WENDY

You guys ready?!

(WENDY, SPLINT, and MATTHEW have a momentary Mexican stand-off with just their eyes. Consensus is reached.)

WENDY

Come on!

(The three run into the open door, which promptly slams shut.)

## SCENE 7

(The three Rats all squeeze through the door. Once out on the other side, the set begins to strip away. The walls of the maintenance tunnel are pushed upstage, and decorated with windows that look out into the vast rat galaxy. A loud, low hum is heard. Discordant strings pierce the room. The lights do whatever they want; I'm not their boss. The three Rats twirl and twirl; it is a scene in a play where things get loud and confusing because a big transition is taking place. The stage is transformed into the main cabin of a starship, a la Star Trek, but with better taste. The rats are thrown space uniforms from offstage which they quickly change into. TIN LIPS reenters, wearing a tin foil hat, cheering:)

TIN LIPS

Space rats! Space rats! Space scones?!

(SPLINT yells through the chaos.)

SPLINT

When does this end?

TIN LIPS

Uh...

(TIN LIPS checks his watch.)

TIN LIPS (cont.)

Now.

(On "now," everything is silent and still. Beat. Suddenly, the cabin fills with Rats: BLUE, MARKUS, LEIGHANN, and ZED, all in space uniform, break out

into a bustle of activity, and our three heroes get pushed around a bit. ZED and LEIGHANN should not be easily recognizable.)

TIN LIPS

Yoo-hoo! Cap'n Malarkey? I've got your new recruits!

(CAPTAIN MALARKEY, dressed impeccably in rat space captain's gear, emerges from the bustle. He looks WENDY, MATTHEW, and SPLINT up and down. He speaks in an authoritative and information-oriented voice; he rarely displays much emotion.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Hm. These ones are fresh.

TIN LIPS

Ripe for yours truly, captain!

MATTHEW

Excuse me?

TIN LIPS

Juicy new space rats. Heard it here first.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

That'll be all, Colonel Lips.

TIN LIPS

Okey dokey!

(TIN LIPS runs off. He throws a pocket-full of purple sand behind him as he skitters away. A crew member, MARKUS, approaches.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Wendy. Matthew. This is Markus. He'll be seeing you off to your quarters.

(MARKUS speaks in a soothing, low but loud dulcet voice.)

MARKUS

We must make haste.

WENDY

What? What about Splint?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

He and I need to chat. It is imperative.

SPLINT

We do?

MATTHEW

We should just play along, Wen. The man's a captain, after all.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

He is correct. I am a Captain.

MARKUS

And while I am not a captain, I still maintain total authority over new recruits, as decreed by space rat law 509, one of our many laws.

WENDY

Splint, I don't like this. (to CAPTAIN) Are we in space? Tin Lips mentioned space. Like, outer?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Outer space, that's correct madame. Welcome.

WENDY

Thanks?

SPLINT

It's fine, Wendy. Tin Lips couldn't have gone far. I'll track him down right after I have a chat with this captain.

MARKUS

Wendy, Matthew, you two must be parched. We have a phenomenal space cafeteria. Come, now.

WENDY

Come find us!

SPLINT

I will.

(MARKUS escorts WENDY and MATTHEW out of the room.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Ah. Young love.

SPLINT

Whose?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Don't be so shy or naive or stupid. Walk with me.

(A square of a people-mover (basically a treadmill without any rails or devices) is brought out by 2 crew members and placed right next to SPLINT and MALARKEY. It is turned on at a very slow speed, and the two begin "walking around" by walking in place.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

You're a very lucky rat. I hear the Great Space General will approve of your coming matrimony.

SPLINT

Matrimony? Sir, I think you're mistaken. I'm single.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

You need to cut this modesty out immediately. Marriage to the General's daughter is a privilege and a great responsibility. This Wendy is special. The stars foresee it.

SPLINT

I'm going to be married to Wendy?! We haven't even started dating yet. I mean-- we're not--

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Yet? Aha. The two of you have been lovebirds for

centuries.

SPLINT

How is that possible?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Everyone here lives for thousands of years. That's one of the rules. Another rule: if you don't marry Wendy, the General will be quite displeased. Such displeasure will lead him to kill you for further displeasing his daughter. You must bring her pleasure.

SPLINT

Captain.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

I don't suppose they have courtship where you come from? It is really very simple.

SPLINT

Yeah, no, we do--

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

I will give you a refresher just in case.

(The CAPTAIN steps off of the people-mover, and gestures SPLINT to do the same. SPLINT does. The CAPTAIN kicks the people-mover off-stage. CAPTAIN MALARKEY asks a question of his cabin.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Great warriors of space! I require a plausible youth for sake of matrimony's explanation. Who shall volunteer?

(A crew member named BLUE steps out from off-stage. She's wearing a Victorian England-era dress that one might wear to a date, and is holding one of those silly white umbrellas too. She twirls the umbrella.)

BLUE

Me, captain! Oh, let it be me!

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Come, private Blue.

(BLUE approaches them.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

This is private Blue.

BLUE

I am private Blue.

SPLINT

Hello.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

So in this hypothetical, I will play the courter and private Blue will play the courted. Ready?

SPLINT

Yep.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Let's begin.

(clears throat)

Say, sweet little space lady, my senses indicate that you harbor some serious moxie.

BLUE

(already in love)

What a charming thing for someone to say. I am enamored of you by that.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

(aside to SPLINT)

See? Now we've got her hooked.

SPLINT

Is this how you pick up girls in space?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

(aside to SPLINT)



This is simply a demonstration for the sake of tutorial. But yes, this is roughly how it actually goes down.

(attention back to BLUE)

I am glad to have charmed you. May I see your space report card?

SPLINT

(to himself)

What the fuck...

BLUE

Hee hee hee, only if I may see yours!

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Of course. I never leave my house that is just a small pod with a bed, without it.

(CAPTAIN and BLUE both pull sheets of paper out of their back pockets, and swap. They inspect each other's space report cards.)

BLUE

Straight R's! Truly outstanding work. This makes me more likely to want to enter into a love contract with you.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Hm. Tardiness. I will do my best to look past it.

SPLINT

Dude.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Well, this is practically all of the information I need to make an informed love decision about you.

BLUE

How fortunate! I feel quite the same.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Okay then. I love you.

BLUE

Yes.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

I want you to tickle me right down to my cerebellum.

BLUE

Yes.

SPLINT

Uh--

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

I desire you so much. I want to squeeze your earlobes.

BLUE

Yes.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

You are the located within the observable universe. You fall between the stars. Let us sign a love contract.

BLUE

I would like that.

(Beat.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

And, scene.

(BLUE collects herself quickly, bows, and returns to her station in the starship.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY (cont.)

That last part was what sex is to us.

SPLINT

Awesome.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

And now this is what you must reenact with your courtress, Wendy. Posthaste, dear lover.

SPLINT

Did Tin Lips put you up to this?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Tin Lips puts everyone up to everything. Be grateful; he has given you direction, and **purpose**, something you lack.

SPLINT

But I didn't need directions for marrying Wendy in space. I wanted ones to get us out of Rat City, and into the countryside where we'd be safe.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

There is no countryside. There is no rat city. You're in space, Splint.

SPLINT

Why? Why couldn't we just stay on track?! We were so close.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Oh please, with the bread con? Give me a break. Someone seems to prefer you in space.

SPLINT

And that someone is Tin Lips? Where did he go?

(A voice is heard over the PA  
loudspeaker.)

PA VOICE (O.S.)

Attention crewmembers: space lunch is now being served in the tertiary dining area. Come get some. Goo-bye.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Ah, well wouldn't you know it. As I am very hungry, I will leave now. But first...

(CAPTAIN MALARKEY puts his hand on  
SPLINT's shoulder.)

CAPTAIN MALARKEY (cont.)

Rid your mind of Mr. Lips. Your lover and her sibling

are just down that hallway right behind you over there. I assumed you might want to see them. Especially Wendy, so that you may love her.

(SPLINT motions stage-left.)

SPLINT

Right back here?

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

That is correct. Be careful. The fate of our universe may rest in your hands.

SPLINT

Great. That's great. Mostly just trying to get out of here. But thank you so much, Mr. Malarkey. I appreciate your tremendous... hospitality.

CAPTAIN MALARKEY

Any day, anytime, any space, Cadet Splint Lockwood. I will help you find a hallway.

SPLINT

Thanks, captain.

(SPLINT hurries down the hallway,  
offstage.)

## SCENE 8

(SPLINT is walking down a hallway in the space station. Doors line the walls; SPLINT tries them one by one, all locked. He spots TIN LIPS, standing by the farthest door.)

SPLINT

Tin Lips.

TIN LIPS

Splint lips.

SPLINT

It's just Splint.

TIN LIPS

Oop! Check your nametag!

SPLINT

My what?

TIN LIPS

Back pocket!

(SPLINT digs into his back pocket, finds an ID on a lanyard that reads "Splint Lips.")

SPLINT

Motherfuck. Dude-- what's your problem?

TIN LIPS

Me, I'm a problem SOLVER, and creator, and then solver. Your friends are being briefed on their new roles. Matthew's dissolving into thin air.

SPLINT

...What?

TIN LIPS

I liked him but he's not necessary anymore. He was your means to your end. And sorry if this is MEAN, heh, but it's the END, okay, for our friend Matthew. Your friend Matthew. Wendy's brother / Matthew.

SPLINT

You're... you're sick.

TIN LIPS

I'm quite well.

SPLINT

You're killing Matthew.

TIN LIPS

No, no no no no, you can't think about it like that. He simply never was, soon, he still **is** I think...

(TIN LIPS does the lick-a-finger-and-put-it-up-in-the-air-to-tell-wind-direction thing)

TIN LIPS (cont.)

Yeah he's still hanging on. Matthew, *Splint*, Matthew will never have been. Or, he has existed, but that's not really gonna happen anymore.

SPLINT

You're describing death to me.

TIN LIPS

No, you're not getting it-- death is when someone has been alive and then they aren't so much alive anymore. Okay? Whereas my thing is that they were alive and they existed, and now they aren't dead or alive AND they don't exist anymore **and** once they've stopped existing, they never *have* existed. The time-line works out great, I could draw it for you.

SPLINT

This is some bullshit. I'm finding Wendy.

TIN LIPS

Oh, she's right in here. I think.

(TIN LIPS steps aside from the door.)

TIN LIPS (cont.)

I'm rootin' for ya!

SPLINT

Fuck off.

(SPLINT opens the door and walks through. LIGHTS ON: The Great Space General's throne room. A modest throne sits down-center, with THE GENERAL, who wears a large cloak that hides much of his form, sitting upon it. The room has giant windows that showcase the great expanse of space. Two GUARDS, played by ZED and LEIGHANN, stand a distance away at either side of the throne, holding lances, faces masked. SPLINT cautiously steps through the doorway, and knocks twice on the door swung ajar.)

SPLINT (cont.)

Hi-- sorry to bother-- I might have the wrong room.

THE GENERAL

Not at all. You find yourself in quite possibly the least wrong room one can find oneself within. Please, approach me.

SPLINT

Um, why?

THE GENERAL

You dare question me, cadet? Today of all days? Upon our first meeting? Approach me!

(GUARD 1 lifts his mask and speaks in a

hushed tone to SPLINT. THE GENERAL cannot notice this interaction.)

GUARD 1

(to *SPLINT*) This is the Great Space General the Captain warned you about!

(GUARD 2 follows suit. THE GENERAL still is unaware of their speech.)

GUARD 2

(to *SPLINT*) Show him some respect!

GUARD 1

(to *SPLINT*) You must! For your love.

(The GUARDS put their masks back on. *SPLINT* approaches THE GENERAL.)

THE GENERAL

You desire my blessing for your engagement with my beautiful daughter. Is that correct?

SPLINT

Well, I would have liked to get to know her a little better first. But if this can be a vehicle for that, yeah I guess that could be my desire. Then again, starting a relationship out of necessity is no foundation for a true and honest connection. Trust and communication; that's what's most important! Wasn't I... here for something else?

THE GENERAL

... What's meant by this?

SPLINT

Great General, sir, have you ever had a crush before?

THE GENERAL

Of the heart? I've heard of such things, in stories, when I was a child of 300 years old. But those were just stories. To me, A Crush is coordinating and expediting my daughter's courtship rituals. Your



ceremony is to take place later this evening.

SPLINT

So soon? Sir, we should postpone. Wendy and I-- we need more time. And there's--

THE GENERAL

MORE TIME? A lotta nerve you got. Comin' into my starship, on the day my daughter is to have a rat wedding in space, and you ask me to postpone? What kind of man is marrying my baby?!

(THE GENERAL rises. Suddenly, WENDY rushes in from offstage, dressed head to toe in space princess garb. WENDY speaks with soft confidence.)

WENDY

Father! Wait.

SPLINT

Wendy! Father?!

THE GENERAL

DAUGHTER, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? SPACE RAT BRIDE AND GROOM MAY NOT SEE ONE ANOTHER OTHER ON THE DAY YOU ARE TO BE--

WENDY

Dad, that tradition is weird and dumb. Forgive me.

(WENDY politely kisses her father on the cheek, which momentarily shuts him up. THE GENERAL sits back down in his throne. WENDY turns to SPLINT.)

WENDY (cont.)

Splint.

SPLINT

Wendy.

WENDY

I've learned a lot in the last ten minutes. A lot that

has to do with you.

SPLINT

We're supposed to marry?

WENDY

Yes. And this angry man is my father.

SPLINT

Where's your brother? Is Matt okay? Tin Lips... he said--

WENDY

When Matt found out that you and I are to be together, he stormed off.

SPLINT

Well that's just... that's... just as well, isn't it?

WENDY

I'm thinking about him less and less. Every moment, another memory fades. I wonder if he even is my brother, here in space.

SPLINT

Things aren't the same up here, Wen.

WENDY

They definitely are not.

SPLINT

I had an intuition when I first saw you-- that we might get along.

WENDY

You always tipped me well. I always watched you drink your coffee.

SPLINT

And I always watched you pour it. So what does that makes us?

THE GENERAL

The man spoke of a crush. Wendy, would you know

anything about this?

WENDY

He and I share the sensation, father. It wasn't love at first sight-- nothing like that.

SPLINT

But love in last moments, one totally contrived... can't that hold the same merit for a rat?

WENDY

Certainly a rat of space.

THE GENERAL

So the suggestion to postpone-- we can table that?

SPLINT

Yes, sir. With few words-- your daughter has enchanted me.

THE GENERAL

What a hasty transformation you've made. I am pleased.

WENDY

Splint, petty thief and adventure-avoider. You are located within the observable universe. You fall between the stars. Let us sign a / love contract.

SPLINT

Let us sign a love contract.

THE GENERAL

Get my blessing!

SPLINT

May I have your blessing?

THE GENERAL

You got it!

WENDY

Oh, Splint!

(WENDY and SPLINT run to one another and

embrace.)

THE GENERAL

Let the marital ceremony... commence!

(Lights out. Silence. Spotlight back up  
on just SPLINT and WENDY.)

SPLINT

We're really doing this.

WENDY

Finally.

SPLINT

Finally.

(TIN LIPS slips into the spotlight from  
the darkness.)

TIN LIPS

Finally!

WENDY

Tin Lips, we really couldn't have done this without  
you.

TIN LIPS

No you couldn't have! I am essential.

WENDY

I just wish Zed were here. I'd love to see the look on  
his face right now, seeing me and Splint like this.

TIN LIPS

He is!

(The spotlight is widened to include  
GUARD 1 (ZED), who takes off his mask.)

ZED

It's me, man! And I'm so happy for your love! Look at  
this crazy face I'm making!

(ZED makes a crazy face.)

SPLINT

Zed, oh my god, it's you.

TIN LIPS

Alright, that's enough.

(TIN LIPS shoos ZED off, who obediently steps back into the darkness.)

TIN LIPS (cont.)

Let's get you two married.

SPLINT

Zed... how is Zed here?

TIN LIPS

I made him a guard.

SPLINT

Ah. You made him. You didn't... was he something else?

TIN LIPS

Oh, uh.

(TIN LIPS squints and scrambles for words.)

TIN LIPS (cont.)

No, he's... I took his component parts. He's mostly the same. Was already pretty shallow.

WENDY

Wait... WAIT.

(WENDY blinks a bunch, she takes a big sniff of the air, and looks down at her clothes.)

WENDY (cont.)

What am I wearing?

TIN LIPS

You look beautiful.

WENDY

Do you think so, Splint?

SPLINT

You look gorgeous.

WENDY

DO I?! Splint, I definitely had a brother at some point.

TIN LIPS

No no no. You may have but now you "definitely" never did.

WENDY

No no no you no no! Matthew.

TIN LIPS

Fuhhhh-ehhh. Prprbrbr. (*mumble noises, expressions of panicked thought.*) mmmm okay. Okay. Matt's gone. Thin air. Splint, we just spoke about this.

SPLINT

He needed me to save him. We were on our way.

TIN LIPS

Ya got conned!

WENDY

That was one obstacle!

TIN LIPS

That's too many! I wanted a love story, you guys!

SPLINT

You... oh. Wendy, are we getting married for Tin Lips?

WENDY

What kind of--

TIN LIPS

You two, you had this, there was charisma, there was

chemistry, but not knocking it out of the park, ya know, workable, but no fireworks, and I like fireworks, you saw my purple dust! I want that but on fire, and in the sky, and so bright and so loud.

(Fireworks can be heard, seen outside the "windows.")

TIN LIPS (cont.)

But the fireworks were your love and it wasn't happening 'cause your gunpowder was WET! SOPPING! No fires there! And ESPECIALLY not with some, some, brother in the picture!

SPLINT

Get us out of here.

TIN LIPS

Get married!

WENDY

Bring my brother back.

TIN LIPS

Tough luck.

(TIN LIPS claps twice. The stage is fully lit.)

THE GENERAL

I said!... let the marital ceremony... commence!

SPLINT

No, you can't.

(THE GUARDS take SPLINT and WENDY forcibly, dragging them away kicking and screaming.)

WENDY

Why do I look like this?!

THE GENERAL

Be still, couple. Your ceremony awaits.

TIN LIPS

Everyone, get OUT of here!

(Everyone leaves except TIN LIPS.)

TIN LIPS

If a Tin Lips has offended,  
Think but this, the story's ended.  
I am quite encumbered here  
in this space I hold so dear.  
This had weak and idle themes,  
yielding just as much as it probably seems.  
Gentles, do not reprehend me:  
if you'll excuse, I won't befriend thee:  
As I am an honest Lips,  
If I have taken unearned trips  
to space, the journey's end has brought  
such long amends;

(Awkward beat.)

TIN LIPS (cont.)

Oh, you call the Lips a liar?  
*Someone's* got their pants on fire.  
Give it a rest or you'll get the bends,  
no Tin Lips shall restore amends.

(TIN LIPS bows. Curtains.)

END OF PLAY.