

SOMEWHERE-BETWEEN

By Jeff McKillip

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SOMEWHERE-BETWEEN

A Full Length Serio-Comedy

By Jeff McKillip

SYNOPSIS: In this dream-like story full of bad puns, twisted logic and fast-paced philosophic banter, a young girl with an impending medical procedure escapes her anxiety into a surreal world called *Somewhere-Between*. With the help and guidance of a patchwork doll, she navigates the rich and strange reality where the more things change the more They stay the same. Pursued by a frightening entity known only as Them, the two companions traverse the places that lie between sleep and awake, dream and reality, concrete ideas and abstract ideals, to fulfill a Destiny she never knew she had and discover that just because ideas are tenacious that doesn't always mean they're worth holding on to.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(4–26 males, 7–31 females, 23 either, 4–10 extras;
gender flexible, doubling possible)*

JESSIE 1 (f) A small, sickly young child. *(173 lines)*
 MOTHER (f) Mother to Jessie. *(35 lines)*
 DR.DOG (m/f) Doctor with the nose of a dog. *(37 lines)*
 DR. DUCK (mf) Assistant to Dr. Dog. Has the nose of a Duck. *(30 lines)*
 DR. PIG (m/f) Anesthetist for Dr. Dog. Has the nose of a Pig. *(31 lines)*
 PATCH 1 (m/f) JESSIE's companion on her journey. Has “button eyes” and “head full of fluff”. *(46 lines)*
 JESSIE 2 (f) Dressed same as JESSIE 1. *(122 lines)*
 PATCH 2 (m/f) Has the same “button eyes” and “head full of fluff” as PATCH 1. *(116 lines)*
 BEGGAR (m/f) Beggar in Somewhere-Between. *(1 line)*
 YAWNER (m/f) Tired person, possibly in pajamas. *(1 line)*
 ANGIE/MOTHER 2 (f) An actress for the Dream Theatre. *(37 lines)*

- BOSS (m/f)A stage manager for the Dream Theatre.
(21 lines)
- BOB (m)An actor for the Dream Theatre. (2 lines)
- BILL (m).....An actor for the Dream Theatre. (2 lines)
- HANK (m).....A “leading man” type actor for the Dream
Theatre. (4 lines)
- JESSIE 3 (f)Dressed same as JESSIE 1.
- PATCH 3 (m/f)Has the same “button eyes” and “head full
of fluff” as PATCH 1. (74 lines)
- DIRECTOR (m/f)Voice in the darkness. (13 lines)
- KEEPER 1 (m/f)A military looking door guard. (11 lines)
- KEEPER 2 (m/f)A military looking door guard. (11 lines)
- HEAD OF STATE 1 (m/f).....Stately looking bust of a person.
(30 lines)
- HEAD OF STATE 2 (m/f).....Stately looking bust of a person.
(28 lines)
- HEAD OF STATE 3 (m/f).....Stately looking bust of a person.
(28 lines)
- JESSIE 4 (f)Dressed same as JESSIE 1. (59 lines)
- PATCH 4 (m/f)Has the same “button eyes” and “head full
of fluff” as PATCH 1. (59 lines)
- JESSIE 5 (f)Dressed same as JESSIE 1. (72 lines)
- PATCH 5 (m/f)Has the same “button eyes” and “head full
of fluff” as PATCH 1. (69 lines)
- MJ (m).....The male Jessie, dressed the same as
JESSIE 1. (5 lines)
- GURU (m/f).....A wise mystic type character. (19 lines)
- EXTRAS:**
- *THEM (m/f)Dark, shadowy, scary creatures played by
3-6 actors. (Non-Speaking)
- BODY OF GOVERNMENTa stately looking, headless body that runs
through a scene. (Non-Speaking)
- OTHER ACTORS.....Extras for the Dream Theatre.
(Non-Speaking)
- PASSERS BY 1, 2, 3, 4 (m/f)People passing by. (Non-Speaking)
- RUSHERS 1, 2 (m/f)People rushing by in Somewhere-
Between. (Non-Speaking)

*-Even though they do not have lines, the Them are essential to the play. See Production Notes for a detailed description.

NOTE: Doubling is possible for Keepers, Them, Passers-by, puppets etc.

DURATION: Approx. 90 minutes

PRODUCTION NOTES

JESSIE is played by more than one actress (and even one actor) throughout the play. Each JESSIE *must* wear *exactly* the same outfit. Each time the change in actor should be more drastic and noticeable.

PATCH is also played by more than one actor; however the only thing that needs to remain the same is the “eyes,” which are constructed using large buttons like sunglasses, and the “head full of fluff” which can be as simple as a strategically placed bit of cotton batting on a bobby-pin. Clothing for PATCH should always be ragged and patchwork in nature, but can change throughout, as can the make-up. In the original production, all Patch actors teased their hair, added a few pieces of cotton batting with bobby pins, and painted their faces to look a bit like a Raggedy Anne doll. Each actor had their own set of glasses which were made of circles of black leather with four holes punched near the center. These were held on by bent wires hot-glued to the leather. Other options include making the button eyes out of sunglasses with dots of white paint, or even just make-up, though this last choice is not recommended.

The doll itself should look as though it has been patched and repaired so many times little to none of the original doll remains. The doll should look well-loved and friendly, NOT creepy or scary. Cloth doll blanks can be purchased online for relatively cheap and patches and details added to meet the production needs.

HEADS OF STATE can be played by three to five actors. Lines can be split accordingly. The original “bust” illusion was created by actors in a cabinet with holes that allow them to poke head and shoulders through the top. Clothing, crowns and makeup were black with bronze to look like aged bronze busts, but anything that makes them look statue-like works.

GURU LEVITATION is achieved by building a cane that connects to a metal plate beneath the actor. The cane actually extends up the sleeve, down the side and has a small platform for the actor to sit on. Lifting legs up achieves “levitation” with only the tip of the cane touching the ground. The platform and seat are hidden by loose, flowing clothing. This, however is just a suggestion, and other means may be used if applicable. Be careful that the actor is not too heavy for the platform. In the original production the setup and strike of this set piece was hidden by a tech in a large cloak to keep the audience from seeing how the illusion was accomplished. This illusion was quite successful and well received by the audience.

MOTHER and MOTHER 2 – These are played by different actresses, but they *must* be wearing the exact same outfit. MOTHER 2 will need some place on her outfit, or on stage, to hide white gloves and THEM mask of some sort for the transformation into one of THEM.

*THEM – Originally played by five actors wearing all black with white neutral masks and white gloves. Actors contorted their bodies and walks into very unnatural gaits. This unnatural movement coupled with a swift light change and loud discordant music makes THEM quite frightening. Despite having no speaking lines the part of THEM is essential to the plot and **MUST** be filled by at least three actors, more would be better.

SCENE 1.5 - This scene is completely optional and was written for theatres who want to experiment with or already have done puppetry. The scene is not essential to the plot and was not performed in the original production.

AUTHOR NOTES

This play was written to be performed with a large, ensemble cast and be as flexible as possible. With that in mind, if you are lucky enough to have more male actors than female, the character of JESSIE can be played by males. Unless there is a very specific reason not to, most of the cast is gender-flexible with the swapping of a few pronouns as needed.

The character of PATCH is written using the male pronoun only to help clarify who is being referred to in stage directions. Patch was actually played by all females in the original production.

Some of the room descriptions have been left intentionally vague so that room design can be as extensive or simple as needed. The idea is that it is a dream world. Some rooms may have very intricate and surreal backgrounds, some may be simply lighting effects, but the only limits to what the rooms look like is the imagination of the design crew and the technical limitations of time and budget. The more strange and interesting things that can be added the better; however, the entire play can also be performed with just the doors and simple lighting effects as well.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: Jeff McKillip is a high school Drama and Art teacher with three young children of his own. This is his second published play and his first full length play that is not an adaptation.

PROPS

- Tissues
- Tea Cup
- Small Trash Bin
- Box
- Hand Mirror
- Alice In Wonderland Book
- Photo Album
- Patch Doll
- Room Decorations (Director's Choice)
- Bed/Hospital Gurney
- Squeaky Hammer

- Plastic Saw
- Plastic Screw Driver
- Plastic Hammer
- Stapler
- Sausage Links
- Rubber Chicken
- Fur
- Brass Clock
- Glue
- Dog Nose Mask
- Pig Nose Mask
- Duck Nose Mask
- Mouse Nose Mask
- Surgical Masks
- Cotton Batting (Fluff)
- Button "Eyes" Glasses
- Street Sign
- Make-Up
- Assorted Strange Props
- Large Weapon
- Trucker Hat
- Clip Board
- Guard's Pikes
- Desk Accessories
- Oversized Objects
- Slightly Different Bedroom Décor
- Guru Stand (For Floating Effect)

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Somewhere-Between Premiered at McQueen High School in Reno, NV
on April 30th – May 3rd 2014 with the following cast:

JESSIE 1	Sam Dyer
MOTHER	Cassady Anderson
DR.DOG/BOB/EXTRA	John Giammona Wilber
DR. DUCK/BILL/EXTRA	Hector Mendoza
DR. PIG/YAWNER/ACTOR/EXTRA.....	Austin Pierce-Taylor
PATCH 1	Brooke Ludel
JESSIE 2	Ivy May
PATCH 2	Laural Whisenant
ANGIE/MOTHER 2/PASSERBY 1	Susan Holmstrom
BOSS/PASSERBY 3.....	Ashlan Gardella
HANK/PASSERBY 2	Tommy Craig
JESSIE 3	Nicole Moreland
PATCH 3	Libby Schipper
DIRECTOR/PASSERBY 4.....	Elaine McQuillan
KEEPER 1/RUSHER 1	Olivia Williamson
KEEPER 2/RUSHER 2	Hanna Danforth
HEAD OF STATE 1	Delaney Martin
HEAD OF STATE 2	Melina Hollinger
HEAD OF STATE 3	Haley Wehking
JESSIE 4	Tori Davidson-Ladd
PATCH 4	Randi Owens
JESSIE 5	Yolanda Contreras
PATCH 5	Payden Thompson
M J/THEM.....	Nate Eaken
GURU/BEGGAR	Marisa King
THEM.....	Jessica Schmitt, Nate Eaken, Tyler-Ann Ellison, Bella Cudworth
BODY OF GOVERNMENT	Marcy Abac
EXTRAS/ACTORS	Natalie Barrera

Dedication

For my Dad – the true H.M.F.W.I.C.

See you Somewhere-Between, Pop.

DO NOT COPY

ACT ONE, SCENE 1
THE NIGHT BEFORE

SETTING: *Inside JESSIE's bedroom. A bed, a nightstand, a lamp.*

AT RISE: *Lights up on SR. The room is sparsely decorated to indicate a child's bedroom. JESSIE sits reading in her bed, dressed in pajama pants and matching shirt. She is frail and looks sickly, small for her age. She coughs a little as she reads a large, hard-bound copy of "Alice in Wonderland". Her MOTHER enters through SR door.*

MOTHER: How are you feeling tonight, honey?

JESSIE 1: Okay, I guess.

MOTHER: I brought you some tea. Here you go.

JESSIE 1: Thanks, Mom.

MOTHER fusses about JESSIE, feeling her forehead to see if her fever has gone down – it hasn't – fluffing her pillows, perhaps cleaning wads of tissue off the floor and throwing them out, etc.

JESSIE 1: *(Puts the book down.)* Mom?

MOTHER: Yeah, Sweetie?

JESSIE 1: Oh... nothing.

MOTHER: Really?

JESSIE 1: Yeah.

MOTHER: Are you sure?

JESSIE 1: I guess. It's just that tomorrow is...

MOTHER: Kind of a big day?

JESSIE 1: Yeah.

MOTHER: It will be okay. Doctor Dodgson is very good and has helped a lot of kids.

JESSIE 1: But... What if I go out that door and... and... it's the last time...

MOTHER: Oh, honey! You can't think that way. Everything will be okay.

JESSIE 1: Okay, but what if I go out that door and come back... different?

MOTHER: You will be different. You'll be healthy.

JESSIE 1: That's not what I mean.

MOTHER: You're going to go out that door and down to the hospital for a little while, and then you'll be back home and on the road to recovery before you know it. Then you'll be able to go back to school and make new friends and you'll meet boys and get invited to dances, and then you'll turn into a rebellious, know-it-all teenager who wants nothing to do with her boring old Mom and, well... there'll just be no living with you after that, will there?

JESSIE 1: (*Smiling a bit at the chiding.*) Moooommm...

MOTHER: (*Lovingly.*) It will be okay, Sweetie. I promise.

JESSIE 1: How can you make that promise, Mom?

MOTHER: Because I'm your mother. (Beat) I have something for you. I'll be right back.

MOTHER exits through the SR door. JESSIE sits drinking her tea for a moment, coughs a bit, sips more tea. MOTHER returns with a small moving box which she sets on JESSIE's bed and opens.

JESSIE 1: What is this?

MOTHER: Things that used to belong to your Great-Grandmother Alice.

JESSIE 1 reaches into the box and pulls out a small old photo album and begins to flip through the pages.

JESSIE 1: Is this her?

MOTHER: Yes. I'd forgotten how much you look like she did when she was young.

JESSIE 1: She changed so much... (*Beat.*) I don't think I'd ever wear that, though.

MOTHER: You never know. With all the styles that are coming back these days...

MOTHER reaches into the box and pulls out a patchwork doll with button eyes.

MOTHER: This was hers when she was a child. I want you to have it.

JESSIE 1: Mom, I'm not eight anymore.

MOTHER: I know. I just thought... I guess it was a little silly.

JESSIE 1: What's this? *(Pulls a small, silver mirror out of the box.)*

MOTHER: That was hers, too. That's got quite a story.

JESSIE 1: What do you mean?

MOTHER: I didn't know Great-Grandma Alice very well. By the time I knew her she was very old and more than a little senile, but she always had that mirror. She used to claim that she was "*The Alice*" and that was "*The Looking Glass*."

JESSIE 1: Was she?

MOTHER: Of course not. The real Alice was Alice Liddell, not Alice Little, and she lived in the 1850's.

JESSIE 1: *(A little disappointed.)* So... it's not the real looking glass then, is it?

MOTHER: Who knows? We don't know where she got it. Your grandmother said she always had it and kept it close, even before she...

JESSIE 1: Lost her marbles?

MOTHER: Got old. *(Beat.)* The point is, Great-Grandma Alice always said it had a kind of magic of its own, and it always seemed to make her feel better just to hold it. She said it reminded her of who she was. *(Shrugs.)* Who knows? Maybe it will help you feel better, too. *(She leans over and kisses her on the forehead.)* Now you need some rest.

JESSIE 1: Can I read a little more first?

MOTHER: A few more minutes. Then you need to go to sleep.

MOTHER puts the photo album back in the box and reaches for the doll.

JESSIE 1: No, it's okay... I mean. You can leave that, too... if you want.

MOTHER: *(Smiles.)* Okay.

JESSIE 1: Thanks, Mom.

MOTHER: Good night, Sweetie.

JESSIE 1: Good night.

MOTHER moves to the door SR to exit.

JESSIE 1: Hey, Mom?

MOTHER: Yes?

JESSIE 1: Do you really think I'll make new friends?

MOTHER: Of course you will, Honey. You're kind and sweet and smart—

JESSIE 1: – and weird...

MOTHER: Who says so?

JESSIE 1: Mom, I'm not stupid. I watch TV. I'm small for my age, and I'm sick all the time, and I look like I'm sick all the time, even when I don't feel like it, which isn't that often.

MOTHER: Well, after tomorrow, when everything is a success, you'll feel better and you'll start to show it. Besides, remember what they say, "It's not what's on the outside..."

JESSIE 1: "...It's what's on the inside that counts." I know.

MOTHER: That's right. Now don't stay up too late. *(Exits, closing the door behind her.)*

JESSIE 1: *(Looks into the small mirror.)* What does it count when your insides are as sick as your outsides look? *(Sigh.)* Sometimes I wish I were someone else... I don't want to be reminded of who I am. *(Sets the mirror down on the nightstand and looks at the doll a bit.)* I bet you don't worry about what's on the outside or the inside.

JESSIE 1 carefully inspects the Doll for a few moments, then places it on her nightstand, and settles in to read. She slowly drifts off to sleep. Lights fade down but not out. The center stage door is slowly illuminated. It opens slowly and three doctors with surgical masks enter. They un-cover JESSIE and reveal that she is on a hospital gurney. They raise the gurney and wheel her through the door. Lights cross-fade to stage left, a surgical theatre.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2
ANIMAL DOCTORS

SETTING: *A surgical theatre on the SL side.*

AT RISE: *The strange doctors stand around JESSIE. DR. DUCK arranges a tray of tools and several odd-looking machines and medical equipment that is somehow not quite correct.*

DR. DOG: Are we ready?

DR. DUCK: Ready when you are.

DR. PIG: Masks?

DR. DOG: *(Nods.)* Masks.

They remove their surgical masks to reveal animal noses that match their names. DR. PIG takes JESSIE'S pulse for a moment, takes out a plastic squeaky hammer and bops JESSIE on the head with it. JESSIE wakes up, looks around a bit frantic at first, but only able to move her head. All tools mentioned should be obviously plastic toys.

JESSIE 1: Why can't I move?

DR. DOG: Because if you did, that would make this procedure a heck of a lot more challenging. Saw.

DR. DUCK: Saw. And if we wanted a challenge we would have become telemarketers.

DR. PIG: Yeah, those guys are gluttons for punishment.

JESSIE 1: This can't be real.

DR. PIG: What makes you say that?

JESSIE 1: Well, things like this don't happen in real life.

DR. DOG: What is real? Wrench.

DR. DUCK: Wrench.

JESSIE 1: Well... real is... what you experience as real.

DR. DUCK: You're experiencing this, aren't you?

JESSIE 1: Yes, but... Okay, real is a shared experience. Something verifiable by the masses.

DR. PIG: How about all the times you've been alone then? Those have not been real either? No masses to verify it.

DR. DUCK: What about when no one is around? What is real then?

DR. DOG: If a tree is marked in the woods, and no one is around to sniff it, is there a scent?

DR. PIG: Is there a tree?

DR. DUCK: Where does your reflection go when you step away from the pond?

DR. PIG: If you go to market and no one stays home, does home still exist?

DR. DOG: Or perhaps you think the room just disappears when you're not there to be in it...

JESSIE 1: No. It's... There has to be a way to back up the idea that something is real – to verify it. Otherwise everything becomes subjective.

DR. PIG: I hereby verify that this is real. All in favor?

DR. DOG: Aye.

DR. DUCK: Aye.

JESSIE 1: No! You can't verify that it's real, because you yourselves are not real.

DR. DOG: I think I'm real. Cogito ergo sum. Hammer.

DR. DUCK: Hammer. I think therefore I am.

JESSIE 1: No. You only *think* you think you are. You really don't think at all.

DR. DOG: How do you know?

JESSIE 1: Because I'm sick.

DR. PIG: Obviously, or we wouldn't be operating on you.

DR. DOG: Exactly. After all, we're not quacks. No offense. Screwdriver.

DR. DUCK: None taken. Screwdriver.

JESSIE 1: No, I mean I'm sick, and you're just my nightmare.

DR. DOG: If you think this is a nightmare, wait until you see the insurance paperwork.

The Doctors laugh at the joke and abruptly cut back to silence. DR. DOG pulls out a length of sausage links, sniffs them, smiles, and is about to take a bite when DR. PIG coughs pointedly and shakes his head at DR. DOG. DR. DOG looks ashamed and puts them back.

JESSIE 1: (*Witnessing the exchange.*) Maybe I'm mad.

DR. DUCK: Well, you do seem a little agitated, but I wouldn't say mad.

JESSIE 1: Not that kind of mad. I mean crazy, like Great-Grandma Alice. Maybe you are just symptoms of my dementia. Maybe I'm in a hospital somewhere already. Maybe something went wrong and I'm strapped to a bed, drooling and muttering incomprehensibles to myself.

DR. PIG: Well, that's a rather bleak outlook.

DR. DOG: Indeed. If that's the case, then what are you paying us for?

DR. DOG pulls out a rubber chicken, examines it, shakes his head, and puts it back.

JESSIE 1: That's the point. I'm not paying you. You're not *real*. You're just in my head.

DR. DUCK: Rather egocentric, don't you think? I mean, I could as easily say that you're the one not real, and I'm just some surgeon having a bad dream.

DR. PIG: Or I may be an anesthetist in a coma dreaming you.

JESSIE 1: But you're not. I'm real. This isn't. Things like this don't happen. You are figments of my imagination! You're just symptoms of my sickness.

DR. DOG: How do you know?

JESSIE 1: Because... Because you don't know anything except what I know.

DR. DUCK: Prove it.

JESSIE 1: Fine. I don't know anything about surgery.

DR. DOG: Then how is it that I'm performing surgery on you?

DR. DOG Pulls out a piece of fur repeating the action for the rubber chicken.

JESSIE 1: You're not! Your tools are plastic! You can't perform surgery with plastic tools!

DR. DUCK: How do you know? By your own admission you know nothing about surgery.

JESSIE 1: I don't. But... This isn't real!

DR. PIG: So you keep saying. But what is your basis for comparison?

JESSIE 1: My memories. Rubber chickens and fur are not what's inside a person!

DR. DUCK: And I suppose you know better what's on the inside?

JESSIE 1: I remember a world where people were filled with guts and blood, not rubber chickens and fur!

DR. DOG: Guts and blood? That's disgusting.

DR. DOG Pulls out an old-fashioned brass alarm clock. He listens to it, shakes it a bit, then proceeds to wind it up before putting it back in JESSIE.

DR. PIG: What if your memories are not really yours?

JESSIE 1: What do you mean? Of course they're mine.

DR. PIG: You said we do not think, we only think we think. What if you only think you remember?

DR. DOG: Yes. What if your memories are all false. What if someone gave you those memories? Stapler.

JESSIE 1: What would be the point of giving me false memories that do not fit the world in which I live?

DR. DUCK: Stapler. To confuse you of course.

DR. DOG: Yes. To throw you off the scent, so-to-speak.

JESSIE 1: What scent? Who would want to confuse me?

DR. PIG: Them, of course.

JESSIE 1: Them who?

DR. DOG: The Them that say what They say.

JESSIE 1: Oh. I think I've heard of Them...

DR. PIG: And you know what They say.

JESSIE 1: Yeah. I guess so. "It's not what's on the outside –

DR. DOG: SSSHHHHHH!!!

DR. PIG: They can't have you telling everyone what They say, can They?

DR. DUCK: Loose lips sink ships, after all.

JESSIE 1: So They say, but...

DR. PIG: He who lies down with dogs, and such. No offense.

DR. DOG: None taken. A bird in hand, as it were... No offense. Glue.

DR. DUCK: None taken. Glue.

DR. PIG: So there you have it. A perfectly rational explanation. We are as real as the reality in which we exist.

DR. DOG: And in addition to that, I just fixed your ticker. You'll be good for the next three months or 126,000 minutes. Whichever comes first.

DR. PIG: Unless it's a leap year.

DR. DOG: Of course. If it's a leap year that changes things doesn't it? But don't worry. We'll see you in a week. The nurse will have your bill. No offense.

DR. DUCK: None taken.

PATCH 1 enters with a nurse hat and coat and a mouse nose.

PATCH 1: Doctors.

DR. PIG: Nurse.

PATCH 1: Is the patient ready for transport?

JESSIE 1: Transport where?

DR. DOG: Yes, I've just finished closing. She's completely prepped for processing.

JESSIE 1: Processing what?

DR. DOG: Your memorectomy, of course. They don't like people knowing what They say, after all.

DR. DUCK: Doctor!

DR. DOG: Oh, don't worry so much! It's not like she's going to remember. (*To JESSIE*) Which is exactly the point, of course. They process you so you don't remember.

DR. PIG: And if you don't remember, you can't change. They don't like change.

JESSIE 1: Remember what?

DR. DUCK: Exactly.

DR. PIG: Speaking of which, (*Addresses PATCH*.) I don't remember seeing you around here.

DR. DUCK: Yes, are you new? You seem a bit... Mousy.

PATCH 1: I'm, uh... I'm filling in for Nurse Pony. (*Beat*.) She was feeling a little hoarse.

DR. PIG: Well the horse is hoarse.

DR. DUCK: Of course.

DR. DOG: Of course.

DR. PIG: And there's just no talking to some people.

DR. DUCK: Off you go then.

DR. DOG: See you soon, Alice.

JESSIE 1: It's Jessie.

DR.DOG: That's what I said.

PATCH 1: Thank you, Doctors.

PATCH 1 leaves with JESSIE 1, wheeling her through the center door. Lights crossfade back to SR.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3 TRANSITION

SETTING: *The SR room is now empty with only the doors and some interesting lighting to give it an unworldly feel.*

AT RISE: *PATCH 1 stops pushing JESSIE 1 on the gurney.*

PATCH 1: Well, glad that's over with. Are you going to lay there all night?

JESSIE 1: *(Tentatively sits up, stands.)* Wha... Who are you?

PATCH 1: *(Extends a hand.)* Name's Patch. Nice to meet you. We don't often get your kind here. I didn't think it was a good idea to let you stay with them too long. Those doctors, I mean. They can sure do a number on you. Especially if you let them get in your head.

JESSIE 1: *(Shakes PATCH's hand.)* Um... I'm Jessie.

PATCH 1 pulls JESSIE 1 in and examines her head like a monkey looking for lice.

PATCH 1: They didn't get in your head did they? Nasty little buggers if they did. Hard to get rid of, you know.

JESSIE 1: *(Struggles.)* Let me go!

PATCH 1: *(Lets go.)* Nope. Looks like you're clean. That's good. Don't need hitch-hikers in this place. Hard enough to get around without extra intellectual baggage, if you know what I mean.

Throughout the following exchange PATCH 1 takes off the nurse outfit to reveal the patchwork clothing underneath.

JESSIE 1: I don't think I do.

PATCH 1: That's okay. Neither do I most of the time.

JESSIE 1: Where are we?

PATCH 1: Somewhere-Between.

JESSIE 1: Between what?

PATCH 1: Oh, Here and There.

JESSIE 1: I don't understand.

PATCH 1: That seems to be a problem with you, doesn't it?

JESSIE 1: I suppose...

PATCH 1: Look. If you start off Here and you're going There, but you haven't got There yet, where are you?

JESSIE 1: Somewhere between?

PATCH 1: Exactly.

JESSIE 1: Then where are we going?

PATCH 1: Not There, that's for sure! Horrible place. Full of Grouples and Hudgewallers.

JESSIE 1: And... That's bad?

PATCH 1: It isn't good, I can tell you.

JESSIE 1: Then where are we going?

PATCH 1: You may well ask.

JESSIE 1: (*Beat.*) I just did.

PATCH 1: Did what?

JESSIE 1: Ask.

PATCH 1: What do you want me to ask?

JESSIE 1: I don't want you to ask anything. I want you to answer my question!

PATCH 1: Then you really should say what you mean.

JESSIE 1: I did!

PATCH 1: No you didn't. You said "ask," when clearly you meant to say "answer".

JESSIE 1: What is wrong with you?

PATCH 1: Head full of fluff, what's your excuse?

JESSIE 1: What?

PATCH 1: Fluff.

PATCH picks a large piece of fluff out and drops it on the floor. It crawls across the stage (accomplished by black thread and an off-stage tech reeling it in.) PATCH watches it go with a sigh.

PATCH 1: My thoughts are constantly running away from me.

JESSIE 1: (*Exasperated.*) Look, are you here to help me or not?

PATCH 1: Yes.

JESSIE 1: Then please, just answer my question. Where are we going?

PATCH 1: Oh! I have to take you to see the Heads of State.

JESSIE 1: But, I'm in my pajamas!

PATCH 1: That's okay, they don't even have bodies.

JESSIE 1: What?

PATCH 1: Are you sure they didn't get in your head? Maybe crawl in an ear or something? You seem to be having trouble hearing!

JESSIE 1: No!

PATCH 1: No they didn't, or No you're not sure?

JESSIE 1: No they did not get into my head!

PATCH 1: Oh, good. You had me worried there for a second. (*Beat.*) All right then, let's go.

JESSIE 1: (*Resigned sigh.*) Down the rabbit hole we go then, Scarecrow.

PATCH 1: Eww! No! It's not a rabbit hole (*PATCH 1 opens SR door, brooms and buckets and other assorted junk falls out.*) it's a broom closet. Now that's not right. Hang on a minute. (*PATCH kicks the stuff out of the way and closes the door.*)

JESSIE 1: What now?

PATCH 1: Just give it a moment. And I'm not a scarecrow, by the way.

JESSIE 1: I know, I was mixing references.

PATCH 1: Well you shouldn't. It's rude.

JESSIE 1: Sorry.

PATCH looks at an obviously watch-less wrist.

PATCH 1: That should do it.

PATCH 1 opens the SR door again and dark purple light streams in. Simultaneously the lights dim SR, the door opens SL, and the SL room is lit in dark purple light. As PATCH 1 and JESSIE 1 exit SR, PATCH 2 and JESSIE 2 enter SL. Both doors close at the same time.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4 CHANGE

SETTING: *A dark room on the SL side. A signpost with labels pointing in every direction, some pointing in more than one direction, (labels can include places such as: Here, There, Anywhere, Everywhere, Nowhere, Asleep, Awake, Then, Now, etc.) stands in the room.*

AT RISE: *PATCH 2 can be wearing completely different attire, though it should still retain some of its patchwork quality and she should still be wearing the same large button "glasses". JESSIE 2 should be a different actress wearing the same pajamas. JESSIE 2 doesn't notice her own change right away. Other EXTRAS cross throughout the scene. These can be as simple or as strange as the director chooses. They should, however, all move with purpose from one door to the next, like the hustle and bustle of a busy city.*

JESSIE 2: It's dark in here.

PATCH 2: Is it?

JESSIE 2: Can't you... *(Looks at PATCH 2.)* What happened to you?

PATCH 2: What do you mean?

JESSIE 2: You look... different.

PATCH 2: I always look different. Except when I'm the same, of course, but that doesn't usually last long.

JESSIE 2: You're very confusing.

PATCH 2: Am I?

JESSIE 2: Yes.

PATCH 2: Are you sure it's not just that you are easily confused?

JESSIE 2: What's that supposed to mean?

PATCH 2: Case in point.

JESSIE 2: Nevermind. *(Beat.)* It's cold in here.

PATCH 2: I thought you said it was dark.

JESSIE 2: I did.

PATCH 2: I wish you'd make up your mind.

JESSIE 2, rubs her arms to battle the chill and notices that she's changed.

JESSIE 2: Wait! What happened to me?

PATCH 2: What do you mean?

JESSIE 2: Something's wrong.

JESSIE 2 pats herself, feeling different.

JESSIE 2: I'm not me!

PATCH 2: *(Trying to quiet her and looking around nervously.)* Of course you are. Who else would you be?

JESSIE 2: But I didn't look like this before.

PATCH 2: Keep your voice down. Is that what makes you who you are? Your looks?

JESSIE 2: No, but that's part of it.

PATCH 2: Why? Can't you still be you even if you looked like someone else? I thought that's what you wanted.

JESSIE 2: What? No! I mean, I did, but... I didn't think...

PATCH 2: Maybe that's the problem. Come on, let's go.

JESSIE 2: What if it happens again?

PATCH 2: Oh. It will. It happens through almost every door, the further you go.

JESSIE 2: But I don't want to be someone else!

PATCH 2: *(Loudly.)* You're not. You're you. And you should be glad of it. *(Whispers to her.)* If I hadn't caught you before you were processed, you'd only ever be the you that you were, not the you that you are, or the you that you'll become.

JESSIE 2: What does that mean?

PATCH 2: Processing keeps you the same, but I saved you. Now you can still change.

JESSIE 2: But what if I change too much?

PATCH 2: You change every moment you live.

JESSIE 2: Not like this!

PATCH 2: Did you always look like you did before?

JESSIE 2: No.

PATCH 2: So this is no different. Let's go.

JESSIE 2: But I always changed so slowly before.

PATCH 2: Did you? That must be boring.

BEGGAR: Spare some change?

PATCH 2: No! No change here. Move along. No change at all. (*To JESSIE 2.*) Let's go.

JESSIE 2: Why are you in such a hurry?

PATCH 2: Oh, no reason. We can stay as long as you like... as long as you'd like to leave soon.

JESSIE 2: What is this place?

PATCH 2: I told you, this is Somewhere-Between.

JESSIE 2: But that doesn't mean anything.

PATCH 2: Of course it does. It means everything. Everywhere is somewhere between There and Somewhere Else. Or Here and There, depending on how you look at it.

JESSIE 2: So, we're nowhere?

PATCH 2: Perish the thought! We're Somewhere-Between! Nowhere is a terrible place to be. Almost as bad as There.

JESSIE 2: Where?

PATCH 2: There. And if you start asking me who's on first, I'm going to take you Here and leave you there.

JESSIE 2: Do you ever make sense?

PATCH 2: (*Waxing poetic.*) There is a place between Here and There, that really isn't Anywhere. And in that place, called Somewhere-Between, is the place where people dream.

JESSIE 2: Dream?

PATCH 2: Sometimes, but not at the moment, thank you. Somewhere-Between is between everything. It's the space between light and dark where shadows hide.

YAWNER: It's that place between Sleep and Awake.

PASSERBY 1: The place between Here and There.

PASSERBY 2: The space between the wall and the paint.

PASSERBY 3: Between the bread and the butter.

PASSERBY 4: Between child and adult.

RUSHER 1: Between Then and Now.

RUSHER 2: Or Now and Then.

PATCH 2: Depending on which way you're heading. To put it simply, Somewhere-Between is any place that's not where you started, nor where you want to be.

JESSIE 2: I... Think I understand.

PATCH 2: Good. Now let's get going.

JESSIE 2: *(Reluctantly and still slightly confused.)* Ohh-kaay...

PATCH 2 grabs JESSIE 2's hand and leads her through the center door to SR.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5 GREENROOM

SETTING: *Lights cross fade to SR lit in any color but green. SR side is set up like a greenroom. There is a prop bin by the SR door filled with various props, the stranger the better.*

AT RISE: *Actors sit on stools. BOB paces nervously in the background. ANGIE is just finishing extremely heavy makeup. BILL, HANK and ACTORS are milling about doing various peculiar warm-ups (ie. Jumping jacks, talking to a wall, nonsense vocal warm-ups.) BOSS enters SR carrying a clipboard. JESSIE 2 and PATCH 2 enter SR, but are silent observers for the first part of the scene. Other characters are too caught up in their own business to notice them.*

ANGIE: What do we have tonight, Boss?

BOSS: Looks like a recurring on stage one. You can relax, Bob, you know this one.

BOB: Which one?

BOSS: Mother insecurity with a dash of self-doubt and a liberal seasoning of primal fear. You'll be playing the hunting trip uncle again.

BOB: I'll go get the meat mask.

BOB exits SR grabbing a ridiculously large weapon from the prop bin on the way out.

ANGIE: Stern Matron or Unfeeling Workaholic?

BOSS: Neither. High strung guilt-monger, and don't skimp on the mascara... for the tears.

ANGIE: Hmm... Mixing things up a bit are we?

BOSS: Can't let our audiences get too comfortable, can we?

ANGIE: So it would seem. (*ANGIE Exits SR.*)

BOSS: (*Claps BILL on the back.*) I need you to play the bus driver on One tonight, Bill.

BILL: Where am I driving?

BOSS: Don't worry about it, I'll have tech take care of it. Just make sure you use "the voice" and wear the trucker hat.

BILL: Ten-Four, Good Buddy.

BILL snaps a sloppy salute and exits SR grabbing a beat-up mesh trucker hat on the way out.

BOSS: I need the rest of you on Stage Two, we're going the romantic comedy route tonight.

Groans from the remaining ACTORS

BOSS: I know, I know, but the Management wants to bring our two audiences closer together. Desperate times call for desperate measures, my friends.

HANK: What do you need from me, Boss?

BOSS: Tonight we need a rugged sort of Depp-slash-Grant type.

HANK: Hugh, or Carry?

BOSS: Hugh... (*Checks clipboard.*) Oh, and throw in a little Frank, too.

HANK: Can do, Boss. Oh, and uh, Sparrow or Scissors?

BOSS: De Marco.

HANK: Got it.

BOSS: The rest of you, the usual parts. Get to places!

The remaining ACTORS all exit through the CS door donning masks and/or other peculiar character traits as they go, leaving only BOSS, JESSIE 2 and PATCH 2 in the greenroom.

BOSS: And who are you? Cast and Crew only allowed in the greenroom. No spectators! *(Beat.)* Wait a minute! *(To PATCH.)* Don't I know you?

PATCH 2: *(Nervous laugh.)* I, eh... I just have one of those faces.

BOSS: Then what are you doing here? The greenroom is for Cast and Crew only! You're not allowed back here!

JESSIE 2: We're... Umm... we... eh... that is...

PATCH 2: We were sent here by the Management.

BOSS: What?

JESSIE 2: Uh... Yes. That's right. Management sent us to, uh, check up on the operation.

BOSS: Suppose that's just like them. Surprise inspections...

PATCH 2: Yes, well... You know what They say about surprise inspections...

BOSS: Yes... I mean, no! Do not! Who told you that??

JESSIE 2: Oh, yes. And we'd hate to have Them find out.

BOSS: No! I mean... heh. I'm sure we can come to some sort of... arrangement.

PATCH 2: Tell you what, you just let us do our little inspection, try to stay out of our way and we'll be gone before you know it.

BOSS: And um...

PATCH 2: Oh, what They don't know won't hurt you.

BOSS: Of course... Thank you! Stay as long as you like. If there's anything you need, anything at all, just let me know.

JESSIE 2: Thank you. Keep that attitude and Management should be very pleased with our report.

PATCH 2: Uh... Best not to let anyone else know we were here. Should anyone ask.

JESSIE 2: Surprise inspection and all.

BOSS: Yes. Of course. Well. *(Beat.)* I'll just get to it then?

JESSIE 2: Yes.

PATCH 2: Yes, yes. There's a good man.

PATCH 2 and JESSIE 2 pat BOSS on the back reassuringly as they shoo him out the USSR door

JESSIE 2: What was that about?

PATCH 2: *(Looks around.)* I didn't think we'd come through here.

JESSIE 2: Through where?

PATCH 2: The Dream Theatre.

JESSIE 2: What is The Dream Theatre?

PATCH 2: It's where dreams are performed. Well, technically this is just the greenroom.

JESSIE 2: Dreams are performed?

PATCH 2: Sure. You didn't think all those people in your dreams were just amateurs, did you?

JESSIE 2: I thought they just came out of my head?

PATCH 2: You think there's enough room in there for that many people?

JESSIE 2: I guess when you put it that way...

PATCH 2: Besides, haven't you ever noticed that people in your dreams, even people you know – people you recognize, like close friends and relatives – don't look like they should?

JESSIE 2: Yes.

PATCH 2: It's because they're not those people, they're just the Dream Players.

JESSIE 2: I always thought that was a little weird.

PATCH 2: A slap of make-up, a little characterization, and a healthy dose of Theatre Magic and bam! Bob's your uncle, Fanny's your aunt, Angie's your mother and Bill's your bus driver. (*Beat.*) Or something like that, anyway.

JESSIE 2: I suppose that makes sense, but, Patch?

PATCH 2: Yeah?

JESSIE 2: What did he mean when he said the Management wanted to bring their two audiences together?

PATCH 2: Well, there are Dream Players for every dreamer in the world. Some of them pull double shifts. And sometimes the Management... gives a little nudge to the dreamers, shall we say?

JESSIE 2: What do you mean?

PATCH 2: Ever hear of people having prophetic dreams?

JESSIE 2: Yeah.

PATCH 2: Or dreaming of their true love before they ever meet?

JESSIE 2: I've seen movies about it.

PATCH 2: Well, that's what I'm talking about. Management must have plans to bring these two dreamers together somehow, and that's why they sent down the scripts they did.

JESSIE 2: Scripts?

PATCH 2: Sure. Commissioned by Management.

JESSIE 2: So, who is the Management?

PATCH 2: The Management are the ones who commission, and control all of the Dream Theatre productions. Don't you pay attention?

JESSIE 2: So, you're saying someone else writes my dreams?

PATCH 2: Well, you certainly wouldn't come up with so many odd things on your own, would you?

JESSIE 2: I guess I never thought about it.

PATCH 2: I'm sensing a recurring theme here, but I just can't put my finger on it.

JESSIE 2: Don't be mean. I'm learning to think about a lot of things I never did before. *(Beat.)* Why do they call it the greenroom? It isn't green.

PATCH 2: Neither is Greenland. A pinky isn't pink, either. It's a mystery.

JESSIE 2: *(Beat.)* Is this the way to the Heads of State?

PATCH 2: Oh, there are many ways to get to the Heads of State. It usually involves bribery, but we'll get there.

JESSIE 2: Why do we need to go see them anyway?

PATCH 2 looks as if he is about to answer, but suddenly the USR door opens and dark shadows enter seeming to crawl and slither across the floor and walls toward PATCH 2 and JESSIE 2!

PATCH 2: They've found us! Jessie, quick, we have to go!

JESSIE 2: What are they?

PATCH 2: It's Them! We have to go!

JESSIE 2: What does that mean?

PATCH 2: I thought that was pretty clear! We. Have. To. Run!

PATCH 2 runs to JESSIE 2 and pushes her through the Center door, closing it behind them. SR lights down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6
THE GETAWAY

SETTING: *PATCH 2 and JESSIE 2 enter the SL room. It is a strange sort of waiting room where various creatures seen elsewhere in the background are seated, waiting for some sort of appointment. The creatures and the room should all be not quite right. Perhaps a “Now Serving sign with strange characters instead of numbers. None of the occupants move much or acknowledge Patch and Jessie as they pass through.*

AT RISE: *PATCH 2 leans against the closed door. JESSIE 2 walks halfway across the room before noticing that PATCH 2 stopped.*

PATCH 2: Well, that was close!

JESSIE 2: What was that?

PATCH 2: I told you, that was Them.

JESSIE 2: The Them that say what They say?

PATCH 2: And you know what They say.

JESSIE 2: And that’s bad?

PATCH 2: Don’t you pay attention at all? They don’t like people knowing what they say.

JESSIE 2: Then shouldn’t we keep running?

PATCH 2: Actually, I think we’re okay for a bit.

JESSIE 2: We’re only one door away!

PATCH 2: Are we? *(Gives JESSIE 2 a pointed look.)* Remember the broom closet?

JESSIE 2: *(Beat.)* So, we’re safe?

PATCH 2: Sure. Well, we are for now anyway. Well, I wouldn’t say safe. Well, I suppose that depends on where we are now. Look, if it will make you feel better, we can go through another door.

JESSIE 2: I think I’d like that.

PATCH 2: Off we go then.

JESSIE 2 and PATCH 2 exit USL. Lights down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 7
AUDITIONS

SETTING: *A single spotlight illuminates the middle of the SR room. It is empty. For a beat there is nothing.*

AT RISE: *PATCH 3 and JESSIE 3 enter through the SR door, and stay just out of the spotlight. They whisper in the dark.*

PATCH 3: Happy now?

JESSIE 3: Where are we?

PATCH 3: No idea. Why are we whispering?

JESSIE 3: I don't know...

A voice emanates from somewhere in the darkness.

DIRECTOR: I said, "NEXT."

JESSIE 3: *(Whispers.)* What do we do?

PATCH 3: *(Whispers.)* I have an idea.

PATCH 3 gently pushes JESSIE 3 into the spotlight before she realizes what he's doing. She tries to leave the spotlight only to find that she is stuck by the borders of the light.

JESSIE 3: *(Frantically whispers)* Patch! I'm stuck!

PATCH 3: What do you mean?

JESSIE 3: I mean I can't get out of the light.

DIRECTOR: Of course you can't. No one passes through without an audition.

JESSIE 3 stands for a moment blinking into the light and shading her eyes, trying to see into the darkness.

JESSIE 3: Hello...?

DIRECTOR: And you are?

JESSIE 3: I'm Jessie. Or at least I was. I've changed again. That seems to be happening a lot lately.

DIRECTOR: That's nice. And what will you be performing for us today?

JESSIE 3: Performing?

DIRECTOR: You did prepare a monologue, didn't you?

JESSIE 3: Monologue?

DIRECTOR: Yes. Maw-no-log. You were supposed to have one prepared for this audition.

JESSIE 3: Audition?

DIRECTOR: For the Dream Players... Where do they get these actors? (*Resigned sigh.*) Okay. So you don't have a monologue. Do you have anything to perform for us?

JESSIE 3: I was... I don't know what I'm doing here. I was just running away from –

DIRECTOR: That's nice. A lot of actors are just running away from stuff. I don't need your life story. What I do need, if you want any shot at a part, is some kind of performance. Can you do that for me? Anything you want. A song? A reading from a book? Re-enact your favorite movie scene? Interpretive dance? Poetry?

JESSIE 3: I... don't have anything prepared.

DIRECTOR: No one passes through without an audition. I don't care what you do, but you have to do something or you'll stop up the whole works. So... Do. Something.

JESSIE 3 nervously and awkwardly does any sort of strange talent or stupid human trick the actor is willing/able to do; ie. A song, dance, makes faces, contorts, pats head and rubs tummy at the same time, etc.

DIRECTOR: That's great. Thank you. Next!

PATCH 3 walks into the light gently pushing JESSIE out.

DIRECTOR: Name?

PATCH 3: Patch von Patchenstein the Fourth, child of Marcel Duchamp. (*Chuckles.*) Sorry, that's just a bit of toilet humor. (*Beat.*) Seriously though, he was my Dada. (*Beat.*) Nothing? Okay...

DIRECTOR: What will you be performing for us?

PATCH 3: This is a piece by William Shakespeare, that I wrote.

PATCH 3 launches into the following monologue with overdramatic vigor.

PATCH 3: To be, or not to be... that isn't the question.

Whether tis nobler in the world to suffer in silence,
Or to take up a task, and by the working, finish it.
To live. To dream. Perchance to do. Aye there's the rub!
For in that place between what is and what may be
Is where we live eternally.
What a piece of work is man... or woman.
How noble in reason. How infinite in imagination.
How doth people create the worlds in which they live,
And build kingdoms of common threads, and empires of ideas?
Ideas and thoughts begin the world, and end it.
For every dream's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
And many actors in their time play but a single part.
If we shadows have offended, think but this and all is mended,
That someone has slumbered here, while these visions did appear.
To snooze? To sleep? Perchance to dream.
And in that world of sleep what dreams may come?
When we have shuffled off this conscious coil, must give us pause.

Pause.

There once was a kid named Jessie
Who's subconscious was really quite messy.
She... (*Struggling.*) changed lots of times...
It's... hard to... find rhymes... (*Inspiration!*)
That don't mention a cow named Bessie. (*Self-satisfied.*)
Thank you very much. (*Bows elaborately.*)

Beat.

DIRECTOR: NEXT!

PATCH 3 and JESSIE 3 exit through CS door. Spotlight out.

ACT ONE, SCENE 8
KEEPERS

SETTING: *The SL room is populated only by two unmoving, military-looking creatures standing on either side of the center door.*

AT RISE: *Lights crossfade quickly as PATCH 3 and JESSIE 3 appear out of the CS door immediately. They do not notice the guards on their entrance. PATCH 3 stops in the middle of the room laughing.*

PATCH 3: That was fun!

JESSIE 3: You have a strange idea of fun.

PATCH 3: You didn't think so?

JESSIE 3: Standing in front of an unknown audience to do an audition I am completely unprepared for? No. Not my idea of fun.

PATCH 3: Oh, it's not so bad. Besides, when in doubt, improvise.

JESSIE 3: I'm not good at that.

PATCH 3: Not with that attitude.

JESSIE 3: What does that mean?

PATCH 3: You'll never know what you can do if you believe you can't before you even try.

JESSIE 3 looks around the room and notices the KEEPERS.

JESSIE 3: Where did they come from?

PATCH 3: Perfect! Oh, this is better than we could have hoped for, Jessie!

JESSIE 3: Are they statues?

PATCH 3: What? Oh, no! They're not statues. These are the Keepers of the State room. We're almost to the Heads.

JESSIE 3: That's great! (*Beat.*) Right?

PATCH 3: Well, to be honest I was hoping to bypass them, but there's nothing for it now. That door doesn't change, and beyond that door are the Heads of State.

JESSIE 3: But we just came from there.

PATCH 3: Oh, a door can be an exit from any number of places, but this door is only an entrance to one place. That's why the Keepers are here.

PATCH 3 approaches the door. The Keepers make a simple but definite gesture that Patch is not allowed through the door. ie. Crossing spears, stepping closer together to block the door, etc.

PATCH 3: Oh, hello. Yes, well, if we could just get past, we need to speak to the Heads of State. It's rather important.

KEEPER 1: Do you have an appointment?

PATCH 3: No, but –

KEEPER 2: -- No admittance without prior authorization!

PATCH 3: But it's really important.

KEEPER 1: If it were really that important you would have made an appointment.

KEEPER 2: And filled out the proper paperwork.

PATCH 3: Yes, but –

KEEPER 2: Without the proper paperwork your appointment cannot be verified, ratified and added to the prior documentation needed in order to request the requisite requirements –

KEEPER 1: -- for the fulfillment of forms four-five-one-dash-orange through four-six-nine-slash-monkey.

KEEPER 2: In triplicate.

PATCH 3: *(Over them.)* Look, we really need to –

KEEPER 1: *(To KEEPER 2.)* Well, of course in triplicate. It wouldn't do anyone any good if it weren't in triplicate. That goes without saying.

KEEPER 2: *(To KEEPER 1.)* You would think so, wouldn't you? But you'd be surprised how many people think they can just waltz in here with a single copy of Form seven-eighty-three-colon-banana and get right in.

KEEPERS continue to discuss various forms with bizarre annotations consisting of large numbers, a punctuation mark and an object, (ad lib as needed.) as PATCH 3 and JESSIE 3 talk.

PATCH 3: *(To JESSIE 3.)* We need to get through that door. What do we do now?

JESSIE 3: Now, I guess... we improvise. (*To the KEEPERS.*) You know the lady in reception... umm... what was her name... the tall, short-ish lady with blondie-brown-reddish hair...

KEEPER 1: Janine...?

JESSIE 3: Janine! Yes! Well she told us that we only had to fill out the form eight-seventy-six-semicolon-koala and give it to that one guy with the short-longish hair and the clean-shaven beardy-face.

KEEPER 2: Fred?

JESSIE 3: Fred! That's right!

KEEPER 1: But, form eight-seventy-six-semicolon-koala is not even for this department! It's for accounts receivable!

JESSIE 3: Ugh! I can't believe this! I just can't believe this!

PATCH 3: I'm sorry, Ma'am. Please, calm down.

JESSIE 3: Don't tell me to calm down! Somebody is getting fired over this! (*To the KEEPERS.*) and it just might be one of you!

PATCH 3: Please, Ma'am, they're just doing their jobs.

JESSIE 3: It won't be their jobs for long if they don't get this straightened out right away!

PATCH 3: Listen guys, if you could just get down there and figure out what happened I'm sure I can get her calm by the time you get back.

KEEPER 1: We can't just leave our post!

KEEPER 2: She can't really get us fired, can she?

PATCH 3: Can she? Do you have any idea who that is!?

KEEPER 1 and KEEPER 2: No.

PATCH 3: (*Pulls both KEEPERS aside and whispers*) My friends, that esteemed personage which your lowly eyes have the privilege to gaze upon over there is the High Muckety-Muck and H.M.F.W.I.C. visiting from Here on official business with the Heads, and someone, has provided her the wrong forms for the meeting which is supposed to be taking place presently post-haste. If I were you, and I'm glad I'm not, I would be running down to reception to get this little business straightened out ASAP if not sooner.

KEEPER 1: We can't desert our post.

PATCH 3: Well, it's your job... I personally would not want to be the one to tell her that she has wasted her time coming here because someone in your organization couldn't get their paperwork in order.

KEEPER 1: I'll stay here and you go down and get this paperwork problem sorted.

KEEPER 2: Or, I'll stay here and you go down and get this paperwork problem sorted.

KEEPER 1: I'm not going!

KEEPER 2: Neither am I!

JESSIE 3: If you think you can stand here and deny me my meeting just because you can't leave your post, you've got another thing coming! I'll get you fired! You, fired! Janine, Fired! Fred, Fired! I'll get your whole department fired and replaced by someone competent! So, somebody better go now, before I lose my patience!

KEEPER 2: *(Gulp.)* Before?

PATCH 3: Oh, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

KEEPER 1: Let's both go!

KEEPER 2: Deal!

KEEPER 1 and 2 EXIT post-haste.

PATCH 3: See? And you thought you weren't good at improvising.

JESSIE 3: That wasn't really improvising. I've just seen my mom fill out so much paperwork, and yell at so many paper-pushers, that was nothing. It's just a question of knowing how bureaucracy works.

PATCH 3: How's that?

JESSIE 3: No one wants to take the blame for anything.

PATCH 3: What do you think improvising is? You draw on past experiences to make something new. You just did it and you didn't even know it.

JESSIE 3: Maybe you're right.

PATCH 3: Shall we then?

JESSIE 3: Yes, let's.

PATCH 3: *(Opens the CS door.)* After you.

JESSIE 3: Why thank you. *(Beat.)* Hey, Patch... What does H.M.F.W.I.C. stand for?

PATCH 3: No idea. Head full of fluff, remember? But it sure sounded important, didn't it?

They share a laugh as they EXIT. Lights cross-fade to SR.

ACT ONE, SCENE 9
THE HEADS OF STATE

SETTING: *The SR room is occupied by a large desk with an empty chair and a counter behind it with busts of important-looking people*
see production notes

AT RISE: *PATCH 3 and JESSIE 3 enter the room. All is silent and the HEADS do not move.*

JESSIE 3: *(Beat.)* So... where are they?

PATCH 3: I don't know. I've never actually met them before.

JESSIE 3: But I thought you said...

PATCH 3: I said no such thing.

JESSIE 3: But I didn't...

PATCH 3: No. You didn't. *(Beat.)* Listen, Jessie, we need to talk.

JESSIE 3: What about?

PATCH 3: About you.

JESSIE 3: What about me?

PATCH 3: I didn't just help you for no reason.

JESSIE 3: What do you mean?

PATCH 3: I thought... I think you might be... important.

JESSIE 3: I doubt that. I've never done anything.

PATCH 3: It's not about what you've done. It's about what you can do.

It's about who you are. Or at least, who you might be. And who you might be depends entirely on what you do.

JESSIE 3: What's that supposed to mean?

PATCH 3: I think you might be The Niche.

HEADS: *(Together.)* The Niche?

JESSIE 3: Who...?

PATCH 3: Those.

JESSIE 3: I didn't expect the Heads of State to be...

PATCH 3: Heads? I told you they didn't have bodies.

JESSIE 3: I thought you were joking.

PATCH 3: So did I. I mean, I've heard, but I've never seen...

HEADS: SILENCE!

HEAD 1: Did you say

HEAD 2: you think you've found

HEAD 3: The Niche?

PATCH 3: Um, yes, Your High Headlines...es...

HEAD 1: Bring

HEAD 2: her

HEAD 3: forward.

PATCH 3 pushes JESSIE 3 toward the HEADS, where she stands nervously.

HEAD 1: Spin. (*JESSIE 3 starts to spin.*)

HEAD 2: Slowly. (*JESSIE 3 slows.*)

HEADS: HHHmmmmm...

HEAD 3: Stop.

Beat.

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