

BOY FALLS FROM SKY

Written by

Hunter Toro

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

All song lyrics referenced are taken directly from the show.

ARTISTS FIRST
Corrine Aquino

CAA
Darian Lanzetta

ii.

Please don't sue me.

Pretty please?

EXT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - BROADWAY - NIGHT

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

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

GLEN
(sigh)
Fuck.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS LOBBY - NIGHT

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

EMMA
Thanks.

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

EMMA (CONT'D)
You good?

GLEN
Sure. Just wish I wasn't conscious.

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

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

Emma holds up her untouched drink.

EMMA
Still fine.

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

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

GLEN

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

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

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

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

The bartender offers Glen a napkin.

BARTENDER

(smiling)

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

The OTHER BARTENDER smacks him on the arm.

OTHER BARTENDER

That's the writer, dude.

BARTENDER

Oh, shit.

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

TITLES: BOY FALLS FROM SKY

INT. PBS WRITER'S ROOM - DAY

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

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

SHOWRUNNER

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

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

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

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

MEGAN (ON TEXT)
JULIE TAYMOR NEEDS A WRITER FOR HER
NEXT PROJECT. CALL ME NOW, DUMMY!!!

Glen looks up.

EXT. PBS OFFICES - DAY

Glen paces on the sidewalk, phone to his ear.

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

MEGAN (O.S.)
Fuck the cartoon! This is your
dream job!

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

GLEN
What's she doing next?

MEGAN (O.S.)
A musical based on Spider-Man.

GLEN
Wait like Spider-Man Spider-Man?

MEGAN (O.S.)
Yep. You familiar?

GLEN
Yeah. My kid loves the movies.

MEGAN (O.S.)
Great. Then be in her office by 4.

GLEN
Today?

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

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

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

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

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

GLEN
They look the same!

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

Glen is stunned. He stops pacing.

GLEN
Are you serious?

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

Glen is so astonished that the insult misses him.

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

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

INT. PBS WRITER'S ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

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

The Showrunner nods.

SHOWRUNNER
Go home, Glen.

GLEN
Yep. Thank you.

Glen scurries away.

INT. BERGER HOME - KITCHEN - CONNECTICUT - DAY

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

KAYLA
Daddy!

EMMA
You're off early.

Glen surprises her by coming in for a passionate kiss.

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

Glen starts the coffee maker. He assembles some snacks.

GLEN (CONT'D)
It's Julie Taymor. Can you believe
it?

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

EMMA
The actress from Seinfeld?

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

(MORE)

GLEN (CONT'D)

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

EMMA

(shrug)

Sounds like me.

Glen pours himself a cup of coffee.

GLEN

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

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

EMMA

Wish Daddy good luck.

GLEN

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

KAYLA

Break both your legs, Daddy!

GLEN

That's my girl!

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

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

TONY (O.S.)

Come in, come in!

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

GLEN

Hi. Hello. I'm Glen.

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

TONY

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

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

TONY (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking the time to meet
with us today.

GLEN

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

Julie does not respond.

TONY

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

GLEN

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

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

TONY

A tour, that's exciting!

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

TONY (CONT'D)

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

JULIE
--When I was 20--

Tony stops. He and Glen look at Julie.

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

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

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

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

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

A beat. Tony smiles and clears his throat.

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

JULIE

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

GLEN

I think I do.

Julie nods. Tony looks completely lost.

TONY

Okay then.

JULIE

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

Glen beams.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

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

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

EXT. NEW YORK SIDEWALK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Glen, deeply unathletic, sprints on the sidewalk.

BEGIN ANIMATED SEQUENCE

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

GREEN GOBLIN

(singing)

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

(MORE)

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

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

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

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

(singing, smiling)

*My dear Manhattan, I'll have you
down to--*

(slamming keys)

Miserable smoldering black cinders!

(singing, smiling)

And I'm greeeeeen...

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

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

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

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

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

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

SPIDER-MAN

Goblin.

Green Goblin lifts a champagne flute.

GREEN GOBLIN

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

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

SPIDER-MAN

No thanks. I'm doing dry January.

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

GREEN GOBLIN

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

SPIDER-MAN

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

GREEN GOBLIN

(laughing)

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

SPIDER-MAN

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

GREEN GOBLIN

(buzzer sound)

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

Goblin cups his hands to his inhuman mouth.

GREEN GOBLIN (CONT'D)

(shouting down)

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

He shoves the piano off the building with a laugh.

SPIDER-MAN

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

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

GREEN GOBLIN

No!

SPIDER-MAN

Buh-bye! Have a safe flight!

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

INT. BERGER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

EMMA
Why is he southern?

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

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

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

He takes back his pages.

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

EMMA
What?

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

EMMA
Why didn't you just say that then?

Glen groans.

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

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

EMMA
What's wrong with good?

GLEN
"Good!" Christ.

EMMA
It was... funny?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GLEN
Does this mean--?

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

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

JULIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All you've gotta do now is convince
the boys. Then it's a done deal.

GLEN
The boys?

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

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

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

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

Glen tries to smile.

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

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

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

But Tony has gone back to his phone.

INT. AMPHITHEATER BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

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

THE EDGE
I like the font.

BONO
It's a good font.

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

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

BONO
(politely)
Hm.

The Edge looks up, slightly disappointed.

THE EDGE
Always better to be prepared.

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

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

BONO
Thank you.

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

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

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

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

THE EDGE
Oh, right. Thanks.

The assistant glares at Glen, feeling one-upped.

ASSISTANT
Yeah. Thanks a lot.

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

JULIE

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

Bono and the Edge look over at Glen.

GLEN

(weakly)

Daytime Emmy.

Tony winces.

JULIE

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

BONO

...You're absolutely sure this time?

THE EDGE

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

Julie's smile doesn't waver.

JULIE

I am sure.

Bono looks deep into Glen's eyes.

BONO

Glen, this musical has to be brilliant.

It almost sounds like a threat.

GLEN

It will be. You have my word.

Bono stares him down, then decides he believes him.

BONO

Okay.

JULIE

Okay?

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

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

Tony slaps a smiling Glen on the back.

TONY
 Welcome, mate.

GLEN
 (confused)
 Turn off the...?

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

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

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

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

ASSISTANT
 She's really lovely.

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

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

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

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

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

JULIE
Cheers.

THE EDGE
Sláinte.

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

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

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

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

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

GLEN
(pleasantly surprised)
They're pretty good!

TONY
Yeah, they're fucking U2!

Tony takes in the sweet, naive idiot before him.

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

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

GLEN
Always.

Tony pats a hand on Glen's back.

TONY

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

Glen laughs until he realizes Tony's not kidding.

TONY (CONT'D)

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

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

GLEN

We won't let you down.

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

(shouting over music)

There's no wiggle room on the title?

TONY

(shouting over music)

Let it go, Glenny. I lost that battle a long fucking time ago.

INT. TRAIN - THE NEXT DAY

Glen cheerily commutes from CT to NYC.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

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

JULIE (PRE-LAP)

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

INT. JULIE OFFICE - DAY

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

JULIE

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

GLEN

It hasn't made you a coward.

Julie smiles.

JULIE

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

She turns to Glen.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

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

GLEN

Yes. Exactly.

She fixes Glen with her intense eyes.

JULIE

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

Glen smiles.

GLEN

There is genuinely nothing I want
to do more.

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

JULIE

Have at it.

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

GLEN

This is amazing. The quality is--

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

JULIE

What?

Glen shakes his head.

GLEN

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

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

JULIE

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

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

GLEN

Oh. Yes, he is.

JULIE

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

GLEN

Did... you not see the movies?

Julie shakes her head no.

JULIE

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

She smiles at Glen, cocky.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

Glen is amazed.

GLEN

Wow. I want to be like you one day.

Julie laughs.

JULIE

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

GLEN

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

Julie's look encourages him to go on.

GLEN (CONT'D)

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

Glen laughs.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Can you believe that?

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

JULIE

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

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

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

Julie checks her watch.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Tony, what are we thinking for lunch?

INT. BERGER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

EMMA

How was your first day?

Glen gives her a kiss on the cheek.

GLEN

Amazing. Sorry it's so late.

His wife snuggles into him.

GLEN (CONT'D)

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

He's wrong, of course.

BEGIN MONTAGE

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

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

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

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

INT. JULIE'S OFFICE - A FEW HOURS LATER

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

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

JULIE

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

GLEN

The Greeks got the better end of the deal.

JULIE

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

GLEN

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

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

Sorry.

JULIE

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

GLEN

No, they cycle through a different
one each movie.

JULIE

Then let's do all the villains.

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

TONY

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

JULIE

Oh, don't be crass, Tony.

TONY

It's my job, darling.

GLEN

(considering)

It certainly would be a different
approach from the movies.

JULIE

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

Tony, smiling, rolls his eyes.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

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

GLEN

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

Julie's whiteboard marker keeps squeaking as she writes.

JULIE

Of course I'm right.

She is not bragging. This is just a fact.

GLEN

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

Julie's marker stops, intrigued. She turns.

GLEN (CONT'D)
No-- a GEEK chorus.

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

JULIE
Glen Berger. That's pretty good.

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

TONY
I need another trash can.

Tony leaves.

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

GLEN
Mary Jane?

Julie snorts.

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

GLEN
Yeah. Shit. You're right.

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

Glen nods.

JULIE (CONT'D)
It's a shame because spiders are feminine in nature. Weaving has always been a woman's work.

Glen spots the time. He stands.

GLEN

Oh crap, so sorry but--

Julie waves her hand.

JULIE

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

GLEN

Thank you!

JULIE

Have fun.

Glen scrambles out. Julie goes back to the board.

INT. GLEN'S HOME - NIGHT

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

GLEN

I know, I'm sorry.

Emma nods, sad.

EMMA

Come up with anything good today?

GLEN

Yes. A lot of great stuff.

He kisses her.

GLEN (CONT'D)

I really am sorry, Em.

EMMA

You still like me more than Spider-Man?

GLEN

Way more. You're a much better kisser.

She kisses down his neck.

EMMA

And Julie?

Glen hesitates half a second.

GLEN
Of course.

EMMA
Then we're okay.

Glen puts her face in his hand.

GLEN
I am so lucky to have you--

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

INT. BERGER HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

GLEN
Hello?

INT. TAYMOR'S OFFICE

Julie has her phone on speaker. Tony sits nearby.

JULIE
Are you sleeping?

INTERCUT WITH GLEN AND JULIE

GLEN
No. Well. Yes.

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

Glen checks the time, it's 3AM.

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

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

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

BEGIN COMIC BOOK ANIMATED SEQUENCE

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

JULIE (V.O.)

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

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

JULIE (V.O.)

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

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

JULIE (V.O.)

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

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

JULIE (V.O.)

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

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

JULIE (V.O.)

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

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

INT. MARVEL OFFICES - DAY

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

JULIE

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

Wow.

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2
But we were thinking... is it a bit
too fresh of a take?

MARVEL EXEC 1
It's leaving us with a few tiny
concerns. Nothing huge.

MARVEL EXEC 2
The teeniest and tiniest.

Julie says nothing. Tony steps in.

TONY
We're all ears.

The Execs look at each other.

MARVEL EXEC 1
For one, the musical is a bit...
darker than we'd like for a family-
friendly affair.

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
...Right. My mistake.

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
It opens with a with a woman
hanging herself, right?

JULIE
Yeah, but she doesn't succeed.

MARVEL EXEC 2
Spider-Man is one of our most
precious properties. Peter Parker
is practically his own institution.
So while we LOVE the experimental
aspects of your work, Julie--

MARVEL EXEC 1
--I mean just ADORE. If I could
leave my wife and kids, marry it
and put a baby in it I would!

MARVEL EXEC 2
--we do have to make sure that
Spider-Man's image is protected.
There's so much... rich... history
at stake--

Money.

MARVEL EXEC 1
So.much.history.

Money. They mean money.

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
It's just little things. Like
having a joke alluding to Peter
Parker quote, "jerking it" and
fearing that webs will quote, "come
out of his penis."

Glen swallows. Julie smiles, unruffled.

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

MARVEL EXEC 2
I fear there's been a bit of a
miscommunication. Peter Parker
can't be sexual. Or have sex.

MARVEL EXEC 1
Or even think about sex. Or have it
implied that he thinks about sex.

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

MARVEL EXEC 2
Shall we also take a look at the
potential lyrics you submitted?

MARVEL EXEC 1
Yes, there was some foul language
we wanted to flag--

GLEN
I believe he says shit one time.

MARVEL EXEC 1
(smiling)
Peter Parker cannot curse. Ever.

Julie scoffs.

JULIE
Any other censorship we should know
about?

MARVEL EXEC 2
(sincere)
Yes. Thank you for asking.

MARVEL EXEC 1
No drinking, no smoking, no killing-

MARVEL EXEC 2
Unless deemed forgivable enough
and/or from an accident that he
spends the rest of his life
regretting. And/or you make it seem
like someone is dead but then you
bring them back, say using a time
travel device so therefore there
were actually no stakes all along.

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

GLEN
(impressed)
How do you guys remember all these
rules without a list?

MARVEL EXEC 2
Also, no political sentiments of
any kinds. Unless they are Peter
Parker expressing gratitude for his
American citizenship. For instance,
"wow! I am so glad to be a citizen
of these United States!"

Julie gives a dry laugh.

MARVEL EXEC 2 (CONT'D)
Unfortunately those rules are hard
and fast.

MARVEL EXEC 1
They come from Mr. Marvel himself!

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

Tony shakes his head.

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
One more thing. Arachne.

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

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

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

Julie takes a deep breath. She stands.

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

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

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

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

JULIE

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

She leaves. Tony smiles apologetically at the execs.

TONY

Give us a minute, will you?

Calmly, he stands up.

EXT. MARVEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

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

GLEN

Here.

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

You okay?

Tony nods, dabbing at the sweat on his forehead.

TONY

Never better.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

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

TONY

Julie, wait! Christ on a bike.

Julie stops. They approach, Tony catching his breath.

TONY (CONT'D)

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

JULIE

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

GLEN

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

JULIE

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

Tony puts a hand on Julie's tensed shoulder.

TONY

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

GLEN

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

TONY

(ignoring him)

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

Julie softens. Tony smiles.

TONY (CONT'D)

(to Julie)

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

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

JULIE

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

Glen does now, so he says nothing.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

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

GLEN

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

TONY

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

Glen holds up a bottle of cheap champagne.

GLEN

Oooh this label is pretty.

Tony swipes the bottle from Glen, laughing.

TONY

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

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

TONY (CONT'D)

Christ. Wallet's in the car. Mind
spotting me?

GLEN

Yeah, of course.

Glen gets his wallet out.

TONY

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

The cashier rings the bottle up.

CASHIER

\$321.08.

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

INT. EDGE'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

THE EDGE

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

TONY

More for me and Glenn-o then.

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

TONY (CONT'D)

To finally sealing the deal.

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

THE EDGE

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

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

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

GLEN

Oh my God.

THE EDGE

What the fuck! Tony! Tony!

INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT

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

INT. CHURCH - DAY

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

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

JULIE

We will make him proud.

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

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

GLEN

Yes.

JULIE

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

GLEN

Of course.

JULIE

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

Glen is completely caught off guard.

GLEN

What?

JULIE

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

GLEN

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

JULIE

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

Glen blinks. He shakes his head.

GLEN

I don't--

JULIE

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

Glen realizes this is not a suggestion.

JULIE (CONT'D)
We can find you an apartment
tomorrow.

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

He looks around at the funeral.

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

An ORGAN begins to play. The funeral is starting.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Death waits for no man but Marvel.

INT. BLACK BOX STAGE - NIGHT

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

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

SPIDER-MAN
(chipper)
Are you ready to get fucked, Glen
Berger?

INT. GLEN'S ROOM - MORNING

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

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

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

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

Glen runs his fingers through his crazy hair.

GLEN
I can't. I have to work.

EMMA

What? A man *died*.

KAYLA

Like my goldfish?

EMMA

Yes, honey.

GLEN

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

Emma thinks about saying something, but doesn't.

KAYLA

Can I watch when you flush him?

GLEN

They don't put people in toilets.

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

EMMA

What else are you not telling me?

GLEN

Nothing. We'll talk later.

EMMA

Glen.

Glen hesitates. Then weakly-

GLEN

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

Emma gives a dry laugh.

EMMA

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

GLEN

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

EMMA

Are you sleeping with her?

GLEN

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

EMMA

I'm not sure I do.

GLEN

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

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

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

EMMA

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

GLEN

Every weekend.

EMMA

And you're not cheating on me?

GLEN

No.

EMMA

(sigh)
Okay.

He pulls her in for a hug.

GLEN

Thank you. It'll be worth it.

EMMA

It has to be.

INT. GLEN'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

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

GLEN

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

The landlord shrugs.

LANDLORD

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

Glen smiles tightly and walks the landlord towards the door.

GLEN

Thanks again.

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

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

JULIE (ON TEXT)
WE GOT THE THEATRE!

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

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

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

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

JULIE (CONT'D)
Through the sky. Over the audience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Julie hugs him.

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

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

GLEN
Yeah.

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

GLEN
Absolutely. Whatever you need.

She smiles and jostles his shoulder.

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

Glen laughs, disbelieving. He nods.

EXT. BROADWAY - NIGHT

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

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

INT. CASTING ROOM - DAY

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

NICE GUY 1
I'm your--

CUT TO:

NICE GUY 2
Friendly--

CUT TO:

NICE GUY 3
Neighborhood--

CUT TO:

NICE GUY 4
Spider-Man!

Julie and Glen smile.

JULIE
Thank you.

GLEN
Thanks.

JULIE
We'll be in touch.

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

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

GLEN
But it is.

Julie rolls her eyes.

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

GLEN
...Right.

Julie sighs.

JULIE
Just send in the next one. Reeve.

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

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

JULIE (CONT'D)
Reeve?

REEVE
Hi.

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

Reeve shakes his head.

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

Julie smiles.

JULIE
Start whenever you'd like.

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

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

Glen looks alarmed. Julie looks certain.

JULIE (PRE-LAP)
He's the one.

INT. EMPTY CASTING ROOM - LATER

Glen is startled.

GLEN

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

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

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

Julie waves her hand.

JULIE

Our Spider-Man fucks.

Julie walks away.

GLEN

Does Marvel know that?

JULIE

(shrug)

They will.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - DAY

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

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

GLEN

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

Julie is too focused to celebrate.

JULIE

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

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

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

GLEN
 I'm sure they're just excited.

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

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

Everyone claps. Glen whistles loudly.

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

Reeve affects a dweeby voice.

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

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

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

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

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

READER
 "The bully shoves Parker."

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

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

READER

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

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

READER (CONT'D)

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

REEVE

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

READER

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

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - LATER

The Marvel Execs approach Glen and Julie after the reading.

MARVEL EXEC 1
We just LOVE the space.

MARVEL EXEC 2
When you first said you wanted the
most expensive theater on Broadway
we were really not sure. But now we
LOVE.

MARVEL EXEC 1
I'm getting it pregnant as we
SPEAK.

JULIE
I'm glad you like it.

MARVEL EXEC 2
Reeve is such an... interesting
choice for Spider-Man. Very
different.

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

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

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

Julie smiles tightly.

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
No, no of course.

MARVEL EXEC 2
Yes, preach, girl.

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
That is really great!

MARVEL EXEC 2
So great.

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

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 2
One more thing.

Julie freezes her smile.

MARVEL EXEC 1
We felt the Arachne storyline was
still a bit too...

MARVEL EXEC 2
Loud. It felt too loud.

JULIE
Too loud.

MARVEL EXEC 1
Yes, exactly. Maybe we can look at
quieting it down a bit?

MARVEL EXEC 2
But otherwise GREAT job today. We
are so excited for this!!

JULIE
Thanks. So are we!

GLEN
Yeah, thanks. See you soon!

The Execs leave.

JULIE
God, I wish Tony were here.

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

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

GLEN
(laughing)
Why did you do that?

JULIE
They've never seen a musical.

Glen freezes.

GLEN

What?

JULIE

Never seen a single one.

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

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

GLEN

Really?

JULIE

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

GLEN

I've never been to Ireland.

JULIE

(shrug)

It's green.

GLEN

Will Marvel book it for us?

JULIE

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

GLEN

They'll pay us back though?

Julie walks away.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

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

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

EMMA (ON TEXT)

Kids going to bed. We can try again tomorrow.

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

TIRED MOM
Sorry in advance.

GLEN
How old is she?

TIRED MOM
Three and a half.

GLEN
My son's that age.

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

EXT. IRELAND COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

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

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

Julie, however, looks invigorated by the walking.

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

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

INT. BONO'S HOUSE - DAY

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

BONO
Thanks for this, love.

JULIE
Did you get a chance to listen?

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

BONO

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

GLEN

(helpfully)

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

THE EDGE

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

GLEN

He is a legend...

A CELL rings. Bono's ASSISTANT approaches.

ASSISTANT

It's time.

BONO

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

(into phone)

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

Bono exits.

THE EDGE

(proudly)

He's very passionate about his AIDS
work.

JULIE

Amazing.

GLEN

That's great for AIDS...

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

ASSISTANT

Shall I make tea?

THE EDGE

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

JULIE

Green if you have it. No sugar.

ASSISTANT

Sure.

GLEN

And I'll--

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

JULIE

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

THE EDGE

Well, you know.

Julie and Glen wait for an answer.

THE EDGE (CONT'D)

...We haven't written anything. The tour's been pretty all consuming.

JULIE

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

The Edge nods.

THE EDGE

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

He points at the beanie on his head.

THE EDGE (CONT'D)

Isn't it nice?

JULIE

Very nice.

He looks at Glen, expectantly.

GLEN
Oh. Yeah, very nice.

The Edge nods, proud.

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

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The assistant assembles tea cups on a tray.

GLEN
Hey there--

The assistant sighs at Glen's presence.

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

ASSISTANT
No idea.

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

The assistant spins to face him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. PUB - THE NEXT DAY

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

BONO
 It's brilliant.

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

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

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

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

JULIE
 Fuck. I love it.

GLEN
 Yes!

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

The Edge bangs out a beat on the table.

BONO (CONT'D)

(singing)

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

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

GLEN

Oh my God!

JULIE

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

Bono and the Edge are pleased.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

BONO

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

They all cheers their beers to that.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - DAY

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

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

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

JULIE

He's here. Shall we?

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - BACKSTAGE

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

JULIE
Scott.

He greets Glen and Julie with a handshake.

SCOTT
Pleased to make your acquaintance.

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

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

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

GLEN
Yeah. You did a great job.

SCOTT
Shucks! I like this guy already.

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

GLEN
Okay.

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

SCOTT

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

He spits dip in his cup.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

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

GLEN

Do you have any live theater
experience?

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

SCOTT

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

Glen is not satisfied with this answer.

JULIE

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

SCOTT

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

He claps loudly, startling Glen, and runs off.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - STAGE

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

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

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

Scott looks at Julie and Glen smugly.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Pretty cool, huh?

Julie and Glen clap, impressed.

JULIE
 Wow!

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

GLEN
 Amazing.

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

Julie shakes Scott's hand.

JULIE
 Welcome to the team.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - CROSSWALK - LATER THAT DAY

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

GLEN
 Where's this coming from?

JULIE

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

Glen is shocked.

GLEN

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

JULIE

(smiling)

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

She shakes her head, smiling.

JULIE (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

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

GLEN

(quietly)

I pay two rents.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - THE NEXT DAY

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

SCOTT

Y'all, meet Chris.

CHRIS

Hi!

He shakes their hands with both of his.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So pumped to meet you guys.

JULIE

Likewise.

SCOTT

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

JULIE
Marvelous.

GLEN
Yeah, thank you!

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Actually, I bet I can find a photo of me dressed up as Spider-Man when I was little...

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's here somewhere.

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

CHRIS
A-ha!

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

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

JULIE
Oh, that's precious.

She hands it to Glen.

GLEN
Oh my gosh! That's amazing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Ready?

The STAGE MANAGER pulls out a walkie talkie.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCOTT
Technical difficulty. Normal at these early stages!

Glen and Julie nod politely.

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

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

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

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

SCOTT
Yes.

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

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

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

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

JULIE

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

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

SCOTT

Now how set in stone is our first preview night?

Julie's face hardens.

PRE-LAP the sound of intense BULGARIAN CHANTING.

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

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

GLEN

(over music)

Julie?

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

Why is it so big?

JULIE

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

GLEN

(reading)

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

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

JULIE

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

GLEN

Isn't... that all true?

JULIE

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

She rips the pages from Glen's hands.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

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

GLEN

You know, Julie, maybe we should--

JULIE

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

A STAGE HAND passes by in the hallway.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Was it you, no-chin? Huh?

The Stage Hand freezes.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Are you the rodent responsible for
this?

Julie throws the papers. The Stage Hand scurries away.

GLEN

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

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

COSTUMER

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

The costumer walks away, leaving a shaken Glen behind.

INT. MARVEL OFFICE BOARD ROOM

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

JULIE

Everything's going good.

MARVEL EXEC 2

Good.

MARVEL EXEC 1

So good.

JULIE

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

We've read.

JULIE

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

GLEN

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

JULIE

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

GLEN

You know what they say, quality over quantity.

MARVEL EXEC 1

We believe that way of thinking is outdated.

GLEN

Oh.

JULIE

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

(hopefully)

Losing Arachne? Love where your head's at.

JULIE

No. To request another push for our preview.

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

JULIE

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

The budget doesn't allow for it.

Julie holds up her hands.

JULIE

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

The execs look at each other.

MARVEL EXEC 2

If we give you the preview push, IF-

JULIE

Yes?

MARVEL EXEC 1

Will you consider cutting Arachne?

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

JULIE

Absolutely.

Glen tries to hide his shock. The Exec nods.

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

EXT. MARVEL OFFICES -

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

GLEN

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

She holds up a finger to Glen.

JULIE (ON PHONE)

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

She hangs up the phone.

JULIE (CONT'D)

What were you blathering on about?

GLEN

Nothing. Never mind.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATER - DAY

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

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

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

WOMAN (O.S.)

Call the medic!

Julie and Glen hop up and run BACKSTAGE --

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

JULIE

What happened?

STAGE MANAGER

Computer freaked out and he crashed into the wall.

GLEN

Oh no.

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

JULIE

You.

SCOTT

Julie. I'm doing everything I can.

JULIE

It's not nearly fucking enough.

SCOTT

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

GLEN

Dollars??

JULIE

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

SCOTT

Of course.

JULIE

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

BEGIN MONTAGE:

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

-A bag of flour EXPLODES as it hits the wall

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

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

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

ARACHNE ACTRESS
(sobbing)
This production is CURSED!

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

But the other cast and crew around Arachne nod too.

SPIDER-MAN ACTOR
She's right.

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

The Arachne actress whimpers.

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

REEVE
I agree.

JULIE
Thank you, Reeve.

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

The crew all starts to agree.

CREW

Yeah it has to be cursed/we are
fucked!

STAGE MANAGER

Hey!

Everyone quiets down for the no-nonsense Stage Manager.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

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

Everyone turns to Julie.

JULIE

(almost laughing)

I don't know what you want from me.

STAGE MANAGER

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

The Arachne actress sniffs.

ARACHNE ACTRESS

Please, Julie? We need it.

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

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

ENERGY HEALER

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

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

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)

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

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

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

ARACHNE ACTRESS
(gasp)
The name of our show!

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

She turns and spins viciously.

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)
BANISH!!!

She pauses, calmed and quiet.

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

SCOTT
Amen.

ENERGY HEALER
SILENCE PLEASE!

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

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

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

ARACHNE ACTRESS
I've always said that.

DANCERS
You have/she's so right.

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

ENERGY HEALER

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

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

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

ENERGY HEALER (CONT'D)

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATERS - BACKSTAGE - THE FOLLOWING NIGHT

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

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

JULIE

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

Glen shakes his head.

GLEN

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

Julie straightens his coat.

JULIE

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

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

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

They hug.

GLEN

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

Julie hugs him tighter.

JULIE

Well said. I feel the same.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

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

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

LATER-

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

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

GREEN GOBLIN

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

SPIDER-MAN

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

GLEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAN (O.S.)
CALL 911!

EXT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

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

EMT
Move! Give us some fucking room!

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Julie and Glen are horrified.

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

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

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

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

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

Julie takes a deep breath.

JULIE

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

The stage manager nods.

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

They walk.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(to Glen)

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

Glen dials Bono.

ASSISTANT (ON PHONE)

What do you want?

GLEN (INTO PHONE)

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

ASSISTANT (ON PHONE)

I--

GLEN

And YES! It IS more important than AIDS!

There's a beat.

ASSISTANT

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

Glen takes a deep breath to keep from screaming.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

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

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

CHRIS

(to Bono and Edge)

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

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

JULIE

That's alright, Chris. We told them.

Chris stops, out of breath.

CHRIS

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

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

BONO

Of course, mate.

THE EDGE

Save your strength.

CHRIS

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

Julie nods her head.

JULIE

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

CHRIS

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

He looks up at the fluorescent lights.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He takes a deep breath.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm so lucky.

EXT./INT. HOSPITAL GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

INT. STAGE - FOXWOODS THEATRE - DAY

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

ARACHNE ACTRESS

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

REEVE

No! Never!

ARACHNE ACTRESS

Fine. Then ATTACKING!

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

REEVE

(singing)

Let her go!

ARACHNE ACTRESS

(singing)

Love me or kill me!

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

REEVE/ARACHNE ACTRESS

(singing)

Let her go/Let her go/Let her go--

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

ARACHNE ACTRESS

Finish this! Kill me!

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

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

GLEN

Jesus! Sorry, I didn't see you.

JULIE

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

Glen hesitates.

GLEN

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

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

JULIE

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

Everyone in the theater watches Julie, their eyes wide.

JULIE (CONT'D)

So what the fuck were you talking
about, Glen?

Glen feels the cast's eyes on him.

GLEN

Let's talk about it later.

JULIE

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

GLEN

I'm...Lenny?

JULIE

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

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

GLEN

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

Julie laughs.

JULIE

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

GLEN

It isn't like that--

JULIE

I really thought you were
different.

GLEN

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

JULIE

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

Julie walks away.

GLEN

I'm trying to save the show, Julie.

JULIE

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

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

REEVE

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

Glen sits down in a theater seat.

GLEN

Just move on to the next scene.

REEVE

Cool.

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

EXT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

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

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
The man of the hour! Congrats on
your first sold out performance!

GLEN
What? We sold out?

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

GLEN (CONT'D)
I don't understand. We got panned.
A man almost died.

MARVEL EXEC 2
Exactly!

MARVEL EXEC 1
Apparently people are desperate for
a chance to see disaster unfold in
front of them! Drink!

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
(waving him off)
Money speaks louder than branding.

MARVEL EXEC 2
Keep this up, my friend, and you
will find yourself a very rich man!
Everybody's gonna want some of you.

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

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

GLEN
I can't believe it.

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

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

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

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

GLEN
You okay?

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

GLEN
Anything I can do to help?

Julie just laughs. Glen nods, stung.

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

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

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

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

JULIE
It certainly isn't perfect.

Bono laughs.

THE EDGE
You can say that.

Julie is unruffled.

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

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

JULIE
(shrug)
Then we have a difference of
opinion.

The stage manager enters.

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

Julie stands.

JULIE
I'll be right back.

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

BONO
This is not good.

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

Glen spots his opening.

GLEN
I can fix the show.

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

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

They do.

THE EDGE
Go on.

Glen steadies himself. This is his chance.

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

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

U2 thinks this over.

BONO

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

THE EDGE

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

BONO

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

GLEN

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

BONO

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

GLEN

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

THE EDGE

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

GLEN

Right.

BONO

(thinking, then)

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

THE EDGE

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

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

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

BONO
Let's do a bottle of Veuve.

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

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

THE EDGE
You ready?

Glen nods, confident.

GLEN
Absolutely.

Just then Glen spots someone approaching.

GLEN (CONT'D)
Hi.

He stands to hug the MARVEL EXECS.

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

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
NOT a problem.

MARVEL EXEC 2
Sharing is caring.

Both grown men perch on the same chair.

MARVEL EXEC 1
We LOVE your changes. LOVE.

MARVEL EXEC 2
 It feels so good to finally feel
 heard and respected in this
 process. Thank you, Glen. Really.
 Honestly gave me a lot of insight
 into how minorities must feel.

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

MARVEL EXEC 2 (CONT'D)
 We think your vision is absolutely
 the way to go. So the million
 dollar question is--

MARVEL EXEC 1
 The 65 million dollar question--

MARVEL EXEC 2
 --Do you think you'll be able to
 get Julie on board? Or if not...

Glen smiles.

GLEN
 That won't be a problem.

MARVEL EXEC 1
 My guy! You'll talk to her
 tomorrow?

Glen hesitates and everyone notices.

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

MARVEL EXEC 1
 So creative, this one. Wish I could
 be in that brain.

He muffles Glen's wild hair.

INT. JULIE'S OFFICE - DAY

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

JULIE
 No.

GLEN

I think you're--

JULIE

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

BONO

Julie--

JULIE

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

THE EDGE

There's not time--

JULIE

Time is meaningless. We can make more time.

BONO

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

JULIE

Oh please. Save it for your AIDS songs.

The Edge GASPS.

BONO

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

THE EDGE

(nodding)

Hurt people hurt people.

GLEN

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

Julie shrugs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULIE (CONT'D)
You are nothing without me.
Nothing.

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

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

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

She shuts the door in his face.

EXT. JULIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Glen catches up to U2 walking away.

GLEN

Well. Shit.

BONO

Yeah. Brutal.

THE EDGE

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

GLEN

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

BONO

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

Glen beams.

GLEN

Never been more ready.

BONO

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

THE EDGE

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

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

INT. GLEN'S APARTMENT - A WEEK LATER

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

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

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - A WEEK LATER

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

THE KILLERS

(singing)

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

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

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

GLEN

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

CHRIS

Good to be back. Met the new guys
yet?

GLEN

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

CHRIS

The new writer's pretty cool too.

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

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

GLEN

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

WRITER

Of course.

DIRECTOR

(exaggerated sympathy)

Completely understand. Really, we
do.

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

THE EDGE

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

BONO

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

Glen nods, calming down a bit.

DIRECTOR

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

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - DAY

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

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

CHORUS

(singing)

A freak like me needs company--

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

GREEN GOBLIN/CHORUS

(singing)

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

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

INT. GLEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

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

GLEN

Fuck this.

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

INT. BERGER HOME - NIGHT

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

EMMA

Little early to be drunk.

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

GLEN

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

He looks at her for a response.

EMMA

Oh, no thanks.

GLEN

What?

EMMA

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

GLEN

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

EMMA

Exactly.

GLEN

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

Emma laughs. She gets up and gestures around her.

EMMA

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

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

GLEN

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

EMMA

(laughing)

Yeah. I actually do.

GLEN

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

EMMA

Oh come on.

GLEN

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

EMMA

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

GLEN

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

She turns to face Glen.

EMMA

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

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

GLEN

I fucked up.

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

GLEN (CONT'D)

(muffled)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

EMMA

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

Emma looks into his eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

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

GLEN

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

EMMA

Really?

GLEN

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

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

INT. BERGER HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

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

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

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

INT. BOARD ROOM - MARVEL OFFICES - DAY

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

He does a chef's kiss on his hand.

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

No one should!

DIRECTOR

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

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

MARVEL EXEC 1

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

MARVEL EXEC 2

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

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

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - LATER THAT DAY

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

STAGE MANAGER

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

DELIVERY MAN

Glen Berger? These are for you.

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

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

They're nice, right?

GLEN

(nodding)

Is there a note?

The delivery man gives Glen a large yellow envelope.

DELIVERY MAN

You've been served.

GLEN

What?

DELIVERY MAN

...Can I get those flowers back?

Glen sadly hands them over.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(proudly)

Thanks. Those were my idea.

(MORE)

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

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

Glen opens the envelope: Julie Taymor is suing Glen and the rest of the Spider-Man production.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

Good luck tonight!

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - OPENING NIGHT

BACK TO THE PRESENT, OUR OPENING. Glen, frowning, walks with Emma to their seats. A tuxedoed Chris Tierney turns stiffly in his neck brace to wave at Glen. Glen waves back.

Glen and his wife sit. He watches Bono and the Edge take photos with the new writer and director on stage. He scans around for Julie but can't find her.

EMMA

Your suit looks good. It should work for court too.

GLEN

(tightly)

Yeah. You found the perfect in-between.

Glen's knee bounces as people file in around him.

EMMA

Glen? Promise me this is the last time you do something like this.

Glen laughs.

EMMA (CONT'D)

No, I mean it. Nothing this big or stressful ever again. Or I'll leave you. I'm serious.

GLEN

You think I'd sign up for this again?

EMMA

Glen, please. Promise me.

The lights dim. People clap politely. Glen looks at his beautiful wife. He takes her hand.

GLEN
I promise.

The opening song begins. Glen tries to sit still, but it's excruciating. He needs another drink. He stands and exits, annoying everyone in the aisle he has to pass.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE LOBBY - NIGHT

Glen enters the empty lobby. Seated on the carpeted floor, leaning against the wall sits JULIE. Glen freezes.

JULIE
I couldn't watch it either.

GLEN
...You want a drink?

She nods. Glen goes to the bar.

GLEN (CONT'D)
Two whiskeys. Neat. Make them extra large, please. We made this show.

The bartender nods and pours accordingly. He slides the drinks over.

GLEN (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Glen brings Julie their drinks and slumps onto the floor with her. They clink glasses half heartedly and sip.

JULIE
You look like shit.

GLEN
Yeah. I feel like it too.

JULIE
Good.

Julie swirls a finger in her drink.

JULIE (CONT'D)
My lawyer told me not to come tonight. But some sickness made me. I had to see it. And now, I can't even go in.

GLEN
I get it.

JULIE

I definitely shouldn't be talking
to you.

GLEN

Julie, I'm so sorry-

Julie gently holds up a hand. She doesn't want to hear it.

JULIE

That's not what this is.

Glen nods. After a beat--

JULIE (CONT'D)

Is it better? Did they make
something better than we would
have?

GLEN

Not by a fucking long shot.

Julie half smiles. She finishes her drink and stands,
offering a hand to Glen. He stands and she searches his face.

JULIE

Goodbye, Glen.

GLEN

Goodbye, Julie.

She heads back inside the theatre. Glen watches her go.

MAN (O.S.)

Glen! There you are!

Glen turns to an unknown sweaty MAN, 50s, clomping over.

MAN (CONT'D)

You're a hard man to find. Good
thing I had to piss like a fucking
camel. God bless diabetes, right?

He laughs and shakes Glen's hand.

MAN (CONT'D)

Would love to pick your brain. I'm
a big fan of the show. The few
seconds I just saw was great stuff.

GLEN

Thanks. You are--?

PRODUCER

I'm a producer. I'm actually trying to get a massive King Kong show up on Broadway. Your name's at the top of my list to write it.

GLEN

...Really?

PRODUCER

You kidding? Absolutely!

GLEN

Amazing! I would love to be considered!

PRODUCER

Happy to hear it.

He claps Glen on the back.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)

I'll be in touch.

GLEN

I'll be waiting! Thanks.

INT. FOXWOODS THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Glen sits next to Emma, a huge smile on his face. Emma puts a hand on Glen's leg. Then a giant hairy black GORILLA HAND lovingly pats Glen's other leg. Glen puts his hands over both as he watches the show.

The camera moves past the actors on stage, and looks up into the rafters. There, a Spider-Man in a harness waits, crouched. He breathes heavy under his spandex suit, his chest rising and falling.

SUPER: TURN OFF THE DARK only ran on Broadway for three years. In total, it lost an estimated \$75 million. Julie, Glen, and the rest of the producers settled their lawsuit outside of court. Glen has not had a show on Broadway since. Spider-Man, however, has gone on to have 7 more movies, 2 animated TV shows, and feature in 3 other Marvel films.

It's his cue. Spider-Man does the sign of the cross before diving into the air, falling down.

THE END