

Playwright Bio:

Evan Spreen is an award-winning playwright based in Los Angeles. Most recently, his play *Amelia?* was part of PEP Productions Best of 2020 festival in Orange County, NY and the 2025 Brisk Festival in Los Angeles. His one-act *Lost Oceans* was selected as Best of Festival at Know Theater's 2022 festival in Binghamton, NY. His horror play *The Vast and Unknowable Oven* was performed at Kent School in Connecticut in 2023. In New Mexico, his play *Decision Makers* was part of the New Mexico Seven 2023 at the Fusion Theater company. His full-length play *Unsweet Perdition* premiered at the 2025 Hollywood Fringe Festival and then went on to appear at the Santa Clarita Shakespeare Festival 2026 to much praise from audiences. He is a proud member of the DGA, HWA, and SFWA.

Influences: *Beginners, Eternal Sunshine, All the Myriad Ways.*

Setting: Present day. In a universe not unlike our own.

Molly, Curtis, and Uncle John are originally from Kansas. Asher is from Lincoln Park, Chicago. Walton is from Beverly, Chicago. Nora is from the ocean.

ACT ONE

- Sc 1. A backyard, Bethany, KS
- Sc 2. Uncle John's Cabinhouse, Shelborne, MA
- Sc 3. Beachfront, Shelborne, MA
- Sc 4. Breakfast Joint, Teluga, ME
- Sc 5. Uncle John's Cabinhouse, Shelborne, MA
- Sc 6. Uncle John's Cabinhouse, Shelborne, MA

ACT TWO

- Sc 1. Exterior & Interior Luxury apartments, Hyde Park, Chicago,
- IL Sc 2. Potter's Bar, Palmer House, Chicago, IL
- Sc 3. Asher's Apartment in Lincoln Park, Chicago, IL
- Sc 4. Humboldt Park, Chicago, IL
- Sc 5. Beachfront, Shelborne, MA
- Sc 6. Asher's Apartment, Chicago O'hare, Arcadia, ME

Trigger Warnings:

Language, sexual content, descriptions of crime scenes, suicidal ideation.

Characters:

3M 3F

(In order of appearance)

CURTIS - M - Cursebreaker. Hopeful. Likes the one Depeche Mode cassette tape he had when he was twelve and Death Cab for Cutie.

MOLLY - F - Exiled. Fierce. Likes Smashing Pumpkins and My Morning Jacket, but never both in the same afternoon.

UNCLE JOHN - M - Molly's mom's brother. An outlier. Likes the Talking Heads. A lot. This Must Be the Place is his favorite.

NORA - F - A Siren. Ethereal. Likes the sound of humpback whales having midnight trysts in the deep and the sound the moon makes when you cry.

WALTON - M - Cursebreaker. Clever. Likes Lana del Ray and Film Soundtracks and is prepared to talk about them at length.

ASHER - F - Cursebreaker. Caring. Likes Hiatus Kaiyote on a waterproof speaker in the shower and The Preatures on headphones when she's jogging.

Pronunciation Guide:

Acieleanora: *Ah* - tsee- ay - lee- uh - no - ruh

Teluga: *Ti* - *loo* - guh

Ixillis: *Ix* - *ill* - iss

Anciopath: *An* - see- oh - path

Diavela: *Dee* - *ah* - vuh - la

Plastidential: *Plass* - ti - den - chull

4.

Scene List

ACT ONE

Sc. 1 - Ceiling Ghosts - Curtis, Molly

Sc. 2 - Cabinhouse at the End of the World - Uncle John, Curtis

Sc. 3 - Melancholy of the Moon - Curtis, Nora

Sc. 4 - Teluga - Uncle John, Molly, Curtis Sc. 5 - Magnanimity in Motion - Molly, Uncle John, Nora, Curtis Sc. 6 - Robot Brains - Uncle John, Curtis, Molly

ACT TWO

Sc. 1 - Skyhawk Down - Walton, Asher, Curtis Sc. 2 - They're Clearly Fucking - Curtis, Asher, Molly Sc. 3 - Bandid the Cat - Asher, Curtis, Molly Sc. 4 - Jaunted - Walton, Curtis

Sc. 5 - Vixil's Wish - Curtis, Nora

Sc. 6 - Arcadia Gate - Curtis, Asher, Molly

5.

ACT 1 SC 1 - CEILING GHOSTS

AT RISE Just past midnight, a backyard in Bethany, Kansas, CURTIS and MOLLY are cuddled together in the shadow of a tree. Molly rests her head on his shoulder. Leaves are scattered around them. Crickets chirp.

CURTIS

I miss you.

MOLLY

I'm still here, doofus.

CURTIS

I feel like I'm running low on words, and I'm worried I won't find the right ones before tomorrow.

MOLLY

Then don't say anything.

Beat.

CURTIS

Can I say one thing?

MOLLY

Not if it is what I think it is.

Beat.

CURTIS

Potato.

MOLLY

God dammit.

CURTIS

Hot.

MOLLY

Don't.

CURTIS

Potato.

MOLLY

You're fucking ridiculous.

Beat. They're laughing. She punches him. He kisses her. She kisses back. She breaks it.

MOLLY

Let's go inside, get under the covers, hold each other until we fall asleep.

CURTIS

Not yet.

MOLLY

Come on.

CURTIS

I haven't lived the whole moment.

MOLLY

One more minute.

CURTIS

Two more minutes.

MOLLY

Fine.

Beat. They lie back and snuggle closer.

CURTIS

I'm really glad we got to have this.

MOLLY

Me too. Thanks for letting me stay over.

CURTIS

Of course.

7.

MOLLY

Do you remember when we used to climb this tree after school? Your mom would come out and yell at us if we got too high up.

CURTIS

It's an apple tree.

MOLLY

Really? I've never seen it with apples.

CURTIS

Neither have I, actually. Maybe it isn't an apple tree.

MOLLY

And then in high school we used to smoke over there by the storm drain... I know we didn't hang out much back then.

CURTIS

We wasted so much time not kissing.

MOLLY

We were both busy kissing other people.

CURTIS

I just wish we had more time together.

MOLLY

We do. We have right now.

CURTIS

The night before you...

MOLLY

...before I cross over, yeah.

Beat.

CURTIS

What if the audit was wrong?

MOLLY

Curtis...

CURTIS

What if they made a mistake?

8.

MOLLY

Hey. You asked for the moment, so let's live in it.

CURTIS

But I don't know if you're ever coming back, or what kind of person you'll be when you do.

MOLLY

I wish I could tell you that. But you knew. You knew three days ago, when we kissed on your game room sofa.

CURTIS

That was unavoidable. Cosmically preordained.

MOLLY

Even so, you knew about the time limit.

CURTIS

Do you think you kissed me because you knew there'd be an exit?

MOLLY

I kissed you because I wanted to kiss you--

CURTIS

Then, if you could stay, would you?

MOLLY

Curtis, it's not like I get a choice. I didn't mean to fail the audit. I was depressed, but can you imagine throwing an audit? Nobody does that.

CURTIS

What was it like?

MOLLY

I said I didn't want to talk about it. Fifteen times now.

CURTIS

I just can't imagine it, and maybe it would help make it more real for me if I could visualize it. Please? I won't be able to bother you about it after tomorrow.

MOLLY

...Fine. Yeah. I'll tell you.

Beat.

9.

CURTIS

So.

MOLLY

So... They led me into a room.

CURTIS

What kind of room?

MOLLY

A room. Just a room. A small white room, like a hospital room, I don't know.

CURTIS

Then?

MOLLY

Then they asked me some questions.

CURTIS

What were the questions?

MOLLY

I don't remember them all.

CURTIS

Well, what were they generally pertaining to?

MOLLY

Hold on. I'm trying to tell you. They weren't linear questions. They fluttered around like ceiling ghosts. Sometimes what they asked connected. Other times it didn't. I don't remember it all. I was too nervous to pay attention. Nervous about the procedure. About the test.

The auditors were cold. Detached. The nurses too. In the corner, there was this machine that would chirp like a dolphin, and then spit out all these records they kept referring to. But they were just numbers. Just sequences of random numbers. One of the auditors would glance down at them and then ask me a question like:

When you were six, one of your older cousins stole your favorite stuffed animal from your room while you were sleeping as part of some incomprehensible joke. Did you ever find it? When you were cleaning up the house 20 years later to sell after your mother died?

I remember the questions, but I don't remember my answers. Each question brought up an emotional memory. Like that one. It would kind of take me back there.

10.

They made me feel so weird:

When you had the explosive public argument with your ex husband Andrew at an airport on your 24th birthday did the music softly piping into the terminal B food court remind you of how you felt the time your dad cried as he was driving you to your piano lesson that week in August when it rained so hard you felt like it would never stop and decided you wouldn't care if it never did?

Then the weird one about cheese:

When you traveled to Seattle after your divorce, you spent most of your time in the hotel room except to smoke cigarettes in the parking garage beneath the hotel, but every time you made eye contact with the valet staff down there you felt guilty, even though it was a clearly marked smoking area. Do you think they thought the divorce was entirely your fault simply by the way you look, or could they somehow tell that you really prefer pepper jack to provolone?

Near the end of the audit, it got even weirder. The other two auditors started lowering these scary metal forceps towards me. They looked like a cross between an astrolabe and a farming scythe.

The last question before I lost consciousness was:

When you imagine what dinosaurs looked like, what is the color of the sky you picture them standing under, and do they look sad? And if they do look sad, what would be your first idea on how to make them feel better?

Then nothing.

Later, they explained that these questions were meant to drag my soul to the surface. So they could examine it properly. Weigh it. Make note of its color and shape. Shine a light on it to see clearly into all the fractals of my past lives. So they could arrive at a decision. Which they did.

I don't know what they saw in me, and I don't want to know. I guess I just want to go on pretending that my soul is some kind of color I'd agree with. Like a soft violet or light blue reflections that ripple on the ocean floor. Anything but yellow. Even a happy yellow can go fuck itself.

I woke up after a few hours. In an empty room. Then someone came to collect me and present me with their decision. After a big, unnecessary dramatic pause, they told me I didn't pass. Which is fucked because I still don't really know what the criteria for a pass even is.

11.

I didn't cry. I refused to be reduced any further than I already had. I cried later, sure, I fucking cried, but I didn't cry when I found out. I didn't.

So there you go, I'm leaving tomorrow, and as much as I want to stay, as much as I want to explore this new, exciting thing with you.

I have to go.

And now this is the part where I should tell you I'm sorry. But I can't and I won't because it's not my fault. If I could stay, I think we both know... that I would and...

Full stop.

CURTIS

Yeah. That's exactly how I imagined it.

MOLLY

What? Shut up. You're full of shit.

CURTIS

I am.

MOLLY

I shouldn't have even told you that much; they keep the whole process a secret. It was...

It was violating. Not physically, but--

CURTIS

Spiritually?

MOLLY

Yeah.

CURTIS

I'm really sorry, Molly.

Beat.

MOLLY

Let's go inside. I gave you more than two minutes; be grateful.

CURTIS

I'm still going to drive you tomorrow. To the facility.

12.

MOLLY

I know. But... I don't want to... how do I say this? I don't want to be close to you on the drive. Physically. I don't want to hold hands or anything, or kiss goodbye when I get out of the car.

CURTIS

What? Why not?

MOLLY

Because three days isn't... that. As much as we wish it could be. (beat)

I'm not trying to be cruel; I'm very grateful you gave me a place to stay and took me out to dinner tonight.

But tomorrow can't be about us. I'm the one who has to leave.

So kiss me as much as you can before I fall asleep,

and that'll be the end of it.

He kisses her gently as the lights fade.

BLACKOUT

Transition: Wave sounds and dim lights as
UNCLE JOHN enters with a metal detector and
gently scans the downstage area. Only soft
intermittent beeping is heard.

ACT 1 SC 2 - CABINHOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Lights up. Two years later. In a cozy beach house cabin. We hear the ocean outside. Uncle John enters, followed closely by Curtis. Curtis wears a suit while Uncle John wears beach rain gear. The bungalow is messy cozy, and there is an ancient Macintosh in the corner.

UNCLE JOHN

Put your coat right there. With the other coats.

13.

CURTIS

Thanks.

UNCLE JOHN

Do you drink tea? I don't drink much tea because the caffeine makes my tummy grumbly, but it feels somewhat inappropriate to offer you a tall glass of water, and I fear it might be too early for anything stronger.

CURTIS

Tea is great, thanks.

UNCLE JOHN

We don't get many house guests. Way out here.

CURTIS

We?

UNCLE JOHN

Oh, it's just me and Acieleanora. But she doesn't come out during the day. I expect you'll meet her tonight if she's not feeling too shy. You know how it is. Moon cycles and all that.

CURTIS

I appreciate you hosting me.

UNCLE JOHN

I wasn't there a lot. I wasn't there a lot when Molly was little. You said she mentioned me? Before she sojournd?

CURTIS

...she didn't. I looked you up myself.

UNCLE JOHN

Oh.

CURTIS

I thought you'd want to be there.

UNCLE JOHN

How long have you been married?

CURTIS

Sorry?

14.

UNCLE JOHN

How long have you and my niece been married?

CURTIS

We weren't. We aren't.

UNCLE JOHN

So that's why you need me. You aren't related, so they won't let you pick her up.

CURTIS

It's not just that. I thought it might be good for her. To have you

there. UNCLE JOHN

She was twelve the last time I saw her. And she was as mean as a deep-fried bobcat. Her father and I went to watch her softball game. She got in a big fight with the little girl playing shortstop.

It was hilarious. Knocked her flat on her ass. Started wailing on her with her helmet. Shortstop tries to get up, but then Molly grabs her by the braid and slams her back down in the dirt. I don't know what that other girl said to make her lose it like that, but the coach had to peel her off, kicking and screaming. Her dad was so embarrassed. And furious. Kept apologizing to shortstop's father and calling Molly a problem child. But I happen to be a bit of a problem child myself, so I know the score. I didn't directly encourage her behavior, but I did buy her a cheeky SpongeBob ice cream after the game... while her father kept doing his best to make her feel irredeemable.

In my mind... in my mind she's still twelve. Still shell-shocked from the simple act of being brought into this confusing existence. Coming to terms with being trapped in a body she didn't get to choose. Yanking that girl's braid into a full bodyslam like, here we go, let's expedite some karmic payback bitch, when all shortstop did wrong was tell her she ran like a boy or that she had fat arms or some dumb shit like that.

A couple days before that, I bought her a goosebump. At the scholastic book fair. She comes at me, holding this book about a haunted camera that turns people into skeletons, and says, Uncle John, can I have this? And I say fuck yeah, you can have that; that book looks sick.

And then, of course, her dad gets mad at me later because haunted photography skeletons aren't something that factor into their daughter's wholesome Christian education. Give me a break. You can have both. You can have Mickey Mouse goofin' with the broomsticks and still get Chernabog up on Bald Mountain.

Anyway, I hope she got to read it.

15.

In my mind, it's *that* little girl who crossed over two years ago. Isn't that wild? But I know it won't be her when she comes back tomorrow.

It'll be like meeting her again for the first time.

God, I hope she likes me.

I mean, we got along fine back then. But I don't spend much time around people anymore. It's just me and Nora way out here at the end of the world.

And now you.

You show up and tell me we've gotta go pick her up. And listen close: I don't fault you for this. I don't fault you for this at all. But when you got me on the Facebook, and you told me that I was her next of kin. That was the moment I found out my sister was dead. And her husband. And by that logic, probably my older brother too.

They didn't like me very much. None of them did. I suppose that's part of the reason I left. Not the whole reason, sure. But it was still hard to hear that the family that never really wanted me no longer has a chance to change its mind. Do you know what I mean?

Redemption had a time limit, and I overslept and missed it

altogether. Beat.

Tea. I promised you tea. Let me get you some tea. Tea, tea, tea, tea, tea, tea, tea.

Uncle John stumbles around and attempts to put the kettle on.

UNCLE JOHN

Do you like your tea warmed up in a cup?

CURTIS

I'm sorry that I was the one to have to tell you--

UNCLE JOHN

I've got green tea, but it's ancient. Does green tea go bad? It doesn't look very green. It

looks grey. Is it supposed to look grey? Acieleanora drinks it sometimes, but it ain't gonna hurt her none.

16.

CURTIS

Whatever you have is fine.

UNCLE JOHN

You say that now. But I imagine you'll have a pretty lousy time should I poison you with my grey tea. Are we taking your car tomorrow?

CURTIS

We can. I don't mind. It's a rental.

UNCLE JOHN

Full Disclosure: It's been years since I've left Shelborne, Massachusetts. And my truck ain't gonna make an eight-hour drive. I'm actually not entirely sure it'll start at all. It's okay if we take yours? We can split the driving.

CURTIS

Well, you probably shouldn't drive since you aren't on the insurance.

UNCLE JOHN

I'm gonna drive. I have a license if that's what you're worried about. I don't know where it is. But I have it.

CURTIS

Okay.

UNCLE JOHN

I figure we'll stop in Teluga on the way out. I'm just happy her portal is close by. Could've been the one in Rio de Janeiro. Now, I have nothing against Brazilians, but I've never been off this continent, and I worry that maybe my body might feel different in South America. What if my feet hurt in South America?

CURTIS

I guess we're lucky it's the Arcadia Gate.

UNCLE JOHN

Isn't there a portal in Florida? That's almost South America. Split the difference.

CURTIS

The Tampa Gate is dead. Fizzled out years ago.

UNCLE JOHN

Did they ever figure out why they mostly popped up on the East Coast?

CURTIS

There are some theories about magnetic distribution.

17.

UNCLE JOHN

Ah, right, yeah, like how all dogs poop on a north-south axis.

CURTIS

That can't be accurate.

UNCLE JOHN

Of course it is. What time are we leaving tomorrow?

CURTIS

Early. How's 9?

UNCLE JOHN

That's fine, but it's not early. Five is early. Six is early. But we can leave at nine, sure, I don't have a strong preference as long as we can stop in Teluga and get a late breakfast.

CURTIS

Great.

UNCLE JOHN

On the way back, too.

CURTIS

That works.

UNCLE JOHN

It's just the two of us then? I know people throw those big parties for people when they come back, but if it's all the same to you, I'd rather just come straight home. I have everything we need here.

CURTIS

Yeah, that's fine. I don't think she'd want a big celebration.

UNCLE JOHN

I have board games.

Teapot whistles.

BLACKOUT

ACT 1 SC 3 - MELANCHOLY OF THE MOON

We hear ocean sounds. Curtis is sat on the beach watching the sunset.

18.

We sit with him for a while. He sees something out in the water. He stands, alarmed and

confused. NORA enters barefoot and dripping.
She is an ethereal creature. She wears a single
earring.

CURTIS

Hey! Are you okay?

NORA

Hello.

CURTIS

Were you... swimming?

NORA

Yes.

CURTIS

Night swimming?

NORA

Yes.

CURTIS

Can I get you a towel or something?

NORA

No.

CURTIS

I'm a friend of Uncle John. You must be...

NORA

Nora.

CURTIS

Great. It's nice to meet you.

NORA

The moon is sad tonight. Can you feel it?

Before the moon discovered sadness, I roamed the dark forests of her surface.
Luxurious moonwebs were strung on shimmering branches. It was impossibly quiet.

19.

Save for the whispers of the moon spiders, constantly predicting future calamities.

It was among those moontrees that I happened upon a strange being. It hailed from the
yellow planet one arcspace closer to the sun. But soon more billowed through the void
to join the first; their bodies made of wind. I tried to sing to them, but they could not

listen or did not have the ears to hear. In fact, they could not detect my presence at all.

These wraithforms eventually siphoned all of the moon's breath to build their drifting zephyr cities on the oceans of Gaia long before the time of apes. But before that, they turned the moonspiders into authentic prophets by meticulously eradicating each and every one of them.

Their dissonant arachnoid mindhowls met the howling wind to produce the most horrendous harmonies. I fled into a moonhollow to escape the discordant bellows.

It was there, beneath the surface, that I discovered Ixillis, Queen of the Lunar Arachnids. Though she had evaded the genocide, she curled helplessly in the center of her great web and wept for the loss of her brood. I began to sing for her then; it was all I had to give. I took in her pain and wove it into the moonbrood lament. Which remains the most sorrowful song I know.

Ixillis mourned for three cycles, until it seemed my voice had stirred a small sliver of hope somewhere deep within her cephalothorax, and with that she finally found the strength to flee from the awful phantoms of the yellow wind.

But her assailants were clever; they discovered her just as she finished constructing a solar sailing ship spun from her moonwebs. Their gaseous forms gathered to form a sallow cloud just above the ridge, coldly observing her, calculating. As soon as she spied the growing haze, she began to skitter away as a far lesser creature would. Reduced to the simple form she inhabited.

I did not cease my song, even as they sucked the final breath from her body. I bore witness as all eight of her elegant spindle legs ceased their arrhythmic twitching and she fell into the long sleep that comes for us all.

Would you like to hear it?

She sings a haunting melody. Near the end of the song, Curtis looks hypnotized and begins to walk forward as if to walk into the ocean. Nora stops him with her palm.

20.

NORA

We must go inside.

CURTIS

But I can hear the moon now. And it's weeping. Go inside? *Why?*

NORA

There are board games.

BLACKOUT

ACT 1 SC 4 - TELUGA

Uncle John, Curtis, and Molly sit in a booth at a roadside breakfast diner. Curtis is in his suit. John in a comfy sweater. Molly wears clothes that were purchased at a roadside gift shop in Teluga.

UNCLE JOHN

You've barely touched your chocolate peanut butter banana pancakes.

MOLLY

Would you like some?

UNCLE JOHN

No. I mean, I shouldn't. But yeah.

She slides the plate to him. He eats them happily.

CURTIS

Are you still feeling dizzy?

MOLLY

I'm fine. I just didn't like them.

UNCLE JOHN
(mouth full of pancakes)

You didn't like them??

MOLLY

I'm not used to solid food yet. They say it takes a few days after you come through.

21.

UNCLE JOHN

I didn't know you'd come out naked. Heck, I would've been mortified.

MOLLY

They prepared us for it. Rebirth can be extremely disorienting.

CURTIS

I can imagine.

MOLLY

The sojourn defies human imagination.

CURTIS

Yeah. No. I just meant I can relate.

MOLLY

You can't though.

CURTIS

No. Yeah.

UNCLE JOHN

Think you'll do it again?

CURTIS

Hah. Wait, no, she can't. Can she?

MOLLY

Some people can, but it's rare. The big guy who came through right before me. Ollie. He's been through three times.

UNCLE JOHN

Sounds exhausting. Did they at least let you choose which portal you came out of?

MOLLY

Kind of. There's always a chance you'll go through the wrong one by accident. They warned us about that. There was a rumor about a guy who rebirthed in the Mariana Trench.

CURTIS

There's no Mariana Gate, as far as I know.

MOLLY

Yeah, I know there isn't. Somebody made it up.

Awkward beat.

22.

UNCLE JOHN

Wooooo. Now that's what I call pancakes.

MOLLY

I'm glad you liked them.

UNCLE JOHN

Did you at least have fun? Over there? Did you make some new friends?

MOLLY

I was a little bird on the other side.

I was a little bird before I moved up to a higher level. I think I was something like a sparrow, but then again, it's hard to tell what kind of bird you are when you are the bird that you are. I inhabited that form for at least a year.

Time didn't work the same. I was there six years. But only two passed Earthside.

I joined up with a unit of cartographers after that. Once I had fingers again. For three

years, we attempted to map the unmappable. It drove us nearly insane.

Predictably, we became lost. Lost in a place without a sky. The floor was concrete. Everything was concrete. There were times when I didn't think I'd ever see the color blue again. You don't realize how important blue is until you don't have it anymore. Several of us got split up there. Don't know what happened to them. Don't want to know.

Then we found a slightly nicer place. Like a recursive faith-based pediatrician's office, except covered in neon tubing filled with glowing blood. A woman, Gwen, met her grandchildren in one of the thousands of waiting rooms there. Gwen had never even had any children to begin with. Yet. They say there's this tiny chance that will happen. That you'll meet someone who knows you. Someone who has sojourned in the future. But they aren't supposed to reveal themselves. It can damage a mind to know what must be.

By that time, the group was plagued by a conspiratorial optimism. Smiles became veiled threats that underscored each day. When faced with the impossible, we fell fully into delusion. It became too much for me, I began to miss my days as a little bird.

One by one they drifted away. And then I was alone again. Stuck in an endless psychometric forever maze. But it wasn't long after that until my time was up. Whatever needed to be changed in me had been successfully altered. I felt a pull. Voices in my head guiding me out.

Then the rebirth. Naked, cold, and afraid.

23.

You'd have to experience it yourself for it to make any more sense than that, though I wouldn't wish it on anyone.

And I think I'm done talking about it for now.

Beat.

UNCLE JOHN

(genuine)

Hey. Thanks for sharing. We're here for ya if you wanna talk more.

MOLLY

That's kind, Uncle John. But I just wanna go home now, but I don't really have one of those anymore. So, if you guys could get me set up at a hotel, I'd be appreciative.

UNCLE JOHN

AHAHAHAHAHAHA. No. You're staying with me, you idiot.

MOLLY

I was told to expect night terrors as my body reconnects with the nature of this existence.

UNCLE JOHN

Well, I'm nocturnal. I'll always be up to talk you down. Oh shit, I haven't told you about

Nora. You're gonna love her. She's been really good for me.

MOLLY

I don't want to be a burden.

UNCLE JOHN

You won't be. And how about you?

CURTIS

Huh?

UNCLE JOHN

When's your flight back to...

CURTIS

Chicago.

UNCLE JOHN

To Chicago.

24.

CURTIS

I haven't booked it yet.

UNCLE JOHN

(a little hesitant)

Okay. Well, then you can stay too. Join the family. I don't give a shit.

CURTIS

Thanks. But I have to get back. I have work Monday.

UNCLE JOHN

Well, at least I offered, so now you have to like me more. But you're spending the night tonight because board games. Right? RIGHT?

CURTIS

Yeah. If that's okay with everyone.

UNCLE JOHN

Of course, it's okay. The rules are all made up anyway. Not board game rules, though. Those are law. The three of us played a couple last night. Nora won every round. She's tough to beat. But with four players we can break out something *really* complicated. Now if you'll be so kind as to pardon me for a moment, I'm going to go do a peepee, and then we shall skeedaddle.

Uncle John leaves. Beat.

MOLLY

Chicago.

CURTIS

That's right.

MOLLY

When did you move there?

CURTIS

Right after you left.

MOLLY

And the job?

CURTIS

I'm a Cursebreaker. Not an agent in the field or anything. Maybe in a few years, who knows?

25.

MOLLY

Good for you.

CURTIS

You should come out sometime.

MOLLY

Yeah?

Beat.

CURTIS

This feels bad.

MOLLY

What does?

CURTIS

This. Us.

MOLLY

Why?

CURTIS

Because you know... because when you left we were...

MOLLY

Together?

CURTIS

Yeah...

MOLLY

I just spent six years in a sojourner's realm.

CURTIS

It's been two years.

MOLLY

Six. And now I feel like you may be expecting things that I can't give you.

CURTIS

I didn't come expecting anything. I just didn't know--

26.

MOLLY

Yeah, that's what I'm saying. You didn't know. You couldn't know. You based your expectations on a version of me from six years ago.

CURTIS

Two years ago.

MOLLY

Six years ago.

CURTIS

I just thought we could... try.

MOLLY

I can't. Not now.

CURTIS

Okay.

MOLLY

I could sleep with you if that would make you feel better, but that's just something this body can do; that's not actually me. That's not the me who can soar.

CURTIS

I don't want that.

MOLLY

Then what do you want? Because it seems to me like you tracked down my Uncle John and dragged him into facilitating... whatever this is. You may not realize it, but Uncle John is only here because he's too nice to say no. Even to you, some random guy he's never even met before. What if he just wanted to be left alone? I mean, that's the him I grew up with. Or didn't grow up with, rather. After his divorce, he just left. As if he had been building up the courage to leave for years. And I don't blame him. His ex-wife (Debra, Delilah, something like that, starts with a D) was a piece of shit. My dad was a piece of shit. My Mom was a piece of shit. And quite often, I, too, am a complete piece of shit.

CURTIS

I thought the sojourn was supposed to enlighten you.

MOLLY

What if this is what enlightenment looks like?

27.

CURTIS

Okay. Sorry. (beat) I'll just-- I'll drop you guys back at his place, and I'll find somewhere to stay before my flight...

MOLLY

You can't.

CURTIS

Why not?

MOLLY

Because you agreed to play board games.

Uncle John returns

UNCLE JOHN

Hey, what'd I miss?

MOLLY

Nothin' much. Ready to go?

UNCLE JOHN

Yup! Did the waitress lady come by? Oh, wait, I think you're supposed to pay up front.

Uncle John exits. Molly starts to exit. Curtis just sits there.

MOLLY

Okay. Okay. Listen, Curtis. I'm sorry I can't be the person you want me to be. You're obviously welcome to stay the night. Especially since you promised him board games, which are practically his love language. I'm just... I'm still readjusting to the truth of this reality. Give me some time. Okay?

CURTIS

Okay.

UNCLE JOHN (O.S.)

You guys coming or what?

BLACKOUT

28.

ACT 1 SC 5 - MAGNANIMITY IN MOTION

A board game is set up on a table. The four of them are crowded around it. Uncle John has a scotch. Molly is drinking water through a straw.

She wears one of Uncle John's sweaters. Curtis has tea again. Nora is drinking a Diet Coke. The game is something needlessly complex. The atmosphere has cooled down a bit.

MOLLY

So I can swap this card?

UNCLE JOHN

Only if you pay the resource cost.

MOLLY

What's the resource cost?

UNCLE JOHN

It's in the top left corner.

MOLLY

3. I don't have 3.

UNCLE JOHN

Then you can't pay the resource cost.

MOLLY

Fine, it's Nora's turn.

NORA

I am going to upgrade my Owl Warrior, activate my fortress, and attack your Koala Commander.

MOLLY

How are you so good at this? You have a home-field advantage.

UNCLE JOHN

NORA

She's never played this.

I have never played this. Bullshit.

MOLLY

29.

UNCLE JOHN

It's Curt's turn.

CURTIS

I pass.

UNCLE JOHN

What do you mean? You can't pass.

Curtis shows Uncle John his cards.

UNCLE JOHN

Oh. Okay. You should pass. My turn. I play a raccoon scout because that's all I've

got. Molly?

MOLLY

I think... she wins.

UNCLE JOHN

Looks like it.

NORA

I relish this victory.

UNCLE JOHN

Good job, honey.

CURTIS

That was fun. Bit of a learning curve. But yeah, I had fun.

MOLLY

She's not human, so it wasn't actually a fair game, was it? The win doesn't actually count.

Tense Beat.

CURTIS

Why don't we--

UNCLE JOHN

She beat us all fair and square. Sweetie, Molly didn't mean that.

MOLLY

Sure, I did. I think she should slither back where she belongs. Sink her fangs into someone else. Quit playing board games with her food.

30.

NORA

Did you feel something was missing when they put your soul back inside you? Did you have the sudden and terrifying realization that you were lacking something you never even had to begin with? Something you were born without. Twice. In addition to a stunning lack of magnanimity.

Tense Beat. Molly is visibly shaking. Nora stands abruptly.

NORA

I must return to the ocean.

Nora exits.

UNCLE JOHN

Hold up. Hold up. I'm coming. I'm sorry, Molly. I'll talk to her. Give me a

minute. Uncle John exits. Beat.

CURTIS

I think her faction was a lot stronger. It didn't really seem balanced from a design perspective.

MOLLY

I tried. I tried so hard to keep it cool for Uncle John. But I can see beneath the surface now, Curtis. And she's horrifying. We just played a boutique board game with a great white shark, or a dragon, or some shit.

CURTIS

What is she, though? What is she really?

MOLLY

A siren.

CURTIS

No way.

MOLLY

And she's going to drown him.

Curtis stands up, startled.

31.

MOLLY

Not tonight, doofus. Eventually. She must pity him, so she's holding off. But she has a mark on his soul. I can see it. I can see more than before. I can see inside people a little bit. Just around the corner.

CURTIS

What do you see in me?

MOLLY

I think he knows she's gonna kill him. But he's happy. While it lasts.

CURTIS

Molly, what do you see in me?

Molly stands up and refills her water. She sips it and stares at him for a beat.

MOLLY

I already told you. I'll fuck you, but I'll feel absolutely nothing. I don't have anything left.

Uncle John re-enters.

UNCLE JOHN

Cooler heads prevail! She's not leaving just yet; she just said to give her a minute

because she wants to eat a fish or something.

MOLLY

Yum.

UNCLE JOHN

Which gives you the perfect opportunity to go talk to her.

MOLLY

I don't want to.

UNCLE JOHN

It doesn't even have to be a good apology.

MOLLY

She was way meaner than I was.

UNCLE JOHN

Molly. Acieleanora is my person. Even if she's not a person, she's still my person.
Make an effort? For me?

32.

MOLLY

Fine. I'm going.

Molly exits in a huff. Beat.

CURTIS

She came back different.

UNCLE JOHN

I don't know if we can jump to that conclusion in the first 24 hours.

CURTIS

It's pretty clear to me.

UNCLE JOHN

I think she may be more herself now than ever. But some of us have to try harder than the rest. To fit in. To be a part of a world that doesn't fit *us*. And let me tell you, I know exactly how that feels.

Molly deserves our patience. And Acieleanora gets that too. When I went out there, she told me not to worry. Said she wasn't mad at all. Admitted she probably shouldn't have said what she said. Ya know, she's over 9,000 years old, but she still makes mistakes. I

think most carbon-based lifeforms kinda plateau after the first thousand years. That's my theory anyway.

Her sisters went to sleep a long time ago, and Nora's the only one who woke back up. So she can relate. She knows what it's like to return and not fit anymore.

I just want to enjoy the slow passage of time while I still can. Even if I'm just pretending that it's not speeding up on me. And Acieleanora makes me forget. If only for a short while.

You know we don't even have sex? She just holds me, runs her fingers through my hair, sings me soft melodies of a world gone by. Never would've thought that would be enough, but it is. Sometimes when she leaves, I just sit and stare at the water until she comes back. Shout all these pretty words out into the waves. If she's heard me, she never says so.

Okay, so... you wanna do a card game before they come back in?

Focus shifts to Nora and Molly standing side by side staring out at a dark ocean.

33.

MOLLY

Sorry. (beat) So, there... I'm not very good at apologies.

NORA

Neither am I.

MOLLY

Do you think you could try though? For conversational symmetry.

NORA

Very well, (beat) sorry.

Beat.

MOLLY

I can't see your soul. That's what was making me uncomfortable.

NORA

I do not have one. I have something else.

MOLLY

...cool.

Beat.

MOLLY

Coming back... sucks. It hasn't stopped hurting.

NORA

Perhaps it never will. Do you wish to return?

MOLLY

No. I don't know... You don't know what it was like over there.

NORA

I am well acquainted with the phenomena of unbeing. Dreamless sleep defined only by all that it is not.

Beat.

NORA

You know you are not human anymore, either.

34.

MOLLY

Yeah, I'm aware.

NORA

It is not a bad thing. It is just a thing. So many things are just things that we forget are things.

MOLLY

Do you love my Uncle John?

NORA

I do.

MOLLY

Good. If you could change your nature and let him live, would you?

NORA

No.

MOLLY

I think I get that. Expected it at least.

NORA

I am not afraid of what I am.

MOLLY

Color me jealous.

NORA

I am going to drown him, and then devour him. But in the end, he will ask me to. He will be glad for it.

Beat.

MOLLY

Did you cheat at the board game?

NORA

No.

MOLLY

Bullshit.

NORA

I am just a great deal smarter than you.

35.

MOLLY

(sarcasm)

Yeah, okay.

Focus shift to Curtis and Uncle John playing cards.

UNCLE JOHN

So, we go back and forth taking tricks until the deck is empty. Aces are high, of course. And you can only play pairs with a higher face value than the last.

CURTIS

I don't want to go back to Chicago. I want to go back to two years ago.

Why do they even have to test people? I know it's an edict from the other side. But we can't actually know where it's coming from. And you fail the test because your soul's the wrong color, or you were too much of a dick in a past life, and then you're exiled from this reality?

I'm sorry. I'm in a spiral.

If I let go now-- I'm letting a part of myself die. I know that's melodramatic, but it's true. Don't worry. I'm not going to stay. I bought a ticket home. I leave tomorrow morning. I want to stay. I'm just forcing myself not to.

That's the best I can do.

BLACKOUT

ACT 1 SC 6 - ROBOT BRAINS

The next morning. Curtis is asleep on the couch. Uncle John comes in from the beach carrying his metal detector. He tries to be very quiet but is very bad at being very quiet.

UNCLE JOHN

Are you asleep? Hey. Are you asleep?

36.

CURTIS

I've kinda been in and out.

UNCLE JOHN

Good morning. Take a look at this.

CURTIS

Um. What is it?

UNCLE JOHN

I think it's part of a robot. That's my guess. Could be a part of a robot brain. I don't know.

CURTIS

Okay.

UNCLE JOHN

Do you wanna keep it?

CURTIS

Oh. Um. I can? If you need me to.

UNCLE JOHN

Great, here you go. Couldn't let you leave empty-handed.

This is the first cool thing I've found in a while. There are these long stretches where it's just spoons. Which makes it seem like a cargo ship carrying nothing but spoons crashed off the coast. Who knows, maybe it did. I'd believe it simply by the quantity of spoons I find in a given week.

This one time though, I found an earring that belonged to someone important. I could just tell it did. And that made me feel important. So, I gave it to Acieleanora. I don't have it anymore, and I can't show it to you. But you'll have to take my word that it was also pretty cool.

But not as cool as this.

I know robots are make-believe, but someday you might run into a robot with a piece of his brain missing, and he's gonna be really grateful. A full-on Domo Arigato situation. He may even reward you. In which case, I request an even share of the monetary reward, and anything else is up for discussion if it's impossible to do an even 50/50 split, okay?

CURTIS

Okay. Is Molly up?

37.

UNCLE JOHN

Yeah. She's... out there on the beach. I'm not sure she slept at all. Between the two of us, I think it might be best if you snuck out now.

CURTIS

How do I contact you? When I'm gone? Do you have a phone?

UNCLE JOHN

Do like you did before. Catch me on the 'book'.

CURTIS

Facebook?

UNCLE JOHN

I mostly post political memes.

CURTIS

Alright. I will.

UNCLE JOHN

I made you a bagel for the drive.

CURTIS

Thank you.

Uncle John sits on the couch next to him.

UNCLE JOHN

I'm really glad I got to meet you, Curtis. You aren't so bad. I'll send you a message to make sure you got home safe. So long.

Uncle John pats him on the back and then exits.

CURTIS

So long, Uncle John.

Curtis collects his things and grabs the bagel. He starts to leave, but realizes he doesn't have the car keys. He starts to look around and eventually finds them in the couch cushions. When he turns around, Molly is standing there with her arms crossed.

MOLLY

Bye.

38.

Molly exits. Curtis stands there for a minute, then exits.

BLACKOUT

END ACT ONE