

OXYMORONIC FUSION

Z. Sharon Glantz
(206) 523-7442
zsharon@thesanitypatrol.com

CHARACTERS

SERENDIPITY WHITE & CLEPOTHA	Actress
DOCTOR SAM DOCTOR	Psychiatrist
MALARIE BLACK	Newscaster
	Spirit Guide
DONA P. SHPILKAS	Attorney
BETSY ROSS	Financial Advisor
TABITHA PLUTO	Professor of Mythology
MADAME X	Psychic
SYBIL	Cat
Y	Unborn child (boy
DUMMY (puppet)	(the voice of a male actor)

NOTE: DUMMY'S VOICE CAN BE THAT OF AN ACTOR HIDDEN ONSTAGE OR PROJECTED FROM A HIDDEN MICROPHONE.

PLAYWRIGHT ASKS THAT A MINIMUM OF THREE PEOPLE OF COLOR BE CAST IN ANY PRODUCTION OF *OXYMORONIC FUSION*.

RUNNING TIME: 2 hours

SYNOPSIS

Oxymoronic Fusion, a full-length metaphysical farce, explores the complex co-existence of contradictory reality constructs and belief systems. Serendipity, with the assistance of Madame X, a psychic, channels the entity, Clepotha. Unpleasant yet alluring, Clepotha has gained popularity through her instructional videos marketed by her business manager, Betsy Ross. Unbeknownst to anyone, Betsy is one-half the consciousness of an extraterrestrial. She and her other half, a hand puppet or dummy, plan to use the Clepotha entity as their fusion catalyst to bring them back together and recapture their ship so they can go home. Dona P. Shpilkas, a lawyer, works on suing Clepotha out of Sera's body. She and Sera's psychiatrist, have been reincarnated many lives during which they've chased the Clepotha entity from body to body. To end their karmic cycling, the psychiatrist seduces Clepotha. In her dimension, Sybil, Madame X's cat, is a physicist, who fell through a portal while working on oxymoronic fusion. Malarie Black documents many of these events in her television newscast, *Tabloid News*. When Sera finds herself pregnant with Y, Malarie appears as her spirit guide to help Sera and Y decide whether or not Y is ready to be born. Tabitha, Sera's live-in lover, reveals to Madame X that she is actually the goddess, Persephone, and wants to host a party to bring Sera out of her depression. All of the characters come together as Sybil invokes oxymoronic fusion so that Clepotha helps everyone get their needs met.

ACT I

[MALARIE APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS]

MALARIE

This is a tabloid update. Fact or fiction? She is channeling Clepotha. With her words of wisdom and wonder, Clepotha has captured the hearts and minds of millions. Sources say she's netted millions of dollars in the past six months from video tapes, audio tapes, personal appearances and private counseling sessions. Is it a scam? Does Clepotha really exist? Her hostess, Ms. Serendipity White, had been a struggling actress before Clepotha appeared. Could it be she's using her acting skills to capitalize on the spiritual void of American society? Clepotha, fact or fiction? You decide. Malarie Black reporting.

[LIGHTS COME UP ON SERENDIPITY LYING ON A COUCH. SAM SITS IN A CHAIR]

SAM

What makes you so sure you're not schizoid?

SERENDIPITY

It's the new age, haven't you heard? Psychology is out, consciousness is in. And channeling is the next best thing to nirvana. I only wish Malarie Black was right.

SAM

Who?

SERENDIPITY

That reporter who does Tabloid Update on television.

SAM

Are you trying to tell me Clepotha is a scam, Serendipity?

SERENDIPITY

Call me Sera. I wish it was just a scam. But I'm not as good an actor as Clepotha, Dr. Doctor.

SAM

One doctor will die.

SERENDIPITY

I'm sorry I missed those first few appointments. Did Clepotha show up instead?

SAM

How would it make you feel if she did?

SERENDIPITY

It's not fair.

SAM

Explain please.

SERENDIPITY

She's demanding more and more time – my time. I started leaving notes asking if we could negotiate for time.

SAM

Good choice, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

Thanks. I even got her to use this appointment book. She's been pretty good about it in between crises. But I never really know if I'm going to get to where I want to go. I deserve a life, don't I?

SAM

Yes you do, Sera. But let's not forget why you're here.

SERENDIPITY

You tell me.

SAM

Because Dona P. Shpilkas Esquire sent you here.

SERENDIPITY

And you value her opinion, right?

SAM

As much as I can respect the opinion of any lawyer. She asked me to make sure you're not a multiple personality for your lawsuit. Did you experience physical or sexual abuse as a child?

SERENDIPITY

No, my parents ignored me. I was just another material object they needed to maintain. And just when I was about to confront them and tell them how much I hated them, they died in a plane crash. I was 18. Why don't you ask Clepotha about her parents. Maybe she's the one with a traumatic childhood and I'm a manufactured personality.

SAM

I don't think so, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

Well she's the one with all the answers.

SAM

Are you so easily replaced by her? Were you so ignored as a child you feel your existence has no meaning or value?

SERENDIPITY

I don't know. Maybe.

SAM

Have you ever heard her speak, Sera?

SERENDIPITY

Yes.

SAM

You hear her talking through you?

SERENDIPITY

No, I've watched her videos. I have a great deal of money because of her, Doctor.

SAM

How does that make you feel?

SERENDIPITY

Betsy Ross is happy.

SAM

Who?

SERENDIPITY

Betsy Ross, my business manager.

SAM

Why does that sound familiar – oh yes. Betsy Ross.

SERENDIPITY

You know her?

SAM

She sewed the flag, didn't she? Sera, are you happy? Do you want for anything you cannot have?

SERENDIPITY

My life. Those videos are of this body. But it's not me. Sometimes I pretend it is me. Other times I forget and believe it is me. I get confused about who I really am. Does that make sense?

SAM

Of course it does.

SERENDIPITY

Clepotha has some very interesting things to say. She can be incredibly profound.

SAM

Jealous?

SERENDIPITY

What if I am?

SAM

Do you really want her to go away?

SERENDIPITY

Most of the time I do. Hell, she's had a good visit and now it's time for her to go back to wherever she came from and give me my body back. But what if she's looking to make permanent residence? I could just disappear. I want my career back.

SAM

Your acting career.

SERENDIPITY

It's what I do best, even if I'm not a big star. Clepotha's such a natural. She's celebrity material with celebrity skills.

SAM

Explain please.

SERENDIPITY

I love performing. On stage I'm there, in character, in the moment. The audience makes me feel like I'm part of something larger, something important. But I hate the stupid stuff actors have to do to make a living – accept one hundred rejections for every one good paying job, get orgasmic over laundry detergent, do unmasking interviews to publicly expose skeletons in the closet, attend fundraising dinners with cultural morons – you know. It's insane. Clepotha not only knows how to talk the talk, she thrives on it. At least in public.

SAM

Explain, please.

SERENDIPITY

I've been looking at tapes of her counseling sessions – the \$500 an hour chats with God.

SAM

Is that what she is?

SERENDIPITY

I don't know. I do know she's starting to tell people weird shit, Doctor.

SAM

Explain please.

SERENDIPITY

Have you seen the tapes?

SAM

Yes, including the sessions you speak of. Why are you smiling?

SERENDIPITY

I like spending her money on your expertise.

SAM

Explain, please.

SERENDIPITY

Sometimes, all I want to do is hurt her. She really pisses me off. Does that make me a bad person?

SAM

Anger is good. Anger is much healthier than jealousy.

SERENDIPITY

It's more than jealousy, doctor. She takes control over what's mine. She invades every aspect of my life – or at least she tries. Sometimes I fantasize putting my hands around her throat and choking her until she turns blue and then taking knife and--

SAM

But you'd be choking your own throat.

SERENDIPITY

Who's side are you on?

SAM

We're off to a good start. Tomorrow, then?

SERENDIPITY

Doctor, this rage is threatening to explode. What if that rage surfaces and I get so mad I hurt myself or somebody else? Look at me. I'm vibrating.

SAM

It's okay to be angry. Scream, beat a pillow, rant and rave.

SERENDIPITY

Thanks a lot, Doctor. I'm dramatic, but not that dramatic. Sometimes you sound just like Clepotha.

SAM

Thank you.

SERENDIPITY

Damn you, Doctor, what about me? Here I am, finally just on the verge of feeling something intensely real, and you put me into some kind of limbo until the next time. You should just lock me away in some rubber room until next time.

SAM

Is that what you really want?

SERENDIPITY

Is that what I should want?

SAM

Sera, what do you want?

SERENDIPITY

Want?

SAM

From me.

SERENDIPITY

Will you testify on my behalf?

SAM

I've already told you, your lawsuit will never go to trial. I will tell Dona I'm not convinced you're a multiple personality or schizophrenic or simply that good of an actress – no offense. However, I do want to help you. Sera, before you go – I mean before you take yourself, your body, out of my office – may I speak to her? I'll make sure you both get home in one piece, I promise.

SERENDIPITY

I guess. She's not always available on the spur of the moment. She has to appear just so for her public.

SAM

My talking to her can only help you.

SERENDIPITY

I still think it's unfair to share you with her, but I'll see what I can do.

SAM

It's in your best interest, I assure you. Maybe you can use the time out of your body to deal with those feelings that threaten to surface.

SERENDIPITY

It doesn't work that way. When Clepotha's around, I go unconscious. It's like sleeping, except I don't dream. I've known a few actors who were drunks. They'd go a little heavy on the drink and talk about blackouts. It's more like that. You can't know how disorienting it is. If I don't see you until tomorrow, thanks, Doctor. I really appreciate your time and I'm sure you and Dona will --

SAM

Until tomorrow, then.

[SERENDIPITY DOES A GESTURE TO INDICATE THE COMING PRESENCE OF CLEPOTHA. SHE SMILES AT SAM]

SERENDIPITY

I've missed you darling.

[THEY KISS PASSIONATELY, FALL TO THE GROUND AND INDICATE THAT THEY ARE HAVING SEX. BLACKOUT. SERENDIPITY AS CLEPOTHA APPEARS ON THE VIDEO MONITORS]

SERENDIPITY

Hello. My name is Clepotha. Let us talk about love and recreation. Yes, recreation. Together we will recreate that mystical moment of conception, that moment when your father's sperm irritated your mother's egg into creating the being that is you. Yes, you were conceived with love and irritation. Therefore, you do irritating things to find out how loved you really are. You make impossible demands on others, you invade their lives. This is what I have done to my hostess, Serendipity. How could I take from her her life? How could I use her so? I be. I exist. Therefore, I mustard survive. I do not relish the thought that my being causes her hurtfulness. But I mustard survive. I love

SERENDIPITY (cont'd_

Serendipity White and I irritate her as well. And so it is with all of you. The more love you bring into yourself, the more irritating you become; the more irritating you become, the greater the opportunity to find out how much you are loved. And isn't love what wife – I mean life – is all about?

[LIGHTS COME UP ON MADAME X'S PARLOR. MADAME X CLICKS OFF VIDEO MONITORS WITH A REMOTE AND SIPS TEA. SYBIL TALKS WITH CAT SOUNDS]

MADAME X

Remarkable isn't she, Sybil? Even on video she has such presence. Makes me shiver all over. Sybil, I want that you shouldn't pout. You make me feel guilty. I know I couldn't possibly imagine how you suffer, living in the wrong body, in the wrong dimension. I know because you tell me every waking moment of our lives, Sybil. What do you do in that other dimension when you're not a cat? Fine, I won't ask again. You won't give me information but you're happy to share your suffering, Sybil dear. I bet in your world you're some kind of martyr. No? You mean your hand isn't permanently stapled to your forehead in your parallel universe? Such suffering -- oi. Please stop with the blaming me. It was not my fault. I can't believe you think I told "that feline" as you so love to call her – my precious Shakti – I can't believe you think I told her to dive through that portal at what was a vulnerable moment. I didn't even know the portal was there. No, Sybil, Sera hasn't called. No, not Clepotha either. Not that I want to hear from Clepotha. I like her better in two dimensions on the TV, I think. I can only imagine how Tabitha must suffer. You know, it's been a long time since Tabitha came for a visit. Long – as in the passage of time – oh, that's right for you, linear time doesn't exist. You're a cat. A cat who lectures an old woman. What was I saying? That's right. I wonder how that Tabitha is doing. There's something very mysterious about her, don't you think? Yes, Sybil, I did everything you said. Will I really dream the answer to my questions? Sleep on it? Very funny. And here I thought you lost your sense of humor. Are you ready for your supper, Sybil dear? I bought you kidneys and gizzards, your favorite.

[BLACKOUT. LIGHTS COME UP ON SERENDIPITY AND TABITHA IN THEIR APARTMENT PREPARING TO GO TO THE THEATER]

SERENDIPITY

I'm not happy, Tabitha.

TABITHA

I know.

SERENDIPITY

You're not happy either.

TABITHA

It's not your fault, Sera. Clepotha, dear sweet Clepotha, on the other hand --

SERENDIPITY

I don't want to talk about her, I want to talk about me. I miss working.

TABITHA

You missed working long before Clepotha showed up.

SERENDIPITY

The Rep should have rehired me last season.

TABITHA

You hated the Rep.

SERENDIPITY

I did? No, I didn't.

TABITHA

You had regular hissy fits about how badly they treated you.

SERENDIPITY

Just blowing off steam. Of course they made me mad. They're family.

TABITHA

You hated half the plays you worked on.

SERENDIPITY

So?

TABITHA

You complained they always played it safe, remember?

SERENDIPITY

Yeah. But maybe safety isn't such a bad thing.

TABITHA

Since when?

SERENDIPITY

You should write a play, Tabitha. We could perform some of those weird rituals you teach about, take theater back to its roots.

TABITHA

No thanks. I get enough hassle from my fellow academics.

SERENDIPITY

Screw 'em, you've got tenure.

TABITHA

As long as I'm published, not produced.

SERENDIPITY

Even in obscure journals?

TABITHA

Even in obscure journals. I like being obscure.

SERENDIPITY

Not me. Since I was a little girl, I've always wanted fame. But not like this. What if it's all I ever get, all I deserve.

TABITHA

You've changed, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

I know. I'm sorry.

TABITHA

You never used to apologize.

SERENDIPITY

Sorry, I mean--

TABITHA

It's as though a chunk of you was missing.

SERENDIPITY

At first I thought it was all Clepotha's doing. Now I'm not so sure. It's like you said – it's like a piece of me disappeared. Spooky.

TABITHA

I should never have--

SERENDIPITY

Not again, Tabitha. I'm the one who decided to go to Madame X's channeling class. Granted, I did it to impress you. No way I would have gone to that new age freak show on my own.

TABITHA

There's our missing edge.

SERENDIPITY

I'm sorry.

TABITHA

Don't be, Sera. Now you're creeping me out.

SERENDIPITY

At first Clepotha seemed like a Seth or Ramtha. I felt like a god – indirectly, of course.

TABITHA

Lucky you.

SERENDIPITY

I deserve a life, don't I? How are you and Clepotha getting along? I know how much you adore each other.

TABITHA

I rarely talk to her – not since me and you – I mean me and your delicious body – serves her right, the homophobic bitch.

SERENDIPITY

You won't leave me, will you, Tabitha?

TABITHA

Come closer, love. I've had to share you for too long.

SERENDIPITY

Six months.

TABITHA

Six interminable months. Clepotha, the great psychic suck, has got to go and somehow we're going to get rid of her.

SERENDIPITY

Will you hold me forever?

TABITHA

Forever is a long time. Believe me.

SERENDIPITY

It's shorter when you live a double life.

TABITHA

Not necessarily.

SERENDIPITY

Like you would know.

TABITHA

I could surprise you. Listen to me, Sera. Somehow we'll put an end to Clepotha.

SERENDIPITY

Call it something else. Endings are death and who needs the grief.

TABITHA

Create a new crises instead? [SERENDIPITY WALKS AWAY] Old business, I'm sorry.

SERENDIPITY

Do you really think I wanted Clepotha in my life?

TABITHA

Madame X said you and Clepotha chose each other for a reason.

SERENDIPITY

I suppose you know the reason?

TABITHA

No, but I know how hard it is for you to let go of anything. Look at this place.

SERENDIPITY

So I collect stuff. What's the big deal.

TABITHA

Sera, you're terrific at big grandiose endings. That's how you manage to go from play to play. It's the day-to-day stuff – the little deaths. Talking to you on the phone is fine until I start feeling like I have to hang up on you because you won't stop babbling. You read three or four books at a time so you won't have to experience the ending of one because you're also in the middle of another. Sometimes endings are necessary.

SERENDIPITY

Thanks, Mom. [TABITHA WALKS AWAY] I'm sorry, Tabitha.

TABITHA

Sorry again.

SERENDIPITY

You started it.

TABITHA

Just leave my mother out of this.

SERENDIPITY

How's that book of yours?

TABITHA

I'll finish it in the fall.

SERENDIPITY

After your yearly disappearance for the summer?

TABITHA

Yes. Besides, I've been busy Saturday mornings when I often work on it.

SERENDIPITY

Thank God for that, sweet thing. I wonder what Clepotha does every Friday night and Saturday morning.

TABITHA

I don't care, as long as she leaves us alone.

SERENDIPITY

We could do your research together. I like your topic: Saturday Morning Cartoons – Images of Modern Religious Diversity. I'm jealous.

TABITHA

Of?

SERENDIPITY

You. You have a life.

TABITHA

So do you.

SERENDIPITY

Even from before Clepotha – I'm always doing what everyone else wants me to do.

TABITHA

Sera, you usually do exactly what you damn well please. At least until lately.

SERENDIPITY

Do you have any idea how many people glamorize my life? The flamboyant actress who sleeps all day, entertains all night both on stage and off. Forgive her idiosyncrasies – she's an artist. I'm a walking anxiety attack living on a shoe string and people want to live vicariously through me.

TABITHA

Shoe string?

SERENDIPITY

I'm talking about before Clepotha and her money. Forget it. It's almost 7:30. We'd better get hopping if we want to make it by curtain.

TABITHA

Are you sure about tonight?

SERENDIPITY

Some people do exercise or take drugs to calm themselves. I go to the theater.

TABITHA

Did you talk to that shrink?

SERENDIPITY

I was a good girl. I made another appointment and showed up as myself. He even almost got me pissed off.

TABITHA

At least you came close to feeling something besides self pity.

SERENDIPITY

I'm sorry. Let's go. The television is finally fixed. We can pick it up on the way. [EXITS]

TABITHA

I'll be down in a minute. Where did the woman I fell in love with go? She used to be so full of piss and vinegar. Like Mother. [PICKS UP CRYSTAL BALL] Do you hear that mother? Do you? Mother, why don't you answer? He did it, didn't he. You brother turned you against me – again. I know he did because farmlands are dying again. Clepotha has got to be his doing as well. Damn him. Mother, did you know I'm scared of the dark? Did you? Answer me, Mother. Answer me now, damn it. [THUNDER AND LIGHTENING] Oops. I'd better watch that. Mother, wherever you are, I know you can hear me. Can we call a truce? I'm tired, Mother. I want the same normal life that Sera wants and we need your help. You'd like Sera, Mother. The old Sera, anyway. Mother, why do you torture me? Talk to me.

SERENDIPITY

[ENTERING] Did you see that? Not a cloud in the sky and – are you all right, Tabitha? Put that thing down and let's go.

TABITHA

What are we seeing tonight?

SERENDIPITY

Dr. Faustus.

TABITHA

Well we'd better hurry. Wouldn't want to miss going to hell, would we?

[BLACKOUT. MALARIE APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS]

MALARIE

This is a Tabloid Update, I'm Malarie Black. Madame X, the renown psychic who helped bring Clepotha into the body of Serendipity White, affirms that this is no scam. When asked how she could be so certain, she insisted her cat told her. When asked for comment, her cat, Sybil, said meow. More at you later, this is Malarie Black.

[VIDEO MONITORS GO BLACK. LIGHTS COME UP ON BETSY AND DUMMY SITTING AT A TABLE IN A TAVERN. BETSY PLAYS WITH THE UNUSUAL CONDIMENTS THAT TAKE UP MUCH OF THE TABLE]

BETSY

How long have we been here?

DUMMY

Ten minutes.

BETSY

Not here, here.

DUMMY

Long time.

BETSY

There's a shitload the Sociotechs never told us about humans.

DUMMY

They told but you wouldn't listen. Why do you think I chose this body when I had the chance?

BETSY

Thank goodness it only took me 300 years to find a fusion catalyst.

DUMMY

You? Why is it always you? If it wasn't for that stupid cellular phone we planted in your brain, you'd have forgotten I even existed and then you'd never have returned from the jungle and then you'd never have learned financial wizardry and then you'd never have

DUMMY (cont'd)

found Clepotha and figured out she's a fusion catalyst and then she'd never have become your client so we can get the fuck out of here. You should be thanking me.

BETSY

Do you think the Sociotechs know there's a fusion catalyst on earth?

DUMMY

Don't be an idiot. Of course they knew. Lucky for us the Revolted supplied us with reverse thrusters so we can get home. All the Sociotechs did was split us in two and send us to this ridiculous excuse of a planet. Won't the Sociotechs be surprised when we return in one piece and lead the Revolted into a new era.

BETSY

Until the Revolted become just like the Sociotechs.

DUMMY

Would you rather be stranded here like the others?

BETSY

At least they didn't have their psyches split. I've never found one anyway. What do you think happened to them?

DUMMY

How the fuck do I know? All I know is they were sent here just after the dinosaurs committed mass suicide. They probably inbred with humanity. Talk about disgusting. Thanks for using that modem thing to plug me into a computer. I did a lot of research while you were gallivanting in the jungles of Zaire or whatever they're calling it these days. I found traces of our heritage in the weirdest places – mythology, fairy tales, CIA documentation.

BETSY

[PICKS UP CONDIMENT] What the hell is this for?

DUMMY

What do I care? I don't have to fuel this body day and night. Humans. What an incredibly inefficient species.

BETSY

Did you know Africa is where humanity began?

DUMMY

Sure, blame Africa.

BETSY

I miss Chata. His tribe accepted me even though I obviously didn't belong. Every new day was a miracle. There were no routines, only rituals. Bad weather was a way of bringing us closer together. Humans can be extraordinary.

DUMMY

I don't know how you stand living in that body.

BETSY

I could say the same for you.

DUMMY

Everything I needed to learn, I learned from the Internet. I even found a way to watch television. I know all about humans now. They're irrational, violent and obsessed with buying things.

BETSY

Everyone watches too much television.

DUMMY

Television taught me I don't need with people.

BETSY

Humans watch so much television they forget how to relate to one another. It alienates them.

DUMMY

I know all about alienation and so do you.

BETSY

But what do you know about sex?

DUMMY

Sex? That's got to be the grossest and most disgusting thing humans do.

BETSY

Bodies do have a few advantages over wood. But how could you know that? Chata and I made love as much as we possibly could. He tried so hard to pin point what made me so different, the poor dear. He was attracted but he was also repelled. I miss him. It's lonely here in these bodies when they're not having sex.

DUMMY

We've been here a long time.

BETSY

300 years.

DUMMY

No, here in this dark dreary taste testing parlor for rebellious young affluence. Where's our fusion catalyst?

BETSY

Be careful with her. She's no dummy.

DUMMY

And I am? Don't answer that.

BETSY

She'll be here. I've done good by that woman or entity or whatever she is. I've taken good care of her money so that it can grow up to be big and strong. The economy on this planet is child's play compared to our economy.

DUMMY

Whatever. I just want to meet her.

BETSY

I have to admit, I'm just the tiniest bit nervous. If she works as a fusion catalyst, she'll be part of us when we merge. Try and get along. Otherwise, we could have a hard time living with ourselves.

DUMMY

Is she taking good care of the ship? I can't believe you gave it to her for safe keeping. [BETSY LOOKS GUILTY] You said – where's the fucking ship?

BETSY

Don't worry about it.

DUMMY

You said it would be safe – that we could get it anytime.

BETSY

I gave it to Clepotha for safe-keeping, so it's safe.

DUMMY

Does she know it's our ship?

BETSY

Of course not.

DUMMY

But she has it, right?

BETSY

Yes and no. She told me Sera found it and gave it to the psychic who helped her channel Clepotha.

DUMMY

And?

BETSY

And I didn't want to go see Madame X and with a dummy who asks too many questions. Even going alone, she might get suspicious. She's very sensitive.

DUMMY

You haven't seen her yet?

BETSY

I paid our Madame X a visit just after Sera gave her the ship. In fact, I've been seeing her regularly. You know, she could even be a descendent of--

DUMMY

The ship, what about the fucking ship?

BETSY

Easy, you'll attract attention even amongst these weirdoes. She's been helping me train my intuitive powers. She asked me to pick an object to focus on.

DUMMY

And you chose the ship?

BETSY

Of course.

DUMMY

Just checking.

BETSY

I've had some amazing insights.

DUMMY

Such as?

BETSY

Such as how a stranger will appear. She will wear an exotic hat with a veil. The stranger will perform three acts and say three words that will reveal her to be the true owner. I'll fill you in later. Here comes Clepotha. Behave yourself. Hold it, that's not her.

SERENDIPITY

[ENTERING] Hi, Betsy, it's me, Sera. I saw the appointment in the book and thought Clepotha would have stepped in hours ago. But she didn't. So here I am. Sorry to disappoint you.

BETSY

Nonsense, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

What's with the dummy?

DUMMY

Don't call me that.

BETSY

I'm doing a new therapy – dummy therapy. It's a legitimate way of talking to myself. Sera meet [MAKES SOUND], [MAKES SAME SOUND] meet Sera.

SERENDIPITY

Nice to meet you [ATTEMPTS TO MAKE SOUND]

DUMMY

That's [MAKES SOUND], dummy.

SERENDIPITY

Sorry. [PICKS UP AND LOOKS AT THE CONDIMENTS] What's this for?

DUMMY

I'm pleased to know Clepotha has inhabited the body of someone as curious and intelligent as you, Betsy.

SERENDIPITY

Does this means he likes me for my good taste as well as my money?

BETSY

Money isn't everything.

SERENDIPITY

Money can buy lots of things, but not everything.

DUMMY

If you watched the shopping channel you'd know that wasn't true. You didn't tell me she was a whiny baby, Betsy.

[BETSY PUTS DUMMY FACE DOWN ON ANOTHER CHAIR]

SERENDIPITY

I'm sorry. I guess I don't really want to be here, but I also know how much you've done for us. Clepotha should be doing this – it's her career. What do I know?

BETSY

What do any of us know?

SERENDIPITY

Your therapy not working?

BETSY

On the contrary. It's working too well.

[BETSY AND SERENDIPITY REVIEW AND COMMENT ON CONDIMENTS AND LAUGH]

BETSY

Why don't we get something to eat. The food's over there in those large vats. Maybe after a nice meal you'll be up for some business talk. Otherwise, I can contact Clepotha at another time.

SERENDIPITY

I should at least warn you. I've retained a lawyer and I'm talking to a shrink and--

BETSY

Slow down, girl. Are you hungry?

SERENDIPITY

Starved. I'm always hungry these days.

BETSY

Shall we?

SERENDIPITY

We shall.

[BLACKOUT. SERENDIPITY AS CLEPOTHA APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS]

SERENDIPITY

Each of you simultaneously live in two realities. The first reality is your consensus reality. The collective consciousness of human beings makes decisions and in so doing, designs the universe. The second reality is your individual reality. Every decision you make affects the universe in which you live. Consensus reality is the warp, individual realities are the weave. Together they fabricate the universe. Sometimes an individual reality affects the texture of the universe by sticking out, by skipping a stitch, or even by ending at a certain place. As an individual you can change the fabric of the universe by strengthening and thickening your sense of who you are. This kind of empowerment is very very sexy. Are you ready to change the universe? Hmm?

[VIDEO MONITORS GO BLACK AS LIGHTS
COME UP ON DR. SAM DOCTOR AND
DONA P. SHPILKAS IN DONA'S OFFICE]

SAM

The deed is done.

DONA

Did you have to enjoy it?

SAM

All I did was rise to the occasion.

DONA

I'm sure Clepotha appreciated that.

SAM

Jealous?

DONA

It's business, Sam. If you and Clepotha make a baby, the pattern will change and we won't have to keep recycling the same drama that is our lives. Besides, you'll look terrific on the witness stand.

SAM

You promised me Sera's lawsuit wouldn't go to trial.

DONA

Most likely it won't. But if it does, it'll be quite the court room drama. By the time I'm finished you and Sera will look like the victims of an evil Clepotha.

SAM

Let's just make sure it never gets to court, shall we?

DONA

As long as you promise not to regale me with the details of your seduction.

SAM

Dona, Dona. Must we endure your jealousy life after life?

DONA

I'm not jealous.

SAM

Are you sure?

DONA

It's not like when you and that woman--

SAM

It had nothing to do with you. Your timing was unfortunate. Celibacy is your way of life, not mine.

DONA

I needed you. I walk in and there you are – with her – your legs, her arms, like a checkerboard, squealing like little piggies and – forget it. Just give that thing a rest.

SAM

You're impossible Dona. Will you marry me? [DONA LAUGHS] What's so funny?

DONA

You want to marry a celibate?

SAM

No, I don't.

DONA

You'd have to get a blood test. God only knows where that thing has been.

SAM

Dona, Dona, Dona.

DONA

It's been so long that when I imagine doing it, it seems disgusting and stupid.

SAM

How could our love making be anything but wonderful?

DONA

Marriage. I can just hear Mama: Didn't I tell you it was just as easy to marry a doctor? Then she'll pinch my cheek.

SAM

Does that mean you'll see her again?

DONA

Only if I have to.

SAM

Won't you have to for Sera's lawsuit?

DONA

Not necessarily.

SAM

When was the last time you saw her? [DONA SHRUGS] When, Dona?

DONA

The day she put out her shingle.

SAM

Her ad says she's been practicing for 10 years.

DONA

Do I have to have a crazy mother each and every life I live?

SAM

Explain please.

DONA

Save your psychobabbling curiosity for your patients, Sam. In this life, my mother makes a living reading tea leaves, liver spots and cards with cartoons on them. Psychic my ass. I can't think of one past life where I had a sane and nurturing mother. Not a one. [SAM CLEARS HIS THROAT] You were as crazy a mother as the others – worse.

SAM

You're the crazy bastard who killed his father to marry me, your dear old mum. Remember, Rex?

DONA

Don't call me that. That was a very difficult life, especially after I couldn't see. Clepotha or whatever she called herself didn't have to enter the body of Tiresias and tell the whole world about us. Although the experience was rather helpful during my life as Freud.

SAM

I can barely remember my life as Anna O. I don't like lives where I'm that neurotic, even if I do get laid.

DONA

So what was it like?

SAM

What?

DONA

Fucking Clepotha?

SAM

It's nothing I ever want to do again. She's too kinky, even for me.

DONA

Let's hope your seed navigates better than your mind, Sam.

SAM

So, Dona, what's the verdict, your judgliness?

DONA

On which case, your psychofulness?

SAM

You want me on my knees? Is that it? [DONA MOVES AWAY] How's the case?

DONA

Which case? I have a suit case – packed for a sexy vacation if I ever have sex again in this life. I have a brief case with lots of lengthy briefs – even though I prefer boxers. Or do you mean a court case? I'm still looking for the right angle. Serendipity White, single woman versus Clepotha, single entity -- no, single consciousness -- no, single fuckhead--

SAM

Dona, Dona, Dona.

DONA

Sam, Sam, Sam. I need you, Sam.

SAM

You do?

DONA

For the case.

SAM

Your mother is one of the most important witnesses and I don't see you running after her testimony. You promised you could settle this thing.

DONA

I probably can, but what if Clepotha finds a hotshot attorney who wants a trial?

SAM

Then I won't testify. Conflict of interest. It's not ethical.

DONA

But it's not illegal.

SAM

I have a reputation to maintain.

DONA

Sera is your patient, Clepotha is your lover. I think it'll look great in court.

SAM

Only as long as my credibility holds up. [SMILES]

DONA

What?

SAM

I could become Clepotha's psychiatrist too.

DONA

Ethics, remember?

SAM

I remember. Just so you know, the seduction of bodiless entities is not my idea of a good time, Dona.

DONA

I know, Sam, but if she's pregnant, the pattern changes. The plan, remember?

SAM

How could I forget. Dona, let's talk you and me. For the first time in all of our lives we're born into bodies that will let us share our love within the status quo and believe it

or not, despite all my passionate adventures throughout this life and all the others, you are the one I desire most of all.

DONA

I'll take consistency and control over passion any time.

SAM

In which life did you start getting so – so old?

DONA

Like you said, it'll all be over soon.

SAM

Will we die for good when we succeed?

DONA

Maybe we'll just live happily ever after.

SAM

Until death does us part. Dona, we're finally free to love each other. Marry me. Live with me. Make love to me.

DONA

Not now. We've got work to do.

SAM

[MIMICS] We've got work to do. Will you marry me if Sera's unborn child gets rid of Clepotha? This could be our final life as human beings, you know.

DONA

One thing at a time, Sam.

[BLACKOUT. LIGHTS COME UP ON
SERENDIPITY AND TABITHA IN THEIR
APARTMENT EATING DINNER]

SERENDIPITY

Will you pass me the stuffed paper?

TABITHA

It's filo. I thought you hated my cooking.

SERENDIPITY

I don't hate your cooking.

TABITHA

You used to. I've got to leave for class in a few minutes, but before I go, I have a present for you. Maybe it'll pierce the black funk oozing from your person and get you feeling something. [TABITHA HANDS HER A BOX OF KLEENEX] Talk to me.

SERENDIPITY

I don't have anything nice to say.

TABITHA

That never stopped you before. Clepotha would be better company.

SERENDIPITY

She's wiggling out, Tabitha. She used to be the most elegant and articulate channeled entity anywhere. Now instead of counseling her clients, she seduces them.

TABITHA

She screws her clients?

SERENDIPITY

She doesn't touch them but her sessions ooze creepy sex.

TABITHA

How do you mean?

SERENDIPITY

I've been watching video tapes of her private sessions. Thankfully, so has my shrink. One of her clients is this sweet man, fortyish, professional of sorts, who has a thing for ladies' shoes – open-toed shoes. She asks him if he has any pictures of himself in his favorite pumps and no, he doesn't wear them on his feet. He says he carries pictures with him everywhere – just in case someone wants to see them. She takes them and starts kissing them passionately.

TABITHA

Gross. What did he do?

SERENDIPITY

He just sat there drooling. She told him he was just fine and should bring more pictures to their next session. I can't believe this body kissed those pictures.

TABITHA

Clepotha turning into a high priced whore.

SERENDIPITY

[BREAKING DOWN] Tabitha, I've been raped.

TABITHA

Sera, what are you saying?

SERENDIPITY

She's using my body to have sex with men.

TABITHA

How do you know?

SERENDIPITY

I'm late.

TABITHA

How late?

SERENDIPITY

Two weeks. I couldn't tell you – I thought you'd be mad at me.

TABITHA

It's not your fault, Sera. I'd better enhance the protection spells.

SERENDIPITY

It's too late.

TABITHA

I'm so sorry, Sera. I don't know what to say.

SERENDIPITY

I'm scared, Tabitha. It's not that I've never been with a man before. I have. We loved each other and our lovemaking was sweet. I would probably be bi if I hadn't settled down with you.

TABITHA

We share more than you know, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

It's not fair. [CRIES. TABITHA HANDS HER A KLEENEX AND SHE BLOWS HER NOSE]

TABITHA

Not bad, eh? What do you feel?

SERENDIPITY

[LOUD RAGING] Pissed off. Whoever fucked me is gonna pay and pay and pay and pay. No one fucks me without my consent. I've had enough. Clepotha has got to go. She's a narcissistic self-absorbed bitch. Phew. This kleenex--

TABITHA

Like my present?

SERENDIPITY

What did it do?

TABITHA

It took off some of the veils of depression, repression and pretend emotion to help you feel what's at your core. All this self-pity and feeling sorry for yourself – they're not your core feelings. Your core feeling are--

SERENDIPITY

Rage. I haven't been this mad since Cleoptha showed up. It feels great. [THROWS GLASS ACROSS THE ROOM]

TABITHA

Easy, girl.

SERENDIPITY

What did you put on these?

TABITHA

Nothing. I energized them.

SERENDIPITY

You did a ritual around kleenex? Does this alter my karma? What can you do with tampons?

TABITHA

I made magick just for you, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

Just make sure you keep your magick wand out of my privates, Tabitha.

TABITHA

Kleenex included?

SERENDIPITY

You and your cosmic bullshit, that's all you care about. What ever happened to living a normal life with normal dreams and normal presents. No, not Tabitha the witch. She's got a fucking belief system for every occasion. She won't even take a shit without one. You're really full of it, Tabitha. You hide in your ivory tower of academia, take secret vacations every summer. You're a joke, Tabitha, a big fucking joke. Fuck you. Fuck it all. And fuck you God. [SCREAMS, TABITHA COVERS HER MOUTH WITH A KLEENEX]

TABITHA

Sera? [SERENDIPITY LOOKS SURPRISED]

SERENDIPITY

You're still here?

TABITHA

Was I supposed to run away? So you yelled at me. Big deal. You used to rant and rave like that all the time. Sometimes I miss it.

SERENDIPITY

I'm scared, Tabitha. Clepotha doesn't care about anyone but herself. She's a fraud. And she could – she could – [CHOKES ON TEARS AS TABITHA REACHES FOR HER]

TABITHA

[TABITHA CHUCKLES AND HUGS SERENDIPITY WHO STARTS TO CRY] Moody, aren't we? Kleenex? [SERENDIPITY SHAKES HER HEAD] What is it now? [SERENDIPITY POINTS TO TABITHA] My fault? [SERENDIPITY NODS] Have I hurt you? [SERENDIPITY SHAKES HER HEAD] What have I done?

SERENDIPITY

You love me.

TABITHA

Of course I do, Sera. And here I thought you liked all that cosmic bullshit.

SERENDIPITY

Only when it resembles art. I'm sorry I've been such a whiny baby. I've tried to stop, but like you said before, something inside of me is missing.

TABITHA

Maybe it's the being inside you that has possession of that something. I wish I could help you, Sera. I really do.

SERENDIPITY

Such is life, love. Don't you have a class to teach?

TABITHA

I'm thinking of canceling.

SERENDIPITY

Don't. Not on my account. Go to school, Tabitha. I'll be okay.

TABITHA

Are you sure?

SERENDIPITY

I've got my kleenex.

TABITHA

I'll only be gone a few hours.

SERENDIPITY

I'll be fine. Get going, already.

[TABITHA KISSES SERENDIPITY AND EXITS. SERENDIPITY CLICKS ON VIDEO MONITORS. MALARIE APPEARS ON MONITORS]

MALARIE

This is Tabloid Update, I'm Malarie Black. Is Clepotha a scam? In an exclusive interview with the Repertory Theater where Serendipity White used to perform, the artistic director said he did not believe it possible for Ms. White to pull off the phenomenon that is Clepotha. He claims that although she is a talented actress, she lacks the awareness that Clepotha demonstrates.

SERENDIPITY

Thanks, Allen.

[AS SERENDIPITY FALLS ASLEEP, VIDEO TAPE SLOWS DOWN UNTIL IT IS FROZEN]

MALARIE

He says that the person that is Clepotha has an ability to engender trust in others and that Ms. White was far too misanthropic to be able to pull off Clepotha's warm sense of humor.

[MALARIE ENTERS]

MALARIE

Wake up, sleepy head. We need to talk.

SERENDIPITY

[WAKING] Tabitha?

MALARIE

No, Sera. It's not Tabitha.

SERENDIPITY

I can't believe this is happening.

MALARIE

What do you think is happening?

Television has finally taken over my psyche.

SERENDIPITY

Enough with the dramatics, Sera.

MALARIE

Clepotha?

SERENDIPITY

Please.

MALARIE

Are you a friend of Clepotha's?

SERENDIPITY

Hardly.

MALARIE

Are you here to take Clepotha away?

SERENDIPITY

I wish. No, Sera. I'm you. Forget clicking me off, you can't. See?

MALARIE

You don't look like me.

SERENDIPITY

You don't look like you either.

MALARIE

I look in the mirror and I know it's me, at least a piece of who I used to be, but something's missing.

SERENDIPITY

I'm what's missing. You cut me out of your life.

MALARIE

So I am a multiple personality after all?

SERENDIPITY

I never knew I could be such a bozo.

MALARIE

What are you doing here?

SERENDIPITY

MALARIE

I'm a projection. A projection of your shadow, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

What?

MALARIE

Didn't you just say you felt like something is missing?

SERENDIPITY

You're the part that's missing? Why?

MALARIE

I can't tell you.

SERENDIPITY

Why?

MALARIE

Because you're in denial.

SERENDIPITY

I didn't mean to cut you out. Honest.

MALARIE

Hasn't anyone else besides Clepotha wondered why you've become such a wuss?

SERENDIPITY

I'm sorry.

MALARIE

See what I mean?

SERENDIPITY

Why did you take so long to talk to me?

MALARIE

I'm not sure I would have been able to appear for you at all if it wasn't for those kleenex. Tabitha doesn't know her own strength.

SERENDIPITY

Can the kleenex put us back together? I need you. Dr. Doctor and Betsy and Dona--

MALARIE

Slow down. I know all about it, Sera. Like it or not, I'm with you wherever you go. You're denying my existence, not the other way around.

SERENDIPITY

Are you present when Clepotha takes over our body?

MALARIE

No, but a minute ago I couldn't talk to you here on the astral plane either.

SERENDIPITY

What do we do now?

MALARIE

You need a backbone if we're going to get rid of Clepotha, and you don't got one without me. That means, we have to get back together.

SERENDIPITY

How?

[PHONE RINGS. SERENDIPITY STARTLES.
MALARIE EXITS. VIDEO MONITORS
CONTINUE AT REGULAR SPEED.
SERENDIPITY MUTES SOUND AND
ANSWERS PHONE]

SERENDIPITY

Hello? Meow? Who is this? Meow yourself. [SLAMS DOWN RECEIVER] What's happening to me? [TABITHA ENTERS] Hey Malarie, I'm back. Malarie, talk to me. I need to know your idea. Malarie, quit ignoring me.

TABITHA

Sera, what are you doing?

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha. That Malarie Black. She's something else, isn't she?

TABITHA

How would you know, the sounds off. Are you all right?

SERENDIPITY

Yes. No. I going to be sick. [RUNS OFF]

TABITHA

[CLICKS SOUND ON VIDEO MONITORS] Malarie, now see what you've done? You're making Sera sick.

MALARIE ON VIDEO

Why is it my fault? Wait a minute, you can see and hear me?

TABITHA

Don't worry. Besides Sera, I'm the only one who can.

MALARIE ON VIDEO

How is it you can?

TABITHA

I've missed you.

MALARIE ON VIDEO

I've missed you too. There's so much I've wanted to tell you. But how--

TABITHA

Sera needs you.

MALARIE ON VIDEO

Tell me about it.

TABITHA

Malarie Black. I had no idea Sera's secret ambition was to be a news anchor.

MALARIE ON VIDEO

I'm really an actor. I'm even doing a pilot for a sitcom.

TABITHA

You mean Malarie Black is doing a pilot. You're just a projection, remember?

SERENDIPITY

[FROM OFFSTAGE] I'm going to bed, Tabitha.

TABITHA

I'll be in a little while, love.

MALARIE ON VIDEO

How is it you're talking to me?

TABITHA

Let me begin by introducing myself.

[BLACKOUT. LIGHTS COME UP ON BETSY
WITH HER DUMMY SITTING IN HER
OFFICE]

DUMMY

I saw Clepotha's new video. I don't know, Betsy. I don't know if I want to merge with her. Everything she says is obvious to anyone with a brain. And she's so patronizing.

BETSY

She's the fusion catalyst. We don't have any choice.

DUMMY

I don't like her. She's arrogant and smug.

BETSY

Sounds like you.

DUMMY

How's that useless piece of celluloid selling?

BETSY

We can't keep them in stock. I can barely maintain a reasonable schedule to accommodate Sera. Barbara Walters wants to interview both Sera and Clepotha. Hopefully we'll be off this planet before then. Once we fuse--

DUMMY

Re-fuse.

BETSY

Fine. Once you and me re-fuse with the help of the only fusion catalyst on earth, the Sociotechs won't have a chance. The Revolted will claim us as their hero. Our life will be completely new and wonderful.

DUMMY

Speaking of refusing, what if Clepotha refuses to re-fuse? She and Sera are being pitted against one another by that self-serving attorney and her sidekick, the bleeding-heart head-shrinker. Maybe Clepotha will want to fight to take that body once and for all or maybe she'll just disappear or maybe they'll both end up in a looney bin.

BETSY

Slow down. I really wish Sera had gone to some other psychiatrist. It was one night. I knew it was a mistake the minute he took my hand. He was so loving and kind and I missed Chata and I wanted to escape into kundalini.

DUMMY

Into what?

BETSY

Sex. Humans have no idea the power generated out of sex and emotion. They could keep their cities lit all year on the anger generated in the inner cities.

DUMMY

They wouldn't have to suck the juice out of the planet or build nuclear reactors even though they don't have a clue what to do with nuclear waste except bury it so someone else will have to deal with it. The jerks.

BETSY

Why can't we just kidnap Clepotha and Sera, re-fuse and go home.

DUMMY

First you have to make that stupid court case disappear. If that lawyer somehow makes Sera or Clepotha go away, we lose Clepotha and get stuck here. Make the call.

BETSY

You do it.

DUMMY

This dummy doesn't do phones.

BETSY

Well, this dummy had better. One night. [DIALS PHONE] The sex was great. How was I supposed to know he-- Hello? I'd like to speak with Dona P. Shpilkas, please. You answer your own phone? Oh. I didn't realize it was that late. My name is Betsy Ross. No, I'm not joking. Look, we've got to talk about Serendipity White. I'm Clepotha's business manager. Ms. Shpilkas, we both know how unusual this situation is. Maybe we can come to some kind of agreement. Good. I'll come to your office. Goodbye. [HANGS UP PHONE] This case had better shut before it opens.

DUMMY

Won't that lawyer recognize you?

BETSY

I doubt it. All us aliens look alike.

BLACKOUT. SERENDIPITY AS CLEPOTHA APPEARS ON MONITORS]

SERENDIPITY

Each and every cell in your body knows the truth of who you are as an individual as well as what it means to be a living being, living in consensus. However, like the human being, each cell has a mind of its own. Therefore, you must work with your bodies to understand your raison d'etre, your reason for being. When you do Clepotha's workout, you exercise not only your physical body, but your spirit as well. Let us begin with some warm ups.

LIGHTS COME UP ON SERENDIPITY SITTING OPPOSITE DONA IN HER OFFICE.

DONA EATS CHOCOLATE COVERED ESPRESSO BEANS AND CLICKS OFF TELEVISION. MALARIE APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS. SHE WATCHES AND REACTS TO THE SCENE]

DONA

That's what happens when you cross Jane Fonda with Shirley MacLaine. At least she's not kissing pictures of dicks in high heels. I wonder what Sam – I mean, Dr. Doctor will make of her new video.

SERENDIPITY

Why should I keep going to him? I'm not the one who's crazy.

DONA

Sera, we've gone over this. He's a respected specialist. Besides, if Cleopatra--

SERENDIPITY

Clepotha.

DONA

Whatever. She won't say spit to me. Your doctor is a top notch shrink. I saw those video tapes too. I may not be a psychiatrist, but Cleorta doesn't meet my personal qualifications for sanity. The judge will want to hear it from a professional.

SERENDIPITY

I wonder how he and Clepotha get along.

DONA

Chocolate covered espresso bean? [SERENDIPITY TAKES A FEW]

SERENDIPITY

How's my lawsuit?

DONA

I'm working up a few different strategies. One of the biggest problems will be implementing any order the court decides upon favorably. Why should Ms. Klepoth listen to a mere judge? We know so little about what she is. In regards to the case, I have to warn you that the devil skated through the court room and so could your nemesis.

SERENDIPITY

Someone sued the devil?

DONA

A case of possession. The judge determined the court had no jurisdiction over the devil. So, I'm looking for ways to make Clepooopoo uncomfortable by making those with whom she does business uncomfortable.

SERENDIPITY

How?

DONA

You and she have different signatures, right? [SERENDIPITY NODS] Both signatures are on the account cards at your bank?

SERENDIPITY

I guess. So what?

DONA

The fact that there is a necessity for two signatures is significant. The existence of the two of you in one body is impossible; however, it's documented by your bank. Don't worry yourself, Sera. The entire matter could be settled out of court if Clytemnestra would just talk to me, the nasty bitch. She's bad news – real bad. We're going to get her and get her good.

SERENDIPITY

Why do you hate her so much? You've never even met her.

DONA

What makes you think I hate her?

SERENDIPITY

Are you always so enthusiastic about your cases?

DONA

Let's just say that Clepothacary has had an overwhelming effect on a very good friend of mine. I know I have nothing to worry about because we've gone through this before, time and time again. But I don't like the aggravation. You are not to worry, okay? My alleged hatred should work to your advantage.

SERENDIPITY

I hope so. Have you talked to Madame X?

DONA

The jury won't find her to be a credible witness.

SERENDIPITY

Why not?

DONA

Because she's a witch doctor, a magician, a shaman, a sham.

SERENDIPITY

I like her.

DONA

Are you okay, Sera?

SERENDIPITY

I look better than I feel.

DONA

You look terrific, positively glowing.

SERENDIPITY

Ever since she made her work-out video, Clepotha has us on a fitness program. I found a whole set of weights, a stationary bicycle and a bunch of other stuff at home. I like waking to the physical knowledge I'm in great shape even though I have no memory of working out.

DONA

If we could package such a circumstance, we would make a million.

SERENDIPITY

I've already done that.

DONA

You pay a high price for all that luxury.

SERENDIPITY

Only my life. Will I ever get my life back?

DONA

I honestly don't know. We never got this far with any of the others. Never mind. Your biggest challenge will be to stay sane. Am I right?

SERENDIPITY

You have no idea.

DONA

It's going to be okay, Sera. I'll get in touch with you when I know more. You just hang in there. [PICKS UP TELEPHONE AND DIALS]

SERENDIPITY

Do you really think Betsy will help us?

DONA

Not if she can help it. Hi, it's me. [WAVES SERENDIPITY AWAY] Goodbye, Sera.

SERENDIPITY EXITS TENTATIVELY AND
VIDEO MONITORS GO BLACK]

DONA

Sorry. Sam, I'm worried. Sera is not a happy camper. I practically had to kick her out of my office. Do you think she's dramatic enough to do herself in? What do you mean you don't know. You're supposed to know these things, doctor. Yes, I quit drinking coffee, doctor dear. No, I don't notice a bit of difference – still got my edge. Just because you've kicked caffeine. Also, Clepotha's business manager, a Betsy Ross, wants to meet. That's right, Betsy Ross. Can you believe it? Anyways, it could be good news but I doubt it. What do you think? Sam? Are you there? As I was saying, at the very least it's bound to be interesting. Sam, Sam, Sam. I feel like we've been at this forever. Yeah, we'll make it. It could be worse, I suppose. We could be born brain dead like practically everyone else. Talk to you soon, Sam.

BLACKOUT. MALARIE APPEARS ON VIDEO
MONITORS]

MALARIE

This is a tabloid update, I'm Malarie Black. Sources confirm that Ms. Serendipity White and her channeled chum, Clepotha could take to the courtroom. Does she have a case? Her agent, a Ms. Betsy Ross, denies this is a publicity stunt for her new work-out video. Her attorney, Dona P. Shpilkas, Esq. refuses to comment. Her best friend, Tabitha Pluto, a professor of mythology and religion at the University, refuses to comment. Madame X, the renown psychic who allegedly brought Clepotha to life, refuses to comment. More news on our next Tabloid Update.

MALARIE STAYS ON VIDEO MONITOR AS
LIGHTS COME UP ON SERENDIPITY LYING
ON THE COUCH IN SAM'S OFFICE.
MALARIE WATCHES AND REACTS TO
SCENE]

SERENDIPITY

Maybe if I stay very still I'll just disappear and I won't have to deal with anyone or anything.

SAM

Explain--

SERENDIPITY

Shhhh [THEY SIT IN SILENCE] It's not working is it Dr. Doctor.

SAM

What are you avoiding, Sera?

SERENDIPITY

I'm having trouble hanging on, Doctor. I feel so invaded – so violated.

SAM

By Clepotha?

SERENDIPITY

By Clepotha – by all of those horrible men – I don't hate men, Doctor.

SAM

It's all right, Sera. I don't take your sexuality personally.

SERENDIPITY

I'm pregnant.

SAM

You are? Really?

SERENDIPITY

Why does that make you so happy?

SAM

Life is precious, Sera. A child could save your life.

SERENDIPITY

Give me a reason to live? Doubtful.

SAM

Does Clepotha know? [SERA SHRUGS] Do you want to keep the child? [SERA SHRUGS] How do you feel?

SERENDIPITY

I don't know. [LOOKS IN PURSE] Where did I put my kleenex? I'm aware of how I would feel if I did, but without my kleenex I can't. Damn, I thought I brought some. [SAM HANDS HER A BOX OF KLEENEX, SHE PUSHES IT AWAY] I think I'm scared, Doctor, really scared.

SAM

So you do feel.

SERENDIPITY

Sometimes I think I'd be better off ending it all. There's a piece. [PULLS KLEENEX OUT OF HER PURSE] Damn Clepotha. All she gives me is grief. I hate grief. She's gotten me knocked up. She's stripped me of half of my personality. If I kill myself, will Clepotha die too?

SAM

I doubt it, Sera. But what about having a child?

SERENDIPITY

Me, a mother? That's a terrifying thought. What if I'm as bad as my mother was? What do you think I should do?

SAM

I don't pretend to be unbiased – I happen to adore children. We only have a few minutes left, Sera. I want to help you hold onto your courage.

SERENDIPITY

Maybe I'll just throw away the rest of this kleenex and stay depressed.

SAM

It's your choice. Depression reinforces your helplessness, encourages suffering, attracts the persecution of others. Promise me you won't kill yourself tonight, Sera? Not until we talk tomorrow.

SERENDIPITY

I don't think I can make that promise.

SAM

You can and you will. If you won't think about yourself, think about your unborn child.

SERENDIPITY

I'm sorry. Tell you what. I promise I won't kill myself tonight. I'll take a 23 hour vacation from my kleenex and stay good and depressed until our next session instead.

SAM

Are you sure shutting down is wise?

SERENDIPITY

You and my kleenex get those emotions moving and all kinds of old ugly feelings surface. That's good, I'm sure. But I can't indulge myself right now. It's too dangerous.

SAM

Depression makes you more vulnerable.

SERENDIPITY

I'll put all blunt instruments out of reach. But if I don't come back, it's because Clepotha has taken over for good.

SAM

And the child?

SERENDIPITY

I don't know.

SAM

Will Tabitha be home tonight?

SERENDIPITY

Yes.

SAM

And you have my home number?

SERENDIPITY

Yes, doctor. What's the big deal.

SAM

I'm concerned. I care about you, Sera. Call me at home if you need to. Promise?

SERENDIPITY

I guess.

SAM

Tomorrow then?

SERENDIPITY

Sure. I suppose you want to see Clepotha?

SAM

It would be best. Goodbye Sera.

SERENDIPITY

Right. Well here goes – she'll be here if she comes [SERENDIPITY DOES A GESTURE TO INDICATE THE COMING OF CLEPOTHA. SHE AND SAM EMBRACE PASSIONATELY] Oh, darling.

SAM

My love.

SERENDIPITY

Another tedious hour with you know whom?

SAM

She's pregnant.

SERENDIPITY

I wondered who that other presence in this body was. I don't like him a bit. He keeps telling me I don't belong in this body and then he makes this body feel sick all the time. Maybe I should make him go away.

SAM

Would it be that easy?

SERENDIPITY

They haven't outlawed abortion, have they?

SAM

Not yet. But I'm the father. Doesn't that make any difference?

SERENDIPITY

Of course not. Just because your sperm irritated Sera and my egg into fertilization doesn't mean you have any say in the matter.

SAM

Don't kill him, Clepotha. Please don't kill him.

SERENDIPITY

Why not?

SAM

Sera said she'll kill herself if you abort the child.

SERENDIPITY

Oh dear. That would be inconvenient. You must talk her out of it, Sam.

SAM

I'm working on it. Oh no.

SERENDIPITY

What is it, my precious?

SAM

If Dona finds out I'm going to be the father of another woman's child, she'll cut off our engagement and never talk to me again.

SERENDIPITY

Then it's settled. We keep the child. Our child. And Dona will go away.

SAM

What about all that there-is-enough-love-for-everyone crap you preach so eloquently.

SERENDIPITY

I take responsibilities for my hypocrisy. Since I awakened in this body, I've learned all about a double standard and I embrace it with all my liver.

SAM

That's heart, Clepotha.

SERENDIPITY

Whatever. I like who I am and who I'm becoming. Will you take me home now, darling? I want to make slow wonderful glove to you.

SAM

I want to make glove to you too, but I'm afraid I can't. I've got some work to finish.

SERENDIPITY

Why do you torture me?

SAM

I would never do that, Clepotha. If anything were to happen to you, I would die. And I'd have to come back and do it all again.

SERENDIPITY

What do you mean?

SAM

I couldn't live without you, Clepotha.

SERENDIPITY

That's better. I'll see you soon then. Farewell, my dearest. [EXITS. VIDEO MONITORS GO TO BLACK]

SAM

[MIMICS] Farewell, glove. [DIALS TELEPHONE] Stupid selfish insensitive-- Dona, dear heart, so nice to speak with your voice mail. She sounds just like you. I just got through with you-know-who. You'll be happy to know, my seed took. However, Sera's worse off than I thought. I'm doing everything I can. I'm sick to death of chasing the cancer that is Clepotha from body to body. I wish Sera would get a backbone and fight back. But, no, she's too busy being victimized – just like all the other times. I want off the wheel, Dona. I can't tell if Sera wants to keep the baby or not. I don't think she knows. I love you.

SAM (cont'd)

[HANGS UP] Please, God – make Clepotha go away – far far away – so Dona and can live out this life and the ones to come in peace.

[BLACKOUT. SERENDIPITY AS CLEPOTHA APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS]

SERENDIPITY

[DOES AEROBICS] Reach up to the stars, touch the gods. Now back to the earth. Feel your spirit take root. Reach forward and stretch to the future soon to come. Arch back and look what you've left behind. Good. Beginning with the right, shake your hand and throw it away. Throw away the mindsets that keep you from seeing the goodness that is you. Now shake the left and throw it away. Fling your imagination beyond its limits. What do your fantasies tell you? Good. Now take a deep breath.

[VIDEO MONITORS GO TO BLACK AS LIGHTS COME UP ON TABITHA AND MADAME X IN MADAME X'S PARLOR. MADAME X SERVES TEA]

MADAME X

Tea?

TABITHA

Got any coffee?

MADAME X

No.

TABITHA

What kind of tea is it?

MADAME X

Pomegranate tea. Has a very interesting effect on some.

TABITHA

How could I resist.

MADAME X

I didn't think you could. I love tea. It's one of my favorite rituals. I have a large collection of teapots. Very special people gave me each one.

TABITHA

Sera gave you one, didn't she?

MADAME X

Yes. One of my clients has taken a fancy to it. She's using it to better her intuition. Very interesting things this woman says.

TABITHA

Who gave you this one?

MADAME X

My daughter. Made it herself.

TABITHA

Is she a potter?

MADAME X

She's a hot shot attorney downtown.

TABITHA

You haven't talked with her for a long time, have you.

MADAME X

What does she need with a mother?

TABITHA

I haven't spoken with my mother in years.

MADAME X

I know. I'm sorry. For both of you.

TABITHA

[SYBIL GROWLS DEEPLY AT TABITHA] It's all right. Cats have a love-hate relationship with me and I with them.

MADAME X

Sybil, what is it? You want more food? I don't know. You're getting awfully plump, Sybil.

TABITHA

Does she talk to you?

MADAME X

Sometimes.

TABITHA

Is she talking to you now?

MADAME X

No.

TABITHA

Your tea is extraordinary.

MADAME X

Extraordinary tea for an extraordinary being.

TABITHA

[SYBIL MEOWS] What did she say?

MADAME X

I don't know. Sometimes a meow is simply a meow. I had a dream, Tabitha. A woman came to me. She was weeping over the loss of her daughter.

TABITHA

You miss your daughter, don't you.

MADAME X

Yes, but this woman wasn't me. In my dream, she was in her tent in a hot desert. The Sahara, I think. She prepared an incredible altar with odds and ends from ancient Greece. She lit incense and candles, drank wine, ate bread, then did some kind of ritual. Then the strangest thing happened. In my dream I watched her from the point where the walls of the tent meet. She looked straight at me and smiled. It's true. At first I was afraid. She didn't seem – I don't know – clear-headed. Her eyes had this strange sheen. Then she reached out and touched me as though I had a body. Her touch infused me with some very important information, including all about her daughter who refused to forgive her. She even told me the name of the rites she had performed, said to tell you their name to let you know she hasn't forgotten you.

TABITHA

So, what did she call these rites?

MADAME X

The Elusinian Mysteries.

TABITHA

Mother.

MADAME X

You're well disguised.

TABITHA

I thought I was.

MADAME X

Do I call you Persephone?

TABITHA

Tabitha, for now.

MADAME X

How is it you're still here?

TABITHA

We never left. Hermes runs a software company, Aries works in the pentagon, Aphrodite produces infomercials on hair care. We're immortal, but we are in the world.

MADAME X

And your mother, Demeter?

TABITHA

Last I knew, she had the finest farmland all over the world. She grew the tastiest fruits, vegetables, coffee. She lived in Haiti. But something happened. Again. Her brother, Zeus, has this bad habit of pissing her off. He doesn't visit Demeter very often, but every time he does, she goes insane.

MADAME X

How do you know when she goes insane?

TABITHA

She sucks up all life out of the earth around her. Look at Haiti now. It's considered a dead island. That's her signature all right. I hate it when she goes mad. Somehow it's always my fault. I figured she left Haiti and went to Africa.

MADAME X

What makes you think so?

TABITHA

She's killing the land there. The Sahara is spreading like wildfire, relatively speaking. Not that she cares.

MADAME X

But I think she does.

TABITHA

I vowed I'd never see her again. Not that she's bothered to visit me or answer my hails.

MADAME X

Are you willing to forgive her?

TABITHA

What's to forgive? I've learned to accept my fate, why can't she? She's not the mother she's supposed to be.

MADAME X

She's not the mother you wanted her to be.

TABITHA

What are you talking about? I said, she's not the goddess she's supposed to be.

MADAME X

Mother. You said mother, not goddess.

TABITHA

Ridiculous. I said goddess. She used to be the goddess of harvest, for chrissakes. But not anymore.

MADAME X

She says she wants you to visit her. She says she needs your forgiveness to regain her sanity.

TABITHA

What do you know about the Elusinian Mysteries, Madame X?

MADAME X

Not a lot.

TABITHA

That's why they're called mysteries.

MADAME X

You've been amongst mortals a long time.

TABITHA

Yes.

MADAME X

You still return to--

TABITHA

I go back to the Underworld three months out of the year.

MADAME X

Do you love him?

TABITHA

Hades? In a strange way, yes. We made our peace when my stint with him moved to summers. I love teaching.

MADAME X

He's no Satan, is he.

TABITHA

Hades? Not at all. No, the darkness of Hades is nothing like the evil that is Satan. That's what set mother off the second time. Once Christianity took root, Zeus convinced her I married the devil. He thought he was being cute.

MADAME X

I suspect my little Dona misses me in the same way you miss Demeter. She won't forgive me either.

TABITHA

If mother won't answer my calls--

MADAME X

I didn't see a telephone in her tent.

TABITHA

We scry to one another, Madame X.

MADAME

Scry? You mean you talk through a crystal ball?

TABITHA

If she won't answer my calls, how am I supposed to tell her I forgive her.

MADAME

She made me memorize a map of where she is. She says she has to see you in person.

TABITHA

Her terms, her timing, as per usual. Do you like being a mother?

MADAME X

Yes and no. It's the hardest thing I've ever done. Why?

TABITHA

Sera's pregnant.

MADAME X

How? I thought – oh, Clepotha.

TABITHA

I'm throwing Sera a birthday party Friday night. Maybe it'll bring up her spirits. You'll want to be there. It'll be a full moon in Scorpio and time for my – descent.

MADAME X

What about Sera and the child?

TABITHA

I haven't quite figured that out yet.

MADAME X

Tell Sera who you are.

TABITHA

I already have, in a way. Madame X, I want to take Clepotha down with me. Hades will fall madly in love with her – she's exactly his type. Maybe I can buy myself a few years without having to leave for the summers. Which reminds me. It's about time to dig out my aging spells again.

MADAME X

You've done this before?

TABITHA

The stories I could tell. Many a historical mystery could be solved.

MADAME X

Why should Clepotha do this for you?

TABITHA

Let me worry about that. Could I bother you for another cup of tea?

MADAME X

Certainly. It's the least I can do. I'll get us some more hot water and we can continue chatting about motherhood, eh? [EXITS]

TABITHA

[TO SYBIL] Have you figured out the formula for Oxymoronic Fusion? What message? I never received a message. You talked to Sera? Well of course she hung up on you. Cats. I know it's difficult to conduct experiments in that body, but it's not impossible. Save the whining for Madame X. I'll open the portal the minute you give me the formula. Of course you can take the formula back to your own world. That's what it's all about – the big picture, the peaceful co-existence of contradictory beliefs and alternative planes of existence within one grand system that incorporates them all. Sybil, no more riddles. I want the straight poop or I'll– [MADAME X ENTERS] Nice kitty, nice kitty.

MADAME X

Here we are.

TABITHA

I'm sorry, Madame X. I completely forgot I had an appointment. I really must go.

MADAME X

Wouldn't you rather talk?

TABITHA

I'll be in touch about Sera's party. I recommend you tell no one about me, please. I'm very unpleasant when I feel trapped. Isn't that right, Sybil kitty? [EXITS]

MADAME X

What was that about? A goddess, can you imagine? Sybil, I've never seen you carry on so. Come come. Let's settle you down with a nice saucer of milk.

[BLACK OUT. LIGHTS COME UP ON
TABITHA'S AND SERENDIPITY'S
APARTMENT. SERENDIPITY WATCHES
MALARIE ON VIDEO MONITORS]

TABITHA

Coming to bed?

MALARIE

Hello, this is Tabloid Update, I'm Malarie Black. Clepotha's work-out video has hit the top of the charts. Rumor has it, she will open a chain of gyms that utilize her psycho-spiritual aerobic expansion technique.

SERENDIPITY

Not just yet.

TABITHA

You're going to watch that crap? Why bother?

SERENDIPITY

I guess I want to see how I'm doing.

TABITHA

Sera, you can barely keep your eyes open.

SERENDIPITY

Go to bed, Tabitha.

TABITHA

Good night.

[TABITHA EXITS. SERENDIPITY FALLS ASLEEP. MALARIE'S IMAGE ON THE VIDEO MONITOR FREEZES AS SHE ENTERS AND POKES AT SERENDIPITY]

MALARIE

Wake up, sleepy head.

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha?

MALARIE

No, it's me. There's someone here who wants to meet you. [Y ENTERS]

SERENDIPITY

Who are you?

Y

Y.

SERENDIPITY

Because I want to know.

MALARIE

Not why, Y.

SERENDIPITY

What?

Y

My name is Y.

SERENDIPITY

Why?

MALARIE

That's right.

SERENDIPITY

No, I mean why is your name Y?

Y

Because I have one X chromosome and one Y chromosome.

SERENDIPITY

So?

MALARIE

Sera, he's the unborn male [SOUND] growing in your [SOUND]

SERENDIPITY

I'm pregnant with a fetus, not a man.

Y

I'm projecting like you and Malarie.

SERENDIPITY

This is too weird.

Y

I just wanted to say hi. Bye.

SERENDIPITY

Where's he going?

MALARIE

Who cares.

SERENDIPITY

I care.

MALARIE

Why?

Y

Yes?

MALARIE

Y, would it hurt you if we killed you?

Y

What makes you think the choice is yours?

SERENDIPITY

I won't let you hurt him, Malarie.

MALARIE

Who's choice is it?

Ours. Y

You, me and Sera? MALARIE

I vote he lives. SERENDIPITY

And someone else. Y

Who? MALARIE

I forgot. Y

See? It's too late for him to go back. SERENDIPITY

No it's not. Y

Do you want to be born, Y? SERENDIPITY

Yes. Y

As a human being? MALARIE

I don't know. Human beings are weird. And there's that other one. She doesn't belong. I won't stay if she doesn't go away soon. Y

I have to keep him. He can make Clepotha go away. SERENDIPITY

Is that true, Y? MALARIE

No. I've tried. Can I go now? Y

Y

[ENTERING] Yes?

MALARIE

Go away.

Y

Okay. [EXITS]

SERENDIPITY

Don't go, please don't go.

TABITHA

[OFFSTAGE] Sera, are you all right?

MALARIE

Now you've done it. I haven't even told you about who Tabitha really is.

[SERENDIPITY JOLTS AWAKE AS TABITHA ENTERS]

SERENDIPITY

Y!

TABITHA

Why what?

SERENDIPITY

Y White.

TABITHA

I don't know, Sera. Are you all right?

[VIDEO MONITORS CONTINUES]

MALARIE

And that's Tabloid Update. I'm Malarie Black.

[TABITHA PICKS UP REMOTE. MALARIE SILENTLY PLEADS WITH TABITHA TO KEEP HER ON. TABITHA CLICKS OFF AND VIDEO MONITORS GO TO BLACK]

TABITHA

Thanks Malarie. Come on, Sera. Let me put you to bed.

SERENDIPITY

Y?

TABITHA

Because you're tired.

SERENDIPITY

Do you want to be a mother, Tabitha?

TABITHA

That's not a choice I have to make.

SERENDIPITY

But if I have this baby . . .

TABITHA

Do you want to raise a child?

SERENDIPITY

Y's the only thing keeping me alive.

TABITHA

Y?

SERENDIPITY

Because Clepotha hates Y and Y hates Clepotha. [CURLS UP ON COUCH]

TABITHA

Who's Y? [PUTS BLANKET OVER SERENDIPITY]

SERENDIPITY

Ask Malarie. [GOES TO SLEEP]

TABITHA

My poor Sera. A double life is bad enough. But a triple? [PICKS UP CRYSTAL BALL]
Mother, please. I need you. It's all gotten so confusing. Please tell me what to do. I
forgive you, Mother. Do you hear? I forgive you. What's going to become of us?

[BLACKOUT. END ACT I]

ACT II

[LIGHTS COME UP ON DONA BEHIND HER DESK IN HER OFFICE. BETSY ENTERS]

BETSY

Thank you for seeing me.

DONA

You look familiar. Do I know you?

BETSY

I don't think so.

DONA

Maybe not. How could I forget a name like Betsy Ross.

BETSY

Ms. Shpilkas, we need to talk about Sera and Clepotha.

DONA

I'm sorry, but I know I know you.

BETSY

Sera tells me she's been seeing a psychiatrist on your recommendation.

DONA

Dr. Doctor.

BETSY

Yes.

DONA

That's it – you're the one who--

BETSY

It had nothing to do with this.

DONA

You and Sam.

BETSY

It was one night.

DONA

Who the hell do you think you are coming here?

BETSY

I'm Clepotha's business manager. My coming here is business, Ms. Shpilkas. Nothing more.

DONA

You fuck my fiancée and tell me it's only business?

BETSY

Can we talk about Dr. Doctor's work with Sera?

DONA

No, we can't.

BETSY

Why not?

DONA

It's confidential. The bastard. His fucking around is making me crazy. First you, then Clepotha. Who's next. God?

BETSY

He's had sex with Clepotha?

DONA

It's business. Has nothing to do with this.

BETSY

Business? I don't understand.

DONA

I'll make it simple. We're going to sue Clepotha into oblivion. We, as in Sam and me. You don't have a chance.

BETSY

In our minds, Sam was making love to you and I was with Chata. Sam even called out your name.

DONA

How exactly did you meet him?

BETSY

We met at an espresso stand. We were both drinking espresso and --

DONA

Caffeinated espresso?

BETSY

He said he lives for fresh brewed coffee.

DONA

The jerk. Bean?

BETSY

No thank you.

DONA

I think you should leave. I'll talk with Clepotha's lawyer if and when you find one.

BETSY

Ms. Shpilkas, I'd hoped we could come to an understanding.

DONA

What's to understand? You fucked Sam and now we're gonna fuck Clepotha.

BETSY

Could we please talk about something other than sex?

DONA

Who's talking about sex? We're going to expose and embarrass Clepotha in the halls of justice. You can kiss your client and your career goodbye, Ms. Ross. If I were you I'd quit while I was ahead. Go sew a flag or something.

BETSY

I already did that and look where it got me.

TABITHA

[ENTERING] Hello?

DONA

Who are you and what do you want?

BETSY

This is Tabitha – Sera's lady love?

TABITHA

How's it going, Betsy?

BETSY

I've had better times.

TABITHA

Haven't we all.

DONA

Tabitha, it's a pleasure to meet you. I was just telling Ms. Ross about the hard work we're doing on Sera's behalf. I advised her to get her client her own lawyer if she can find a litigator willing to take Clepotha on.

BETSY

I'd hoped we could settle before the situation gets out of control. If anything happens to my client, you'll be very sorry – we all will. Trust me.

DONA

Trust you?

TABITHA

I'm here to invite you both to Sera's birthday party. She's been horribly depressed, you know.

[PHONE RINGS]

DONA

Hello? Did you get it? I'm sorry, but I have to take this call. It'll only be a minute.

BETSY

Is Sera all right?

TABITHA

Yes and no. You've had Clepotha on a pretty tough schedule.

BETSY

I know. I'm sorry it's so hard on Sera. I keep thinking she'll start enjoying it all.

TABITHA

She misses her life. I miss her life.

BETSY

Clepotha's popularity feeds on itself. It's out of my hands.

TABITHA

You'll come Friday night?

BETSY

Sera's birthday?

TABITHA

Sera mentioned something about your dummy. I think she'd like you to bring him.

Will Clepotha be there?

BETSY

She said she'd make an appearance.

TABITHA

How could I refuse?

BETSY

You couldn't refuse without Clepotha, could you?

TABITHA

What are you saying?

BETSY

[HANGING UP TELEPHONE] Something wrong, Ms. Ross?

DONA

She's concerned for her client, that's all. Isn't that right, Betsy?

TABITHA

Right.

BETSY

She'd better be concerned.

DONA

We'll see you Friday night for Sera's celebration then?

TABITHA

I'll have to check my calendar.

DONA

Fine. Can I walk you out, Betsy?

TABITHA

I wish you would.

BETSY

See you Friday, Dona.

TABITHA

[BETSY AND TABITHA EXIT]

DONA

[DIALS TELEPHONE] Fucking machines. Come on, come on, come on. Oh dearest – I was just visited by an old friend of yours. If you value this life or any others to come you'll call me, you mother fucking son of a bitch!

[DONA SLAMS DOWN PHONE. BLACKOUT. LIGHTS COME UP ON SERENDIPITY AND DR. DOCTOR IN HIS OFFICE. MALARIE APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS AND REACTS TO SCENE]

SAM

Are you sure you want me there?

SERENDIPITY

I feel like we've shared a very special intimacy, you and Clepotha and I. You're more than my doctor.

SAM

I am?

SERENDIPITY

You're my friend. Someone I can trust. I want you at my birthday party.

SAM

I'll be there, Sera. Who else is coming?

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha, Madame X, Betsy Ross, Clepotha's business manager – no big deal. Tabitha says she's inviting a special guest. She even invited Clepotha. That should be a whole lot of fun. I bet Dona would come if you told her she'd finally meet Clepotha. I've even brought her some chocolate covered espresso beans.

SAM

So that's how she quit drinking coffee. I'll do what I can, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

I didn't used to hate parties. I used to be a partying kind of gal. Doctor, I'm so bored with myself, I'm ready to give this body to Clepotha for good.

SAM

What about the child?

SERENDIPITY

We haven't decided yet.

SAM

You and Tabitha?

SERENDIPITY

No, but never mind, we're working on it. I can't keep on like this, doctor. I have no particular reason to live. I know, I know. What about Y?

SAM

Why?

SERENDIPITY

He's not so sure he wants to be a human being. I know it's not my fault, but I feel so guilty.

SAM

He who?

SERENDIPITY

Y.

SAM

You tell me.

SERENDIPITY

Forget it.

SAM

Tell me. I notice you brought your own kleenex again. Why?

SERENDIPITY

Where's Y? Oh, kleenex. Keep them. I don't want them any more. They make Malarie mad at me.

SAM

Malarie?

SERENDIPITY

Doctor, it would mean a lot to me if you kept these kleenex.

SAM

Thank you, Sera. I appreciate the gesture.

SERENDIPITY

[DOES GESTURE TO INDICATE THE COMING PRESENCE OF CLEPOTHA] Darling.

SAM

I've missed you.

SERENDIPITY

And I you, darling. But I'm afraid I must go. I want to buy a new breast for Sera's birthday party. She has taste up her ass. I'm sorry I can't stay, darling.

SAM

Of course, glove.

SERENDIPITY

You'll be at Sera's birthday party, won't you? I want you there. It's time for someone to give up use of this body – even if it means a fight to the deaf. And then you and I will have a chance to make glove. It's been so long.

SAM

We can make glove all night long.

SERENDIPITY

And I can't get pregnant because I already am. Isn't that wonderful? Bye, darling.
[KISSES HIM AND EXITS AND VIDEO MONITORS GO TO BLACK. DONA ENTERS. SAM HANDS HER THE CHOCOLATE COVERED ESPRESSO BEANS. SHE MUNCHES ON THEM]

DONA

Make glove?

SAM

Talk to me, Dona. Your repressed rage makes me uncomfortable.

DONA

How could you?

SAM

How could I what?

DONA

She said you drank caffeinated together.

SAM

Who? Oh, we're back to Betsy.

DONA

Are you suggesting she lied to me?

SAM

You eat those beans instead of drinking coffee.

DONA

So what? I like caffeine, Sam. So do you, you hypocrite. Heal thyself, Dr. Doctor. Caffeine isn't the issue, anyway, even if we've made it so.

SAM

Do you remember our garden in Paris? Those long afternoons of drinking coffee and talking.

DONA

You were the cutest handmaiden I ever had. Too bad Clepotha, or whatever Joan called her, showed up.

SAM

Ruined everything.

DONA

Poor Joan.

SAM

Her army was the best. I can still smell her burning flesh.

DONA

You're a jerk, Sam.

SAM

Why do you say that?

DONA

You're the one having all the fun.

SAM

Shows how much you know. You're not the only one who struggles with things. Sometimes I wonder if you believe you're the only person in the world who truly exists. I have needs too, not that it makes any difference to you.

DONA

Love it or leave it.

SAM

Don't.

DONA

Life's a bitch.

SAM
You're doing it again.

DONA
Explain please.

SAM
Spouting clichés.

DONA
Isn't that a little like the pot calling the kettle black?

SAM
Stop it. Just stop it.

DONA
You're frothing at the mouth, doctor. Allow me. [WIPES SAM'S MOUTH WITH KLEENEX]

SAM
Don't do that. Do this. [KISSES DONA]

DONA
Stop it. Just stop it.

SAM
I couldn't help myself.

DONA
Here, I'll help you. We have a lot to go over before Friday night.

SAM
Your mother will be there.

DONA
I can hardly wait.

SAM
Don't you miss seeing her at all? When we first met in this life, she's all you ever talked about.

DONA
So what? That was then, this is now.

SAM

Back to clichés.

DONA

You can't always get what you want.

SAM

Rock 'n roll, Dona.

DONA

[WHIMPERING] Love is never having to say you're sorry.

SAM

We do this every life, no matter who we are. I get melancholic about the past, you get angry, I get angry, you spout clichés, I get angrier, you spout more clichés and then you start to cry. [DONA BLOWS HER NOSE WITH KLEENEX]

DONA

[KISSES SAM] How can two people love each other after knowing as much as we do about each other? I know you better than I know myself. Kiss me, Sam.

SAM

What's with the change of heart?

DONA

I love you.

SAM

It's about time.

DONA

I'm tired, Sam. So very very tired. I want to go to bed.

SAM

Call you in the morning?

DONA

I was hoping you'd be with me in the morning.

SAM

Where do you want to meet?

DONA

How about under the covers? Will you stay with me tonight?

SAM

Of course I will. What's come over you?

DONA

I don't know, Sam. I honestly don't know.

[THEY KISS AS LIGHTS FADE. LIGHTS
COME UP ON SYBIL CIRCLING BETSY IN
MADAME X'S PARLOR. BETSY WEARS A
LARGE HAT DECORATED WITH FRUIT AND
VEGETABLES AND FLOWERS AND A VEIL.
SYBIL HISSES AND CURLS UP IN THE
CORNER. BETSY HANDS MADAME X A
VIDEO TAPE]

MADAME X

Cleoptha's new work-out video. How thoughtful. Tea?

BETSY

Thank you. Two lumps.

MADAME X

Excuse me?

BETSY

Two lumps.

MADAME X

Where?

BETSY

In my cup.

MADAME X

Really? I can get you a new one.

BETSY

I love sugar.

MADAME X

Will honey due?

BETSY

No, I don't care for melon. This is fine.

Good. Now what can I do for you? MADAME X

Like my hat? BETSY

It's very becoming. MADAME X

Nice teapot. BETSY

I collect teapots. MADAME X

Do you, now. BETSY

Would you like to see my collection? MADAME X

I'd love to. I love a nice teapot. [MADAME X OPENS A CABINET FULL OF TEAPOTS]
Where did you get them all? BETSY

Special gifts from patrons, family, friends. Do any of them strike your fancy? MADAME X

[TAKES A TEAPOT] This one is curious. BETSY

Oh dear. MADAME X

Is something wrong? BETSY

You picked a very special teapot. It's been passed down in my family for almost 1,000 years. MADAME X

Where's it from? BETSY

MADAME X

Ireland. Yes, there were Jews in Ireland too. I come from a long line of wanderers. This particular teapot is said to have been made by the faerie.

BETSY

Faerie?

MADAME X

The magical little people of the forest, the keepers of very old secrets. They were probably aliens from another planet.

BETSY

Another planet? [DROPS TEAPOT. IT SHATTERS] I'm terribly sorry. How foolish of me.

MADAME X

Nonsense. I'll just put the pieces in a bag. Perhaps I can make something out of them. I've grown accustomed to their enchantment.

BETSY

The enchantment wasn't broken?

MADAME X

Don't worry yourself. Here. Pick another and tell me what you feel.

BETSY

Are you sure you trust me and my two left hands?

MADAME X

No, but I have faith.

BETSY

This one's very odd.

MADAME X

My one and only daughter made it for me. Serves her right.

BETSY

It must mean a lot to you.

MADAME X

She's much too busy to visit her dear old mother and gods forbid she dirty her perfectly manicured fingers with mere earth.

BETSY

Still--

MADAME X

No, no, she and I haven't spoken for a very long time – until today, that is. She actually called. Serendipity White is a client of hers and dear Dona--

BETSY

Dona P. Shpilkas is your daughter? [DROPS TEAPOT. IT SHATTERS] I'm so terribly sorry.

MADAME X

Thank you. Any other teapots you wish to inspect?

BETSY

This one. It's most unusual.

MADAME X

Sera stole it from Clepotha and gave it to me.

[BETSY THROWS DOWN TEAPOT. IT DOES NOT BREAK. SHE OPENS TEAPOT AND SMELLS INSIDE]

BETSY

It vaguely smells of Earl Grey.

MADAME X

Really.

BETSY

If this tea were a man I'd marry him.

MADAME X

She said you'd say that. Keep it.

BETSY

Keep what?

MADAME X

The teapot. It's for you.

BETSY

What do you mean?

MADAME X

How could you refuse? You'll never find a teapot like that one. It wants to take you home.

BETSY

Pardon me?

MADAME X

I must have meant, it wants you to take it home. Don't mind me. Sometimes I ask questions, say things that baffle even me. I'll clean this up later. How about another cup of tea. We can talk about little wooden men and the revolted.

BETSY

Interesting choice of topic.

MADAME X

Sometimes I ask--

MADAME X AND BETSY

--questions, say things that baffle even me.

[BLACKOUT. SPOT ON TABITHA PACING]

TABITHA

Where is she? I hate waiting more than anything. [SYBIL ENTERS] Well it's about time. You're late. Don't start in on that what-is-time bullshit. That clock in your head is more trustworthy than the sun. So have you figured out the formula or not? What's the matter, cat got your tongue? What do you mean you don't know. You'd better get it together before Friday. Yes, Sybil, then you can go home, I promise. Madame X? I'll keep an eye on her. Otherwise that insufferable daughter of hers could make her life miserable. I like Madame X. She reminds me of-- Sybil, what preparations should I make for Friday night so we can at least test the formula? Okay. Right. Got it. Excellent. This had better work, Sybil. Nervous? Me too. It was so much easier and politically correct to perform magic before Christianity. I know. The world in your dimension is far more sophisticated. Maybe I should go through the portal with you if it ever opens again. Just kidding, Sybil. Maybe the next age will be better – if the earth lives through this one. With the formula for oxymoronic fusion, we just might have a chance. Well, Sybil, I'll make sure my part's done. You do the same. It would be tragic if one of your world's most renown physicists got stuck lapping milk in a parallel universe. Relax, Sybil, you're losing your sense of humor. My book? It's coming along. I hope it finds a readership besides fellow academics. No, it is not a self-help book. Sybil, why don't you just go back to your catnip and scratching post and lick a few fleas.

[SYBIL HISSES. BLACKOUT. LIGHTS
COME UP ON BETSY SITTING AT SAME
TABLE IN SAME TAVERN FROM ACT I. SHE
TALKS TO THE DUMMY]

DUMMY

How the hell did this Tabitha woman know about us?

BETSY

How should I know? Besides, she didn't know everything.

DUMMY

Just enough to make our life miserable.

BETSY

She said she'd help us.

DUMMY

And you believed her? Honestly, Betsy--

BETSY

Honestly yourself. We have to trust her. What choice do we have?

DUMMY

What choice indeed. At least we have the ship back.

BETSY

Tabitha says it's all up to some cat.

DUMMY

A cat? Our life hinges on the whims of a cat?

BETSY

Shut up, here comes Clepotha.

SERENDIPITY

[ENTERING AS CLEPOTHA. MALARIE APPEARS ON VIDEO MONITORS AND REACTS TO THE SCENE] Betsy, darling. Who's your friend?

BETSY

Clepotha, I'd like you to meet [MAKES SOUND]

SERENDIPITY

Very pleased to meet you, [MAKES SAME SOUND]

DUMMY

At least she's good with names.

SERENDIPITY

Is this your better half, Betsy dear?

DUMMY

You got it sister.

SERENDIPITY

Why would you choose a life inside the body of a dummy.

DUMMY

I'm a smart dummy.

SERENDIPITY

You're an oxymoron.

DUMMY

So who the fuck are you?

BETSY

She's a fusion catalyst, dummy.

DUMMY

It won't work, Betsy. She sucks.

SERENDIPITY

What's he babbling about?

BETSY

He's just a little moody, that's all.

DUMMY

You're full of shit, Betsy.

SERENDIPITY

My my, you're a nasty little dummy.

BETSY

He's scared he'll never go home again.

SERENDIPITY

Does his little wooden nostrils grow when he lies?

DUMMY

Take your fairy tales and stuff them up your tight little--

SERENDIPITY

What is this place? It's wonderful. What are these?

DUMMY

Lunch.

BETSY

Did you want something to eat, Clepotha?

SERENDIPITY

No, these will be fine. [SERENDIPITY TASTES THE CONDIMENTS]

BETSY

You put that stuff on the stew to enhance the flavor.

SERENDIPITY

I see. To tell you the truth, I'm not very hungry.

BETSY

Will you be attending Sera's birthday party?

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha invited me. My my she can be persuasive.

BETSY

Yes, I know.

DUMMY

Do you know what the fuck she is?

SERENDIPITY

She teaches at the university.

DUMMY

Not what she does, what she is.

BETSY

She seems to know more than she should.

SERENDIPITY

Explain please.

BETSY

It's not important.

DUMMY

The fuck it isn't.

SERENDIPITY

You are the first dummy I've ever met who had a mind of his own.

BETSY

It isn't his own, I can assure you.

SERENDIPITY

He is kind of cute. Have you two been together long?

DUMMY

Since we were hatched.

SERENDIPITY

[LAUGHS] Hatched? How very amusing he is. [TICKLES DUMMY]

DUMMY

[LAUGHING] Stop that.

SERENDIPITY

I really must go. I'm running out of time.

DUMMY

Fuck time.

SERENDIPITY

Too bad it won't reproduce. I could use with a few extra minutes here and there. What was it you wanted me to sign?

BETSY

[LOOKS IN BRIEFCASE] The contracts for your interview with Barbara Walters. What do you know. I left them in the office. I'm sorry to have wasted your time, Clepotha. Perhaps I can bring them tonight?

SERENDIPITY

Please don't waste my time like that again, Betsy. If that's all, I'll leave you two to your bickering. You'd have quite an act if you ever decided to go into show business.

DUMMY

I hate show business. Pretentious bunch of morons.

SERENDIPITY

You must bring your little friend tonight. He's most amusing.

BETSY

I'm glad you think so. We'll see you tonight, then?

SERENDIPITY

That you will. It should be an extraordinary evening. Goodbye Betsy, [MAKES SAME SOUND AS PREVIOUSLY. EXITS AS VIDEO MONITORS GO BLACK]

DUMMY

She didn't know shit.

BETSY

No, she didn't. I thought for sure she'd know what Tabitha is.

DUMMY

She sucks, Betsy.

BETSY

You're just mad because she's as irritating as you. When we re-fuse, you won't have to compete with her. Would you rather stay here until we find another fusion catalyst?

DUMMY

We could be dead by then. I guess she'll do. I just don't like her.

BETSY

We don't have to like everything we are.

DUMMY

You've been watching too many of Clepotha's videos.

BETSY

Do you want to re-fuse and go home or what?

DUMMY

I know I don't want to or what.

[BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP ON MALARIE AND SERENDIPITY IN SERENDIPITY'S AND TABITHA'S APARTMENT]

SERENDIPITY

Whatever you guys decide is fine by me.

MALARIE

Damn you, Sera.

Y

Malarie and I believe--

You two talk behind my back?
SERENDIPITY

Y isn't in denial. He listens to me.
MALARIE

So do I.
SERENDIPITY

Then why are we still split, Sera?
MALARIE

Do you know why?
SERENDIPITY

Of course she knows me.
Y

It's because you won't listen to me, Sera.
MALARIE

I listen.
SERENDIPITY

You do not.
MALARIE

I'm leaving now.
Y

We'll talk later?
MALARIE

No. I'm leaving this body now. There's too many of you in here. There's no room for me.
Y

Where will you go?
SERENDIPITY

You'll know as soon as I do. [EXITS]
Y

Now look what you've done.
SERENDIPITY

MALARIE
Me? Why is it always my fault?

SERENDIPITY
I don't think I want to live anymore.

MALARIE
Why not?

Y
[ENTERING] Yes?

SERENDIPITY
I thought you were Y, not Y not.

Y
Not anymore.

SERENDIPITY
Will I miscarry when I wake up?

Y
No. But I won't be there.

SERENDIPITY
Will you die?

Y
No. I want life, just not this life. I wasn't meant to be human, that I've learned.
Someone else will take my place.

MALARIE
Who?

Y
Someone who's as screwed up as you two and wants to stop the pattern. I've already
made arrangements. Bye. [EXITS]

MALARIE
Now look at what you've done.

SERENDIPITY
He's going to another body. I can't believe it.

A body that isn't human.

MALARIE

I miss him already.

SERENDIPITY

Me too.

MALARIE

You're the one who--

SERENDIPITY

I can handle the grief, Sera, even if you can't.

MALARIE

I hate grief.

SERENDIPITY

No kidding. Just remember that if you give up this body to Clepotha, you'll be causing a lot of people a lot of grief.

MALARIE

Like who?

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha. I want to tell you about her.

MALARIE

So tell me.

SERENDIPITY

I doubt you'd believe me.

MALARIE

Why not?

SERENDIPITY

[THEY LOOK FOR Y TO ENTER. HE DOESN'T]

MALARIE

For the same reason I split from you in the first place. You don't listen to me.

SERENDIPITY

I am so bored with my existence.

But I'm not. MALARIE

Really? SERENDIPITY

Really. MALARIE

I don't think I can go on living without you. SERENDIPITY

But you're afraid you can't live with me either. MALARIE

I can't say as I like you very much. SERENDIPITY

So? Don't you miss the stage, the audience, the thrill of performing? MALARIE

It's what I used to live for. But I've finally grown up. I don't need that sort of attention any more. SERENDIPITY

No? What do you live for now? MALARIE

I'm just doing time. SERENDIPITY

You sound like you're in prison. MALARIE

I feel like it too. SERENDIPITY

Aren't you bored? MALARIE

I already said I was. You have no idea. SERENDIPITY

You didn't used to be bored. MALARIE

That was before. SERENDIPITY

Before what? MALARIE

Clepotha. SERENDIPITY

She's not the problem, Sera. MALARIE

She's not? SERENDIPITY

The day before Clepotha showed up was the day you quit the Rep. You made the decision to give up acting for good. Remember? MALARIE

Sort of. Go on. SERENDIPITY

You decided you didn't want to suffer the life of an artist any longer. You decided you wanted a normal life. MALARIE

I did? SERENDIPITY

I can't tell you how many times I've tried to have this conversation with you. MALERIE

You have? SERENDIPITY

Even before the kleenex. I knew I needed to talk to you, to remind you that you need me and I need you. MALARIE

But I don't want to act any more. The life is too hard. SERENDIPITY

Look at me, Sera. Who do you see? MALARIE

SERENDIPITY

Malarie Black.

MALARIE

Malarie Black is an actor.

SERENDIPITY

No she's not. She's an anchor. She does the news.

MALARIE

You call Tabloid Update news? Get real, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

My life is fine the way it is.

MALARIE

No it's not. You're talking about ending it all because it's empty and you hate yourself. Believe me, I understand.

SERENDIPITY

You do?

MALARIE

Sera, we may be split into two, but we're the same person. You can't hide anything from me nor do you have to. Embrace me, embrace your shadow and I promise you, you'll have what it takes to rid yourself of Clepotha and take back your life. Our life.

SERENDIPITY

My life? My old life?

MALARIE

No, your new life, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

I'm scared.

MALARIE

I know. Do it anyway.

[SERENDIPITY EMBRACES MALARIE AND FALLS ASLEEP. MALARIE EXTRICATES HERSELF AND EXITS AS TABITHA ENTERS. SERENDIPITY JOLTS AWAKE]

SERENDIPITY

Holy shit.

TABITHA

Nice nap?

SERENDIPITY

Yes, Persephone.

TABITHA

I knew you'd come back to me. Gods how I've missed you.

SERENDIPITY

So it's true.

TABITHA

Yes.

SERENDIPITY

I don't know what to say.

TABITHA

Nothing. Say nothing.

SERENDIPITY

You're the real thing.

TABITHA

For what it's worth.

SERENDIPITY

Your secret's safe with me.

TABITHA

Is it?

SERENDIPITY

Yes, on the condition you tell me more about your long history, your family. When I think of all those things you've carefully made up for my benefit.

TABITHA

I didn't want to lie to you, but--

SERENDIPITY

If I were you, I would have done the same thing. Jesus, Tabitha.

TABITHA

I've missed you, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

I know. Me too.

[DOORBELL]

SERENDIPITY

Let the festivities begin. I hope I can handle this. I've learned a few things in the last few moments that I'm not sure I ever wanted to know.

TABITHA

I'll cancel the whole thing on the spot if you want me to.

SERENDIPITY

No, I'll be all right. You invited Clepotha.

TABITHA

Trust me, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

Trust the goddess Persephone. Do I really have a choice?

[SERENDIPITY OPENS DOOR TO MADAME X AND SYBIL]

MADAME X

Happy birthday. [HANDS SERENDIPITY A DECORATED BAG OF TEA]

SERENDIPITY

Thanks, Madame X.

TABITHA

Madame X, good to see you.

SERENDIPITY

Why don't I fix us some of this tea. Pomegranate, isn't it?

TABITHA

Good idea, Sera. She's back, Madame X. And she knows.

MADAME X

Let me help you with the tea, Sera. Will you be all right alone with Tabitha, Sybil dear? Good.

[SERENDIPITY AND MADAME X EXIT]

TABITHA

Well? I warned you, Sybil. If you think for a moment I'd open the portal without the formula you're nuts. [DOORBELL. SYBIL HIDES] I'm worried about you Sybil. Ah, Dr. Doctor--

SAM

Sam.

TABITHA

Sam, Dona, do come in.

DONA

Where's the birthday girl?

TABITHA

Making tea.

DONA

Tea?

TABITHA

I made a pot of coffee earlier.

DONA

Good.

SAM

Maybe we'll like the tea.

DONA

I prefer beans to leaves, shrubs and seeds, thank you.

TABITHA

Do you take it black?

DONA

He sure does. I prefer a little sugar.

[DOORBELL]

TABITHA

Excuse me.

DONA

Now don't you feel better admitting the truth, doctor dear?

SAM

Whatever you say, dear.

TABITHA

Betsy, won't you and your friend come in?

SAM

Friend?

DONA

Didn't she ever tell you about Chata?

SAM

He's still in Zaire.

TABITHA

Sam, Dona, this is [MAKES SOUND]

SAM

Hello Betsy.

DONA

I didn't know you went for dummies, Betsy.

BETSY

I could say the same for you, Dona.

DUMMY

Don't pay them any attention, Sam.

SAM

I won't, Betsy. I didn't know you were a ventriloquist.

DUMMY

She's not.

BETSY

So where's the birthday girl?

TABITHA

Sera, your guests are here.

SERENDIPITY

[ENTERING] Hello, everybody. Madame X and I were just making tea. [EXITS]

BETSY

Let me help you. [SITS DUMMY DOWN IN CHAIR. EXITS]

TABITHA

I'll get the coffee.

DONA

Mother's here already.

SAM

You can handle it.

DONA

[TO DUMMY] What are you staring at?

DUMMY

I think I'm in love.

SAM

Did you hear that?

DONA

What?

SAM

He spoke. The dummy spoke.

DONA

Forget it Sam. Unless they're psychiatrists, dummies don't speak.

DUMMY

Unless spoken to.

DONA

Stop it, Sam.

SAM

I didn't say it -- he did.

[SYBIL CREEPS OUT OF HIDING PLACE
AND SNIFFS DONA]

Fuck off, Sam.

DONA

I wish you wouldn't get crabby tonight of all nights.

SAM

I don't want to hear it.

DONA

Me neither.

DUMMY

Good. All right, I confess. I'm a little nervous. Maybe I should have insisted we see each other before coming here.

DONA

You called her, didn't you?

SAM

I meant to, but--

DONA

[ENTERING] Here we are.

TABITHA

[MADAME X ENTERS FOLLOWED BY BETSY CARRYING TEA AND COFFEE]

The ship. Thank god.

DUMMY

What ship, Sam?

DONA

I said I was sorry, Madame X.

BETSY

If the teapot was so important to you, all you had to do was ask. [DUMMY LAUGHS. TO SAM] What are you laughing at?

MADAME X

It wasn't me, it was him.

SAM

SERENDIPITY

[ENTERING AS CLEPOTHA] Welcome, welcome all my wonderful darlings. So good of you to plumb. But what is this? Why such unhappiness on such an important occasion?

DONA

Clepotha, at long last.

SERENDIPITY

In the flesh.

BETSY

[TO MADAME X] Please forgive me, Madame X.

MADAME X

I hate being made a fool of.

DUMMY

Too late for that.

MADAME X

[TO SAM] And you call yourself a psychiatrist?

SAM

I didn't say anything, he did. I swear it.

DONA

Watch your mouth, Sam. That's my mother.

TABITHA

Let's settle down to a nice cup of coffee or tea. Madame X?

MADAME X

Coffee, please. That teapot has bad juu juu's.

TABITHA

Dona, Sam, coffee?

DONA

Yes.

SAM

Please.

TABITHA

Betsy?

BETSY

Tea, please.

TABITHA

Clepotha?

SERENDIPITY

Tea would be very nice, Tabitha. [TABITHA SERVES] How nice of Sera to use that lovely teapot you gave me for safe-keeping, Betsy. What's that?

MADAME X

A cat. She's like the daughter I never had.

SERENDIPITY

Don't be ridiculous. She's no cat, she's--

TABITHA

Betsy, won't you entertain us with your friend here?

DONA

I'd like that. Wouldn't you like that, Sam?

SAM

That dummy is from the twilight zone.

BETSY

Actually, he and I are from the same place.

SERENDIPITY

Sam, darling, can I talk to you in the kitchen?

DONA

Don't be long, sweetheart.

[SAM AND SERENDIPITY EXIT]

MADAME X

You call your psychiatrist sweetheart?

BETSY

Sam is Dona's fiancée, Madame X.

MADAME X

How wonderful for you, Dona dear. A doctor. Congratulations. [PINCHES DONA'S CHEEKS]

DONA

Thank you, mother.

BETSY

When's the wedding?

DONA

We haven't decided.

MADAME X

August.

DONA

What?

MADAME X

Mental health practitioners usually take vacations in August because it's the only month in which there are no major holidays.

DONA

I didn't know that.

MADAME X

Now you do. Maybe I still do have a few things left to teach you, Dona.

TABITHA

You were saying about your friend, Betsy?

BETSY

Yes, well, since arriving on earth -- I mean since when I started walking the earth, I've developed a dual personality.

DUMMY

Two pairs of matching bookends, different as night and day.

DONA

[SINGING] But they're cousins, identical cousins and you'll find -- Sorry.

MADAME X

Too much television as a child, I imagine.

BETSY

We're working on getting ourselves together. It's a very complicated business. [SYBIL HOWLS]

MADAME X

Sounds like the reversal of Oxymoronic Fusion.

TABITHA

What did you say?

MADAME X

Sybil told me to say that.

DONA

I thought your cat's name was Shakti.

DUMMY

Oxymoronic Fusion?

[SCREAM FROM KITCHEN. SERENDIPITY RUNS IN DISHEVELED. SYBIL DRAGS DUMMY BEHIND A PIECE OF FURNITURE, TALKING TO IT]

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha, help me. [SAM ENTERS]

TABITHA

What happened?

DONA

He fucked up again.

SERENDIPITY

I came back into my body and thought you were kissing me but it didn't feel right.

MADAME X

And you want to marry this -- this rapist?

SAM

You've got it all wrong. [TO SERENDIPITY] I was only doing it for you.

TABITHA

It's okay, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

He's the one who--

SAM

Sera, I'm sorry. It's all my fault.

TABITHA

Don't be a dummy. It wasn't you, it was Clepotha.

[SERENDIPITY DOES A GESTURE TO
INDICATE THE COMING OF CLEPOTHA
AND LAUGHS]

SAM

But I'm the one who--

SERENDIPITY

Sam gloves me. Is that so bad?

BETSY

[SCREAMS] My dummy. Where's my dummy?

MADAME X

Sybil's got him. What are you doing, Sybil kitty?

DONA

You mean Shakti kitty.

SAM

Shshshsh.

BETSY

Get away, you fat cat. [GRABS DUMMY] Are you all right?

MADAME X

Don't hurt my Sybil.

SERENDIPITY

That cat, as you insist on calling it, has the same problem I do.

TABITHA

What are you talking about?

SERENDIPITY

She's pregnant, just like me. [EXITS]

[SYBIL HOWLS]

MADAME

Sybil?

TABITHA

She's got it. She's got the formula for Oxymoronic Fusion.

BETSY

[GRABS DUMMY] What did you tell that cat?

DUMMY

Nothing we haven't known for millennia.

TABITHA

Sybil, how simple it is!

MADAME X

She talks to you too? Sybil, why didn't you tell me.

BETSY

You promised you'd help us, Tabitha.

TABITHA

And I will.

[SERENDIPITY ENTERS WITH BIRTHDAY
CAKE. CANDLES ARE LIT]

SERENDIPITY

See? I can be a nice person.

TABITHA

That's very sweet of you, Clepotha. Now how about letting Sera blow out the candles.

SERENDIPITY

But I wanted to grow out the candles.

MADAME X

It's the right thing to do, Clepotha. And you want to do the right thing, don't you?

SAM

She's very good, your mother.

MADAME X

Thank you, Doctor. I appreciate that. Don't you appreciate that, Dona dear?

DONA

Yes, mother.

SERENDIPITY

[INDICATES THE COMING OF SERENDIPITY] What happened?

TABITHA

Blow out the candles and we can all sing happy birthday.

DONA

Are you sure? The song's copyrighted, you know.

SAM

Knock it off, Dona.

DONA

You knock it off.

BETSY

Tabitha, please.

TABITHA

I know, Betsy. Take it easy. Hang on, Sybil. Blow out the candles, Sera.

SAM

Maybe she doesn't want to blow out the candles.

DUMMY

Fuck off, doctor.

DONA

Thank you, Betsy.

DUMMY

Thank you.

TABITHA

Sera, will you trust me?

SERENDIPITY

Whatever you say, Tabitha.

TABITHA

Sera, do you want your life back or not?

SERENDIPITY

You know I do. But I'm scared.

TABITHA

I know, but it's part of the formula. As soon as you blow out the candles, make Clepotha come back.

SERENDIPITY

No problem. I can feel her fighting to come back as it is. I'm just scared that--

TABITHA

Trust me, Sera. As soon as she blows out the candles, everyone start telling each other all about why you're irritated at them. Talk, yell and scream at whoever you choose, as long as it's loud and angry. If you feel like giving into forgiveness, move onto somebody else. Hold nothing back. You can include Clepotha as well. Do you understand?

SAM

I don't think--

DONA

Knock it off, Sam.

SAM

You knock it off, Dona.

TABITHA

Save it you two.

BETSY

Thank you, Tabitha.

DUMMY

This had better work.

BETSY

It will.

TABITHA

Ready Sera? I love you.

[SERENDIPITY BLOWS OUT THE CANDLES
AND DOES A GESTURE TO INDICATE THE
COMING OF CLEPOTHA]

SERENDIPITY

Hello, everyone.

[EVERYONE FIGHTS WITH ONE ANOTHER IN VARIOUS COMBINATIONS. TABITHA GOES BEHIND THE PIECE OF FURNITURE HIDING SYBIL. SERENDIPITY AS CLEPOTHA QUIETLY REMOVES THE CANDLES FROM THE CAKE. VOLUME AND INTENSITY INCREASE. EXPLOSION. BETSY, DUMMY, THE TEAPOT AND TABITHA DISAPPEAR. SERENDIPITY FALLS FACE FIRST INTO HER BIRTHDAY CAKE]

DONA

What happened? Mother, are you all right?

MADAME X

I think so.

DONA

Where's Betsy and Tabitha?

SAM

Help me -- Sera's drowning in her birthday cake. [THEY LIFT HER UP]

SERENDIPITY

Am I in heaven?

MADAME X

No, it's only angel food with meringue.

SERENDIPITY

Tastes heavenly. Yummy, yum, yum. [CONTINUES TO EAT CAKE AND MAKE HAPPY SOUNDS]

SAM

I'll get a towel or something. [EXITS]

MADAME X

I love you, Dona. I've missed you horribly.

DONA

I know, mother.

MADAME X

Those horrible things we said--

DONA
Words, mother, only words. They meant nothing.

MADAME X
Sybil, are you all right? Oh my god.

[SAM ENTERS AND WIPES SERENDIPITY'S
FACE]

SERENDIPITY
Look, I can have my cake and eat it too.

SAM
She's delirious.

DONA
Will she be okay?

SAM
I hope so. There was more rage in this room than I've ever had in any of my groups.

DONA
What exactly happened?

SAM
I haven't a clue.

MADAME X
Sybil, they're beautiful.

TABITHA
[ENTERING] They are, aren't they?

DONA
They who?

MADAME X
You're back so soon. Did he take her?

TABITHA
Hook, line and sinker.

DONA
Did who take who?

TABITHA

Betsy and [MAKES SOUND] and Clepotha are all in one piece on their way home.

DONA

What's she talking about?

SAM

Haven't a clue.

MADAME X

What are you talking about, Tabitha?

TABITHA

Betsy had to leave. How's Sera?

SERENDIPITY

Sera fine. Clepotha is over under through.

TABITHA

She'll be all right in a minute. You'll want to say goodbye to Sybil, Madame X. I've reopened the portal.

MADAME X

Is that true, Sybil? Do you really get to go home? What about your babies?

DONA

Oh my god. Look, Sam, she gave birth right here.

MADAME X

Aren't they beautiful?

SAM

Yes, Madame X. They're wonderful.

DONA

I want an explanation of what happened here.

TABITHA

Don't start passing professional judgment on things you know nothing about.

DONA

How can I pass judgment when I don't even know what happened here?

SAM

Dona, don't.

TABITHA

Yes, don't. You could cause irreparable damage. This may be the last life you share together.

DONA

What are you talking about?

SAM

Forget it, Dona. I don't know who or what she is but I imagine she can be very dangerous. I'll bet she and Clepotha are in this thing together.

TABITHA

[LAUGHS] Good for you, Sam. You're totally wrong and totally right at the same time. Hurray for Oxymoronic Fusion.

DONA

What did you say to Betsy?

SAM

Me? Nothing to cause her to disappear. At least she took that dummy with her.

TABITHA

Sybil are you ready?

DONA

I'd swear her name was Shakti.

MADAME X

She's ready. We both are.

TABITHA

Keep up the good work Sybil.

MADAME X

Goodbye, dear girl. [FLASH OF LIGHT] Shakti, is that you? Shakti, my sweet kitty.

TABITHA

Sera? It's me, love.

DONA

Can we take you home, mother?

MADAME X

What about Shakti and her baby kitties?

TABITHA

I promise I'll take care of them tonight. Maybe we can move them tomorrow.

MADAME X

Thank you, Tabitha. Thank you for giving my Dona back to me. We can talk about the wedding on our way home.

SAM

Will Sera be all right?

TABITHA

I wouldn't expect her to keep her appointment, Dad.

SAM

I understand. But I've got to tell her why--

DONA

Let it be, Sam. I think Tabitha can take care of it. Take us home.

[DONA, SAM AND MADAME X STAGGER
OUT THE DOOR]

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha? Is that you?

TABITHA

Yes, love, I'm here.

SERENDIPITY

Why do I feel so bad?

TABITHA

Grief. Grief from this and everything else that has ever ended in your life. Grief is cumulative, I'm afraid.

SERENDIPITY

She's gone forever, isn't she.

TABITHA

She'll never bother you again. That I can promise.

[DOORBELL]

TABITHA

I'll get it. Malarie. Do come in.

MALARIE

Thank you. Happy birthday, Sera. Or is it Clepotha?

SERENDIPITY

It is I, darling. The wondrous Clepotha you speak about on that pews program. Do you wish to interview me now?

MALARIE

Actually, no. To tell you the truth, I hated Tabloid Update. My psychic told me to take it so I did. I'm really an actor. But it paid off. The producer of Tabloid Update wants me for a sitcom he's producing.

SERENDIPITY

How important it be to do what your heart desires, eh? I wish you the very best, Malarie. I can think of no other reward for an actress than being cast in a sitcom. If I wasn't so important and committed to my work-out videos, I might try acting in a sitcom myself. But such is life. I wish you lots of glove and prosperity. [DOES A GESTURE TO INDICATE THE COMING OF SERENDIPITY] Malarie Black. Wow.

MALARIE

You must be Sera.

SERENDIPITY

I'm glad to finally meet you. You're nothing like I imagined.

MALARIE

You know it's very strange, but I feel like I know you.

SERENDIPITY

It's strange, but I feel the same way.

MALARIE

Here's my card. I have to be going, my cab is waiting downstairs. But I'm glad I stopped by even if I haven't a clue why I agreed to do so.

TABITHA

You did the right thing, Malarie.

MALARIE

And that's all that really counts. Call me, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

We can do lunch.

MALARIE

I'd like that. Happy birthday and many happy returns.

SERENDIPITY

Yes, may happy returns.

TABITHA

Thanks for stopping by. [MALARIE EXITS] Sera, you scared me.

SERENDIPITY

Maybe I can act again.

TABITHA

Don't do that again, Sera.

SERENDIPITY

I won't. Or maybe I should. Clepotha could live on and no one would be the wiser.

TABITHA

Are you serious?

SERENDIPITY

She could be the highlight of my career. At least until you and me and Betsy figure out a way to kill the bitch. It could be fun.

[SERENDIPITY AS CLEPOTHA APPEARS
ON VIDEO MONITORS]

SERENDIPITY ON VIDEO

Yo hoo.

SERENDIPITY

Clepotha?

SERENDIPITY ON VIDEO

I just wanted to say goodbye and thank you.

SERENDIPITY

Where are you?

SERENDIPITY ON VIDEO

That would be difficult to explain.

TABITHA

I'll explain it to her, Clepotha.

SERENDIPITY ON VIDEO

You can try. However, I don't think you really have as many answers as you think you do, Persephone.

TABITHA

Don't be too sure.

SERENDIPITY ON VIDEO

Ah, but I am sure. You may be immortal but you are of the world. The human world.

TABITHA

That's not completely true and you know it.

SERENDIPITY ON VIDEO

Hades agrees with me, don't you darling. Goodbye. I really must go. [VIDEO MONITORS GO BLACK]

SERENDIPITY

She's got you there, Tabitha.

TABITHA

So what if she does.

SERENDIPITY

Oh my god. Sybil had kittens all over our living room rug. Gross.

TABITHA

I think they're kind of cute.

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha, that's Y.

TABITHA

Why what?

SERENDIPITY

Not why, Y. You know, my unborn [MAKES SOUND]. He changed bodies.

TABITHA

Whatever you say.

SERENDIPITY

Tabitha, I'm not ready to be a mother. I could handle a kitten. Especially Y. But I don't even know who my unborn [MAKES SOUND] is.

TABITHA

Who does?

SERENDIPITY

And I couldn't do that to Madame X.

TABITHA

Excuse me?

SERENDIPITY

Have her son-in-law's baby. As far as Sam and Dona go, good riddance. I'm thinking of stuffing a pillow and putting Sam's face on it and then beating it up until his head explodes. I could have his license for this.

TABITHA

Or his baby.

SERENDIPITY

I'd rather have his license.

TABITHA

After you've recovered from the procedure, how about coming with me on an African safari.

SERENDIPITY

But what about--

TABITHA

I'm here for the summer and for as many summers as I can negotiate, thanks to Clepotha.

SERENDIPITY

Hades and Clepotha? Yuck. As long as we get back by the time the kittens are weaned. That'll give us a whole month.

TABITHA

Your terms, your timing.

SERENDIPITY

And you love it. Why a safari?

TABITHA

It's time you met my mother.

SERENDIPITY

I thought you disowned her forever.

TABITHA

Forever is a long time. I'm sick of being mad at her. I think you'll like her.

SERENDIPITY

I get to meet Demeter, the goddess of the harvest. Now that's what I call meeting someone famous.

TABITHA

I hope you two like each other.

SERENDIPITY

We will, don't worry. Hold me? I don't remember ever being so exhausted.

TABITHA

I'll hold you as long as we both shall live.

SERENDIPITY

Is there any of that kleenex left?

TABITHA

I saved a box just for tonight.

SERENDIPITY

I'll wipe your nose if you wipe mine.

[BLACKOUT. END OF PLAY]