

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A MIRACLE

by

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SETTING

Present day. We are on the set of a talk show. We are also not on the set of a talk show.

CHARACTERS

THE GIRL – 7 years old. Everything is new to her. Nimble and moves with an ethereal grace. Expert control of her body.

MIRACLE – 20 something. Disabled. Walks with a limp and “speaks with difficulty” — whatever that means.

INTERVIEWER – A man. Probably. Could be a woman or non-binary. But most likely a man. 30s. Moves with ease. Observant.

SHADOW – A shapeshifter. An actual shadow. Femme presenting. An extension of The Girl.

PHANTOM – Resembles something similar to a dementor, but more ethereal. Beautiful but deadly.

CASTING NOTE

The casting of disabled folx should be prioritized. The more of the cast that’s disabled, the better. Just because a character like THE GIRL has “expert control” of her body, does not mean it needs to fit an able bodied standard of whatever that means.

With all that said, I understand it is sometimes hard to find disabled actors. MIRACLE is the one character that **must** be played by a disabled actor. It is ideal if the actor has a similar disabilities to MIRACLE’s character but not a requirement.

The roles of PHANTOM and THE GIRL are movement heavy. The stage directions provide suggestions for what the movement **might** look like at various moments. Unless the movement in the stage directions is integral to the story telling taking place, it is heavily encouraged for the ensemble to experiment with what the movement looks like. Once again, while the movements described throughout the piece are inspired by ballet and gymnastics, two forms that expect bodies to look and move in a **very** specific way, the movement in this piece is encouraged to challenge what the able bodied gaze deems as “pretty” or “pleasing” to look at.

Lastly, MIRACLE and THE GIRL should somehow resemble each other, but I believe that can happen in a variety of ways. They do not need to be carbon copies of each other from a look perspective.

PRELUDE

A dark stage. Five shadow-like figures stand in a line. Someone speaks.

PHANTOM

What happened?

The dance begins.

SHADOW

It was a train.

WOMAN

A truck.

PHANTOM

An accident.

THE GIRL

No. It was Grandpa—

PHANTOM

Death—

MAN

God—

SHADOW

Goddess.

WOMAN

My worst day.

ALL

A miracle.

Everyone freezes.

WOMAN

Miracle?

ALL

What happened?

SHADOW

(in an elderly voice)

It was quite fabulous, to have her visit. Of course *(audio glitch)* has been on the truck since the accident, but to think that she would want to go on the truck again... After all that's—you know—happened... She didn't call her mom while she visited. Didn't even call her. Chantal, her mom, said after a few days, "*(audio glitch)* hasn't even called me." So I asked, *(audio glitch)*, are you homesick? That little girl replied, "Grandma, I'm not home sick, I'm home." *(Dramatic pause.)* So we covered a lot of territory. She had sacral cranial treatments two times a week. And then we talked a lot about—when we were on the truck or whatever—about things that she... doesn't talk about. Like she says she doesn't talk much about grandpa. And she doesn't really know why... She says if people ask her—like a stranger or something—why she's limping or something—she doesn't want to talk about—

ALL

What happened?

MAN

Eliza Cripe was getting ready for work when she heard the train coming the morning of Aug. 28, 2006. There was nothing unusual about hearing the train; the New Paris resident and her family live near the tracks afterall. But when Cripe heard a loud boom outside, she knew something was definitely not normal. Something had happened—

ALL

What happened?

Three figures around the woman and girl become sinister, mocking, taking on child like personas.

PHANTOM

What happened?

THE GIRL

(Pleading.)

No.

Yeah, what happened?	SHADOW	
No.	WOMAN	
Why do you walk like that?	MAN	
Stop.	WOMAN	
Why do you talk like that?	SHADOW	
Please stop.	THE GIRL	
I can't understand her.	PHANTOM	
Do you understand her?	SHADOW	
I can never understand her.	MAN	
	WOMAN	THE GIRL
	Stop.	Stop.
What happened, miracle?	SHADOW/MAN/PHANTOM	
	<i>The man steps forward and embraces the woman.</i> <i>The other figures disappear.</i>	
	MAN	

You're a miracle. You know that? My miracle. Ever since you came into my life, I keep thinking, how did I get so lucky? Miracle, baby, one day everyone is going to know—

THE GIRL

My name.

MAN

All I want is to be standing by you when they do. You just gotta let me in. Let us in. Can you do that? Will you let them know—

ALL

What happened?

The woman stumbles away. The man disappears. The woman, MIRACLE collapses onto a bench in a subway station. She picks up the stack of papers on the bench and flips through them, mumbling to herself. A SHADOW wearing a train conductor's hat, or something of the sorts, stands upstage, off to one side.

SHADOW

There is an uptown express 2 train to Wakefield 241st street 2 minutes away.

MIRACLE

I just wanted to say—ahem.

MIRACLE rubs her throat. She speaks again, slower this time. Her voice becomes more clear now.

MIRACLE

I'm so honored to be here. I've sort of been working on this—the memoir—my whole life... Ha. Get it? No? No. No!

SHADOW

There is an uptown express 2 train to Wakefield 241st street 1 minute away.

MIRACLE

What I'm trying to say is it means a lot... It should mean a lot... Gods I fucking hate this.

SHADOW

There is an uptown express 2 train to Wakefeild 241st St approaching the station. Please stand away from the platform edge.

The train arrives. MIRACLE doesn't notice.

MIRACLE

"I'm so honored." Stupid!

SHADOW

Stand clear of the closing doors.

MIRACLE

(Finally noticing the train.)

No! Wait!

MIRACLE rushes, or attempts to rush, towards the train. She doesn't make it. MIRACLE falls off balance, dangerously close to the platform edge.

There's a sound of a loud crash.

SHADOW catches MIRACLE mid fall.

After a moment, the two spin around each other, exchanging places.

SHADOW slowly melts back and slips behind a screen, becoming a literal shadow, larger than life. THE GIRL appears in SHADOW's place, almost like a magic trick.

THE GIRL

What happened?

MIRACLE

No.

Why are you doing this?	THE GIRL
Not again.	MIRACLE
When I grow up—	THE GIRL
This isn't funny—	MIRACLE
I... I don't know what happened to you, but <i>I'm</i> going to be a professional gymnast—	THE GIRL
Am I fucking dreaming—	MIRACLE
I'm going to be a professional—	THE GIRL
Gods—Goddess—fucking—Aphrodite!?	MIRACLE
I'm going to be—	THE GIRL
This isn't funny!	MIRACLE
There is an uptown express 3 train to Harlem 148th st 2 minutes away.	PHANTOM
I'm.... I'm... I'm going to be—	THE GIRL
Dead. You're going to be fucking dead.	MIRACLE
	THE GIRL

When I grow up—

MIRACLE

You won't—

THE GIRL

I'm going to be—

MIRACLE

You're not. Because you're not real.

SHADOW

There is an uptown express 3 train to Harlem 148th st approaching the station.

PHANTOM floats on stage. They slowly make their way towards THE GIRL.

MIRACLE

This isn't real. This isn't real. GODS—

THE GIRL

When I grow up—

MIRACLE

This isn't real. (*To herself*). You're fine. You're alive—

THE GIRL

Everyone is going to know...

MIRACLE

This isn't real. This isn't real. This isn't—

THE GIRL

(*Unsure.*)

Everyone is going to know...

MIRACLE gets dangerously close to the platform edge once again. She reaches out towards the girl.

MIRACLE

Take my hand. You could—We could—I don't know! But If you take my hand, you could be safe. I could keep you safe.

PHANTOM reaches THE GIRL.

MIRACLE

Please take my hand. Please just take it. Please. Please. Please.

THE GIRL

It's ok. Everyone is going to know my—

THE GIRL
Name.

PHANTOM
Miracle.

There's a loud screech of metal on metal. Then THE GIRL disappears, as if consumed by PHANTOM.

SCENE 2

INTERVIEWER

There you are! What happened?

The set of a talk show. MIRACLE rushes towards the set. Well. She moves with urgency, but it is probably a much slower pace than what most would consider “rushed.” When MIRACLE spots INTERVIEWER, she takes a second, collects herself, then approaches. Her gait becomes a lot smoother.

MIRACLE

I’m so sorry I’m late—I had... train delays...?

INTERVIEWER

Thank GOD you’re here, we were getting worried something happened.

MIRACLE

No. Heh. No. Nothing happened.

INTERVIEWER

It’s all our fault. We should’ve gotten you a car—

MIRACLE

It’s fine. I made it—so like—not a big deal.

INTERVIEWER

Well—ok. We don’t have a lot of time so why don’t you make yourself comfortable?

MIRACLE sits. The couch is awkward. She tries to discreetly find a comfortable way to sit while trying not to drop the stack of papers from earlier.

INTERVIEWER

Everything ok?

MIRACLE

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

Nice couch. Yeah?

MIRACLE

Um... Yeah. Super comfy.

INTERVIEWER

Like sitting on a cloud.

MIRACLE

You stole the words right out of my mouth.

INTERVIEWER

Congrats by the way. A New York Times best seller is—

MIRACLE

Crazy. Right?

INTERVIEWER

It's well deserved. Your story... It had me in tears.

MIRACLE

Oh. Thanks. I mean—Sorry about the tears—

INTERVIEWER

No. They were good tears. (*Beat.*) What do you got there?

*INTERVIEWER gestures to the stack of papers in
MIRACLE's hands.*

MIRACLE

It's silly. It's a really early draft of like—it's very beginning of—well—everything. The story. The book. Now this whole tour—

INTERVIEWER

Ahh yes. You must be very busy these days.

MIRACLE

My publisher thinks it's a good idea to get as much exposure as possible. Which I have to admit I was a little hesitant—I want the book to speak for itself—but they insisted. So this interview today. Podcast tomorrow. Then radio. All the things.

INTERVIEWER

You don't sell thousands of copies waiting around for people to stumble across your book in a store. Those days are LONG gone. Your publisher has the right idea. And on behalf of the whole team here, we're so honored to be your first interview.

MIRACLE smiles politely. Hesitates. Then.

MIRACLE

Can I be honest?

INTERVIEWER

Please.

MIRACLE

I was a little shocked to get this interview. With you. Like on this show.

INTERVIEW

Huh? We're of the opinion that your messaging aligns very well with what we cover here. The second we heard about your story, we knew we had to have you on.

INTERVIEWER notices a cue from off stage just as MIRACLE is about to respond.

INTERVIEWER

Hold that thought. We're about to start. Now we'll cover all the usual things. The book. What's the inspiration behind it. What the journey was like writing something so personal. And then we'll dig into some of the stories you touch on in the book itself. So all the basics. Is there anything off limits for you?

MIRACLE

Um... No. I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER

You sure?

MIRACLE

You could say I'm an open book.

INTERVIEWER

Ahhh. Funny! That's really funny... (*Notices another cue offstage.*) Let's get started, shall we?

INTERVIEWER stands and takes his spot in front of a large sign reading, "MIRACLE NETWORK." Another sign reading "Recording in progress." Lights up.

INTERVIEWER

Hello everyone! I hope y'all are having the most blessed day today! I know I am! I'm so blessed to be here. To have this job. To work with the most incredible crew. Here on Miracle Network, we believe in challenging what it truly means to be human. We open our minds to some of the most unbelievable stories. And today is no different. Today, we have with us, the BRAND NEW New York Times bestselling author (*audio glitch*)! Let's have a round of applause for (*audio glitch*)!

An applause track plays. INTERVIEWER makes their way to where MIRACLE is sitting and takes the chair opposite of hers. They pick up a book off the coffee table in front of them.

INTERVIEWER

This is your book.

MIRACLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

You wrote a book.

MIRACLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

"How To Survive a Miracle." That's the title of your book.

MIRACLE

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Talk to me about that.

MIRACLE
(*Joking.*)

What do you want to know?

INTERVIEWER

Everything.

MIRACLE

Well, it's kinda a long story. That's why I wrote the book.

INTERVIEWER

Ahhhh. She's a funny one folks. (*Beat. A laugh track plays.*) If you had to summarize what the book is about, how would you do that?

MIRACLE

Um, when I was seven years old, I was in an accident—

INTERVIEWER

A car accident.

MIRACLE

Yes. A really bad car accident where, to speak plainly, I should have died—

INTERVIEWER

Spoilers!

*Laugh track. PHANTOM and THE GIRL enter.
They walk hand in hand in the background.*

MIRACLE

That's hardly a spoiler! The odds were not in my favor.

INTERVIEWER

But you survived.

MIRACLE

Yes. I survived.

INTERVIEWER

And I must say you look incredible! Doesn't she folks?

Applause track.

MIRACLE

Uh, thanks... Ahem. So this nurse happened to live right by where the accident took place.

INTERVIEWER

Which is INCREDIBLE. Right? Out of all the people to be nearby, it was someone specifically trained to step in for moments like this.

MIRACLE

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

One could even call it miraculous.

MIRACLE

(Laughing awkwardly.)

Oh they did.

INTERVIEWER

Do you believe in miracles?

MIRACLE

Sorry?

INTERVIEWER

Miracles. Do you believe in them?

MIRACLE

I think miracles have a particular religious—or spiritual—connotation that I have a hard time getting behind.

INTERVIEWER

I thought as much.

MIRACLE

No offense to those who do believe in them. I just personally think the word can do a lot of unintentional harm.

INTERVIEWER

Now we were just chatting before we got started and you shared with me that you have with you one of the first drafts of this book.

MIRACLE

I do.

INTERVIEWER

What caused you to revisit that version of the story? Or miracle, as I'd like to call it.

MIRACLE

I think I wanted to remind myself why I started all of this in the first place. Why it felt necessary to dig up the past in the way I've had to for this (*she gestures to the finished book on the coffee table in front of them*) to happen.

INTERVIEWER

How much do you think has changed from the beginning of the writing process to the final product?

MIRACIE

In some ways? A lot has changed. In other ways, nothing at all.

INTERVIEWER

So is it safe to say that this (*they gesture with the book.*) and the things you say in here may not be a completely accurate depiction of what happened?

MIRACLE

No. I wouldn't say that. I mean—that's what we have fact checkers for, right?

INTERVIEWER

(*Unamused.*)

Let's talk more about this car accident.

*THE GIRL, confused, moves towards MIRACLE.
PHANTOM waits patiently in the background.*

INTERVIEWER

You don't talk a lot about the actual event that is "The Accident" in the book. Why is that?

THE GIRL

(Addressing MIRACLE)

What's happening?

MIRACLE

Um... I don't know. I guess I've always thought that was the least interesting part of—well—everything.

INTERVIEWER

I think... Just based on the reaction of everyone who's gotten to read your story—the events of "The Accident" are what's MOST interesting. Despite your unwillingness to delve into the potential of spiritual forces at play, nothing gets more miraculous than this story.

THE GIRL

(To MIRACLE.)

Psst! What's "the accident"? Did you tell them about the OLYMPICS?

MIRACLE

Yes—No—I mean... I guess how I see it is that I had this whole life before... And then this whole different life after... Sure. This big THING happened in between the before and after but I lost so much so because of that THING, so that THING—"the accident"—didn't really feel like a "miracle."

*THE GIRL finds something to use as a pretend
microphone.*

INTERVIEWER

Let's examine that.

THE GIRL

Testing... Testing... Hello? Hi? Yes. Thank you. Thank you. I'm happy to answer all of your questions.

THE GIRL looks out into the audience. A roaring applause becomes audible. MIRACLE continues speaking at the same time as THE GIRL, but her voice is inaudible.

INTERVIEWER

Tell us about this life “before.”

THE GIRL

Well... When I grow up, I’m going to be a professional gymnast. I know. I know. It’s a little crazy but I’m—like—really good.

MIRACLE places a hand on her throat and coughs uncomfortably, unsure what is happening.

INTERVIEWER

Sorry, I’m not sure I caught that. Please, feel free to take your time. We want to understand every detail. How old were you?

MIRACLE
(*Hoarsely.*)

Seven—

THE GIRL

Seven and a half years old!

INTERVIEWER

So just a child. How did you find yourself at the scene of “The Accident?”

MIRACLE

My family—ahem—

THE GIRL

We’re in the middle of a big move right now, so I don’t currently belong to a gym. But once we get settled, I’m going to be competing on a serious level. And just you wait. One day I’m going to be in the OLYMPICS.

INTERVIEWER

You had some pretty big plans at such a young age.

THE GIRL

Well I've been in the gym six days a week since I was five years old. I'm very committed. Be sure to remember this face and this name (*Audio glitch*).

THE GIRL pauses. She rubs at her throat and coughs uncomfortably.

INTERVIEWER

And then there was the accident?

THE GIRL

(Hoarsely.)

I'm sorry... What?

INTERVIEWER

Can you tell us what happened?

MIRACLE

(Regaining her voice).

What?

INTERVIEWER

August 28th, 2006? What happened?

MIRACLE

It's... I mean. The book... You can read—It was—

INTERVIEWER

A miracle. Yes—

MIRACLE

I didn't say that—

INTERVIEWER

What happened? You were with your grandpa and what—

Time slows down. The world bleeds blue. The stack of papers in MIRACLE's hands fall and scatter in slow motion. PHANTOM moves towards the girl.

INTERVIEWER

Whaaaaaattt hhhaaappeened?

THE GIRL

Grandpa?

PHANTOM picks THE GIRL up into a dramatic lift

INTERVIEWER

Whhhhhhhhaaaaaaattttt hhhhhaaaaaaapppppeeeneeeddd?

THE GIRL

GrAAANndppaa?

INTERVIEWER and MIRACLE are sent into darkness. PHANTOM holds THE GIRL up in the air for a few moments, spinning slowly, before THE GIRL disappears into PHANTOM.

Time returns to normal.

SCENE 2

MIRACLE, lays on the couch with INTERVIEWER who is now THE PARTNER. The talk show has become her apartment. THE PARTNER holds MIRACLE in a close embrace. MIRACLE jolts awake from a nightmare and falls off the couch onto papers scattered on the floor.

MIRACLE

Shit. Fuck. Shit.

THE PARTNER

(Groggy but concerned.)

What's happening?? What happened?

MIRACLE

I don't—

THE PARTNER

Nightmare?

MIRACLE

Maybe.

THE PARTNER

How many times does that make it this week?

MIRACLE

It's fine. I'm fine. I can manage. You don't need to keep spending the night. Like you have stuff you need to do and I'm fine. Or I can be fine.

THE PARTNER

Trust me. You're doing me a favor by letting me crash. You live closer to where me and the team are filming in the morning. And even if you didn't, I want to be here. With you.

MIRACLE

Fine.

MIRACLE winces and attempts to massage her neck.

MIRACLE

Who's bright idea was it to fall asleep on this horrible couch?

THE PARTNER

Yours. You insisted you had a bunch of editing to do. You wouldn't come to bed. And you were playing that terrible /dance movie for background noise—

MIRACLE

Hey! It's a /great movie—

THE PARTNER

That you only like because Jordan Fisher /is in it—

MIRACLE

I can't be blamed if I happen to enjoy the eye candy while watching said great movie.

THE PARTNER

Are you trying to make me jealous?

MIRACLE

Would it turn you on if I were trying to make you jealous?

THE PARTNER

Maybe after we get some real sleep.

MIRACLE winces again. Her shoulder spasms.

MIRACLE

Shit.

THE PARTNER

Here.

He massages/stretches her shoulders.

MIRACLE

Thanks...

THE PARTNER

You don't have to thank me.

MIRACLE

I know. I just really hate that—

A pause.

MIRACLE

Sorry.

THE PARTNER

You can say it.

MIRACLE

I just really hate this body. I hate wanting—or needing—to be taken care of. I know you don't love hearing that—I know you don't mind helping—

THE PARTNER

It's just the stress. You know it's a trigger.

MIRACLE

If it's not the stress triggering me, it's the cold. If it's not the cold, it's because I have to pee. Or it's because my clothing is too tight. Or it's because I don't get enough sleep. Which let's face it. I never get enough sleep because of the fucking nightmares. OR it's because the spasms are so bad that even if I am EXHAUSTED I can't sleep! (*Beat.*) Sorry. It's all the stress.

THE PARTNER

It's ok.

MIRACLE

I'm sorry I kept you up.

THE PARTNER

Don't be. I was enjoying the “great” movie. And you're cute when you're all serious and focused. (*Beat.*) Do you want to talk about—

MIRACLE

I finished the book.

THE PARTNER

Finally? Can I read it?

MIRACLE

In the dream—Nightmare—Whatever it was.

THE PARTNER

Oh.

MIRACLE

(Laughing softly)

Don't sound too disappointed.

THE PARTNER

I'm not going to lie. It'll be a big relief when you finally finish this thing.

MIRACLE

I'm trying. I just—I want to—

MIRACLE

Get it right.

THE PARTNER

“Get it right.”

THE PARTNER joins MIRACLE on the floor.

THE PARTNER

I know. But you need sleep.

MIRACLE

I'll finish it soon.

A pause.

THE PARTNER

What's so scary about finishing the book?

MIRACLE

What?

THE PARTNER

In your dreams—or nightmares—what’s so scary about finishing it?

MIRACLE

Oh. Right... Um. I don’t know... The questions, maybe? Or people trying to make sense of what happened?

THE PARTNER

You don’t have to finish it, you know.

MIRACLE

I think I do.

THE PARTNER

Why?

MIRACLE

Because of the questions.

THE PARTNER

The ones you’re trying to avoid?

MIRACLE

Yeah. I should be used to them. It’s not like they’ll be any different than the ones I’ve been asked my entire life but... I barely know what happened. Which is what everyone wants to know. Or that’s what the publishers say everyone wants to know. So I write. And I write. And I continue to write but I still don’t know what happened.

THE PARTNER

You were just a kid—

MIRACLE

I know but I want to figure it out. I want—no I need—to know what happened, so that when I finish this for real. When I write it all down. When I finally understand what happened for myself... Is it so crazy to want to never answer anyone’s questions ever again? To never have to tell anyone what happened ever again?

THE PARTNER

No... Maybe... I don't know... I mean—Not to be that guy—But I'm personally still waiting to find out what happened. I don't mind waiting. But you don't let me read what you're writing and you don't love talking about all this—so—I'm not exactly the most insightful on this topic.

MIRACLE

Well, you know what happened... It was—

MIRACLE
A car accident.

THE PARTNER
“A car accident.”

THE PARTNER

Yes—I know—But... People don't typically write books about your run of the mill car accident. Now do they?

MIRACLE

Touché

THE PARTNER

You don't have to tell me now if you don't want to. Honestly. I just watch you work on this thing day after day and clearly it's affecting you in a big way. All the nightmares—I mean I've seen you naked—Which I LOVE. You look great naked. But the scars on your body are a lot—Not that they bother me! It just had to be quite the “accident” for it to consume your every waking moment—

MIRACLE
(*Blurting.*)

I'm a trainwreck! (*THE PARTNER laughs.*) No. I was in a train wreck.

THE PARTNER

What?

MIRACLE

So I'm a trainwreck.

THE PARTNER

...

MIRACLE

Get it?

THE PARTNER

...

MIRACLE

It's funny.

THE PARTNER

...

MIRACLE

Or it's supposed to be funny. Sorry. That was a dumb segway.

THE PARTNER

What happened?

MIRACLE

I got hit by a train?

THE PARTNER

Literally?

MIRACLE

Well I was in a car... A truck actually. Like a sort of semi-truck that got hit by—

THE PARTNER

A train?

MIRACLE

YES. And that's why my best friend calls me trainwreck!

A moment of silence.

Then.

THE PARTNER bursts out laughing.

MIRACLE joins in.

THE PARTNER

(Trying to speak through the laughter.)

NO—That’s—This whole time—

MIRACLE

Yes—I was—surprised you—didn’t figure it out—

THE PARTNER

That’s fucked—

MIRACLE

Or it’s really fucking funny—

THE PARTNER

Trainwreck?

MIRACLE

Yes.

THE PARTNER

You’re a trainwreck?!

MIRACLE

Roadkill if you're nasty.

THE PARTNER

NO!

MIRACLE

YES!

THE PARTNER

Roadkill?!?!

MIRACLE

On special occasions.

THE PARTNER

That’s SO fucked.

MIRACLE

You know what we say when we hear a train whistle? (*Beat.*) Daddy’s calling.

THE PARTNER

STOP!

MIRACLE

How did I get hit by a train you ask? I guess I just didn't hear it coming.

THE PARTNER

NO...! Because you can't hear for shit—

MIRACLE

I really can't! And you know why?

THE PARTNER

Why?

MIRACLE

Because I got hit by a train! And whenever I'm running late, you know what we call that?

THE PARTNER?

What?

MIRACLE

Train delays!

Pause.

THE PARTNER

I'm not... I don't get that one.

MIRACLE

It's because I can't move fast... I couldn't start running to try and make it on time even if I wanted to...? Um... Ok maybe that one isn't so good.

THE PARTNER

I can see where you were going with it.

MIRACLE

The rest were really funny.

THE PARTNER

So why the big secret? Why not just tell me from the start?

MIRACLE

You've seen me naked.

THE PARTNER

YES! And I hope to have many more opportunities—

MIRACLE

You're cute. But I guess... You get so much access in that moment. Like you can see the entire story carved into my body... Even if I don't tell you, you know something big happened. Sometimes I want to be able to choose when someone gets access to the words to make sense of the story they see on my body.

A long moment of silence.

The two hold eye contact for as long as they can until MIRACLE finally breaks.

MIRACLE

What?

THE PARTNER

You're so beautiful.

MIRACLE

And that's relevant because...?

THE PARTNER

Thank you for telling me.

MIRACLE softens.

Then they kiss.

THE PARTNER

You know you're going to be famous one day.

MIRACLE

I suppose.

They kiss again.

THE PARTNER

I just hope I'm lucky enough to make it into at least one chapter of your story—

MIRACLE

Figuratively?

THE PARTNER

You're not the only one who can speak in fancy metaphors.

They kiss again.

MIRACLE

(Teasing.)

So. *(A kiss.)* Jealousy doesn't turn you on. *(A kiss.)* But my vulnerability does?

THE PARTNER

(Laughing softly.)

Are you trying to ruin the moment?

MIRACLE

(Teasing.)

Am I not allowed to ask questions now? You get to ask ALL the questions but I don't?

THE PARTNER

Oh shush. Let's take another crack at your story.

*THE PARTNER slowly begins to trace their hands
over MIRACLE's body.*

THE PARTNER

Born—

MIRACLE

December 29, 1998 4:23 a.m.—

*A dark part of the stage lights up, revealing THE
GIRL.*

You wanted to be—	THE PARTNER	
	MIRACLE	
A professional gymnast—	(<i>Embarrassed.</i>)	
	THE PARTNER	
But the Gods—		
	THE GIRL	
God?		
	THE PARTNER	
Had other plans. A car accident—		
	MIRACLE	
August 28, 2006—		
	THE PARTNER	
There was a train—		
	THE GIRL	MIRACLE
	Train tracks?	Train tracks.
	THE PARTNER	
A train wreck—		
	MIRACLE	
A tragedy—		
	THE PARTNER	
A miracle—		
	THE GIRL	
Pain.		

*MIRACLE's full attention goes to THE GIRL who
grasps at her throat.*

THE PARTNER

You survived the worst possible scenario—

MIRACLE

My face turns blue—

THE PARTNER

Despite all the odds—

THE GIRL

I can't breath...

THE GIRL's breathing becomes labored.

THE PARTNER

You grew into this gorgeous—

WOMAN

I can't breathe—

THE PARTNER

Resilient—

THE GIRL

I CAN'T breathe—

THE PARTNER

Woman—

MIRACLE

Please—

MIRACLE's breathing begins to match THE GIRL's.

THE PARTNER

When I look at you—when I look at these scars—all I see is your strength—

MIRACLE

Please kiss me—

THE PARTNER

It means so much for you to share your story with me—

MIRACLE

Please just—

THE GIRL

I can't—

MIRACLE

Please kiss me—

THE PARTNER

You're so fucking beautiful—

THE GIRL

I can't—

THE PARTNER

And talented—

MIRACLE

I can't—

THE PARTNER

And sexy—

THE GIRL

PLEASE—

THE PARTNER

I can't tell—

MIRACLE grabs THE PARTNER's face and brings their lips to hers, seeming to draw breath from them. Just as quickly as she grabbed them, she pushes them away.

THE GIRL collapses. The light around her dims.

MIRACLE

I need to write.

*MIRACLE searches through the papers. Dejected,
THE PARTNER exits.*

*MIRACLE finds the piece of paper she's searching
for. She begins scribbling on the paper. Lights dim
on MIRACLE.*

MIRACLE

This isn't... This is not a story about... Strength? No. Stupid. This is a story about...

SCENE 3

INTERVIEWER

GRIEF y'all. Here at Seeing, Grieving, and Believing, this is a show all about grief!

A sign reading, "Seeing, Grieving, and Believing" lights up. INTERVIEWER sits on the couch wearing headphones and holds a microphone.

INTERVIEWER

The good, the bad, and the ugly. We cover it all. And today we have a very special guest! (*Audio glitch*) ...the bestselling author of "How to Survive a Miracle!"

An applause track play. MIRACLE slides onto the couch across from INTERVIEWER. She puts on another set of headphones and takes a microphone from INTERVIEWER.

MIRACLE

Hello everyone!

INTERVIEWER

Hello!

MIRACLE

How are you?

INTERVIEWER

I'm good. Thank you. How are you?

MIRACLE

I'm good. I think... Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

Yeah? You sure?

MIRACLE

I mean... I'm not in excruciating pain right now. I could get out of bed today. Obviously.

INTERVIEWER

For those who aren't aren't familiar with her book or (*audio glitch*)'s work, she is—do you mind if I say this? I mean, is it ok if I let our audience know about—

MIRACLE

Sure.

INTERVIEWER

So check this out. (*Audio glitch*) is a very UNIQUE individual. She walks with a limp—and—well—you might be able to tell by her voice that she's a little... different—ly—abled! Aye! See what I did there?

MIRACLE

(*Laughing uncomfortably.*)

Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER

So with that differently-abled-ness...?

MIRACLE

You can just call me disabled. It's not a bad word.

INTERVIEWER

Right! SO, with her disabled—ness comes some different experiences. Such as chronic pain. Right?

MIRACLE

Yes. But today is a good day.

INTERVIEWER

You promise you're not lying to us?

MIRACLE

Oh I'd never lie.

INTERVIEWER

(*Laughing.*)

No "train delays" today.

MIRACLE

Huh?

INTERVIEWER

Isn't that what you tell people when you're running late? One might call that a tiny little white lie. Clever. But a lie none the less.

MIRACLE

Oh. Ahem. No. No train delays today.

INTERVIEWER

Speaking of trains, we're here to talk about your book. *How to Survive a Miracle*. Talk about GRIEF man.

MIRACLE

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

The very thing that flipped your world upside down is ALSO the thing that took your grandpa from you. How did you deal with that?

MIRACLE

So I actually didn't know my grandpa had passed away until several weeks after it had happened. And I was SO drugged up... I didn't really deal with it until I watching this one Hillary Duff movie with my mom. In the movie, Hillary's charact's brother gets killed in a car accident and it just like—hit me all of a sudden.

INTERVIEWER

No!

MIRACLE

Yeah. But that was the only time I can remember grieving my grandpa. I had to put so much energy into just—like—surviving. So I think my brain completely bypassed all of the normal stages.

INTERVIEWER

Why did no one tell you for so long?

MIRACLE

I'm not really sure. I mean, at first they—

INTERVIEWER

Your parents?

MIRACLE

Yes. They literally couldn't tell me. I was in an induced coma while the doctors tried to—I mean so much was happening with my body... My mom notoriously likes to say there wasn't a scratch on the outside of my body, but on the inside...? So when I was finally allowed to wake up... There's so much that's kept from kids when they're in the hospital. For better or for worse, I didn't know most of the things happening to and around me.

INTERVIEWER

Mmm. How would you describe your relationship with all of that grief?

MIRACLE

I'm sorry?

INTERVIEWER

There's so much grief in your book. Your grandpa. The loss of bodily functions. The loss of a childhood—

The light around THE GIRL flares. She stirs awake.

THE GIRL

Grandpa?

INTERVIEWER

Why do you think you write so much about grief?

THE GIRL

(to MIRACLE).

Do you know where my grandpa is?

MIRACLE

I... I don't know.

INTERVIEWER

Well let's take it back to the beginning. What happened that fateful day?

MIRACLE

You know.

THE GIRL

I don't know.

INTERVIEWER

For those who haven't read the book. What happened?

MIRACLE

I'd rather not—

INTERVIEWER

I think the context is important.

THE GIRL

Grandpa?

MIRACLE

I uh... I was with my grandpa—

THE GIRL

Oh! Grandpa! (*She looks around trying to find him.*) Is he pulling my leg again?

INTERVIEWER

Why? Why were you with your grandpa?

MIRACLE

My parents were house hunting. We—

INTERVIEWER

Who?

THE GIRL

Where is grandpa?

MIRACLE

Um... Me and my siblings—We—We were staying with my grandparents while our parents were house hunting... My grandparents had work. My sister and I took turns going with either grandma or grandpa each day.

THE GIRL

And today it's my turn—

SISTER
(*Offstage.*)

My turn!

INTERVIEWER

Really? You write about a... fight? With your sister? Do you think that's where the grief stems from? The chance that maybe it should've been your sister instead of you?

MIRACLE

No—

SHADOW takes the form of SISTER, appearing behind the screen.

SISTER

It's my turn!

THE GIRL

No it's not!

SISTER

Yes it is!

THE GIRL

It is not!

SISTER

It is!

THE GIRL

You're such a... a... a LIAR.

SISTER

You're the liar!

INTERVIEWER

It's ok if you don't remember everything correctly. Trauma does that to a person.

MIRACLE

No, I'm sure I remember—

SISTER

You always do this!

THE GIRL

I am one thousand-million-trillion percent positive it's my turn.

SISTER

But it's not!

THE GIRL

Ok ok ok. If you let me go with grandpa today, then you can go with him the next TWO days.

SISTER

Ugh fine. You promise?

THE GIRL

Promise!

SHADOW and THE GIRL both hold their pinkies in the air, sealing the promise. SHADOW spins THE GIRL, throwing her off balance.

INTERVIEWER

So there was a fight.

MIRACLE

It wasn't a fight. It was—

THE GIRL
(*Faintly.*)

My turn.

MIRACLE

My day.

INTERVIEWER

You're sure about that?

THE GIRL

I don't like this.

MIRACLE

We traded who went with grandpa everyday.

INTERVIEWER

And it was definitely your day?

MIRACLE

It... It doesn't really matter, does it? Because I was the one in that car.

INTERVIEWER

You said it was a truck.

MIRACLE

Truck. Sure. It was a truck.

INTERVIEWER

And what happened?

MIRACLE

It's a car accident. I think you know what happened. Or you can read the book—

INTERVIEWER

I think our audience would love to hear what YOU recall. Right here. Right now. We want to know what you think happened.

THE GIRL

GraaAAANNndpa?

MIRACLE

I um... I was in his truck. We were going to Indiana—

INTERVIEWER

To deliver the wedding orders?

Yes.

MIRACLE

GRANDPA.

THE GIRL

I don't know the exact details.

MIRACLE

This isn't fun anymore!

THE GIRL

What do you remember?

INTERVIEWER

I think I fell asleep.

MIRACLE

A bright circle of light encompasses the girl.

No. I'm awake!

THE GIRL

We were approaching some train tracks.

MIRACLE

The light trapping THE GIRL slowly fades in and out.

I'm not ready—

THE GIRL

There were no lights, or bars to warn you that a train is coming—

MIRACLE

I don't want to—

THE GIRL

MIRACLE

Granda is usually a very careful driver. Usually he would've stopped—

THE GIRL

Grandpa—

MIRACLE

He didn't stop.

THE GIRL

GRANDPA—

MIRACLE

There was a train—

THE GIRL

IT'S COMING! STOP!

MIRACLE

There's nothing a train conductor can do when something like this happens. They can't—

THE GIRL

Stop! Grandpa! You HAVE to—

MIRACLE

The train hit the truck—

PHANTOM runs onstage.

THE GIRL

STOP!

*PHANTOM sweeps THE GIRL up into their arms.
Everything is sent into darkness.*

Silence.

Then.

INTERVIEWER

And then what?

MIRACLE

I don't know. I was unconscious.

INTERVIEWER

Or dead.

MIRACLE

What?

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever think you died? For like a second?

MIRACLE

No.

INTERVIEWER

It just sounds a lot like a near death experience. I talk to a lot of people who've had those. I've personally never had one. But it sounds a lot like one. That would explain a lot of the grief.

MIRACLE

I think we're done here.

SCENE 4

Lights snap on in MIRACLE's apartment. THE PARTNER is reading the now cleaned up stack of papers.

MIRACLE

What are you doing?

THE PARTNER

This is incredible.

MIRACLE

Please tell me you're not—

THE PARTNER

I'm sorry. I know. I know. You don't think it's ready yet. But I wanted to see what all the fuss is about.

MIRACLE

It's still a very early draft. It's nowhere near where it needs to be.

THE PARTNER

It's incredible.

MIRACLE

Would you mind... Like could you not—

THE PARTNER

You don't want me to read it?

MIRACLE

It's not ready.

THE PARTNER

I thought we were past this.

MIRACLE

Past what?

THE PARTNER

Past you hiding your past from me. I know what happened now.

MIRACLE

Yes but reading the draft of my book is different.

THE PARTNER

It doesn't sound much different.

MIRACLE

How much did you read?

THE PARTNER

Just the first chapter.

MIRACLE

Ok.

THE PARTNER

What are you so scared of?

MIRACLE

I'm not.

THE PARTNER

It's just me.

MIRACLE

I know.

THE PARTNER

You can share these things with me.

MIRACLE

I know but—

THE PARTNER

But what?

MIRACLE

It's all so messy still. The facts keep changing. Or they feel like they're changing—

THE PARTNER

How? Facts are facts.

MIRACLE

Yes but each time I try to sort through them... I feel like there's something missing. "The Accident" of it all is easy. Everything after, the things I care about, the things that I need people to understand, I don't know how to do it.

THE PARTNER

What's tripping you up?

MIRACLE hesitates.

THE PARTNER

Ok. How about this? When you think about that time, what do you see?

MIRACLE

What I see doesn't matter. I need to write.

MIRACLE tries to take the papers from THE PARTNER's hand. They evade MIRACLE's attempt, keeping the story in their grasp.

THE PARTNER

Do you trust me?

MIRACLE

Yes...?

THE PARTNER

Then come here.

MIRACLE relents. THE PARTNER holds MIRACLE, her back to their chest.

THE PARTNER

Close your eyes. Now. What do you see?

THE GIRL, unconscious, cradled in PHANTOM's arms appears in the same spot we last saw them.

MIRACLE

I don't—

THE PARTNER

What do you see?

MIRACLE

She's dead.

THE PARTNER

What?

MIRACLE

Sorry. She's not... I see a girl. She looks so small. Like a baby. But she's not a baby...

THE PARTNER

So you see yourself, but younger.

MIRACLE

I guess... Yes. But... She's this beautiful, vibrant kid. A kid with a dream.

PHANTOM sets THE GIRL on the ground.

THE PARTNER

The olympics.

MIRACLE

She would've done it, you know? She was so confident. And determined. She could do anything.

*Shadow appears. They perform a gymnast's salute.
They do a cartwheel.*

THE PARTNER

You're still confident.

MIRACLE

No I'm not. I'm terrified. Everyday. I keep waiting for death to come for me.

THE PARTNER

Don't say that.

MIRACLE

Sorry.

THE PARTNER

What else do you see?

SHADOW does another cartwheel, but falters upon completion. They set up for another.

MIRACLE

Her body deteriorating. Like she's aging in reverse.

SHADOW shrinks. Another cartwheel. This time they fall mid cartwheel. THE GIRL stirs on the floor. She cries out in pain.

MIRACLE

The brilliant gymnast trapped inside a body no better than a baby's.

THE GIRL cries out. SHADOW tries again.

MIRACLE

Everything she's ever known ripped from her. All the control she's ever had, gone in the blink of an eye.

SHADOW falls. THE GIRL cries out.

MIRACLE

And she's in pain.

SHADOW fights to get back up. THE GIRL cries out.

MIRACLE

So much pain.

SHADOW can't get up. THE GIRL cries out.

MIRACLE

With no way to communicate.

SHADOW crawls towards THE GIRL. SHADOW tries to merge herself with THE GIRL. THE GIRL wakes with a start. She grasps at her throat. SHADOW grasps at THE GIRL's throat. She struggles to breathe. To speak. MIRACLE becomes affected by what SHADOW/THE GIRL is experiencing until all of their bodies move as one. Whatever that means.

MIRACLE

The train took her body. Her voice. For months she couldn't speak. Which felt like she couldn't breathe. Not that it mattered. When she got her voice back, no one heard her. Everyone around her too used to speaking for her. Or maybe she became too used to living as a shadow. Seen but not heard. Not that it mattered. If she did speak, she couldn't tell you where the wants and thoughts of others' ended and hers began. And she was cold. So cold... Her body a cage, familiar to everyone but herself. And she's alone. So alone. In this bright white prison that they call a hospital. Where everyone has access to every part of her 24/7. Maybe that's where she learned to avoid sleep. An attempt to avoid nightmare filled days. To avoid the pain—

MIRACLE becomes lost in the trance, now unable to speak. THE PARTNER turns MIRACLE towards them, shaking her out of the trance she's in.

THE PARTNER

Hey... Hey... Hey! Open your eyes. Please. Miracle, baby. Come back to me. Open your eyes and— (*Softer.*) Come back to me.

MIRACLE opens her eyes. THE GIRL/SHADOW lays still on the ground.

MIRACLE

Do you think they know her name?

THE PARTNER

Who?

MIRACLE

The doctors? Or... Anyone?

THE PARTNER

Of course they did. You're unforgettable.

MIRACLE

But do you think they knew her? Like really knew her? They knew the story. They knew her medical charts and histories. But do you think they knew her?

THE PARTNER

I think they knew *you*.

MIRACLE

How the fuck do I write this?

Silence.

Then.

THE PARTNER

The way I see it...? This whole event is what made you... *You*. Tell that story. Show everyone how much you've overcome. Don't let the real life horror story be the end of it.

MIRACLE pulls away. Almost as if she was just struck.

THE PARTNER

Maybe the exact happenings of the hospital aren't important. You could do this kaleidoscope of images. If it were a movie—

MIRACLE

It's not a movie—

THE GIRL rises, almost puppeted by THE PARTNER's words. Whatever that means.

THE PARTNER

I know, but hear me out. If it *were* a movie, you wouldn't need all the words, just images—

THE GIRL is “yanked” towards MIRACLE.

MIRACLE

The words are what’s important. The language is important so people can understand. Really understand—

THE GIRL is “yanked” back towards the partner.

THE PARTNER

But this would be the point we cut away to the parents. Get their side of things—

The cycle continues.

MIRACLE

But it’s not their story—

THE PARTNER

I mean—not to be that guy—but it kinda is—

MIRACLE

I know. I’m not saying that it’s *not* their story just—

*The sound of hospital monitors, soft at first.
MIRACLE winces, like she has a headache. THE
GIRL collapses back on the ground. She covers her
ears and mutters to herself.*

THE PARTNER

Have you thought about reaching out to them... Your parents?

The beeping grows louder.

THE PARTNER

They just—they might have the answers you’re looking for.

The beeping grows louder—

THE PARTNER

It could be the angle you're missing. Something to fill in the gaps of what you can't remember.
And you know people go crazy over this family tragedy shit—.

MIRACLE

I know you're trying to help but I really can't deal with this right now—

The beeping grows unbearably loud.

MIRACLE

I just can't—

THE PARTNER backs off. Then exits.

SCENE 5

The world tinged blue. THE GIRL is sitting on the floor, hands over her ears. She appears frightened.

SHADOW is behind the screen. They lay on the couch, or a table. Long hair dangles off of whatever they're laying on.

There's a symphony of beeping from the hospital monitors.

THE GIRL

Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop. Make it stop.

MIRACLE

(Approaching THE GIRL.)

Hey.

THE GIRL

(Looking up.)

You? Stop. Make it stop.

MIRACLE

I'm sorry.

THE GIRL

What's happening?

MIRACLE

I was hoping you'd be able to tell me.

THE GIRL

Why don't you stop this?

MIRACLE

I can't.

THE GIRL

Why?

MIRACLE

I don't know. It was so long ago... And I don't remember. Or I could never let myself remember... But you... It just happened to you so you must have the answers.

THE GIRL

I don't—Grandpa—We were... I don't remember. (*Noticing SHADOW*). What happened to her?

MIRACLE

I—You—She's... It's called an induced coma. I think? Maybe it's a real coma. I don't actually know if it was induced from the start or if it's something they needed to do at a later point.

THE GIRL

Why?

MIRACLE

It's a long story.

THE GIRL

I want to know—

MIRACLE

It might be better if you don't—

THE GIRL

I—I can handle it!

Beat.

MIRACLE

Shit. I'm doing it.

THE GIRL

What?

MIRACLE

Trying to protect you. But it doesn't feel like protection. Does it?

THE GIRL

She's just laying there. And she looks dead. And she looks like me? Why does she look like me? Why am I here? I don't want to be here. Where's Grandpa?

MIRACLE

He's dead.

THE GIRL

What?

MIRACLE

I don't know if you remember the train, but when you and grandpa were going to deliver the wedding orders... He was on the side of the truck that got hit. But they think he might've already been dead. A heart attack or something? I don't know. What I do know is you survived. See? You're alive. Or you're fighting for your life.

INTERVIEWER, who is now DOCTOR, walks onstage holding a pair of scissors. He goes behind the screen, becoming another shadow.

THE GIRL

Who is he—

MIRACLE

A doctor—

THE GIRL

Is he going to help me?

MIRACLE

I don't know.

DOCTOR begins expertly braiding SHADOWS long hair.

THE GIRL

Doctors are supposed to help.

MIRACLE

They are. They try to help.

What is he doing—	THE GIRL
We should go—	MIRACLE
No—	THE GIRL
	<i>DOCTOR holds the braid up and readies his scissors.</i>
NO! Stop!	THE GIRL
He can't.	MIRACLE
Make him stop!	THE GIRL
I can't.	MIRACLE
	<i>THE GIRL tries to rush at the DOCTOR but MIRACLE grabs a hold of her.</i>
NO! LET GO! LET ME GO!	THE GIRL
I can't. He has to—	MIRACLE
	<i>They both sink to the floor, THE GIRL struggling as MIRACLE holds her tight. DOCTOR cuts the braid off.</i>
NOOOOOOOOOOOO! Why? WHY? WHY?	THE GIRL

MIRACLE

They have to. They—

THE GIRL

WHY DID YOU LET THEM DO THIS?

MIRACLE

They're trying to help you get better. Your brain...

THE GIRL

MY HAIR!

MIRACLE

There's a lot of pressure in your brain and they need to put a device in your head to monitor the pressure.

THE GIRL

I hate you!

MIRACLE

I know.

THE GIRL

I hate you! I hate you! I HATE YOU!

SILENCE.

MIRACLE

I know. I hate me too sometimes.

DOCTOR

(to Shadow.)

Hey little miracle... You're doing so good, kid.

SHADOW stirs.

DOCTOR

I know this is tough. You're probably really confused... You don't know this yet, but you have a guardian angel.

PHANTOM appears.

DOCTOR

Your grandpa is watching over you and we're doing everything we can on our end to help you get better. I know it might be tempting to give up, but we need you to fight. We need you to want to come back...

White light. A tree appears opposite of PHANTOM.

THE GIRL

Grandpa?

MIRACLE

It's not grandpa.

DOCTOR

Just because you come back, doesn't mean you have to say goodbye to your grandpa. You can visit him whenever you want. You just have to close your eyes and—

THE GIRL closes her eyes.

MIRACLE

(Frightened.)

No! Don't do that. Wake up! Wake up!

THE GIRL

(Opening her eyes.)

Why?

MIRACLE

I don't know.

THE GIRL

I'm so tired. I want to see grandpa!

MIRACLE

I know.

PHANTOM advances on THE GIRL.

	THE GIRL (Noticing <i>PHANTOM</i>).
No. Don't... Don't let it take me.	
	MIRACLE
It won't hurt you.	
	THE GIRL
I don't want to leave you.	
	MIRACLE
It hasn't hurt you right?	
	THE GIRL
I can't keep doing this.	
	MIRACLE
I know. I'm trying.	
	<i>PHANTOM gently takes THE GIRL from MIRACLE's arms. For a moment, the three are embracing.</i>
	MIRACLE
I could take her place.	
	SHADOW
Let go.	
	MIRACLE
If you let me. I could take her place.	
	SHADOW
Let go.	
	MIRACLE
Please.	
	PHANTOM

Let go.

PLEASE.

MIRACLE

PHANTOM backs away with THE GIRL in their grasp.

I'm sorry.

MIRACLE

SCENE 6

MIRACLE's apartment. THE PARTNER is reading a stack of papers. Again. MIRACLE sits anxiously off to the side. SHADOW shadows MIRACLE.

There's a long moment of silence.

THE PARTNER

Wow.

MIRACLE

Good wow or bad wow?

THE PARTNER

Good wow.

MIRACLE

Is it too much?

THE PARTNER

It's heavy.

MIRACLE

But is it too much?

SHADOW

But is it too much?

THE PARTNER

No. I don't think so. But...

MIRACLE

But???

THE PARTNER

Maybe it'll confuse people?

MIRACLE

What do you mean?

THE PARTNER

This whole hair cutting situation... Would a doctor be the one to do it? Isn't that like a nurse's job or something?

MIRACLE

It's not meant to be completely accurate.

THE PARTNER

Isn't that confusing?

MIRACLE

I don't know what you mean.

THE PARTNER

This is supposed to be a true story, right?

MIRACLE

Mostly. Yes.

THE PARTNER

How can something be mostly true?

MIRACLE

Because truth is subjective. The event might not be true, but it feels true.

THE PARTNER

Maybe I just don't get it.

MIRACLE

You were the one—

SHADOW

You were the one—

MIRACLE

To suggest it. Focus less on the words and more on the images. I wanted to see if I could do a little bit of both...? Somehow.

THE PARTNER

I was talking about movies. It works in movies but—what do I know? I mean—you know my work. I don't do narrative shit. My stuff is more... experimental.

MIRACLE

Which is why I thought you'd get this.

THE PARTNER

Why don't you just stick to the facts?

MIRACLE

What facts? No one ever told me shit.

THE PARTNER

Hey don't get all mad at me. I'm sorry. Life has just really sucked lately. My latest film has been completely misunderstood and the day job sucks and here you are writing beautiful powerful shit. Shit that is going to really get you somewhere. And I'm so proud of you, but it's hard to watch you do so well sometimes.

MIRACLE

Sorry. You're right. I remember how frustrating it was to wait for things to start happening.

THE PARTNER

I don't know how the hell you do it.

MIRACLE

It just... happens?

THE PARTNER

I wish my shit just happened.

MIRACLE

It will.

SHADOW

It will.

THE PARTNER

Sure. But you? You're going to be famous.

MIRACLE

Oh stop it.

THE PARTNER

When all the big studio execs start approaching you about movie rights, don't forget about me.

MIRACLE

I thought you don't do narrative shit.

THE PARTNER

I would with this. (*He gestures with the stack of papers.*)

MIRACLE

What would you do with it?

SHADOW

What would you do with it?

THE PARTNER

We'd open on a girl in a gym. All her peers sit around her as she prepares to climb up a rope. She's confident, and isn't bothered by the staring. As she climbs, we get a close up on her muscles straining. Sweat runs down her forehead. She rings the bell at the top. Then. CRASH. We're in a frantic hospital. We see several family members get the dreadful call. Then we spend the rest of the movie watching the recovery and how this dream of being a gymnast transforms into something new.

MIRACLE

Oh. I mean—it's certainly very different than what you normally do... It's what my editor keeps encouraging me to do with the book. Um... I'm just not sure it's right.

THE PARTNER

Oh.

MIRACLE

To write a recovery story implies the the recovery stops... That one day everything miraculously gets better, but that's not true...

THE PARTNER

Sure. But recovery stories sell really well.

MIRACLE

Yeah... I mean, It's a great idea. Don't get me wrong.

THE PARTNER

That's just what I came up with off the top of my head. Give me time to prepare and you'd be completely blown away.

MIRACLE

I doubt the "studio execs" would ever want to turn this into a movie.

THE PARTNER

Miracle, baby, you underestimate yourself too much.

MIRACLE

There's just a lot you don't know yet. A lot that could make you change your mind when you do know.

THE PARTNER

Then tell me. Let me in.

SHADOW leans to whisper in MIRACLE's ear.

SHADOW

Stop fighting.

MIRACLE

I'm trying. It's just... hard.

THE PARTNER

Noting you could tell me would make me look at you differently.

SHADOW

(Whispering).

It's time.

MIRACLE

You're cute... But I think it should make you look at me differently.

THE PARTNER

Meaning?

SHADOW

(Whispering.)

It's time to stop fighting.

MIRACLE inhales sharply.

MIRACLE

I don't know. I need to get back to work. I... When it's done, I'll be sure to personally give you the first copy.

THE PARTNER

Yeah?

MIRACLE

Yeah.

SHADOW

(Whispering.)

It's time.

SCENE 7

The scent of eucalyptus and orange. Candlelight or the effect of candlelight. MIRACLE, alone, with a bowl of water. She aggressively scrubs at her hands and arms.

MIRACLE

Let water cleanse these hands. Let salt ground and protect me. Let fire give me strength. Let the wind clear away any ill intent. I light this candle as a guide for one person and one person only. Hel, please, let it act as a guide for her to come back home. If she's lost. If she's searching. I know she's scared. I'm sorry I didn't realize sooner. Let me help you. It's time for you to rest sweet child. When you're ready, I'll be here.

Lights come up on INTERVIEWER. MIRACLE sits across from them on the couch.

INTERVIEWER

What's up guys! WELCOME back to Medical Dramazzz! Where we expose the truth behind the hospital systems. Today I am here with (*audio glitch*), a living and walking medical mystery and author of *How to Survive a Miracle*.

MIRACLE

I'm not sure I'm a medical mystery.

INTERVIEWER

Wasn't it predicted that you were never supposed to walk again?

MIRACLE

Yes. Spinal fractures are a bitch like that.

INTERVIEWER

And here you are walking!

MIRACLE

After a LOT of physical therapy.

INTERVIEWER

And you ALSO survived that freak accident. Which let's be honest, most people would be six feet under after something like that.

MIRACLE

Tell me about it.

INTERVIEWER

Now I know you probably get asked this a million times, but to cover the basics so we can get into the good shit, in your own words, could you describe what your book is about briefly.

MIRACLE

This book is a true story. Or it's based on a true story. It's my attempt to document "what happened." A question I'm not sure I knew the answers to for a long time. But more than that, it's an attempt to pass on the language I've discovered that helped me make sense of being a child who spent a good chunk of time in and out of the hospital system. And all the messy feelings that come with that.

INTERVIEWER

I love that. Really. Language is survival. And I think what's really incredible about this book is the insight it gives adults and parents into what their children might be going through.

MIRACLE

I actually had one parent, my former History of Economics professor, who I never would have expected to pick up my book — he shared how helpful it was to read something like this when his two year old son was in and out of the hospital because of a health condition.

INTERVIEWER

Crazy!

MIRACLE

Parents can benefit a lot from reading my book, and I hope they do, but it really isn't for them. As much as I appreciate the response I'm getting from adults and parents, my biggest hope is that it can help children who are currently in and out of the hospital understand some of the things they might be going through.

INTERVIEWER

I never thought about that.

MIRACLE

You see, the scariest part about, essentially, growing up in a hospital is not having the language to describe "what happened." I want to give children the language they're missing. Whether it's literal definitions or simply giving them permission to feel the emotions they're feeling when they see lots of other people in their position have felt the same way.

INTERVIEWER

But do you think it's appropriate?

MIRACLE

I'm sorry?

INTERVIEWER

You write about some pretty graphic stuff. Like describing surgeries in great detail, among other things. Don't get me wrong, I love this shit, but do you think that's appropriate for children to read?

MIRACLE

Is what they're experiencing any less graphic? Everything I've written happened when I was a child.

INTERVIEWER

Sure. But you didn't know how graphic the things you went through were—I mean... one of the stories you share is about how you were held down by multiple people as they inserted a catheter in you.

MIRACLE

It's not exactly uncommon for force to be used on patients in medical settings.

INTERVIEWER

Yes but this is like...

MIRACLE

Assault? Are you saying it feels like sexual assault when you read about it? Even when there's nothing sexual about it?

INTERVIEWER

Ahem... maybe we shouldn't talk about this.

MIRACLE

No, I think this is important. There are things children will experience in hospital settings that will fuck them up. I'm sorry for swearing, but that's the truth. Living with that type of pain and confusion over a thing that happened to them—done by people who are supposed to be helping them—all while their parents watch... Children need to know that whatever feelings they have

about these kinds of experiences are valid and reasonable. And who's going to tell them that? Because I'd argue most parents won't. Not when all they want is to see their child get better.

INTERVIEWER

Your parents watched? They just stood by—

MIRACLE

When you're a kid in a hospital, you learn pretty quickly that screaming and crying is pointless. No one ever listens. Not the doctors. Not the nurses. Not my parents. And it's not their fault. They were doing what they thought was best. That's the reality of "getting better." But this isn't about me. This is about kids currently in the same position I once was.

INTERVIEWER

What advice would you give to the parents of those kids?

MIRACLE

Listen to them. Take time to explain what's happening to them. Really explain it. Go through their medical charts with them. It's their body. The more they understand what's happening, the less scary it is.

INTERVIEWER

I love that. Now, I'm curious, a little birdie told me you just turned down a major movie deal. Is that true?

MIRACLE

It is.

INTERVIEWER

Isn't that every author's dream?

MIRACLE

My one goal when I set out to do this is that I wanted to do it one time, and one time only. I did that. Now it's time to move on.

INTERVIEWER

So we won't see this miracle play out on the big screen.

MIRACLE

Unfortunately, no.

INTERVIEWER

There was a director who claims to be very close to you who was drumming up a lot of support for the movie adaptation. What do you know about that?

MIRACLE

Can't say I know much.

SCENE 8

Outside the TV studio. People vie for MIRACLE's attention. There's flashing lights. THE PARTNER approaches.

The PARTNER

I saw your interview.

MIRACLE

Oh.

THE PARTNER

Yeah.

Silence.

THE PARTNER

You turned down a movie deal?

MIRACLE

Yeah.

Silence.

THE PARTNER

You didn't tell me.

MIRACLE

Yeah. I'm sorry.

Silence.

MIRACLE

What'd you think?

THE PARTNER

You didn't tell me—

MIRACLE

I know. I'm sorry about the movie. I know you have this idea that I'm going to be famous. Hell. Even I thought once upon a time—

THE PARTNER

It's not about the movie. You never told me about how... When they'd hold you down...

MIRACLE

Oh.

Silence.

MIRACLE

I wrote about it. (*Beat.*) You didn't read the whole book.

THE PARTNER

You didn't *tell* me.

MIRACLE

It was hard enough to write. I can't believe you didn't read the/ whole thing.

THE PARTNER

I thought I had/

MIRACLE

You begged to read it before/ it was ready.

THE PARTNER

I guess that part got added after... In a later draft.

MIRACLE

Yeah.

THE PARTNER

Why didn't you tell me?

MIRACLE

Because...

The word hangs in the air for a moment. The Partner gestures for MIRACLE to continue.

MIRACLE

I knew it'd hurt you.

THE PARTNER

That's not true—

MIRACLE

Ok. Then tell me the information doesn't hurt. Tell me the image of—that—isn't haunting.

Beat. The two hold each other's gaze, neither willing to back down.

THE PARTNER

(Relenting.)

Fine. It hurts. And I hate it. And it makes me want to punch someone. Or—I don't know! But I'm trying—I'm trying not to make this about me. I can handle it.

MIRACLE

For how long? How much hurt can you handle? Because I can't tell you most of what I've gone through without it hurting you. I don't want to hurt you. Hurting you hurts me and I already hurt enough.

THE PARTNER

I want to know these things.

MIRACLE

You don't.

THE PARTNER

I do.

MIRACLE

No. You don't.

THE PARTNER

I do.

MIRACLE

You don't.

THE PARTNER

I do!

MIRACLE

Well I don't want you to know!

Silence.

THE PARTNER

(Slowly.)

You can tell the whole fucking world but you *can't* tell me?

MIRACLE

Yes.

THE PARTNER

Why?

MIRACLE

Because they—

THE GIRL dances onstage. MIRACLE is mesmerized, watching THE GIRL dance for a moment. Her movements are light, and beautiful, and full of joy.

MIRACLE

They will always look at me differently.

THE GIRL's movements begin to falter.

MIRACLE

Their looks are full of pity or curiosity or confusion or borderline worship or... disgust.

THE GIRL's movements transform into something sharp and distorted.

MIRACLE

I can tell them these things because it helps them make sense of what they're seeing. I don't want to... With you...

*THE GIRL falls. MIRACLE rushes to help her up.
THE PARTNER has turned their back on them.*

THE PARTNER

I'm not sure I can handle being kept in the dark. You go to these places where I don't know how to reach you. I need to be able to reach you. Because it's scary.

THE GIRL

No. Don't be scared.

MIRACLE smiles down at THE GIRL. After a long moment, THE PARTNER turns back towards MIRACLE and studies her for a moment.

THE PARTNER

You're doing it again.

MIRACLE

Sorry.

THE PARTNER

Where did you go?

MIRACLE

It's not important.

THE GIRL
It is.

THE PARTNER
It is.

MIRACLE holds eye contact with THE GIRL for a moment before looking back to THE PARTNER.

MIRACLE

Do you ever wish you died?

THE PARTNER

What?

MIRACLE

I'm not—Like I'm not suicidal. But when I think about the accident. When I think about that day... I can't help but wish I had died.

THE PARTNER

You don't mean that.

MIRACLE

But I do. Because this body is hell. I love my life—but my body? Dying would've been a much kinder fate. And I keep thinking back to the day this all happened. Memories—or my idea of what should be my memories—play on my head in repeat. Like what happened? Really. What happened? Because I was there but I can't remember anything. I know what people tell me... But what they tell me sounds like a fairytale when I know it was a nightmare. I keep thinking—

THE GIRL

Grandpa.

MIRACLE

I was with my grandpa. And he was driving.

THE GIRL

Sleeping.

MIRACLE

No, I was sleeping.

THE GIRL

I think I was sleeping?

MIRACLE

I must have been sleeping. He should have stopped.

THE GIRL

He always stops.

MIRACLE

But there was no stopping this.

THE GIRL

Grandma says that when it's your time to go, it's your time. God will find a way.

MIRACLE

Maybe grandpa escaped Death one too many times. Maybe this was the only way to make sure he finally passed on.

THE GIRL

The train hit.

MIRACLE

The seat belt digs into my stomach, disconnecting my ureter tube from my bladder.

THE GIRL

The right side of my body slams into the door.

MIRACLE

The doctors say I present like a stroke victim. One side of my body weaker than the other. If the right side of my head slammed into the passenger door, the left side of my body suffers.

THE GIRL

Glass shatters.

MIRACLE

It must have shattered.

THE GIRL

Mom says—

MIRACLE

There wasn't a scratch on me.

THE GIRL

There wasn't a scratch on me.

MIRACLE

But why do I keep finding tiny scars littered all over my body?

PHANTOM enters.

THE GIRL

Death comes.

PHANTOM offers a hand to THE GIRL.

MIRACLE

I meet Death.

THE GIRL takes PHANTOM's hand and they fall into position, as if they are about to waltz.

THE GIRL

Death touched me. I think I died.

PHANTOM abruptly dips THE GIRL.

MIRACLE

But I didn't die. At least, not all of me. But a part of me...?

A deadly dance begins between THE GIRL and PHANTOM.

THE GIRL

I met Death—

MIRACLE

And I didn't die.

THE GIRL

I should have died.

MIRACLE

But I didn't. So death has been haunting me.

THE GIRL

Maybe it wasn't grandpa's time. Maybe it was mine.

MIRACLE

Maybe it was my turn.

PHANTOM

(In the voice of SISTER)

My turn!

THE GIRL

Maybe he sacrificed himself for me.

MIRACLE

And I feel like I've been running. I can't run, but I feel like I've been running. Because it should have been me.

THE GIRL

This body—

MIRACLE

Death would be easier. So, sometimes I want to die.

THE GIRL

Which I can't say. It makes people mad. Because God saved me from Death and it was a miracle.

MIRACLE

But I think I like Death more than I like God.

THE GIRL

Death doesn't let you go easily.

MIRACLE

Death will stake its claim.

THE GIRL

Death claimed me.

MIRACLE

And God "saved" me. God ripped me away from Death's embrace.

THE PARTNER

Stop! Stop saying you died! You're not dead. You're here. You're with me.

MIRACLE turns her focus back to THE PARTNER.

MIRACLE
But I'm not. Am I?

THE GIRL
But I'm not. Am I?

THE PARTNER

You are!

THE GIRL leaves PHANTOM reluctantly and goes to hold MIRACLE's hand.

MIRACLE

Point to who you see.

THE PARTNER points at THE GIRL.

MIRACLE
What's my name?

THE GIRL
What's my name?

THE PARTNER

Miracle.

MIRACLE smiles sadly.

MIRACLE

No.

THE PARTNER

No?

MIRACLE shifts her attention to THE GIRL.

MIRACLE
We've been fighting for a long time for you to stay with me. I thought I needed to keep you with me. I'm so sorry for not realizing sooner. It's ok for you to rest.

THE GIRL

Really?

Really.

MIRACLE

Will you be ok?

THE GIRL

I think I'm going to be fine.

MIRACLE

THE GIRL hesitates.

It's ok. You can go. Death is waiting.

MIRACLE

*With a burst of energy, THE GIRL runs towards
PHANTOM and disappears in their arms for the
final time.*

What just happened?

THE PARTNER

She died.

MIRACLE

END