

RADIO: Outcast

Episode 7A

"Row, Row"

Written by

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## **NARRATORS**

### **Jesse Rogers**

Black, 19, a young but thoughtful cowboy on the search for his father's killers with a strict moral code. Keeps a written journal of each day.

### **Helix**

Messenger God of Sound, 370 million-years-old, a party gal whose recent banishment has sent her 100 years back in time. Prays to her mother, the God of Mass Communication, each night.

### **Charles Osgood (An alias)**

White, 20s, a master of disguise and conman contracted by the God of Time desperate to live despite a mysterious illness. Keeps notes on a tape recorder as part of his mission.

## **OTHER PLAYERS**

### **Coda and the Sonny Machine**

Helix's familiar and Charles's magical guide. Both are "voiced" by sound clips edited together for meaning.

- **Alderman, et al.**
- **Emi**

## SETTING

1887: swan song of the American West. Could be any place where you'd expect cowboys, shoot-outs, and dusty saloons. But what's with that black monolith over there, in the distance?

## \*NOTES

All music and key audio cues will be numbered and outlined as follows:

1. CHARACTER A'S THEME.

2. GUNSHOT.

Unless cued in script, music will be added as seen fit during post-production.

- [brackets] are used for implied dialogue: "Mmm. [Yes.]"
- (parentheses) are used for dialogue actions: "Okay. (sigh) Let's move. (beat)"
- (*parentheses + italics*) are used for dialogue direction: "*(disbelieving)* Right."

Scene One: The Starlight Leisure Theater, Missouri  
River, Oacoma, SD

1. VOICEMAIL BEEP.

**MALE RECORDING MESSAGE**

Hello, --

**EMI**

-- Emi --

**MALE RECORDING MESSAGE**

-- isn't available to take your call. Please leave a message  
after the tone.

2. VOICEMAIL BEEP AGAIN.

3. CHARLES CLEARS HIS THROAT.

**CHARLES (now)**

Indeed. [beat] Well, I suppose these strange means of transmission follow a day most *ludicrous* itself. It seems only fitting.

4. BOAT HORN BLASTING.

5. HUSHED CROWD MURMURING. MEN AND WOMEN LAUGHING.

6. MUSICIANS TUNING THEIR INSTRUMENTS - BRASS INSTRUMENTS, STRINGS, ETC.

**CHARLES**

*(Walking to his seat)* Pardon me. Yes, sorry if you could just - *Brilliant.* *(fake, polite laughter)* Thank you , yes. Excuse me.

**HELIX**

He's back!

**CHARLES**

Well that's quite the joyous welcome.

**JESSE**

Don't flatter yourself just yet. She just wants those peanuts you're carryin'.

**CHARLES**

Ahhhh. But for a moment I believed myself more than my duty.

**JESSE**

Peanut wranglin' ain't your duty. Your duty is mapmakin', which you've been failin' at ever since you no longer have that talkin' machine of yours to lean on anymore. That little drawin' of yours we've been followin' since Deadwood looked more like a coffee stain than the Missouri River.

**HELIX**

Peanuts, please!

**CHARLES**

Perhaps once dear Jesse has released your hands from his ever judgemental grip.

**JESSE**

My grip ain't judgemental and neither am I -

7. CHARLES SCOFFS IN DISBELIEF.

**JESSE**

I ain't. Truth of the matter is we got lucky with that circle clue back at the cult and though a circle should be easy enough to draw on a map all you got for us is (*mocking Charles's voice*) "somewhere towards Yankton, perhaps" and "a showboat is quite the stylish mode of transportation, where the most venerated entertainers outside of" - how'd he say it - "elevated circles perform and the perfectly average gambling officiants revel". Did I get that right?

**HELIX**

(*Snickering*) Look at you. That was the funniest thing I've heard you say. But you have to make your words a little longer next time, like this: "oh the Missouri River, river of abundance, wild as it is alluring blah blah blah blah blah."

**CHARLES**

Ha. Ha. Firstly, I said "perfectly average gambling aficionados" not officiants. That would be absurd. Secondly, I made us a new map, set up our transportation, and found us a bit of

entertainment to pass this dreary trip through Dakota. A rare "thank you" may be in order.

**HELIX**

Thank you, Charles.

8. CODA TWEET-TWEETS HAPPILY.

**JESSE**

Mm-hmm.

**CHARLES**

*(Sarcastically)* Now, now, don't sink this vessel with the weight of your boundless gratitude. *(beat)* Are you nearly done with her hands, Rogers, or not? I do not plan on carrying three bags of peanuts all night.

**JESSE**

I wouldn't have to check her bandages if Barefoot here hadn't been so dumb and desperate to find the next tower. *(pointedly annoyed)* Goin' off on her own climbin' trees. Then returnin' to camp, tail between your legs. Pure dumb luck you didn't break your neck.



**HELIX**

(groans) It's been like three days. When will the lectures end?

**JESSE**

When I don't have to keep bandagin' you up every week. Now sit tight, [I'm] almost finished. There. (sighs) Go nuts.

**CHARLES**

Go nuts, indeed. Your bag of peanuts, my dear. And another.

**JESSE**

*Thank you.* Anyhow, Osgood, why are we all the way up front?

**CHARLES**

The man who told me about this boat, *Starlight Leisure*, insisted that my companions and I sit front row center in case there were any need for audience participation.

**JESSE**

What?

**CHARLES**

Oh yes. A small trade indeed and I managed to haggle the cost of our three tickets down to nearly the price of one.

### HELIX

Impressive.

### CHARLES (NARRATION)

Yes, though I have been left largely to my own devices since our last conversation, Emi, I have made the best of an inconvenient situation. Jesse had been complaining about crossing the river being impossible with the horses, Helix's self-sustained injuries made the trek on horseback even more precarious, and so I of course saved the day. I brought us here to this emerald showboat pulled by a small gray engine boat, the *Starlight Leisure*, and secured us safe passage down the Missouri River.

I sat there with my two companions, blissfully unaware of what was to pass, snapping peanut shells open in a crowd of 100 equally eager passengers in the grand hall right beside the orchestra pit. And then the gentleman with the fashionable yellow topper who sold me our tickets appeared. A fellow dandy with a tuxedo-top hat and a formidable moustache. He walked down the aisle, up a short flight of steps, and to center stage.

9. FOOTSTEPS ACROSS THE STAGE.

10. A POWERFUL SPOTLIGHT BOOMS ALIVE.

11. THE ALDERMAN CLEARS HIS THROAT.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Greetings, you *disgusting* lot! Welcome to the Starlight Leisure!

12. AUDIENCE APPLAUSE.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Across the world, Paris builds a tower that shall one day grow taller than any building before it! (beat) And yet here we are. Adrift this river, destined to crash into a meager-er-er tower!

13. AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

The man in the tophat walked twice as fast as anyone and spoke with as much hurry. And then he looked at Helix and grinned slowly. His eyes met mine then, and there was something about

the look. Like he had been expecting us. He then rolled his eyes and proceeded.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

*(To Jesse, Helix, and Charles)* Welcome, halfwits, to the *Starlight Leisure*. *(To the crowd)* Please filter in, everyone! You're late but the show shall wait. Agog, agone? Leave the horses, mind your voices. *La maison* is sacred. Come!

**JESSE**

Did that man say halfwits?

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

My name is The Alderman. I am one of twelve Aldermans. Please do not strip the article *The* from my title. We've been sat on this river waiting for you for - oh, some interminable length of time. Yes, yes, of course, I recognize the look on your faces. *Strangers*. Indeed, you fools. And your names? (beat) Oh, shall I fabricate names for you then?

**HELIX (loudly)**

Um. Are you talking to *us*?

14. AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

I jest. Of course, we know your names: Clod, Dullard, and *Dunce*.  
Now please, make your way up here at once.

**JESSE**

I'm not gettin' on that stage.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

What else shall you do? Stare obliquely into your boots until  
the leather gives way? Certainly not. Come, come.

**CHARLES**

*(To Jesse and Helix)* Come now, it was part of the deal anyhow.  
I'm sure it will be painless, Rogers. *(To the Alderman)* We'll be  
there at once.

15. SEATS CREAKING.

16. JESSE, CHARLES, AND HELIX EXCUSING THEMSELVES AS THEY  
CROSS THE ROW. CODA TWEETS ALONG WITH THEM.

17. FOOTSTEPS UP STAIRS AND THEN ACROSS THE STAGE.

18. A TRUMPET PLAYS TRIUMPHANTLY: TA-DAH!

**The Alderman (whispering, fast-speaking)**

You, there. This one, here. And right at this spot. You will perform for the Voices. Now I trust you have no questions.

**Helix**

Actually, what are we --

**The Alderman (loudly, fast-speaking)**

*(To the audience)* On our bill tonight, might I greet you to myself, The Alderman. And accompanying me in a feast of act for your undeserving eyes, these three *people*. I believe their names are Mongoose -

**JESSE**

No. The names are Jesse Rogers, Charles Osgood, and Helix.

19. AUDIENCE GASPS

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Well, since this grim gentleman wishes to *steal* the spotlight, we shall provide him justly! (beat) Technicians!

20. FAST FOOTSTEPS.

**Scene Two: The Starlight Leisure Theater**

**HELIX (NARRATION)**

I was still reeling and not quite sure what was going on but I do love the theater. Broadway, off-Broadway, high school productions, backyard productions. I was looking forward to a bit of spectacle. Though Jesse certainly wasn't.

A small boy and a small girl rushed toward us from the wings. They looked almost identical. Like pre-teen twins. The boy had on long brown boots, like the kind you might go hunting with, and a floppy hat. And the girl wore a pink dress with a droopy white bow wrapped around her waist. They ushered me and Charles off the stage where Jesse was left all on his own, the poor guy. The boy then jumped up and down as he pulled on ropes and the curtains drew open to a painting of some woods. The girl rolled

what looked like a fancy arts and crafts project, a stone well made out of paper mache, to the stage.

21. RECORDING OF WOODS SOUNDS.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Behold! A wishing well. From the Europeans' terrible notion that water is home to deities to now this stage. I give you one free wish.

22. AUDIENCE CLAPS.

**JESSE**

All I gotta do is wish somethin' and then I can leave?

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

A wish is as good as a mile, don't you know. Now go on. Tell me, which wish itches to squish its way onto the pitch?

**JESSE**

Wish to be off this stage.

23. AUDIENCE LAUGHS.



**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Tsk-tsk. That's no wish. Try again, more heart this time.

**JESSE**

More heart? Alright then, I wish I had in my hands the best book of poems ever written.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Mmm, yes. Poetry. One moment. (*Voice echoing as he speaks into the well*) Do you have any poetry? (Beat) I'm afraid the ink has smeared so the well is fresh out. Try again. Come on now, any wish. *But* make it a good one.

**JESSE**

I don't know. (Beat) Guess I wish reverence, good will, and justice would spread across this nation.

24. AUDIENCE "AWWW" S.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Good will, eh? One moment. (*Echoing again, speaking into the Well*) Do you have any reverence, good will, and justice to

spare? (beat) I'm afraid they don't carry abstract concepts, my boy. I do say, you are quite horrid at this. Let's try something else, chum.

25. THE ALDERMAN SNAPS A FINGER.

26. LOTS OF MOVEMENT ON STAGE AS THINGS ARE MOVED AND THE SCENE IS CHANGED. THE SOUNDS STAY THE SAME, WE ARE STILL IN THE WOODS.

#### **HELIX (Narration)**

The girl ran back to the stage and glared at Jesse before wheeling her well back to the wings. The boy jumped up and down while tugging at ropes and the background behind Jesse and the Alderman changed into the exact same painting though this time a version that was in the night. The bright yellow lights were exchanged for blue ones. Then the Alderman took out two headbands with large antlers from his coat pocket and gave one to Jesse. Jesse looked over at Charles and I so we both gave him sympathetic thumb's up. He sighed and took off his hat trading them for the antlers.

#### **THE ALDERMAN**

Okay. Once more. We are moose in the forest. We are getting ready to brawl. (*Groaning loudly and wildly like a moose*)

Ooooooom. Huh. Huh. Guuuuuuuuuuh. Huh. Huh.

27. DEAD SILENCE.

**JESSE**

What.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, annoyed)**

(*Groaning loudly and wildly like a moose*) Oooooooh-uh.

Aaaaa-eeee-uh.

**JESSE**

What the hell are you doin'?

**THE ALDERMAN (Loudy, fast-speaking)**

How are we expected to fight without first establishing a quarrel? Stop speaking human and start speaking moose.

**JESSE**

I'm two seconds from fightin' you as is. You're insane!

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fasty-speaking)**

He's so difficult! One more change then, shall we?

28. THE ALDERMAN SNAPS A FINGER.

29. LOTS OF MOVEMENT ON STAGE AS THINGS ARE MOVED AND THE  
SCENE IS CHANGED.

**HELIX (Narration)**

The Alderman tossed the antlers as the set changed one more time. This time the backdrop resembled a pretty cozy and modest kitchen, except it was warped to look twice as tall as a real kitchen.

**HELIX**

He's actually looking ticked off now.

30. CODA TWEET-TWEETS IN AGREEMENT

**HELIX**

Charles, I'm gonna go drop the curtains and stop this.

**CHARLES**

Stop fretting, Helix. I'm sure the Alderman will be wrapping up soon. Rogers can bear it a moment longer.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

O-kay! Let us have some tea before bed.

**JESSE**

*(Annoyed)* Alderman, more like Addle-headed!

31. SOMEONE IN THE AUDIENCE COUGHS, UNIMPRESSED.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Tea. We're in a kitchen and it's nighttime -

32. QUIET NIGHTTIME SOUNDS: CRICKETS, OWLS, NOTHING.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

- so we must drink tea. How about chamomile, for the frog in your throat?

**JESSE**

I'm fine.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Fine? You've been screaming and crying all day like a baby with colic. Your voice is practically croaking.

**JESSE**

I'm -

33. THE ALDERMAN CROAKS LIKE A FROG.

**JESSE**

I'm not-

34. THE ALDERMAN CROAKS LIKE A FROG.

**JESSE**

I said my voice is -

35. THE ALDERMAN CROAKS, CROAKS, CROAKS LIKE A FROG.

**JESSE**

Would you cut that shit out?!

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Yes I suppose we've moved past the animal jokes. Hey I have a deer with no eyes, do you know what I call it?

**JESSE**

A deer with no eyes?

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Yes! A deer with no eyes. No idea. (*Pronounced like no eyed-deer*)

36. THE AUDIENCE IS DELIGHTED, CLAPS AND LAUGHS.

**JESSE**

Look I've been a good sport, but I'm gettin' real sick and tired of your damn word games.

37. THE ALDERMAN CRIES LIKE A BABY.

**JESSE**

(*Furious*) Are you mockin' me?

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

That wasn't me. It was the night.

38. NIGHTTIME SOUNDS ARE INTERRUPTED BY A ROOSTER CROWING AND  
OTHER MORNING SOUNDS.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

You see it's in mourning.

39. THE AUDIENCE IS DELIGHTED, CLAPS AND LAUGHS.

**JESSE**

Son of a-

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

I guess your voice isn't the only thing that's croaked.

40. GUNSHOT AND GLASS SHATTERING.

41. AUDIENCE GASPS.

**JESSE**

*(To the audience)* Don't go actin' all surprised!

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**



On this eve? (beat) Look what you've done. The Voices seethe with rage!

42. AUDIENCE BOOS.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Off with you! And send out the white-haired clown. Perhaps *he* shall be more fun.

43. AUDIENCE LAUGHS AND CHEERS.

### **Scene Three: The Starlight Leisure Theater**

**JESSE**

You're up, white-haired clown.

**CHARLES**

*(Eager)* How do I look?

**HELIX**

Same as ever. Oh wait, you've got a peanut shell!

**JESSE**

I got it. (beat) Either of you changed your minds yet?

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Oh where has our next star traveled? Has he crashed and broken his skull? Gee, if that is indeed the case, then we may need to use it as a fruit bowl.

**CHARLES**

Here!

**JESSE (NARRATION)**

Lemme tell you. The neck crack I got waitin' for Osgood's soliloquy. As if the man didn't already walk through the days as if he were on stage deliverin' lines.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Technicians! Wardrobe hence!

**JESSE (NARRATION)**

The children that'd been workin' alongside the Alderman scurried from the wings of the stage to Charles, carryin' twigs and yarn with 'em. They each wrestled him one way and the other -

44. CHARLES OBJECTING AND QUESTIONING THE CHILDREN'S DECISIONS.

**JESSE (NARRATION)**

- 'til at last they got him lookin' like a well dressed tree. Branches going out one way and the other, wooden cutouts of grass in front of his feet, and a hat in the shape of a green cloud that was likely meant to look more like a cluster of leaves. Just as soon as they got him to stand still the lights on the stage went black.

45. LIGHTS BOOM.

**CHARLES**

Excuse me? (beat) Hello?

46. THE ALDERMAN SHUSHES HIM LOUDLY.

**CHARLES**

*Well.*

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, echoing voice)**

Elsewhere in a field of green-*een-een*. Stood an elm tree,  
obedient and keen-*een-een*. Its branches reached high and took in  
the sun-*un-un*, while everyone else got to run around and have  
real fun-*un-un*.

47. LIGHTS BOOM.

48. CHILDREN LAUGHING AND SCREAMING.

49. AUDIENCE CLAPS AND LAUGHS.

**JESSE (NARRATION)**

Them two children ran across the stage, each ridin' a hobby  
horse. Laughin' and dancin' in circles 'round poor Osgood who  
thought he was about to be a star but was actually cast as  
nothin' more than foliage.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, echoing voice)**

The elm stood tall taking in the sky's light-*ight-ight* doing  
nothing it wasn't meant to do, remaining perfectly green, leafy,  
and slight-*ight-ight*.

**CHARLES**

Wait just a minute. You mean to say I'm expected to stand here and do *nothing*? That's absolutely --

50. AUDIENCE GRUMBLES IN CONFUSION.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, echoing voice)**

Don't you know that trees are meant to stand still, be quiet, and only be seen-*een-een*? What else did you expect? Now please, don't intervene-*ene-ene*.

**CHARLES**

But Mr. The Alderman, can't I be more than just this? There must be a story, some hidden depth, anything more than leaves and branches. Perhaps I have aspirations and goals?

51. AUDIENCE GRUMBLES UNHAPPY.

**CHARLES**

*(Desperate to win the audience)* At least an obstacle! Perhaps a woodpecker has made my life a living-

**THE ALDERMAN (louder, echoing voice)**

Well the tree was truly such a master at obedience some might have instead called it a hunting dog-og-og. It sucked moisture from the ground all day while standing at attention, never leaving its post no matter rain, sleet, or fog-og-og.

**CHARLES**

That rhyme was forced.

52. MECHANICAL WHIRLING AS A FOG MACHINE IS TURNED ON.

**JESSE (NARRATION)**

True enough, the little ones ran onto the stage with a strange machine and a thick gray somethin' - I'd personally call it more smoke than fog - slowly filled the stage. They pointed the mouth of the thing straight at Charles and as the haze grew denser and wider it had swallowed him from foot to neck almost completely.

53. AUDIENCE CLAPS AND LAUGHS.

54. CHARLES COUGHS, COUGHS, COUGHS.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, echoing voice)**

Quiet down Tree or your motivation will be to turn into paper-per-per. You wouldn't want to miss out on your chance to shine all thanks to a bit of vapor- [por-por]

55. CHARLES COUGHS.

**CHARLES**

This is all so absurd!

**JESSE (NARRATION, sympathetic)**

For the first time ... ever ... me and Osgood were on the same page. Though Charles maintained character, holdin' his arms up and away from 'im in the stiff and angled shapes of branches, and though he didn't move a single step, his face glowed red. Looked like he was barely restrainin' himself as the Alderman fellow shouted rhymes from the orchestra pit. [I] Felt bad for 'im.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, echoing voice)**

The tree grew upward with devotion, its long branches forever uncut-ut-ut. But no matter its height, heaven was too high for his nut-ut-ut. This is something upon which you can always depend-end-end. And so our story has reached the end-end-end.

56. AUDIENCE CHEERS.

**CHARLES**

That's it? That's all there is to my big number?

**THE ALDERMAN (normal volume, fast-speaking)**

Yes indeed. You may lower your branches now.

**Scene Four: The Starlight Leisure Theater**

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

Mistress. It is an odd moon when *I*, myself, am perplexed by the machinations of a man's performance.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Now we progress! *Technicians!*

57. A SNAP OF HIS FINGERS.

58. A LIGHT BOOMS.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**



As before, the Alderman's command prompted a blinding flash of light. The children rushed back on stage with booming quick footfall, shoving my companions beside me.

59. A LIGHT BOOMS. ANOTHER. ANOTHER. ANOTHER. TOO MANY.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

The goddess, the revenant cowboy, and I shielded our eyes from the incessant assault of light. Yellow, then red, then yellow, then blue, and violet, and green. And in those seemingly unending seconds of blindness, the scene changed and we were each forced into costumes. Around us a new backdrop, a strange living space - what I imagine you would call "not of this time" - decorated with a couch, a table, a dresser in the common room, a dining table downstage right, a wood door with a crystal window pane upstage and a precarious set of stairs coming down from the ceiling, leading to nothing.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

*We arrive at the final act!*

60. CROWD APPLAUDS. THEY GO INSANE.

**THE ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Extraordinary! Illusionary! Adamantine! And myself, The Alderman of this eve. Each with a role! Each a narrative! But what story shall we see? Hmm? What shall the Starlight Leisure witness now?

61. A LIGHT BOOMS.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

The lights flashed yet again, I rubbed the stars away and found Helix under a single spotlight. In a bright red jumpsuit with a silver lightning bolt going from her neck to her pelvis.

**HELIX (hesitant)**

Wait ... why is the spotlight on me? I don't know what's going -

**THE ALDERMAN (whispering, fast-talking)**

On this eve, at least. Take the damned papers, Madame  
Extraordinary.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

Helix looked down, as did I, to find one of the children holding out a script for me. When I glanced up, Jesse and Helix too. I couldn't believe it. From tree to speaking role. Jesse's outfit

had also changed, he was wearing a new set of clothes. A red plaid dress shirt tucked into a pair of workers' denim. I myself was wearing a black short-sleeve shirt covered in white paint made to look like part of a tuxedo and chef's hat.

**HELIX**

*(in wonder)* Mork and Mindy.

62. CODA TWEET-TWEETS IN CONCERN.

**JESSE**

What?

**HELIX**

Robin Williams. Mork & Mindy. This is - It's a show about an alien from space who meets a human woman and learns about Earth. This is - was our favorite show. Dre and I used to watch the reruns together all the time.

63. CODA TWEET-TWEETS UNEASY.

**HELIX**

Coda. I --

64. THE ALDERMAN CLEARS HIS THROAT.

**HELIX (hesitant)**

Okay ... (beat) Hopefully we're almost to Yankton, right?

**THE ALDERMAN (whispering, fast-talking)**

Of course, of course.

65. CODA CHIRPS.

**HELIX**

Don't worry, Coda. It's fine; it's just a show. (*Reading her script awkwardly*) Nu-na, nu-na. Helix to the All-Mother. Come in All-Mother. Helix to the All-Mother. Come in All-Mother.

66. THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS.

67. LIGHTS BOOM, AGAIN, AGAIN, AND AGAIN.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

And so continues the scene, this time with a light beaming down on all of us on the stage, including the Alderman who had not changed clothes.

68. FLIPPING THROUGH PAGES.

**JESSE**

You want me to read this. Out loud.

**ALDERMAN (as himself, fast-talking)**

Yes, yes, before I place my head between the damned rudders!

**JESSE (As Dre, high-energy and friendly)**

Woo-hoo! I'm just so excited to have you all here for our Welcome Back the Red (*confused*) M&M Party. After 11 long years a great wrong has been made right.

**CHARLES (As "Murphy", with swagger)**

Not that I'm complaining, a party is a party, is a party. But don't you think that's strange?

**JESSE (As Dre)**

Not at all, *Murphy*! I'd say a strange reason for a party would be abolished upper tax rates, "It's morning again in America", and the (*confused*) Rage-gan Revolution?

69. THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS, DELIGHTED.

**CHARLES (As "Murphy")**

Oh, *Dre*, if you wanted to scare me why don't you throw a Halloween party in July next time?

**JESSE (As Dre)**

(*Laughing*) Great idea, *Murphy*! Now, where has my dance partner for tonight gone? I wanted to get a conga line going.

**HELIX (Awkwardly)**

I'm right here, uh, *Dre*. (*beat, then to The Alderman*) Sorry, I - this is the *last* act, right? You promise?

**THE ALDERMAN (whispering, fast-talking)**

Yes, yes, of course.

**HELIX (bracing herself)**

Okay.

**JESSE (As Dre)**

Hey there Helix, what's the matter?

**HELIX (awkwardly)**

Oh, nothing. I wanted to tell you something but the All-Mother said it was too dangerous.

**JESSE (As Dre)**

Whatever it is, you're a goddess. I'm sure you'd make sure nothing bad happened. And I'll be with you even if it does.

**HELIX (awkwardly)**

Okay. You see it looks like I've been stung.

**JESSE (As Dre)**

By a bee? Are you allergic?

**HELIX (awkwardly)**

No by cupid. *(she hesitates)* I love you.

71. FLIPPING THROUGH PAGES.

72. LONG BEAT.

**THE ALDERMAN (fast-speaking, insistent)**

Read it.

**HELIX (upset)**

You- *(clears her throat)* Your eyes are leaking.

**JESSE (As Dre)**

What do mean, beloved? I'm not crying. *(beat)* Oh no. But I am bleeding. *(breaking character)* What do you mean bleedin'? What the devil is goin' on?

**HELIX (frantic)**

Sorry, I - Can we stop? It's not ... *(to the Alderman)* I don't know where you got this script but I'd rather swim to the next tower than keep going.

**CHARLES**

But it's the final act!



**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

In retrospect, perhaps I should have been more empathetic but your tortures have become quite common by now and I'll admit I was delighted to have a speaking part. Forgive me for speaking so plainly but I think by now the charade between us may end, Mistress, because whatever mischief was cooked up for us on that river it could be from no one else but you to make a point. To each of us. And judging by the way Helix held the script to her chest and kept looking to the stairs to run away off-stage, this was something cutting. But the show must go on.

**THE ALDERMAN (aggressive, fast-speaking)**

I will have you drown if you ruin my show. You there, continue hence.

**CHARLES (As "Murphy")**

Dre! Dre! What's happened? You're bleeding! You're dying.

**JESSE**

I -

**THE ALDERMAN (fast-speaking)**

You! It's all her fault, the silly alien goddess. I heard her, she knew it was dangerous! Violated nature and indulged in fantasy. Helix from Elix, didn't the gods of Elix warn you? The gods don't debase themselves with love, it only brings chaos and destruction to the world.

73. THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS.

74. CODA TWEET-TWEETS, UPSET.

**HELIX (shaken)**

That's not what happened. *No one* warned me. I didn't know this could happen. I didn't want this to happen!

**THE ALDERMAN (fast-speaking)**

You heard her! She wanted this to happen! But why? Did you not have enough attention at home? You had to bulldoze this pathetically fragile human man's life too?

75. AUDIENCE LAUGHS.

**JESSE (angry)**

Stop.

**HELIX**

He wasn't pathetic!

**THE ALDERMAN (fast-speaking, aggressive)**

You know what they say, easy come easy left alone. So why don't you do that? Leave everyone alone? Even the filth and common trash who are too naive or too stupid to not worship you. Do the Heavens and Earth a favor, destroy only yourself henceforth.

**HELIX**

I'll destroy you!

76. A LAMP BREAKS.

77. HELIX SHOUTS IN PAIN.

78. CODA TWEETS ANXIOUSLY.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

Helix grabbed the closest thing to her on the stage. She'd been gearing up to launch a lamp at the Alderman's head but the

tighter she squeezed the lamp, the more her hands shook until it crashed right at her feet.

79. AUDIENCE GASPS AND THEN BOOS.

**THE ALDERMAN (fast-speaking)**

Dunce, look what you've done! You've angered The Voices!

**JESSE**

(Angry) I said stop. (beat) We'll swim the Muddy River.

**THE ALDERMAN (fast-speaking)**

No. Murphy, read your line. This show ends when I say it may.

(beat) Murphy!

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

I don't understand, Mistress. Why go this far? I know, I know. I shouldn't question you. But I couldn't understand the point right then and I found myself mute. (beat) As Jesse fussed as he's prone to and tried to inspect Helix's hands for any reopened wounds, she looked up at him and whispered something. It must have been quite a something, for our dear cowboy companion had never looked nearly so afraid in any fight.

**HELIX**

Please. I just want to end this story on my terms.

**JESSE (nervous)**

Okay. Yeah. Okay.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

The steadiest hands in the West shook as he grabbed Helix's elbows. She threw a glare at the audience before nodding her head, standing on her toes, and pressing her lips to his. (beat) It was a surprise. Not only for me. A long silence engulfed the theater. When they were done, Jesse's hands still shook as Helix took a step back and said...

**HELIX**

I'm guilty. I didn't know, but I did do it. I don't know how, but I destroyed Dre.

**THE ALDERMAN (smug, fast-speaking)**

You see folks, it's just as I said, the innocent act ends! She -

**HELIX (passionate)**

I ran away to Earth because I was hurt, because I had no one, because it didn't feel like I had anyone or anything that would destroy me or that I could destroy in return. So I ran away, and it was awful and lonely and terrifying but I made a friend. And I learned about Earth, just like Mork in our favorite show. I learned that I was sold a twisted and cruel version of love for thousands of years. Yes, I regret what I did, but I will never regret learning the truth. I will never regret loving the clubs, the dancing, the City, its people. I will never regret falling in love with humanity. The towers, this punishment, my banishment, none of it will make me unlearn that. And none of it will change the fact that I fell in love with Dre. I loved him. I loved him. I loved - !

81. CRASH! BOOM! AS THE STARLIGHT LEISURE HITS THE TOWER.

82. AUDIENCE GASPS AND SCREAMS.

**ALDERMAN (loudly, fast-speaking)**

Ladies and germs, commit yourself to calmly filing out through the western door. I apologize for this strange behavior. But we are quite-fortunately-nearly at our destination, so please go -

**JESSE**

We're at our knees in water. We gotta go.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

The cowboy was right. The Missouri River had risen up to my thighs, and I was never much of a swimmer. And so we departed that cursed floating theater, although floating not-for-long.

**Scene Five: Toward the Seventh Tower, Yankton, SD**

83. BIG BOAT SINKING. BLUB BLUB BLUB.

84. WATER SPLASHING.

**JESSE (panting)**

They're all swimmin' to shore.

**HELIX**

Where are the lifeboats? I mean, don't they have those now?

**CHARLES**

**JESSE**

Pardon?

Seems not.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

As the showboat sank, it remained hooked to the engine-driven rowboat that pulled its drowning body forward. When us three met the bow of the Starlight Leisure, we folded our hands into binocular-shapes and looked onward. Like sailors a-quest at sea. And there we saw, rising from the gray and smoky Missouri River, a black tower winking at us afar.

85. WATER SLOSHING BEHIND THE ENGINE.

**JESSE (panting)**

Suppose this boat is gonna keep gettin' dragged, unless it pulls the other one down. For now it looks like it'll drag us right to the tower.

**HELIX**

The horses?



**JESSE**

Long as they keep their heads above water, they'll also make it.

86. WATER SLOSHING BEHIND THE ENGINE.

87. CODA FLAP-FLAPS THEIR WINGS.

**HELIX**

Aaaand - there! Got it.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

By the time the showboat had been dragged along to the seventh tower, the water had risen to our chests. So once Helix touched the black obelisk and received whichever enchantments this go-around provided, we turned our faces and swam toward the eastern bank. Helix's spectral bird companion, Coda, flew above our heads. And behind us, our three loyal steeds, trotting their ways through water toward shore.

88. BREAKING THROUGH THE WATER.

89. FOOTSTEPS AND HOOVES ON HARD DIRT. WINGS FLAPPING ABOVE.

**CHARLES (breathing heavy)**

Look. (beat) There she goes.

90. LITTLE BOAT SINKING. BLUB BLUB BLUB.

**CHARLES (NARRATION)**

We leaned back onto our arms, watching the little engine boat get pulled down into the gray waters of the Missouri. Sun on our wet faces and clothes. Our steeds vexed at the tangle of it all. My companions were quiet. So I did what I do best, and lightened the mood.

**CHARLES**

Helix. If I might ask? What was the tower's reward this time? Wait. Shall I guess? Perhaps translating the silent language of trees?

**HELIX**

Nope. Sleep inducement. Pretty much every God gets a version.

91. WATER LAPPING AT THE BANKS.

**JESSE**

Alright, hit me with it. (beat) It's been a long day. Tired as  
sin. Could use some good rest.

92. CODA FLUTTERS OVER AND TWEET-TWEETS SLEEPILY.

**HELIX**

Yeah. It sounds like you're not the only one. (To Coda) C'mere,  
buddy.

**CHARLES**

Indeed. And perhaps we can pretend it was all a dream. It would  
certainly make that Alderman's existence make better sense.

93. WATER LAPPING AT THE BANKS.

**HELIX**

And those weird ass kids.

**JESSE**

**CHARLES**

Bossy little brats.

Absolute demons.

94. WATER LAPPING AT THE BANKS AND FADE.

END.