

“EVERYTHING’S FREE!”

A PLAY BY SAM GRABER

ESTIMATED RUN TIME – 75 MINUTES

PRODUCTION – APRIL 2016

Sam Graber
2020 Norway Pine Circle, Minneapolis, MN 55305
612-695-3125
samgraber@comcast.net

SUMMARY

Tyler and Mackenzie have just moved to the big city to chase their dreams. But life isn’t going quite as expected. Trying to make it on their own is hard. And expensive. And being poor isn’t very fun.

All that is about to change, however. The financial spirit guide of Tyler’s only friend arrives with a strange and mysterious offer – a credit card which can be used anywhere, for any amount, and doesn’t require any payment.

Some conditions apply.

CHARACTERS (3M, 2F)

TYLER, early 20s, male

MACKENZIE, early 20s, female

CLUTCH, late 20s, male

EULA, late 20s, female

DOCTOR, 40s, male

PLACE

Minneapolis.

THE STAGE

The stage is awash in light such that corners, angles and ends are rounded and ephemeral.

On one quadrant of stage we see a ratty couch. On another quadrant is a drinking bar. We also see a park bench.

The other locations are depicted by projected image. The stage is a multimedia platform for both human action and image artistry.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Everything’s Free! was first produced by Andrea Tonsfeldt and Mission Theatre Company at SPACE in St. Paul, MN during April 2014, as directed by Anneliese Stuht, set designed by Meagan Kedrowski, costume designed by Krista Weiss, projection and sound designed by Ben Harvey, and stage managed by Ellen De Young, and with the following cast:

TYLER, Jacob Rivet; MACKENZIE, Tynelle Marschall; EULA, Anna Sutheim; CLUTCH, Corey DiNardo; and DOCTOR, Eric Balcerzak.

*For my sister Juli,
whose credit is always good.*

SCENE 1.

*From darkness, we see a webula of credit,
an image.*

*We hear hushed voices speaking in four-
number sequences.*

*At crescendo we hear the sharp swipe of a
credit card knuckle-buster: shhick!-shhick!*

TYLER appears.

TYLER

The human dream only lasts nine seconds.

Nine seconds.

That doesn’t give us a lot of time.

I didn’t ask for any of this to happen.

I didn’t mean for it to happen.

But it did, it all really did.

CLUTCH

A toast!

MACKENZIE

Wahoo!

TYLER

The only thing you can change is what happens next.

Lights shift.

SCENE 2.

*TYLER, MACKENZIE, CLUTCH and
EULA.*

A bar.

CLUTCH holds high a glass of blue liquor.

*EULA wears colorful shawls, ringlets and
boots. One particular shawl is wrapped
around EULA’s face such that we see only
her eyes, which stare straight down.*

CLUTCH

Some money was dropped on the barroom floor...

MACKENZIE / TYLER

Hoh! Look out! Here we go! Let’s hear it! [etc.]

CLUTCH

Some money was dropped on the barroom floor,

As the pub opened up for the night!

When a rich man and poor man taking their seats,

Came upon this fiscal sight.

The rich man says: I’ve got houses and cars,

I’ve got all the money I need.

The poor man says: I’ve got dreams and a name,

And therefore everything’s free!

So they stared for a beat...and then smiled, then laughed,

As each raised their frothy glass.

And all night long you could hear them shout,

To hell with the middle class!

TYLER & MACKENZIE

A-whooh! Sweet! [etc.]

CLUTCH

Here’s to young and invincible! Minneapolis!

TYLER & MACKENZIE

Minneapolis!

ALL except EULA drink.

CLUTCH

Now that...

TYLER / MACKENZIE

[Sputtering, hacking] !!!

CLUTCH

...is a fine tasting libation.

MACKENZIE

Pain!

CLUTCH

Rare are the drinks that can make us wince in good pain, eh?

MACKENZIE

What is this?

CLUTCH

Blue something or other. Can never remember the name. Eula’s favorite.

MACKENZIE

My brain is on pain.

CLUTCH

Good drink is good pain. And bad roads. Bad roads are also good pain. And I’m starting to learn that bad road pain, the way your streets here begin and end at different spots, roundabouting snowbanked alleys and beige-brown brickyards in field-like order. Yes, I say the old windshield looks mighty fondly on your little village.

MACKENZIE

Oh, it’s not ours, really. I mean, Tyler and I just moved here.

CLUTCH

Yes, Tyler-ini said. Relatively new to the local horizon ourselves.

MACKENZIE

But this place, totally sweet.

CLUTCH

First time?

MACKENZIE

We haven’t gone out much. We’ve been trying to save.

CLUTCH

Well, if you think this is something, I’m off tonight, self-imposed blackout. No riders. The wheels are ours and only ours. Anywhere you haven’t been, anywhere you want to go, I’m your horse.

MACKENZIE

I wouldn’t even know those places. Besides, we can’t afford it. Everything is so expensive.

CLUTCH

Don’t worry about cost, okay? After the dollar sign is for you to forget. Tonight’s on us. Me and Eula.

TYLER

Clutch, you don’t have to do that.

CLUTCH reveals an all-white credit card.

CLUTCH

[Holding high] This shall remain open and flowing! Like your Mississippi.

MACKENZIE

It’s not our Mississippi.

CLUTCH

[A little too close] It’s yours tonight. If you want it.

MACKENZIE

Well. This place got steak?

TYLER

Mackenzie.

CLUTCH

Go ahead. Whatever licks your tongue. Totally covered.

MACKENZIE

[Punching into her phone] Licks your tongue, I like that.

TYLER

Clutch, really, you’ve done so much already, you don’t have to pay.

MACKENZIE

Somebody does with these prices.

CLUTCH

Outlay is not your concern! You’re new to town, you’re getting adjusted, you’re trying to figure how to fit in this messy ball of one-way confusion. So enjoy. Because I feel as though I owe you.

TYLER

You’ve been the one giving me all those rides.

CLUTCH

Yes, but you see I’ve yet in this entire peculiar commonwealth to meet a more honest pint than Tyler-ino here. And that kind of honesty’s worth more than anything this card can handle.

MACKENZIE

I’m sorry, it was Oola?

EULA draws her shawl, eyes still down.

CLUTCH

Oooooo-la-la! No, this here...is my financial clairvoyant, my wallet pocket spirit guide, my very sweet and very lovely Eula. Ain’t she a marvel?

MACKENZIE

[To EULA] Mackenzie.

CLUTCH

Introductions unnecessary! Tyler-otomy here has been yapping to us about you since the first moment he hopped my ride. Mackenzie this, Mackenzie that, feel like we’re engaged.

MACKENZIE

We’re not engaged. [To TYLER] You told him we’re engaged?

TYLER

No. No-no, I told him we’re...

MACKENZIE

Mutually agreed intercommittmal life partners.

TYLER

That.

MACKENZIE

I’m getting a steak.

CLUTCH

Big fan of dead cooked cow myself.

MACKENZIE

Dead cooked cow, really like that.

CLUTCH

And I like how you like everything.

MACKENZIE

I’m always looking for the next potential meme, the next big internet hit. I’m an online artist.

CLUTCH

Yes, T-to-the-ylar said.

MACKENZIE

[To TYLER] How many free rides has it been?

CLUTCH

Oh, I can tell you stories about the screen people who hop my backseat, tap-tapping away. Why just today one particular human cargo wearing the beige-brown dithers slithered in the back, and I said hello, and he didn’t answer, and I asked where to, and you know what he did? Tapped response. Him from the back to me in the driver’s. Like the human voice isn’t good enough anymore. And get this: the screen people now want to pay with a tap. Call me old-fashioned but I still relish a nice swipe of plastic. Which! Brings us tonight’s entertainment!

CLUTCH takes out several more credit cards.

TYLER

Credit cards.

MACKENZIE scopes with the phone.

CLUTCH

Fantastic liver starter, my boy, just wait. So! The game is called Card Carrying Drunk. The object is to ritualize new friendship and flash capitalism’s finest. And drink. Everyone’s got their honest pint so now we need rules. As follows. All at bar-side put their cards on the bar. Up mix them. Pick a card not yours. From that card-not-yours read the numbers as fast as you can forward and backward. You stumble or mumble or jumble even the slightest and you gulp your juice. Without flaw and the rest take penalty. Got it?

TYLER

I don’t know.

CLUTCH

What, you have to get up tomorrow?

MACKENZIE

He has to get a job.

TYLER

I’m getting into real estate.

MACKENZIE

As long as that’s getting into a job.

CLUTCH

Never let tomorrow stop tonight! We’re here, locked within the vibrancy of evening, amidst the young revelers of this icy colony. Plus my lager’s shrinking, so! Suspend quarrel, whip ‘em out and lay ‘em flat!

TYLER

Well. The game’s a nice-breaker and all...but...we kind of don’t have a credit card.

On this EULA lifts her head and stares at TYLER. Her stare never breaks from TYLER the rest of the scene.

CLUTCH

What do you mean.

TYLER

I mean we don’t own a credit card.

EULA closer to TYLER.

CLUTCH

How can you not possess a credit card.

TYLER

We just don’t.

CLUTCH

Not one.

TYLER

We feel—

MACKENZIE

He feels—

TYLER

That they’re kind of...[EULA almost on him, glaring at him]...bad news.

CLUTCH

Uh-huh.

TYLER

People trapped in a cycle of poverty.

MACKENZIE

Not that yours are bad or anything.

CLUTCH

[Past her, still to TYLER] What’s that got to do with credit?

TYLER

Sorry?

CLUTCH

What’s any of that got to do with cards?

TYLER

You know, just how sometimes those things can make people do...[EULA now almost on him]...strange things.

CLUTCH

Alright. Well. For the purposes of furthering tonight’s enjoyment, borrow one of mine.

TYLER takes, distasteful.

MACKENZIE

I’ll take one, too.

CLUTCH

Girl after my own heart. So! Who’s ready to have some fun!

Lights shift.

SCENE 3.

TYLER and MACKENZIE.

Before the couch, an artist’s living studio.

TYLER and MACKENZIE stomp their feet, shivering.

TYLER

That was helpful. Wasn’t that helpful?

MACKENZIE

My feet are ice.

TYLER

Night out in the new city. New sources of inspiration for you.

MACKENZIE

My legs are ice.

TYLER

Yeah, you’d figure Clutch’s car would be warmer.

MACKENZIE

Clutch’s Mini Cooper was fine. Waiting for the Clutch’s Mini Cooper at the curb, however. I really don’t know how people do it here.

TYLER

Clutch said something about layers.

MACKENZIE

You’re like flypaper for the erratic.

TYLER

C’mon. Everyone here seems so genuine, don’t they?

MACKENZIE

Clutch? Possible creeper. Eula? The mystic psychic look? Where’d she ever get those boots?

TYLER

Yeah, I can’t seem to figure her out. She never says anything in the car. Clutch’s friend-girlfriend.

MACKENZIE

And I’m your fiancée.

TYLER

Sorry, I forgot we agreed to term us...

MACKENZIE

Mutually agreed intercommittmal life partners.

TYLER

That.

MACKENZIE

I’ll be thawing.

TYLER

Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

What.

TYLER

It’s just...

MACKENZIE

What.

TYLER

I thought it’d be helpful for you to get out. You’ve been sitting around our studio here every night. You’ve started to seem a little moody.

MACKENZIE

Sitting around is what we have to do. It’s going to be us, sitting around our half-working salvation army couch and getting social off the one cracked-screen phone we own, unless Clutch and his silent she-whoever fund our fun.

TYLER

Look, if you’re worried about money—

MACKENZIE

Yes! Tyler, our deal coming here was you finding a regular job so I could focus on creating an internet meme that gets a zillion followers and major advertising. But getting a zillion followers is a lot harder than I thought. And the ad money isn’t exactly rolling in. So you kind of have to be interviewing for jobs. Except you haven’t been interviewing for jobs. You’ve been joy-riding around with Clutch.

TYLER

It’s not joy riding.

MACKENZIE

Is it getting a job?

TYLER

It’s getting into real estate.

MACKENZIE

There’s gotta be jobs. You just walk to the tall buildings and ask, right?

TYLER

I guess. But. On the way to downtown...what I’ve been wanting to talk to you about is...I’m seeing the people.

MACKENZIE

The job people.

TYLER

The ones with their *hands* turning to ice.

MACKENZIE

Am I missing something here?

TYLER

I’ve been waiting for the right moment to tell you. I’ve been thinking about opening a homeless shelter.

MACKENZIE

A what.

TYLER

Don’t worry, I have the perfect building all picked out. Incredible location. And when we fix it up and open the shelter I’m going to hire someone with a real phone to take a real pic of you and me, and all the people cheering our arrival.

MACKENZIE

A homeless shelter is not getting into real estate.

TYLER

I can get a license. It just takes nine months.

MACKENZIE

[Laughing] Nine months? We’re not going to make it nine days. My incredibly shrinking internet ad payouts aren’t clearing basic expenses. I thought they might be enough to support us but then all those deductial subtractive money-suck thingies happened.

TYLER

Taxes.

MACKENZIE

That. Now we’re air-drying laundry in negative ten in the shade. My boots crack. And we’re fishing for car-share fare from the ripped pockets of third-hand coats while our four feet freeze in five feet of snow. Tyler...you know I adore you.

TYLER

I adore you, too.

MACKENZIE

And we moved here to get away from my parents, and your Mom, to see if we could do life partnership on our own. But each day has become less about us and more about picking a fight with reality. Our situation here says something.

TYLER

Welcome to the city.

MACKENZIE

Maybe it says we suck at the city. No really, you can do something for all those thousands of hours and be a master of sucking at it if you’ve not made progress.

TYLER

Give it time. We just got here. You’re upset.

MACKENZIE

Upset was today. Tonight I’m emotionally stressed, creatively freezing. Especially when the people I see are the fancy ones at the bar with their designer boots, talking about gym memberships and rewards points and emailing each other.

TYLER

Those are old people, in their 30’s.

MACKENZIE

They’re doing life right. They figured out which tall buildings to go up to and ask. It’s like we’re missing the thing that can help us get ahead. You know my dream?

TYLER

Yeah, create the next internet sensation.

MACKENZIE

Anyone can do that! I want to do it with you. When my meme blows up, we move into an office, with heat. You quit real estate to sell advertising while I manage creative.

TYLER

Sell advertising.

MACKENZIE

We cuddle behind our big IKEA desk. Go shopping each night, weekends. Change the world. I mean...maybe we should think about getting a credit card.

TYLER

No.

MACKENZIE

All the old people have them.

TYLER

My Dad had them. Pockets full of them. So many Mom lost count. And Dad ran each one up. Before he ran out on us.

MACKENZIE

You never told me that.

TYLER

Never saw him again.

MACKENZIE

Is there anything else you haven’t told me?

TYLER

Those things start as a reward. Then they become a habit. Then a dependency.
Then a secret.

MACKENZIE

I wish I didn’t give Clutch’s card back.

TYLER

Where you and I are right now is just the poor side of rich. And when things run close to empty, new friend people like Clutch are there to fill us up, enough to keep us going, until we get ahead. Money’s not the thing that’s going to make or break us, right?

MACKENZIE

Our deal was you getting a job.

TYLER

So I guess tonight wasn’t that helpful for you.

MACKENZIE

There’s no advertising in homeless people freezing to death. I’m going to thaw.

MACKENZIE goes.

Lights shift.

SCENE 4.

TYLER before the city.

TYLER

The thing is I really do have the perfect building picked out, incredible location.

It’s an abandoned tire factory besides the old deli at the end of a decaying strip mall under the going-out-of-business sign opposite the former bowling alley behind the unused railroad track before the chain-link fence by the broken traffic light across from the empty surface lot.

Kind of hard to miss.

But...I have to get a job.

I layer up and start walking towards downtown.

Which is when I see one on the street.

And another, huddled beneath an overpass.

And another, by a sewer vent, with hands cracked, cold.

So I forget about the job.

The old deli at the end of the decaying strip mall opens at noon.

City workers bustle through and leave behind half-eaten sandwiches, a king’s banquet.

Which I carry to the overpasses and sewer vents.

Some tell me their names, Ms. Beekerman and Mr. Plotsky, they’re very genuine.

Back and forth, deli to street, for as long as I can stay warm.

MACKENZIE

Where’ve you been?

TYLER

Only nine months to go.

Light shift.

SCENE 5.

TYLER and MACKENZIE and EULA.

The studio.

TYLER stomps, shivering.

MACKENZIE

Where have you been?

TYLER

Ahhh...interviews.

MACKENZIE

Yeah? Better be for something epic. The internet got ugly. Lost one of my advertisers.

TYLER

I’m sorry.

MACKENZIE

And right after that piece of warming news I got a visitor.

TYLER

Here?

MACKENZIE

Shirley. Our landloddess. Guess what bounced? [Handing TYLER a letter] Shirley said we’re out.

TYLER

She can’t do that.

MACKENZIE

She did.

TYLER

You said there’s enough in the account. This is a mistake.

MACKENZIE

I called the bank and that’s what they said.

TYLER

A mistake.

MACKENZIE

Our mistake.

TYLER

How could that be?

MACKENZIE

The account went under. Then the bank charged a fee.

TYLER

They can’t do that.

MACKENZIE

Then they put the account on hold. Then they put me on hold.

TYLER

Okay, look, don’t worry, new friend people help each other. I’ll just explain to the bank and Shirley that our...where’s our phone?

MACKENZIE

In the moving box.

TYLER

...

MACKENZIE

We’re out of options. In less than nine days we’ll be freezing to death on a park bench.

TYLER

Please Mackenzie, don’t give up on this. The city needs our help. Those people need our help.

MACKENZIE

Yeah? We’re about to join them. I’m sorry, Tyler. Let’s go back to where we belong and forget all about this place and trying to be something we’re not.

MACKENZIE exits.

TYLER crumples the eviction notice.

Damn.

TYLER

A door knock, precise rapping.

TYLER goes to open the door.

Shirley, hey, I...

TYLER

EULA is there, shawl around her face.

Oh. Eula. Eula?

TYLER

Of the clan Wells and Butterfield.

EULA

What are you doing here.

TYLER

This is your dwelling.

EULA

EULA enters and unravels her shawl. She’s stunning.

With Mackenzie. Mackenzie’s also a dweller.

TYLER

I require only your attention.

EULA

Is Clutch...with you?

TYLER

You require only my attention.

EULA

Ahhh, right now, here, Mackenzie and me, our dwelling, is kind of in the middle of...what are you doing?

TYLER

EULA
Preparing.

TYLER
For what.

EULA
You.

TYLER
Ohh-kay, see, Mackenzie—

EULA
A doubtful girl who de-commits from dreams.

TYLER
Wow, um, I’d love to chat, but I’m trying to solve a not good thing, so—

EULA
Have you ever felt your life has become a halted promise? A caravan of hope arrested by the fatidic tides of profit and loss?

TYLER
What.

EULA
You fail to see how that promise fades before you, dangerously close to extinguishment.

TYLER
Yes, I appreciate, Mackenzie and I appreciate, the whole welcome to town thing, the night out, but I have to call the bank.

EULA
The only help you will receive is before you. I am before you. So that you may apply.

TYLER
To what.

EULA
[Unfurling a fan of credit cards] Your future.

TYLER

Ohhhh-kay.

EULA

To you, and only to you, I present a gateway to possibility.

TYLER

Thanks, but...

EULA

Do not be so quick to decline. This is something very few receive.

TYLER

No, everyone has those things.

EULA

Everyone but you.

TYLER

Right, I really have to call the bank, so...

EULA

You have not told her, have you. You have not spoken to her about your one night.

TYLER

...what?...

EULA

Your one night on the streets. She does not know.

TYLER

How did you know about that?

EULA

Like you, I have been party to regret. I have witnessed the delusion against the deception. And I have witnessed you. Which is why I am here.

TYLER

Do I know you from somewhere?

EULA

Know that I bring no ordinary account. I offer a portal to transience. Harboring a general yet precise sense of what is to come. For special people in desperate times.

TYLER

Yeah, well, I’m not that special. The world’s already proved that.

EULA

But desperate?

TYLER

Not that desperate.

EULA

Did you know the human dream lasts nine seconds. I sense yours has been going far longer. But where has that gotten you. Here. Very close, here. But not quite there.

TYLER

My building.

EULA

What if I were to tell you that dreams are like recapturing the moon. Always circling, always wishing to rejoin, but always just out of reach. See now how it holds at apogee, its light occulting the crushing weight of debt. And look before!

TYLER

[The cards] They’re glowing.

EULA

They are in the presence.

TYLER

What is this.

EULA

A receptor of dreams. Ready to hear what you seek.

TYLER

They’re vibrating.

EULA

Speak to them.

TYLER

This is weird.

EULA

Weird is only lying to ourselves then believing what comes out of our mouth. That is the people above the streets, but not the people on the streets. Quickly, before the moon annuls position, you must speak to them your dream. Speak.

TYLER

I have to get a job.

EULA

Speak to them your dream.

TYLER

I...[into the cards]...I want to get people home. The ones left behind. The ones like me.

EULA

There is a reason you are pre-approved. [Rubbing the cards across his palms] Eyes, fingers, bones and blood, breathe and let the spirits rub.

TYLER

What //are you—

EULA

[Rubbing the cards across his face] Blood, bones, fingers, eyes, breathe and let the spirits rise! Now onto them you must breathe. Breathe!

TYLER breathes onto the cards.

EULA

And look!

TYLER

The numbers.

EULA

Yes.

TYLER

They’re moving.

EULA

Forward and back, deciphering the mirage of fate.

TYLER

Whoa.

EULA

And now...[placing one credit card, Tarot-style]...mmmm.

TYLER

What.

EULA

The pauper. A hopeful soul, yearning to be released.

TYLER

That’s American Express.

EULA deals and arranges more credit cards, forming a pattern.

EULA

Mmm.

TYLER

What.

EULA

The fool.

TYLER

Is that bad?

EULA

The buyer...the changeling...the chooser...

TYLER

Are you gonna need my social security number for this?

EULA extends a final credit card, The Card, all white.

What. TYLER

I did not expect. EULA

Clutch’s card. TYLER

Yes. EULA

There’s nothing on it. No numbers. No stripe. TYLER

No. EULA

It’s totally blank. All white. TYLER

Do not let that deceive you. It has power. Beyond the others. EULA

What kind of power. TYLER

It can be used anywhere. EULA

For what? TYLER

Anything. EULA

Anything. TYLER

For as much as you want. EULA

Like... TYLER

As much as you want. EULA

Well, when do you pay it back? TYLER

You don’t. EULA

You don’t. TYLER

No. EULA

So this card lets you spend as much as you want, wherever you want, whenever you want, and you don’t have to pay it back. TYLER

Precisely. EULA

Sounds too good to be true. TYLER

So is much of the world. And when the world is true it is good. And when the world is dishonest it is a regret that takes much to heal. You bear that regret. EULA

Maybe. TYLER

Family history. EULA

Maybe. TYLER

Your one night on the streets. EULA

Maybe. TYLER

EULA

And something happened to you, on that one night, of which you have not spoken.

TYLER

Maybe.

EULA

The offer before you is immediate and final. Reject now and the portal closes. And once closed it will be lost to you forever.

TYLER uncrumples the eviction notice, looks off towards MACKENZIE.

EULA

Are you ready for something to happen in your life?

A deciding moment.

TYLER takes The Card.

TYLER

That wasn’t so bad.

EULA

Some conditions apply.

TYLER

Uh-huh.

EULA

One: you cannot speak to anyone of the existence of the card.

TYLER

What about Mackenzie?

EULA

Two: you are the only authorized holder on the account.

TYLER

What about Clutch?

EULA

...

TYLER

I can’t tell anyone about the card and I’m the only one who can touch it.

EULA reveals an old knuckle-buster machine.

EULA

Failure to comply with either condition will result in...

EULA slides the imprinter across The Card: shhick!-shhick!

EULA

Consequence. Your card has been activated. And the moon falls from apogee! Ocular lids follow...[shutting TYLER’s eyes]...as we tease the tunnels of time. Now. Do you hear my voice.

TYLER

I hear your voice.

EULA

Do you feel my touch.

TYLER

I hear your voice.

EULA

This voice has spoken of means to an end. Some ends are wealth. Others ruin. Some by joy and some by destruction. Spend wisely, Tyler of Minneapolis. And remember the rules.

EULA again slides the imprinter: shhick!-shhick!

Lights shift.

SCENE 6.

TYLER before the webula of credit.

TYLER

I felt hazy, distorted.

Like shaking dust off the mind, no, like being woken from a dream while already awake, no, like being awake and feeling everything before you is not your eyes.

I appear somehow, before a stone wall.

A stone wall of a mall, milked white by the moon.

Towering and edgeless, a place of purchase and possession, with its white signage lights half-working: Ordstrom.

TYLER before the mall.

TYLER

Two glistening doors swing wide and crystal-white mannequins with flawless hands escort me inside to a brilliant floor with dazzling white escalators shuttling every which way, product adorning their every step.

And the mannequins and I ride on a diamond-encrusted escalator handrail upwards to a gold-white corner of merchandise, where everything shines and finds its way into my waiting hands and the store manager has one checkout line and it’s reserved just for me.

MACKENZIE

Tyler!

TYLER

And it’s all lit so nice.

Lights shift.

SCENE 7.

TYLER and MACKENZIE and CLUTCH.

The artist studio.

TYLER holds shopping bags of varying colors and sizes, ornate.

Tyler! Tyler!

MACKENZIE

Mackenzie.

TYLER

Like, what are you carrying?

MACKENZIE

Hi!

TYLER

What is all this?

MACKENZIE

What?

TYLER

The bags. The shopping bags.

MACKENZIE

Shopping bags.

TYLER

In your hands.

MACKENZIE

Yes! The bags!

TYLER

The very many shopping bags.

MACKENZIE

Look. Um, here, sit down.

TYLER

MACKENZIE

On the floor.

TYLER

Your new couch is getting delivered later.

MACKENZIE

What?

TYLER

I have so much to tell you. And show you. It’s incredible, really. It’s fascinating!

MACKENZIE

[The bags] That’s not going to fit in the moving box.

TYLER

Forget about that. I just had the most insane morning. Starting last night.

MACKENZIE

With what?

TYLER

Credit.

MACKENZIE

Sorry?

TYLER

See, I left the mall, and the sun was beaming and the snow seemed to melt wherever I stepped, like all the freezing was missing in action. Here.

MACKENZIE

What is it?

TYLER

Open it.

MACKENZIE

How’d you get this?

TYLER

Open.

MACKENZIE unwraps new boots, shining.

TYLER

Huh? You like? I bought it.

MACKENZIE

You did.

TYLER

For you.

MACKENZIE

With what?

TYLER

So when I finally left Ordstrom I thought: let’s be the city. Let’s be the people. So instead of hailing Clutch for a freebie I thought let’s do the bus. And just as I thought it, wham!, lurched to a halt right in front of me. And I hopped on, actually jumped on, good morning!, and it’s the city workers, all clutching their phones.

MACKENZIE

You stole these from bus people.

TYLER

No, listen, I’m telling you, I’m standing at the front of the bus, and the moment kind of froze. Sound and light stopped. That’s when I felt this new...I can’t say, against the rules!...but it was in my pocket. Vibrating. Almost pulsing against my leg. So I take it out and now it’s almost quivering in my hand. Radiating warmth. So I swipe it and...here’s the freaky part...it worked!

MACKENZIE

You’re freaking me out.

TYLER

Wait, it gets freakier.

MACKENZIE

Uh-huh.

TYLER

So it worked, you see, the thing I can’t say worked. And I thought that maybe if it worked for me it could work for all the shivering, isolated phone-clutching new friend people. So this is what I did, I said I’m buying everyone’s ride this morning. This card pays.

MACKENZIE

Card.

TYLER

Trust me when I tell you even freakier was watching riders learn they were given a free pass. They had this look of unease and suspicion, finding the most empty seat possible and clutching their phone even tighter, as if someone was going to take their free ride from them.

MACKENZIE

You paid for everyone’s ride.

TYLER

And they all had their hands texting the news out, huge lines started to form at all bus stops around the city, making it packed onboard, you couldn’t even stand. But get this: still no one said anything. Totally quiet. Except for the bus driver, Holy Lloyd, really genuine guy, blessing everyone as they boarded. So you know what I did? Looking at all the silent, layered, phone-clutching winter city people? I started singing.

MACKENZIE

You don’t sing.

TYLER

Right! And at first it was the crazy guy paying for free rides giving the most horrid version of *The Wheels On The Bus* *ever!* But then a second person, three people, a whole busload all singing together. And they went nuts! There was laughing and cheering and hand-slaps and bro-holds and lady-hugs and I told everyone: you ever need anything paid for, come see me!

MACKENZIE

How many people did you pay for?

TYLER

When I finally de-bused, it was the ultimate freakiest: Ms. Beekerman and Mr. Plotsky were waiting right there. And I gave them some of the bags. And they loved the clothes. And they started to cry. And I bought us breakfast. And I didn’t have to steal from anyone’s tray.

MACKENZIE

How did you pay for everything?

TYLER

I could taste the smiles of people. People who needed a lift. It felt so good. But. No matter how good that felt, I knew it wouldn’t feel as good as this.

MACKENZIE opens from a bag a new coat.

TYLER

Huh?

MACKENZIE

Alright, seriously.

TYLER

I can’t talk about it.

MACKENZIE

You’ve been talking about it.

TYLER

Right, but I really can’t talk about it. It’s against the rules to talk about it. Hey. You wanna ride with me? Away from the internet, you and me, making the city ours. I want you and the people to have everything. C’mon, my treat.

MACKENZIE

Your treat.

TYLER

Sometimes you gotta let it flow like the Mississippi, right?

MACKENZIE

Listen to you. You’re showing up with bags of merch, bus rides and breakfasts, couches and clothes?

TYLER

I’d love to tell you, I really would, but it’s against the rules!

MACKENZIE

What rules.

TYLER

That’s the thing, I can’t even talk about the rules.

MACKENZIE

The rules about the card.

Beat.

TYLER

How’d...how’d you know about the card.

MACKENZIE

You told me.

TYLER

I did.

MACKENZIE

Yes.

TYLER

When.

MACKENZIE

Just now. You said credit. And card. Credit card.

Beat.

TYLER

Huh.

Extreme banging on the door.

CLUTCH [OFF]

Tyler! Open your cage!

TYLER

I told you about the card.

CLUTCH [OFF]

Tyler, c’mon man, turn the knob!

TYLER moves to open, and CLUTCH appears.

CLUTCH

Yeah.

TYLER

Come on...in.

CLUTCH

Sorry to barge, I just had one hell of a night. Hey.

MACKENZIE

Hey.

CLUTCH

God.

MACKENZIE

You okay?

CLUTCH

No. No, not really. Far from it. I am right now very far from the place of okay.

MACKENZIE

Did your wi-fi bust or something?

CLUTCH

I shouldn’t have come here. I shouldn’t have come, I shouldn’t have brought you into this but I don’t have many people I can trust. There’s not many I can turn to, I’ve...been driving all night. I’ve been everywhere. I haven’t left the wheel. I’m a little punchy.

MACKENZIE

Little punchy, I like that.

CLUTCH

I’m not joking. Hunched over the dash, looking for any bit of color, of ringlet, of shawl. I have to keep driving. I should be out there. I just needed to get out of the car. My eyes are starting to...

MACKENZIE

Clutch?

CLUTCH

[To TYLER] Listen, I stopped here in the wild chance you might have seen her. Have you seen her?

MACKENZIE

Who.

CLUTCH

Eula.

MACKENZIE

Since the bar?

CLUTCH

She’s always there. She’s always with me. Rooted. Fixed. In the passenger seat. The rules. But then...last night...she went unattached. Last night she went gone.

MACKENZIE

Is she at your place?

CLUTCH

No, that’s what I’m saying. She’s gone. Absent. Missing.

MACKENZIE

You guys live together.

CLUTCH

In the car.

MACKENZIE

Oh.

CLUTCH

It’s happened before. Sometimes her restless nerve gets ticklish and she drifts. She’s drifted before. Only a couple times though. But it’s been temporary, a moment, here and there. Never like this. It’s never been all night. Anyway, I figured I would pit stop in the crazy random she drifted here. So. You haven’t seen her, have you? You haven’t seen her?

MACKENZIE

No. [To TYLER] Right?

Beat.

CLUTCH

You’ve seen her.

TYLER

Ahh...

CLUTCH

Freezing cold, the streets, the nutso nonsense streets, and she’s out there, somewhere, alone, drifting. And she’s not allowed to separate from me, you know, I never let her out of my sight, I can’t take that chance, it’s against the...I got to get her back. It’s, um, very bad news if I don’t get her back.

MACKENZIE

When was the last time you saw her?

CLUTCH

Because I keep it in my wallet pocket. My front pocket, see? So I can feel its outline, its warm presence. But I was pumping liquid juice into my wheels at some MinnieMart and when I go to pay I noticed the pocket was cold. Because it wasn’t there. My card wasn’t there. It wasn’t on me. So I leaned through to check on Eula and that’s when I noticed the passenger’s empty and the door’s wide.

MACKENZIE

You left her at the gas station?

CLUTCH

She’s! Gone!

MACKENZIE

Alright. Alright.

CLUTCH

She’s gone.

MACKENZIE

We’ll help. We’re going to help, okay? We’ll find her. I’ll up a searchlight to the web. Tyler can ride with you.

CLUTCH

I’m sorry to splash you with my mud but the world will get very dirty if I don’t find her. Very dirty.

MACKENZIE

There’s a bus parked on the sidewalk. Why is there a bus parked on the sidewalk?

TYLER

Oh, I had Holy Lloyd wait.

MACKENZIE

Why don’t you get the bus people to search for Eula since you paid for all their rides with that new card?

CLUTCH

What card.

Beat.

TYLER

No-no, it’s not really a card.

CLUTCH

She said new card.

TYLER

Right, no, she’s—

CLUTCH

I thought you didn’t have a card. Hated them, you said.

MACKENZIE

Tyler?

CLUTCH takes in the shopping bags.

CLUTCH

I went to pay for gas. My card was gone. Eula drifted. Eula and my card have vacated my presence.

TYLER

...

CLUTCH

Have you seen her?

TYLER

...

CLUTCH

I’m going to ask one more time.

TYLER

Clutch.

CLUTCH

Where is my card?

TYLER

I-I-I...

CLUTCH

Eula! EULA!

MACKENZIE

She’s not here.

CLUTCH

I bought for you. I helped you. I drove you to that stupid little building.

TYLER

It’s not stupid. And maybe it’s what your card should have been used for in the first place.

CLUTCH

What did you say?

MACKENZIE

Guys. Guys! Let’s forget about some little card and focus on Eula? Finding her? Getting her off the streets?

CLUTCH

[Still to TYLER] You’re going to listen to me now. You don’t realize it but this world is a messy ball, a very messy ball, held together by a few very loose threads. Eula missing tugs a thread. My card missing yanks a thread. I don’t have time to explain how this messy ball can unravel very quickly for everyone everywhere so the best thing, the safe thing, is getting back my card which means that you, right now, need to tell me where Eula is.

TYLER

I. Don’t. Know.

CLUTCH

You just landed on my disaster list.

CLUTCH goes.

Lights shift.

SCENE 8.

TYLER before the webula of credit.

TYLER

I’ve never lost a new friend person before.

Especially over a non-mute mystic-psychic friend-girlfriend giving me an all-powerful credit card.

And yes, it’s one person on the streets.

But the thing is everyone’s living on the streets. Everyone. They just don’t know it.

One injury, one paycheck, one let-down, one let-go, one run-up, one run-out, and who’s there for you?

Who’s there to take your hand?

So I don’t care where this card comes from because I know what it can do.

That’s all that matters, right?

TYLER before the changing city.

TYLER

I have Holy Lloyd drive to the perfect building by the old deli, and the more we drive the more the roads somehow become liquid, a glazed white maze as the bus careens past sparkling white condos and novelty warehouses, past design bazaars and skating huts exhaling cold white steam over frozen white ponds, all of it bearing warm and cold witness to the imperfect progress of man.

I felt exhilarated, charged, vibrant.

MACKENZIE

Tyler!

TYLER

Activated.

Lights shift.

SCENE 9.

TYLER AND MACKENZIE.

The studio.

TYLER holds an oversized key.

MACKENZIE

Tyler! Tyler!

TYLER

Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

Hel-lo?

TYLER

Strange how that keeps happening.

MACKENZIE

No, strange is what I think I just found. You haven’t seen strange until you see this.

TYLER

I only have the photographer and lighting crew rented for another hour, please.

MACKENZIE

Where do they come from?

TYLER

Uptown!

MACKENZIE

No, credit cards. Where do credit cards come from.

TYLER

Downtown?

MACKENZIE

Exactly. I mean, does anybody know where anything comes from anymore?

TYLER

Something about fatidic tides.

MACKENZIE

And what kind of term is credit card, anyway?

TYLER

Don’t worry about that, okay?

MACKENZIE

I’m not worried, I’m thrilled! You have to see what I found!

TYLER

I bought the building.

Beat.

MACKENZIE

You bought a building?

TYLER

The shelter. I bought it.

MACKENZIE

How the hell’d you buy a building?

TYLER

The signs you see planted outside all the abandoned buildings? This one said: call Elliot. I called the number and said I’d like to buy your building.

MACKENZIE

On what phone?

TYLER offers a shiny new phone.

TYLER

For you.

MACKENZIE

Whoa!

TYLER

Hope you like the color.

MACKENZIE

Love it!

TYLER

Like you said, just walk up and ask. Real genuine guy, too. I called the number and said I'd like to buy your building and he said uh-huh and I said when can we do this and he said uh-huh and I asked how much and he said uh-huh and then I kind of...swiped it past your new phone.

MACKENZIE

The credit card.

TYLER

And then it was like an instant later Elliot somehow appeared with a key. That keeps happening.

MACKENZIE

Epic key.

TYLER

Which is when I realized we made it. We didn't need a break. We moved here and we chased a dream and we're going to open the shelter. So I said let's hire people to clean the building. And furnish it. To make it a welcoming home for everyone. So Holy Lloyd and I picked up cleaners and furnishers and IT people so we could have big internet for you, and the card was hot, on fire, sweating with every swipe, paying for everyone, and I kept feeling the surge, and the next thing I knew I was outside the building watching everyone put it together. Everyone but you. You have to come.

MACKENZIE

No, you have to see this.

TYLER

Please, I have it all set up for you. There's something special I want to give you. In my wallet pocket.

MACKENZIE

I uploaded the shots of the four of us from the bar. Tore apart the internet for a face tag of Eula. But there was no tag. Like Eula didn't exist. How can someone not be on the internet and exist in real life? Total whoa moment. So I searched every meme, every insta-face-chat-snap-gram, anything to find out who she is.

TYLER

I didn't get the card from the internet, can we go?

MACKENZIE

Where did you get it.

TYLER

It’s not important.

MACKENZIE

You mean a secret.

TYLER

Please.

MACKENZIE

Not until I see it.

TYLER

Fine, see?

MACKENZIE

That’s Clutch’s card.

TYLER

Not anymore.

MACKENZIE

Completely blank. Not even a number to call.

TYLER

It’s a good thing.

MACKENZIE

How does a good thing get paid?

TYLER

It doesn’t.

MACKENZIE

[Reading from her phone] American Express. Formed in 1850. Originally called Wells and Butterfield.

TYLER

What.

MACKENZIE

Shipping business. Eventually moved to the big city to buy a building as a stable for delivery horses. Fast-forward 1886. Expanded to financial services. Converted the building to a credit office and “commemorated its opening by hiring a photographer to capture the historic moment.”

TYLER

What.

MACKENZIE

Mmm-hm! First I was like ho-hum, boring old black-and-white history, history never happens in Minnesota, who cares, right? But then something caught my eye. I stayed with it. Look at the picture. Right there, see that?

TYLER

A horse.

MACKENZIE

Next to the horse. Holding the reins.

TYLER

Oh, my God.

MACKENZIE

Now I know where she got those boots.

TYLER

1886?

MACKENZIE

One hundred thirty years ago. And she hasn’t aged a day. Standing at the front of the American Express building the day they opened for credit.

TYLER

I don’t understand.

MACKENZIE

Credit. With an End User License Agreement. E-U-L-A.

TYLER

Eula.

MACKENZIE

Last night, you saw her, didn’t you. She drifted on Clutch and gave you his card.

TYLER

Opening a credit building.

MACKENZIE

Let me have the card.

TYLER

She said it’s against the rules.

MACKENZIE

The hundred thirty year old credit card woman? Maybe it’s not so strange. I mean, I’ve seen some really strange things get big on the internet for no reason whatsoever so this kind of makes sense.

TYLER

Desperate people in desperate times.

MACKENZIE

Turning the holders into junkies.

TYLER

When we need it most.

MACKENZIE

Maybe that’s who Clutch is, or was, the guy before you, who got hooked, who depended on Eula for everything. Maybe before Clutch was your Dad.

TYLER

Alright. Let’s...call Clutch, tell him what you’ve found, we’ll warn him.

MACKENZIE

Forget that! That baby’s ours now!

TYLER

But what you discovered, it’s obvious the card’s not really ours.

MACKENZIE

She gave it to you, right?

TYLER

With rules.

MACKENZIE

Rules. Like anybody pays attention to those. Tyler, I adore you, but don’t be so naïve! With this card we can buy everything I want! We can move out of this dump to an office with actual heat!

TYLER

I bought a building.

MACKENZIE

Do you even know how to run a building? It’s a nice dream and all but it’s not your problem anymore. We’ll swipe a zillion dollars to charity and let other people worry about it!

TYLER

I can’t let other people worry about it. For one night I was one of them. I’ve been haunted about it since.

MACKENZIE

Baby, you can tell it to all the therapists that little slice of nice can buy while I’m hitting up the aisles of retail! Wait. Forget retail. With that card we could buy the internet, wait! We could become the single most powerful advertiser in the world! We could leverage the power of that card to become the one home for the entire online universe. Oh please, let me hold it. I must hold it.

TYLER

I never should have taken it.

MACKENZIE

I want to know what it feels like. The touch of getting ahead, of never having to worry again. Let me hold it, Tyler. Don’t you adore me?

A deciding moment.

TYLER puts The Card in MACKENZIE’s hand.

TYLER

Maybe you’re right. Maybe I was rushing into the building. But this card’s dangerous. We need to give it back before anything bad happens, especially to all the people out there who are now depending on...Mackenzie. Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

We appreciate your call. We are sorry to report that you have exceeded your maximum credit limit.

TYLER

What.

MACKENZIE

Please hold while all service representatives currently help other customers.

TYLER

Mackenzie?

MACKENZIE

If you would like these directions in English please hang up.

TYLER

Oh, no.

MACKENZIE

Thank you for calling. Good-bye.

Lights shift.

SCENE 10.

We see images of the hands of the homeless.

We see images of hands emerging from cold, cracked sidewalks.

We see images of hands reaching from old boarded-up buildings, icy hands escaping snow piles, hands from gutters, hands from ragged sleeping bags, hands through windows.

And we see the moon.

Lights shift.

SCENE 11.

TYLER and EULA and MACKENZIE.

The bar.

MACKENZIE [OFF]

We apologize for the delay. We are currently experiencing unusually high call volumes.

TYLER [OFF]

Let’s try here.

As MACKENZIE continues, EULA lays a cocktail napkin, then places atop the napkin a polished glass. EULA pours into the glass a mixed blue liquor, stirring with a shiny blue credit card.

MACKENZIE [OFF]

Your maximum credit limit is determined in part by your balance subject to interest rate, computed by the dates and balances provided in the statement summary section, as the date next to the first balance subject to interest is the first day for that balance, and applicable up to but not including the date of next balance, assuming by then you are still waiting to speak to the next available customer service representative.

TYLER [OFF]

C’mon, a little further.

EULA spears an olive onto the blue card, then rests the blue card inside the mixed drink.

MACKENZIE [OFF]

If you wish to contest this determination, please correct all problems direct with the originating agent.

TYLER [OFF]

No kidding.

MACKENZIE [OFF]

We are sorry to report that your current credit rating is: ZERO.

*TYLER enters, layered, disheveled,
breathing heavy, supporting MACKENZIE.*

MACKENZIE

Thank you for calling. Good-bye.

TYLER stares at EULA.

EULA

Greetings, debtor!

TYLER

Found you. Found you.

EULA

I was being sought?

TYLER

All over this city. Found! You!

EULA

Welcome to my establishment.

TYLER

All night I’ve been, we’ve been, door to door. Now you’re here and I’m here.
We’re both here.

EULA

You seem agitated.

TYLER

Agitated? I’m exhausted, upset, confused, pissed off and frozen under.

EULA

Is that not agitated?

TYLER

And broke.

EULA

Perhaps a drink to return you to your sunny disposition.

TYLER

Uh-uh. No drink. And no more fancy talky speaky-talk from you.

EULA

I see your social grace is missing.

TYLER

Oh, something’s missing alright. And I’m here to get it back. I’m not leaving until it’s back. Now...[slapping the white card on the bar]...turn this back on.

EULA

You were not so abrasive during our last encounter.

TYLER

Our last encounter was you shoving this at me with a bunch of promises. Now get out from behind there.

EULA

You should reconsider your tone.

TYLER

Please get out from behind there. Right now. And turn this back on. Because things have gotten pretty messed up.

MACKENZIE

To hear about our special promotions with low introductory rates and no annual fee, please hang up.

TYLER

All night it took me to find you. I’ve been everywhere. Every little clothing store, boutique, discount rack, consignment shack, laundromat, and MinnieMart. Dragging Mackenzie.

EULA

Walking.

TYLER

I would have loved to ride-share but Clutch is beyond agitated and Holy Lloyd is mighty pious right up until you can’t pay. You left me with nothing!

EULA

Desperation is an ugly visage.

TYLER

You gave me the card. And things were fine. But now a terrible, awful thing has happened.

EULA

Which is.

TYLER

The card decided to stop working.

EULA

The card does not possess intellect. It cannot decide for itself to stop working. Either it is in proper functioning order or you have lost it.

TYLER

I didn’t say I lost it, see, you twist the situation to make it look like I’m the problem. I’m not the problem. The problem is I need this to work.

EULA

And you believe I have the power to bring it back.

TYLER

Of course you have the power.

EULA

The last time I had power it was transferred from my hands to yours by yours.

TYLER

You’re going to turn this card on. Get both it and Mackenzie back to normal. Right now.

EULA

Mmm. With regard to the account in question, were any of the conditions violated?

TYLER

Don’t—

EULA

Were any of the rules broken?

TYLER

Let-let-let-let-yes, okay, I maybe sort-of *gaffed* on the rules.

EULA

One or both?

TYLER

You’re making it seem like I’m the problem here.

EULA

One rule or both?

TYLER

I lost my focus, I admit that, okay? A momentary lapse of focus. But I know what the conditions are and I won’t break them again. Once you get the card working.

EULA

Even if I did possess the ability to revive this card, I cannot pretend your actions did not occur. What would that serve?

TYLER

Me.

EULA

If that’s what you think.

TYLER

If I knew what I thought then I could hear what I’m saying but all that’s rattling off my tongue is...

EULA

Frozen credit.

TYLER

You have to turn this back on.

EULA

...[taking from TYLER the white card, stirring the drink with the blue]...

TYLER

Okay? Because I have no money to pay for anything and the people will have no shelter to help them survive.

EULA

While Mackenzie has her account locked.

MACKENZIE

Your Annual Percentage Rate is the interest rate on your account, which may vary.

TYLER

You came to my place and gave that to me.

EULA

What I gave you was a choice.

TYLER

Yeah, Visa or Mastercard.

EULA

You accepted the responsibility. With responsibility comes conditions.

TYLER

Stop already with the conditions, alright? You knew what was going to happen. So none of your card tricks, okay? This has gone serious.

EULA

Did you mention to anyone the nature of the card? Did anyone other than you touch the card.

TYLER

...

EULA

Goodbye, Tyler of Minneapolis.

TYLER

Okay, wait-wait-wait. I won’t let her touch it again. I won’t let anyone go near it. I’ll do whatever it takes, okay? I’ll be in your debt forever. Whatever you want, name the terms, just...please. You got me into this. I’m begging. Help me.

Beat.

EULA

Sit.

TYLER

Sit? Okay. I’m sitting, see?

EULA

We begin with drink.

TYLER

What about with card?

EULA

This...is a blue sapphire martini. Very expensive. I like things that go money. That and it burns your eyes. But more than that: good drink needs good history.

TYLER

You talk this way to Clutch? Has Clutch ever heard you talk?

EULA

Clutch knows how to please the rules.

TYLER

Yeah, well, whatever you’ve pulled on me and him and whoever else before him won’t work anymore. I know about you.

EULA

Which is.

TYLER

[Pulling the phone] That I found you.

EULA

[Looking at the picture, fondly] Ohhhhh.

TYLER

Who are you?

EULA

Comprehension of this entire enterprise eludes you. An explanation would only confound you further. However, you do surprise me. No one has presented this before.

TYLER

Before.

EULA

I always liked this picture.

TYLER

This, right there, by the horse, this is you.

EULA

Yes.

TYLER

Exactly!

EULA

Taken at the beginning.

TYLER

Of what.

EULA

Homelessness. Mine to be exact.

TYLER

How’d you come here.

EULA

Funny, I was to ask you the same question.

TYLER

I told you, schlepping all night, with Mackenzie chirping credit. And-and-and we’re not talking about me, see you’re making this about me.

EULA

It has been only you since the moment you took the card.

TYLER

So you can turn it back on.

EULA

First, my question. How you got here.

TYLER

I told you.

EULA

I am interested in this continuing because you used the card to serve others. You did not procure material items for yourself. So! Good drink needs good history. Before I lose my interest.

TYLER

And you’ll turn the card on.

EULA

It is time you speak of what you have not said.

TYLER

Alright. The short story is...my grandfather. Refugee from eastern Europe. Came to this country with nothing. The boats over were floating homeless shelters. All he had when he arrived was some torn clothes and a couple words of English. So with that he worked the streets, you know, you just survived. You survive long enough and you get ahead enough and you’re not surviving anymore, you almost have a system of existence, you start to feel comfortable. Until the next boat arrives. And you see how you were when you landed, scared, lost, alone, the worst thing to feel in this world, alone. So my grandfather decided he was going to build places where the alone people like him could stay, and sleep, and learn. Twenty-four hours a day, where nobody felt alone. But how to do it. My grandfather said it came to him in a dream. To build a small building. That’s all he said, a dream. But I knew what he meant. Back then you could just claim your life. People don’t remember but we used to have those kind of small buildings.

EULA

And this is the short story.

TYLER

The long story is...Dad eventually decided what we had wasn't keeping up with the bigness of the world. You're either growing or dying, Dad said. So Dad took on debt and the debt took him until he couldn't take it anymore, all while pretending everything was okay. The day he left and never came back. The day the lights in the house stopped working. The day people took the house. The day I'm standing with Mom in a line to get...the card! For food. Mom said we'll be okay, Tyler, we'll figure out a way, we'll cut that card together. But soon Mom and I are standing in another line, this one for a place to sleep, and we didn't make it to the front. It was just one night. That's all it took, though, to feel on the streets how everyone's watching you. But no one's watching you. You're almost invisible to yourself at that point. Part of two different people but now belonging to neither. What happened was Mom found a warm spot, an alleyway with an air vent, but already there was a woman, crouched, cradling her infant baby. And we all just kind of looked at each other, without saying anything, like we were too terrified or embarrassed. It was the moment the baby...reached out its hand. This tiny hand. Like it needed every ounce of help the world could give to make its next breath. [Beat] My Aunt took us off the streets by the next morning. It was just one night. But every night since then is still me, standing in that alley, staring at that tiny hand, helpless and hopeless, like I can't break out of that moment. Even after Mom and I found a new system of existence, still that hand. Even after Mackenzie found me, made me feel visible again, who made me feel like I was wanted, with something to offer the world, still that hand. [To MACKENZIE] By the time we became who we are it was like who I am with you didn't need to mention that night. But I'm not here to sell advertising. I'm here for the people on the boat, my grandfather, my Mom, anyone who's ever had to put out that hand. But see...[To EULA]...our bank says we're out of money. Our landlord's having us evicted. My bus driver wants to get paid. And my credit card doesn't work. But there's a lot of people out there who need help, who I'm helping. So I'm not going to give up. That's the long story: I'm not giving up. [Beat] Maybe I am the fool.

EULA

Are you familiar with Darwin?

TYLER

Not personally.

EULA

George, son of Charles, mathematically proved the moon was once part of the earth, that it calved from the earth. The upper crust speeds the world, flinging away lesser satellites, holding them in orbit.

TYLER

Well, I’ll tell you about the moon. The moon is the homeless sun. It shines on the places to survive.

EULA

Which I know all too well. I know you can have a house but not a home. And I know when you have no home, you have no voice.

TYLER

Your rule.

EULA

The moon has a bit more to go. So do you. [EULA picks the blue card from the drink and extends to TYLER] If you can handle it. But I warn you, from here it will be only more difficult.

TYLER

[Taking] Thank you.

EULA

Some conditions apply.

TYLER

Uh-huh.

EULA

If you choose to use this blue card, it will restore all prior white card activity.

TYLER

Wait, that’s good.

EULA

It will enable you to purchase any item from anywhere for any amount.

TYLER

Do I have to pay it back?

EULA

With her. If you use this blue card, at any time, she will forever be trapped in credit.

TYLER

That’s not fair.

EULA

Then do not use the blue card.

TYLER

There are a lot of people, people I bought for.

EULA reveals the knucklebuster machine.

EULA

Then use the blue card. But if you use it, at any time, she will forever be trapped.

EULA slides the imprinter across the blue card: shhick!-shhick!

EULA

[Handing him back the blue card] Farewell, Tyler of Minneapolis. And remember the rules.

Lights shift.

SCENE 12.

TYLER and MACKENZIE before the blue city.

TYLER holds the blue card.

TYLER

I floated on the adrenaline of illusion.

Over the streets, now coated in deep blue, a crystal blue, an impossible blue.

Mackenzie was there, too.

MACKENZIE

Minimum payment warning.

TYLER

Both of us, over blue-sharded streets, the emptying geography of the city.

The once stone-white wall of Ordstrom was before us, now blue.

Behind the blue wall, barren blue ground.

The bus appeared, like a metal skeleton on rubber-less wheel, driverless, which took us through the continuum of emptiness, the shops, the stores where I had purchased, now hollow blue, all exterior shells with insides gutted.

We hear hushed voices speaking in four-number sequences.

TYLER

And that’s when I saw the first one.

We see a homeless body in the air.

TYLER

Hovering above the overpass.

Then another, above the sewer vent.

We see homeless bodies in the air.

TYLER

Then all of them, the homeless thousands, now suspended, filling the sky, all held aloft by barely-blue thin threads, silky tentacles, extending from their backs to the distant moon.

Each holding a handwritten sign.

Explorer, inventor, builder, soldier.

CLUTCH

Well, well.

TYLER

Debtor.

Lights shift.

SCENE 13.

TYLER and MACKENZIE and CLUTCH.

Before the drifting homeless.

*CLUTCH suspended, almost
unrecognizable, ratty, torn, filthy.*

CLUTCH

Well, well. That you, Tyler-byler? Milling around down there.

MACKENZIE

We will not charge any interest on purchases if you pay your minimum balance by the due date.

CLUTCH

Girl after my own heart. Whaddya say, Mackenz, how about you ditch that thief and float over here to join the ranks of the righteous!

TYLER

Clutch, what’s happening?

CLUTCH

What’s it look like, thief! Barely rocking in a not-so-free world! Or drifting, rather. Thanks to you.

TYLER

Me.

CLUTCH

My dearest Mackenzie! You’ll have to excuse my manners, I do become distracted in the presence of swindlers. May I present to you Ms. Beekerman, former nurse, worked in the central urban ward, specialized in amputee cases, herself the victim of a certain kind of offing, sudden, aren’t they all, no other opportunities available, now dirtied from her time surviving in the unwatched hole of a storage facility.

TYLER

Clutch, what is all this?

CLUTCH

And here Mackenzie, grant me the honor to tender your familiarization with one Mr. Plotsky, former high school teacher, history, retired, whose pension and social security isn't keeping up with the times, I'm afraid, now surviving in the scariest of all places, the one called We Don't Know. And had you the pleasure of making acquaintance with Mr. Lloyd Goldberg, bus driver? You see, Mackenzie, how he turns away, pretends not to see. It begs us to ponder who else that thief will add to the drifting homeless!

TYLER

I didn't do this.

CLUTCH

[Mimicking] I don't know what happened to your card! You and your lies.

TYLER

I wasn't lying to you, I was just pretending with the truth.

CLUTCH

Well, look where that got us.

MACKENZIE

Forfeiture and seizure of accounts.

CLUTCH

All the people you bought for. The people you promised. Now the people you left in the lurch.

TYLER

No.

CLUTCH

Aren't we a glorious parade! Because if you think about it, ninety-nine point nine percent of the land on Earth is not occupied by any one person at any given time. That one percent of the one percent. Which drifts before you! Obscuring the darkness of day, where the ninety-nine see us, aware, but so concerned trying to buy us back that it never occurred to him to look where we were coming from in the first place. But that thief doesn't have to look, does he, Mackenz?

TYLER

I wasn't using your card for me.

CLUTCH

I didn’t think you were the kind of guy to stab people in their back right to their face.

TYLER

I wanted to help!

CLUTCH

And I warned you.

TYLER

I’ll get you down.

CLUTCH

Yeah? With what? Whaddya holding there? Loose change, food scraps, pity? Oh. I see. Shiny and blue. You steal that, too?

TYLER

It was given to me.

CLUTCH

The rich steal from each other while the poor give it all away!

TYLER

Eula gave it to me.

CLUTCH

So. You’ve seen her.

TYLER

She’s not what you think she is, Clutch, she’s some sort of credit ghost...[through CLUTCH laughing]...you have to help us.

CLUTCH

Right.

TYLER

We have to help each other.

CLUTCH

Oh, we do now.

TYLER

You don’t think I understand? I’ve been here.

CLUTCH

For one night? That makes you a victim, not a survivor!

TYLER

How did you know about that.

CLUTCH

You playing with the truth, like it’s the opposite of the lie. No, the truth is where you sleep at night. Which is why you should have kept riding with me, man, to the next stop, because otherwise you’re nothing but a victim held to that old country, the one you thought you escaped. Well, we’re all displaced from somewhere! With our own sordid history of owing! Except you didn’t owe anything. And you stole from me. And when you made all those purchases, with my card, each buy connected you to a memory, didn’t it? You want to help others because it helps yourself, taking a part of our pain out of your memory’s misery. Or maybe it’s getting back the man who ran out on you.

TYLER

You don’t know what you’re talking about.

CLUTCH

Abandoned you. Put a great, big debit in your life.

TYLER

[The phone screen] Right there. See?

CLUTCH

That’s why you didn’t tell Mackenzie. Honest to everyone but the people he adores.

TYLER

That’s Eula.

CLUTCH

Yeah?

TYLER

Next to the horse.

CLUTCH

ON THE HORSE.

Beat.

TYLER

You.

CLUTCH

Eula and me. All the trust against all the innocence. Keep the middle. Protect the dream. And it really was helping, you know, in its own warped way, the small buildings, until 1950, the first card, around the same time those small buildings got slashed, the quarter houses and night stations slashed. Isn’t that a note of interest? Taking a man’s small square and leaving us with small rectangles. And now there’s more rectangles than people. Now extra-large is small. Now home is temporary, credit is forever! Hahaha, you like that! Why Eula and I still ride. To fight pain as old as that slashing, no, as old as first sin, the debt to someone else, the genetic politics of I owe you, immutable nature, while our messy ball spins beyond balance, beyond right and wrong, until there’s no due date, there’s just us, all of us drifting, caught between the stripe and the swipe, each one a rectangle of regret. But you can end all that. Can’t you. If she spoke to you, if you got to hear her voice, she told you how to make it all free again.

TYLER

[Holding the blue card] Yes.

CLUTCH

How to take someone else’s rectangle and swipe without regret.

TYLER

Yes.

CLUTCH

Then take your rectangle and stand before the people.

TYLER

Eula said using the blue card, at any time, will cost Mackenzie.

CLUTCH

Well. What’s one person? You wanna play card carrying games? Then show us what it means to remember. It’s easy to make people cry, but it’s hard to make them laugh, harder to make them think, and hardest to make them remember. But you can do it, Tyler-ylter. One little swipe.

The voices chant in four-number sequences.

CLUTCH reveals a card reader.

CLUTCH

Everything changed once that card came into play, hmm? You’ve seen what she becomes. Her honesty. Wanting to buy everything you can’t afford. So much credit, so little time. All while you truth-played coming to the city, and half-stole to get back something you can never reclaim. Now you’ve got a lot of people you paid for hanging in that balance. Temporary hold. Waiting for you to buy and buy, to get them home. On the other hand, one person. You said it yourself: what’s one person on the streets? I told you honesty’s worth more than anything that card can handle. So the only truth left is to swipe it. The only truth that remains is for you to swipe the blue card. Is it not the sharing economy?

*The voices grow in volume, frequency,
intensity.*

CLUTCH

Take your rectangle and swipe for the people!

*TYLER rips apart the blue card, dropping
blue crumbs.*

CLUTCH

Wait. What are you doing? Are you destroying the card?

TYLER goes off, lugging MACKENZIE.

CLUTCH

You can’t leave us! You can’t leave us! The free rides are over, Tyler! No one’s going to come for you! You’re in reality’s debt forever! You hear me!

Lights shift.

SCENE 14.

TYLER and MACKENZIE and DOCTOR.

We see a park bench beneath the cherry and spoon.

*Bits of credit card snow drift to the ground.
It’s quiet.*

TYLER [OFF]

Just a little further. A little further. You can make it.

*TYLER and MACKENZIE enter, shivering,
freezing.*

TYLER

We’re almost there. Almost there. See the bench? Nice little park bench. Here we go. Alright. Let’s just rest here. It’s good. Oh. Here. My scarf. And muffs. Good. That’s good. Warm you up. Are you cold?

MACKENZIE

Your statement close date is soon.

TYLER

Hey c’mon, don’t talk like that. We’re fine. We’re doing okay. We’re just resting. Hey. Know what I was thinking? I was thinking I’ll make a call. And maybe my Mom or my Aunt or your parents can come pick us up. How about that, huh? Take us back to warm blankets and soft pillows and...

The phone is frozen, non-responsive.

TYLER

Alright, that’s okay, we’ll...we’ll just find a spot. I’ll get us a spot. We just have to rest here a minute. Give me a minute. It’s a nice spot, huh? For resting. Isn’t this a nice spot for resting?

MACKENZIE

Your statement close date is very soon.

TYLER

Don’t worry, I’ll find us something. Maybe our own shelter. Huh? Would you like that? Our very own shelter? We’ll just rest a second. One more second. Here. Then we’ll find a spot. Warm spot.

MACKENZIE

Your statement close date is very soon.

TYLER

Warm spot.

DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR

Hi.

TYLER

...

DOCTOR

Have we met?

TYLER

...

DOCTOR

So, no.

TYLER

What.

DOCTOR

It’s just the two of you. You and her?

TYLER

Is this your spot?

DOCTOR

No. It’s okay. We haven’t met. I’m still trying to get to know everybody out here.

TYLER

Is this your bench?

DOCTOR

No. No-no, I’m not...I’m a doctor. Sorry. I’m kind of new at this.

TYLER

Oh.

DOCTOR

Do you need help?

TYLER

A doctor.

DOCTOR

Is there anything you need help with?

TYLER

I don’t have any money. I screwed up my white card and tore up my blue card.

DOCTOR

I don’t ask for cards. I don’t ask for or give money, or food, I only give treatment or advice as long as it’s medical. I’m just here to help.

TYLER

Oh. Well, she’s...

DOCTOR

Let me see what I can do, okay?

TYLER

Okay.

DOCTOR

How long have the two of you been...

TYLER

Tonight.

DOCTOR

First night.

TYLER

Yes.

Medication? DOCTOR

No. TYLER

Ongoing conditions? DOCTOR

You could say that. TYLER

You’re, um, standing in the light. DOCTOR

Sorry. TYLER

Don’t be sorry. Nothing to be sorry about. DOCTOR

Did she send you? TYLER

Who? DOCTOR

She didn’t send you? TYLER

So far I’m kind of doing this on my own. DOCTOR

Us, too. TYLER

I’ve never come here before, though. The cherry and spoon. For some reason I thought to come here tonight. Miss? DOCTOR

Mackenzie. TYLER

DOCTOR

Miss Mackenzie, I’m gonna check your vitals, okay?

TYLER

She’s not really talking.

DOCTOR

When did that start?

TYLER

Yesterday.

DOCTOR

Okay.

TYLER

And you do this?

DOCTOR

It’s just vitals.

TYLER

I meant this.

DOCTOR

Until they stop me. The license people. Can’t give a free massage these days without a license. [Gesturing to his bag] Can you hand me that?

TYLER

Nine months. To get a license.

DOCTOR

See the top floor of the tallest building? They give a lot of money. Thought I’d see how it goes. But an assistant would really help. Could get to more people in a night.

TYLER

Top floor people.

DOCTOR

Very genuine. I was staring out my practice window one day and thinking surely somebody’s out there, doing something. But then I thought maybe that’s what everyone’s thinking. So I got some funding. Now it just takes time. One at a time. And we can’t give up. Because everyone’s living on the streets, //they

TYLER / DOCTOR

They just don’t know it.

Long beat.

DOCTOR

Yeah. Um. Look, if you can get to an emergency room...

TYLER

Tyler.

DOCTOR

Mark. Damn, not supposed to give out...Mark. Can you get to an emergency room?

Beat.

TYLER

It was nice meeting you.

DOCTOR

Alright. Take care.

TYLER

Tyler.

DOCTOR

Take care, Tyler.

DOCTOR goes.

TYLER sits next to MACKENZIE on the bench.

MACKENZIE

Your statement close date is very soon.

TYLER

I don’t think we should go, either.

MACKENZIE

Some accounts are charged a membership fee.

TYLER

We’ll just rest here.

MACKENZIE

Your due date is at least twenty three days after the close of each billing period.

TYLER

I know.

MACKENZIE

Would you like to open a new account?

TYLER takes out an engagement ring box from his front pocket.

TYLER

Bought it with the white card. Wanted to do this at the building.

TYLER puts the ring on MACKENZIE’s finger.

MACKENZIE

Some conditions apply.

TYLER

I know. Looks pretty good, huh? On your...

TYLER holds her hand, a moment.

TYLER

Should put your mittens back on.

MACKENZIE

Your statement close date is soon.

TYLER

Shhh. Don’t worry, okay?

MACKENZIE

Your statement...close date...

TYLER

A bit more. We’ll just rest here a bit more. Okay? A bit more. I’m sorry for not telling you why I wanted to come to the city. I should have told you. But I guess we’re all in our own way unable to talk about...Mackenzie. Mackenzie?

No response.

TYLER

The cold was impassive.

It reached out and gripped my throat, my heart, seizing all movement, squeezing life.

And at that moment I looked through my eyes, my own sightless eyes, now black and motionless, as we sat on a park bench beneath the cherry and spoon, a tomb caressed by the tundra night.

And my sight lifted from this body and elevated upwards, towards the moon, carried by a silky thread, through the vast unlimited meme of forever.

And as I approached the moon surface I turned to look back at the earth.

The great streaking whites, the glorious blues, the very beautiful messy ball, the homeless ball, which somehow works.

But now drifting away, farther away, smaller and smaller against the black, until there was nothing left but myself, sinking slowly and softly into crater dust, to total black.

And my eyes a final time closed and saw nothing more.

Darkness.

SCENE 15.

TYLER, MACKENZIE, CLUTCH and EULA.

In darkness we hear the sound of the knuckle-buster: shhick!-shhick!

Lights up and the stage is the studio exactly as it was at the end of Scene 5, with TYLER and EULA across each other, the credit cards arranged before them.

A moment.

EULA

Your nine seconds are up.

Beat.

TYLER

...[???]...

EULA begins collecting the cards.

TYLER

Wait. Wh-wh-what’s going on. What is this. How are we...?

EULA redraws her shawl across her face.

TYLER

You’re kidding, right? This, that, that, was all a...a...

CLUTCH enters, wearing previous wardrobe from Act I, clean.

CLUTCH

Love? Gotta go. Moon’s down.

TYLER

Hold on. No.

EULA bows to TYLER, hands CLUTCH the white card as she exits.

TYLER

No-no-no-no-no-no-no-no-no-no, you’re...[to CLUTCH]...you’re...

CLUTCH

Off to the next stop. [Reading the white card] St. Paul. Wherever that is.

TYLER

This is not...we didn’t just...who are you.

CLUTCH

Alright. Look. It’s kind of against the rules to say anything, but...you remind me a lot of your grandfather. Good luck.

CLUTCH shakes TYLER’s hand, then goes.

A moment.

TYLER

[Gasping] *Yes!*

MACKENZIE

[Entering] I’m sorry Tyler, I shouldn’t have said all that stuff about our deal and Eula’s boots and freezing to death on a—

TYLER

[Gripping her] OH, MY GOD. You’re okay! You’re alive. You’re breathing. You’re talking!

MACKENZIE

You alright?

TYLER

Yes. Yes! Everything’s perfect! Everything’s...listen: you have to get dressed. Layered. You are layered. Except your boots, get your boots, hurry.

MACKENZIE

What is the deal?

TYLER

We have to go. Out.

MACKENZIE

I’m still thawing.

TYLER

Forget that. The park. The cherry and spoon place.

MACKENZIE

Now? We just got back.

TYLER

Yes, right now, before we miss him.

MACKENZIE

Who?

TYLER

Please.

MACKENZIE

We’re walking to the spoon.

TYLER

No, the bus! The bus, to meet him. Hurry.

MACKENZIE

Tyler, what is this?

TYLER

He has funding. He needs an assistant. He could do medical...and maybe I could bring food from the old deli. *It’s about a job.*

Beat.

MACKENZIE

Alright. I don’t know how we’re going to *pay* for the bus, but...alright.

MACKENZIE kisses TYLER, then goes.

TYLER

I didn’t ask for any of this to happen.

I didn’t mean for it to happen.

But it did, it all really did.

The only thing you can change is what happens—

*TYLER feels something, within his pocket,
and withdraws the blue card, now whole.*

MACKENZIE

[Reentering] Ohh-kay! Ready to somehow *pay* for a bus ride to meet some random guy for some random...Tyler? Tyler?

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.