

THE MILKY WAY CABARET

By
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Commissioned by The Cardboard Box Collaborative,
Philadelphia PA
mindy a. beers, Artistic Director

THE MILKY WAY CABARET

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For Philadelphia.

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THE MILKY WAY CABARET

The Milky Way Cabaret was originally produced during the 2007 Philly Fringe Festival. The play was commissioned and produced by The Cardboard Box Collaborative (Artistic Director, mindy a beers; Producing Director, Lindsay Krieg) at Plays and Players Theatre in Philadelphia, PA. The production ran for eight (8) performances, from September 6-15, 2007.

The production was directed by Andrew J. Merkel, with dramaturgy by Andrew H. Beal. Design work by Stephen P. Hungerford (set, lighting, sound), Andrew J. Merkel (lighting, sound) and Jamie Grace-Duff (costumes) with original compositions by Adlai Waksman and Kevin Chun. The production was stage managed by Matt Dell'Olio. The performance featured the following cast:

Travlin' Alice.....Cherie A. Roberts
Arnie.....Daniel Higbee
Buzz.....Steven Wright
Charlotte.....Katy O'Leary
Lorraine.....Brittany Brazill
Mr. Boss.....Tom Wang
Little Alice.....Brenna Schiman

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The Milky Way Cabaret received a second production in November 2009 by Audacity Theatre Lab (Artistic Director, Brad McEntire) at Teatro Dallas, in Dallas, Texas. The production ran for ten (10) performances, from November 11-21, 2009. The production was directed by Brad McEntire and included design work by Brad McEntire (sound), and Jaymes Gregory (lighting). The performance featured the following cast:

Travlin' Alice.....Angela Parsons
Arnie.....Jeff Swearingen
Buzz.....Tyson Rinehart
Charlotte.....Rhianna Mack
Lorraine.....Trista Wyly
Mr. Boss.....Jeff Hernandez
Little Alice.....Angela Parsons

CHARACTERS (4 F, 3 M):

TRAVLIN' ALICE	(F) 35, travels through black holes
ARNIE	(M) late 20s, an alcoholic with magic powers
BUZZ	(M) mid 30s, an assassin in clown clothes
CHARLOTTE	(F) mid 20s, an assassin in clown clothes
LORRAINE	(F) late 20s, former Homecoming Queen, inspires magic
MR. BOSS	(M) mid 40s – early 50s, owns The Milky Way Cabaret
LITTLE ALICE	(F) 7, Arnie and Lorraine's daughter, has magic powers

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TIME AND PLACE AND SETTING:

This play creates three overlapping narratives—each thread connected to The Milky Way Cabaret, a nightclub in South Philadelphia.

Arnie, Lorraine, Little Alice, and Mr. Boss’s story takes place over four days (Tuesday through Friday) during early March 2007.

Buzz and Charlotte’s narrative happens in real-time on a Friday night in early March 2007.

Travlin’ Alice’s story begins on her birthday in 2035 and travels outside of time, but inside of space.

The transitions between scenes are fluid and overlapping—have fun exploring the dreamy places where the worlds meet and bleed into each other.

ABOUT SCRIPT NOTATION:

Breaks in speech are noted by ellipses after the character designation. i.e.:

ARNIE. ...

Each dot represents one heartbeat. These ellipses are space the character uses to react to what was just said, or to think of (or hold back) the next thing to say. These moments are unspoken and active.

ABOUT LANGUAGE:

To be sensitive to young actors playing the role of “Little Alice,” optional lines/language are placed inside of [brackets].

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A blank canvas sits alone on an empty stage. TRAVLIN' ALICE, enters with a backpack on her shoulders. She faces the canvas for a moment. She looks out into the distance.

She takes a charcoal stick from a pocket in her dress and begins to draw a series of four black holes, each successive hole a little bit larger than the previous, making a pattern like a golden spiral. She looks out into the distance.

She faces the canvas again. Inside the center of the spiral, she draws the Milky Way galaxy. She draws an "X" on the canvas, a short distance from the first black hole, and writes the words, "Milky Way Cabaret, 2035". This is her starting place.

She places an "X" on the Milky Way galaxy, and writes the words "Milky Way Cabaret, 2007". This is her destination. She stands back and takes in the detail of her drawing. This is her galactic road map.

She places the charcoal back in her pocket. She takes a ribbon from her pocket and ties it around the canvas (to make it pretty). She takes a small compact mirror from her backpack and looks into it for a moment.

TRAVLIN' ALICE. *(She sings):*

Happy Birthday to me.

Happy Birthday to me.

Happy Birthday, dear Alice.

Happy Birthday to me.

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She takes a deep breath, closes the compact, and puts it in her backpack. She reaches in her pocket and pulls out a timepiece. She watches the second-hand closely, listening to it tick closer to the exact moment she is waiting for.

Just before the second-hand hits the fatal moment, Travlin' Alice stops time. The timepiece is silent. She looks closely at the hands on the timepiece, making sure that time is frozen, then puts the timepiece in her pocket. She lifts the easel and begins walking off stage, pulling an apple from her pocket.

Travlin' Alice eats the apple as she exits and lights rise on a magician, ARNIE, entering a small stage in the Milky Way Cabaret. He doesn't look comfortable in his own skin. He wears a top hat, a tuxedo-printed T-shirt, and a long-sleeve magician's jacket.

ARNIE. Good evening laaaaadies and gentleman! And weelcome to a wonderful evening of entertainment! Here! At The Milky Way Cabaret! I am your first piece of entertainment for the night. I will entertain you with my magical act. You will see magic here tonight. Right here. Because I am: Amazing Arnie! *(He waves his hand through the air badly. He takes a rubber ball from his pocket and waves it through the air theatrically, but not very well).* For my first trick, I will make this simple rubber ball disappear. This is just an ordinary ball. It has no magic powers. It is just a ball. I have nothing in my sleeve. Nothing in my pockets. *(He pats down his pockets. He feels something unexpected and pulls it out of his pocket. It is a banana. This surprises him.)* Except! A banana! *(He waves the banana around. He looks at it for a moment, then peels the banana and eats the entire thing. With his mouth full:)* Ta daaaaa! *(He puts the peeling back in his pocket.)* And now! For my trick! Just an ordinary, everyday ball. *(He waves the rubber ball around. He closes his hand around the ball and takes a few deep breaths. He makes a few grunting sounds.)* Ta daaaaaaaa!!! *(He opens his hand—no ball!)* Ta daaaaaaaa!!! *(He opens his other hand—no ball!!)* And just to prove that trick was no fluke—I'll do it once more and, this time, make the rubber ball re-appear...in my other hand! *(He pulls another rubber ball from his pocket and waves it around.)* Ordinary ball. This is just a regular ball, people! *(He closes his hand around the rubber ball and takes a*

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few deep breaths. He makes a few grunting sounds.) Ta daaaaa! (He opens his hand—no ball!) Ta daaaa! (He opens his other hand—no ball!) Huh. It was supposed to...uh...(He closes and opens his hand again—no ball.) Huh....(He takes a deep breath.) Folks! Watch as I try it again. (He reaches into his pocket and pulls out another rubber ball and waves it around.) I will make this everyday rubber ball—it is not a trick ball in any way—disappear and then! POW! Reappear in my other hand. Watch closely. (He closes his hand around the rubber ball and takes a few deep breaths. He makes a few grunting sounds.) Ta daaaaa! (He opens his hand—no ball!) And now it will re-appear—poof! In my other hand! Ta daaaa! (He opens his other hand—no ball!) Huh. Fuck...Uh...(He takes a deep breath.) Folks! Watch as I try it one more time! (He reaches into his pocket and pulls out another rubber ball.) Just an ordinary rubber ball. Kids play with it and shit. (He waves the ball around.) I will make this rubber ball disappear! And then—SHAZAM! Reappear in my other hand. Watch “Amazing Arnie” and his amazing balls! (He closes his hand around the rubber ball and takes a few deep breaths. He makes a few grunting sounds.) Ta daaaaa! (He opens his hand—no ball!) And now it will re-appear—Lickity Split—in my other hand! Ta daaaa! (He opens his other hand—no ball!) Mother fucker! (He keeps opening and closing his hand. Nothing.) Fuck. (He stands on stage for some time, defeated. He finally decides to search his pockets again. He finds a banana. It has magically re-appeared there. He pulls the banana out of his pocket and takes a good look at it. He slowly peels the banana. The rubber balls fall out of the banana and bounce on the ground.) Ta da. (Lights down on ARNIE.)

Travlin’ Alice enters as lights rise on BUZZ and CHARLOTTE, sitting in the front seat of a parked car. It is nighttime. Charlotte sits on the driver’s side. They wear clown costumes and rubber noses, yet they are still sexy and cool.

They sit in silence as Travlin’ Alice stands the easel on the ground and removes her backpack. She draws a line extending from the “X” to the first black hole on the map.

BUZZ. Mind if I smoke?

CHARLOTTE. ...

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Travlin' Alice sits down on the ground. She rests her head on her backpack and looks into the stars. She closes her eyes and falls asleep as Charlotte takes out a pack of smokes, removes her rubber nose, and lights up a cigarette. Buzz searches his pockets for his pack. He can't find it.

BUZZ. Fuck. Mind if I?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Can I bum one? (*Charlotte takes a long drag from her cigarette. She takes the cigarette from her mouth and hands it to Buzz.*) Thanks. (*Buzz removes his nose and takes a drag as Charlotte lights up another smoke. They smoke together in silence for a moment.*) You don't say much.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. You live in Philly?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. I grew up here.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. South.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. I was actually right outside The Vet when the Phillies took the Series. I was seven.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Lotta stars out tonight.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Didn't you notice?

CHARLOTTE. Not really.

BUZZ. Maybe it just seems like more 'cause of the water.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Supposed to be able to see Pluto tonight.

CHARLOTTE. ...

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BUZZ. Maybe he's behind us.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Stars are pretty fucked up.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. 'Cause we're not even seein' em.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. We're just seein' what they used to be millions of years ago.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. That's somethin'.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. That water looks really cold.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. It is.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. I jumped in once, just to see if I could stand it.

BUZZ. Yeah your heart stops when the water's that cold.

CHARLOTTE. I don't believe in that.

BUZZ. You don't believe in cold shock?

CHARLOTTE. I don't believe in hearts.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ... *(She puts her cigarette out on his face.)*

BUZZ. Fuck!

CHARLOTTE. ...

Lights up on Arnie sitting at a small dressing room table backstage. He is attempting to levitate a doll that looks like Little Alice from the surface of the table. He barely lifts it. He continues trying. He can't quite lift it. He takes a deep breath. He looks into the makeshift mirror for a moment. He takes a drink, then dials a telephone. As he dials, LORRAINE enters and stands across from him on the other side of the mirror. Travlin' Alice wakes and looks into the stars.

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ARNIE. (*Speaking into the phone:*) Lorraine?...Hey...How are you?...Uh huh...Is Alice awake? (*Travlin' Alice takes a deep breath.*) Can I talk to her?...(*Travlin' Alice takes a toothbrush from her pack and begins brushing her teeth.*) Uh huh....Can we talk about that later?...Don't worry about it...I'm working on it...I just got another job...I'll take care of it...Friday...I'll give you everything on Alice's birthday...I promise...Now can you put Alice on the phone?...Lorraine?...(*Lorraine exits. Travlin' Alice places the toothbrush back in her pack. LITTLE ALICE enters and stands across from Arnie, on the other side of the mirror.*) Hey baby...Hey baby, this is Daddy...How are you?...That's good...You had a good week?...Gettin' ready for your big day?...Daddy's gonna see you soon...Yeah...Hey, you wanna see something fun?...Yeah?...Did you get my present?...Look in your pocket. (*Little Alice reaches in her pocket and pulls out a doll that is dressed exactly like Arnie. This makes her happy.*) You like it? (*Little Alice nods her head.*) But I think he's missing something...HMMMM...Oh, I know...Are you ready? (*Little Alice nods her head.*) Ok, here goes. (*Arnie begins to levitate the "Alice" doll from the table. The doll slowly travels towards the mirror. MR. BOSS enters.*)

BOSS. You get a sec? (*The doll continues traveling toward the mirror.*) Arnie? (*The doll continues traveling toward the mirror.*) Magic guy!?! (*The doll falls from the air.*)

ARNIE. (*to Boss*) Sorry. Sorry. (*to phone*) Baby girl? Ok Daddy's gotta go. Daddy loves you. Kiss Mommy for me. Daddy loves you. (*Arnie hangs up the phone. Little Alice exits.*)

ARNIE. Sorry. (*Boss hands Arnie a crumpled bill.*)

BOSS. Here's your split for tonight. (*Arnie uncrumples it and looks at it.*)

ARNIE. Five bucks?

BOSS. We need to talk about your act.

ARNIE. Ok.

BOSS. Your act sucks.

ARNIE. ...

BOSS. I'm givin' you one night to turn it around.

ARNIE. One night?!

BOSS. You're makin' me look bad. Tomorrow night's your last shot.

ARNIE. Tomorrow?

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BOSS. You heard me.

ARNIE. One night?

BOSS. ...

ARNIE. I have a wife. I have a kid!

BOSS. ...

ARNIE. Please.

BOSS. ...

ARNIE. ...

BOSS. I'll give you two more shows. You can't turn it around in two shows, you're done.

ARNIE. ...

BOSS. You got that?

ARNIE. Yes sir.

BOSS. Two shows. (*Boss exits. Lights down on Arnie.*)

Travlin' Alice takes a necklace from her pack. It is a rubber ball with a string tied around it. She holds it up to the starlight, then puts it around her neck. She stands and takes a good look at the map on her easel. She looks into the distance. She takes a deep breath, gathers her backpack, lifts the easel, and begins walking. As she walks, she pulls a banana from her pocket. She eats the banana as she continues walking into the first Black Hole.

BUZZ. You like baseball?

CHARLOTTE. No.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Do you like books?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Music?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. What do you like?

CHARLOTTE. I like when people shut up.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

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BUZZ. What else do you like?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. Swimming.

BUZZ. Swimming?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. You ever had one of your guys not show up?

CHARLOTTE. How do I know I can trust you? (*He takes off his clown gloves.*)

BUZZ. See these scars on my hand?

CHARLOTTE. Your cat?

BUZZ. A buddy of mine's fingernails.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. He got shot in the face.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Clawed the fuck outta me.

CHARLOTTE. Why?

BUZZ. I was reachin' inside of his eye to pull out the bullet.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. What's your name?

CHARLOTTE. What's yours?

BUZZ. Buzz.

CHARLOTTE. Buzz?

BUZZ. Yeah.

CHARLOTTE. How'd you get that name?

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. My name is Charlotte.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

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BUZZ. You got a man or a boyfriend or somethin'?

CHARLOTTE. That's none of your business.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. I gotcha.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

Lorraine waits backstage for Arnie, who enters carrying a shoebox.

ARNIE. Sorry I'm late. I forgot this and had to go back for it.

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. You can sit down.

ARNIE. Ok. Ok thanks. (*He sits.*) How are you?

LORRAINE. I'm fine.

ARNIE. Thanks for meeting me.

LORRAINE. You said you had something to give me.

ARNIE. Yeah. Yeah, here. (*He gives her the shoebox.*)

LORRAINE. What's in here?

ARNIE. Just some old stuff. Photos and shit. Letters. Some of Alice's stuff. You know. Keepsake shit.

LORRAINE. ... (*Travlin' Alice enters from off-stage.*)

ARNIE. ... (*Travlin' Alice stands the easel on the ground and removes her backpack.*)

LORRAINE. I thought this might be our settlement.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. Is that what you wanted?

LORRAINE. ... (*Travlin' Alice draws a line extending from the first black hole to the second black hole on the map.*)

ARNIE. ... (*Travlin' Alice sits down on the ground.*)

LORRAINE. Why are you giving this stuff to me?

ARNIE. I thought you'd want it.

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LORRAINE. You don't want to keep these things?

ARNIE. I'll prob'ly just lose them or somethin'. Make 'em disappear or somethin'.

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. Arn—

ARNIE. So how are you? (*Travlin' Alice looks at her hands for a moment.*)

LORRAINE. ... (*Travlin' Alice opens and closes her hands.*)

ARNIE. Did I already ask that? (*Travlin' Alice looks deeply into the lines on her palms.*)

LORRAINE. Are you ok, Arnie? (*Travlin' Alice leans her face against her hands and rests.*)

ARNIE. Yeah. Yeah, I'm great.

LORRAINE. ... (*Lorraine looks around the room.*) Is this your new job?

ARNIE. Yeah. Yeah, just started. Makin' loads.

LORRAINE. What do you do here?

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. You ever feel like somethin' big's comin'?

LORRAINE. What do you mean?

ARNIE. I don't know. Like somethin' huge is about to happen. You ever feel that?

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. Like a big change?

LORRAINE. Like something good?

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. I don't kn—

ARNIE. Forget it. It's prob'ly nothin'.

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. Do you want to tel—

ARNIE. How's Alice? (*Travlin' Alice lifts her head from her hands and looks out into the stars.*)

LORRAINE. ... (*Travlin' Alice reaches in her pocket and pulls out a celery stalk and munches on it while looking into the stars.*)

ARNIE. ...

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LORRAINE. She's good.

ARNIE. Yeah?

LORRAINE. Yeah.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. She takes after you.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. With the magic.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. She started doing magic.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. Like you used to.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. Simple stuff. Making things disappear. Re-appear. She made Peanut levitate.

ARNIE. Peanut?

LORRAINE. The cat.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. Today she made the kitchen clock go backwards.

ARNIE. Whoa.

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. That's somethin'.

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. I didn't teach her anything.

LORRAINE. I know, Arnie.

ARNIE. So don't be complain—

LORRAINE. I like that she can do magic.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. I miss it.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. You do?

LORRAINE. Yes.

ARNIE. ...

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LORRAINE. Remember Homecoming night? And you made all those flowers appear for me?

ARNIE. Yeah.

LORRAINE. And you made our dinner levitate?

ARNIE. Yeah, that was funny.

LORRAINE. You used to be really amazing.

ARNIE. ...

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. Lorr—

LORRAINE. What are you so scared of?

ARNIE. Scared?

LORRAINE. ...

ARNIE. Yeah right.

LORRAINE. Arn—

ARNIE. You know, that's really stupid. That's really stupid, Lorraine. Yeah right. Scared. All that magic shit? It's just stupid!

LORRAINE. Arn—

ARNIE. You tell Alice. Tell Alice all that magic shit is just stupid!

LORRAINE. Arn—

ARNIE. I gotta. I gotta go. (*Arnie exits as Travlin' Alice lies down on her back and falls asleep. Lorraine sits down, opens the box, and looks through its contents. She is not unmoved.*)

BUZZ. You ever been to a prison rodeo?

CHARLOTTE. No.

BUZZ. We tried it once at Graterford. Pretty amazing.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Bunch a guys. Most of them violent. Almost all of them with nothing to lose.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. And a two-thousand-pound bull to play with.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. They put a small coin behind the bull's left horn and let 'im loose in the arena. Whoever gets the coin, wins.

CHARLOTTE. What do you win?

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BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. How close did you get? (*Buzz opens the collar of his clown costume. Charlotte takes a good look at the length of his scar. She traces the line of the scar on his neck and chest.*) Did it hurt? (*She continues tracing his scar. He pushes her away.*)

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Why do you like swimming?

CHARLOTTE. I'm good at it.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. I can't stand water.

CHARLOTTE. I love it.

BUZZ. Why?

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. Have you ever tried?

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. To swim.

BUZZ. Swam in my own piss a few times.

CHARLOTTE. You're scared of it.

BUZZ. ...

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. I used to be a dock worker. Hardly ever saw my family.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. Every night. I dream I drown my kids.

CHARLOTTE. ...

BUZZ. ...

Travlin' Alice is curled into a ball on the ground, sleeping against her pack. She wakes and looks into the stars. She takes a deep breath. She takes a toothbrush from her pack and begins brushing her teeth.

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Arnie enters the backstage area of the club, carrying a birdcage, and begins to prepare for his magic act.

When Travlin' Alice finishes, she places the toothbrush back in her pack.

Arnie tries to levitate the "Alice" doll off the table. He continues trying, without much success.

Travlin' Alice takes off one of her shoes and takes a good look at a blister on her foot. She takes a bandage from her pack and covers the blister on her foot with it. She takes a Walkie-Talkie from her pack and turns it on. She extends an impossibly long antennae. She listens to the static for a moment.

TRAVLIN' ALICE. *(Speaking into the walkie-talkie:) Hello? (She listens to the static for a moment. She takes a good look at the map on her easel. She looks into the distance and takes a deep breath. Speaking into the walkie-talkie:) Dad? (She listens for a moment as she continues looking into the stars. No response. She turns off the Walkie-Talkie, lowers the antennae and puts it back in her pack. She takes a deep breath, then puts her shoe back on.*

Arnie, unable to levitate the doll, begins gathering his things to go on stage.

Travlin' Alice gathers her backpack, stands, and looks into the distance.

Arnie stands and looks deep into the mirror.

TRAVLIN' ALICE. *I need a hug. (She lifts the easel and begins walking, pulling an orange from her pocket. She eats the orange as she continues walking into the second Black Hole.)*

Arnie enters the cabaret stage carrying a birdcage.

ARNIE. *Good evening laaaadies and gentlemen! Welcome to Arnie the Magician's Magic Act! You will notice I am holding an empty birdcage. By the end of the*

THE MILKY WAY CABARET

night, this cage will have turned into a bouquet of flowers. That's right—a bouquet of flowers! (*He takes a deep breath. He sets the cage down on the ground.*) But for now—a few tricks. Just to get you warmed up. (*He finds a man in the audience.*) Sir. You sir. Pick a number between one and ten. Don't tell me the number yet. Just think the number in your mind...Have you picked a number?...Great!...And now! Tell me the number you have picked, sir. (*The man in the audience says a number.*) Exactly! I knew it! Taaddaaaaa! Alrighty. For my next trick. (*He pulls a deck of cards from his pocket.*) A card trick! (*As he speaks, he shuffles the deck of cards around theatrically but not very well.*) This is just an ordinary deck of cards. It's not a trick deck or anything like that. Just regular everyday cards. (*He fans the cards out and walks to an audience member.*) You, ma'am. Yes, you...Could you please pick a card from this deck? Pick any card from anywhere in this deck. You can pull it out of the deck. But don't show me. (*The audience member picks a card.*) Now! If you could stand up and show everyone your card. And I will turn my back as you do so. (*Arnie turns his back as the audience member stands and shows her card.*) And now! I will turn back around. (*He turns around to face the audience.*) And now! Could you please put your card back into the deck? (*The audience member does.*) Great! Thank you so much. And now! I will pick your card from this deck of cards. I will pick the card out of this deck—the same card that you picked. It will be the same card that you picked out. And I can do this. Because I am Amazing Arnie! The Magician! (*He waves his hand through the air theatrically but not very well. He shuffles the cards around and fans them out as he speaks.*) And now! I will magically pluck your card from this deck. (*He pulls out a card—it is the wrong card—and holds it up.*) Is this your card? (*It isn't.*) Ha ha. Whoops! Rascal card. (*He pulls out a card—it is the wrong card—and holds it up.*) Is THIS your card? (*It isn't.*) Oops! Man oh man. These cards. I don't know what to tell ya. (*He pulls out a card—it is the wrong card—and holds it up.*) Is THIS your card? (*It isn't.*) Jeez! These cards are jokers! (*He pantomimes a "rim shot".*) Ok now. Are you ready for this? (*He pulls out a card—it is the wrong card—and holds it up.*) Ta daaaaaaaa!.....(*He looks at the card—it is still the wrong one.*) Fuck....(*He reaches into his pocket.*) Ta daaaaaaa!! (*He pulls out a pack of cigarettes.*) Fuck!! (*He puts the cigarettes back in his pocket. He fans the cards out so he can see all of them. He looks through the entire deck, searching for the right card.*) Come on come on come on come on come on come on. (*He doesn't find it.*) Fuck.

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(He stands on stage for some time, defeated.) Oh I know! I know. I'm not using my head. (With a flourish, he removes his top hat, expecting to find the magic card there. Instead, a bouquet of flowers pops out of his hat and stands on top of his head. He stands there, defeated. Lights fade on Arnie.)

*THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
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