

## Act One

*Loud music (Dream Queens by Slave to the Beautiful) drowns out everything else inside a cavernous night club. The dance floor is packed with frenetic dancers under strobe lights in make-up and full Goth attire, some girls topless with duct tape criss-crossed over their nipples. Cranky Catherine, who has a second head jutting up behind his real head, walks across the scene, looking up as he argues with his second head above.*

*Enter Fade and Spam who are involved in an intense conversation as they approach the bar. Spam is animated. They order drinks and continue their interaction, glancing around to make sure no one is near enough to hear them.*

*Music and action come to a stop with dancers frozen in place. Disintegration re-enters from the back of the stage between the paused dancers. He's dancing without music and smiling as he approaches the front of the stage.*

**DISINTEGRATION** I told you I'm dead [sarcastic smile], so I'll try to stop dancing into the play like this. Fade and Spam are well known to everyone here, but **no one** here knows about their enterprise except John Scarecrow and Keith Ghost, their comrades in crime. You're about to meet them, too, but don't expect to hear anything from those Sons of Silence. In case it hasn't become apparent, Fade is the leader and tactician. Spam is second in command. He scouts and coordinates "jobs" [fingers indicate quotation marks]. There are troubling undercurrents tonight.

*Disintegration retreats through the dancers as Spam and Fade continue to talk. The dancers walk about and mingle at a distance from Spam and Fade.*

*Enter Keith Ghost and John Scarecrow who approach the bar where Fade and Spam are talking. They motion to indicate a passing "hello" without any intention of joining the conversation. Scarecrow has an involuntary tic, his head intermittently jerking to one side as his mouth forms a grotesque smile.*

**BARTENDER** [nods at Ghost and Scarecrow, waiting for their drink orders, but they stare and say nothing until he throws up both hands as if to indicate, "Oh well, no surprise."] Two **Wrong Islands**, of course.

*Ghost and Scarecrow take their drinks and walk through the Goths on the dance floor, remaining visible in the background where Scarecrow's intermittent tic continues.*

**SPAM** What the fuck? It's like Scarecrow and Ghost don't even know us.

**FADE** Admirable. There are times when I want to act like I don't know you, Spam.

*Dancing and music [Black Desert?] re-start for about 60 seconds, and then the dancers walk around and mingle. Fade and Spam continue their guarded conversation, watching the area around them.*

**FADE** Our **next** job? Really? And what will the theme be? Tooth fairies? How about transgender aliens?

**SPAM** Okay, okay! The Santa hats were a bit over the top, but 'tis the season. I just thought some holiday humor would lighten things up. We already look like androgynous ghouls, so what's the problem with seasonal head gear? All the more to shock'n'awe them with, my dear. [smiling] I considered wearing my Christmas belt, you know the one with big, sparkly, red and green balls that hang at my crotch. [hands clasped together to form two empty spaces at his groin as he sways side to side, looking at Fade as if to taunt him]

**FADE** [sarcastic tone and affect] Glam Spam the event planner. As if your St. Nick fashion statement wasn't enough, what about Metal Joe showing up as Elton John in a duck costume and rhinestone glasses like he was dressed for a performance in Central Park? *Briefly superimpose a photo of Elton John in a duck outfit on the upper corner of the background.* **Smashing** good show, Spam. What else could go wrong? We were lucky...**just lucky**...this time. We wouldn't have gotten away with it anywhere but in this broken city.

**SPAM** Come on, Fade. It wasn't my fault that Metal Joe flipped out. That was as much a surprise to me as it was to you. We both knew he was prone to *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* when we took a chance on him as our driver. Never again. I didn't order the snow storm, either, but that worked in our favor—not that Detroit cops make a timely response even in good weather. [pauses and leans in to look at Fade who's making no response] This ain't fuckin' Bloomfield Hills, is it? [looks at the audience as he laughs at his own humor]

**FADE** Damn good thing. Bloomfield Hills cops would've been all over us after the unnecessary noise Scarecrow made with that 357 snub nose I let him use—against my better judgment—but we were caught in an unexpected full-house situation. He won't stop firing even after landing a bullet between the eyes. And we were sloppy. We didn't live up to our no-survivors policy and let a witness get away. She was trippin', so let's hope she ran and hid. But what if she goes to the cops?

**SPAM** So what if she does? We were all Goth'd up, and most of us were wearing Santa Claus hats—HO. *Briefly superimpose photo of Spam wearing an elf hat in an upper corner of the background.* But, let's be clear. I was wearing an elf hat—**plush velvet**. [again chuckles at his own humor]

**FADE** [rolling his eyes] Thanks for making that distinction, Slappy. “**So what if she does?**” you say. If she describes freaks in make-up, where do you think the cops will go? Straight here to Freak Central. We probably shouldn't even be here tonight. The

one thing in our favor is that we did the city a service when we wiped out that dump. If we're lucky, the cops won't spend five minutes on the case. But...our worthless informant Slink had been hanging out there for weeks. The girl who got away knows him. If she sent the cops to Slink, he would've ratted us out for some blow. If there's one thing Detroit cops know well, it's how to get information out of a crack head.

**SPAM** [angry voice] You mean **cracked** head, don't you, Fade?

**FADE** Damn straight. All I needed was his head at just the right angle on the stairs in front of me and a silencer on my gun. [voice softens] Look, I know you're upset about Slink, but he was high risk, and that's an understatement. He was grinding on my last nerve. Did you hear him after we gave him his cut at that job on the southwest side? He went *weeeeaving* [makes a swerving motion with his hand] down the sidewalk in the dark, laughing like a hyena. He might as well have had a flashing light and a bullhorn. Slink was only interested in his own habit—a fuckin' crack otter and a slop show who couldn't count well enough to give you the number of people in a house. His stupidity cost Disintegration his life and nearly got us all killed. [Spam puts his hands in the air to indicate surrender, yielding to what Fade is saying] He was a liability we couldn't afford.

The worst thing was losing Disintegration. He was only supposed to be a lookout. I warned him he could lose his life—that we all could—and that if he **ever** spoke about it to anyone.... [pause] He said he wouldn't let us down. Gotta admit I had reservations about him, but he jumped in like a warrior after we thought he was dead and saved Keith's ass and yours. And, by the way, that was another Slink fuck up. Wouldn't you think he could've warned us about the Big Time Wrestling guy at the house? I can't believe a bullet in Disintegration's back didn't stop him from body slamming that brute. Dayve was hacking up blood **before** he got bounced off the wall. No one could have survived that. He distracted Mr. Big just long enough for us to take him down. [pause]

We've gotta re-group, Spam. Our entire operation has to be tightened up.

**SPAM** Well then...we need to talk. There's this house that could set us up for a couple of years. It's perfect. High volume traffic and I'm not talking cars. Empty lots on both sides of it. Abandoned neighborhood. All the street lights are out.

**FADE** I don't know. We're not ready. What about Scarecrow and Ghost? Are they still gonna have baseball bats?

**SPAM** Probably...unless they can get some guns.

**FADE** Scarecrow with a gun, not ideal. [hanging his head and shaking it side to side] Have you noticed his creepy smile when brains splatter onto a wall? I'm convinced it's not related to that tic of his...you know...when his head jerks to one side and his mouth contorts. He enjoys the kill...likes it too much.

We'd need an informant to replace to Slink. Right now, it's just you, me, Scarecrow and Ghost. Those two are so tight-lipped that their ability to speak at all is doubtful—so we'll keep them. But then there's Metal Joe. I'm pretty sure he crawled through a worm hole that night—another stroke of luck for us—wiped out his recall. It was his first and last performance in Central Park with us. We need a sane, solid driver.

**SPAM** Look, Fade, just so you know, I **do** get it. Disintegration showed up in tall, heavy designer boots—a fashion statement here at the club but not ideal for a fast getaway through a foot of snow. Our raids are B-list horror films, and our cast is made up of out-take freaks. We're only in the action til we're cut.

**FADE** Thanks for that reminder, Flippy. We're living on luck, and luck runs out. Fate is baked into what we do, and your name says it all—Spam—headed for the trash bin on a computer screen.

**SPAM** And I get this shit from a guy named Fade? At least Spam is edible—fried or eaten right out of the can—definitely not gourmet but a useful item to have on hand. [smiling] You, on the other hand, will pass like a gas bubble and **fade** into the atmosphere [dramatically throws his arms into the air].

*A pretty girl passes by and Spam suddenly turns his head to watch her.*

**FADE** Uh huh....at least she's not a Gothopotamus like the last one you picked up here.

**SPAM** How nice of you to say so.

*Fade subtly rubs his abdomen and grimaces. He turns away from Spam briefly.*

**FADE** Look, Spam. Life is fleeting. We've entered a vortex that's sucking us deeper and deeper into its center. One day this will end. I don't know if I want to be around for the inevitable conclusion, but I know I will be...one way or another.

Moving forward, we all need to be packin', but Scarecrow is a loose cannon. One or two shots will never be enough for him. He'll need a silencer. [pause for thought] I'm not sure about the house you're proposing, especially right now...but a big haul would allow us to not pull off another job for a year or two. That makes it tempting.

**SPAM** Yep. Sounds like you might consider it. The location is ideal, and the potential yield is promising. But finding the right informant and driver will be tough. I'll put ads in the Detroit Free Press for an undercover scum bag addict and a crack house raid getaway driver. [winks, shrugs and smiles at the audience] When applications roll in, I'll contact character references and do background checks.

*Fade shakes his head and laughs. His hand is on his abdomen.  
Spotlight on a knock-out girl (Niv) who has entered the opposite side of the stage.*