

Forgiving Cain

by Ryan McFadyen

*The ancient Indian goddess Kali
is commonly presented black and bloodied
surrounded by pyres of skulls and burning flesh
chewing up human beings...
it's not a pretty picture.*

*Kali says -
'See, I've gotta be harder than hard,
I'm as bad as it gets.
That's what I am.
Bring me your worst,
the deepest shame, the most severe of sins,
your blackest guilt
And I'll eat it.
I promise.'*

Characters

Cain twenties, entirely ordinary (M)

Seth mid-twenties, pretty in the Sydney way (M)

Abel forties, overweight, dead (M)

The Doorman thirties, leatherman with an eyepatch (M)

Lilith Ishtar thirties, exotic, serpentine (F)

Prologue

welcome to the world, little one...

The maze of The Den, a gay male cruise club in Sydney.

There is a booth for the DOORMAN nearby where he has a microphone to address the people in the club. Some of the walls are semi-transparent, they all have small peepholes.

CAIN, SETH, ABEL and the DOORMAN are in the way, cruising. The DOORMAN wears an eyepatch. The audience has to walk past them. Low lighting. The air is sticky with Black Suede cologne - sickly sweet and try-hard masculine. The feeling is claustrophobic.

There is heady industrial music with strains of temple song, sitars etc. A lion growls occasionally.

The music has voices within it;

SETH: The definition was;

1. An emotion, sentiment or feeling of pleasurable attraction toward or delight in something, as a principle, a person, or a thing, which includes a desire for the presence, possession, well-being or promotion of it's object; the strong yet tender longing for whatever is considered most worthy of desire in any relation; a strong feeling of affection for or devoted attachment to a person; especially, a feeling of intimate personal sympathy and affection toward an individual of the opposite sex.

Once the audience has entered they can never see all of everything at once, gradually they can see more and more. Like they are getting used to the dark.

Chapter 1

verse one

the realest place

DOORMAN: Red brick verandas, the best outdoor living in the world. Everyone here looks like they've been airbrushed, where you can be all you wanna be (most people are professional waiters). All the people wear singlets and smell of obsession. Or is it eternity? Something Calvin Klein anyway. There are no children in Sydney. The best restaurants in the world, the best sunny high rise buildings in the world, the best shopping in the world, the biggest fuck off cockroaches in the world, the best value cheap sex for the whole family in the world. No one ever gets bored in Sydney. No one ever exaggerates or lies in Sydney. It's the realest place I know.

verse two

not your dinner

SETH leans back over a table with his trousers around his knees as CAIN looks through his pubic hair for lice. A cellphone sits on the tabletop.

SETH: Many?

CAIN: Uh. A few.

SETH: I hate them. I fucking hate them.

CAIN: Yeah.

SETH: Little fucking shits. What did I ever do to them?

CAIN: They don't know they're pissing you off. They think they've found a good place to live, that's all.

SETH: Yeah well I don't want them living on me. (To his pubes) I'm a human being, I'm not your dinner.

CAIN: Hold still Seth. Jesus.

Seth grimaces as Cain picks off a louse, he puts it on a piece of white paper on the table.

SETH: Is that all of them?

CAIN: (checking) Uh huh. I think so. Wait...

He leans forward and kisses Seth on the stomach.

CAIN: I ate that one.

SETH: Makes a change.

They both lean over the piece of white paper. Cain holds a big magnifying glass over it.

CAIN: Aren't they ugly?

SETH: Look at them waving their little... what are those? Arms?

CAIN: Pincers.

SETH: Pin...cers. Little fuckwits. (He imitates a crab) I'm gonna eat you.

CAIN: Here.

Cain hands Seth a ballpoint pen. Seth takes careful pleasure out of slowly running over a crab with the end of the pen.

SETH: Oh yeah? You wan' fuck with me, huh? You wanna piece of me? Eat my biro.

The cellphone rings.

SETH: Here's trouble.

He answers the phone.

SETH: Hello Damian Grey? Yup, yup. (fast) Well I'm twenty one, five foot ten, smooth cycle chest, outgoing tall centimetres, fair muscular skin. Um...hair. GSM went in with the hi-fi, used to swim in school down below, got a lot of experience. I'm eight and a half outgoing uncut my favourite client colour is blue active. I can arse I've got a nice cook and I'm in or outcall. Yeah I can wait.

He waits.

verse three

what to call it

CAIN: I'd like to explain. I really would. But I don't think there are words for this... I don't have a boyfriend. I don't have a lover. I don't have a partner. I've never lived with anyone who was public property before. And what to call it...

I don't deny that I don't understand myself.
I am quite aware that I fall in and out of love like a heart monitor.
I believe I love him, but I can't explain. Is this still love?
And am I the only one asking these questions?
Why am I always the victim, or an asshole, or an asshole for being the victim all the time?

CAIN: (trying it out) You're an asshole.

SETH: So?

CAIN: So you're an asshole.

SETH: So? I'm an asshole, so?

CAIN: Fuck you.

SETH: What?

The client comes back to the phone, SETH grabs the pen.

SETH: Yeah I am...red-tape is one two oh to one five oh depends if it's local or if you're into paperwork you know...yeah...cattle rustler ...yep. (laughs) That's fine. (laughs again) Hey babe, can I grab your address? OK. Yeah. I'll see you then.

He hangs up. Is immediately impassive, concentrating on killing crabs.

CAIN: Who was it?

SETH: Uh, don't know.

Pause.

CAIN: Not a regular?

SETH: Not a regular, no.

Pause.

CAIN: Didn't he...

SETH: She.

Pause. CAIN is taken aback.

CAIN: Don't you think that will be a bit difficult?

SETH: What?

CAIN: You know, with a woman.

SETH: Just a job Cain, remember.

CAIN: Still.

SETH: I don't wanna talk about it, OK?

CAIN: OK.

SETH: I'm killing crabs, you know. I'm busy.

CAIN: OK, I'm sorry.

Pause.

SETH: It's alright.

Long pause. SETH kills crabs.

CAIN: I'm going to work.

SETH: Be careful.

CAIN: I am.

He leaves.

SETH: There's all kinds of freaks out there.

SETH keeps running over crabs. The cellphone starts to ring. It keeps ringing through into...

verse 4

Hustling For Beginners part one - the basics

SETH is on his mobile, giving someone advice. The DOORMAN has his own cellphone and listens in. SETH is getting ready for a job - condoms, lube, map, cologne etc.

SETH: The Rules Of Hustling.

DOORMAN: As if you need them..

SETH: Always get the money first, never call it money, call it 'paperwork' If you're working with guys, never get undressed first. Hold on the situation is owned by *you* and metered out by *you*.

DOORMAN: But don't vie for it, just have it.

SETH: Know that you can always walk out if you don't like it. Never go through with a job if you don't like it or it makes you dizzy, nauseous or otherwise sick.

DOORMAN: Try not to take it too seriously.

SETH: Develop a character, even if he does things the same as you, has the same philosophies, whatever. Call yourself by his name. Never rush anything. Don't forget to breathe. Make them believe you adore them, especially the ones with money.

DOORMAN: Never do it on any substance except coffee (personal history).

SETH: Believe yourself the best hustler in the world. Pretend to be Cool Hand Luke. Pretend to be River Phoenix. Pretend to be in Lost Highway. Pretend to be in Midnight Cowboy. Pretend to be in New York. Pretend to be genuine. Stay away from anyone selling drugs, be careful of cops and never let anyone aim anything at your head. Work hard, don't swallow. Never, ever fall in love. It's like being in hell. You're an idiot if you do.

SETH hangs up.

verse five

meeting Abel

The DOORMAN sits in his booth at the cruise club. Low level music. ABEL (unseen) is trying to escape from the maze. He is jumping to try and see over the top of the walls. The DOORMAN reads a gay newspaper.

DOORMAN: (singing) I know an old lady who swallowed a fly, I don't know why.

He stops, mid sentence, as if that was all he meant to say. ABEL bangs loudly and clumsily on a wall. The DOORMAN looks up. Waits. Goes back to his paper.

DOORMAN: (singing) She swallowed a fly, perhaps she'll die. I know an old lady.

He stops again. He sees something in the paper and reads it.

DOORMAN: (suddenly, like he is commentating a race) Racing now... Eastern suburbs horny housewife seeks loving lesbian for hot daytime meetings. Discretion assured and

expected. Hi I am 18 years old I like Pearl Jam and Green Day I would like a boyfriend younger than 23 with similar interests. Gay white male, non-scene, gym fit, 30 years old and hung looking for hairy top to 35 for long term romance. Please send a picture. I'd put out for a Prada bag. I love olive. Leather, ripped denim, g-strings, erotic bondage, cross-dressing, golden showers sound like you? Your hot letter receives my response. Philippino lady 23 would like to meet a nice European husband with Australian residency for friendship possible relationship. (building to hysterical race finish) I-want-to-suck-your-cock free for a limited time call 1800 HEAD JOB. These people are real and want casual sex. Tired of being let down by people who are scared to commit? I am a 47 year old man, honest, caring and generous, looking to share existence with a magnificent Libran who loves life. Age, race no barrier. Let's make you happy.

Pause. He flicks over a page or two.

DOORMAN: What a load of shit.

ABEL knocks on the wall again, louder.

DOORMAN: (over speakers, annoyed) Stop that.

ABEL stops.

verse six

cab ride

SETH is ringing. He is continually playing with his phone.

CAIN is in a cab. The DOORMAN drives and listens.

CAIN: Whenever I'm in a cab I'm looking around and imagining having sex with everyone I see... the driver even. Anyone. Some nights I indiscriminately mind fuck every person I drive past. I'm imagining having sex with all of them. I don't know anyone else who thinks like that. I don't know anyone else who thinks like that.

Pause.

It doesn't mean I do it, but I want to.

If there was one thing I learnt in the nineties it's that it what you think doesn't make any difference. I don't mean that like 'individual opinion is undervalued in society' or any of that shit. I mean that it doesn't make any difference whether you have good thoughts, bad thoughts, crazy thoughts, evil thoughts. Thoughts are just thoughts. Poof. Over. And once you know that, it doesn't really matter what anyone else thinks anymore either. How they want to believe it works. It won't change what's really going on. I mean, you know. First time I met Seth I was like 'how can you do that for a job' and he goes 'hey, we're all selling ourselves to someone, call it what you want'. He's right.

Pause, SETH switches off his phone, leans back, smokes.

SETH: It's true. Everyone's a hooker baby, that's the truth. It just more obvious where the point of sale is for a few of us. Most of them, they're selling what, sixty hours an week of their lives. I think it's sad. It's a sad way to live, because they prostitute their *whole* lives, their *whole* bodies, everything, for what? There's this bit of graffiti down the road, it says 'Apathy Kills', and underneath someone else has put 'So?'. See, at least I'm only selling my dick. I prostitute my sex organs for a couple of hours and I've made the same money they make in a week. Work work work, they're working their butts off, I'm working it on. It's not me that created the market. You have that little time to yourself, you've gotta have your sex like you have your food. Fast. Convenient. No washing up.

CAIN: It seems like modern sheeple... Generation Y or the whaddeverthefuck - have left themselves no romance. Chivalry and Courtship and The Thrill Of The Chase. If you can't say it two words you have nothing to say. You're Cool, Fuck Me, Fuck You, Fuck Off. Sometimes I wish I was a Beatles song...no one accused them of co-dependancy.

SETH: But Cain? Cain...I don't know what goes through his head. I think he thinks it's romantic. He's that sort. He's a...argh...you know...he's a 'good kid'. I do try to get a look at him when I get home in the morning, before he wakes up. You know. Whatever. He's a light sleeper.

I sometimes wonder why he's still there.

One morning he won't be.

And that's OK.

that's really OK.

It's OK.

verse seven

Salon Armageddon

The DOORMAN becomes M'aitre De, CAIN is busy at work. Sticks or bowls of frangipani and frankincense are lit and burn for a long time

DOORMAN: Ahhhhhh. Sydney, Babyl-on¹ the Bay. The place that stole the Sodomites from Sodom and taught them how to dance. The metropolis that showed Gomorrah² how to light a *real* barbecue. The drag queens that sent Jezebel home for another shade of sexy. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed such as one of these. At the straining heart of the city's café district is world-renowned Salon Armageddon,

CAIN: Where I work.

DOORMAN ...one of the oldest eateries in the country. Certainly the finest. The very word 'restaurant' blushes in it's presence. The underground darling of international diners,

¹ **Babble-on**

² **Gore-moh-ra**

devotees come from as far away as Berlin to worship at Sydney's altar to culinary indulgence. In fact, Pilgrimage Airlines run daily flights between Sydney and the city of Jerusalem, home of Armageddon's twin restaurant The Tower Of Babel³. The concept - the most wealthy and addicted of Armageddon's worshippers have the temptation of having their evening meal twice in one day, once in the Northern Hemisphere, and once again in the Southern. As you can understand, the hunger of others, when identified, can be a profitable business.

The building itself, converted from a bank in the mid-nineteen fifties, smacks of indulgence.

Lines of coke are snorted, somewhere.

Everything is gold. The tables, the chairs, the floors, the vaulted ceilings - all gold. Like Midas went into interior design. The walls; gold. Embossed with the names of God; Jahweh⁴, Jehovah, Elohim⁵, Zeus, Astarte⁶, Kali, Hecate⁷... The golden plates gleam in the fashion gained only through the unnecessary exhaustion of the lower classes. The food is pure gold too, and not in any metaphorical sense. A demitasse of espresso extracted from the finest gold granules will set the average punter back fifty dollars.

The cutlery, twenty two carat, polished meticulously prior to every late evening sitting of diners. The metal is peculiarly cold to touch at first with a vague electric tingle, though customers attest that it is a sensation that soon passes. Rumour has it as you become a more regular client of the establishment, the cutlery actually becomes a permanent attachment, pushing itself in spindly tendrils back into the tendons in the hand, latching around nerve endings and permeating bone so that eating becomes your second nature.

Fingers of forks, the thumb a golden toothpick, the pinky a platinum steak knife. These alchemic talons distinguish customers, providing a status quo amongst guests. They flourish them like peacock tails over lobster bisque. As a result the first hint you have of your arrival at Salon Armageddon is the sound of hundreds of metallic fingers peeling like tiny bells over the laughter and gossip.

Almost as much of a fixture is the elusive Ms Lilith Ishtar⁸, businesswoman extraordinnaire, part owner of the business with her northern counterpart Mr. Canaan Baal⁹. She lives directly above the kitchen. It is said that Ms Ishtar has spent so much time eating at Salon Armageddon she now sports golden nipples, which are flashed occasionally at parties and offered up to cure styes.

The Garden, PJ Harvey - from Is This Desire?

³ **Bay**-bull

⁴ **Yah**-way

⁵ Ear-**low**-him

⁶ As-**tart**-tay

⁷ **Heh**-car-tay

⁸ **Ish**-tar

⁹ **Cane**-in **Bahl** (like dahl)

CAIN puts fruit into a dumbwaiter and hoists it up into the ceiling.

ISHTAR becomes visible on a platform above the action, surrounded in golden light. She is like Kali, Lilith, Ishtar and Annie Lennox 1983 rolled into one. When we first see her she has four arms, each hand covered in golden cutlery.

She eats the fruit that CAIN has offered her.

SETH arrives, switches off his cellphone. He checks his piece of paper for directions, looks up and sees the platform. He climbs up to ISHTAR and undresses.

ISHTAR eats him.

verse eight

an easy place to get lost

The DOORMAN sits in his booth, reading his paper. CAIN shuffles up to the door. He waits. The DOORMAN turns and looks at him blankly, looks back at his paper. CAIN waits, then presses the buzzer. The DOORMAN looks up from his paper again, sees CAIN again, smiles and lets him in. CAIN goes through the ritual of paying, getting changed etc. As he does;

DOORMAN: Finished work for the night?

CAIN: Yeah. You?

DOORMAN: (forces a laugh) Did you ever hear about this? (reading) Married Man Killed In Sex Beating.

CAIN: No. No I didn't.

DOORMAN: He's... well he *was* forty-seven years old...suburban, you know? Wife and kids, schoolteacher. Not entirely offensive despite his dubious connections with the local scout group. One day, they find him tied up in the scout hall covered in blood, head caved in, flap of skin hanging off his face. He'd been beaten to death with a chair... seems he was into a bit of the old rumpy pump, slap and tickle. Not enough tickle and far too much SLAP if you understand my meaning. Bit of a heart attack, in the broader sense.

Anyway, wife finds out of course that he's into it. You know, bondage...GUYS, scout uniforms, whatever the fuck. Kids are inevitably humiliated, have to leave the school where he was teaching, whole family moves to another state. Grow grapes in SA, so I hear.

He used to come in here quite a bit. What was his name ahhh fuck (click click) what was it now...uh...Amos? No no, it was a bit more common than that it was...uh. Abel. Wasn't it?

CAIN: I dunno. I don't know anything about it.

DOORMAN: That's an unusual sort of a name I suppose. Biblical, isn't it?

CAIN: What is?

DOORMAN: Abel. Like Cain and Abel, first murder and all that.(filling in his register)
What's your name again mate?

CAIN: (thinks) Uh. Seth.

DOORMAN: Seth. Yeah, it's a pretty dangerous combination, marriage and queers. Can't come out you see, having to do everything behind other people's backs. Never know who they'll wind up with, what they might do to them, noone to call to help them. Shame really. Society I guess. Anyway (holds up the paper) they caught the guy that killed him. Some young kid, straight boy who just wanted to kill a faggot...he made his confession to an undercover cop about it. Bragging. Seems Abel was picking up underage guys up at the local gym, paying them or some shit.

CAIN stares, disconnected

CAIN: Right. What...what are you telling me this for?

DOORMAN: Well, Abel he used to come in here a lot, you see. Somewhat of a regular. And ever since this stuff first got in the papers, sometimes really early in the morning I swear I hear him banging around when I'm cleaning up.

CAIN: How do you know it's him?

DOORMAN: I don't. It just *feels* like him. Angry, frustrated. Can't really blame him, I mean, he's gotta be one pissed off guy. He tips over the rubbish bins, slams the doors. And sometimes when I go into the sling room it smells like black suede.

CAIN: Hardly surprising.

DOORMAN: No, no...the perfume. Avon.

CAIN: Uh huh.

DOORMAN: He used to wear it. I'm guessing that now they've caught the kid you know, Abel he's free. Maybe he can move on. I fucking hope so, I hate that perfume.

CAIN goes to leave. As an afterthought...

CAIN: You didn't... you didn't think it was me that killed him?

DOORMAN: No. Why, should I?

CAIN: No.

CAIN goes to leave.

DOORMAN: Hey! Don't forget this.

He throws him a locker key on an ankle strap, attached is a piece of red wool, which unravels behind CAIN.

CAIN: Oh. Cheers.

Chapter 2

verse one

Cruising For Beginners part one - etiquette

CAIN enters the maze, the characters are all partly visible, cruising from assorted darkened corners. ABEL only communicates in his own pigeon sign language. The other characters do not acknowledge him.

CAIN: The Rules of Cruising.

DOORMAN: As if you need them.

CAIN: Switch off the cellphone.

DOORMAN: Check it in at the front desk.

ABEL: (signs) Take off your wedding ring.

DOORMAN: Check it in.

CAIN: Never get changed openly.

ABEL: (signs) Grab.

CAIN: Don't encourage grabbers.

DOORMAN: Report Repeat Grabbers.

ABEL: (signs) Grab again.

CAIN: Always be a gentleman.

ABEL: (signs) Never get caught.

CAIN: Never make eye contact with the elderly.

ABEL: (signs) Never give up, never give up, never give up, never give up, never give up, never give up, never give up. Never.

DOORMAN: Give up, go home.

CAIN: Never go below third best.

ABEL: (signs) Never give up, never give up, never never, never no, not ever, do not on any accounts ever give up.

CAIN: Give up.

DOORMAN: Don't ask ages.

ABEL: (signs) Less is more.

DOORMAN: It's polite to stare.

ISHTAR and SETH are fucking on the platform. People stand around and watch, assorted pants, grunts, groans. In the midst of the noise a lion snarls. SETH sits up, frightened.

SETH: Shhh.

ISHTAR: (still lying down) What?

SETH: I think there's something in there.

A light shines from behind tiny peepholes all over the walls, like a glowing lion is walking around behind them. The characters sit up to watch the light moving around. The light stops, shining through a glory hole. The lion growls. CAIN looks at the hole. He gets up and goes over to it, sticks his dick through the hole.

verse two

Cruising For Beginners part two - meeting new friends

ISHTAR is connected to whatever CAIN does while he's getting off, she uses it to excite herself with SETH.

DOORMAN: Ah yes, the Glory Hole. A Glory unto whom?

One curious invention... you will only ever find these in the scene, the perfect cure for recognition, the ultimate excess of anonymity... the possibilities are endless. Like the cards of the Tarot deck, when face down, identity unknown, they are simultaneously every card and no card at all. So, whoever can that be in there?

SETH: Ian Roberts.

DOORMAN: John Howard.

ISHTAR: Stanley Knife.

SETH: The uncompromisingly ugly.

DOORMAN: The terminally toothy.

SETH: Your worst enemy.

DOORMAN: Your best enemy.

ISHTAR: Your wildest dream.

DOORMAN: Your worst nightmare.

ISHTAR: Your father.

DOORMAN: Your grandfather.

ISHTAR: The Minotaur.

SETH: The Devil.

ISHTAR: Come on...

DOORMAN: An orgasm.

SETH: (thinks) A toothless iguana.

ISHTAR: A five thousand year old Assyrian goddess?

DOORMAN: No women allowed.

ISHTAR: Still...

SETH: (increasingly excited) Under agers.

ISHTAR: You never know.

SETH: First timers.

ISHTAR: Stranger things happen.

DOORMAN: (singing) I know an old lady who swallowed a fly.

ISHTAR: Could be her pet.

DOORMAN: (singing) I don't know why.

ISHTAR: A lion.

SETH: (to DOORMAN) She swallowed?

DOORMAN: A fly.

ISHTAR: A hungry lion.

SETH: Perhaps she'll die.

DOORMAN: Mmm, perhaps.

ISHTAR: A lion that feeds on your want.

DOORMAN: (singing) I know an old lady who swallowed.

Lion growls.

SETH: Shhh.

DOORMAN / ISHTAR: What?

SETH: I think there's something in there.

They all try watch/ listen to CAIN. ABEL's arm comes through another glory hole, starts grabbing at CAIN's leg.

Everyone is having sex in synch with CAIN. CAIN is coming to an orgasm, keeps trying to push ABEL's arm away. Everybody orgasms, CAIN retreats to the showers.

The arm is left groping, looking for something to grab onto. It retracts, ABEL looks out of the glory hole at the audience. His eye is replaced by a flashlight, ABEL shines it around and looks at the audience.

He picks out someone attractive and sends an SOS (... - - - ...) signal to them on his flashlight. He tries until he is exhausted. He bangs when he needs to.

He gives up.

verse three

Hustling For Beginners part two - post coital chat

ISHTAR and SETH are in bed. SETH is exhausted, looks like he's been attacked by a lion. ISHTAR offers him a cigarette, pays him.

ISHTAR: What's your name?

SETH: Damian.

ISHTAR: That your real name?

SETH: No. What's yours?

Pause. She thinks about it.

ISHTAR: Lilith. Lilith will do.

SETH: Will do eh?

ISHTAR: I've got a few names. Different occasions and that. How do you feel about scary stories late at night?

SETH: I like stories.

ISHTAR: I love stories. There is one, oldie but a goodie, that still scares me shitless. Goes a little something like this.

There's this guy, right? For the sake of a story we'll call him...Almighty God. One day this guy is hanging around, realises he isn't sure if he exists or not, right? Decides he's going to make something else to tell him if he's there or not. So he does...

This bit's a bit complicated, he makes uh..what is it...the heavens and the earth, which are good, then he makes light, that was actually more complicated than it sounds, then he separates the water from the land, then animals and then finally he makes man.

Technically *a* man, Adam. First man, right? And then he makes a companion to go with him called Lilith. Nice name, dontcha think? Lilith. And he thinks that's good. He's pretty pleased and things go on. This man and this woman live in... like a National Park of sorts. And things are peachy and this Almighty God he's feeling like maybe he might be actually around as he seems to be able to affect things elsewhere and they seem to notice him. And he liked this, very much. And the man Adam liked this very much.

But this woman Lilith, she's not highly publicised, she's just going about and doing her do, she doesn't want to be told what to do all the time like this Adam seems to be happy to... plus she doesn't always want to be on the bottom, you know what I'm saying? And she's just a bit too bolshy and a bit too big for her boots and she asks a few too many questions about, oh I don't know, what and who and why I guess. And that's it. Boom, she's out. She's chucked out of this park and she's replaced by this wimpy bitch Eve, who seems a lot better because she just kinda does as she's told. But Lilith, she grabs herself a pet on her way out, this lion who she sorta fancies. Fancied. At the time. And she goes east into the land of Nod...

SETH: Nod?

ISHTAR: That's what they say. And she's out and this Arsehole angel stands at the entrance to the National Park with a burning sword and won't let her back in. But she don't care. She's peachy and she goes off to wander the earth.

SETH: That's not that scary.

ISHTAR: The scary thing is, this woman then gets accused of everything that ever goes wrong anywhere... she becomes, well *most* of her becomes the Devil. The snake. The Antichrist, the ruler of all that is bad bad bad. Just because she didn't agree straight off. Just because she asked too many questions. Just because she wanted to find out for herself. Interesting, dontcha think?

You know the original word for 'Satan' means 'knowledge'?

SETH: (transfixed) No. No I didn't know that.

ISHTAR: Do you know what fear is?

SETH: What?

ISHTAR: False Evidence Appearing Real. (she buzzes her lips at him, widens her eyes, points at his nose) And I'll tell you that for free.

Pause.

SETH: Who are you?

ISHTAR: What do you mean?

SETH: Who are you? What do you think? What do you do?

ISHTAR: Bits and bobs. Own a restaurant. I used to be in your line of work, actually.

SETH: Really? When?

ISHTAR: Ages ago.

SETH: Where, here in Sydney?

ISHTAR: No, no. Overseas. I gave it up, wasn't really worth it anymore.

SETH: Make much money?

ISHTAR: Money? (she laughs) What do you think?

SETH: I think you're marvelous.

ISHTAR: Do you like my lipstick?

SETH: I like your lipstick.

ISHTAR: I love my lipstick. It's called Frosty Bitch. (she smacks her lips together) Do you like you?

SETH: I like me.

ISHTAR: I love you.

Uncomfortable, SETH gets up, starts getting changed back into his clothes.

ISHTAR: What do you think of that?

SETH: (dismissive) Part of the job.

ISHTAR: I want to see you again tomorrow, three o'clock. Alright?

SETH: Sure.

He starts climbing back down to the floor.

ISHTAR: (watching him go) What do *you* do?

SETH: I make jam.

ISHTAR: What kind of jam?

SETH: All sorts, strawberry jam, plum jam, orangey kinda a marmalade.

ISHTAR: You've turned my knees to jelly.

SETH: Jam and jelly are very different. Jelly is made with the juice, jam is made with the fruit.

ISHTAR: Jam is chunkier.

SETH: Much.

ISHTAR: Then what is preserve?

verse four

Cruising For Beginners part three - close up

CAIN is showering. The DOORMAN reads a Bible.

CAIN: When I came out, I figured there was no need to live my life any differently than I had imagined. But it didn't work out like that. If you're going to be queer, and, you know, I am, you have to be prepared to accept certain conditions. That person you just picked up, who now lies breathing quietly in your bed, the light filtering through the window picking out just the parts of his face for you to know exactly what he looked like at six years old... this person may or may not be a prostitute. May or may not have been a prostitute, may have a sugar daddy, may be a sugar daddy, may have a fixation with gaining sexual confidence through cyber-fucking strangers at four in the morning. And if you still want that six-year-old in your bed, then that's what you make yourself open to. And suddenly you've let all of those things into your life, into your heart, the in-between spaces of the bristles of your toothbrush. The possibility of them. The compromise. And then it's all on. And you can't go back.

More banging. Things being dragged around. CAIN leans back under the showerhead, he talks with the water falling over his face.

What am I crazy for. I look out of my eyes I look at the world and I ask it what is wrong what is wrong with this picture. Is it a trick? It's a trick, right? Can I go now. Can I have my change please, ha ha it's Ok you can come out now.

ABEL leans over the top of the wall. CAIN sees him. ABEL smiles at him.

CAIN: Fuck. Off.

CAIN gets out of the shower, he goes to the door of the club and gets changed. As he does the DOORMAN reads a Bible;

CAIN: (looking at his eyepatch) What happened to your eye?

DOORMAN: Which eye?

CAIN covers one of his eyes with his hand.

DOORMAN: Oh. You want to know the truth?

CAIN: Yeah I wanna know the truth.

DOORMAN: The real, *real* truth?

CAIN: The truth.

DOORMAN: Smoky dance floor, San Francisco, 1974. I got a little too close to the 'C' in 'YMCA'.

CAIN: Truly?

DOORMAN: Truly Scrumptious, cross my heart and hope to die. Here it is... (reading) ...and Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said 'I have gotten a man from the Lord'. And she again bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of his fruit of the ground as an offering to the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the first of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said to Cain 'Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.'

And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

And the Lord said to Cain 'Where is Abel thy brother?'. And he said 'I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?' And he said 'What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.'

CAIN: (joining in, quietly) And Cain said unto the Lord 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. You have driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from your face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass that every one finding me shall slay me.'

DOORMAN: And the Lord said 'Therefore whosoever slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should

kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

The DOORMAN buzzes him out of the club, switches on the lights, changes the music, goes out.

For a minute we are alone, then ABEL pops back over the top of the wall again, this time with a 'paper cup telephone' - like the kind kids make. He throws one of the paper cups to someone in the audience and starts talking to them.

He can only say 'hello' and 'fuck' He has to try to get the person to take him home.

After a while the DOORMAN wanders back through with a bunch of cleaning things. He is dotting Dettol on the walls with a cotton bud, sniffing to check if the rooms smell fresh..

DOORMAN: (notices audience) What, you think I'm gonna bother cleaning the whole place? I gotta sleep too.

DOORMAN sees the string from ABEL's cup.

DOORMAN: Well I'll be buggered.

He cuts the string with a pair of scissors. ABEL is left talking frantically to no-one

DOORMAN: Must be something new.

He switches off the last of the lights.

DOORMAN: Goodnight Abel.

ABEL shakes his cup frantically. The DOORMAN leaves.

ABEL: (concentrating, painfully) G...g....goo..goooooood.

verse five
goodnight

SETH is in bed, ISHTAR talks to him on his cellphone.

SETH: (amused, final) Goodnight.

ISHTAR: Goodnight.

They hang up. SETH lies down. CAIN gets in on the other side, SETH is fast asleep.

CAIN: Good night?

SETH: (asleep) Mmm, good night.

The DOORMAN is in bed with a large teddy bear in bondage gear.

DOORMAN: (to bear) Goodnight.

ISHTAR lowers a light curtain.

ISHTAR: (to DOORMAN) Goodnight.

DOORMAN: (looks up) Oh, goodnight.

ABEL: (unseen) G..goood.

SETH: (kisses CAIN) 'Night.

He goes back to sleep.

After a second, everyone sings the beginning bars of 'Mr. Sandman', each taking a different part (DOORMAN is bass) from all over the stage.

ALL: (singing) Mr Sandman...

DOORMAN: Yes?

ALL: (singing) Bring me a dream....

ISHTAR sticks her head out from behind her curtain.

ISHTAR: (firmly) Goodnight.

Everything goes off.

ABEL enters and sits on the stage, he looks at the audience. He starts trying to talk to someone, but can't. He can't understand why noone wants him. He looks at them until he starts weeping. He notices one end of the piece of string from CAIN lying on the floor. He picks it up and starts to follow it.

verse six

inner city noises

CAIN and SETH lie in bed, Cain stares at the ceiling, Seth is sleeping. Light catches CAIN's face.

CAIN: In the last four days I have not left this block, in the last week I have not seen a tree. In the last four years I have not seen my father, I don't remember where to look. My previous life waited until a quiet moment and then one night, unexpectedly, packed a modest bag and slipped out the back door. I don't know where it went.

He turns to look at Seth, who has his back to him.

CAIN: Babe?

Silence.

CAIN: Seth?

SETH: Yeah?

CAIN: Let's get out of here.

SETH: (rolls over) What do you mean?

CAIN: Let's get out of here.

SETH: Out of where?

CAIN: The city.

SETH: What's wrong with the city?

CAIN: It's dangerous.

SETH: It's not dangerous.

CAIN: Let's go.

SETH: Where?

CAIN: Home.

SETH: It's closed.

CAIN: No, *home*.

SETH: Where?

CAIN: I dunno. Home. Home-ish.

Silence.

SETH: Go to sleep.

Silence. Seth rolls over again. Cain keeps looking at the ceiling.

Above them, ISHTAR can be seen in silhouette eating something, humming 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'.

CAIN: I think something is happening. I think there's something out there. I keep forgetting things. Sometimes I forget to remember, but I almost always remember to forget.

Pause.

CAIN: Seth, am I a good person?

as he falls asleep.

ABEL is in the room holding the end of the red wool attached to CAIN. He watches CAIN.

CAIN: Because you know, some nights I look at you and I think... you are such a big place. You look so beautiful outside. But inside you're full of noises, reversing trucks and high heels. It's deafening. But I'm here man. I'm in. I can hear you now. If I listen I can hear that you have an underground. It's filthy. And I just want to clean you up, once and for all.

I couldn't kill you straight away. I'd have to tie a rope around your neck and take you to a mirror. I'd want to shoot you slowly to give you time to realise.

Some nights I think like that. It doesn't mean I do it. Am I a good person?

Pause.

(suddenly, like he forgot for a second) My name, my name... my name is Cain and I Have To Get Out Of Here.

Chapter 3

verse one

losing things

Very early the next morning. SETH is awake, watching CAIN as he sleeps. ABEL has tied the length of string around his waist.

SETH: It's amazing how my perception of faces changes. I remember that first morning when your face was an adventure. The boulder-firmness of your mouth, the dangerous forehead I scaled hourly with my fingertips, the deep shadows at the corners of your eyes. I know they were there because I find them written in letters to you. But now? Now your face is so familiar I take it as read. I have become dangerously lax with your features - I see only what I expect to see; as if your face were a permanently demure Polaroid stapled to your neck. Love as a habit.

SETH's phone is ringing. He answers it quietly and moves away from the bed.

SETH: (quietly) Hello Damian Grey, I can swim, I use to cook hockey. I've got a dick.... Yes I can but it'll cost more, ...no no, I saw My Own Private Idaho, I'm in control, I know what I'm doing. I'll measure just about anything, I want to fall in... pardon? (smiling) Eight and a half, is this you again Lilith?

CAIN wakes up. SETH is gone. During the scene ABEL has written 'enough' along all the walls in chalk. It is spelt wrongly every time and written with the wrong hand. ABEL sits at the end of the bed, he still holds the chalk and the piece of string attached to CAIN. CAIN stares at the walls, he thinks the message is from SETH.

CAIN: What the fuck?

verse two

The Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly ...a cautionary tale

STD clinic. The DOORMAN is reading his Bible. He reads this portion of Genesis in the same way as he read the singles column. ISHTAR, ABEL, SETH and CAIN perform an accelerated version of the biblical bed-swapping in semi-darkness.

DOORMAN: (Racing commentator) And Cain knew his wife and she conceived and bore Enoch¹⁰ and he built a city and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. And unto Enoch was born Irad¹¹: and Irad begat Mehujael¹²: and Mehujael begat

¹⁰ **Ee-knock**

¹¹ **Ear-hard**

¹² **May-hugh-gel**

Methusael¹³: and Methusael begat Lamech¹⁴. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah¹⁵, and the name of the other Zillah¹⁶. And his brother's name was Jubal¹⁷ (he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ). And Zillah, she also bore Tubalcain¹⁸, (an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron): (race climax) and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah¹⁹. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. (race ends, like the DOORMAN is announcing what the horses paid) If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold. And Adam knew his wife again; and she bore a son, and called his name Seth. 'For God,' said she, 'has appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.' And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos²⁰: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.

Flicks through further.

DOORMAN: What a load of shit. (sniffs) That isn't how it happened at all.

SETH buzzes at the door. The DOORMAN looks up.

SETH: Hi, I got referred here by the collective... do you guys still have the free, you know, tests and stuff?

DOORMAN: Oh yeah, yeah, come through my friend, come through.

He buzzes him in.

DOORMAN: (from booth) Just grab a seat and I'll get the nurse to come and see you.

SETH: Thanks.

He sits, looks around.

The DOORMAN emerges from the booth with a small nurse's hat on and a gaggle of weird instruments.

SETH: Aren't you the same guy?

DOORMAN: No no, I'm, I'm Good Nurse Gracious.

¹³ May-**thoos**-eye-el

¹⁴ **Lah**-mech

¹⁵ **A**-dar

¹⁶ **Zill**-ar

¹⁷ **Jew**-bull

¹⁸ **Tube**-el-cain

¹⁹ **Nah**-mah

²⁰ **Ee**-noss

SETH: Are you qualified, Miss Gracious?

DOORMAN: Yes.

Weird pause.

DOORMAN: (rolling up Seth's sleeve) Come on now, don't be shy. How are you feeling?

SETH: Fine. Fine. It's just a..

DOORMAN: Right, good, good.

SETH: Just a routine check up, you know?

DOORMAN: Right yes yes good just flex your hand for me there love, good good. Yes it's funny isn't it?

The DOORMAN continues to do weird tests through the scene, noting things down as he goes.

SETH: What is?

DOORMAN: (ignoring him) Yes, I know an old lady who swallowed a fly, I don't know why she swallowed the fly.

SETH: Perhaps she'll die.

DOORMAN: I know an old lady who swallowed a spider that wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her. She swallowed the spider to catch the fly but I'm not sure why she swallowed the fly. Perhaps she'll die.

SETH: Jeepers.

DOORMAN: It gets worse. I know an old lady who swallowed a bird.

SETH: How absurd.

DOORMAN: But not impossible.

SETH: She swallowed a bird?

DOORMAN: Yep. She swallowed the bird to catch the spider that wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her. She swallowed the spider to catch the fly but I don't know why she swallowed the fly. Perhaps she'll die.

SETH: I know an old lady who swallowed a biscuit, she decided to risk it and swallowed a biscuit. She got peritonitis but she didn't die. She got treatment. She was a tough old bird, she was OK. In the end.

DOORMAN: Anyway, getting back to my old lady. I know this old lady who swallowed a cat.

SETH: How about that.

DOORMAN: She swallowed a cat. She swallowed the cat to catch the bird...

SETH: Etceteras et cetera... is this going anywhere?

DOORMAN: OK OK, I know an old lady who swallowed a dog.

SETH: A dog?

DOORMAN: Si.

SETH: Bullshit. Is she swallowing these things whole or is she cutting them up?

DOORMAN: Swallowing them whole.

SETH: Fucking hell. What a hog.

DOORMAN: To swallow a dog?

SETH: Mmm.

DOORMAN: Yeah well, she swallowed the dog to catch the cat, see she swallowed the cat to catch this bird, she swallowed the bird to catch the spider that wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her. She swallowed the spider to catch the fly WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHY she swallowed that fly.

SETH: Perhaps it was an accident.

DOORMAN: I know an old lady who swallowed a cow. I don't know how, but she swallowed a cow.

SETH: Hang on, hang on. Let me get this straight. She, I presume, swallowed the cow to squish the dog, she swallowed the dog to catch the cat, she swallowed this *cat* to catch the bird, she swallowed the bird to catch the spider...

DOORMAN: That...

SETH: ...that wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her. She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. If she'd thought ahead she could have just let the fly digest and come out on it's own. But regardless. This could lead to real tragedy. She could die.

DOORMAN: I know an old lady who swallowed a horse.

Shocked looks.

DOORMAN: She's dead of course.

DOORMAN finishes a test.

DOORMAN: You can pop your shirt back on, love.

DOORMAN goes back to his paperwork. SETH is disturbed.

SETH: Is that shit true?

DOORMAN: What?

SETH: About the horse?

DOORMAN: Uh huh.

SETH: And the old lady? She's dead?

DOORMAN: Oh yeah yeah, long gone now.

SETH: But that's so sad.

DOORMAN: Oh well.

SETH: Why would you swallow a horse?

DOORMAN: I don't know why. *I* wouldn't but then *I* am sensible. I always have been.

SETH: She can't have swallowed the horse to catch the cow because horses don't eat cows.

DOORMAN: Maybe she just got a taste for it.

SETH: Like a fetish?

DOORMAN: Yeah. Swallowing large animals. She figured, fuck it, if I can swallow a cow I can swallow a horse.

SETH: And is that what killed her?

DOORMAN: Possibly. It's conceivable her death was unrelated. She may have swallowed the horse, and then died some time later. I don't know the time frame for sure. I didn't know the old lady that well.

SETH: She might have died of natural causes.

DOORMAN: Well she was an old lady.

SETH: That's true. In a way it was silly of me to say '*perhaps* she'll die' because it was inevitable.

The DOORMAN starts ushering him out.

DOORMAN: I'm afraid so. Look, I didn't want to freak you out, I just thought you should be aware of the risks. I just wanted to imply that if you swallow a fly you could...

SETH: D..die?

DOORMAN: Bingo.

SETH: But not from just swallowing a fly. Not in itself.

DOORMAN: No, not usually. Just be careful.

SETH's phone starts to ring.

SETH: I will, don't worry.

DOORMAN: See you in a week then, don't do anything silly. Tat ta.

SETH exits, starts his hustler sales pitch again. The DOORMAN shuts the door behind him. Pulls off the hat and sighs, exhausted.

verse three

on the virtues of mangos...

Salon Armageddon. ISHTAR is eating a mango, she has her cutlery fingers on. She occasionally passes food under the chaise lounge she sits on to her lion.

ISHTAR: Yum-ah I like to eat. There's really nothing better. There is positively nothing on earth or, indeed, most other places to compare with the pleasure of eating a really very good mango. Wouldn't you agree? Waiter?

CAIN is passing. ABEL is now continually attached to him via the piece of string and tries to keep up with his movement, possibly tries to mimic him.

CAIN: Yes ma'am?

ISHTAR: Have you had a break this morning?

CAIN: No, ma'am, I...

ISHTAR: Have a seat.

CAIN: Thank you.

ISHTAR: Do you like mangos, Cain, isn't it?

CAIN: I like mangoes.

ISHTAR hands him over a slice.

ISHTAR: I love mangoes.

CAIN: My ... companion makes a mean mango chutney.

ISHTAR: Companion. Is that like a dog?

CAIN: No, no, my ...partner makes mango ...chutney.

ISHTAR: Good. I hope you're good to her. Her?

CAIN: Him.

ISHTAR: Him. (eating her mango)Yum. Yum-ah.

They eat together.

ISHTAR: I gotta say, the people who work here fascinate me. They really do. You know I own the place, I take it. They told you that.

CAIN: Yes. Congratulations.

ISHTAR: It was nothing. But you fascinate me, truly. Did you know that you're the modern day equivalent of a slave?

CAIN: Is that right.

ISHTAR: Oh yes. Don't feel bad. Slavery can be beautiful, in itself. But I can't imagine it's an easy job to do. You know what guts is?

Silence.

ISHTAR: Genuine Urge To Succeed. (she buzzes her lips at him, widens her eyes, points a cutlery finger) And I'll tell you that for free. You do do something else, I assume? Some art or something. I mean, it really would be awful if this was all you did.

CAIN: No. This is all I do.

ISHTAR: Gosh.

Pause.

ISHTAR: Do you worry about being a failure?

CAIN: Why would I? A failure is an event. I am a human being.

ISHTAR ploughs into the next mango.

ISHTAR: Of course.

CAIN: Don't you ever worry about getting fat?

ISHTAR: (mouth full) Nope. (swallows) I heard of this special diet. On the TV they said 'eat what you want, when you want.' I figured I'm already on that diet, why do I need to pay for it?

CAIN: Fair enough.

ISHTAR: Why did your parents name you Cain?

CAIN: I don't know. I don't think I was planned.

ISHTAR: It's one of those names that causes you to immediately mistrust whoever owns it, isn't it?

CAIN: What do you mean?

ISHTAR: Oh you know, Cain...Abel...first murder all of that. Original sin.

CAIN: I don't know about that...

ISHTAR: No need to feel embarrassed, I was born an original sinner. I was born from original sin, I tell you what, if I had a dollar bill for all the things I've done...

Weird pause. ISHTAR eats.

CAIN: What?

ISHTAR: I'd own this place. (gestures about with a mangled mango)

CAIN: You do.

ISHTAR: So I do. How about you are you a sinner?

CAIN: No, no. I'm Piscean. We're like eighty-year-olds...

ISHTAR: Still...

CAIN: ...we wonder if we're going crazy. We watch everyone else go first, we lose everything we love.

ISHTAR: Who made those rules?

CAIN: I dunno. Asians? Aztecs?

ISHTAR: Pisceans are also at the end of the zodiac, you know? They're the oldest of the bunch but it's also their last time around the track. As humans. You're only as old as you feel.

CAIN: I feel very very very old. Does that count?

ISHTAR: Yes. I'm afraid it's fairly common. Listen, are you as much into words as much as you are into mangos, Cain?

CAIN: I like words.

ISHTAR: I love words. Keep up...

ISHTAR works him into a poem without him realising what she has drawn out;

ISHTAR: Evolve, Decay

CAIN: Evolve, Decay. Evolve

ISHTAR: Exist

CAIN: Decay

ISHTAR: Decist. Quietly

CAIN: Evolve...

ISHTAR: Decay. Quickly

CAIN: Exist

ISHTAR: Decline. Quite Every Day. Quintessential, Existential Death

CAIN: Queer Escapable Dichotomy

ISHTAR: Quite Elaborate Dollhouse

CAIN: QED

ISHTAR: That which had to be proven

CAIN: That which has been proven

ISHTAR: Three dots

CAIN: Therefore

ISHTAR: Why do it again
why stay
why this cycle
retribution,

CAIN: karmic action,

ISHTAR: divine execution,

CAIN: resuscitation,

ISHTAR: resurrection again again

CAIN: Again again again again again Jesus

ISHTAR: Christ I just

CAIN: wanna go home.

ISHTAR: and

CAIN: Everywhere I want to be
Is somewhere to rest

Somewhere to be on
soft
(ridiculous)
(sentimental)
Feather quilts.
And somewhere to rest my head.
I don't even care if no-one wants to come with me
Anymore.
And just to lie down.
And just to...

ISHTAR: Stop.

He is exhausted

ISHTAR: Good. Nice words. You better get back to work I think Sean's in trouble.

Chapter 4

VERSE ONE

Professional Opinion

SETH is ringing, somewhere in the maze. He emerges.

SETH: Me and Lilith wanted to find out what the difference was between conserve and jam. We looked it up in her dictionary. Lilith's fictionary is very big and old and from America. There is no difference between jam and conserve.

Afterwards I looked up the definition for love, on the page where it was there was a four leaf clover someone had put there ages ago. Lilith said 'maybe they wanted to be lucky in love' I said 'maybe I should eat it.' But she wouldn't let me.

The definition of love was;

1. An emotion, sentiment or feeling of pleasurable attraction toward or delight in something, as a principle, a person, or a thing, which includes a desire for the presence, possession, well-being or promotion of it's object; the strong yet tender longing for whatever is considered most worthy of desire in any relation; a strong feeling of affection for or devoted attachment to a person; especially, a feeling of intimate personal sympathy and affection toward an individual of the opposite sex.
2. Sexual desire or it's gratification.
3. The passion of love personified, or considered as being independent of it's subject; especially Eros, Amor, or Cupid, the god of love; also, less often, Aphrodite or Venus, goddess of love.
4. A cupid; usually represented as a boy with wings; as, the winged *loves*.
5. A score in certain games, nothing; as, *love* all, neither side has scored; a *love* set, one side scored no games in the set.
6. A game in which one player, without looking, guesses at the number of fingers held up by another.

ISHTAR has tied a black blindfold over his eyes.

verse two
making Love

ISHTAR holds up one finger.

SETH: One.

ISHTAR holds up two.

SETH: Two.

ISHTAR holds up one.

SETH: (laughs) One.

ISHTAR holds up five.

SETH: Five.

ISHTAR makes a fist. SETH groans a sexy groan.

SETH: Rock.

ISHTAR holds up a flat hand.

SETH: Paper.

*ISHTAR signs the things and SETH calls them. SETH is enjoying their connection.
ISHTAR is telling the story of the demons being cast out of heaven..*

SETH: Big, green, ball, fire, falling, small, one, plus, one, snap, run, jump, fuck, fight,
look, feel, hear, smell, taste...

ISHTAR is moving one finger around in the air.

SETH: What's that one?

ISHTAR: It's a fly.

SETH stiffens. He is petrified.

ISHTAR: What? What is it? It's only a fly.

She offers it to him. SETH fumbles/runs into the maze, still blindfolded..

ISHTAR: What is it?

CAIN is already sitting on the bed, facing the wall. ABEL is still tied to him, but from afar. He observes what is happening with intense curiosity. SETH runs in, takes his place on the opposite side of the bed, staring out at the other wall.

CAIN holds up three fingers. SETH still has the blindfold. He wants to get it off. He concentrates very hard.

SETH: Two.

CAIN: No.

SETH: Five.

CAIN: No.

SETH: Six.

CAIN: No.

SETH: Two, no I said two. Eight.

CAIN: No.

SETH: Well how many then?

CAIN: Three..

SETH: Do another one.

Later...

CAIN holds up four. SETH thinks for ages.

SETH: Three.

CAIN: No.

Later... they face each other. CAIN still holds up four.

SETH: Nine.

CAIN: No.

ABEL: (decidedly) Four.

SETH: Five?

CAIN: (bored) No.

SETH: You fucking try it! It's hard.

Later...

CAIN stands looking out, SETH sits blindfolded on the bed. ABEL is getting into the swing of it. SETH holds up two.

CAIN: Um...

ABEL: Two.

CAIN: Two.

SETH holds up eight.

ABEL: Eight.

CAIN: Eight.

SETH holds up four and one bent finger.

ABEL: Four... and a half.

CAIN: Four and a half.

SETH: You're cheating.

CAIN: I'm not cheating, you're cheating.

SETH: Are you saying I'm not playing properly?

CAIN: Yes you're not.

SETH: No, I am.

Pause.

SETH: How could you know that?

CAIN: I just know.

SETH pulls the finger.

CAIN: (quickly) One.

Later...

CAIN is doing holding up fingers, SETH is still desperately guessing. CAIN changes the number of fingers every now and again. ABEL is calling them all right, looking at CAIN, holding onto the end of the string. SETH is less and less audible. CAIN stops playing with SETH and is playing changing the number every time ABEL gets it instead.

ABEL: One.

CAIN hears him clearly for the first time, he stiffens. He doesn't change his fingers. He holds up one.

ABEL: One. One. One. One. One.

He slowly turns around and sees ABEL. CAIN is terrified, he bolts off into the maze. ABEL has the string attached to him still like Ahab and the whale. CAIN tries to lose ABEL in the maze, but ABEL is always still attached. SETH is left alone, blindfolded and still guessing.

SETH: (to himself, checking off) One, two, three...FOUR! Four, is it four?

He waits.

SETH: (scared) Cain?

verse three

lies

The lion roars.

ISHTAR surges up to the DOORMAN's booth, furious. She rings the bell and doesn't take her finger off it. The DOORMAN arrives..

ISHTAR: I'm coming in.

DOORMAN: No women allowed.

He goes away. Bell rings again. The DOORMAN returns.

ISHTAR: I'm coming in.

DOORMAN: Look...

ISHTAR: No, I am.

The lion snarls at him.

DOORMAN: (indicating lion) With that?

ISHTAR: Yes.

DOORMAN: Forget it.

ISHTAR: You little worm, I used to *own* this place...

DOORMAN: Forget it.

ISHTAR: If you don't...

DOORMAN: Don't threaten me.

ISHTAR: If you don't...

DOORMAN: You wouldn't.

ISHTAR: I'm warning you.

DOORMAN: You wouldn't dare.

ISHTAR: I'll eat you.

DOORMAN: NO.

ISHTAR: Yes. I will.

DOORMAN: Ish, come on...

ISHTAR: Open the door.

The DOORMAN doesn't open the door. ISHTAR looks around, then...

ISHTAR: Have you been lying to him?

DOORMAN: Don't know what you mean.

ISHTAR: (hisses) You know what I mean. Did you tell him that old shit about the 'swallowing a fly'?

DOORMAN: Possibly.

ISHTAR: And what about the swallowing a horse?

DOORMAN: I may have.

ISHTAR: I suppose you told him I was dead.

DOORMAN: He jumped to his own conclusion on that one I'm afraid.

ISHTAR: And you told him I'm old?

DOORMAN: Well you are.

ISHTAR: No older than you.

DOORMAN: So? I'm old. I'm very very very old, let's not beat around the bush here.

ISHTAR: Why don't you let them decide for themselves? What are you so fucking scared of that you can't just let them *think*?

DOORMAN: Rules are rules.

ISHTAR: And that's it?

DOORMAN: Yes.

ISHTAR: And I'm The Damned?

DOORMAN: And I'm with the good guys.

ISHTAR: When was it ever that uncomplicated? Get real - your job description expired long ago. You shell out fuck jelly to people your boss was fire and brimstoning just yesterday.

DOORMAN: We've all got to do something.

ISHTAR: You mean 'we're all selling ourselves to someone'. Somewhere. Along the line. Bullshit. Do you think anyone is even watching anymore? Did you seriously believe they even were? Where is this guy? All he... all *it* has ever been is what we supposed it was. What is it made of? ME. THEM. YOU. And you don't even have a name. Jesus, how long have you been playing this game? How long have they been playing this game? 'If I just wait a bit longer and do as I'm told I get to win the lottery. Get off the Heaven-Hell elevator. Win the fucking Nirvana karma sweepstakes. I get to go up up up into the sky and everything will be all better.' You know, this paradise, and this punishment, these are not things for discussion in the future tense. They are here. Now. We are already in them. YOU are trapped. I am free.

DOORMAN: Ah but you can't come in here.

ISHTAR: What have you really got in there anyway?

ISHTAR goes. The DOORMAN is distressed. He reads his Bible.

verse four

Forgiving Abel

CAIN and ABEL emerge from the maze, still running. They stop and pant. Finally...

CAIN: What are you following me for?

ABEL smiles. He gains his language again over the conversation.

ABEL: One.

CAIN: What were you doing in my house?

ABEL: My name's Abel.

CAIN I know what your name is.

ABEL: Abel.

CAIN: I know.

ABEL: Abel.

CAIN: I understand. What do you want from me?

ABEL: Hi.

CAIN: Hey.

ABEL: Do you want to fuck?

CAIN: No.

ABEL: What have you done that's bad?

CAIN: Nothing.

ABEL: (repeats) Nothing.

CAIN: Nothing.

ABEL: What have you done that's bad?

CAIN: Nothing.

ABEL: What have you done that's bad?

CAIN: Nothing!...I took ecstasy on Saturday.

ABEL: Feel guilty?

CAIN: No. It was nice.

ABEL: I'd like to fuck you.

CAIN: No. I have a boyfriend.

ABEL: Do you wanna go somewhere?

CAIN: No.

ABEL: Do you wanna go to a room?

CAIN: No.

ABEL: Do you remember what you wore to mufti day May 1992?

Pause.

CAIN: (cautious) No.

ABEL: (increasingly freer) Amco Blue jeans they were stonewash, Reebok pump shoes. A Hard Rock Café t-shirt from Honolulu. There was a necklace of wood beads. You hair was shorter.

CAIN: So was I.

ABEL: You were four foot ten.

CAIN: Was I?

ABEL: You smelt of Contradictions.

CAIN: (dismissive) It wasn't around yet.

ABEL: You were wearing Jazz.

Pause.

ABEL: I'm a teacher.

Big awful pause

ABEL: Remember?

CAIN: (straining) I don't... I don't believe I want to remember.

ABEL: We went to the same gym.

CAIN: I don't think so.

ABEL: I thought I was your first.

CAIN: (changing subject) Look, I don't mean to be a party pooper, but you're dead. Look, it's in the paper.

ABEL: I'm not dead. That chair is dead. Are you dead, chair?

Lights come up on a miniature school chair, like pre-schoolers use. It says nothing.

ABEL: See, that's how you can tell.

CAIN: Why are you following me? I've got nothing to do with you.

ABEL: Don't you remember? In the sauna?

CAIN: Doesn't mean anything to me.

ABEL: My name is...

CAIN: I don't want to know your name.

ABEL: (repeats) ...your name.

CAIN: What?

ABEL: What's your name?

CAIN: My name? My name is Seth.

ABEL: No.

CAIN: My name is Cain. My name is Cain.

ABEL: My name is Abel.

BOTH: I have to get out of here.

They both look at the string between them.

CAIN: But I never killed anybody. I've never killed anybody.

ABEL: You said you wanted to.

CAIN: It doesn't mean I did. It doesn't mean I would.

ABEL: Did you want to kill me?

CAIN: I just want to go home.

ABEL: Do you want to kill me?

CAIN: No. I said I just want to go home.

ABEL: I'd like you to.

CAIN: No

ABEL: Please.

CAIN: No.

ABEL: Please. I want it.

CAIN: No. I'm trying to be a good person.

ABEL: Please, just a little bit.

CAIN: You're dead, you're already dead. It wasn't my fault.

ABEL: I can pay you.

CAIN: No! ...NO!

CAIN picks up the small school chair and smashes it again and again against the floor, as if beating somebody with it. The lion is roaring like it is being attacked.

CAIN exhausts himself and he stops. ABEL is gone, the red wool lies limply on the floor.

CAIN pants. He stands in shock, holding onto the battered chair, unable to move.

ISHTAR is singing a high, wavering tune to comfort herself. She continues through into.

verse five

Cruising For Beginners part four - collection

ABEL goes to the DOORMAN's booth. The DOORMAN looks up.

ABEL: Hi.

The DOORMAN is amazed to see him.

DOORMAN: H..hi.

ABEL: My name is...

DOORMAN: Abel, I know.

ABEL: I've come for my things.

DOORMAN: (apprehensive) You... you don't have any things.

ABEL: I think I do.

DOORMAN looks. He finds a bottle of Black Suede in the deposit box. In a daze he gives it to ABEL. ABEL tucks it under his arm.

ABEL: Thank you.

The DOORMAN buzzes him out, behind the door is full of light. ABEL walks out. The door is closed.

DOORMAN: Have a nice day.

verse six

no more

CAIN still stands with the chair in his hand.

CAIN:

Some things

Some people like a NASA Launch Station

Run around in my head

On catwalks that go way up above me. I am like the Captain. I sit in a chair in the middle and they bring me things. A piece of paper as long as my life tick tick tickker tak tak tak out it comes into my hands.

SETH is visible sitting on the edge of the bed, still blindfolded.

Seeing the faces of all the people I fucked without paying attention.

Did I put in all into a pill and swallow a jar without checking the label?

I think I've done something really stupid.

Baby, I think I've taken too many of these things – call a taxi.

I lean over and nothing will come.

It's too late, it's in my blood.

If it's in my blood.

It's far, far too late.

And if the police come, tell them I'm very sorry but I've gone to bed.

And I'm sorry if I caused a fuss.

And I'm not going to work tomorrow.

ISHTAR: (from above) Far below are the lights and the bars, the city's life for those with the money.

From ISHTAR's platform 5c coins start to trickle down like rain. They pitter-patter on the bed and floor around SETH. SETH flinches as they bounce off him.

CAIN: It's alright, I'll be home soon I'll be home soon I'll be home soon.

I am in love with that man.

I am an origami frog who fell in love with a man.

DOORMAN: How did it feel?

CAIN: What?

DOORMAN: Telling him you were in love with him?

CAIN: It felt good. Felt like things not allowed and pictures...

an origami frog

on the beach in Singapore, waiting for sunrise.

The rain never stops. It is getting heavier.

CAIN goes to SETH, they face out over the audience. SETH is scared, he doesn't know who it is. He leans into the shape of CAIN's body. CAIN places his hand over where SETH's eyes should be. SETH relaxes. He is seeing through CAIN.

Finally...

CAIN: (over noise) What really happened to your eyes?

The DOORMAN rubs his eyepatch longingly. He says nothing.

CAIN: What Really Happened To Your EYES?

DOORMAN: You wanna know the truth?

CAIN: Yeah I wanna know the truth.

DOORMAN: The real, *real* truth?

CAIN thinks.

CAIN: The truth.

Curtain.