

Circus of Fate

by
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CHARACTERS

CASSANDRA, *juggler, clown and prophet*

DIANA, *in love with Troy*

MINERVA, *Diana's best friend and Troy's ex-girlfriend*

Total Roles: 3 female

SET REQUIREMENTS

None.

PROPS

Jester's hat (optional)

Balls for juggling (3)

Music box

Umbrellas (2)

(Lights up on CASSANDRA. She wears a few simple pieces, such as a jester's hat or a touch of red face paint on her nose, that subtly identify her as a clown without being over the top. She winds up a music box and starts it playing. She then starts to juggle, though not necessarily well.)

CASSANDRA

Fate's a funny thing. It takes so little for our lives to change course and spin off in an unintended direction. A chance word, a momentary whim, being in the right place... or the wrong one. How often do we really choose, and how often do we simply react to the circumstances of the moment?

(DIANA enters, upset. CASSANDRA stops juggling and catches two balls, letting the third fall to the ground. DIANA looks up and sees her.)

DIANA

Oh I'm sorry, I didn't see you there. I suppose I shouldn't be back here.

CASSANDRA

If you're here, then you're supposed to be.

DIANA

Are you with the circus?

CASSANDRA

Name's Cassandra. Juggler, clown, prophet.

DIANA

Prophet? Funny.

CASSANDRA

Not really.

(She picks up the music box.)

DIANA

What's with the music box?

CASSANDRA

It tells the future. Care to give it a try?

DIANA

I get it, you're the local fortune teller.

CASSANDRA

Fortune telling? That's just a bunch of mumbo-jumbo for the superstitious. I'm the real deal.

DIANA

Sure.

(DIANA starts to walk away.)

CASSANDRA

What's the hurry, Diana?

DIANA

Am I supposed to be creeped out you know my name?

CASSANDRA

Does fate creep you out?

DIANA

I don't believe in fate.

CASSANDRA

Why did you walk this way?

DIANA

What?

CASSANDRA

Why did you turn left and go behind the tents instead of going right, towards the bearded lady?

DIANA

I don't know. Why not? Why were you back here juggling?

CASSANDRA

Because you went left.

DIANA

I don't get it.

CASSANDRA

If you had gone right, where do you think I'd be?

DIANA

I don't know, over by the bearded lady?

CASSANDRA

No, actually I'd still be right here, because then we weren't supposed to meet.

DIANA

So I'm here...

CASSANDRA

...because you need help. Because you did go left and so you saw the two of them together.

DIANA

Troy and Minerva, I'm going to kill them both. They broke up, you know, but now that we're dating she can't keep her hands off him.

CASSANDRA

Is that what you saw?

DIANA

Her giggling and his goofy smile was all I needed to see. If she thinks I'm giving him up without a fight... Oh God, what do I do?

(CASSANDRA offers her the music box.)

The fortune-telling music box?

(CASSANDRA nods.)

Sure, why not.

CASSANDRA

Just one catch.

DIANA

How much?

CASSANDRA

Not that. You see, I'll tell you your fate, but you won't believe me.

DIANA

Why not?

CASSANDRA

You just won't.

DIANA

Then what's the point?

CASSANDRA

Do you want to know or not?

DIANA

Fine. Sure. Whatever. I don't believe in this kind of stuff anyway.

CASSANDRA

Then wind it up.

(DIANA takes the music box and winds it up. As it starts playing CASSANDRA starts juggling and utters her prophecy in a sing-song sort of chant.)

CASSANDRA (Cont.)

What you now think, the opposite is true. Trust them both and it'll be just him and you. But if you become her enemy, you'll lose them both through jealousy.

(CASSANDRA stops juggling. Pause)

DIANA

That's it?

CASSANDRA

That's it.

DIANA

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

CASSANDRA

Told you so.

DIANA

I saw them together and you're trying to tell me it was all innocent?

CASSANDRA

Yeah.

DIANA

Knowing Minerva, not likely. And Troy's no angel either. But you're saying that if I just let it go Troy and I will live happily ever after?

CASSANDRA

That's the gist of it.

DIANA

Otherwise I'll lose him.

CASSANDRA

Right.

DIANA

I don't know why I'm even talking to you. I just need some time to figure this out, OK?

CASSANDRA

OK.

DIANA

I don't want to lose him, but... but he cheated on me, and... and... and you're not a very funny clown!

(DIANA crosses away to think while CASSANDRA practices some prat falls or something else clownish. MINERVA enters, talking to someone offstage.)

MINERVA

No, I'll be right back. I've got a craving for some cotton candy, that's all.

(Slight pause)

Because I don't want her to see me, what would she think?

(MINERVA starts to cross the stage and stops when she sees DIANA.)

Oh. Hi, Diana.

DIANA

You.

CASSANDRA

(In her sing-song voice again)

Diana, Diana, walk away, and leave it for another day.

MINERVA

Diana, look, it's not what you think.

(DIANA grabs MINERVA by the hair.)

Ow! Stop it!

DIANA

You little flirt!

MINERVA

You're hurting me!

DIANA

Give me one reason why I shouldn't rearrange that pretty little face of yours.

MINERVA

Nothing happened!

DIANA

Oh please. How many has it been, Minerva? How many guys have you stolen from me?

MINERVA

I... I don't know.

DIANA

Too many to count, huh? I never could have a boyfriend without you flirting with him. Next thing I know he's run off with you.

(MINEVERA pushes DIANA away.)

MINERVA

Look, I know I've done some stupid things, but I would never try to take Troy away from you. We were just talking.

DIANA

You with a guy is never just talk.

MINERVA

Is that what you think of me? Diana, we've been friends since the fourth grade.

DIANA

What, couldn't get enough guys on your own?

MINERVA

Troy and I broke up. He broke up with me, if you remember. He wants to be with you.

DIANA

What's the matter, losing your touch?

MINERVA

Are you even going to hear me out?

DIANA

I'm not in the mood for your games, Minerva.

(DIANA pushes MINERVA.)

MINERVA

Stop it.

DIANA

What's the matter? Don't have the guts to stand up to me on your own? Rather go behind my back, is that it?

(She pushes MINERVA again and MINERVA slaps her.)

MINERVA

If you weren't so crazy jealous all the time your boyfriends wouldn't keep running to me looking for a little sympathy.

DIANA

Is that what Troy did? Run to you for sympathy?

MINERVA

Yes! I mean, no, not exactly... What do you want me to say, Diana? That I still have feelings for Troy? Maybe I do, but he's your boyfriend, I would never –

DIANA

Ahhh!!!

(DIANA goes after MINERVA and they struggle. CASSANDRA starts the music box playing and then starts juggling again.)

CASSANDRA

Stop!

(DIANA and MINERVA obey. In her sing-song voice again)

What did she do to earn this hate? Make peace, Diana, it's not too late. Or else your fate may lead to blood, and you'll lose them both. Perhaps you should.

(She stops juggling.)

MINERVA

What?

DIANA

The music box tells the future.

MINERVA

What?

DIANA

She's a prophet... juggler... clown-person.

MINERVA

What?

CASSANDRA

You can still make things right, Diana. Be happy ever after, be best friends for life.

DIANA

With her? I don't think so.

MINERVA

How many times do I have to tell you? Troy just needed someone to talk to.

DIANA

And he found you. How convenient.

MINERVA

He's sick of your stupid jealousy. He... he said he was thinking of leaving you, but I told him how much you care about him. Please, Diana, I was trying to help you.

DIANA

Help me or help Troy? I swear, Minerva, if I see you so much as look at him again I'm going to –

CASSANDRA

Who wants to hear a joke?

MINERVA

Yes! Let's all just calm down and hear a joke from the clown.

CASSANDRA

There was this guy. He married a woman who was beautiful but crazy jealous. So one day when he went out without telling her she followed him. When he secretly met her best friend she was convinced he was unfaithful and in a fit of rage she stabbed them both. Turns out they were just planning her birthday party.

(Pause)

MINERVA

(Shocked)

How is that funny?

CASSANDRA

I guess it's not. I never was a very good clown.

DIANA

You're not much of a juggler either. Do you have a point, Cassandra?

CASSANDRA

Fate likes to test us, make us show our true colors. Such as, will you trust your best friend, or assume the worst? Will you go right or left?

DIANA

Why don't you tell me, O Instrument of Fate?

CASSANDRA

I am telling you: walk away.

DIANA

And let her run off with my boyfriend?

MINERVA

After the way you've treated Troy I wouldn't blame him for leaving you.

DIANA

Just what did the two of you talk about? Remind him of all the good times he had with you?
(MINEVERA shoves DIANA.)

MINERVA

I am so sick of you! You're so jealous of everyone you don't see what a great thing you've already got.

DIANA

I saw you with him. I saw the two of you...

(DIANA unconsciously reaches for a weapon and CASSANDRA tosses an umbrella into her hand.)

I am not letting you steal Troy away from me!

(DIANA threatens MINERVA with the umbrella, using it like a sword, but CASSANDRA has a second umbrella and intervenes.)

CASSANDRA

I'm sorry, Diana, it's too late now. Troy's going to go back to her now.

DIANA

Did the music box tell you that?

CASSANDRA

Yeah, I thought I explained that part...

DIANA

I knew it, Minerva. The two of you, behind my back. You've been making a fool of me this whole time.

MINERVA

It's not like that!

CASSANDRA

(To MINERVA)

You should probably go now. But don't worry, you and Troy are going to be very happy together.

MINERVA

But why?

CASSANDRA

Because she went left.

DIANA

This is all your fault. You and your stupid fate.

(She attacks CASSANDRA and they "sword" fight with the umbrellas.)

MINERVA

Diana, stop, we can work this out. We'll go back to Troy and –

DIANA

Shut up! I don't ever want to see you again!

MINERVA

We're best friends, Diana, please...

(MINERVA gets in the way of the fight as DIANA lunges with her "sword." CASSANDRA takes the blow instead and is stabbed by DIANA.)

Oh my God... You killed a clown. Troy's right, you are nuts!

(MINERVA runs off and exits.)

DIANA

Minerva, please... I'm sorry...

CASSANDRA

You know, I saw this coming.

DIANA

I should've listened to you. If I had gone right, everything would have been fine...

CASSANDRA

...but you went left and...

(She winces in pain from her wound.)

Fate's a funny thing.

DIANA

Yeah.

(Pause)

Now what?

CASSANDRA

You know, it's funny: I don't know.

(DIANA picks up the music box, winds it, and lets it play. Blackout.)