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GEEK!

Crystal Skillman

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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ISBN 978-0-573-70319-5

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GEEK! was first produced by the Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company at Incubator Arts Projects in New York City on March 21, 2013. The performance was directed by Robert Ross Parker, with sets and lights by Nick Francone, costumes by Kristina Makowski and Jessica Wegener Shay, sound by Shane Rettig, multimedia design by Matthew Tennie, puppet design by David Valentine, and fight direction by Ray Rodriguez. Stage management was by Kelly Ruth Cole and Shannon Lippert, and assistant stage management was by Lauren Elizabeth Erwin. The cast was as follows:

DANYA. Allison Buck
HONEY Becky Byers
TOBY/ENSEMBLE Sheldon Best
GWEN/ENSEMBLE Emily Williams
GUARD 1/ MINNIE/SPRING/ENSEMBLE Rebecca Comtois
GUARD 2/SQUEAKER/MANNO/ENSEMBLE Eugene Oh

The producing staff of the Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company was as follows:

CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS. Qui Nguyen, Robert Ross Parker
PRODUCER/MANAGING DIRECTOR Abby Marcus
PRODUCING DIRECTOR. Nick Francone
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER. Dan Rech

CHARACTERS

DANYA – Japanese-American girl, 16. Cosplays as **DANTE**, the hero of *Dante's Fire*.

HONEY – Danya's friend, 13. Cosplays as **VIRGIE**, Dante's guide.

An ensemble cast of four actors play the following roles.

Ensemble Actor 1 (female):

ELLEN – Honey's sister and Danya's best friend (pre-recorded). She cosplays as **CLEO**, the villain.

MISS COSY – Cute anime character that is an interactive guide. Miss Cosy operates as a guide/announcer for the convention. Danya and Honey utilize her throughout the play. (Miss Cosy can be a projected anime, a voiceover, a puppet, or an actor if roles are not double cast.)

MARCY – Preteen playing a *Dante's Fire* **DEVIL ANGEL**.

GWEN – Danya's arch rival from her preteen days, cosplaying as **CLEO**, the villain of *Dante's Fire*. Gwen is played by same actress who plays Ellen.

CLEO (FIGURE) – Gwen in disguise.

DEVIL CAT #1 – Woman, mid-30s, playing an evil cat lady.

GOTH GIRL PRINCESS – Bitchy yet lovely goth girl, in a Tiara, playing a princess from *Dante's Fire*.

Ensemble Actor 2 (male):

GUARD #1 – Old-timer geek, 30s. A guy into *Star Trek*.

STEAMPUNK LEUT #1 – Teen acting as Army in *Dante's Fire*.

BRIAN – Fifth grader dressed as the **TIMEKEEPER**.

GOTH BOY PRINCESS – Goth boy, dressed as princess from *Dante's Fire*.

SQUEAKER* – A guy cosplaying as the big furry orange ball-like creature.

MANNO – Kid who plays a wizard, a real *Dante's Fire* magic card game nerd.

Ensemble Actor 3 (female):

GUARD #2 – Old-timer geek, 30s. A woman into *Star Wars*.

MOLLY – Preteen playing a *Dante's Fire* **DEVIL ANGEL**.

STEAMPUNK LEUT #2 – Teen acting as Army in *Dante's Fire*.

MINNIE – Overly dramatic girl dressed as the **MINOTAUR**.

DEVIL CAT # 2 – Woman, mid-30s, playing an evil cat lady.

SPRING – Determined homeschooled larping girl who plays a French elf archer.

* If keeping the cast size to six actors, Squeaker may be played by different ensemble actors because he is always in a costume.

Ensemble Actor 4 (male):

TOBY – Dressed as Steampunk Army leader, **ULEE-O**. Gwen's ex-boyfriend.

BATTLE BOT BOY – Headgear-wearing third grader playing an evil robot.

TINY AJAX – Kid cosplaying a dwarf. Love to rock and roll... dice!

SETTING

An anime convention in Columbus, Ohio.

TIME

January of the present year.

PRODUCTION INFO

GEEK! can be performed without an intermission.

DOUBLE CASTING

GEEK! can work with or without double casting the roles. The New York premiere production was done with a cast of six: four females and two males.

Danya and Honey were always played by the same two actresses. (The actress playing Honey can play an extra background character in the elevator in Act Two, Scene 1.)

SET DESIGN

There are quick scene changes that require alternating between reality and a heightened fantasy. The set design for the New York premiere production was kept simple to allow for these fast costume and lighting changes. Several large moveable screens operated as the set and were moved about and projected on. A screen that dropped from the ceiling was used to project the girls homemade cosplay videos. Some props and set elements (like what the girls see in the museum) were simply acted out as the girls see them or acted out in the wings (like the red door).

Ultimately, the set should be adaptable and able to move quickly to keep the brisk pace of the show. There are many low budget solutions to *GEEK!* which is, after all, a play about imagination. So have fun imagining how this play comes to life on the stage!

VIDEOS

The videos throughout the play are integral to telling the story. They reveal why the girls are there that day and are the only times we see Ellen's character. They are each scripted and will fill time during the many quick transitions needed in the play. If utilizing double casting, one will find this to be very useful.

The videos feature Danya, Honey, and Ellen cosplaying. Danya cosplays as Dante, the young male hero – tough but vulnerable. Dante's look should be strong while still embracing Danya as a girl. Honey plays Virgie, Dante's best friend and right hand gal, and her pet is Squeaker. Ellen plays Cleo, Dante's best friend turned villain.

Thought most videos will be pre-recorded, the video of Danya racing through the convention and the advertisement (videos 2 and 5) can be live.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

If you've picked up this script, it's likely you're already familiar with the concept of cosplay, you smart cookie, you! But in case you're looking for a bit more information about it: cosplay is simply when you love a character in a show or comic so much, that you gather with other loyal fans – often at conventions – dressed up as that character.

In *GEEK!*, each character is cosplaying characters they love from their favorite anime/manga, *Dante's Fire*, a fictional show created for the play. In the New York premiere production, much joy came from fleshing out the character of each kid – being true to who they are as they attempt to be a larger than life character, always keeping in mind the real kid underneath. There are heightened moments in the play where each kid 'sees' themselves doing heroic acts like their characters, but in reality these are real teenagers with real problems. Being true to that is the key to the play and to the fun!

For more information about the origins of *GEEK!*, read Crystal Skillman's interview at HOWLROUND.COM

FOREWORD

Whaddup reader,

First and foremost, I'm a fan of Crystal Skillman. I've watched her tear it up in the downtown scene for years. Her voice is irreverent, but yet also incredibly moving. What amazes me about her talents is she has the ability to find the humanity in even the quirkiest of characters and makes her audience absolutely fall in love with them.

With that in mind, in ye olde 2009, I invited her to write for our monthly serialized play series, *The Saturday Night Saloon*, which has a rogues gallery of powerhouse playwrights writing in "geek" such as Mac Rogers, A. Rey Pamatmat, Megan Mostyn-Brown, and Mike Lew to name a few. Ask anyone who's done it, writing six interconnected plays that has to be both interesting as a full season arch but also immediately entertaining as individual episodes for a packed crowd of drunken geeks is no easy task. However Crystal blew it up.

For two seasons, she crafted two shows, *Hack* and *Killer High* (the former being a spaghetti-western set in an office and the latter being about a group of elementary school assassins), that both became instantaneous audience favorites. Our rabid fans were foaming at the mouth for Crystal's work. They sent emails. They talked to me in the streets and at the after parties about them. They fell in love with her writing. Seeing her mastery over our audience inspired me to commission her to write the first Vampire Cowboys show not penned by me.

As the company known as the pioneers of "geek theatre," Vampire Cowboys has always created shows *for* outsiders, crafting plays about zombies and superheroes and epic space operas. However Crystal took a different approach as I handed her the reigns, instead of creating a play *for* them, she wrote a play *about* them. *GEEK!* is a love letter to all our fellow pop-culture nerds, fangurls, and gamer-boys. It explores both the positive and negative connotation to a word that has earned Hollywood billions of dollars yet still isolates those who are most devoted to those entertainments to sit alone in cafeterias. Along with all the hysterical jokes, funny characters, and adventure, *GEEK!* is a show about the heart of being an outsider and I am so proud that it is now available for you to read and hopefully produce in your own communities.

I'm a fan of Crystal Skillman, but she's also one of my best friends. I am delighted that this play is now in your hands to enjoy. Get ready to laugh. And cry. And geek. Using a bit of Crystal Skillman's patented slang, it is "amazeballs!"

Sincerely,
Qui Nguyen
Playwright & Co-Artistic Director, *Vampire Cowboys*

*To my husband Fred,
and to all those who love creating a world to live in
where anything is possible, if you imagine it.*

PRESHOW (OPTIONAL)

If desired, you can set up a convention feel in the performance space as soon as the audience enters. During preshow, projected slides of Miss Cosy, a cute little anime character, can teach audience members the rules of the anime convention they are about to see. These slides will introduce the audience to the fun world of *Dante's Fire*!

Welcome to Dante's Fire Con! Miss Cosy's Dos & Don'ts!

SLIDE #1: WELCOME TO DANTE'S FIRE CON! Yay! Here's Miss Cosy Con's Cosplay Dos & Don'ts for your Dante's Fire Con journey! Pay attention, cuties!

SLIDE #2: KA-BOOM! Keep those projectile weapons and laser-aiming devices or air cannons in check!

SLIDE #3: OUCHIE! NO swords, knives of any style, axes, hatchets, tomahawks, scythes, kunai, etc., including shuriken (throwing stars and darts!) unless properly padded!

SLIDE #4: OH LA LA! NO offering services in exchange for goods or sexual favors! Tee hee!

SLIDE #5: CHOKING BAD! You may NOT lead another person around with leashes, handcuffs, chains, or ropes!

SLIDE #6: NAUGHTY BITS MUST BE COVERED! Costumes must be 'street-legal!' Bikini area must be covered on both men and women. No storming the beaches topless here, cuties!

SLIDE #7: NO bare feet! ... Don't be stupid.

SLIDE #8: WATCH YOUR WINGS! Costumes must be kept to a manageable size, 'o my darlings! This applies to wings and tails! Duh!

SLIDE #9: HOW MANY FINGERS AM I HOLDING UP? You must have a clear line of sight through those cosplay costume peepholes! Or a fellow cosplayer MUST act as a handler at all times. Yay friends!

SLIDE #10: DANTE'S FIRE CON *HEARTS* THE FOLLOWING! Replica weapons of wood, foam, plastic, resin, fiberglass, and non-metal training weapons!

SLIDE #11: HAPPY HUNTING! Bows and crossbows are awesome but must be kept in a quiver! Arrow tips! Bows should be loosely strung with a weak material like yarn. Yay, yarn!

SLIDE #12: Have a good Con and remember to always play safe, o' my darlings!

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Fuck Waiting

*(Video projection #1: Anime music blares. Quick snippets of homemade videos flash by to the music. In the snippets that appear we see three teenage girls: **DANYA**, **HONEY** and **ELLEN** who are dressed up, acting out scenes from their favorite anime/manga, Dante's Fire. The quick video ends with **ELLEN** looking at the camera. Video off.)*

(Title projection up: GEEK!)

*(Harsh lights snap up on **DANYA** and **HONEY** shivering in the freezing cold. While their jackets and sweatshirts cover their cosplaying outfits, we can see hints of their costume peeking out. **HONEY** carries a large duffel bag. **DANYA** has a small bag slung across her shoulder. They are outside the convention center entrance; the door is open – casting a warm glow of light on them. They both anxiously face the burly Hyatt Hotel Convention Center thirty-something security **GUARDS** in front of them. The **GUARDS** are looking over their clipboard with the eyes of the uncommitted. These **GUARDS** are the guys that do nothing for good or bad, just their job.)*

GUARD #1. You're not on the list.

DANYA. Bullshit.

HONEY. Danya. Chill, okay. *(to **GUARDS**)* Please, just look again, okay?

GUARD #2. We did.

DANYA. Well try again and maybe this time you'll remember how to read. We should be there. Danya Spenser.

HONEY. Roberta Taylor. I might be under Honey. It's a nickname that stuck.

GUARD #1. Sweet. But uh, yeah, no way.

DANYA. We drove from Cleveland. Like five hours!

GUARD #1. And that's how long you're gonna drive back.

HONEY. Please, we're here to see Joto Samagashi.

GUARD #2. And so is everyone at Dante Fire Con, whoever the hell he is.

DANYA. SHE created *Dante's Fire*! SHE'S the greatest manga and anime creator ever.

HONEY. (to DANYA) Uh, Tezuka...? Astroboy.

DANYA. (to HONEY) Correction: greatest *living* manga creator ever.

GUARD #1. You're. Not. On. The. List. So if we're wrong show us your tickets.

DANYA. We paid months ago. There should be three tickets. Danya Spensor. Honey and –

HONEY. Ellen Taylor.

GUARD #2. Oh. Well we have an Ellen Taylor here.

DANYA. That's us Dickface!

GUARD #1. Well let her appear and show her magical ID and I can use my magical powers of security guard-dom to let you in.

HONEY. She couldn't make it.

GUARD #2. Well then – you're going to have to go back around front of this glorious palace of a Hyatt Hotel and pay for this freak fest like every other weirdo.

DANYA. How much is it?

GUARD #2. Sixty bucks a ticket.

HONEY. How much do we have, Danya?

DANYA. After that rest stop where you ate like five whoppers –

HONEY. Like three! And one of them was a junior!

DANYA. We're wasting time! Please! There's only an hour and fifteen minutes left!!!

GUARD #2. How is that our fault? Who comes to one of these things on the last possible day!

HONEY. We had complications, okay?

DANYA. And we have to see Samagashi. It's important!!

GUARD #1. Look I get obsessions. I love to snuggle up with a good bottle of gin and Wrath of Khan –

GUARD #2. (*correcting him - a heated subject*) Empire. Strikes. Back.

GUARD #1. Your mistake my friend!!

GUARD #2. No the mistake is that you and I agreed to work an event populated by kids lining up at 6 AM looking like Back to the Future slipped Mad Max a roofie and popped out some Stripe-Gremlins-Chud-Rosemary's baby!

DANYA. What's Gremlins?

GUARD #1. This conversation is over.

HONEY. Wait! Can't you do something to help...a fellow geek?

GUARD #1. Oh. Oh, a fellow geek, well. Jerry. Jerry.

GUARD #2. What Tom?

GUARD #1. Should we give them three questions before they cross the Bridge of Death?

DANYA. Oh c'mon.

(They eye each other. Standoff.)

GUARD #1. Where does Princess Leia tell Grand Moff Tarkin the rebel base is located?

(DANYA and HONEY look at each other blankly at this old school geek shit.)

GUARD #2. Dantoine!

(GUARDS high five. GUARD #2 takes role of "Quiz Host.")

YEAH! Who appears in all five Trek shows?

GUARD #1. Majel Roddenberry! Gene's widow. The voice of the Trek computer! Oh good lord!!!

(They high five.)

GUARD #2. Hah! Feel the sting of our awesome!

GUARD #1. *(making bee stinging noise)* Zzzzzz! You lose Pikachu!

HONEY. Here! *(HONEY offers manga to GUARDS.)* This is one of *Dante's Fire's* best issues in the whole wide freakin' world! It's yours if you let us in.

(GUARD #1 takes the comic.)

GUARD #1. WOW! NOW I see. You're just in time! I need another good "Jokes for the John".

(GUARDS snicker. Why are they so mean?!)

HONEY. Hey!

GUARD #2. Speaking of – nature calls!

GUARD #1. Goodbye girls!

DANYA. But Samagashi never shows up anywhere – this is our only chance!

HONEY. You don't understand – you don't –

(Back door slams shut. The light is gone as are the GUARDS!)

DANYA. AHHH!!! MOTHERFUCKING BITCH FUCKER
FUCKFACES!

HONEY. Could you try being a little less angry?

DANYA. Well that's kinda my thing.

HONEY. Well it's getting kinda old.

DANYA. What the hell does that mean?!

HONEY. What the hell do you think it means? We're just sitting there - everyone in the living room and you pull me aside out of nowhere - right there while my whole family is just – *(imitating DANYA:)* "I'm going. I need to get the convention – I need to take your parents car!"

DANYA. It's not my fault my dad has a piece of shit Honda!

HONEY. Whatever happened to "we"? The whole ride over with your hood up – *(imitates her driving pissed at the wheel)* Said nothing about *her* – like all you're doing is trying not to talk about –

DANYA. You said you wanted to come with me.

HONEY. What am I supposed to say?

DANYA. That you know this is right! Everyone just sitting around – No offense to you or your family but Ellen would have hated everything about this weekend okay. And Ellen wouldn't give a shit if I didn't want to talk about it.

HONEY. She would have actually. If you want to remember something that really happened correctly instead of idealizing every single thing my sister did before she –.

DANYA. You want to be here for the same reason I do.

(DANYA holds up her bag – what's inside must be very important to them!)

We do this Honey and then everything will be –

HONEY. Better? Okay? That's what you really think.

DANYA. I think Dante never gives up.

(DANYA takes out her iPhone. She presses play. The Dante's Fire theme song blares.)

HONEY. Don't. Don't even –.

(DANYA dances around HONEY as the music gets louder. HONEY can't help but let out a laugh. Smiles. HONEY unzips her hoodie revealing her VIRGIE character outfit underneath. She plops on her pink, short hair wig or flicks her already short highlighted hair. VIRGIE, the character HONEY is cosplaying, is a spunky, go-to gal, full of gadgets, fun, and perhaps aviation goggles! After all she's a sassy pilot. DANYA grins throwing off her jacket revealing the DANTE outfit she wears. DANTE is a character who fights first and talks later, but has unexpected humility at times, a bad ass ready for anything and his outfit reflects it. Though DANYA is playing a male character – she's also selected items that still show her femininity. She puts her hair in a pony tail. DANYA and HONEY grow more and more excited – diving into the large duffel bag they've brought, taking out items to complete their costumes. HONEY bows to

DANYA, giving her a blue, plastic sword. **DANYA** smiles and bows back, takes it from her as if it were real. My goodness! Look! **DANYA** and **HONEY** have transformed before us into **DANTE** and **VIRGIE**. They're having so much fun they don't notice **MARCY** and **MOLLY**, dressed in black with huge devil wings and boots, sneaking up on them. **DANYA** and **HONEY** realize they're being watched. The music comes to a halt as they turn to face...)

DANYA & HONEY. *Dante's Fire Devil Angels!*

MARCY. YAY!!! I told you it is them! The girls who acted out all the videos!

HONEY. You saw them?

MOLLY. We love them!!!

(introducing themselves:) Molly!

MARCY. Marcy!

We heard what the guards said to you. So mean!

MOLLY. Awful, stinky bad guards! Not like pretty Dante's Angels Super Sister Guardians of the Hell Universe. Do you think we're pretty?

(MOLLY and MARCY pose.)

HONEY. Sure!

MOLLY & MARCY. YAY!!!

(MOLLY and MARCY run to HONEY and DANYA. They hug them tightly.)

DANYA. That was fast.

MOLLY. Well everything happens faster these days with technology! We live in an accelerated culture you know?! Every moment here is a life changing moment. Oh that was good!

MARCY. Tweeted it!

DANYA. Look we don't have a lot of time. The convention's gonna close. Can you get us in?

MARCY. It's a CRAZ-YYY cosplaying world in there! You can barely tell what's real and what's not.

MOLLY. (*handing HONEY a game cartridge*) It changes the way you see things.

DANYA. We're not scared of anything.

MARCY. No one ever is baby. Until it gets shitballs crazy. Follow us!

(She puts out her hand and they all pile their hands on.)

ALL. GIRL POWER BITCHES!

(They throw their hands up in the air as they jump up excited! MOLLY and MARCY motion for DANYA and HONEY to follow them through a secret entrance into the convention.)

(Video projection #2: Intense rock music blares. A filmed advertisement of the convention plays! Images of a convention scroll by as ANNOUNCER talks.)

ANNOUNCER. DANTE FIRECON 2013! DANTE ANIME! DANTE MOVIES! DANTE COMICS! DANTE FIRE CON! THE ULTIMATE COSPLAYING CONVENTION THAT HAS IT ALL! ALL THE AWESOME SHIT YOU WANT ALL THE TIME! ALL NOW! NOW! FROM THE BEST ANIME SERIES OF ALL TIME CREATED BY THE ONE AND ONLY *JOTO SAMAGASHI!*

(Photos of celebrities are shown, as they are voiced over.)

SAMUEL L. JACKSON. God Bless Joto Samagashi! Her animated TV shows – and *Dante's Fire Energy Cereal Crunch!* – are what gets me up in the morning and keeps me going!

WILLIAM SHATNER. Beam me up Joto. Samagashi. How can you not. Love! *Dante's Fire!* A show about a boy who travels to find his own. Destiny!

GEORGE LUCAS. Every time I make another blue ray Wampa on Hoth I silently pray: Bless you. Joto Samagashi.

SHATNER. Sam-a-gashi!

ANNOUNCER. WELCOME! COLUMBUS, OHIO! Only this weekend can YOU COSPLAY as YOUR favorite character in all nine *Dante's Fire* dimensions! Dante's

Fire Con is perfectly created to replicate Dante's journey across the universe! This is where you'll catch 'em all!

(Images of the characters scroll by:) CLEO! ULEE-O! SQUEAKER! VIRGIE! DANTE! AND ALL THE REST!

DUMB DAD/ADULT. Uh, what the hell is cosplaying?

NERD SON. Well DAD cosplayers in Japan used to refer to themselves as *reiya* or *kosupure*. In Japan teenagers gather with like-minded friends in places like Tokyo's Harajuku district to engage in cosplay. The whole point is to become someone else to find yourself! After all, the power of transformation is a huge thing in Japanese culture –

ANNOUNCER. But all YOU need to know is it's motherfucking awesome! Thanks to Joto Samagahi! And holy shitballs! She's here! Right inside Dante's Fire Con! Signing whatever your geek-filled heart desires!!!

(An image of Joto Samagashi in a baseball cap, her face obscured, trying not to be seen holding up her hand, is shown.)

The ever reclusive and exclusive Joto Samagashi the most influential manga creator of all time is our guest artist! DO YOU HEAR WHAT I'M FREAKING SAYING? SIGN UP NOW TO SEE HER! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? DON'T FUCK UP! THIS IS THE LAST DAY! THE LAST HOUR! SUNDAY! SUNDAY! SUNDAY!!! FOR SAMAGASHI!

COSPLAYERS. Abandon all hope! All ye who enter here!

SAMUEL L. JACKSON. MOTHERFUCKER!

(Film ends. HONEY and DANYA stand in the middle of the ever-busy-big-bad-wild-world of Dante's Fire Con. DANYA clutches her bag tightly. Projections of Dante's Fire surround them! It's like the Emerald City of nerd-dom! Everywhere they look cosplayers are rolling dice,

dancing and singing on stage, merchandise is being sold! Everyone is dressed up and going crazy.)

HONEY. Oh man.

DANYA. This place is more packed than a whore's asshole.

HONEY. It is! But how are we gonna –

DANYA. Honey. We'll have to be the best Dante and Virgie.
And what does Virgie do?

HONEY. Navigate. Right!

(HONEY holds up the USB device/cartridge MOLLY gave her. She takes out her own handheld DS game player and puts the device in. Suddenly MISS COSY, an animated cute girl cosplayer – designed to be a interactive guide to the con – appears! A big version of her is projected behind them – or she appears as a puppet or actor to audience – as they watch her on HONEY's game player.)

MISS COSY. Tee. Hee. Please INSERT NAMES.

HONEY. *(typing their names in)* Oh!

MISS COSY. HELLO! Pleased to meet you DANY-YA and HONE-Y! Welcome to all nine dimensions of Dante's quest! See...?! Pretty!

(MISS COSY gestures to a map which appears on screen that is horribly and wonderfully complicated and crazy.)

Ms. Samagashi herself signs on the 9th level! But OMG it's 5:45 and we close at 7 sharp!

HONEY. *(signing up)* Samagashi! C'mon we just want to sign up to see –

MISS COSY. Got it! Your number is: 465,783,231009,800, 6999 –

DANYA & HONEY. SON OF A BITCH FUCK!

HONEY. Danya! How are we gonna get up there now?

(ding!)

DANYA. The elevator!

(DANYA and HONEY run to the elevator but teenagers, dressed like a Steampunk Army, spill out of the doors stopping them!)

STEAMPUNK LEUT #1. YO YO YO YO these run express only
for Sir Major Ulee-o of the Steampunk Army of Hell!

STEAMPUNK LEUT #2. YO.

DANYA. Well we don't care "yo" , we have to –

HONEY. Oh my god really? What? Ulee-o's my favorite character.

DANYA. I thought I was your favorite character.

HONEY. Next to you of course. *(gesturing to others)* And you.
And you. Yo.

STEAMPUNK LEUT #2. HE'S ALMOST HERE! YO! Clear the
way! Clear the way for Major Ulee-o! Attention! YO!!!

DANYA. AHH! I don't care if some geek dresses up like the
hottest guy in the show just let us –

*(The Leuts silence DANYA. They whip out a small boom
box and prepare her to hear ULEE-O's song.)*

STEAMPUNK LEUTS #1 & #2.

HIS ARMOR SHINES LIKE THE SUN!
FREAKIN' AWESOME SINCE THE WORLDS BEGUN
HIS ROAD IS THE ROAD TO EVERYONE
ASHORE FROM THE DANGEROUS SEA-YO
IS FREAKIN' AWESOME SIR MAJOR ULEE-O

*(As they rap, TOBY another teenager dressed as ULEE-O,
enters with his back to the audience.)*

HE IS JUST!

*(TOBY turns around dramatically, revealing his
awesome.)*

TOBY.

HE JUST IS!

STEAMPUNK LEUTS #1 & #2.

MOVES THE HEAVENS!

TOBY.

IS A FREAKIN' WIZ!

STEAMPUNK LEUTS #1 & #2.

SO FREAKIN' WISE!
THE CUTEST EYES!
MAKES LOVE PRIMAL!

TOBY.

IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

STEAMPUNK LEUTS.

IF YOU DON'T LOVE HIM YOU'RE JUST PLAIN CRAZY GIRL!
DON'T BE STUPID! HE'S HERE! YO.
IS FREAKIN' AWESOME SIR MAJOR ULEE-OOO!!

TOBY. Yo my lady.

DANYA. Yo lady this Sir-Doche-A-Lot.

TOBY. Danya? Honey?

HONEY. Fuck my face! You do have mind powers.

TOBY. It's me. Toby from Brooklyn?

(Breaking the suave act, TOBY jumps up and down happy to see them.)

We played online! DF chatroom.

(aside to DANYA) Ullee-o-251? C'mon. You sent me those fan videos you guys were making.

DANYA. And apparently you formed some kind of cult.

TOBY. We are the army Ulee-o himself once formed to govern the universe!

DANYA. Look Toby –

TOBY. Danya. I... I've been trying to get in touch with you.

DANYA. We haven't been online in a few days.

TOBY. About Ellen is it really true she –

DANYA. How do you...?

TOBY. It's posted all over. I didn't even think you'd be here.

HONEY. Well we are here okay!

TOBY. But –

DANYA. Look, we don't have time to banter with your double-dealingness, okay? Just let us use the elevators.

(She clutches her bag swung across her shoulder, reminding her of it's importance.)

We have to see Samagashi!

(beat)

TOBY. *(dramatically as ULEE-O)* Only those ready for the truth can see Samagashi.

DANYA. We're not ready to see Samagashi and those geeks are?

TOBY. I'm saying I don't care about them.

(Beat. SEXY!!!)

DANYA. Just playing Ulee-o huh. You never know if he's good or bad so why should I trust you?

TOBY. Everyone trusts me. I'm loveable.

(HONEY sighs. DANYA shoots her a look.)

HONEY. It's true!

TOBY. Just know Samagashi will make time for you if *you* make the time.

(The lighting suddenly becomes heightened-fantasy lighting. This is how our cosplayers "imagine" this moment. The LEUTS dramatically make a magical noise as TOBY takes off a golden watch from around his neck and throws it to DANYA. She catches it in awe. Harsh reality lights pop back up. DANYA stares at what he's actually given her.)

Til next time. O my darling.

LEUT. He's gone.

(He and they are indeed. HONEY looks back to "timepiece.")

HONEY. Cool! Dante's timepiece to magically jump from porthole to porthole to descend to each ring!

DANYA. And how is a baby stroller wheel painted gold with an alarm clock going to help us?

HONEY. Only the timekeeper knows how to work it anyway.

(A creepy hooded kid dressed like the TIMEKEEPER enters.)

BRIAN. Uh, hello I am here.

HONEY & DANYA. AH! Timekeeper.

BRIAN. Steampunk Ulee-o is right you know. There is, uh, another way. To find –

DANYA. Samagashi?

BRIAN. Uh-huh. How good are your moves?

(They do some moves.)

Very good! “I choose you!”

HONEY. To do what?

(We hear bloodthirsty cheers: “Fight! Fight! Fight!”)

BRIAN. It’s a secret.

(BRIAN acting as TIMEKEEPER touches the wall as if to open a magical, hidden door but in reality he is just opening a door leading to...)

DANYA & HONEY. Ah! Emergency Stairwell!

DANYA. For Samagahi.

HONEY. For Ellen.

(They descend.)

Scene 2: To the Victor Go the Spoils, Motherfuckers!

(In darkness we hear MISS COSY's voice reminding us...)

MISS COSY. Tee hee! Just a reminder Con-sters! Here at Dante's Fire Con there is ABSOLUTELY NO MOCK FIGHTING! Weapons or props may NOT be wielded or brandished in a reckless manner. To do so is illegal and Miss Cosy will find you! Oh yes she will. Tee hee!

(Sound of cheering. A bloodthirsty crowd of geeks! Lights bump up on DANYA and HONEY in some kind of ring! DANYA's bag is still slung across her shoulder.)

DANYA & HONEY. Battledome!

(BRIAN, still acting like the TIMEKEEPER, throws padded "American Gladiator"-like-huge-jousting-foam-stick things at DANYA and HONEY which they catch.)

DANYA. Whoah!

HONEY. Danya – listen! I have a feeling –

DANYA. That we can totally do this right?!

HONEY. *(to BRIAN)* Is that true if we win we'll meet Samagashi?

BRIAN. Dudes! I'm the Timekeeper I can make magical shit happen all the time, yes totally you win you get an express trip to hell – and Samagashi.

CROWD. Samagashi! Samagashi!

BRIAN. Timekeeper says: It's TIME!!! First fight! Three jabs wins!

DANYA. Just follow me okay?

HONEY. I can take care of myself you know!

(The ground rumbles! Someone or something is coming...!)

Uh... Danya...?!

BRAIN. First out of our air duct grate gate!

(**BRAIN** gestures to a little gate that leads to an air duct [or gestures to the wings].)

BRIAN. Minotaur!!!

(*Fantasy lighting. Footsteps grow louder! The ground shakes! DANYA and HONEY prepare to fight. Lighting returns to normal when MINNIE, dressed like a MINOTAUR, an overzealous geek, jumps out with a jousting stick.*)

MINNIE. Every geek for themselves! It's the only way. The best geek wins! The best geek – gets lead straight down to see Samagashi before this place closes for all TIME right Brian?!

BRIAN. I told you – I'm Timekeeper! We're not at Masque and Mime Drama Camp right now Minnie!

HONEY. Wait. What grade are you in?

BRIAN. Fifth.

DANYA. How does a fifth grader end up running an illegal cosplay fight club?

BRIAN. Who are you to question me? Are you fucking smarter than a fifth grader?

DANYA. Yes! (*to HONEY:*) All we have to do is win. Easy right?

MINNIE. Wrong! I'll crush you! I know all of minatour's moves. I've been working on 'em. I love the ladies. I love the cheeseburgers. I still wear my *Dante's Fire* glow in the dark underroos – you know the one with Ulee-o and Dante flying through the stars and Cleo following them with her red ax of fire and I'm ready to go in!! To win! To go straight down. See Samagashi! I'm ready! I'm ready!

HONEY. Wow, you really love Samagashi too.

MINNIE. YES! Took the bus. The bus broke down. Found a car. Smashed through. Don't know how to drive. Got out of the car. Ran. Little old lady found me – thought I looked cute and petted me and called me Maxie poo and I let her. I let her. Door opened. Ran out. Guards. So mean. Wanted money. So much money. Ran to

ATM. Ate my card. Kicked it. Screamed. Calmed. Thought: What would Samagashi do? Sold my entire *Dante's Fire* first series right there in front of those Geek Gestapo. Said they needed exact change. Ran to deli. Got banana. Potassium! Ran back. Threw the money. Ran. And now victory! I'm ready to win now Brian!!!

BRIAN. Timekeeper!

MINNIE. For Samagashi!!!

(Fantasy lighting. DANYA and MINNIE fight in slow motion. DANYA easily wins. Lights snap back to reality. MINNIE is crushed.)

Busfare?

(DANYA and HONEY shake their heads "no." MINNIE slithers back into the grate, exiting.)

DANYA. We won! Take us to Samagashi.

BRIAN. You won. *(about HONEY:)* This one didn't fight.

HONEY. That's not fair!

BRIAN. Don't worry you'll get your chance. With your arch rival – reigning champion CLEO!

(GWEN bounces out of the grate. She is dressed like CLEO, the villian from the series. She waves her huge, joustingpadded ax, and does some super sassy cheerleader like moves! Oh my!)

GWEN. Go. Fight. Win! YEAH!

DANYA. What the fuck kind of moves are that?

GWEN. Super sexy death battle awesome time moves Danya-Dorcus!

(She attacks them as they battle/chat.)

DANYA. Gwen Sweetiny. Fuck!

HONEY. You know her?

DANYA. Before I transferred.

GWEN. Are you going to even try to fight Danya-Dorcus?

DANYA. We're not on the playground – I'm not twelve – you have no right to call me that here!

GWEN. Oh come on Karate Kid I was never that bad. Ever since I met Toby online playing I realized I can save my aggression for this!

(GWEN does a big attack with her ax joust!)

DANYA. *(defending against GWEN)* Toby?

GWEN. *(circling around DANYA, twirling her ax)* Toby's my boyfriend so... We share. He loves my videos. My dad. He helped me with the green screen – played Squeaker in the live action movie –

HONEY. I LOVE SQUEAKER! Your dad really plays him?

GWEN. Yeah – we have his whole orange furry outfit on the tenth floor.

HONEY. Wow you live in a mansion?!

DANYA. HONEY! If you're too scared to fight then please shut up!

HONEY. I'm not scared!

GWEN. You should be – of the government! Universal health care right?! That's what my dad says.

DANYA. If your dad is so awesome Gwen-dorkus then why the hell are you here – why doesn't he just get you in to see Samagashi?

GWEN. Industry people are busy – that's what makes them better than us. And he has to work the Squeaker booth – I mean – it's not his weekend to see me anyway. And who cares?! Then I get to spend more time with Toby. We texted all last summer – sometimes texting all night long!

DANYA. You are a pale imitation to Ellen's Cleo. *You* don't deserve to see Samagashi. Come on, Honey.

(DANYA turns to go.)

GWEN. Oh yeah?! HAH!

(GWEN pushes the backside of her ax into DANYA's back, shoving her to the ground!)

DANYA. Ah!

HONEY. Hey! Leave her alone.

(**HONEY** swats **GWEN** with her jousting stick.)

YES! Virgie's going to kick your but!

(**GWEN** gets up, a super pissed look in her eye. She raises her ax.)

DANYA. (struggling to get up) Honey –

HONEY. I got this!

(**GWEN** attacks **HONEY** who defends, fights back. **GWEN** isn't all talk – she's good. **HONEY** holds her own but suddenly gets hurt! **DANYA** jumps back into the fight. She knocks **GWEN** to the ground. **GWEN** panics and changes up the game:)

GWEN. Tag team!

(**BRIAN**, as **TIMEKEEPER**, blows a whistle. A nerdy kid with headgear dressed in a weird, metallic, robotic outfit enters.)

HONEY, DANYA, & GWEN. FIFTH DIMENSION FIRE BOT BOY!

BOT BOY. Uh-huh. I'm in third grade. I was taught to respect all life forms. You girls are pretty.

(The girls say "Awww.")

And I'm so sorry I have to hurt you. But you flesh bitches gotta be taught some responsibility.

(Big robot fight – they are almost crushed! In the fight

BOT BOY gets **DANYA**'s bag!)

HONEY. No!

BOT BOY. Bot Boy senses something special inside.

GWEN. Bring it to me. To the Victor go the spoils motherfuckers! Danya Dorkus! Hah!

(waving **DANYA**'s bag around, taunting)

Who's winning now?! Who *always* wins?

DANYA. Give it back or I'll kill you.

GWEN. Wow. Dark. It is true what Ellen said –

DANYA. What do you mean?

GWEN. You have gone off the deep end.

DANYA. Ellen talked to you?

GWEN. Everyone in the chatroom was talking about what happened when we found out what Ellen did. She was saying for weeks how she didn't even want to be friends with you anymore. Ellen said all you wanted to do was cosplay all the time and you didn't even care what happened to her after you posted those videos and there were all those comments. God. That you still would go out there and act like – you were just asking for a beating. That's probably why she killed herself.

DANYA. SHUT THE FUCK UP!

GWEN. She didn't want to play anymore and you couldn't handle it.

DANYA. I said SHUT UP!

(DANYA hits GWEN! It's violent and intense – surprising all of them! The bag falls to the floor.)

HONEY. Shit! Shit!

(Clearly shaken, DANYA grabs back her bag.)

GWEN. You broke my fucking nose you freak!

DANYA. I didn't mean to – .

(HONEY grabs BRIAN.)

HONEY. Look we won your dumb game – take us to Samagashi!

BRIAN. I can't. I was just making this up!

HONEY. You mean we did this for nothing?

BRIAN. You think I don't want to meet Samagashi?! We all do. At least I gave us hope.

DANYA. There is never hope in lying.

(BRIAN runs off crying.)

HONEY. Danya! You're bleeding!

(Flashlights! Ah! The GUARDS are here! GUARD #2 rushes in.)

GUARD TWO. What kind of Death Star hellhole insanity is going on in here?!

(GWEN points at them.)

GWEN. It's their fault. Those crazy bitches!

(HONEY grabs DANYA. Everyone is after them.)

DANYA. The air duct!!!

HONEY. Danya!

(HONEY grabs DANYA. They flee exiting through the air duct, closing the gate behind them.)

Scene 3: Don't Rush a Devil Cat

(Video projection #3: One of the videos the girls have made is projected. While home-made and put together by filming each other in their backyard, using home-made props of course, the videos are impressive and inventive. The videos consist of jump cuts between different scenes. Here DANYA cosplays DANTE, and ELLEN cosplays CLEO. At the start ELLEN is playing CLEO before she turns evil – here we see why!)

DANYA. *(as DANTE)* Are you sure I am the one to hold the sword of fire?

(Cut to: DANYA walking alongside ELLEN as their characters.)

Cleo. I have to go with Ulee-o and his army – he's the only one who can lead me to the center of the universe. The tower.

ELLEN. *(as CLEO)* You choose him over me?

DANYA. I have to go! You have to stay here and make our village is safe.

(Cut to: CLEO and DANTE. This shot captures that “splitscreen-anime-yelling face feeling.”)

ELLEN. You'd abandon your best friend?! Who has fought beside you?

DANYA: You can't come. Alright?!

ELLEN: Why?

DANYA: Because friends get in the way and I don't want you to get in my way, okay?!

ELLEN. I hate you!

DANYA. I DON'T HATE YOU BUT YOU HAVE TO SERIOUSLY CHILL! I'll be back for you I promise.

(CLEO holds a homemade prop that represents a huge powerful crystal – something fun like a box lined with tin foil with a light inside so it glows as she peers in.)

ELLEN. Yes. Ah!!! Oh no what's – THE POWER!!!

(ELLEN acts like CLEO turning evil!)

(directly at camera:) I feel different. ALIVE! DANTE
I'M COMING FOR YOU.

*(Video out. Tick. Tick. Tick. Time is running out!
Lights up on harsh reality. HONEY and DANYA come
up out of the grate into a bathroom. Cold. Sounds of
dripping. A kind of darkness is setting in: a realization
of the task they've come here to do, and the violence that
has just passed.)*

HONEY. Oh god – where are we?

DANYA. Miss Cosy.

HONEY. Right! Miss Cosy!

*(HONEY takes out her game system and turns on MISS
COSY, who is projected behind them. During this, DANYA
stands, getting herself together, swinging her bag across
her shoulder again.)*

MISS COSY. Oh I got so sleepy you weren't using me you
silly girls! Danya. Honey. What are you doing in the
third floor bathroom, silly? Why aren't you out having
fun?!

DANYA. Um, because I'm fucking bleeding, Miss Cosy!

MISS COSY. How can you be glum when there's Cotton
Candy Land on this floor at Squeaker's Candy Corner!

HONEY. Squeaker!

DANYA. Honey! We don't give a shit about that – we need
to find a way out of here!

HONEY. There isn't Danya. You can only get out using the
main floors. We go out there and they'll catch us for
sure. Look at you. Don't you ever just think –

DANYA. People get mad Honey. People fuck up. People
do horrible things. You start thinking – life gets
complicated. Okay? Time runs out. Time is running
out. C'mon!

HONEY. You're not going anywhere until –

(HONEY stops her, taking DANYA's arm which is bleeding. HONEY takes care of DANYA's wound while she talks.)

– hold still! You're always so impatient.

DANYA. Do I have a choice?!

HONEY. We all do. This is crazy. God. Coming here like – it won't change anything.

DANYA. That's Honey talking.

HONEY. What if I don't want to play Virgie right now okay?

DANYA. You don't have to do anything you don't want to, Honey. The last thing I want is for you to feel...

HONEY. What that Gwen girl said –

DANYA. You'd listen to her? C'mon. You know. Ellen loved playing this more than anything.

HONEY. Where are you going?

DANYA. To see Samagahi. Are you coming?

HONEY. We can't just walk out there now! They're waiting for us!

DANYA. A hero doesn't think – a hero does! You can't be scared, Honey –

HONEY. What the hell? YOU - you're going to teach ME now?! When you can't even tell me why – ?

DANYA. No one can. It happened. *(Hesitant to bring it up, but she must:)* And I have one more year here and then I graduate and –

HONEY. You're telling me this right now? Out of all the fucking things – .

(HONEY goes into one of the stalls, closes the door.

DANYA holds the bag in front of her, trying to find the right words. She softly speaks through the bathroom door to HONEY.)

DANYA. Honey. Look. Ellen – she'd worry about you. Calling out sick just to avoid going to class? That's not you. You have to stand up for yourself.

HONEY. Don't you tell me what my sister –

DANYA. She knew that you can't keep acting like a kid.

HONEY. And you can't keep acting like you don't care!

DANYA. Being here is caring. Getting this to Samagshi is caring.

HONEY. For you. Not for her. That's the truth isn't it. This is all about you!

DANYA. How can you say that? Seriously. Grow up, Honey.

HONEY. Me? Look at you!

(Sound of purring. DANYA stops HONEY from talking.)

DANYA. Uh, Honey - I don't think we're alone.

(Flush! Two sets of feet donning high healed red boots appear under the stalls. And then cat tails.)

DANYA & HONEY. Dante's Fire Devil Cats!

(Door stalls burst open and the DEVIL CAT LADIES are there. They are dressed in red and wear long gloves with long claw like nails they click together.)

DEVIL CAT #1. TICK.

DEVIL CAT #2. TICK.

DEVIL CAT #2. TICK. Time is running out.
Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. Joto.

DEVIL CAT #2. Samagashi.

DEVIL CAT #1. Have you seen those escalators?

DEVIL CAT #2. Packed.

DEVIL CAT #1. Shame.

DEVIL CAT #2. And the elevators are Steampunk Army express only if you haven't noticed.

DANYA. Already noted. Do you only state the obvious?

DEVIL CAT #1. Don't rush a Devil Cat.

HONEY. We're in the bathroom. You can drop the act.

DEVIL CAT #2. What act? This is really us.

DEVIL CAT #1. Our alter egos work in another world.

DEVIL CAT #2. Receptionist.

DEVIL CAT #1. Office Manager.

DEVIL CAT #2. Notes.

DEVIL CAT #1. Emails.

DEVIL CAT #2. Deadlines.

HONEY. Wait a minute you think being you is um, when you're not pretending?

DEVIL CAT #2. Have you ever twitched a furry tail between your legs and seen who you end up with at the end of the night of these dreadful affairs?

HONEY. Uh... I'm thirteen.

DEVIL CAT #1. Well crash course! It's awesome.

HONEY. Danya...?

DEVIL CAT #2. Not used to us are you?

DANYA. You're different that's for sure.

DEVIL CAT #1. You can say it.

DEVIL CAT #2. Older.

DEVIL CAT #1. Late Thirties!

DEVIL CAT #2. Shhhh. Don't tell.

DEVIL CAT #1. We can drink –

DEVIL CAT #2. Legally!!

DEVIL CAT #1. And do heroin!

DEVIL CAT #2. Illegally!!

DEVIL CAT #1. And order lots and lots of boots from Zappos!

DEVIL CAT #2. That we decoupage with our own cat's fur.
Pretty!

DEVIL CAT #1. But happiness?

DANYA. Is dressing up.

DEVIL CAT #2. PURRRRRRRRRRR. I like you.

DANYA. I see.

DEVIL CAT #1. We have experienced – so many cons.

DEVIL CAT #2. Cosplay.

DEVIL CAT #1. Fur fan clubs.

DEVIL CAT #2. You –

DEVIL CAT #1. Remind us –

DEVIL CAT #2. Of us.

DEVIL CAT #1. We might help you.

DEVIL CAT #2. If you show us.

DEVIL CAT #1. Why you're here.

DEVIL CAT #2. What's in the bag, Dante?

(DANYA clutches her bag.)

DANYA. It's private.

DEVIL CAT #1. Special? Valuable!

DANYA. For *us*. Stay away.

DEVIL CAT #2. But it's worthless unless you see her, isn't that right?

HONEY. You know how to get to Samagashi?

DEVIL CAT #1. We know another way in.

(DEVIL CATS open a door! Or a hatch in the floor. Or gestures to a light offstage! Something impressive! The girls peer in.)

Exhibit room A.

DEVIL CAT #2. The museum.

DANYA. C'mon Honey – let's go.

(DANYA exits into the museum. HONEY follows but one of the DEVIL CATS grabs HONEY's shoulder, pulls her back and purrs in her ear.)

DEVIL CAT #2. She only thinks of herself.

DEVIL #1. She doesn't appreciate you.

DEVIL #2. *She* has no right to see Samagashi.

DEVILS #1. But you do little one.

DEVIL CAT #2. Remember in *Dante's Fire* real friends share.

HONEY. You want to be friends?

(They cackle.)

DEVIL CAT #1. Sure. You get us that precious bag. And we'll take *you* to Samagshi.

HONEY. You will?

DEVIL CAT #1. We'll find you. Meow.

DEVIL CAT #2. Chow.

(**DEVIL CATS** *smile big ass freaky cat smiles.* **HONEY** *breaks away from them and exits through the special entrance. The* **DEVIL CATS** *exit on the opposite side, cackling.*)

Scene 4: How Do You Know You're Winning?

(Lights up on DANYA standing in the middle of the hall. HONEY runs after her friend, skidding to a stop to avoid crashing into her. A slower, more heartfelt version of the Dante's Fire theme music plays as DANYA and HONEY look out in amazement at this place.)

DANYA. Wow.

HONEY. OMG! So much Samagashi stuff.

HONEY. Bibs, puzzles, all the toys! Uh, a rocking chair? Oh! The Sword of Fire! Look!

(HONEY opens her game system. MISS COSY's voice is heard.)

MISS COSY. Welcome to Exhibit Hall A, the Samagashi Museum. Enter the exhibit number to learn more about the amazing objects you see.

(HONEY types numbers into the device.)

Selection 51. What you see before you is Samagashi's first printed manga, or graphic novel. *Dante's Fire*, first edition. Samagashi first drew Dante after reading *The Inferno* in school at the tender age of ten. In her own words:

(We hear SAMAGASHI's voice speaking in Japanese, as MISS COSY translates over her:)

"I closed this masterpiece and looked out the window. Outside I saw a bright red bird in a tree and I imagined! What if that was a boy trying to get free from everyone who didn't understand him, who didn't care. His parents who could never see Dante was the one to fight to bring all the stars together – the hope that was stolen. I saw how, with this story, I could find peace in the world –"

HONEY. – and all the answers of the universe.

DANYA. She had a vision. Knew what she wanted every step of the way. It's when things are unclear – when

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