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SF PERUSALS

GEEK!

High School Edition

Crystal Skillman

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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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 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.

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* 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! High School Edition can be performed without an intermission.

DOUBLE CASTING

GEEK! High School Edition 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! High School Edition* 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.

Though 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! High School Edition* 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 this *High School Edition,* I'd like to give special thanks to Erin Underwood, the editor of Geek Theatre Anthology, Underwoods Press, 2014.

For more information about the origins of *GEEK! High School Edition,* 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 fun 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: Dante Never Gives Up

(Video projection #1: Anime music blares. A montage: Quick snippets of videos spliced together flash by. In the snippets that appear we see three teenage girls: **DANYA**, **HONEY**, *and* **ELLEN**. *They are dressed up as their favorite characters and cosplaying (acting out scenes) from their favorite anime/manga comic,* Dante's Fire. *The short video ends with* **ELLEN** *looking at the camera – at us. Video off. Lights out.)*

(Title projection up: GEEK!)

(Harsh lights snap up. **DANYA** *and* **HONEY** *shivering in the freezing cold. Their jackets and sweatshirts cover their cosplaying outfits, but hints of their costumes peek 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. But they anxiously face the burly thirty-something* **SECURITY GUARDS** *who are in their way, reviewing lists attached to their clipboards. These* **GUARDS** *do nothing for good or evil, just their job.)*

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

DANYA. The hell we're not.

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

GUARD #2. We did.

DANYA. Well, look again. Maybe this time you'll remember how to read. We're there. Danya Spenser and –

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

GUARD #1. Sweet. But uh, yeah, you're not listed.

DANYA. We drove from Cleveland. Like five freaking 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 heck he is.

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

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

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

GUARD #1. You. Are. Not. On. The. List. 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. Well we have an Ellen Taylor.

DANYA. That's us, jerk off!

GUARD #1. When she appears and shows her magical ID, 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 to the front of this glorious palace of a convention center and pay for this freak fest like every other weirdo.

DANYA. How much is it?

GUARD #2. 60 bucks a ticket.

HONEY. How much do we have Danya?

DANYA. After that lame 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's 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 The 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 a.m., 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! Please can't you do something to help – a fellow geek?

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

GUARD #2. What Tom?

GUARD #1. Should we give them a chance to prove they're worthy before crossing 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 lore.)*

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! Hah!

(The **GUARDS** *high five.)*

GUARD #2. Feel the sting of our awesome!

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

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. *(waving magazine)* 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 –

(The **GUARDS** *exit. The back door slams shut and the glowing light blinks out.)*

DANYA. What the hell! Open this door! Freaking, lame-shit-ass jerk faces!

HONEY. Could you try being a little less angry?

DANYA. Well, anger is kinda my thing.

HONEY. Well, it's getting kinda old.

DANYA. What does that mean?

HONEY. What 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 … And then you're all, *(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 crap Honda!

HONEY. Whatever happened to "we?" The whole ride over with your hood up *(***HONEY** *pulls up her sweatshirt hood and imitates* **DANYA** *driving angry behind the wheel.)* saying nothing about her – like all you're doing is trying not to talk about it.

DANYA. You said you wanted to come with me.

HONEY. What am I supposed to say?

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

HONEY. Actually, she would have… If you want to remember something that really happened 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? Is that really what you think?

DANYA. I think Dante never gives up.

*(***DANYA** *takes out her iPhone. She presses play.* Dante's Fire *theme song triumphantly 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! *(Waving "hello." Introducing herself)* 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. *(pause)* Oh that was good!

MARCY. *(pulls out her phone and types)* 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 insane 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!!!

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

(Video projection #2: Intense rock music blares. A filmed advertisement of the convention plays! Images of a convention in progress – tons of people – toys – booths – flash by as **ANNOUNCER** *talks. NOTE: If video is limited, it is possible to stage this projection.)*

ANNOUNCER. WELCOME COLUMBUS, OHIO TO DANTE'S FIRE CON! FEATURING DANTE ANIME! DANTE MOVIES! DANTE COMICS! DANTE'S FIRE CON! THE ULTIMATE COSPLAYING CONVENTION THAT HAS IT ALL! ALL THE AWESOME COSPLAY YOU WANT, ALL THE TIME! NOW. NOW! NOW! From the best anime series of all time, created by the one and only, JOTO SAMAGASHI! This weekend only. Dante's Fire Con is created to replicate Dante's journey across the universe! Cosplay as your favorite characters in all nine *Dante's Fire* dimensions! This is where you'll catch 'em all!

(Images of the characters scroll by.)

ANNOUNCER. *(cont.)* Our hero Dante! Navigator Virgie! The evil Cleo! The slick Ulee-o! Cute Squeaker. And all the rest!

(Image changes to a **FATHER** *and his* **KID**.*)*

CLUELESS FATHER. Cosplaying? What's that?

GEEK KID. Cosplayers in Japan, called *reiya* or *kosupure*, are teens who dress up as characters they admire and gather together with other like-minded friends to engage in cosplay. The whole point is to become someone else in order to find yourself! The power of transformation is a huge thing in Japanese culture –

ANNOUNCER. But all YOU need to know is it's FREAKING awesome! All thanks to JOTO SAMAGASHI!

(Images of celebrities scroll and 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!

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

ANNOUNCER. And holy heck! 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 creators 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 MESS THIS UP!! THIS IS THE LAST DAY! THE LAST HOUR! SUNDAY! SUNDAY! SUNDAY! FOR SAMAGASHI!

(an image of **COSPLAYERS** *gathered together happily shouting)*

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

(Film ends. Light up on **HONEY** *and* **DANYA** *who stand in the middle of the ever-busy-big-bad-wild-world of Dante's Fire Con.* **DANYA** *clutches her bag tightly. Everywhere they look there are cosplayers 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 Minotaur's Mega Metropolis.

HONEY. It is! But how are we gonna –

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

HONEY. 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 projection of a cute girl cosplayer, designed to be an interactive guide to the con, appears projected on the wall behind them. NOTE:* **MISS COSY** *can also be a puppet, or appear live.)*

MISS COSY. Tee. Hee. Please INSERT NAMES.

HONEY. *(typing their names into her game player)* Oh!

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

*(***MISS COSY** *gestures to a map, which appears on the screen. It is horribly and wonderfully complicated and crazy.)*

See?! Pretty! Ms. Samagashi signs on the 9th level! But OMG, it's 5:45 and we close at 7 P.M. 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. HOLY CRAP BALLS!

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

(an elevator dings)

DANYA. The elevator!

*(***DANYA** *and* **HONEY** *run to the elevator, which is offstage. However, teenagers, dressed like a Steampunk Army, spill out of the doors and onto the stage, stopping them.)*

STEAMPUNK LEUT #1. YO YO YO YO, these here elevators only run 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. *(beat)* Yo.

STEAMPUNK LEUT #2. He's almost here. Yo! Clear the way! Clear the way for Major Ulee-o! Attention! Yo!

DANYA. Ah! 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 play Ulee-o's theme song.)*

STEAMPUNK LEUTS.

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. Oh he is cute!)*

TOBY. He just is!

STEAMPUNK LEUTS #1 & #2.

HE MOVES THE HEAVENS!
HE 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 #1 & #2.

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

TOBY. Yo, my lady.

DANYA. "Yo, my lady" this Sir-Doche-A-Lot.

*(***DANYA** *flips him the bird.)*

TOBY. Danya? Honey?

HONEY. Whoa! 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 chat room.

(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 on line 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 ok!

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 its importance.)

We have to see Samagashi!

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. **TOBY** *smiles. He's so cute!* **DANYA** *resists!)*

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, mimicking 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 on.* **DANYA** *stares at what he's given her.)*

'Til next time, o' my darling.

*(***TOBY** *dramatically exits.)*

STEAMPUNK LEUT #1. He's gone.

*(***STEAMPUNK LEUTS #1** *and* **#2** *exit.* **HONEY** *looks back to "timepiece.")*

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

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

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

*(***BRIAN***, a creepy hooded kid dressed like the* **TIMEKEEPER** *enters.)*

BRIAN. Hello, I am here.

HONEY & DANYA. 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 Samagashi.

HONEY. For Ellen.

(They exit.)

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

(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 from a bloodthirsty crowd of geeks! Lights bump up on **DANYA** *and* **HONEY** *who are standing in some kind of ring!* **BRIAN** *and a crowd of cosplayers are heard or seen cheering around the 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-sticks at* **DANYA** *and* **HONEY***, which they catch.)*

DANYA. Whoa!

HONEY. Danya – listen! I have a feeling–

DANYA. That we can totally do this, right?!

HONEY. *(to* **TIMEKEEPER***)* Is that true? If we win, we'll meet Samagashi?

BRIAN. Dudes! I'm the Timekeeper. I make magical stuff 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, ok?

HONEY. I can take care of myself, you know!

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

Uh – Danya – ?!

BRIAN. First out of the air duct grate gate!

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

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 led 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 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 minotaur's moves. I've been working on 'em. I love the ladies. I love the cheeseburgers. I love 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. I'm ready to go in! To win! To go straight down. To see Samagashi! 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.)*

Bus fare?

*(***DANYA** *and* **HONEY** *shake their heads "no."* **MINNIE** *exits, defeated, back into the grate.)*

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 villain from the series. She waves her huge, jousting-padded ax, and does some super sassy cheerleader-like moves.)*

GWEN. Go. Fight. Win! YEAH!

DANYA. What the hell 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!

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 playing online, 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. *(to* **HONEY***)* C'mon Honey – we'll find another way.

*(***DANYA** *turns to go.)*

GWEN. Oh yeah?! HAH!

*(***GWEN** *pushes the backside of her axe 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 butt!

*(***GWEN** *stands, angry. She raises her axe.)*

DANYA. *(struggling to get up)* Honey –

HONEY. *(jumping in front of* **DANYA***)* 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 kid with headgear dressed in a weird, metallic, robotic outfit enters.)*

HONEY, DANYA, & GWEN. Fifth Dimension Fire Bot-Boy!

BOT-BOY. Uh-huh. I was taught to respect all life forms. You girls are pretty.

(Girls go "Awww.")

And I'm so sorry I have to hurt you. But you flesh-babes 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, duh Danya Dorkus! Hah!

(He hands **GWEN** *the bag, and she waves it around, taunting.)*

Who's winning now?! Who always wins?

DANYA. Give it back or … *(tossing aside cosplay joust sticks)* or I'm going to kick your ass for real.

GWEN. Wow. Dark. Maybe 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 after 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 this all the time, and you didn't care what happened to her after you posted those videos. There were all those comments. God. Still, you go out and act like – well, you were just asking for a long deserved beating.

DANYA. Leave me alone.

GWEN. Why do you think she killed herself?

DANYA. Shut up!

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

DANYA. I said SHUT THE HELL UP!!!

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

HONEY. Oh, my god.

(Clearly shaken, **DANYA** *grabs back her bag.)*

GWEN. You hurt my 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! The **GUARDS** *rush 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 freaks started it all!

*(***HONEY** *grabs* **DANYA**. *Everyone is after them.)*

DANYA. The air duct!

HONEY. Danya!

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

Scene 3: Another Way In

(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.)*

DANYA. 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. You choose him over me?

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

(Cut to: close up of **ELLEN** *playing* **CLEO** *and* **DANYA** *playing* **DANTE** *shouting in each other's face. This shot captures that "split- screen-anime-yelling face feeling.")*

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

DANYA. You can't come.

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.

(Cut to: **ELLEN** *as* **CLEO** *picks up a homemade prop that represents a huge powerful crystal (something 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** *crawl out of the grate into a bathroom. Stalls. Sounds of dripping. The bathroom is gloomy and they both are affected by 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? Why aren't you out having fun?

DANYA. Because I'm 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 care about that right now – we need to find a way out of here!

HONEY. There isn't a way out, Danya.

*(***HONEY** *grabs* **DANYA***'s hand, trying to clean up her cut and bandage it.)*

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 screw up. People do horrible things. You start thinking – life gets complicated. Okay? Time runs out. Time is running out. C'mon. We have to go.

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 have choices. 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 do, Honey. The last thing I want is for you to feel…

HONEY. What that Gwen girl said, do you think –

DANYA. No. Ellen loved playing this more than anything.

HONEY. Where are you going?

DANYA. To see Samagashi. 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)* And I have one more year here and then I graduate and –

HONEY. You're saying this right now? Out of all the possible 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 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 now is caring. Getting this to Samagashi 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 heeled red boots appear under the stalls. And then cat tails.)

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

(Door stalls slam open and the cat ladies enter, wearing furry tails and high heeled red boots rimmed with fur. They are dressed in red tights and wear long gloves with claw-like nails they click together.)

DEVIL CAT #1. TICK.

DEVIL CAT #2. TICK.

DEVIL CAT #1. TICK. Time is running out. Ohhh. Joto.

DEVIL CAT #2. Samagashi.

DEVIL CAT #1. Have you seen those escalators?

DEVIL CAT #2. Packed.

DEVIL CAT #1. Such a 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. Filing.

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 drugs!

DEVIL CAT #2. Illegally!

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

DEVIL CAT #2. That we decoupage with our own cat's fur. *(showing off her furry boots)* Meow!

DEVIL CAT #1. But happiness?

DANYA. Is dressing up.

DEVIL CAT #2. Purrrrr. 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?

DEVIL CAT #2. Valuable! Do tell.

DANYA. Private. For us. Stay away.

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

DEVIL CAT #1. We could take you there.

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 gesture off stage! 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 CAT #1. She doesn't appreciate you.

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

DEVIL CAT #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 Samagashi.

HONEY. You will?

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

DEVIL CAT #2. Chow.

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

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.

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 we don't know where to go – that's when we get lost and …

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