

THE STRANGERS IN OUR SKIN

By

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Cast of Characters

<u>Gloria</u> :	25-40
<u>Audrey</u> :	12-15
<u>Adam</u> :	25-40

Scene

A makeshift bunker

Time

The not-so-distant future

Scene One
Sisters

Lights on GLORIA (25-35) and AUDREY (12-14). They're in a makeshift bunker of sorts, maybe a basement or a bomb shelter or just a well-barricaded apartment. The walls are cold and dark. The only entrance is a heavy metal slider.

Gloria polishes a baseball bat with a dirty rag. Audrey cuts construction paper with safety scissors. She builds a multicolored paper chain.

AUDREY
Tell me a story, Gloria.

GLORIA
A story?

AUDREY
Yes. A story.

GLORIA
What do you wanna hear?

AUDREY
If I knew what I wanted I'd ask for it.

GLORIA
So just any story?

AUDREY
Any story.

GLORIA
You ever heard of *Pulp Fiction*?

AUDREY
No, I don't want to hear that story.

GLORIA
You said I could choose anything.

AUDREY
Tell me about Mom.

GLORIA
You sure you don't just want to hear about *Pulp Fiction*?

AUDREY
I want--

A rattling noise from above. Gloria instinctively brandishes the baseball bat.

Silence.

Gloria goes back to shining the bat.

GLORIA
So you want to hear about Mom?

AUDREY
Tell me a fun story about Mom.

GLORIA
Do you remember her?

AUDREY
I think.

GLORIA
What do you remember?

AUDREY
She was beautiful.

GLORIA
Naturally.

AUDREY
With big eyes.

GLORIA
Beautiful big eyes.

AUDREY
And she had purple hair.

GLORIA
Purple hair?

AUDREY
Yes. Mom had purple hair.

You got it.

GLORIA

Lights down.

Lights back up. The multicolored paper chain hangs on the wall, striking against the darkness.

Gloria shines the baseball bat. Audrey folds paper into origami.

AUDREY

Tell me a story, Gloria.

GLORIA

I'm telling you. *Pulp Fiction* will blow your mind.

AUDREY

Tell me about Dad.

GLORIA

You remember Dad.

AUDREY

Of course I do.

GLORIA

So why don't you tell it?

AUDREY

Because I asked you. If I wanted to tell a story I wouldn't have asked.

GLORIA

Should it be about his adventures? His trips around the world?

AUDREY

What did he do?

GLORIA

Like for a job?

AUDREY

What did Dad do for his job?

GLORIA

Don't you remember?

AUDREY

I want you to tell me.

GLORIA

Dad owned a grocery store.

AUDREY

A great big grocery store.

GLORIA

With plenty of food. So much food. More food than you could possibly eat.

AUDREY

And not just cold canned soup?

GLORIA

No, so much more than cold canned soup. Dad had more food than the United Way.

AUDREY

Until -- it -- happened.

GLORIA

Until -- it -- happened.

AUDREY

Tell me more. Tell me more.

GLORIA

He, uh, played the cello.

AUDREY

He did?

GLORIA

Don't you remember?

AUDREY

Oh yeah! He really shred the cello.

GLORIA

And he liked to play Spider Solitaire on his work computer.

AUDREY

At the grocery store?

GLORIA

Right in the middle of the check-out line.

AUDREY

Oh that Dad.

GLORIA

And he had big purple hair.

AUDREY
Nuh-uh! Nuh-uh! That was Mom.

GLORIA
Didn't they both have purple hair?

AUDREY
No, you're telling it wrong. Dad had brown hair.

GLORIA
How could I have forgotten.

AUDREY
Before -- it -- happened, of course.

GLORIA
Of course.

Lights down.

Lights back up. Origami animals
hang from the ceiling. The bunker
is less dark. Less cold.

Gloria is back at it with the
baseball bat. Audrey colors on
parchment paper with crayons.

AUDREY
Tell me a story, Gloria.

GLORIA
All right, so Jules and Vincent are in this diner.

AUDREY
This better not be *Pulp Fiction!*

GLORIA
It's not. Don't be silly. So Jules and Vincent are wearing
these ridiculous clothes and trying to get some breakfast
when--

AUDREY
Tell me about Adam.

GLORIA
Oh. You wanna hear about Adam?

AUDREY
I want to hear all about your boooooofriend.

GLORIA
Haven't I told enough?

AUDREY
If you had told me enough...

GLORIA
Yeah, yeah. Then you wouldn't be asking.

AUDREY
Tell me about his muscles.

GLORIA
Big muscles.

AUDREY
Like these?

She holds up a drawing.

GLORIA
Bigger.

AUDREY
No way they were bigger than these.

GLORIA
Yes way. He was 6 foot 3. Blond hair to his shoulders.
Biceps like cantaloupes.

AUDREY
And he drove a Lamborghini.

GLORIA
Two Lamborghinis. He kept one around just in case the other
broke down.

AUDREY
But it wouldn't.

GLORIA
Because not only was he a pro surfer and astronaut, boytoy
was a topnotch mechanic too.

AUDREY
What a babe.

GLORIA
You know what he said to me once?

AUDREY
Nuh-uh.

It was about you. GLORIA

What did he say? AUDREY

He told me, "Gloria, you're pretty cute..." GLORIA

Just pretty cute?! AUDREY

"But your sister Audrey is beautiful." GLORIA

What a jerk. AUDREY

He was kind of a jerk. GLORIA

But then -- it -- happened. AUDREY

That flame died out long before then, sister. GLORIA

Did he really say that? AUDREY

Of course he did. GLORIA

Sounds of rumbling and reverberations.

Jesus, they're moving. There's gotta be hundreds of them.

What's going on? AUDREY

Come close, ladybug. GLORIA

They huddle together for the first time. Gloria cradles Audrey, protecting the girl with her body.

I'm scared. AUDREY

GLORIA

Tell me about your pictures. Who's this you've drawn.

AUDREY

You can't tell?

GLORIA

Oh. The purple hair should have given it away.

AUDREY

And here's Dad. And you.

GLORIA

I'm not that big.

AUDREY

You are to me. And here's Adam. But now I think he should be smaller because he was a jerk. And here are all the other people. And here's the grocery store. And Dad's cello. And everything that was happy and good before -- it -- happened.

Lights down.

Scene Two
Out There

The room sports more of Audrey's decorations. It almost feels homey.

Audrey completes an origami ladybug. Proud of herself, she plays with it and hums a tune. The space comes to life. She sings and the ladybug flies.

AUDREY

*Fly through the sky and pray, Ladybug, There's no such
strange danger when springtime does come,
Sing me the sweetness of soft yellow breeze
And love Ladybug, Ladybug return to me.*

*The rattling noise cuts off her
song. The ladybug falls. Reality
sets back in.*

The rattling becomes a rumbling. Audrey collects items: a metal trash can, garbage bags, rubber gloves, safety goggles. She sets them near the door. She holds a dagger close as the rumble swells. It feels extremely close and then dies down.

She approaches the door.

AUDREY

Gloria?

A knock. And then another. It's a pattern. Audrey recognizes it and opens the door. Gloria enters. She's clothed head to toe. Her bat is bloody.

AUDREY

There were a lot of them. I heard. Are you okay? Was there trouble?

GLORIA

Inspection.

AUDREY

Are you hurt?

GLORIA
Bag in the trash can, Audrey.

AUDREY
I could help you out there. I really could.

GLORIA
Audrey! Now!

AUDREY
I'm sorry.

Audrey lines the can with a garbage bag. Gloria deposits the bat into it.

GLORIA
Inspection. Quickly. Hurry.

AUDREY
I'm going. I'm moving.

GLORIA
Move faster.

Gloria stands with arms and legs spread out. Audrey garbs herself in the protective gear.

GLORIA
Why weren't you ready?

AUDREY
I'm sorry.

GLORIA
That's not what I asked.

Audrey inspects Gloria's garments.

Audrey, this is serious. Why weren't you prepared?

AUDREY
I--

GLORIA
No. Focus your attention.

Audrey inspects.