THROWN FOR A LOOP

A fantasy in one act
by
Bradley Hayward

PREVIEW ONLY!
For a complete script, or to apply for production rights:
haywardb@hotmail.com

Copyright 2026
by Bradley Hayward

SYNOPSIS

Mabel’s Make-A-Wish trip takes a turn when a roller coaster malfunction hurls her into a magical world where her illness holds no power. In this whimsical realm, she finally lives out her adult dreams in impossible ways, from ordering solar flare coffees at a cosmic cafe to steering a convertible made of moonlight directly into a comet. It’s a vibrant, high flying adventure where Mabel must choose between a perfect fantasy of the future and the brave reality she left behind.

SETTING

A stark white hospital ward dominated by a blue infusion chair that serves as the lead car for Mabel’s roller coaster ride. This sterile environment magically transforms into a variety of locations as her imagination takes flight.

RUNNING TIME

30-35 minutes

CHARACTERS

Gender flexible cast of 4-18+

MABEL.....14 year old fighting for her future
OPERATOR.....exuberant roller coaster operator
BARISTA.....cheerful barista
BUSINESS.....impatient customer
ECCENTRIC.....flamboyant customer
INSTRUCTOR.....practical driving instructor
SOULMATE.....Mabel's love interest
VIOLINIST.....restaurant violinist
CONFIDANT.....Mabel's friend
BESTIE.....Mabel's friend
BOSS.....Mabel's boss
CONTRACTOR.....Mabel's colleague
SUPERINTENDANT.....hospital superintendent
SON.....Mabel's child
DAUGHTER.....Mabel's child
LOOPS.....ensemble of 3 or more that creates magic

CASTING NOTES

All of the roles except MABEL may be doubled. For the smallest possible cast, the LOOPS may be played by an ensemble of 3 actors, who also play all of the other roles. For an infinitely larger cast, each of the roles may be assigned individually, with as many LOOPS in the ensemble as desired. Any combination in between is perfectly acceptable.

All of the roles are gender non-specific and may be played by actors of any gender identity. Simply change the pronouns, as necessary.

A NOTE ON THE LOOPS

The LOOPS is an ensemble of infinite size. They are a magical entity, so the sky is the limit as to how they are incorporated. Their lines may be spoken in unison, split up among the actors, or any variation in between.

Additionally, all of the LOOPS do not have to be onstage at the same time. The ensemble could be constantly in flux, shape shifting into an endless loop of various groupings.

AT RISE: A stark and sterile hospital room. There's a blue infusion chair in front of a blank white wall, center stage. MABEL sits in the chair. She's pale, wearing a oversized hoodie and a Make-A-Wish button, connected to an IV drip. She looks at the audience with a smirk.

MABEL
Welcome to the happiest place on earth.

She laughs.

That's a bold claim, isn't it? Especially when you're in a ninety minute line for a ride that lasts forty five seconds, surrounded by toddlers having meltdowns because their Mickey Mouse shaped pretzels broke in half. But today? Today, I'm buying into the hype.

She touches her Make-A-Wish button, her expression softening.

I know what people think when they see this button. They picture me in this blue chair, guzzling chemo, and they get gentle. They move me to the front of the line and they look at me with puppy dog eyes that say, "Oh, you poor, brave thing." But I'm not here for the pity parade. It's true, I made a wish, but it wasn't this. I'm here because I spent three months staring at a stain in the ceiling that looks like a crying walrus, thinking about all the somedays I'm supposed to have.

She coughs into a napkin, then reaches into a side pocket of the infusion chair and pulls out a notebook. She opens it and looks at a page full of handwriting.

I've got a list. A messy, beautiful someday list. I want to order a coffee so complicated the barista needs a college degree to understand it. I want to parallel park a car without clipping a side mirror. I want to go on a first date where the only thing terminal is the awkward silence when the bill arrives. I want to graduate with a cap and a gown, and then I want to build. I want to be an architect of everything. I want to design places that don't have emergency exit signs every ten feet. I want to be thirty five and stressed about a mortgage and why the twins decided to use permanent marker to turn the hallway into a mural of the solar system. I want the whole, long, exhausting, non-stop loop.

Suddenly, the lights flicker. The IV bag begins to glow neon green. The infusion chair starts to vibrate.

MABEL
(Continued)
I didn't wish for a roller coaster. I wished for a ride that doesn't have a stop button.

The blank white wall slides away, revealing a vortex of twisted roller coaster tracks against a neon sky. The infusion chair is no longer a piece of furniture, it's the lead car of a cosmic roller coaster. An ensemble of actors called the LOOPS appear. This ensemble may be as few as three actors, or infinitely larger. From now on, they perform all of the scene changes and provide magical ambience. As they speak, they attach roller coaster cars to the back of the infusion chair.

LOOPS
Check the restraints.
Check the bolts and the chain.
There's a wild, golden engine
Inside of her brain!
Check the IV
And the drip and the light.
We're launching a soul
Through the middle of night!
You think it's a ward?
You think it's a cage?
It's the center ring spotlight
Of the biggest known stage!
It's the happiest place
Because maybe is free
And the now is a door
To the gonna-be!
Hold your breath.
Hold the sky.
Watch how the seconds
And centuries fly!

MABEL
Maybe this <u>is</u> the happiest place on Earth!

The LOOPS slide on a sculpture of a golden lever. Lights sparkle all around its edges.

LOOPS
The track is polished.
The silver is bright.
The ghosts of the morning
Are lost in the night!
The somedays are calling.
The nevers are gone.
The ride of a lifetime
Is carrying on!
Higher and higher
The ticking begins.
Where reality loses
And the magic world wins!

OPERATOR enters, wearing a suit of flickering LED lights and oversized top hat. He's a whirlwind of joyous energy.

OPERATOR
Huzzah! Welcome, welcome, welcome! You must be Mabel! I've been polishing the tracks and greasing the gears since the first star blinked this morning!

MABEL
Who are you?

OPERATOR
I'm the Maestro of Momentum!

MABEL
I love your outfit!

OPERATOR
(Gasps with delight)
What a compliment! I shall treasure it forever! Now, get ready, Mabel! The Loop is prepped, primed, and pulsing with pure potential! It's a whirlwind tour of the what-ifs and a VIP pass to the gonna-bes!

MABEL
Is it real, or just another pretty balloon people hand to kids like me so we don't notice the ground getting further away?

OPERATOR
Mabel, a wish isn’t a lie. It’s a rehearsal! And in this theatre we call life, the rehearsal is just as vivid as the opening night. Do you want to stay on the platform and talk about the boring old physics of maybe, or do you want to see what it feels like to fly?

MABEL
(Grins)
I want to be launched! I want to go so fast my Make-A-Wish button flies off and hits a pigeon.

OPERATOR
That’s the spirit! Hold onto your somedays, Mabel! Here we go! Don’t blink or you’ll miss your future!

He pulls the golden lever. The LOOPS hop into the roller coaster cars behind the infusion chair. The roller coaster begins its ascent to the top of the loop.

LOOPS
The tick of the needle.
The tick of the gear.
The mechanical heartbeat
Of fourteen long years!
Tick tick goes the track
As we climb through the grey.
Dragging the weight
Of the maybe away!
A tick in the ceiling.
A tick in the bone.
Mabel is rising
To claim what is known!
One final tick
As the world disappears.
The tick of the future.
The tick of the years!

MABEL grips the armrests of the infusion chair as it tips over the precipice.

MABEL
Here comes the drop!

The roller coaster zooms down the track. MABEL raises her arms high in the air and feels the wind rush through her hair. The

LOOPS follow her lead and throw their arms up in the air.

LOOPS
Jump from the metal.
Leave gravity behind.
The future is waiting
For you to unwind!
A world made of glitter.
A sky made of dreams.
Nothing is ever
Quite what it seems!

The roller coaster levels out and the LOOPS disembark to set up the next scene. The roller coaster cars become the set pieces for the Glitter Grind, a vibrant cafe. There's a counter for ordering and a table nearby.

LOOPS
The steam is a curtain.
The sugar is light.
The shadows of yesterday
Vanish from sight!
One for the syrup
And two for the bean.
The busiest counter
That you've ever seen!
Order a memory.
Order a day.
Before the espresso
All washes away!

The cafe snaps into action and the LOOPS become customers. MABEL leaps out of the infusion chair and jumps to the front of the line at the counter. Behind the counter, BARISTA is a whirlwind of motion, swirling drinks like they were magic potions. ECCENTRIC, an older woman wearing a wildly large and colourful hat, sits at a nearby table.

MABEL
(Touches her face)
Fifteen. I have braces! I can feel the metal. And my lungs... they have their sparkle back! I could blow out a thousand candles and

still have breath left to sing!

BARISTA
(Wildly enthusiastic)
Welcome to the Glitter Grind, kid! Where we turn caffeine into destiny and foam into philosophy! I have the best job in the galaxy because I get to see people's morning faces turn into conquering faces! What can I slide down the counter for the girl with the birthday cake eyes?

MABEL
Gosh! I don't know.

BUSINESS enters, staring at his cell phone, and stands in line behind MABEL.

BUSINESS
Hurry up, little girl. People are waiting.

MABEL
People wait, even here?

BUSINESS
Welcome to adulthood. It's 90% waiting for a something to happen, 9% waiting for a paycheck, and 1% actually doing the thing you said you'd do when you were ten. I've been in this line for three years waiting for a career defining croissant.

MABEL
Three years? Why don't you leave?

BUSINESS
And lose my spot? Ha!

ECCENTRIC
(Taps MABEL with her cane)
Ignore him, dear. He's a professional waiter. Not the kind that brings you soup. The kind that waits for permission to breathe. I'm eighty two in the real world, and I spent most of those years waiting for the right time. The right time to travel, the right time to say "I love you," the right time to wear a hat this ridiculous.

MABEL
And did the right time ever come?

ECCENTRIC
The right time is a ghost, Mabel. It's a polite way of saying never.

I thought that in a magical loop, the line would move faster. But look at us. Even on these tracks, we're still checking our watches. We're so afraid of making a mess that we stay in the line.

MABEL
I don't want to wait. I've done enough waiting in rooms that smell like hand sanitizer.

She looks at the menu.

I want the Triple Shot Solar Flare and I want it while it's still exploding! I want to feel my heart beat like a drum solo.

BARISTA
Coming right up!

MABEL
(Puts her arm around BUSINESS)
And let me buy this man's Flare, too!

BUSINESS
Make mine a Double Black Deadline. And hurry. If I don't sign these contracts by ten, I might accidentally have a free hour to realize how lonely I am.

MABEL
Is that your big dream? To keep signing things?

BUSINESS
My dream was to be a professional snowboarder. But snowboards don't have dental plans. So now I spend my days chasing numbers so I can retire at sixty five and finally go on the ultimate snowboard vacation that I'll probably be too old and too rickety to enjoy.

He looks at his watch, then sighs.

Don't blink, or you'll end up in a suit that fits better than your life does.

ECCENTRIC
Oh, hush! You've been practising that tragic suit speech all morning.
(To MABEL)
Drink your glitter, dear. It's the only time in your life when your stomach won't judge you for it.

MABEL
You look like you've seen a lot of people come through this loop.

ECCENTRIC
I've seen them all. The ones who run, the ones who crawl, and the ones who forget to look out the window. They all get older without noticing until it's too late. I'm exactly as old as I feel, which is nineteen with a grudge. My big regret is that I spent too much time being polite and not enough time being loud.

MABEL
I want to build things. Huge things.

ECCENTRIC
Then build them loud, Mabel. Build them so they scream "I was here!" Because the world loves to try and quiet you down. Don't wait for a better time. The steam in our cups is the only time you've got.

BARISTA slams a glowing, bubbling, fizzing drink on the counter.

BARISTA
One Triple Shot Solar Flare! Careful, it's got enough spark to jump start a dead planet!

MABEL takes a sip and her eyes light up as though she's been plugged into an electrical socket. The lights flicker.

MABEL
It tastes like... victory! And a little bit of grape!

ECCENTRIC
Go take on the world, young lady.

BUSINESS
And what about me?

ECCENTRIC
We watch! And we learn!

MABEL
I can feel the flare in my bloodstream!

ECCENTRIC
That's because you <u>are</u> the flare.

MABEL
(To BUSINESS)
It’s not too late to hit the slopes, you know.

BUSINESS
You think?

MABEL/BARISTA/ECCENTRIC
(Together)
We know!

(The sound of a car engine revving fades in and the LOOPS spring into action.)

LOOPS
The sugar is rushing.
The blood is a race.
The clock is a blur
On the edge of your face!
From the cup to the car.
From the foam to the street.
The next destination
Is for you to meet!

BARISTA, BUSINESS and ECCENTRIC exit as the LOOPS set up the next scene. The roller coaster cars become a glowing space convertible, with a front seat and a steering wheel.

LOOPS
The keys are a promise.
The pedal a dare.
A map with no limits.
A path to somewhere!
No more please.
And no more wait.
You’re the master of the turn
And the captain of the gate!
But the road is a puzzle
And the lines are a blur.
And nothing is ever
As simple as it were!

MABEL sits in the driver’s seat of the convertible and grips the steering wheel tightly. The LOOPS become clouds that MABEL

passes as she drives.

MABEL

Sixteen! I have a permit! I have a pulse! And for the first time in my life, I’m not being pushed in a chair or carried down a hallway. I’m the one with the keys! I’m the engine! I’m going to drive until the pavement turns into starlight and I don’t have to ask anyone for permission to turn left!

INSTRUCTOR enters and takes a seat beside MABEL. He wears a neon yellow safety vest and holds a clipboard that’s actually an Etch-A-Sketch.

INSTRUCTOR

(Mutters)

Left... right... somewhere in between... honestly, who decided on ten and two for hand placement? It’s so symmetrical, it’s suspicious.

He looks at MABEL, then checks his Etch-A-Sketch.

Oh, right. You’re the one who wants to go solo.

MABEL

(Determined)

Yes. Solo. No nurses, no parents, no “Are you feeling okay, Mabel?” Just me, a full tank of gas, and the open road. I want to go where I want to go, when I want to go there.

INSTRUCTOR

Very noble. Okay, Driver. Parallel park between those two cumulus clouds. And try not to clip the tail of that passing comet. They’re very litigious about their glitter trails.

MABEL

(Concentrates deeply)

Mirror... check. Signal... check. I’ve got this. I don’t need anyone to guide me in. I’ve spent my life being navigated. Today, I’m the compass.

She turns the wheel with intense focus. The LOOPS slowly move, as though the convertible is moving past them.

INSTRUCTOR

You know, it’s a lot of pressure being the compass. Compasses get

dropped. They get demagnetized. You ever notice that cars have four seats but only one steering wheel? It’s a design flaw. We all think we’re driving, but really, we’re hoping the person in the lane next to us isn’t dreaming about asteroids.

MABEL
(Frustrated)
Hey! I’m trying to park here. I’m doing it on my own. Look! No hands! Well, two hands, but no help.

INSTRUCTOR
(Points out the window)
Look at that cloud. It looks like a turtle. Or is it a baked potato? It’s very confusing and unpredictable out here. I know you want to go where you want to go. That’s the dream. But even the best drivers need a navigator to read the map when the stardust rolls in. Even the fastest car needs a pit crew. You think independence means being alone, but independence is having the right people in the passenger seat who know when to shut up and when to tell you there’s a pothole.

MABEL stops the car, parked slightly crooked between two clouds.

MABEL
I just want to prove that I’m not a patient anymore. That I’m a driver.

INSTRUCTOR
You’re both. We’re all patients of something, and we’re all driving toward somewhere.

He turns the dials on the Etch-A-Sketch, then hands it to MABEL.

There! You’re licensed, Mabel. But keep the doors unlocked. You never know who’s got a better playlist than you do.

MABEL
(Smiles)
I’ll keep a seat open. But I’m still picking the radio station.

She grips the wheel with excitement.

Watch this. No more “be carefuls.” I’m merging into the fast lane of forever!

She slams her foot down on the pedal. The INSTRUCTOR is thrown back in his seat as the LOOPS fly by in the background.

INSTRUCTOR
Ooh, bit of a lead foot there, Driver. You might want to watch out for the —

MABEL
I've got it! I'm in control! I'm the architect! I'm the —

Suddenly, the LOOPS swing a massive comet in front of the convertible. MABEL swerves. The LOOPS make a deafening SCREECH sound as the lights flicker. MABEL and the INSTRUCTOR are jolted forward. The roller coaster cars collapse onto their sides.

MABEL
(Gasps for breath)
What... what was that?! I followed the rules! I had my hands at ten and two! I was doing it right!

INSTRUCTOR
That? That was a circumstance. Specifically, a Halley's curve ball.

He gets out of the space vehicle to examine the wreckage.

Oof. Looks like your bumper is currently orbiting Jupiter.

MABEL
But I was supposed to be the one in charge! I finally got the keys. How could I crash? I was being so careful.

INSTRUCTOR
Mabel, listen. You can be the best driver in the galaxy. You can have a perfect map and a brand new engine. But sometimes, the comet hits you. Sometimes the road washes out. Sometimes you do everything right, and you still end up in the ditch with a flat tire and a face full of stardust.

MABEL
So what's the point of the license?

She shakes the Etch-A-Sketch clear.

MABEL
(Continued)
If I can’t stop the accidents?

INSTRUCTOR
The license isn’t a no-crash guarantee. It’s the permission to keep moving after the wreck. The point isn’t that you hit the comet. The point is that you’re still standing here, complaining about the bumper. Accidents happen. That’s what makes it a road and not a treadmill. Now, do you want to sit here and cry over the fenders, or do you want to hitch a ride to the next loop?

MABEL
I think I’m going to need a bigger car.

INSTRUCTOR
(Smiles)
That’s the spirit.

Violin music fades in. INSTRUCTOR exits as the LOOPS pick up the pieces of the accident.

LOOPS
The bumper is dented.
The starlight is cracked.
But there’s no turning over
And no turning back!
From the wreck on the shoulder
To the candlelit glow.
Where the rhythm of maybe
Is starting to grow!

The LOOPS set up the next scene. The roller coaster cars become a romantic restaurant. A booth floats over a cloud. VIOLINIST appears and continues to play.

LOOPS
A table for two
On a carpet of air.
With starlight in pockets
And hope in your hair!
The candles are floating.
The menus are dreams.
But nothing is ever
As smooth as it seems!
The parents are watching

From three stars away.
But the heart has a nervous
New music to play!

MABEL sits in the booth. SOULMATE, a boy with a crooked tie, enters and sits across from her.

MABEL
I guess this is my first date!

VIOLINIST nudges her closer to SOULMATE with his bow.

And I guess this is the Gravity Bistro. I heard the chef once cooked for a supernova and got a five star review for his astral souffle.

SOULMATE
(Voice cracks)
Yeah. I read a review. It said the bread sticks have their own force field.

He laughs nervously. She laughs nervously. They both turn away from each other, nervously. VIOLINIST plays faster, coaxing them to turn back toward each other. They do. MABEL leans in and whispers.

MABEL
Can you see them? Over by the “Event Horizon” sign? My mom is trying to look like she’s reading the wine list, but I know she’s actually lip reading us.

SOULMATE
(Peers over his shoulder)
And my dad is wearing those invisibility specs that don’t actually work. I can see his eyebrows glowing from here.

He laughs nervously. She laughs nervously.

Why did we agree to this? We’re seventeen. We have licenses! You survived a literal comet strike! Why do we need a security detail for a bowl of linguine?

MABEL
(Giggles)
Because in the real world, they’re used to checking my oxygen levels

every five minutes. I think they’re afraid if they aren’t ten feet away, I’ll evaporate into a cloud of what-ifs.

SOULMATE
You aren’t evaporating, Mabel. You’re the most solid thing in this room. Even with the floating booths and the shadow violinist.

MABEL
(Blushes)
And you’re the guy who taught me how to calculate the trajectory of a falling star while I was still dizzy from the crash.

SOULMATE
It’s the only way to be sure where they land.

He pauses.

Mabel... do you ever think about what you’re actually looking for? Beyond the Make-A-Wish stuff? I mean, what is love supposed to feel like when your life has been a series of scheduled appointments?

MABEL
I think love is someone who doesn’t look at you like a project. For me, it’s about someone who sees the architect in me, not the blueprint. I spent so much time being handled with care that I want someone who isn’t afraid to break me. Or at least someone who understands that if I do break, I can be rebuilt.

SOULMATE
I used to think love was a math problem. If I was correct enough, the answer would equal forever. But I think I was wrong. I think love is just being there. Someone who says, “I saw that Friday afternoon where you were bored and grumpy, and I still want to sit on the couch with you.” I don’t want a grand romance. I want someone who knows my favourite constellation and doesn’t laugh when I get the math wrong.

MABEL
That’s it, isn’t it? It’s not the fireworks. It’s the after. It’s the person who stays when the music stops and the violinist goes home to get some sleep.

VIOLINIST stops playing.

SOULMATE
I’m not a great pilot, Mabel. I’ve hit comets, too. But if we’re going to crash, I’d like to crash with you.

MABEL

(Smiles)

If we get through this date without the parents actually coming over to cut our steak for us, do you think we could do it again? Maybe somewhere less magical? Like a place with actual gravity and grease on the pizza?

SOULMATE

I'll bring the napkins. And I'll tell my dad to leave the invisibility glasses at home.

MABEL

Deal.

She looks at VIOLINIST.

Hey. Can you play something we can dance to?

VIOLINIST nods and begins to play a beautiful waltz. MABEL holds out her hand. SOULMATE puts his hand in hers. They step out of the booth and dance on the cloud as the LOOPS return.

LOOPS

The nectar is finished.
The promise is made.
The shadows of lonely
Are starting to fade!
From the touch of a hand
To the cap and the gown.
The ride is too fast
For the girl to slow down!

SOULMATE and VIOLINIST exit as the LOOPS set up the next scene. The roller coaster cars are stacked and become a tall podium at a high school graduation.

LOOPS

The tassels are silver.
The fabric is night.
A chorus of scholars
In halos of light!
From the ward to the walk.
From the chair to the stage.

The architect’s turning
A shimmering page!
It’s not just a diploma.
It’s not just a gown.
It’s the weight of the climb
And the gold of the crown!

MABEL takes her place atop the podium. CONFIDANT and BESTIE enter and stand beside her. The LOOPS have three fishing rods with sparkly graduation caps attached to them by transparent fishing line. They dangle these graduation caps over the heads of the MABEL, CONFIDANT, and BESTIE so that they look like they are magically floating above them. The girls put on sparkly fairy wings as they speak.

MABEL
Eighteen! Graduation!

CONFIDANT
(Struggles with her wings)
Mabel, help! My clasp is stuck on a memory of sophomore year and it won’t snap shut. I feel like my future is dragging on the floor!

MABEL
(Helps CONFIDANT with her wings)
Hold still. You’re just over thinking.

She snaps the clasp shut.

There. Now you look like a girl who’s about to own the maybe.

BESTIE
Do my wings look heavy? They feel weighted down by every algebra test I almost failed. I’m worried if I walk across that stage, the gravity of high school is going to pull me straight through the floor.

CONFIDANT
They’re not heavy. They’re significant. You’re carrying the momentum!

BESTIE
We’re actually doing it. We’re leaving the loop.

MABEL
(Adjusts her own wings)
We aren’t leaving it. We’re widening the circle. I spent eighteen years thinking graduation gowns were just shrouds. I thought they were uniforms for the healthy kids to wear while they marched away and left me behind.

BESTIE
And now?

MABEL
Now they’re wings!

She pulls them both into a tight huddle, their wings overlapping.

I spent my life in a waiting room. But look at us.
(To CONFIDANT)
You’re going to teach kindergartners how to twirl.
(TO BESTIE)
And you’re going to write stories about the milky way. And me? I’m going to build a place where nobody ever has to feel like a ghost in their own story.

CONFIDANT
You’re going to build the world, Mabel. These wings are just the beginning of the flight.

MABEL looks up at the hovering graduation caps above them.

MABEL
I used to think independence was being able to go to the bathroom without a nurse. A small, quiet freedom. But standing here, I realize it’s much louder than that.

She plucks one of the graduation caps from the sky and puts it on BESTIE’s head.

I’m going to be an architect. I want to build structures that don’t just stand up, they stand for something. I want to design a place that feels like a hug when someone needs it the most. I want to build a hospital where the windows are so big you forget there are walls at all.

She plucks another graduation cap from the sky and puts it on CONFIDANT’s head.

MABEL
(Continued)
I’ve spent eighteen years living in buildings designed to keep me in. Now, I’m going to spend the rest of my life building things that let people out. My independence is the right to leave a mark on the world that says, “Mabel was here, and she built this to last.”

She plucks the final graduation cap from the sky and puts it on her head.

BESTIE
They’re calling the A’s now. That’s us!

CONFIDANT
That’s architecture.

MABEL
That’s arts.

MABEL/CONFIDANT/BESTIE
(Together)
That’s always.

MABEL
Don’t just walk. Soar!

They link arms and leap forward. They take flight, with the LOOPS carrying them high into the air.

LOOPS
The tassels are flipped
And the magic is cast.
The girl in the chair
Is a ghost of the past!
Step into the sunlight.
Step into the air.
The architect’s name
Is a shout and a prayer
The maybe is moving.
The future is wide.
With all of the universe
Cheering inside!

The LOOPS carry CONFIDANT and BESTIE offstage, then set up the next scene. The

roller coaster cars are stacked to form a giant picture window.

LOOPS

Blueprints of silver
And rebar of light.
Building a sanctuary
Out of the night!
No more the patient
And no more the guest.
The architect’s putting
Her heart to the test!
From the bed to the beam.
From the floor to the sky.
Where the spirit of better
Is starting to fly!
The steel is a promise.
The glass is a vow.
The healing of future
Is starting right now!

The LOOPS move behind the window, swirling glow sticks in the air, like shooting stars cutting across the sky. BOSS enters alongside CONTRACTOR and SUPERINTENDANT. They all wear hard hats.

MABEL

My first job! I can smell the cement mixer.

SUPERINTENDENT

Mabel, I’ve run four hospitals and I’ve never seen a pediatric wing designed like a... what did you call this? A magical meadow?

MABEL

That’s right!

CONTRACTOR

It’s a nightmare to plumb. She’s got the water pipes running through the walls like a musical fountain. If a pipe leaks, it plays Mozart. And don’t get me started on the gravity. She’s got the infusion pumps calibrated to the tide of the moon.

MABEL

It’s not a meadow, it’s a distraction. I spent eight thousand hours staring at a beige ceiling tile with a water stain that looked like a

crying walrus. I knew every crack in the linoleum by name. You want a functional wing. I’m giving you a habitable one.

BOSS
Mabel, the board is worried about the skylight atrium. They say it’s a waste of square footage. They want more beds. They want efficiency.

MABEL
Beds don’t heal people. Light heals people. The feeling that you aren’t trapped in a box heals people.

She gestures toward the window. A shooting star cuts across the sky.

I designed this window so a kid lying flat on their back can catch a falling star, not the top of a cloud. I want them to see where they’re going, not just where they are.

CONTRACTOR
I suppose the girl’s right.

MABEL
(Proudly)
I’m a woman now.

CONTRACTOR
I’m sorry. You’re right again.

MABEL
(Smiles)
Thank you.

CONTRACTOR
(To SUPERINTENDENT)
This is the first job I’ve worked where the building doesn’t feel like a cage. Most hospitals feel like they’re trying to keep the outside out. Like they’re afraid the world is contagious. This one feels like it’s inviting the sun in for a check up.

SUPERINTENDENT
It’s expensive. Magic of this grade doesn’t come cheap.

MABEL
You know what’s expensive? Despair. You know what costs a fortune? A patient who loses the will to look at the clock because every hour looks the same. I’m building a bridge between the ward and the world. I’m using every moonbeam and every solid pound of steel I can find to

make sure that fourteen year old Mabel doesn’t feel like her life is on pause.

BOSS
(Smiles)
She’s stubborn, Superintendent. I tried to talk her out of the secret garden on the fourth floor, where the roses sing lullabies, but she threatened to redesign my office without a door.

MABEL
(To CONTRACTOR)
Tighten that bolt on the north girder. I want this wing to be the sturdiest thing in this universe. I want it to be here long after I’m not.

She looks through the window. There’s a burst of shooting stars.

I’m building a future where the hospital isn’t a place you go to stop living. It’s the place you go to get your strength back for the next loop.

The sound of carousel music fades in and the LOOPS jump into action.

LOOPS
The wing is attached
And the garden is green.
The loveliest clinic
That you’ve ever seen!
From the bed of a patient
To the steel of a peer.
The architect’s spirit
Is finally here!
Step through the doorway.
Step into the sun.
The work of the healer
Has finally begun!

BOSS, CONTRACTOR and SUPERINTENDANT exit as the LOOPS set up the next scene. They transform the roller coaster cars into a carousel.

The blueprints are folded.
The hardhat is gone.
The architect’s morning

Is meeting the dawn!
Two little comets
With silver spun hair,
Floating on popcorn
And high altitude air!
The house was a fortress.
The wing was a grace.
But the heart of the future
Is in this one place!
Higher and higher
The carousel spins.
Where the joy of a mother
Finally begins!

SOULMATE rushes in, chased by SON and DAUGHTER. SON tugs MABEL's arm.

SON
Mom! Mom! Can we go on the Comet Coaster? The one that goes through the center of the sun?

DAUGHTER
(Tugs MABEL's other arm)
I want to get some gravity fried dough!

MABEL
(Laughs)
One thing at a time, my little pulsars! The sun isn't going anywhere, and neither is the dough. Climb into the Carousel of Time!

SON and DAUGHTER climb into the roller coaster cars and the LOOPS push them around in a circle. MABEL hugs SOULMATE tightly.

Can you believe we built all this? Not the carnival.

She gestures toward SON and DAUGHTER.

This.

SOULMATE
(Kisses her forehead)
I remember a girl who was afraid to order a coffee because she thought she'd evaporate. Now look at you. You built a hospital wing that breathes, and you built a family that... well, they don't exactly stay on the ground, do they?

SON jumps to his feet in the roller coaster car.

SON
Look, Mom! I’m a satellite!

MABEL
I spent my whole life wishing for someday. I used to draw these scenes on the back of my charts in the ward. I’d imagine the smell of the sugar and the way the wind feels when it isn’t coming from a vent. But the drawings weren’t real. They didn’t have the way his hand feels sticky with syrup, or the way she snores like a tiny freight train.

SOULMATE
It’s the after, Mabel. Just like we talked about at the Gravity Bistro. The violin didn’t stop. It just got louder.

MABEL
I used to think being an architect was about the steel. But it’s about the people inside the steel. I built that hospital wing so kids like ours wouldn’t feel alone. But I built this life so I wouldn’t be a ghost in my own dream.

The carousel stops turning. SON and DAUGHTER jump out.

DAUGHTER
Time for gravity fried dough!

She tries to run away, but MABEL catches her on the way by.

MABEL
Gotcha, you little moon hopper!

DAUGHTER
(Giggles)
Mom! You’re squishing my imagination!

MABEL
Good! I want to squish it until it stays right here with me!

She pulls SON and DAUGHTER in for a group hug.

I’m thirty. My back hurts a little from carrying them, and I’m

worried about the mortgage on the moonbeam house, and I have a meeting tomorrow... and it’s perfect. It’s so beautifully, wonderfully complicated.

SOULMATE
(Grabs her hand)
Hey, Architect. The Carousel of Time is about to start its next rotation. Are you coming?

MABEL
I’m already exactly where I’m supposed to be.

The beeping of a heart monitor fades in.

LOOPS
The sugar is melting.
The lights start to dim.
The cup of the future
Is full to the brim.
But a shadow is falling.
A chill in the air.
A silence that follows
The carnival flare.
The circle is turning.
The track starts to bend.
The beginning is hidden
Inside of the end.

END OF PREVIEW

For a complete script, or to apply for production rights:
haywardb@hotmail.com