

THE STRANGERS IN OUR SKIN

By

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Cast of Characters

Gloria: 25-40

Audrey: 12-15

Adam: 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.

GLORIA

You got it.

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 booooooyfriend.

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.

GLORIA

It was about you.

AUDREY

What did he say?

GLORIA

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

AUDREY

Just pretty cute?!

GLORIA

"But your sister Audrey is beautiful."

AUDREY

What a jerk.

GLORIA

He was kind of a jerk.

AUDREY

But then -- it -- happened.

GLORIA

That flame died out long before then, sister.

AUDREY

Did he really say that?

GLORIA

Of course he did.

Sounds of rumbling and
reverberations.

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

AUDREY

What's going on?

GLORIA

Come close, ladybug.

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

AUDREY

I'm scared.

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.