

# Stranger of the Mind

## ACT 1

### SCENE 1

(At a bar in town, the bartender is cleaning glasses. A patron, Illya, is at the bar and barfly, narrator Mardie, staggers in drunk)

#### MARDIE

Here we are again.. in our little hidy hole away from the world. Misfits all of us - except me (hiccup). In this old town you never quite know whats gonna...

(Crosses front stage to bar, Old jazz song 'Mata Hari Jam' is playing - the barflys talk over & enjoy the song)

Hey Illya how are ya? Ooh I like this one..

#### ILLYA

Hi Mardie, ya its good, come listen!

#### BACCHUS

The usual Mardie?

#### MARDIE

My good lady, Bacchus!.. I feel like its gonna be an interesting day - make it a double!

#### BACCHUS

You'll be seeing double in a minute .. but lets hope it IS interesting!(pours him a double and hands to him)

#### ILLYA (Turns up radio after comment)

Oh zis is a real toe tapper!.. Mata Hari, she vos a great spy!

#### MARDIE

(Skulls double) Aah!('Silver dress dancer' appears to do a short tap & dance - Mardie's eyes bulge in disbelief)

#### ILLYA

(They toe tap and listen to song - after while..) Zis bit! Skiddly diddly dee do dopee dopee!

#### MARDIE

(Mardie starts getting into dancer's moves) Oh I like it, the skiddly diddly doowap! (After a bit dancer fades and song fades away) (Almost to audience) Hiccup! That was a good start!

#### ILLYA

Ah, vot a song! Za Mata Hari Jam! Reminds me of my fazer. Az you know he fought in za vor. He vos a great engineer. Used to play zis vun all ze time.(Reflective) Unfortunately, zee vor drove him mad. He never really recovered.. He vos a good man too.

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### BACCHUS

Yes we KNOW about your father - a PERFECTIONIST just like my father - to a fault!.. I think it's the reason I am the way I am today.

### ILLYA

And vot vay are YOU today?

### BACCHUS

Well like any day, I'm stuck here shining these glasses OVER AND OVER, but no matter how much I shine them, they never seem clear to me... and I start to wonder, could it be that there is a FLAW in these glasses or indeed whither the flaw be within me?

### ILLYA

..Yez, zere's a FLAW in you alright.

### BACCHUS

Hmm possibly... but then again, I grew up in a strict boarding school with nuns... so maybe it's an environmental thing.

### Mardie

Maybe it's an hysterical, I mean HISTORICAL problem.

### BACCHUS

No no the question is more like NATURE versus NURTURE... Maybe it IS genetic... These kinds of human problems have been intriguing scientists... and me since time dot!

### ILLYA

I remember a girl called Dot. Needless to say, I voz dotty over her. (Chuckling to himself)

### BACCHUS

(Dry) Ha ha. Well, you started up with YOUR father - AGAIN.

### MARDIE

You two... Keep it going. Keep it going..

### ILLYA

..And you always gasbag on about zeze big ideas, professor, but YOU don't listen - and you're a barkeeper? No vonder I need to see a shrink!

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### ARGYLE

(Enter Argyle with Emmy Claire)

You lot sound like cackling old witches! (teasing) Look there's a spot on your glass - maybe its poison?

### BACCHUS

Steady young Argyle.. takin a breather from your Ma again eh?/

### ARGYLE

Lets not mention that here! I need a drink. (Trying to introduce Emmy-Claire) Oh this is/

### ILLYA

/You should try to relax a bit more Argyle.

### ARGYLE

Who are you to tell me to relax! - How about you and all your secrets!

### ILLYA

Whoa.. vell yes zis is true but I told you before I have been seeing somevun about zat lately.. maybe you should too..

### ARGYLE

See who? Wait a minute, I haven't introduced my new girl Im seeing yet, this is Emmy-Claire - isn't she an electric dream?

### BACCHUS/MARDIE

Stunner!.../ Charming!

### ILLYA

Vee have already met at a ze bakery, vunce or twice..

### ARGYLE

Oh?

### EMMY-CLAIRE

Yes, hes become quite the regular customer! (To the others) I'm Millie's new assistant at the bakery. Started not so long ago. And we, ah Argyle and I, we ah bumped into each other at work.

### ILLYA

Vots zis bumped? Lucky its not Bumped off. (Suspiciously)

### EMMY-CLAIRE

Yes, no, just bumped! - I was at the Bakery carrying this box of custard pies and he comes in through the backdoor, almost bumps me off my feet and knocks the box clean out of my hands... It goes flying through the air and them pies come down and hit us both right in the head!

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**ILLYA**

Reminds me of an accident down at the docks. Old lefty vos crankin za shaft for za crayne. Put his hand up to reach za cable an got it caught - Unfortunately, his arm vent flying off vis it!

**EMMY-CLAIRE**

Oh.. My.. God! Er well anyway that's how we met.

**MARDIE**

Like puppies in love, keen as mustard..

**EMMY-CLAIRE**

No custard!

**ARGYLE**

(groans) Oh of course it had to be CUSTARD pies! (fast) Make it one beer for me, and one for the lady. (To himself very fast) Custard pies... Custard pies, Custard pies ... I remember...

**EMMY-CLAIRE**

(Stops Argyle) Ahh.. What's that about?

**ARGYLE**

Er nothin jus talkin to meself. (To himself again) That's another story..

**BACCHUS**

(To Emmy-Claire while pouring beers) Did you know the first female telephone-operator was Emma Nutt, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1878..

**ILLYA**

/Youre a nut!/

**BACCHUS**

/at the Edwin Holmes Telephone Despatch Company in Boston, USA. (gives Emma Claire a drink then Argyle)

**EMMY-CLAIRE**

Ah ok.. (Baffled)

**ARGYLE**

(Taking big sip and sighing) Every day it's, "Argyle do this Argyle do that..." Oh if only I could get a break from it all!

**ILLYA**

Vel, as I voz just saying before, I've started seeing zis new doctor in town. Maybe you should try talking to him.

**ARGYLE**

Doctor who?

**MARDIE** (Nasal - Like an announcement)

Paging Tom Baker.

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### ILLYA

Actually, its Dr Davids - hes ze new head doc, just set up shop. If you need somevun to talk to... just an idea.

### ARGYLE

Ha! You know ma hates doctors.

### ILLYA

Vys zat?

### ARGYLE

Reckons they donno know what they're talkin about. Especially the doctors that go inside your head.

### MARDIE (Nasal - Like an announcement)

/Tom Baker's Labotomy services.

### ILLYA

Oh, no zis one is little different - good to talk to about zose zings you maybe CAN'T talk about.. normally. Never know he might help.

### MILLIE

(Storms in glares at Emmy Claire and Argyle and sings song: What are you doing here? There's work to be done)

Oh my! What are you DOING here?

I thought I made myself clear

There's still the cleanin' at the bakery.

But instead you're here drinkin' beer.

### ARGYLE

Ma!

### MILLIE

I work hard. Harder than I should.

To make the bread to put on your table

You know I've got no-one else that's strong n' able

So get yourself together and do what you know you should.

### ARGYLE

I'm twenty-two you can't tell me what to do

It's my life and there's something else I gotta do

Now I'm twenty-two you can't tell me what to do

An if I wanna stay here that's just WHAT I'll do

### BACCHUS

Now listen you two I don't want no trouble.

Hey Millie take it easy and have yourself a double

You know in my place where all friends here, including you.

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### MILLIE

Now Bacchus you know I like you  
But you better back up and not get between us two  
And Emmy-Claire you should have more sense  
I expect the both of you to be back at the bakery  
before...

### ILLYA

Ah hello Millie so hard vorking, so strong  
Remind me of ze vimen back home...

### MILLIE

Ah! Illya, ever so charming. What do you want?  
In the meantime, I expect the both of you to be back  
At the bakery, be back, at the bakery before two!!  
(End song)...

And hurry up about it!!  
(Millie storms out)

### EMMY-CLAIRE

We better go Argyle! Your mother is really mad.

### ARGYLE

She's going to drive me mad! You go ahead. I AM going to  
finish my beer. (To himself) I can't believe she came in here!

### EMMY-CLAIRE

Oh Argyle, your impossible! Im new so it's my job on the line.  
Don't be too long! (Emmy-Claire hastily exits)

### ILLYA

I know you sink your mozzar is a dragon...

### ARGYLE

You're telling me.

### ILLYA

Sorry for your problems. But if you CANT talk to HER, I would  
recommend you go have a chat vis zis doctor.

### ARGYLE

What? A head doctor?

### ILLYA

He iz really good at bringing zee inner-self out er... if you  
know vot I mean...

### ARGYLE

Well yeah you can see I've got a few things I'd like to get  
OUT. You think so?

### ILLYA

Yes yes!

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### ARGYLE

Need an appointment?

### ILLYA

I am sure if you knock on ze door he vill give you some time. Hiz office is you know, down in Moore St, number five. Tell him I sent you.

### ARGYLE

Yeah, I know it.. Ok - keep an open mind - lets see how the dice fall on this one! Heads I go see this doctor tails I'll.. anything rather than go back and face that mother of mine. (He flicks a coin from his pocket) Oi!!!.. Heads it is!.. This will be interesting... You say this.. Dr Davids is good?..

### ILLYA

You got problems - hez gat answers! - maybe. Oh here iz hez card - and remember to tell him I sent you.

### ARGYLE

We'll see now! (Argyle sculls beer and exits)

### BACCHUS

Of course... you all leave and I'm stuck here. Well you know where I'd rather be...

### ILLYA

Oh no... here ve go...

### BACCHUS

...I could be out roaming the wilds.. free!  
(Bacchus shines more furiously) Im going to do it!  
Ill close today, and Ill be off, on a holiday - to the desert!

### ILLYA

(Leaving) My friend, I'm zure I vill zee you here later, vere else iz zere to go?  
Do svidaniya.  
(Illya moves to front of stage - Sings to himself Mata Hari song)

Hmm.. shall I go down to ze Docks now?... or maybe I vill go to see zat Millie.. to.. mm yes maybe I need some more bread.  
(spy music as he exits)

### SCENE ENDS