

INFERNO: A DIVINE COMEDY

Written by  
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**EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY**

A city bus screeches to a halt 10 feet in front of a bus stop. The door hisses open. Sounds like there's an argument.

Down the steps walks LAUREN (30, Midwestern hot, but lacking LA confidence). Way overdressed for 9am and carrying a large black garbage bag full of shit.

Behind her comes STELLA (30, looks like a butterfly, but has the temper of a bee - at least, that's how she thinks the expression goes).

STELLA  
(to the driver)  
We paid our fare. Get your fucking  
eyes checked.

The bus speeds off.

LAUREN  
We definitely didn't.

STELLA  
Didn't what?

LAUREN  
Pay. We didn't pay.

STELLA  
So I just yelled at a service worker  
for nothing? Jesus, I'm an asshole.

LAUREN  
Your words.

**INT. BACKSTAGE CANADIAN SYFYCON - DAY**

A sad array of half-dressed science fiction characters roam through a makeshift backstage area.

Lauren and Stella - sweaty and smelling of city bus - approach a BORED WOMAN (40s) with a clipboard.

LAUREN  
Lauren and Stella from Premier  
Models. Sorry we're a bit late, but  
we're stage ready...so to speak.

Bored Woman surveys them both. Smudged eyes. Flat hair. She searches their names on her clipboard. She doesn't seem convinced these are the models she ordered.

STELLA

Not sure if my file mentioned it, but I'm also an actress. So if there's a stage or crowd work to do, probably best to put me there.

Lauren elbows Stella and moves in front of her.

LAUREN

Any assignment is fine. We also brought our own wardrobe.

Stella upends a garbage bag. Out spills sparkly dresses and tops, heels, makeup, *is that a pink wig?*

BORED WOMAN

Costumes are over there. Your assignments are on the front.

She motions to a row of brown garment bags arranged on a rack. Stella lights up.

STELLA

Costumes! Fancy.

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON MEET AND GREET BOOTH - DAY**

Stella and Lauren are dressed as 6.5-foot-tall green squids. The costume extends a foot over their heads, a hole cut in the middle of the body for their faces. Tentacles dangle from their shoulders to the ground.

A banner overhead reads, "Meet the north of the border stars of SyFy." They're in front of the meet-and-greet display for the show Astrid & Lilly Save the World.

STELLA

This is not fancy.

LAUREN

The agency said if we did them this solid, they would book us for ComicCon this weekend.

STELLA

I've been starving myself all week just to look like this.

Stella waves a tentacle in Lauren's face.

LAUREN

There's no one here to impress.

STELLA

You always say, 'every event is an opportunity to--'

LAUREN

Get discovered. And that's true. But everyone here is Canadian.

STELLA

What's wrong with being Canadian?

LAUREN

Nothing. If you wanted to be cast in a show about the mounted police solving snow crimes.

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON MEET AND GREET BOOTH - DAY**

Lauren lets tween girls into the curtained booth one at a time. Stella hikes her costume up to expose her leg.

LAUREN

You look ridiculous.

STELLA

I'm aware.

LAUREN

No, I mean your leg.

STELLA

I'm creating an Angelina moment.

A RUSHED MAN, 30s, cuts in line with TIM, 13, in a wheelchair. There are light-up "Make-a-Wish" stars on it.

Tim's head tilts at an odd angle. He's clearly paralyzed. He moves his head slightly and makes a noise when he sees the sign for Astrid and Lilly.

RUSHED MAN

Sorry everyone, but we have limited time here. Can he go in?

Stella, furious at being interrupted, stops short when she sees the wheelchair.

LAUREN

There's someone in there right now, but we can get this cute little guy in next.

RUSHED MAN

Can I leave him here, then? I took him to the bathroom, and now I have piss all over my leg.

STELLA

Gross. And sure.

The man rushes off.

Lauren's phone buzzes from somewhere deep in her costume. After a brief battle with her costume, she reaches through the face hole and retrieves it from between her boobs.

"PR Firm" flashes on the caller ID.

LAUREN

Can you handle this for a sec? I'll be right back.

Stella nods, but Lauren's already gone.

STELLA

(Leaning down to talk to the kid)

Are you excited to meet Astrid and Lilly? Are they why you came?

Tim uses the screen attached to his wheelchair to speak in a mechanical voice.

TIM

Astrid is hot.

STELLA

That's so cute!

TIM

Do you think they'll fuck me?

STELLA

What?

TIM

I'm OK with a pity fuck.

The tweens in line gasp and snicker at the conversation.

STELLA

Jesus Christ, stop saying fuck.

TIM

I would have asked you, but you're not my type.

STELLA

Would you sto--. Not your type? Why not?

TIM

Look at you.

STELLA

Under this costume, I'm actually very attractive.

TIM

Maybe ten years ago.

STELLA

How dare you.

Tim uses his finger to accelerate the wheelchair forward, right into Stella's knee.

TIM

Get out of my way, old hag. I want Astrid and Lilly to fu--

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON - DAY**

Lauren answers the phone, huddled in a corner. Over her shoulder, Tim rams Stella's knee with his wheelchair again.

LAUREN

Yes. This is Lauren. Is this about the Junior Publicist role?

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON MEET AND GREET BOOTH - DAY**

Stella, clutching her knee, blocks Tim from plowing through the curtain and into the meet-and-greet.

TIM

(still in his  
mechanical voice)

Someone move this old bitch. I'm trying to make my wish come true.

Tim backs up to ram her again, but Stella jerks forward. She reaches for his control panel, but her hand is attached to a 6-foot-long tentacle.

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON - DAY**

Lauren's face is a wash of emotions. *Is she crying?* She's also oblivious to what's happening over her shoulder.

LAUREN

I just worked so hard on that application, you know. Sure, I have a massive gap on my resume, and I don't have any real experience per se, and of course, I know that Rothschild & Rothschild is the most prestigious PR firm in the city...

Stella reaches the controls, but her tentacle whips toward Tim's face. A sucker connects with his mouth. Knocks out a tooth. Blood sprays everywhere

LAUREN (cont'd)

Wait. I got the interview?

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON MEET AND GREET BOOTH - DAY**

The sound of Lauren's voice briefly distracts Stella. Just long enough for Tim to back up again

Stella throws her hands up to block the blood. But tentacles snake out and wrap themselves around Tim's axle.

Tim frantically tries to get away (which means he's moving his head violently back and forth). His screen voice sticks.

TIM

Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck.

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON - DAY**

Lauren wipes her tears and pulls herself together.

LAUREN

Meet with Maureen Rothschild herself....8am tomorrow, I will be there....Oh, and can you maybe, potentially, not mention to her that I cried on the phone?...Thank you so much.

Tim capsizes, overrun by a giant, bloodied squid.

Lauren takes a few deep breaths and turns to see...

**INT. CANADIAN SYFYCON MEET AND GREET BOOTH - DAY**

A ring of tween girls surrounds Stella and Tim. Cheering them on like some sort of fight club.

Lauren rushes forward to help.

STELLA  
Just. Shut. Up!

Stella fights to free herself. One tentacle snaps Tim's screen free from his wheelchair.

Stella struggles, and with a final jerk, she rises. Her tentacles drag the now dismantled wheelchair toward her feet, dislodging Tim, who rolls away limply. The tweens are horrified.

**INT. BACKSTAGE CANADIAN SYFYCON - DAY**

Stella and Lauren sit like two kids waiting outside the principal's office. They're both covered in blood. Their squid costumes limp.

LAUREN  
How did that even happen?

STELLA  
It was an accident.

LAUREN  
An accidental assault?

STELLA  
It all happened so fast. And where were you, by the way?

LAUREN  
Oh, um. My mom called. My dad. Is like. Really sick.

STELLA  
Oh, shit. I'm so sorry.

LAUREN  
It's OK. Don't even think about it. Like, at all.

STELLA  
Is there any way we don't get fired?

LAUREN  
Absolutely not.

Stella groans and tries to put her head between her knees. But her squid costume only lets her get halfway.

STELLA

Oh god. I can't get fired. I'm supposed to have an audition down at ComicCon tomorrow.

LAUREN

An audition?

Lauren feels as guilty as she looks.

STELLA

For *Iron Man: Keeping the Iron in the Fire*.

Lauren swallows hard. Tries to think of a way out of this.

LAUREN

I'll tell them I did it.

STELLA

What? No. Then you'll get fired.

LAUREN

It's OK. I left you alone. This is my fault. Let me fix it.

STELLA

Your dad's sick, you need the money just like I do, and you want to sacrifice yourself for me?

Stella embraces Lauren in a tentacly, bloody hug.

STELLA (cont'd)

You're literally the best friend I've ever had.

Stella tries to hold Lauren's hand but instead wraps their tentacles together.

**EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY**

Still bloody, they haul their trash bags to the bus stop.

Above them is a flashy billboard for LA's newest nightclubs. Nine-floor mega club "Inferno" and VIP rooftop bar "Ether."

STELLA

The angle of that security camera made it look way worse than it actually was.

LAUREN

You think? For me, it was you throwing the first and only punch.

STELLA

I can't believe they fired us both. Do you think that means they're not going to pay us for today?

LAUREN

I think that's exactly what it means.

STELLA

Fuck, our rent money.

LAUREN

At least no one is pressing charges.

STELLA

What would they even charge me for?

LAUREN

Assault on a minor.

STELLA

OK.

LAUREN

Reckless endangerment.

STELLA

I said OK.

LAUREN

Attempted manslaughter.

STELLA

I get it! So what are we going to do?

LAUREN

Just let me think for a second.

The LA summer heat melts what's left of their makeup off. Stella gives up carrying her trash bag, drags it behind her.

STELLA

What about that girl you dated, V? Doesn't she work with Todd?

LAUREN

We went on one date. And I told you,  
it was a disaster. I'm not calling V.

STELLA

I mean, her dog is fine, what can she  
still be upset about?

LAUREN

There are other ways to get you to  
ComicCon--

STELLA

Us.

LAUREN

You're the one with the audition.  
Let's focus on you. I can always make  
money some other way--

STELLA

Absolutely not. I refuse to go  
without you. If one of us succeeds,  
we both succeed.

LAUREN

Right. No, you're totally right. We  
just need to find someone to help  
you, er, us.

**EXT. BUS STOP - DAY**

Stella hides under the scrap of shade the bus stop provides.  
She's kicked off her shoes, the bottoms of her feet black.  
She becomes more enraged with every passing minute.

Lauren is on the phone.

LAUREN

I figured it was last minute. Thanks  
for trying.

(hangs up)

Both Model Pros and Models Models  
Models are fully booked for ComicCon.

STELLA

Of course. No one cares about the  
actual models.

LAUREN

I mean, they do. They care about the  
actual ones they've already hired.

Stella paces and rants. Blood and makeup streaked down her face. She looks like a B-movie extra.

STELLA

This is all part of the war on women.  
We're just used up and spit out.  
Another young ingenue ground up by  
the industrial entertainment complex.

Two TOURISTS, 20s, come out of a nearby McDonald's. They watch with horrified fascination, whispering to each other. One films it on her phone.

STELLA (cont'd)

No one respects us. Not my agent, not these promo companies, not all the casting directors who wouldn't know talent if it hit them in the face. And least of all, those suits who run the world!

Tourist 1 approaches Stella holding out her McDonald's bag.

TOURIST 1

Um...here.

STELLA

(Practically snarling)  
What's this?

TOURIST 1

We're not supposed to give you guys money.  
(Looking at Tourist 2)  
Right?

Stella hits a level of rage that renders her still. After a long beat, she snatches the bag from the tourist's hand.

STELLA

(Looks in the bag)  
Did you get sauce for these nuggets?

TOURIST 1

Um, we, well. We used it all. But there's also a cheeseburger and some fries in there.

Tourist 2 takes a selfie over her shoulder of Tourist 1 handing Stella the bag. She captions it, "Helping the Homeless," as she posts it to Instagram.

LAUREN

You're not seriously going to eat that?

STELLA

Of course I am. Because we're broke, jobless, and one step closer to being fucking homeless.

LAUREN

We're not having used McDonald's for lunch.

Stella slowly reaches in and pulls out a (sauceless) nugget.

STELLA

But I'm hungry.

They stare at each other - a standoff. Stella slowly brings the nugget to her mouth. *What are you going to do about it?*

Lauren slaps the bag out of Stella's hand, scattering McDonald's across the sidewalk.

LAUREN

What if you miss ComicCon because you're in the hospital for eating second-hand fast food?

STELLA

I need lunch.

#### **INT. LAUREN'S CAR - DAY**

Lauren's car is a beater. Gas on empty, check engine light flashing. They coast down a fancy suburban street on fumes.

Lauren cases each house they pass. She sees one she likes. It's palatial with massive gates. At least two weeks' worth of newspapers lay in the driveway.

Shitty customer service music blares from Lauren's phone.

LAUREN

Time to get us some lunch.

Stella opens her mouth to protest, but the customer service music clicks off.

PREMIER MODELS REP

Hi, thank you for calling Premier Models. How can I help you?

Lauren motions to Stella to get out of the car. Stella shakes her head. A silent argument ensues.

PREMIER MODELS REP (cont'd)  
Hello? Is anyone there?

Stella throws her hands up and mouths, "fine."

LAUREN  
(In a distinguished  
lady accent)  
Hello, yes, I'm calling to book a few  
of your models.

**EXT. PALATIAL HOUSE - DAY**

Stella creeps up to the gate. She throws a stick at it, testing the gate for electricity, like Jurassic Park.

Deeming it safe, she hikes up her skirt. Climbs.

INTERCUT

PREMIER MODELS REP  
OK, great. What are their names?

Stella slips and lands on her ass. Hard. But she's in. She checks the perimeter before she...picks up the newspapers?

LAUREN  
Well, now hold on, they told me they  
were booked at some convention. For  
comic books, maybe?

Stella tears through the Sunday paper. Lauren keeps watch.

PREMIER MODELS REP  
We have a lot of models going to  
ComicCon. I could reassign them for  
you if you just give me their names--

Stella holds up coupon after coupon. Lauren rejects them. Neither notice a man's face appear in a ground floor window.

LAUREN  
No, no, I'd love to see them work.  
Not an audition or anything. Because  
they were lovely. But I'd love to see  
them in action, so to speak.

PREMIER MODELS REP  
You want to go to ComicCon?

Stella holds up a Chick-fil-A flier. Lauren runs her thumb across her neck, and Stella slowly rips the page in half.

Stella roots around, but Lauren finally notices the man in the window. *He looks angry.*

LAUREN

Is it possible to see them on stage?  
Well, one of them, anyway. Some place prominent?

Stella sees Lauren's signal just as three dogs and a man in tightie whities, waving a gun, burst out the front door.

Stella grabs newspapers and her skirt and charges the gate.

PREMIER MODELS REP

Ma'am, are you dictating terms for another company's booking?

Stella fights off the dogs. When that doesn't work, she uses the newspaper to start a game of fetch. Turns out, these dogs love fetch.

LAUREN

(accent faltering)  
No, sorry. If you could just confirm for me that Stella Montgomery is working at ComicCon tomorrow?

**EXT. PALATIAL HOUSE - DAY**

Stella clears the gate, newspapers and cleavage flying.

She sprints for the car. Jerks open the door. Well, tries to. *What the fuck?* The door is locked. She pounds on the window, but Lauren is practically catatonic inside.

**INT. LAUREN'S CAR - DAY**

Stella shoves Lauren into the passenger seat, throws the car into drive, and punches the gas.

In the rearview mirror, the man and his dogs spill into the street behind the retreating car.

The woman on the phone is still speaking.

PREMIER MODELS REP

...and after that, we had no choice but to fire them.

(MORE)

PREMIER MODELS REP (cont'd)  
We've let the other agencies know as well, so you won't be able to book them through anyone else. But I can give you our two best models--

Lauren's mute, stunned.

STELLA  
Better models than Stella and Lauren?  
I don't fucking think so.

Stella chucks the phone in the backseat. This snaps Lauren out of her trance.

LAUREN  
This is all my fault. I'm so sorry.  
Earlier. When I left. The phone call.  
I'm, well. I have a--

Lauren hyperventilates. She struggles to breathe, to speak. She's having a panic attack.

STELLA  
You're OK, Lo. I'm here. Just breathe with me. In, two, three, four, five.  
And then out for five on your own.

Stella reaches a hand over to Lauren's chest.

LAUREN  
I have to tell you--

Stella presses her hand harder on Lauren's chest.

STELLA  
Listen. You tried. It didn't work.  
We'll figure something out. We're in this together, right?

More panic. Tears pour down Lauren's face.

LAUREN  
You succeed, I succeed.

Stella's heartbroken. But she still tries to cheer up her best friend.

STELLA  
I scored us buy-one-get-one-free all day breakfast at the Chicken Hut.

Stella holds up the flier for breakfast sandwiches made with giant slabs of fried chicken instead of bread.

**INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Lauren soaks in the tub. The dried blood gone. Washcloth draped over her eyes.

STELLA (O.S.)

I've got it!

Lauren, startled, opens her eyes and looks at Stella, who sits in the bathtub facing her, looking at her phone.

LAUREN

This isn't another Nigerian prince who wants to give us a million dollars, is it?

STELLA

I told you, I think those might be scams. The last two didn't even email me back.

Lauren leans back and puts the washcloth back over her eyes.

STELLA (cont'd)

I think I've figured out how we're going to get our jobs back.

LAUREN

You're buying that kid new front teeth?

STELLA

Listen, that kid deserved it. You should have heard the foul stuff coming out of his computer.

LAUREN

Jesus, Stel.

STELLA

(Showing her screen)

Do you know who that is?

LAUREN

Rebecca Chase. The casting director for the new Michael Bay movie The Weatherman.

STELLA

What? No. I mean, sure. How do you know that?

LAUREN

Dress for the job you want.

STELLA

Do you know the one next to the one you know.

LAUREN

Oh damn, that's the owner of Premier Models. Todd.

STELLA

And you see where he is?

Lauren leans forward to look closer at the photo.

LAUREN

Is that Ether? The new member's club?

STELLA

He's there for opening night. All we have to do is go there and explain that we may have made one tiny mistake and ask for our jobs back.

LAUREN

And when that doesn't work?

STELLA

We beg.

LAUREN

And what if he knows what we did and doesn't want to see us?

STELLA

Do you really think some douchebag wearing sunglasses at night cares what we did to a handicapped kid?

LAUREN

You can't call them that anymore. It's people with disabilities.

STELLA

OK then. Do you really think a person with the disability of wearing sunglasses at night will care what we did to a handicapped kid?

LAUREN

Not douchebag, handicapped.

STELLA

You can't call a handicapped kid a douchebag, even if he was one.

LAUREN

Why don't you just go. You're way more convincing than I am.

STELLA

We're in this together, right? One of us succeeds, we both succeed.

Lauren groans.

LAUREN

It's almost ten. Can we even make it before it closes?

STELLA

All we have to do is pop in, find Todd, ask him to make a quick phone call, and boom. How long can it take?