

## TRISHA SCHLEICH

### KARL

I once knew this squid.  
His name was Karl.  
He had the most beautiful squiddy arms.  
Six of them.  
Those squiddy arms danced.  
They whirled and twirled  
and squiggled and did all that fancy squid jiving.  
Karl could move.  
200 feet under the sea,  
Karl blinked like a neon sign.  
Like a bold neon sign during one of those nights when they sky  
was pitch black.  
All you could see was  
Karl dancing with grace and  
blinking with techno colored excellence.  
Like fireworks.  
But although Karl danced,  
He also wanted more.  
This squid man's passion was not blinking or swirling  
it was racquetball.  
I didn't get it.  
I don't think anyone got it.  
But as soon as one of those oozing tentacles wrapped itself around a racquetball racquet  
it was magic.  
All I can remember is  
that jelly smile.  
Karl's neon swirling fireworks was nothing compared to the way he beamed  
playing that game.  
The only problem was,  
you can't play racquetball under the sea.  
There's no nets, no balls, no other players, and certainly too much water.  
So Karl cried.  
That squid cried.  
I swear the ocean got bigger  
with how many tears poured out of that one big squiddy eye.  
Pathetic.  
Until one day,  
Karl had this idea.  
If he couldn't play racquetball, racquetball would play on him.  
Excellent.  
He swam way down.  
He found the darkest water.

And that squid danced because at this point it was the only thing keeping  
him alive.  
Karl danced so fast  
and so furiously that  
his neon lights made the illusion there was this unearthly racquetball game going on.  
Hypnotic.  
It was crazy.  
Karl darted so fast  
From here to there that this entire picture of a racquetball game came alive  
made by him!  
He was the whole thing.  
He flashed the entire game.  
Two teams with four players on each side, a net, a ball racquets, and enough air to play it right.  
Amazing.  
Everyone watched it.  
They came from everywhere.  
I was there every day watching these matches and even rooted for my favorite team  
the neon greens.  
Until this one day  
the fishermen got him.  
Karl was real old by this time and they caught him up in their big fishy nets and  
pulled him aboard.  
But Karl didn't mind.  
He even grabbed his racquet on his way up.  
And I hear they found him with a racquet and a big jelly smile when they  
opened the nets.

## STINKY PUPPY

I remember when you were adorable.  
When your puppy tongue would  
flap in the wind with every  
puppy bounce.  
When your puppy bark  
sang out a call for love and  
admiration to myself and those  
you love.  
When your puppy fur  
felt like a new bath towel  
fresh from the mouth of  
they dryer. On fluff mode.  
And when your puppy eyes  
sparkled like dark polished  
marbles shined carefully  
with Windex.  
Now your bark sound like  
the cry of a deranged hippo  
lost in a storm.  
Now you have a skin disease that  
causes a smell much like  
a mixture of tar and smut.  
Now you stare at me with  
faded milky eyes in a  
Freddy Krueger like style.  
And now you drag your belly to the ground sliding  
into the house whatever foul creatures  
become trapped  
in your folds.  
Puppy I loved you once but now you  
just freak me out. I promise you'll die quickly  
and painlessly.  
But only if you promise that  
you won't whimper when I leave the room  
as you die there.

SUGAR MUFFIN GOOBER

My dearest ball of goo.  
Let me stuff you with sugar.  
Let me squish your face uncontrollably  
and squeeze out all your fluff!  
As I stare into your big  
glass eyes I wonder  
if your stare is one of love  
or one of hate.  
Either way, I will continue  
to smother you with  
chocolates and goodies  
until you ooze with the sweet smell of bumbleberries.  
My dearest ball of goo  
I love you with every strained hug!  
You are all mine and I refuse to let you  
leave me.

## TRISHA SCHLEICH

### BATTLE OF THE BANDS

#### SCENE 1

ADELAIDE Female Mid 60s

BUCK Male Mid 30s

J.A.-RITE a.k.a. RIGHTEOUS FORCE Male 20s

ZACH STACKAH Male 20s

TAHRISTIEGH AYTUNE Female 20s

FEMALE VOICE #1 FEMALE VOICE #2

(A truck stop diner at 4am in the morning somewhere in the southern United States. In the middle of the stage there is a long waist high counter with barstools lining along its front side. Kitty corner from the counter, and on opposite sides, there are either tables or booths suggesting more seating in the diner beyond the action of the counter space. Behind the counter, but off to the side, there is a rectangular shaped opening suggesting an order drop-off and pick up window between the diner and the kitchen, where BUCK, the cook, can be seen occasionally passing the opening as he cleans. He wears a white cook outfit with a white paper hat. He is greasy looking, to say the least. In the center, behind the counter, there is a large sign that reads, "Betty Beavers Truck Stop & Diner" with a female beaver wearing a patriotically embellished dress holding a gas pump in one hand and balancing a plate with a hamburger and fries in the other. The diner is completely empty except for ADELAIDE, the only waitress working. She is behind the counter casually leaning while she files her nails, hums, and chews her gum much like a cow chews on its cud. She wears a waitress outfit mirroring the outfit "Betty Beaver" wears on the sign.)

Enter J.A.-RITE, a famous rap star dressed in a track suite, sunglasses, a gold chain, tennis shoes, and a hat. He runs into the diner as though he is trying to get away from something. He leaps over the counter next to ADELAIDE. Two female voices can be heard from outside. ADELAIDE stands frozen in shock.

FEMALE VOICE #1: OH MY GOSH! LIKE. WHERE DID HE GO?

FEMALE VOICE #2: OH MY GOSH! LIKE. I HAVE NO IDEA!

FEMALE VOICE #1: OH MY GOSH! LIKE. I BET HE WENT TO THE PIGGLY-WIGGLY!

FEMALE VOICE #1 and #2 simultaneously let out a fading scream as though they are fading into the distance. J.A.-RITE slowly rises from behind the counter to face

ADELAIDE who is still standing frozen.

J.A.-RITE: Sorry lady. I'm what they call the Righteous Force. You can call me J.A.-Rite. Heres the short and quick. I got done with a concert and those crazy-ass fans By this time all three stars are standing as they start batting at one another in a catfight like manner.

ADELAIDE: (Gets on top of the counter) HEY YA'LL BREAK IT UP! Not in this diner! You guys want to fight? Fine! But we're going to do it like civilized rock, pop, and rap stars, kay?

Buck! Get the stage and the system ready! (ADELAIDE raises one arm in the air and brings it down slowly in front of her face as she says in a whisper) Its time to karaoke battle!  
Lights fade out.

## SCENE TWO

(Lights up to the same setting for the exception of the additions of a small stage consisting of a 4x8 foot flat raised from the ground, an inexpensive looking karaoke system, a banner that reads, "Betty Beaver's Ultimate Karaoke Battle", and the "karaoke roulette wheel of death". The three pop stars have plates in front of them suggesting they finished the meals that were ordered for them. The stars are staring at each other menacingly.)

BUCK stands in the window wearing the same outfit in the last scene with the addition of sunglasses, red lipstick, white sparkly gloves, and a pirate hat. ADELAIDE enters wearing a bedazzled version of her waitress outfit, sunglasses, red lipstick, white sparkly gloves, and a pirate hat.

ADELAIDE: Okay listen up kids! Now that me and Buck got our official Betty Beaver's ultimate karaoke battle judging outfits on we can start. Heres the rules. First and foremost, no doing your own songs. In fact, Betty Beaver's has here our very own karaoke roulette wheel of death that works very simply. I spin the wheel, it lands on a number, I open up the envelope corresponding to that number, and from that envelope there is a slip of paper that reads your fate- the karaoke song you must sing in Betty Beaver's ultimate karaoke battle. Rule number two. The best singer and performer wins- so technically their ain't really a rule number two except give it your all! Understand?

TAHRISTIEGH: Whats.

ZACH: [Singing] CHHEEEYEEAH!

J.A.-RITE: Aight.

TEHRISTIEGH: Wait. Who goes first because I don't really think its fair if you choose because you'll just choose who you think will either the best or worst at going first.

ZACH: (Singing) That girl is paranoid. Yeah. She's so paranoid. That girl is

TAHRISTIEGH: Shuddap Zach. You're the paranoid one. You were always so- tied up my limo driver and took me hostage. Turning a corner I kicked out a door in my limo, took one of those dive rolls onto the pavement and I've been running since now.

ADELAIDE remains frozen for two beats and then snaps out of it and immediately starts rapping.

ADELAIDE: I'm J.A.-Rite, the Righteous Force and we're going to heat it up like a convection oven. I'm J.A.-Rite, the Righteous Force and baby I'm the closest thing to heaven! Ha-ha-ha! Darling I love you and your songs when I'm in the club! You can stay here as long as you want. Baby, you look hungry. You want something? Hey Buck! Come here! Look who just walked in!

BUCK peers through the window at J.A.-RITE and nods his head in approval.

J.A.-RITE: Yeah, yeah, yeah! That's sounds blastizzle! You're pretty fly for an old lady. I like you're outfit. I'll have me some fishsticks with a side of fries and a little mustard.  
Just then ZACH STACKAH, a famous rock star, dressed in all black and leather, parades into the room carrying a microphone as he marches up to ADAILADE in a seductive manner.

ZACH:(He sings in a deep rocker voice) Hey girl. You look so good to me. With your patriotic waitress dress. How bout you get me some food for my tummy?

ADELAIDE: Oh Lordy! Have I died and gone to heaven? My first night shift at Betty's Beaver and famous rap star J.A.-Rite and famous rock star Zach Stackah in my diner at the same time in one night? Sit down cutie! What can I get for you?

ZACH: (Sits down next to J.A.-RITE, still singing) Oh girl. My sexy fallen angel from heaven. How bout you get me a Diet Pepsi to start?

J.A.-RITE: [As he exchanges a complicated handshake with ZACH) HEY BOY! How you doin' man? Its been a while. What brings you here?

ZACH: (In a high voice very opposite of his singing voice) Oh, gee-wiz. I was just riding in my tour bus, and I was writing a song about a German girl when I got really hungry for some sausage links. I saw this cute little place and I just had to stop!

ADELAIDE: Sausage links is what you want? Sausage links is what you'll get! Hey Buck! Look who we have now! Its Zach Stackah! (BUCK looks out the window and

ZACH, this time he nods in disapproval.) I'll put you twos sugar lip orders in right away! Just as ADELAIDE writes down the two orders and hands them to BUCK, pop sensation

TAHRISTIEGH AYTUNE walks in. Camera flashes can be seen coming from offstage on the same side the women's voices were heard from. TAHRISTIEGH is wearing an outfit so trendy it looks more like a piece of art then an actual outfit. All in the diner, including BUCK from the kitchen, stare at TAHRISTIEGH in shock and horror.

TAHRISTIEGH: {Directed to camera flashes offstage) Okay you guys. That's enough for one night. Go home. Go home. Shooo! (Turns around to see the others staring in horror) What are you guys looking at. OMG, story of my life. People always looking at me, taking my pictures, following me everywhere. Its like I'm not human or something. Can't a girl just wear 6 inch stilettos and express herself and her problems by means of mainstream pop without being looked at all the time. OMG can someone get me a sparkling water before I fall over?

ADELAIDE: Well hot damn! Three singers in my diner at one time! Did someone wish on a shooting star or something? Buck you wish on a shooting star? (BUCK shakes his head no. He is clearly confused.) Sit down honey. Now I don't need you falling over we've been accident free for two days now- it's a streak! I'll make your water sparkle, doncha' worry.

TAHRISTIEGH: J.A.? Zach? OMG. What are you guys doing here?

J.A.-Rite: Well I was running from some fans, and he had the munchies, so here we be. Why you here shawdy?

TAHRISTIEGH: What I do is secret. Lets just say the paparazzi got in my way, as usual.

ZACH: (Singing] That girl. Oh! She says she doesn't know they'll show but I think she do!

TAHRISTIEGH: Shaddup Zach!

ZACH: You shut up!

TAHRISTIEGH: NO YOU SHUDDAP!

J.A.-RITE: You both shuddup!

ZACH: No you shut-up!

TAHRISTIEGH: YEAH!

ZACH: You're not on my side- you need to shut up too!

J.A.-RITE: Everybody shuddup cept' for me! I AM THE RIGHTEOUS FOOOOORCE!

J.A.-Rite: Chill ya'll! This is the whole reason we're doing this thing, to see who really needs to shuddup. Now Ms, Adelaide. Sweet thing. Suga Mamma. My sparkling little star. My delicious little cookie. (In a soft sweet voice) How 'bout' we just draw straws or somethin'. (He winks)

ADELAIDE: Boy do I look like I'm drowning? Stop trying to throw lines out at me cuz' none of that sweet talks gunna work to sway this karaoke battle. In fact, new rule. Don't seduce the staff. It don't work here. Won't help your game. But that straw thing, now J.A. that's an idea I can use! Listen up! The person that draws the short straw goes first, and we can draw again for the second round.

TAHRISTIEGH: Can you do that? Make up new rules and stuff? That doesn't seem fair.

ADELAIDE: Honey if life was fair I'd be the pop star and you'd be the one looking like the lovechild of Uncle Sam and a hooker pirate. With that said, I make the rules, you just follow them. Lets get this thing started.

ZACH draws the short straw.

ZACH: Hot dog! I get to go first!

ZACH crosses to spin the wheel.

ADELAIDE: Song number five it is! Lets see... You will be singing Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen!

ZACH prepares himself on stage and just as BUCK presses start to begin the song the karaoke machine explodes and starts smoking from the back. TAHRISTIEGH and

ADELAIDE both drop to the ground cover their heads and start screaming.

J.A.-RITE: What the HIZZO is going on here?

ZACH: Yeah this is a true bummer, I was about to sing my song!

J.A.-RITE: I think some one fixed this battle cuz' they were scurred they weren't gunna win!

TAHRISTIEGH: That is like, so right! I bet someone did fix it!

All, except BUCK, suddenly stop and start to circle each other around the room with suspicion for five beats.

BUCK: (Suddenly breaking the silence and with a British Queens accent) Stop this nonsense!  
Twas I THAT SABOTAGED THE KARAOKE BATTLE!

ALL: GASP!

BUCK: That's right, twas I! You see, I have a secret

TAHRISTIEGH: (Over-dramatically)No Buck! Don't!

BUCK: Yes Tahrstiegh, I must! For us! You see, I'm in love with Tahrstiegh and she is in love with me!

ALL: GASP!

BUCK: Yes, tis true indeed. We had no choice. It was either move to the United States to start her pop career or die!

TAHRISTIEGH: BUCK STOP!

BUCK: But darling aren't you sick of living a lie!? The only time I get to see you is when you sneek away to my kitchen late at night! I. Can't. Live. This. Way. Any.  
MORE!

J.A.-RITE: Okay ya'll. Shits getting weird.

TAHRISTIEGH: You're right Buck! You are so right! Everyone! This is the last moment you will see Tahrstiegh Aytune the pop star! (ALL but BUCK and TAHRISTIEGH cheer) Well, that was uncalled for.

BUCK: Nevermind them! Tahrstiegh lets go tell the world of our love!

TAHRISTIEGH: Ok! Hold on a sec. [Opens cell phone and dials] Hey! Ed, I got a great story for you! I'm leaving my life as a pop star to marry an overweight greasy truck stop cook! You're already here? Ok! Great! (Closes phone) Lets go Buck!

As BUCK and TAHRISTIEGH leaves the same camera flashes start flashing from off stage as they walk out.

ZACH: What just happened?

J.A.-RITE: I dunno man.

ADELAIDE: Can't you see? Destiny just happened! If none of you would of showed up here tonight, then Zach wouldn't have pissed off Tahristiegh and she wouldn't of told all you to shut up and you wouldn't have gotten into a fight and then we wouldn't of had that karaoke battle and Buck wouldn't of sabotaged the karaoke battle so he could proclaim his love for Tahristiegh!

ZACH: What just happened?

J.A.-RITE: I dunno man.

ADELAIDE: Its simple boys. Love will happen as long as you have the stomach to handle a truck stop diner.

J.A.-RITE: As crazy as that sounds it really makes sense. Adelaide, Zach, its been real, but you know what I just realized? I gotta let love happen. Excuse me, I have to crazy fans waiting for me at the Piggly Wiggly! (J.A.-RITE exits)

ADELAIDE: That's right J.A! You go get em'!

ZACH: Well. I guess its just us.

ADELAIDE: Yup, just little old me and you.

ZACH: Adelaide?

ADELAIDE: Yes Zach?

ZACH: I've got a big bus, and besides the driver its just me, and it gets a little lonely and

ADELAIDE: Say no more sugar child, I think I know what you're saying.

ZACH: You do?

ADELAIDE: Yes, I do. (Goes behind the counter and pulls out a hand puppet that resembles the Betty Beaver logo) Take this. She's all I got, and now I'm giving her to you.

ZACH: Oh Adelaide how did you know?! (In puppets voice) I will miss you and the diner but I know Zach will take good care of me and never forget you!

ADELAIDE: Get out of here you two and enjoy being rockstars! (ZACH exits merrily with his new puppet friend. ADELAIDE wanders around the stage cleaning things up and then walks to the karaoke stage, and pics up the mic. In a Elvis voice) Thank you! Thank you very much!

Lights fade out.