FLIGHT OF THE MOTHMAN

A Musical Mystery

for children and children at heart

Music by Matt Glickstein Book & Lyrics by Jason Spraggins

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MAIN (10)

Members of The Junior Gumshoe Agency (Campers):

RILEY- (Teen/Preteen) New to Camp Pleasant Pines. Obsessed with the unknown and fantastical. Riley "wants to believe". Friendly and a bit naive.

CASEY- (Teen/Preteen) Camper at Pleasant Pines. Member of the Junior Gumshoe Agency (a kid's detective club). One of the Agency's science experts. Logical and methodical- a natural skeptic. A bit edgy in personality.

TAYLOR – (Teen/Preteen)Founder and President of the Junior Gumshoe Agency.

ALEX- (Teen/Preteen) Another of the Junior Gumshoe Agency's science experts. Specializes in zoology cryptid research. Balances skepticism with curiosity and open-mindedness.

JORDAN- (Teen/Preteen or Younger) Member of the Junior Gumshoe Agency. A funloving jokester, loyal to his team.

Camp Staff:

MR. SCHWARTZ- (Adult/Older Teen) Camp Director. Friendly but somewhat aloof/scattered. Grandson of Camp Pleasant Pines' owner.

MRS. LUNA- (Adult/Older Teen) Nature Guide/Camp Counselor. Very proper and put together- the opposite of Mr. Schwartz. Serious and often cryptic with her words.

MR. DRAKE- (Adult/Older Teen) Wealthy Businessman/Investor. An uptight professional with his own, selfish plans for Camp Pleasant Pines.

CHARLIE- (Adult/Older Teen) Mr. Drake's Bumbling Assistant – Clumsy and easily frightened. Often a source of comic relief, unintentionally.

MR. HERRON- (Adult/Older Teen) Grounds Keeper. Quiet and watchful. Often a mysterious figure of suspicion and questionable motives as events unfold.

SUPPORTING (6)

Gumshoe Cadets- 4 total (members-in-training) (speaking & singing)

(Preteens or Younger)

JAMIE, BAILEY, PARKER, & DREW

Adult/Young Adult Voices (staged, off-stage, or pre-recorded):

ADULT POD CAST HOST ("The Seeker") (non-singing) Adult co-host of *Beyond Belief.* Same gender as Riley- to draw parallels between the present-day host and the character from the 1980s.

ADULT POD CAST HOST ("The Skeptic") (non-singing) Adult co-host of *Beyond Belief.* Same gender as Casey- to draw parallels between the present-day host and the character from the 1980s.

ENSEMBLE: NON-SPEAKING (3+)

MOTHMAN- (non-singing) The elusive, winged creature at the center of the mystery. The Mothman appears in three iterations: a shadow puppet, costumed, and in his "true form". More info can be found in the script (to avoid spoilers).

YOUNG BOY (non-singing)- A curious kid and avid listener of the paranormal podcast *Beyond Belief*. His role, though minor, bridges the modern day with the past.

CAMPERS- (singing) Students visiting Camp Pleasant Pines Summer Camp 1986.

*All characters may be portrayed by actors of any gender, and pronouns/honorifics in the script can be adjusted to reflect the performers' identities.

SETTINGS

Camp Pleasant Pines- Summer 1983

A simple summer camp setting with basic cabins, a central fire pit, and minimal outdoor décor to suggest a forested environment. The stage might feature wooden benches, logs, or picnic tables to create the camp atmosphere. A large, wooden "Camp Pleasant Pines" sign would be a nice touch. The addition of tree-like structures or panels surrounding the set could hint at the dense woods just beyond the camp. The campfire, placed center stage, serves as a crucial focal point; it can be represented using lighting effects. For practicality, the campfire setup should be on wheels, allowing for easy movement on and off the stage as needed for scene changes.

There should be two paths on and of stage for actors (one on each side). One path leads to the camp cabins and one into the forest- both destinations can be simply suggested. Incorporating camp signage into the set could be helpful, with arrows labeled and pointing toward the appropriate destinations: "Forest" in one direction and "Cabins" in the other.

The Marsh

A shadowy area created with low or colored lights and fog effects. The set might include props and suggestive set pieces- tangled vines, rocks, and uneven platforms to represent the marsh's wet, uneven terrain. The overall atmosphere should be spooky. Soundscapes (such as croaking frogs, moving water, or insects) might be considered.

SCENES/MUSICAL NUMBERs

Scene 1: Welcome to Camp Pleasant Pines! (The Camp- Afternoon)

#1 "Camp Pleasant Pines"

Scene 2: Strange Sightings (The Camp- Evening)

#2 "Camp Pleasant Pines Reprise #1"

#3 "Legend of the Mothman"

Scene 3: Something Wicked in the Marsh (The Marsh- Night)

#4 "Something Wicked!"

#5 "I Want to Believe"

Scene 4: The Investigation (The Marsh-Day)

#6 "The Investigation"

Scene 5: Floods, Bugs & the Cryptid (The Camp- Evening, Days Later)

#7 "Seeing is Believing"

#8 "More than Meets the Eye"

Scene 6: Stranger Than Fiction- The Evidence (The Camp- Night)

#9 "Stranger than Fiction"

#10 "Camp Pleasant Pines Reprise #2"

- Scene 7: Epilogue- The Stories We Tell (The Camp- Night)
 - #11 "The Stories We Tell/ I Want to Believe Finale"

*The musical may be performed in a single act without a break or with an intermission placed between Acts 4 and 5.

PROGRAM NOTES

Backdrop

An expansive backdrop featuring depictions of forest trees that suggests a dense forest. It might be complimented with lighting that changes to reflect the time of day and various moods. Also, there should be room for visibility above the backdrop to allow the Mothman to appear to the audience, looking out above the treetops. To achieve this effect, ladders or scaffolding can be used behind the backdrop.

Shadow Puppetry (Scene Two)

For the shadow puppetry, a thin semi transparent fabric called a scrim can be used. To create the shadow puppet effect, puppets or cutouts of figures (like the MOTHMAN) should be placed behind the scrim. Strong backlighting from floor mounted or low angle lights aimed at the scrim will project the shadows onto it and create a larger than life silhouette. Ensure that the lighting is focused so the puppeteers are not lit and the shadows appear to be moving on their own.

Glowing Red Eyes (Scene Three)

To create the "red eyes" effect, small, battery-operated red LED lights could be used. Some can be attached to handheld props or the backdrop, while others can be fixed to stationary set pieces at different heights. This mix of moving and fixed lights, blinking and fading in various spots, creates the illusion of rapid, movement. LEDs are available from retailers like Amazon or hardware and theater supply stores- some with blinking effects.

MOTHMAN costuming

The show calls for two version of the MOTHMAN- the "costumed" and the "True Form". For the costumed version: a somewhat cheesy esthetic would be effective- dramatic but maybe a bit "over-the-top" (think B-movie). For the "True Form" iteration- simple, imposing, and majestic is the key. This form of the cryptid should be awe inspiring and more natural. The script/story shines further light on these concepts.

Lighting

Flexible lighting/the abilty to dim stage lights and achieve blackouts are important aspects to achieving the show's spooky, atmospheric vibes. Creativity in this arena is encouraged.

A Note From the Authors...

Flight of the Mothman was conceived as a fun mystery story that combines the spooky atmosphere of campfire storytelling with the cartoonish procedural detective aspects of shows like *Scooby Doo*. It also explores deeper universal themes, including the importance of curiosity, the powers and limitations of perspective, science versus imagination, belief versus evidence, and the role of storytelling in understanding our world.

A central theme of the show is "I Want to Believe. "While popularized by *The X-Files*, the phrase existed long before and was commonly used by individuals who longed to believe in paranormal and unexplained phenomena, even without solid evidence- making it a perfect mantra for Riley in our show and a call to action for embracing curiosity and openmindedness.

Two of the main characters, Riley and Casey, represent opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to imaginative curiosity and a strict adherence to science and logic. There is an intentional nod to Mulder and Scully from The *X*-*Files* in how these two characters contemplate questions of the unknown.

In the musical, the Mothman is less a character and more a presence—a mysterious symbolic figure (a bit like the shark in *Jaws*). It embodies the power of stories and legends and how they evolve, shaping how we see the world. Is it a monster, an omen, a protector... or something else? The answer doesn't rely on what you see, but what you believe.

When staging the show, we encourage the creative team to have fun with the 1980s setting. Directors might wish to draw inspiration from cartoons like *Scooby Doo* for the campy, slapstick tone- from movies like *The Goonies* and *Stand by Me* for the sense of childhood adventure and teamwork- and from shows like *Locke and Key* and *Stranger Things* for the atmospheric revelry in "what might be."

Jason and Matt 12/16/24

SCENE 1: WELCOME TO CAMP PLEASANT PINES!

AMERICA. SUBURBS. PRESENT DAY/ CAMP PLEASANT PINES 1986. AFTERNOON.

In darkness, the final notes of a brief, OVERTURE give way to soft, mysterious music. Dim lights rise, revealing a YOUNG BOY center stage. He is wearing a backpack and a T-shirt with the words "I Want to Believe." He removes his pack, takes out a pair of earbuds, and puts them in. He pulls an iPhone from his pocket, swipes the screen, then presses play.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) Greetings, fellow truth-seekers. Welcome back to our weird little corner of the podcast universe.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC"(OFF-STAGE) You're listening to *Beyond Belief*- where we explore all things strange and unexplained. (corny sci-fi SFX)

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) I'm your host, The Seeker.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC"(OFF-STAGE) And I'm the Skeptic. From cryptids to ghosts...

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) From magic to U. F. O's...

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC"(OFF-STAGE) We curate curiosity!

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) This week, we look into the legend of an infamous cryptid-

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC"(OFF-STAGE) A flying creature that's haunted the skies for decades.

The YOUNG BOY looks up nervously.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) Is it a dangerous monster?

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) Or just the figment of overactive imaginations?

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) We'll examine one of the most well-known encounters. Underscore fades.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) These strange events occurred at a little summer retreat way back in the year 1986...

> Lights rise, revealing that the YOUNG BOY's imagination has transported him to a 1980's summer camp. He puts on his backpack. MR. SCHWARTZ, the Camp Director, enters carrying a clipboard. He is followed by MRS. LUNA and MR. HERRON (who carries a shovel)- none notice the BOY's presence.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) Picture it: a classic early 80s summer camp: picnic tables, cabins, a cozy fire pit, big hair, headbands, scrunchies, and lots of neon. (CUE MUSIC)

The YOUNG BOY looks around and then exits into the trees as the song unfolds.

(#1) "CAMP PLEASANT PINES"

MR. SCHWARTZ I'VE MADE MY FINAL ROUNDS. ALL THE CABINS ARE PREPARED AND CLEAN.

MRS. LUNA THE KITCHEN HAS BEEN STOCKED.

MR. HERRON THE GROUNDS ARE MANICURED AND GREEN.

MR. SCHWARTZ

LET'S OPEN UP THE GATES-IT'S TIME TO START THE DAY. CATCH YOUR BREATH AND BRACE YOURSELVES-THE CAMPERS ARE ON THEIR WAY!

> There is a flurry of activity as the CAMPERS enter. They great one another and the STAFFlike a scene from an 1980's TV commercial.

ALL THE WAIT, AT LAST, IS OVER; WELCOME TO CAMP PLEASANT PINES! HIDDEN IN THE FOREST-WHAT A PLACE TO SPEND THE SUMMERTIME! WITH LAKES TO SWIM AND TRAILS TO ROAM-THE PERFECT HOME AWAY FROM HOME.

IF ADVENTURE'S WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND, YOU'LL FIND IT AT CAMP PLEASANT PINES.

CASEY (spoken) (to RILEY) Come on, Riley. I want you to meet my camp friends.

> CASEY excitedly pulls RILEY along, dragging him toward TAYLOR, who stands near ALEX and JORDAN.

TAYLOR (spoken) Hey look. It's Casey!

JORDAN (spoken) Case, where are your glasses? You look different!

CASEY

(spoken) I wear contacts now- not that it's any of your business, Jordan.

JORDAN (spoken) (smiling) Rad. Who's your friend?

CASEY (spoken) *Rad?* (eye roll) Anyway, this is Riley. We go to school together. And I think he'd be great for the Agency.

RILEY (spoken) *The Agency?* What's that?

Ignoring RILEY's question, the others face the audience and continue the song.

- **TAYLOR:** (singing) WE'VE COUNTED DOWN THE DAYS.
- ALEX: EACH OF ONE US HAS DREAMED AND PLANNED.
- **JORDAN** NOW, WE'VE MADE IT HERE.
- **CASEY:** OUR FRIENDS ARE WAITING CLOSE AT HAND.
- **JORDAN:** WE'LL WATCH THE FIRE GLOW-
- ALEX: WE'LL LET THE STORIES FLOW-
- TAYLOR: MAYBE SOLVE A MYSTERY-

CAMPERS AND STAFF

AT THIS PLACE, YOU NEVER KNOW!

THE WAIT, AT LAST, IS OVER. WE'RE BACK AT CAMP PLEASANT PINES. OUT HERE IN THE FOREST, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW TO FIND! MR. SCHWARTZ IF YOU'RE NEW HERE, YOU WILL LEARN-

MRS. LUNA EXCITEMENT WAITS AT EV'RY TURN.

ALL AN ADVENTURE'S WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND, WE'LL FIND IT AT CAMP PLEASANT PINES!

Music ends.

MR. SCHWARTZ Campers, I have a bit of business to finish up before the official welcome and announcements. Feel free to visit among yourselves. I'll be back with you shortly.

> CAMPERS break into small groups. MR. SCHWARTZ checks off items on his clipboard. MRS. LUNA exits. MR. HERRON lingers.

TAYLOR

Nice to meet you, Riley, I'm Taylor, (proudly) founder and president of The Junior Gumshoe Agency.

RILEY

Gumshoe?

ALEX

It's an old fashioned word for detective. We meet here every summer and solve mysteries. I'm Alex, by the way.

TAYLOR

Alex and Casey are our science experts. Alex specializes in zoology and dabbles in cryptid research.

RILEY

Did you say cryptid?

ALEX

Yep. Bigfoot, Yeti, Jackalope, Nessie- you name it.

CASEY

Cryptids are Riley's obsession. Well, cryptids, aliens, ghosts- anything fantastical with no chance of being true.

ALEX (to RILEY) Don't let Casey give you a hard time, Rileyshe's skeptical about everything. JORDAN She may not have much of an imagination, but she makes up for it with her *charming* personality!

CASEY rolls her eyes. Four younger campers (GUMSHOE CADETS) approach and form a line.

TAYLOR

Riley, you've met Alex and Jordan. (gesturing to the young campers) These youngsters are Gumshoe Cadets: Jamie, Drew, Bailey, and Parker- our next generation in training!

The GUMSHOE CADETS salute.

JORDAN (snarky) If they earn their badges, that is.

TAYLOR

Take it easy, Jordan. (to the trainees) At ease, Cadets.

JAMIE

(to TAYLOR) Why doesn't Riley have to earn his badge?

CASEY

Because, Riley comes with expertise. Plus, *I* recommended him. Enough said.

RILEY (ignoring MR. SCHWARTZ) (intrigued) Wait, you solve mysteries. How many could there be at one camp?

ALEX

You'd be surprised.

TAYLOR Anyway, welcome aboard, Riley. (they shake hands)

MRS. LUNA returns, a megaphone in hand. She gives it to MR. SCHWARTZ.

MR. SCHWARTZ

(speaking into the megaphone and startling the students) Campers, may I have your attention?

The CAMPERS all turn to face MR. SCHWARTZ, covering their ears. He hands the megaphone off to MR. HERRON, embarrassed.

MR. SCHWARTZ (CONT'D) Welcome everyone. For those of you who don't know, I'm Mr. Schwartz- the Camp Director.

MRS. LUNA And I'm your nature guide, Mrs.Luna.

MR. SCHWARTZ *This* (gestures) is Mr. Herron, our grounds keeper. We're here to make this a week you'll never forget.

Off-stage, a dinner bell rings.

MR. SCHWARTZ (CONT'D) And *that*'s the dinner bell! We'll meet back here after we eat to light the bonfire.

MRS. LUNA Remember kids, the sun sets in an hour. I suggest you all stay close to camp after sundown.

The STAFF MEMBERS share nervous looks.

TAYLOR Come on, gang. Let's get some food. If we're lucky, a mystery will present itself before dark.

The CAMPERS and MR. SCHWARTZ exit toward the cabins.

MR. HERRON

Mrs. Luna, I finished sharpening your shovel this morning (handing it to her.) Good as new.

MRS. LUNA Wonderful! Thank you, Mr. Herron. This will come in handy.

MR. HERRON Why do you need a shovel anyway?

MRS. LUNA

One never knows when a need may arise. Best to be prepared.

MRS. LUNA (with the shovel) and MR. HERRON (with the megaphone) exit to the cabins. Brief, mysterious TRANSITION MUSIC.

SCENE 2: STRANGE SIGHTINGS

CAMP PLEASANT PINES. THE CAMPSITE. SUMMER. 1986. EVENING/NIGHT.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) Latter that evening as shadows lengthened and night fell...two important visitors arrived at the camp...

MR. DRAKE and CHARLIE, both in business attire, enter and look around the camp.

CHARLIE (looking around) What a wonderful, scenic location.

MR. DRAKE Yes, indeed. It will be perfect! We just need to remove the cabins and trees, of course.

CHARLIE (smiling) Of course.

MR. SCHWARTZ enters,

MR. SCHWARTZ Mr. Drake! I thought I saw headlights approaching.

MR. DRAKE (extending his hand) Ah, Mr. Schwartz. Hello again. This is my assistant, Charlie.

MR. SCHWARTZ We weren't expecting you until morning.

MR. DRAKE

Morning? But your message said I should be here by sundown.

MR. SCHWARTZ

Oh, my mistake. I must have been confused. Grandpa won't be arriving until tomorrow.

MR. DRAKE

Tomorrow? (pause) Your grandfather, he is still committed to the deal isn't he? No surprises?

MR. SCHWARTZ Absolutely. We'll wrap up our week of camp, and then...

MR. DRAKE (interrupting) Wonderful.

CHARLIE (eagerly) Yes, wonderful!

MR. SCHWARTZ gives CHARLIE an annoyed look. MRS. LUNA enters.

MRS. LUNA Mr. Schwartz, will our guests be staying for the night?

MR. DRAKE That won't be necessary. We passed a motel back in town.

MR. SCHWARTZ

That's a half hour drive, and it's already late.

MRS. LUNA You can use my cabin. I much prefer a tent anyhow.

MR. DRAKE (exasperated) Me? Spend the night here?

CHARLIE (feigning exasperation) *Him?* Spend the night *here*?

MR. DRAKE Mr. Schwartz, I'm a very important person.

MR. SCHWARTZ (to MR. SCHWARTZ) Of course, you are.

CHARLIE (softer) And so is his assistant.

MR. DRAKE gives CHARLIE an annoyed look.

MR. SCHWARTZ Since you've decided to stay...

MR.DRAKE (interrupting) But I..

MR. SCHWARTZ (interrupting) There *is* something that I should mention.

MR. DRAKE (leaning in, impatient) Something? What kind of something?

MR. SCHWARTZ (pausing, glancing nervously) I'm afraid there have been a few... strange sightings around the camp.

MR. DRAKE Sightings you say? (CUE MUSIC)

MR. SCHWARTZ

(#2) "CAMP PLEASANT PINES REPRISE"

(nervously) THERE'S A LEGEND OF THESE WOODS-THAT IS OLDER THAN THE OLDEST TREES-

MRS. LUNA ABOUT A THING MORE STRANGE THAN MOST OF US WILL EVER SEE.

Members of the JUNIOR GUMSHOE AGENCY enter, unnoticed by the others, and listen in.

SIGHTINGS IN THE SKY HAVE LEFT TENSIONS HIGH.

MR. SCHWARTZ THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS (gesturing to the sky) OF A SHADOW FLYING BY

A MYSTERY'S UNFOLDING-RIGHT HERE AT CAMP PLEASANT PINES. HIGH ABOVE THE FOREST, SOMETHING'S SENDING US A SIGN. I WON'T GO ON; I'VE SAID ENOUGH. BUT THINGS AROUND HERE MIGHT GET ROUGH.

MR. HERRON and the other CAMPERS enter.

MR. DRAKE (To CHARLIE) THIS ISN'T WHAT I HAD IN MIND.

CHARLIE SHOULD YOU BE BUYING CAMP PLEASANT PINES?

Music ends. The adults notice the campers.

RILEY (to CASEY) Did he just mention a flying shadow?

CASEY Forget that. Who's buying the camp?

TAYLOR (smiling) Team, I think we've just hit the mystery jackpot!

CASEY Mr. Schwartz, who are these people?

MR. SCHWARTZ

I had hoped to save the announcement, but since you are all here- *this* is Mr. Drake and his assistant CHARLIE.

JORDAN (OR BAILEY)

Why are they here?

MR. SCHWARTZ

(reluctantly) After 40 years, my grandpa's decided to close the camp. Mr. Drake is here because... because he is purchasing Pleasant Pines.

ALEX

But Why?

CHARLIE

So he can tear it down and build the greatest strip mall this county has ever seen! (pause- looks at shocked campers) Duh.

The CAMPERS react with shock.

JORDAN (OR JAMIE) That's not true is it, Mr. Schwartz?

MR. SCHWARTZ

We have fewer and fewer campers every year. Kids are just less interested in the outdoors these days.

CASEY We can't lose this place!

JORDAN (OR PARKER) My parents came here when they were kids!

ALEX (OR DREW)

Mine too!

JORDAN Same. And this is my **third** summer!

TAYLOR Camp Pleasant Pines is important to all of us.

The CAMPERS react in agreement.

RILEY Hang on. You mentioned something about a shadow in the sky. That things might get... *rough* around here. TAYLOR Yeah, I'd like to hear more about that.

MR. DRAKE

As would I.

MR. SCHWARTZ looks to MRS. LUNA nervously.

MR. SCHWARTZ (hesitantly) Very well. But there's only one way to tell a story like this. Mr. Herron, light the bonfire. (CUE MUSIC)

> MR. HERRON "lights" the bonfire center stage, which casts shadows in all directions. On the stage's back drop, shadow puppets come to life and act out MR. SCHWARTZ's strange tale.

MR. SCHWARTZ

(#3) "LEGEND OF THE MOTHMAN"

GATHER 'ROUND THE FIRE. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE FLYING SHADOW-ITS BRIGHT RED EYES AGLOW. THE LEGEND OF THE MOTHMAN THROUGH THE YEARS HAS GROWN. THE TRUTH BEHIND THE LEGEND WILL CHILL YOU TO THE BONE.

MRS. LUNA

CENTURIES OF SIGHTINGS, IN PLACES NEAR AND FAR, OF A HAUNTED CREATURE, BOTH FRIGHTENING AND BIZARRE.

MR. SCHWARTZ & MRS. LUNA

A HUMANOID BODY, ITS SKIN AS GREY AS STONE, WITH WINGS LIKE THOSE OF DRAGONS. IT ONLY FLIES ALONE.

> The shadow puppetry continues. A mysterious voice is heard in the distance singing a wordless call/chant with a haunting melody. The CAMPERS and STAFF curiously look out into the dark forest then raise their voices and join in.

RILEY (spoken) I've heard of the Mothman. It's one of the most famous cryptids of all time.

ALEX (spoken) Over seven feet tall with a ten foot wing span.

RILEY

SOME SEE IT AS A SIGNAL-OF BAD THINGS YET TO COME,

ALEX A WARNING FROM THE DARKNESS. BUT WHO KNOWS WHERE IT'S FROM?

MR. SCHWARTZ & MRS. LUNA

ONE THING IS FOR CERTAIN-IT'S FLIGHT INSPIRES FEAR. AND NOW THIS FLYING MONSTER HAS MADE ITS HOME RIGHT HERE.

The shadows fade. MR. HERRON exits.

TAYLOR (OR JAMIE):	ARE WE ALL IN DANGER?
JORDAN (OR BAILEY):	SHOULD WE BE ALARMED?
RILEY (OR DREW):	IS IT HERE TO SEND A MESSAGE?
ALEX (OR PARKER):	DOES IT MEAN US HARM?

MR. SCHWARTZ & MRS. LUNA

WE DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS. WE DON'T KNOW WHY IT CAME. BUT IF YOU SEE THE MOTHMAN, YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME.

More call and response. Music ends.

TAYLOR (to MR. SCHWARTZ) Wait, you've seen this creature yourself?

JORDAN Or is this like the summer you saw Bigfoot's footprint?

All CAMPERS snicker.

MR. SCHWARTZ

(irritated) It was Mr. Herron and the grounds crew who reported the sightings for your information.

RILEY

Mothman sightings are bad luck. Almost always.

ALEX Riley's right. The Mothman is usually spotted before disasters- falling bridges, earthquakes, tsunamis...

JORDAN (interrupting) Camp closings?

MR. DRAKE (snapping) That's enough. Mr. Schwartz, if this is some feeble attempt to scare me off, you've lost your...

An unusual wailing sound is heard in the distance. Everyone looks into the forest.

JORDAN

What *is* that?

MR. DRAKE

Most likely an owl.

RILEY

I don't think so.

MR. SCHWARTZ

Listen, I know this is all a lot to take in. But we do have one more scheduled activity for the evening. Mrs. Luna?

MRS. LUNA

Campers, tonight we will embark on our first nature tour. (dramatically) We'll journey to the Marsh, a terrain filled with nocturnal animals, insects, and maybe even... a few surprises.

CASEY

(apprehensive) The Marsh? Is that safe? Under the circumstances?

MR. SCHWARTZ

I have no reason, at this point, to think there's danger.

MRS. LUNA

We all know that Mr. Herron can be a bit... peculiar.

MR. SCHWARTZ

I only mentioned the Mothman as a courtesy to Mr. Drake. And for a bit of campfire fun.

MR. DRAKE

Well, I've had enough *fun*. Please, show me to my cabin.

MRS.LUNA

Bur Mr. Drake, I was hoping you would join us. Perhaps it would give you an appreciation for the (searching for a word) *uniqueness* of Pleasant Pines.

MR. SCHWARTZ Mrs. Luna, I think that's a wonderful idea!

JORDAN

I think, he might be a little overdressed for the Marsh.

The CAMPERS laugh.

MR. SCHWARTZ

Mr. Herron, please bring the bag of flashlights.

MRS. LUNA I haven't seen Mr. Herron since he lit the fire.

MR. SCHWARTZ

Hmmm. Well, you all go ahead. I'll catch up with he flashlights. (exiting to the cabins) Watch your step; the marsh can get pretty gnarly this time of year.

MRS. LUNA Okay, group. Stay together and follow close.

The CAMPERS follow MRS. LUNA off-stage into the forest. Another wail is heard. MR. DRAKE and CHARLIE look into the trees.

MR. DRAKE (after a pause) Like I said- most likely an owl.

CHARLIE (to MR. DRAKE) Yeah. An owl. (pause) A really big one!

MR. DRAKE shakes his head in frustration.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Good luck, sir.

MR. DRAKE, annoyed, points to the forest. CHARLIE, reluctantly, exits into the woods, MR. DRAKE follows.

MR. DRAKE This should be entertaining if nothing else. CUE TRANSITION MUSIC. Lights lower or curtain closes to allow for a scene change.

SCENE 3: SOMETHING WICKED IN THE MARSH

CAMP PLEASANT PINES. THE MARSH. SUMMER 1986. NIGHT.

In the darkness...

ADULT HOST - "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) So, the group headed to the Marsh, just outside of camp.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) And that's where things got really strange.

Dim lights rise to reveal the Marsh. Fog creeps onto the stage. Scattered around are uneven platforms, large stones, and vines.

ADULT HOST - "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) Just how strange? Well, that depends who you ask. One thing's for sure, everyone's nerves were already on edge.

CHARLIE enters from the opposite side. He nervously looks around, searching.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) And the residents of Camp Pleasant Pines weren't alone in the Marsh that night.

MR. DRAKE enters, unnoticed by CHARLIE. He approaches CHARLIE from behind.

ADULT HOST - "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE)

Or were they?

MR. DRAKE taps CHARLIE on the shoulder. CHARLIE, frightened, screams and jumps high into the air. He is relieved to discover it's only his boss.

CHARLIE Mr. Drake. Thank goodness it's you!

MR. DRAKE Who else would it be? Get yourself together!

The members of the GUMSHOE AGENCY enter.

TAYLOR (to MR. DRAKE) What are you two doing?

MR. DRAKE What's it look like? Trying to find our way back to camp!

CHARLIE We got separated from the group in the dark.

CASEY

So did we.

MR. DRAKE (frustrated) Where is Schwartz with those flashlights?

MRS. LUNA, carrying a bag, and the rest of the CAMPERS enter.

MRS. LUNA There you are! Thank goodness!Everyone's accounted for. Well, except for Mr. Schwartz.

JORDAN (to MRS. LUNA) What's in the bag?

MRS. LUNA Flashlights. We found the bag on the ground.

The members of the GUMSHOE AGENCY each take a flashlight from the bag.

ALEX These will come in handy!

RILEY (looking up) At least there's a full moon, otherwise...

ALEX looks to the sky. He and RILEY squint their eyes and point upward.

RILEY (CONT'D) (pointing) Hey look. Right there!

A shadow passes over the camp. Everyone looks up, and their eyes track the shadow's flight from one side of the stage to the other. The group gathers close to one another, frightened. Alex shines his flashlight into the sky.

ALEX (entranced) I see it.

MR. DRAKE What on earth is that?

ALEX Maybe a Barred Owl?

MRS. LUNA They're not native to this area. Perhaps a Blue Heron.

ALEX

Idon't think so.

JORDAN (in shock) Dude. You're gonna need a bigger flashlight.

MRS. LUNA

Oh, my! (CUE MUSIC)

(#4) "SOMETHING WICKED!"

- JORDAN: WHAT'S THAT IN THE SKY?
- CHARLIE: DID I SEE TWO BRIGHT RED EYES?
- **CASEY:** IT'S JUST A TRICK OF LIGHT.
- **RILEY:** OR THE MOTHMAN IN MIDFLIGHT?
- CASEY: THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM-
- **TAYLOR:** IT'S LIKE WE'RE CAUGHT INSIDE A DREAM.
- ALEX: UP IS DOWN; LEFT IS RIGHT.

ALL (EXCEPT CASEY) ALL OUR THOUGHTS ARE FILLED WITH FRIGHT!

SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR; IT'S SOARING THROUGH THE MOONLIGHT. ONLY LOOK UP IF YOU DARE.

CHARLIE (SCARED) THIS WILL BE A LONG NIGHT!

MR. DRAKE: IT'S IN THE SHADOWS! CHARLIE: IN THE TREES!

CASEY CALM DOWN, GUYS- THAT'S JUST THE BREEZE.

ALL- IN TWO GROUPS (EXCEPT CASEY) (group one) IT'S HERE- (group two) IT'S THERE- (all) IT'S EVERYWHERE!

CHARLIE SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR!

ALL SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR. SOMETHING WICKED! SOMETHING WICKED!

CASEY THAT'S ALL A BIT ABSURD. IT WAS JUST A PASSING BIRD.

RILEY (in awe) NO BIRD HAS WINGS SO WIDE?

CHARLIE (scared/overacting) MAYBE WE SHOULD GO INSIDE!

MR. DRAKE (curious) WHAT IS THIS FLYING BEAST?

CHARLIE IT IS WEIRD TO SAY THE LEAST!

RILEY THAT'S THE MOTHMAN- IT IS CLEAR.

MR. DRAKE (angry)TELL ME, WHAT'S IT DOING HERE?!

ALL (EXCEPT CASEY) SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR. IT'S SOARING THROUGH THE MOONLIGHT. ONLY LOOK UP IF YOU DARE.

CASEY (ANNOYED) THIS WILL BE A LONG NIGHT.

ALL(EXCEPT CASEY) IT'S IN THE SHADOWS- IN THE TREES. LET US HOPE THAT'S JUST THE BREEZE. (pointing) IT'S HERE- IT'S THERE- IT'S EVERYWHERE!

MR. DRAKE SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR!

ALL SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR. SOMETHING WICKED! SOMETHING WICKED! The GROUP notices the shadowy figure of the MOTHMAN high above the stage in the tree tops, slowly rising from behind the backdrop- its back to the group. They turn and look up at the creature. The MOTHMAN stretches its wings wide and then ducks behind the backdrop.

ALL (EXCEPT CASEY) (CONT'D) SOMETHING'S UP THERE, SOMETHING STRANGE-SOMETHING SCARY AND DERANGED! WE'RE IN ITS SIGHTS. WE SHOULD BEWARE. CAUSE SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR!

> Lights fade. The GROUP performs choreography inspired by the growing fear and confusion. GUMSHOES turn on their flashlights and incorporate the beams into the routine. Meanwhile, pairs of red eyes blink and fade, popping up in different spots on stage and at different heights to suggest the creature is moving quickly from place to place- scaring the group.

SOMETHING WICKED! SOMETHING WICKED!

SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR. IT'S SOARING THROUGH THE MOONLIGHT.

MRS. LUNA

STAY ALERT AND BE AWARE 'TIL WE REACH THE CAMPSITE.

ALL: NO ONE'S SAFE AT PLEASANT PINES! MRS. LUNA: PLEASE DON'T PANIC; WE'LL BE FINE.

ALL (EXCEPT CASEY AND MRS. LUNA) (pointing) IT'S HERE- IT'S THERE- IT'S EVERYWHERE! SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR. SOMETHING WICKED'S IN THE AIR.

ALL (CONT'D)

SOMETHING WICKED! SOMETHING WICKED!

Music ends. Everyone is rattled.

CHARLIE Uh, I don't think that was a bird. MR. DRAKE (sarcastically) Oh really?

RILEY (determined) We all know what that was.

CASEY No way. Cryptids don't exist.

JORDAN (OR JAMIE) (pointing) Whatever it is- it just flew into the forest.

TAYLOR We should go get a closer look.

MRS.LUNA Nonsense.We're going back to camp.

MR. DRAKE Lead the way, Mrs. Luna. Tomorrow, we'll deal with this...problem. I won't be intimidated by an overgrown insect!

MRS.LUNA Come along, campers.Be watchful.

The GROUP, following MRS. LUNA, exit cautiously. RILEY lingers behind; CASEY notices, and waits until they are alone.

CASEY What are you doing? We're headed back.

RILEY (looking up) I just thought that maybe... I don't know.

CASEY You thought that maybe you'd catch another glimpse of the Mothman? (teasing, kindly) Or *whatever* that was.

RILEY I know you don't believe, but...

CASEY I know you do. (pause) But, aren't things interesting enough *without* monsters?

RILEY

It's just that...

CASEY

(interrupting) Do we really need fantasy to make the world fantastic? I mean, it's the 1980s! We have floppy disks and the Atari.

RILEY

But...

CASEY

(interrupting- passionately) Cassette tapes! How much better can it get?

RILEY

(looking up again) Don't you think there must be more than that... things we haven't found yet or can't explain?

CASEY

Isn't that how legends got started? To explain things that seemed mysterious? Storms, stars, the seasons... bad luck.

RILEY I never thought of it that way.

CASEY

(teasing, fondly) You're a hopeless dreamer. But what if this Mothman stuff *is* just a story? Just imagination.

RILEY

(CUE MUSIC)(looking up) Maybe the only limit to what's out there is what we're willing to imagine. Maybe imagination is the key to everything, Case. Even science.

(#5) "I WANT TO BELIEVE"

I WANT TO BELIEVE IN ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES-THAT THERE ARE WONDERS WAITING FOR ME TO SEE. AND A MILLION SECRETS CALLING TO ME!

CASEY I'LL NEVER BELIEVE UNTIL I SEE THE EVIDENCE. CAUSE I NEED ANSWERS BEFORE I CROSS THE FENCE. I RELY ON SCIENCE AND COMMON SENSE.

RILEY

LOOK UP AND SEE THE NIGHT SKY GLOW-BEYOND OUR REACH SO MUCH UNKNOWN. IT'S THE SAME DOWN HERE BELOW. WHO COULD THINK WE'RE NOT ALONE. UNCHARTED LANDS, UNMEASURED SKIES-COUNTLESS LEGENDS THAT DON'T DIE. YOU MIGHT THINK THAT I'M NAIVE- BUT THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE! I WANT TO BELIEVE.

RILEY (CONT'D) I WANT TO BELIEVE THE MOTHMAN'S NOT JUST FANTASY. CAUSE HE'S A SYMBOL POINTING TO WHAT MIGHT BE IN A WORLD SO BIG DREAMS CAN RUN FREE.

CASEY FLYING MONSTERS, U. F. O. 'S, HAUNTED HOUSES- ON IT GOES... ALL THOSE STORIES THAT GET TOLD-THEY'RE NOT REAL- YOU HAVE TO KNOW.

RILEY TRY TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND. YOU'LL BE SURPRISED BY WHAT YOU FIND. YOU MIGHT THINK THAT I'M NAIVE-BUT THERE'S TRUTH IN LEGENDS I WANT TO BELIEVE!

RILEY (CONT'D) (facing the audience) I WANT TO BELIEVE!

Music ends.

CASEY I know you do. But if the Mothman exists, there'd be proof.

RILEY

The world- this universe is *so* big. How can we rule anything out?

CASEY Let's get back before they send a search party.

> CUE MYSTERIOUS TRANSITION MUSIC. RILEY looks to the sky one last time, then the two turn on their flash lights and exit. From the opposite side, unnoticed, MR. HERRON emerges from the trees and follows the them off stage. Lights fade to black.

SCENE 4: THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

CAMP PLEASANT PINES. MARSH. SUMMER 1986. THE NEXT MORNING.

Lights rise to reveal the Marsh, now bright and fog-less. MR. SCHWARTZ and MRS. LUNA enter, followed by MR. DRAKE and the JUNIOR GUMSHOE AGENCY- each wearing a backpack. ALEX (OR PARKER)

Wow. The marsh isn't so spooky in the daylight.

MR. SCHWARTZ

I'm not sure what you hope to accomplish out here, Mr. Drake. I'm sorry I missed the fun last night but...

MR. DRAKE

(interrupting) I want to end this Mothman nonsense once and for all. Since I can't count on you, I've turned to alternatives.

MR. SCHWARTZ

(looking at the GUMSHOES) Them? You've got to be kidding me.

MR. DRAKE Taylor here assures me his team is experienced in these sort of cases. The Junior Gumdrop Agency they call themselves.

MRS. LUNA

Agency? They'rekids!

CHARLIE Their fees are very reasonable.

CASEY (rolling her eyes) It's Gum*shoe*, by the way.

MR. SCHWARTZ

Taylor?

TAYLOR

Just business, Mr. Schwartz. Plus, there might be something in these woods- you've said so yourself.

ALEX If it's a flying cryptid...

RILEY

Like the Mothman.

JORDAN

Or just a local animal...

CASEY

Or simply figment of the imagination...we'll figure it out.

MR. SCHWARTZ

And then what?

MR. DRAKE And then we *deal* with the problem. Whatever it is. I want this sorted out before your grandfather arrives.

MR. HERRON enters and whispers something into MR. SCHWARTZ's ear.

CHARLIE Point Pleasant Pest Control is on standby.

MR. SCHWARTZ

You'll have more time than we thought. I've Just been told Grandpa is running late- he'll be here later tonight.

MR. DRAKE You'rekidding me!

i i e k i uu iiig iiie:

MR. SCHWARTZ

We're headed back. Mrs. Luna, keep an eye on things here. I want you all back at camp before dark.

MR. HERRON and MR. SCHWARTZ exit.

MR. DRAKE

Unbelievable.

TAYLOR

Gumshoe Cadets...

The GUMSHOE CADETS hurry to form a line in front of TAYLOR, bumping into one another.

TAYLOR (CONT'D) This is your chance. Find a clue and earn your badge!

JORDAN Good luck, newbies. We'll show you how it's done.

MR. DRAKE

(to TAYLOR) Listen, my investors can't hear about these sightings. Understand?

TAYLOR Let's not jump ahead. First, we investigate. (CUE MUSIC)

Jordan, keep track of our time. We bill by the hour!

CHARLIE (sarcastically) Fantastic.

(#6) "THE INVESTIGATION"

TAYLOR

NO NEED TO FEAR. WE'RE ON THE SCENE. STEP BACK, RELAX; SEE WHAT I MEAN.

JORDAN

WE'VE GOT THE SKILLS, AND ALL AGREE A MYSTERY'S OUR SPECIALTY.

> The GUMSHOES take various detective tools (magnifying glasses, steno pads for note taking, etc.) from their respective backpacks and go to work searching the Marsh for clues in a choregraphed routine.

TAYLOR SPREAD OUT, TEAM; THERE'S LOT'S TO DO. TURN EVERY STONE, AND FIND ANY CLUE.

ALL GUMSHOES WE'RE CHASIN' LEADS; WE'RE HAVIN' FUN! THE INVESTIGATION'S JUST BEGUN.

> During the instrumental interlude, as the choreography continues, JORDAN pulls out a clock from his backpack. He holds it up to the audience and the clock hands start to spin quickly, hours flying by. From 8 to 2 in seconds. The ADULTS yawn and pace. ALEX finds a Kite and shows it to TAYLOR. The CADETS hurry to inspect.

ALEX (spoken) It's a Kite. But why's it out *here*?

TAYLOR

(spoken) (to the gumshoe Cadets) Looks like Alex beat you to the first clue! Sorry newbies!

The GUMSHOE CADETS react with disappointment.

JAMIE (OR TAYLOR) (spoken) What's that written on the wing?

ALEX

(spoken) It says "S. O. S.". Must be some kind of message.

BAILEY (OR TAYLOR) (spoken) Maybe a distress signal?

JORDAN (spoken) (to the others) Hey guys, come check this out!

ALEX (singing) (holding up the kite) LOOK WHAT I FOUND!

JORDAN

IS THAT A KITE?

CASEY (examining) IT'S GOT BLACK WINGS-AND TWO RED LIGHTS.

TAYLOR

THE KITE IS STRANGE; THAT MUCH IS TRUE.

Mr. SCHWARTZ (interrupting) BUT RIGHT NOW-IT'S YOUR ONLY CLUE!

TAYLOR THAT'S RIGHT, TEAM; THERE'S MORE TO DO. WE'RE ON THE TRAIL, BUT WE'RE NOT THROUGH.

ALL GUMSHOES AND LIKE A DOG CLINGS TO A BONE, THE INVESTIGATION CARRIES ON.

(INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE / SEARCHING THEME)

Once again, JORDAN lifts the clock to face the audience. The hands quickly turn- this time from 2-8. The stage lights dim as night encroaches. CASEY looks behind a stone and discovers MR. SCHWARTZ's megaphone.

CASEY (spoken)(noticing what CASEY has found) Hey, it's Mr. Schwartz's megaphone!

MRS. LUNA (spoken)(noticing what RILEY has found) I've been lookin' for that!

DREW (OR CASEY) (spoken) Why is it in the marsh?

TAYLOR (spoken) Good question. Who was last seen with it?

PARKER (OR RILEY) (spoken) Mr. Schwartz gave it to Mr. Herron yesterday.

TAYLOR (singing) GOOD JOB, TEAM- (taking the megaphone) IT'S CLUE NUMBER TWO. YOUR LOCKIN' IT DOWN- TIGHT'NIN' THE SCREWS.

ALL GUMSHOES WE'VE CAUGHT THE SCENT; NOW WE'RE ON THE CHASE. THE INVESTIGATION PICKS UP PACE.

MR. DRAKE (spoken) It's been hours and still- no real answers!

MRS. LUNA (spoken) He's right. We've wasted enough time.

TAYLOR (spoken) It's getting dark. Let's head back to camp to debrief.

DREW (spoken) (disappointed) We didn't find a single clue.

JORDAN (spoken) (snarky) Tough luck, Cadets. Maybe next time.

JORDAN returns the clock to his backpack. RILEY sees something in trees and points.

RILEY

COULD IT BE TRUE? LOOK OVER THERE. ARE THOSE RED EYES-A GHOSTLY STARE?

RILEY (CONT'D)

THERE'S BEEN NO TRICK; YOU GUYS WERE WRONG. IT'S BEEN THE MOTHMAN ALL ALONG!

The costumed MOTHMAN storms the stage on foot, wings flapping. There are screams.

He chases the group around as choreographed chaos ensues. Everyone runs away, leaving the MOTHMAN center stage. He faces the audience, spreads his wings, and looks up to the sky- ready to take flight. BLACK OUT. (OPTIONAL INTERMISSION)

SCENE 5: BUGS, FLOODS, AND A CRYPTID

CAMP PLEASANT PINES. CAMP SITE. SUMMER 1986. A FEW DAYS LATER. EVENING.

In the darkness...

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) Days passed, and the number of sightings increased.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) Meanwhile, the camp was plagued by a series of unfortunate events.

> Dim lights rise. The CAMPERS, MRS. LUNA, MR. DRAKE, and CHARLIE are sitting around camp in various states of exhaustion, frustration, and anxiety (Missing are MR. HERRON and MR. SCHWARTZ). Some of them are fanning their faces. Some hold fly swatters; others have spray cans, clearly marked "BUG SPRAY". MR. DRAKE wears an inflatable duck around his waist. The GUMSHOES and CADETS all wear backpacks.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) Were these events related to the Mothman sightings?

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) Or just coincidence? Well, that's for you to decide, curious listener...

JORDAN Dude. This is officially the worst summer camp ever!

ALEX

By far.

MR. DRAKE And to think, I shouldn't even be here. If one of you delinquents hadn't deflated my tires, I'd be....

MRS. LUNA (interrupting) Enough whining! And why are you still wearing that ridiculous flotation device?

MR. DRAKE The river is over its banks if you haven't noticed. And steadily rising.

CHARLIE

He can't swim.

The campers laugh as MR. DRAKE glares.

MR. DRAKE We'll see how funny things are when my bulldozers arrive.

CHARLIE If Schwartz's grandpa ever shows up to complete the sale.

MRS. LUNA (grinning) How can he? The river has covered the road.

MR. DRAKE

(beaten) Floods.

TAYLOR (swatting) Bugs.

CASEY When will the power be back on?

CASEY (CONT'D) Can't we call someone?

MRS. LUNA I'm afraid our phone line has lost service.

CASEY

Of course it has.

RILEY It's the Mothman. I told you! Whenever it's sighted, bad things happen.

JORDAN (interrupting) Yeah. It's like an Oprah.

Everyone looks at JORDAN, confused.

CASEY

You mean an *omen*?

JORDAN Yeah. That's what I said. An omen. CHARLIE I for one can't stand Oprah. She's ruined the 1980s talk show. I'd say her five minutes of fame are almost over.

MR. DRAKE This really is the worst summer camp ever. (CUE MUSIC)

(#7) "SEEING IS BELIEVING"

MR. DRAKE (CONT'D) (spoken on cue with music) (disgusted) Ugh.

CASEY (spoken on cue with music) (reacting to a bug bite) Ouch!

JORDAN (spoken on cue with music) (reacting to a bug bite) Ow!

CHARLIE traces the flight of a bug with a bottle of bug spray. .

CHARLIE

(spoken on cue with music) (spraying the bug spray) Pow! *(his head drops as he watches the bug fall)*

MR. DRAKE:	IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS, AND THINGS ARE WORSE.
CHARLIE:	THIS CAMP IS CAUGHT INSIDE A CURSE.
JORDAN:	THE BAD LUCK HERE WON'T GO AWAY.
RILEY:	SEEMS LIKE MOTHMAN'S HERE TO STAY.
ALEX:	THE RIVER FLOODS.
CASEY:	THE POWER'S OUT.
TAYLOR:	WILL THINGS IMPROVE?
ALL:	WE HAVE OUR DOUBTS.
MRS.LUNA:	BUGS INVADE.
ALEX:	MOSQUITOES SWARM.
ALL:	THESE SAD EVENTS ARE NOW THE NORM.

ALL (everyone looking ahead, deflated)

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY IT, BUT THE LEGEND MIGHT BE TRUE. THE TROUBLES SINCE THE SIGHTINGS HAVE CHANGED MY POINT OF VIEW. LOOK AROUND; YOU CAN'T DENY IT. YOUR EYES ARE NOT DECEIVING. EVIL'S COME TO PLEASANT PINES. SEEING IS BELIEVING. (REPEAT TWICE)

CASEY (spoken) We still don't know for sure if the Mothman is real. It could be a hoax.

RILEY (spoken) We've all seen it, Casey! What more do you need?

High above, in the treetops, the costumed MOTHMAN reveals himself, rising up from behind the backdrop. The people below notice, and react with annoyance as they sing the next verse. The creature, casually sways to the music. Normalcy has set in.

MR. DRAKE

(spoken) (pointing at MOTHMAN) Does that look like a hoax?!

- **TAYLOR:** (singing) THE ENTIRE CAMP HAS GONE BERSERK.
- CHARLIE: AND IN THE CLOUDS, A MONSTER LURKS.

MR. DRAKE (CONT'D) THE SKY'S BEEN FALLING SINCE HE CAME. THE MOTHMAN IS THE ONE TO BLAME!

ALL

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY IT, BUT THE LEGEND MIGHT BE TRUE. THE TROUBLES SINCE THE SIGHTINGS HAVE CHANGED MY POINT OF VIEW. LOOK AROUND; YOU CAN'T DENY IT; YOUR EYES ARE NOT DECEIVING. EVIL'S COME TO PLEASANT PINES. SEEING IS BELIEVING. (REPEAT TWICE)

CASEY TO BLAME THE LEGEND'S A MISTAKE.

MR. DRAKE YOUR SILLY CLUES DON'T MEAN A THING.

CASEY CHANCES ARE- THIS MOTHMAN'S A FAKE

MR. DRAKE WE'VE SEEN THE CREATURE- THE CHAOS IT BRINGS!

The MOTHMAN slowly lowers himself, swaying to the music all they while, as he vanishes behind the backdrop.

ALL (EXCEPT CASEY) I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D SEE IT. BUT THE LEGEND HAS COME TRUE. THE TROUBLES SINCE THE SIGHTINGS HAVE CHANGED OUR POINT OF VIEW. LOOK AROUND, YOU CAN'T DENY IT; PERHAPS, WE SHOULD BE LEAVING. THERE'S NOT MUCH HOPE FOR PLEASANT PINES. SEEING IS BELIEVING. PLEASANT ISN'T PLEASANT PINES. SEEING IS BELIEVING. (REPEAT TWICE)

Music ends.

TAYLOR (spoken) Relax, everyone. The investigation is ongoing.

MR. DRAKE

(spoken)I'm not paying you amateurs another dime! The mystery is solved. Now, I need to get rid of the Mothman. Otherwise, you can keep the camp.

MRS. LUNA

(smiling) Really?

CASEY Where is Mr. Schwartz? Things are falling apart here.

MRS. LUNA

At this point, all we can do is wait it out. I suggest we get some rest. Things will look sunnier in the morning.

Everyone, seemingly defeated, exits to the cabins- leaving only the GUMSHOE CADETS. They gather together and take flash lights from their packs.

DREW (to JAMIE) Are you sure this is a good idea?

JAMIE

Do you want to earn your Gumshoe badge or not?

DREW The Marsh- it really creeps me out.

JAMIE Listen, we haven't checked the trap in days.

PARKER Yeah, what if we caught something?

BAILEY In that trap? Doubtful. Why did we use a fishing net anyway?

PARKER Yeah, I thought we were trying the catch a Moth- not a trout!

JAMIE

Come on, let's go.

PARKER (nervously) I've got a bad feeling about this...

The older members of GUMSHOE AGENCY enter from the cabins.

JORDAN (to PARKER) Take it easy, Luke Skywalker. Are you guys sneaking out to check that useless trap you built?

JAMIE So what if we are?

TAYLOR Good luck, Cadets. Be safe out there.

CASEY I want a full report on what you find.

JORDAN That should be a short report.

TAYLOR It's 10:30 PM. Be back before Mrs. Luna's cabin checks.

GUMSHOE CADETS salute and exit into the forest, flashlights in hand.

TAYLOR (CONT'D) A lot of things aren't adding up.

CASEY What caused the flood anyway? There's been no rain.

ALEX There's a large beaver dam on the south edge of camp.

JORDAN

I've seen it.

ALEX If it was broken, well...

JORDAN But who would have broken it?

RILEY

The Mothman?

CASEY Come on, Riley. Enough with that nonsense.

JORDAN I know where Schwartz keeps the wading boots.

TAYLOR Excellent! Grab the boots, Jordan. I 'll get the flashlights. The two of us will check the beaver dam.

CASEY Be careful! Things are getting very strange around here.

JORDAN Wait. (nervously) Are beavers dangerous?

ALEX Only if it's a full moon. And they're hungry.

JORDAN (frightened-looksup) Seriously?

TAYLOR (smiling) He's kidding. Let's go.

TAYLOR & JORDAN exit.

CASEY I'm certain there's a simple, logical answer to all of this.

RILEY (sarcastically) Probably nothing to do with the flying cryptid we've all been seeing for days.

CASEY Alex- back me up here.

ALEX Logic's great, sure. But so is being open minded.

CASEY Typical. I knew you would take his side.

ALEX You're both after the same thing. You're just looking through different lenses. Maybe meet in the middle?

RILEY That would never happen. Casey thinks I'm a kook.

CASEY (to RILEY) That's not true (CUE MUSIC). I just don't want you to be disappointed when the truth comes out.

(#8) "MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE"

EVERYWHERE, YOU LOOK FOR SIGNS IN BOOKS, IN DREAMS, AT PLEASANT PINES -TO PROVE THINGS THAT ARE JUST PRETEND. BUT REALITY WON'T BEND.

RILEY YOU ACT LIKE WE ARE BACK AT SCHOOL. OUT HERE, THERE'S MORE THAN FACTS AND RULES-A HIDDEN PLACE THAT'S WILD AND FREE. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND YOU MIGHT SEE.

THERE'S ANOTHER WORLD WITHIN OUR OWN. ITS MYSTERIES ARE RARELY SHOWN. LIKE STARS UNSEEN UNTIL THE NIGHT, THEY'RE ALWAYS THERE - JUST OUT OF SIGHT. WHAT WE SEE IS JUST ONE PART. THE REST IS BEST FOUND WITH THE HEART. I DON'T RELY ON HOW AND WHY; I UNDERSTAND THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE. (REPEAT ONCE)

ALEX

FROM WHERE WE STAND, IT'S ALL UNCLEAR-

CASEY:	THE FACTS
RILEY:	THE MYTHS
CASEY & RILEY:	OUR HOPES AND FEARS.
ALEX:	WE SEE OUR WORLDS IN DIFF'RENT WAYS
CASEY:	IN BLACK
RILEY:	IN WHITE
ALEX:	IN SHADES OF GRAY.

ALEX (CONT'D) NO ONE HERE CAN DISAGREE-WE'VE LOST THE FOREST IN THE TREES. TO FIND THE TRUTH IT'S BEST TO START BETWEEN THE MIND AND HEART.

ALL THREE THERE'S ANOTHER WORLD WITHIN OUR OWN. ITS MYSTERIES ARE RARELY SHOWN. AND WHILE WE SEARCH WITH ALL OUR MIGHT, THE ANSWERS REMAIN JUST OUT OF SIGHT.

RILEY:THERE'S WHAT WE FEEL-CASEY:AND WHAT WE KNOW.ALL THREE:FROM HERE TO THERE THE DISTANCE GROWS.(*CHOREOGRAPH this concept- with Alex between Riley and Casey)

ALEX BUT LOOK ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE THERE'S COMMON GROUND AND MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE. (REPEAT ONCE)

RILEY: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE **ALL THREE:** MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

They take out their flashlight and point the beams into the distance.

RILEY SO WE WILL SEARCH WITH ALL OUR MIGHT-

CASEY WE'LL SHINE OUR LIGHTS INTO THE NIGHT.

ALL THREE

WE'LL FIND THE TRUTH; WE HAVE TO TRY. IT'S WAITING THERE- AND MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE. (REPEAT TITLE 3 TIMES)

> Unnoticed by the others, MR. HERRON enters from the forest carrying a shovel. He approaches them from behind. Music ends. He bangs the shovel handle on the ground, starling the campers.

MR. HERRON (with a sinister vibe) You kids need to come with me. There's something in the woods you should see.

RILEY

But..

MR. HERRON

Now.

Mr. Herron points to the forest, directing the campers to exit. He follows them into the woods as the lights fade to black out. Tense transition music plays.

SCENE 6: STRANGER THAN FICTION

AMERICA. CAMP PLEASANT PINES 1986. LATER THAT SAME NIGHT.

In the darkness. .

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) Much later that same evening, Mrs. Luna made her nightly rounds and cabin checks.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) She was alarmed by what she discovered...

Dim lights rise on the camp- the fire has burned out. MRS. LUNA, a bell in hand, enters. She rings the bell loudly, and the other campers slowly enter, followed by MR. DRAKE, and CHARLIE- all groggy and in PJ's.

MR. DRAKE

(angrily) Mrs. Luna, what is the meaning of this? Do you know what time it is?

CHARLIE (checking his watch) It's 12:37 AM , sir.

MR. DRAKE (irritated) I know what time it is Charlie.

MRS. LUNA I apologize for waking everyone. But I'm afraid there's reason for concern.

MR. DRAKE This whole place is a reason for concern. What planet are you living on?

CHARLIE (confused) She's on planet earth, sir. We all are (concerned) Are you feeling OK? DREW What's wrong, Mrs. Luna?

MRS. LUNA Nine campers are missing from their cabins. Every member of the Junior Gumshoe Agency to be exact.

MR. DRAKE Missing? Where is Mr. Schwartz?

MR.LUNA (stalling) Mr. Schwartz is...uhm...he's...

MR. DRAKE What are you not telling us, Mrs. Luna?

CASEY enters from the forest, followed by ALEX and RILEY.

CASEY There's a lot she's not telling us.

MRS. LUNA Where have you three been?

TAYLOR and JORDAN enter from the forest, wearing their boots, towels around their shoulders.

MR. DRAKE

Well, thank goodness. That's five are accounted for. (to TAYLOR and JORDAN). You two are soaking wet.

JORDAN

Because we fell into the river. We almost drowned.

The Campers are shocked.

MRS. LUNA

What were you doing at the river in the middle of the night?

TAYLOR

Inspecting the beaver dam- or what's left of it.

JORDAN

We'd have washed away in the current if we hadn't been pulled out!

MR. DRAKE Pulled out by whom?

TAYLOR

It was so dark, I couldn't see a thing, but someone lifted us out of the water and took us to the banks.

MR. HERRON, still carrying the shovel, enters from the forest.

JORDAN Next thing I know, Mr. Herron is shining a flashlight in my face.

MRS. LUNA Mr. Herron? Why were *you* at the river?

TAYLOR The same reason as us- he's been investigating things too.

MRS. LUNA

What do you mean?

TAYLOR There's only one way to tell a story like this. Alex, light the campfire.

ALEX "lights" the fire. The campers and "adults" gather around it.

TAYLOR (CONT'D) Gumshoe Cadets, you can bring the suspect.

> The CADETS enter from the forest- escorting a captive, costumed MOTHMAN (covered in a fishing net). The others (aside from the GUMSHOES) recoil in fear. RILEY exits to the cabins.

JAMIE Look what we caught!

MRS. LUNA Oh dear. (CUE MUSIC)

TAYLOR You can remove the net. He's not going anywhere.

MR. HERRON removes the net.

39.

(#9) "STRANGER THAN FICTION/ THE EVIDENCE"

TAYLOR (CONT'D) HERE'S WHAT WE FOUND; I'LL MAKE IT QUICK. THE MOTHMAN'S NOTHIN' BUT A TRICK, MR. SCHWARTZ WILL TAKE THE FALL. CAUSE HE'S THE ONE BEHIND IT ALL!

TAYLOR unmasks the fake Mothman to reveal MR. SCHWARTZ's face. Everyone gasps.

GUMSHOES

FORGET SUPERSTITION, CAUSE THIS WILL BLOW YOUR MIND. WE HAD OUR SUSPICIONS. BUT WHO KNEW WHAT WE'D FIND. THE CASE WAS STRANGE BEYOND DESCRIPTION-A WINDING, TWISTING EXPEDITION. IT'S LEAD US TO A RECOGNITION THAT SOMETIMES TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.

OTHER CAMPERS, MR. DRAKE & CHARLIE

OH, STRANGER THAN FICTION

MR. SCHWARTZ YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT; WHAT A SHOW! BUT TELL ME PLEASE- HOW DID YOU KNOW?

RILEY enters with a bag of evidence.

JORDAN IT WASN'T HARD; THE CLUES DON'T LIE.

ALEX WE'VE MADE A LIST TO TELL YOU WHY...

TAYLOR (spoken) The evidence tells the whole story...

Music transitions to "THE EVIDENCE". RILEY produces the kite from the bag.

RILEY (spoken) Exhibit One: A black kite with red lights. Initials "S. O. S. " written on the wing-

TAYLOR (to MR. SCHWARTZ) We checked your personnel file. Full name: (dramatically) Sequoia Oregano Schwartz. S...O...S. MR. DRAKE (spoken) Oregano? Seriously?

MR. SCHWARTZ (spoken) (shrugs) Could be worse. My brother's name is Paprika!

CASEY IN THE MARSH, WE FOUND THIS KITE-(pointing to Mr. Schwartz) YOUR INITIALS ON IT IN PLAIN SIGHT.

ALEX WE THINK YOU FLEW IT THROUGH THE NIGHT. IT'S RED LIGHTS CAUSING QUITE A FRIGHT.

TAYLOR THERE IS MORE, IF YOU PLEASE-WE HEARD THE NOISES IN THE TREES.

RILEY produces the Megaphone from the bag.

JORDAN WE SEARCHED THE MARSH- TURNED EV'RY STONE-AND WE FOUND YOUR MEGAPHONE.

RILEY (spoken) Exhibit two- a megaphone found in the marsh.

TAYLOR (spoken) Mr. Herron has admitted to creating creature sounds with the megaphone.

ALEX (spoken with increasing intensity) But what about the flood, the bugs, the phone lines, the power?

CASEY (to MR. SCHWARTZ) YOUR BEST TRICKS WERE IN THE DARK. IN THE LIGHT OF DAY THEY LOSE THEIR SPARK.

TAYLOR WHO HELPED YOU WITH YOUR MASTER PLAN? WE THINK YOU MUST HAVE HAD A HELPING HAND.

GUMSHOES (approaching MRS. LUNA) WHO BROKE THE DAM- UNLEASHED THE FLOOD? THE SWARMING INSECTS OUT FOR BLOOD?

RILEY produces a bottle labeled "BUG BAIT".

GUMSHOES (CONT'D) MRS. LUNA, THESE AREN'T ACCIDENTS; WE FOUND THE BUG BAIT BY YOUR TENT!

RILEY (spoken) Exhibit Three: an empty bottle of Bug Bait!

Campers react withs shock. TAYLOR takes the shovel from MR. HERRON.

TAYLOR (spoken) And Mr. Herron found this in the wreckage of the beaver dam. Exhibit four- Mrs. Luna's shovel.

Music returns to "STRANGER THAN FICTION."

TAYLOR (CONT'D) SO, THERE THEY STAND-THE ONES INVOLVED. IT'S OVER NOW; THE CASE IS SOLVED.

RILEY BUT STILL, SOMETHINGS DON'T MEET THE EYE. WE KNOW THE "WHO" BUT NOT THE "WHY".

ALL

FORGET SUPERSTITION, CAUSE THIS WILL BLOW YOUR MIND. WE HAD OUR SUSPICIONS. BUT WHO KNEW WHAT WE'D FIND.

MR. DRAKE:	THE WEEK'S BEEN STRANGE BEYOND DESCRIPTION.
ALL:	WE THOUGHT THE CAMP WOULD FACE EVICTION.
LUNA & SCHWARTZ:	BUT NOW WE'RE IN A NEW POSITION.
ALL:	AND SOMETIMES TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION!
	STRANGER THAN FICTION!

Music ends.

MR. DRAKE

Mrs. Luna, I am disappointed. And Mr. Schwartz, I have no words. I assume your grandfather isn't coming?

MR. SCHWARTZ

I've been stalling him. I thought we could scare you away with the Mothman story- that we could keep the camp open.

CHARLIE

(to MR. SCHWARTZ) But we saw the Mothman high in the trees.

CASEY

I read his file- he was a tree trimmer before he became a counselor. (to SCHWARTZ) Heights weren't a problem.

TAYLOR

Mrs. Luna's tent just outside of camp provided the perfect staging area for their schemes.

MRS. LUNA

Our plan was simple- We'd introduce the Mothman legend. Then, Mr. Herron would make some well-timed sound effects.

MR. SCHWARTZ

If that didn't work, I had a few other tricks up my sleeve.

CASEY You mean the kite? The lights? (pointing) The costume?

MR. HERRON

All of that was never part of the plan as I knew it. Things went too far. The flood put the campers in danger.

MR. SCHWARTZ We never meant for that to happen.

MRS. LUNA We wanted to save the camp- for all of you.

RILEY By turning off the power and cutting the phone lines?

JORDAN With floods and bugs?

MRS. LUNA Our intentions were good. Our methods were not. (to MR. SCHWARTZ) How did you end up in that ghastly net?

MR. SCHWARTZ It was dark. I saw a lantern flickering under a tree. When I got closer, I stepped into some kind of trap.

JAMIE (smiling) A moth to a flame.

TAYLOR Great work, Cadets!

MR. SCHWARTZ (sarcastically) Yeah. Great work.

MR. HERRON We came across the Cadets on the way back from the river.

TAYLOR They had trapped Mr. Schwartz.

JORDAN Caught like a fish and tied to a tree. (to MR. SCHWARTZ, mockingly) The mighty Mothman.

MR. SCHWARTZ;

(defeated) So Mr. Drake, I guess you're still buying the camp?

JORDAN And shutting it down?

MR. DRAKE Oh, I'll be buying it. But I won't be shutting it down!

CHARLIE

(mockingly to the others) Oh, he'll be buying it alright! But he won't be...wait a minute! (to MR. DRAKE) You won't be shutting it down??

MR. DRAKE

No, Charlie. It's been quite a journey, but this place has a certain vibe I can't shake. In fact, you might say (CUE MUSIC)... I'm holdin' on to a feeling.

CHARLIE

A *journey* you say? Oh dear.

MR. DRAKE And I can't stop believing...

CHARLIE

(#10) "CAMP PLEASANT PINES REPRISE #2"

MR. DRAKE THERE'S SOMETHING WITH THIS CAMP

THAT'S TAKEN ME A WHILE TO SEE. WHAT I THOUGHT WAS STRANGE COULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY.

CHARLIE SIR, I HAVE MY DOUBTS. MR. DRAKE IF YOU'LL JUST HEAR ME OUT, I WILL TELL YOU WHY THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE...

WITH JUST A SLIGHT RE-BRANDING, WE'LL TRANSFORM CAMP PLEASANT PINES TO A PLACE FOR CHASING CRYPTIDS.

CHARLIE IT SENDS A SHIVER UP THE SPINE!

MR. DRAKE THIS PLACE WILL BE A TREASURE TROVE-NEW CAMPERS WILL LINE UP IN DROVES! IF THE MOTHMAN'S WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND, THEY'LL FIND IT AT CAMP PLEASANT PINES! AIN'T IT FUNNY HOW THE STARS ALIGN? A FORTUNE WAITS AT CAMP PLEASANT PINES!

Music ends.

MR. DRAKE (CONT'D) "Come to Camp Pleasant Pines for the Mothman Encounter!" Why, the camp will be booked year round!

CHARLIE

(in awe) Genius.

MR. DRAKE Indeed! Imagine it- Mothman T-shirts, books, action figures! Mr. Schwartz, you and your staff will stay on board won't you?

MR. SCHWARTZ

What?

MR.DRAKE Once people hear about this place and the sightings here...

CASEY But the sightings weren't real.

MR. DRAKE

(exiting) Don't get lost in the details, kid. People want a good story. They *want* to believe! Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Luna-come along- we'll iron out the details. This is the beginning of a beautiful, and lucrative, relationship!

MR. DRAKE & CHARLIE exit to the cabins, MR. SCHWARTZ and MRS. LUNA shrug their shoulders and follow them.

SCENE 7: EPILOGUE/ THE STORIES WE TELL

AMERICA. SUBURBS. PRESENT DAY/ CAMP PLEASANT PINES 1986. THAT SAME EVENING

MR. HERRON

Okay, kids. The show's over. Back to your cabins.

The CAMPERS are disappointed.

CAMPER But it'll be daylight soon, anyway.

MR. HERRON

(sternly) Now.

The CAMPERS begin to exit. The members of the AGENCY gather near MR. HERRON.

CASEY

(to MR. HERRON) We couldn't have figured it out without you.

MR. HERRON

I came here as a boy. I love the camp. But I shouldn't have gotten caught up in their scheme. I had to make that right.

TAYLOR And thanks for pulling us out of the river.

MR. HERRON

I didn't pull either of you from the river. I found you both on the banks when I came down to check the dam.

JORDAN

What?

TAYLOR If you didn't save us, then who?

RILEY

Or what?

CASEY Oh, Riley- not that again!

MR. HERRON You kids should get some rest. I'll see you in the morning.

MR. HERRON exits.

TAYLOR Another mystery solved by the Junior Gumshoe Agency!

JORDAN And our newest recruit. Thanks for the help, Riley!

ALEX Yeah- nice to have another Cryptid Geek on the team!

TAYLOR Let's plan to meet back here at sunrise.

JORDAN Sunrise? For what?

TAYLOR For a badge pinning ceremony. Isn't that right, Cadets?

JAMIE

Really?

TAYLOR

You earned it.

CASEY Congratulations, Gumshoes!

JAMIE Thanks. I guess we learned from the pros... and Jordan.

Laughs all around.

JORDAN Yeah, yeah. Come on. I'll tell you about the time I saw the Loch Ness Monster.

JORDAN, ALEX, and the CADETS continue talking as they exit to the cabins.

ALEX I've told you a million times, Nessie is in Scotland, not your uncle's swimming pool! That was just an inflatable.

JORDAN Why sweat the small stuff, Alex. You're no fun. CASEY begins to follow the others but notices RILEY standing in place, staring into the night. She approaches him.

CASEY Are you disappointed?

RILEY Nah. Just because Mr. Schwartz tricked us, doesn't mean the Mothman doesn't exist.

CASEY Boy, you're stubborn.

RILEY

Sorry.

CASEY Don't be. I like that about you.

RILEY (looking up) The sky is clear tonight. (pointing) Look, it's the Big Dipper.

CASEY I'll take your word for it. It's all just blurry light to me. I lost my contacts while we were in the Marsh.

RILEY

Really?

CASEY I can barely tell the difference between you and a cryptid at this point!

RILEY

Oh, come on!

CASEY

Go gather up the evidence and let's call it a night.

Dramatic underscore begins.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) And just when it seemed like the mystery was solved, things got even more wild. While I was busy putting the evidence away, there was another sighting. Right, Casey? RILEY steps away to retrieve the evidence bag and starts to gather the various items. Meanwhile, underscore swells as CASEY notices something in above the camp. From behind the top of the backdrop, a winged creature- the true MOTHMAN- raises into view and spreads its wings.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) It was decades ago, Riley. But I did see... *something*. Even without my contacts, I could make out a blurry figure in the trees above the camp...

CASEY, shocked, points toward the cryptid.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) (CONT'D) I can't say for sure, but I believe that it saw me too.

The MOTHMAN nods at CASEY and lowers itself behind the backdrop. Underscore fades.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) (CONT'D) And then it was gone. Like it had never been there.

CASEY (in awe- still looking and pointing upward) Riley?

RILEY (looking up) What? I don't see anything.

CASEY

You wouldn't believe it. But I might have just seen the Mothman...the real one. (second guessing) No, it can't...

RILEY (interrupting/smiling) Of course, I'd believe it. And I don't even have to see it.

CASEY

(smiling) Point taken.

RILEY

(pause) You know, maybe the Mothman was *never* bad luck in the first place. Maybe he was watching over the camp all along- protecting it... and us. Maybe he even saved Taylor and Jordan from the river? He just needs a new story. A more optimistic one. And maybe we're all part of it now.

CASEY

I'll admit, even the possibility of seeing him *was*...kind of incredible.

RILEY Better than cassette tapes?

CASEY For sure. (she looks up to the sky)

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) I'm still naturally skeptical, and I can't say for sure what I saw that night. But I do know how I felt.

CASEY For once, It feels like there might be something else...something bigger...something unexplainable.

RILEY We don't always need proof or explanations, Case. Sometimes, possibility and imagination are enough.

The

The CAST enters and faces the audience.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) I learned to appreciate legends and stories, because they do help us see our world in new ways- to understand it beyond just science and facts- to feel it. (CUE MUSIC)

(#11) "THE STORIES THAT WE TELL"

- **RILEY:** (to the audience) WE ALL LOVE A STORY-
- CASEY: A ONCE UPON A TIME-
- **BOTH:** FROM TALES AROUND THE FIRE-TO SIMPLE NURSERY RHYMES.
- ALEX: WE TAKE FLIGHTS OF FANCY-
- **TAYLOR:** GET LOST IN MYSTERIES-
- CASEY: WARM OUR HEARTS WITH ROMANCE-
- **JORDAN:** AND WITNESS HISTORY.

FULL CAST

A STORY IS A DOORWAY TO ANOTHER PLACE, BRIDGING MIND AND HEART-ECLIPSING TIME AND SPACE. THERE ARE LESSONS IN THE LEGENDS; THE WORDS CAN CAST A SPELL. YOU'LL FIND TRUTH AND YOU'LL FIND ANSWERS IN THE STORIES THAT WE TELL. CASEY: WE SEE OUR OWN REFLECTIONS ALL: IN THE STORIES THAT WE TELL.

TAYLOR: ON EV'RY HERO'S JOURNEY-

RILEY: YOU SEARCH OUT THE UNKNOWN- (OR "TAKE ON..")

ALEX: MEET MONSTERS AND FACE TRIALS-

JORDAN: DISCOVER YOU HAVE GROWN,

CASEY:	STRUGGLES MAKE US STRONGER.
MR. DRAKE:	A CHALLENGE DOES US GOOD.
MR. SCHWARTZ:	SOME MONSTERS WE ENCOUNTER,
ALL:	ARE JUST MISUNDERSTOOD.

FULL CAST (CONT'D)

A STORY IS A WINDOW, AND ON THE OTHER SIDE, WE CAN SEE OUR WORLD, IT'S MAGIC MAGNIFIED. WE CAN TRY A NEW PERSPECTIVE AS WE LOOK BEHIND THE VEIL. THE TRUTH COMES INTO FOCUS WITH THE STORIES THAT WE TELL.

- **SOLO:** WE CAN UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER
- ALL: WITH THE STORIES THAT WE TELL.
- **SOLO:** WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD AROUND US

ALL: WITH THE STORIES THAT WE TELL.

The YOUNG BOY enters, still listening to his Earbuds and makes his way center stage.

FLYING MONSTERS, U. F. O. 'S, HAUNTED HOUSES, ON IT GOES— ALL THE STORIES THAT GET TOLD-IF THEY'RE REAL, WE WANT TO KNOW! ALL WE NEED ARE OPEN MINDS. THERE'S SO MUCH FOR US TO FIND— SO MANY WONDERS TO ACHIEVE. WE'LL MAKE NEW LEGENDS; I WANT TO BELIEVE! THE SKY'S NO LIMIT— WE WANT TO BELIEVE!

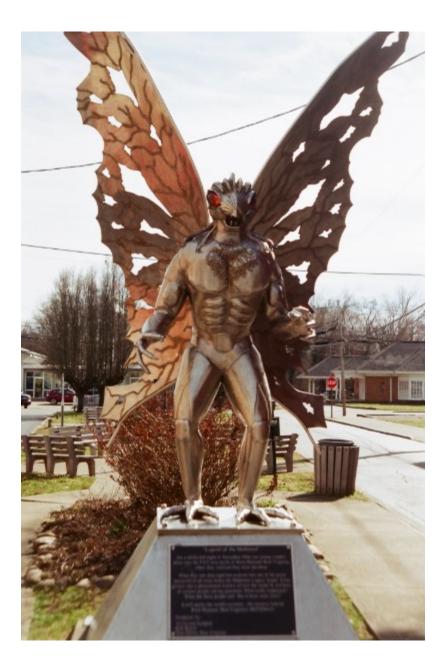
> Music softens to a soft mysterious theme. The CAMP CHARACTERS lower their heads; they rest in place as the focus shifts.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER" (OFF-STAGE) (spoken) And that's all for this episode, my fellow truth seekers.

ADULT HOST- "THE SKEPTIC" (OFF-STAGE) (spoken) Until next time, keep curious and rememberbelieving is more than just seeing.

ADULT HOST- "THE SEEKER"(OFF-STAGE) (spoken) And that in every legend, there's a bit of truth waiting to be discovered. Transmission ended. (digital SFX)

> The YOUNG BOY takes out his Earbuds, smiles. He slowly looks up to the sky, squints his eyes, and points upward. The FULL CAST does the same. BLACKOUT.



Statue of THE MOTHMAN in Point Pleasant, West Virginia

The Mothman Legend

The first reported real-life sighting of the creature that would come to be known as the Mothman occurred on November 15, 1966, in Point Pleasant, West Virginia (the inspiration for "Camp Pleasant Pines" in our musical). The couple who claimed the sighting described the creature as a large man-bird with glowing red eyes. The next day, the town's newspaper ran the headline: "*Couples See Man-Sized Bird. . . Creature. . . Something.* " The national press soon ran with the story, and the account of the "Mothman" spread across the world. Skeptics of the sighting believed the Mothman to have actually been a Sandhill Crane or Giant Blue Heron (hence the name of our red herring character: Mr. Herron). Nonetheless, sightings continued and have done so for decades.

Through the years, the Mothman has allegedly been sighted across the globe-often near disaster sites: bridge collapses, the Chernobyl meltdown, and even the World Trade Centers on 9/11. This has led to the cryptid being considered a harbinger of doom. However, some see it as a sentinel, silently watching over those in distress. Perception plays a significant role in how the Mothman is viewed, and perception plays an important role in our fictional story, with vision, lighting, and personal biases being recurring references.

The Mothman, real or not, is certainly a powerful symbol that inspires wonder and consideration of the unknown. The skies have captured the public's imagination for centuries and remain a vast, mysterious frontier. Just in recent months, the news has been flooded with reports of U. F. O. sightings by the military and unexplained, rampant drone activity over many states. Our musical plays on the "sky/flying" theme with character names like Mrs. Luna, Mr. Herron, and even Mr. Drake (Drake being another name for a duck).

The Mothman remains a relevant piece of lore that encourages us to contemplate the mysteries of our world with an open mind and to consider the limitless power of legends to invoke and inspire new perspectives.

Point Pleasant, West Virginia, continues celebrating the infamous cryptid with an annual Mothman Festival. Downtown, a large statue of the Mothman stands silent, perpetual watch.

Camp Pleasant Pines



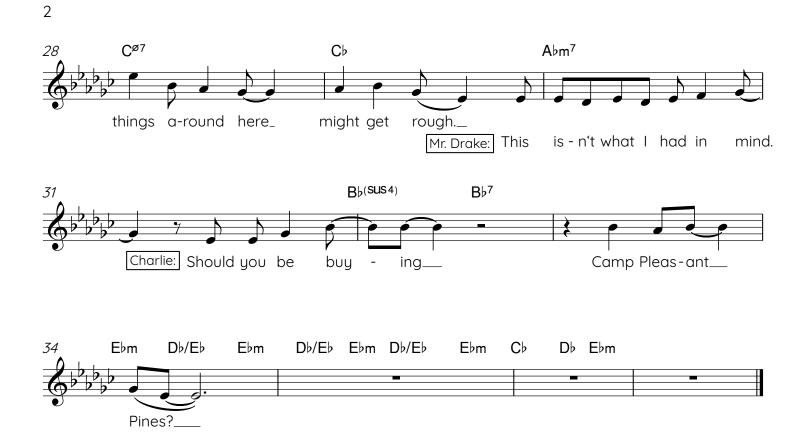




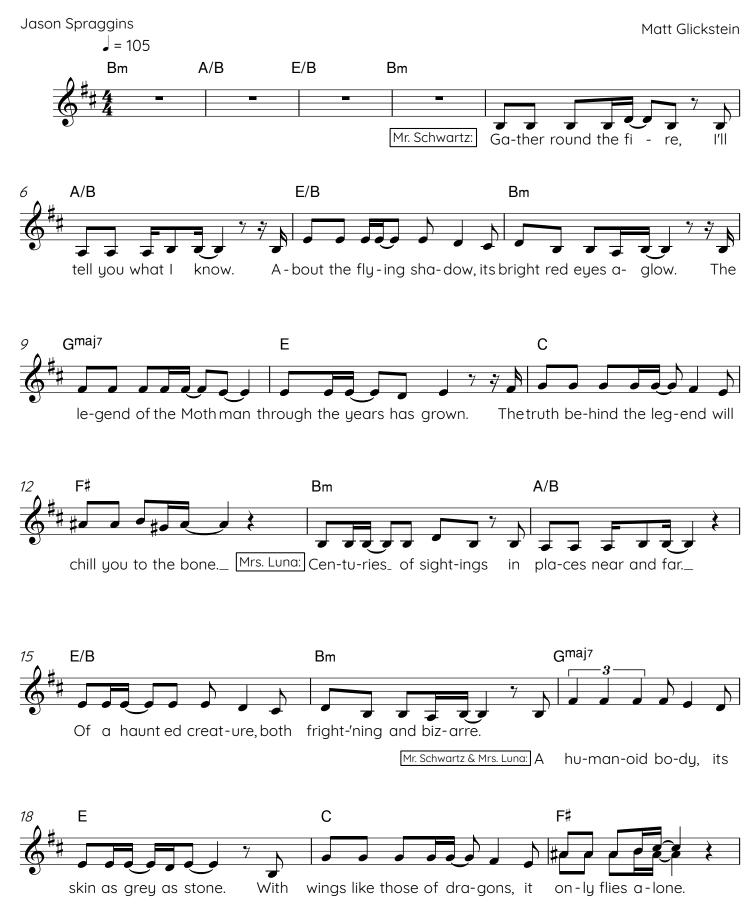


Camp Pleasant Pines Reprise 1



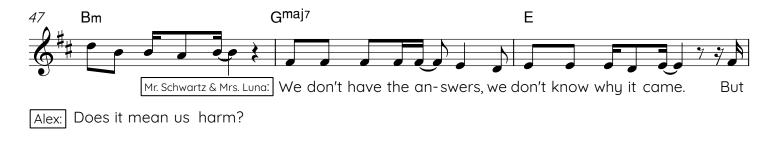


Legend of the Mothman





Jordan: Should we be a-larmed?







Something Wicked

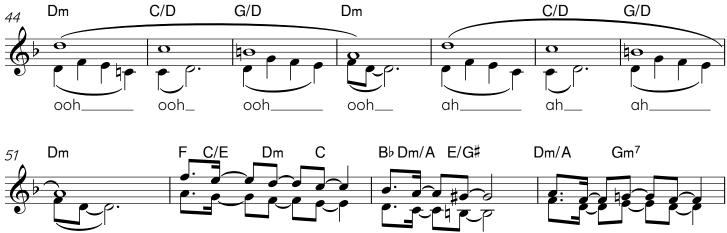


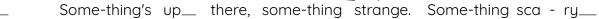


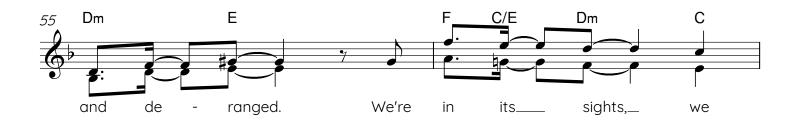
Charlie: May-be we should go in side.__













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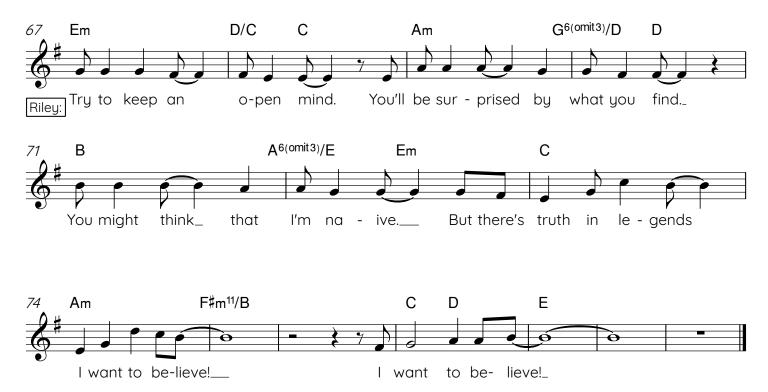


I Want to Believe









The Investigation







Seeing is Believing

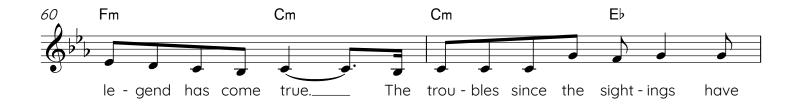




ne-ver thought I'd say it, but the le-gend might be true. The trou bles since the sight ings have

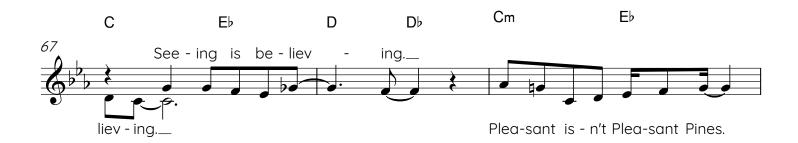


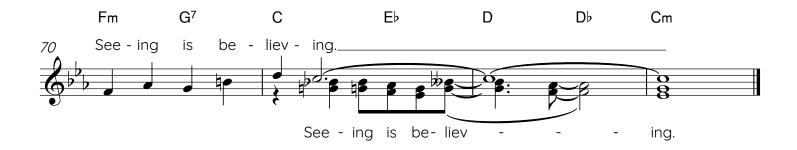












More Than Meets the Eye

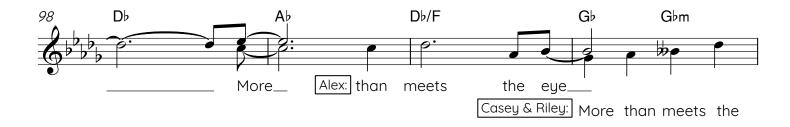


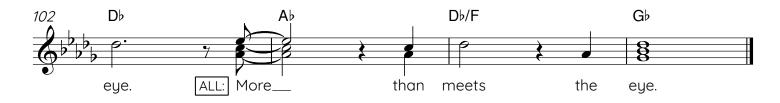




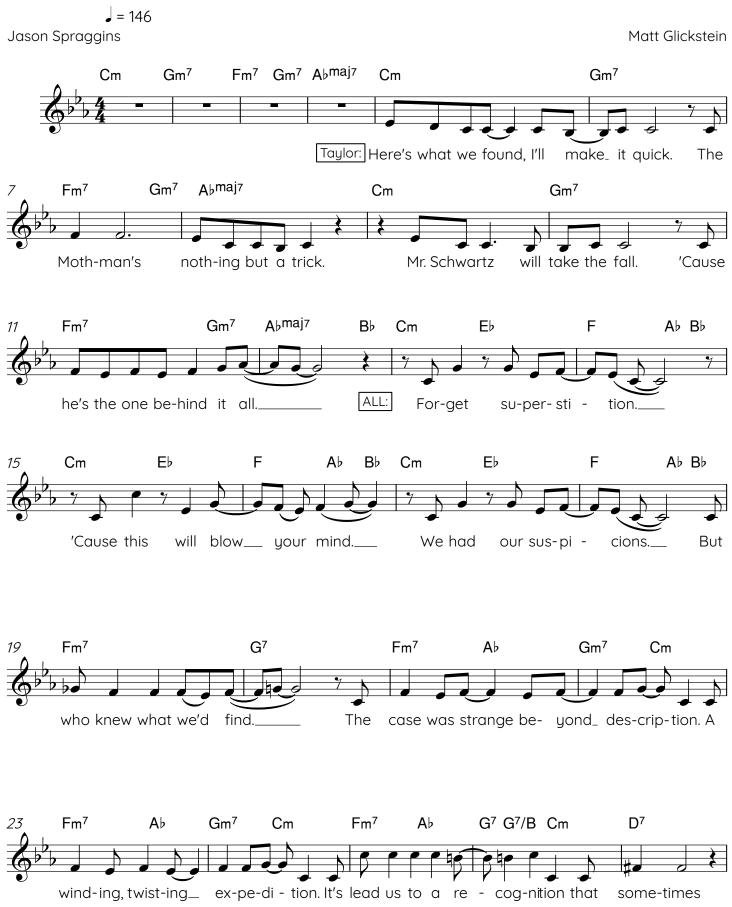


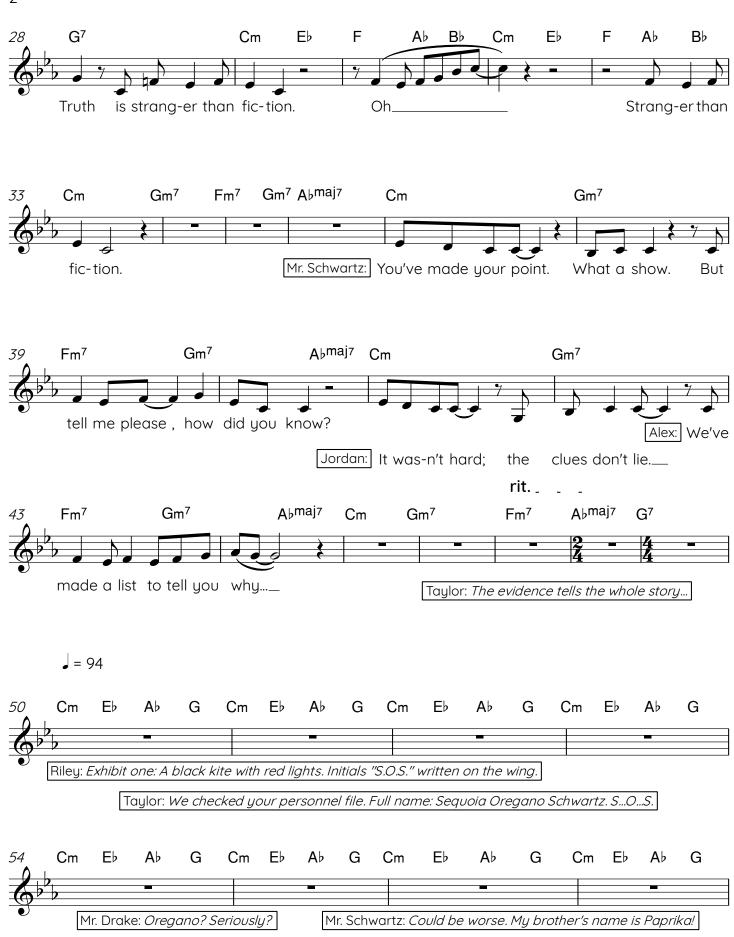




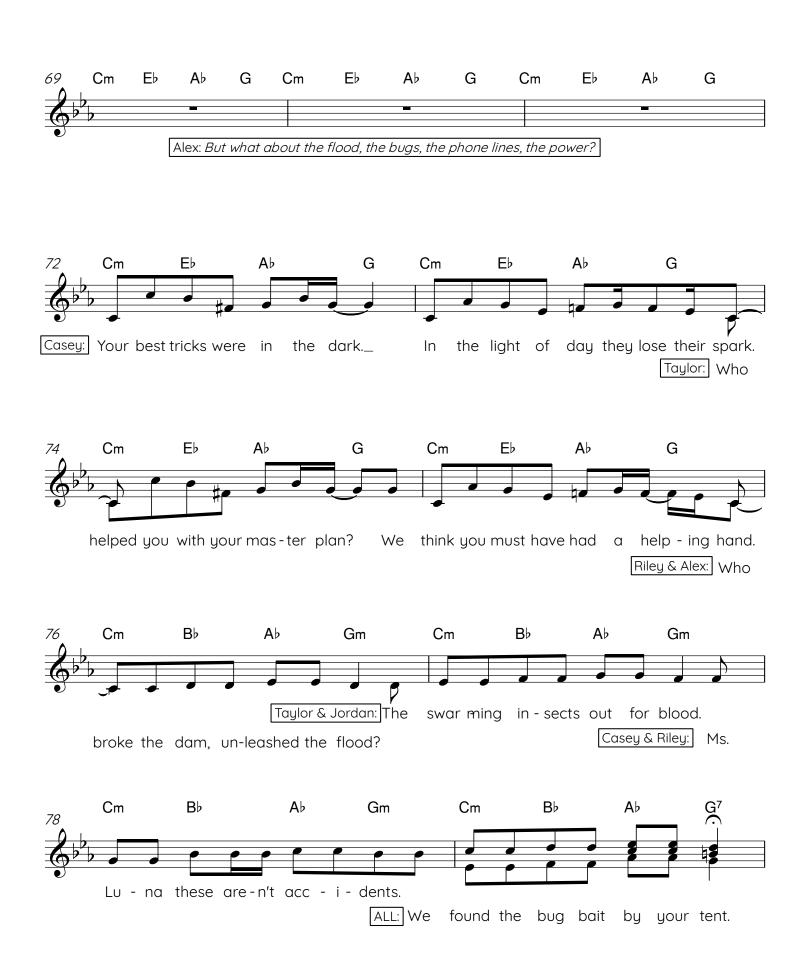


Stranger Than Fiction









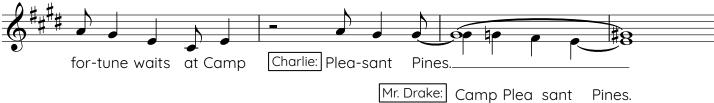




Camp Pleasant Pines Reprise #2







The Stories That We Tell

= 128

Jason Spraggins

Matt Glickstein







Schwartz & Luna: We

