

CARNIVALESQUE OBSCURA

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Welcome to the Show...

Somewhere beyond the familiar world, where the roads lead to nowhere in particular and the nights seem to last a little longer, there happens to be a distinctly remarkable travelling carnival. This is Carnivalesque Obscura...

Beneath the tattered splendour of its striped canvas waits a most peculiar company of performers. Singers, dancers, musicians, actors and other assorted curiosities. All possessed ambition, talent and a desperate longing for something greater than the lives they had been given.

They gave up something they thought insignificant... to a master of treachery and deceit - "you-know-who".

Some demanded fame; some wished to acquire fortune. Others sought beauty, love, recognition, revenge or simply the opportunity to become something other than themselves. They were promised everything their hearts desired, and for a while... perhaps... they received it.

The trouble with making a deal with "him" is that he has a rather different understanding of the terms and conditions. Fame fades. Beauty withers. Love turns sour. Fortunes disappear. The applause dies away, and the audience eventually leaves.

But a contract, once signed, remains binding. And "he" has never been particularly sympathetic to requests for early termination.

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“They gave up something they thought insignificant... to a master of treachery and deceit.”

The Show That Never Ends

Carnivalesque Obscura is part gothic musical, part dark cabaret, part twisted rock opera. A collection of cautionary tales, woven together by an unlikely cast of ill-fated performers.

At its heart is the Ringmaster, a charming, theatrical and thoroughly untrustworthy gentleman who also happens to be... "you-know-who". Immaculately dressed and perpetually delighted by his own ingenuity, he presides over his collection of unfortunate performers with the smug satisfaction of a man who knows he holds all the cards.

He is their master of ceremonies, their impresario and, in a rather more literal sense... their owner.

The carnival is not merely a place of entertainment. It is a gilded cage, a travelling prison dressed in velvet and gold, where every performer must continue playing their role.

Here, the show really must go on. Not because the audience demands it. But because "he" does.

And what better way to spend eternity than doing the one thing you once dreamed of doing forever? On second thoughts...

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“What better way to spend eternity than doing the one thing you once dreamed of doing forever?”

Behind the Velvet Curtain

And what of the carnival itself? Well... step inside.

Beyond the velvet curtains lies a world of tarnished gold, crimson velvet, cracked mirrors and flickering candles. A place where glamour and decay exist side by side, and the footlights still burn long after the applause has died away. From somewhere behind the curtain comes the sound of an orchestra tuning up. A melancholy piano drifts from a dimly lit dressing room, while the Bluesman can be heard playing somewhere in the Devil's own Speakeasy.

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“A Cast of Beautiful Disasters”



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The Ringmaster

He is their master of ceremonies, their impresario and, in a rather more literal sense... their owner.



The Old King

Among the attractions is the Old King, a once-mighty figure reduced to a shabby caricature of his former magnificence. His crown remains firmly upon his head, though whatever authority it once represented has long since departed. He is a figure of ridicule, particularly to the Ringmaster, who takes considerable pleasure in the humiliation of his fallen adversary.

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The Dancer

There is the Dancer, whose beauty and grace conceal a far more dangerous nature. She moves between desire and damnation with an ease that suggests she knows considerably more about both than she is prepared to admit. To watch her dance is to forget, if only momentarily, that some invitations are better declined.



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The Fallen Angel

The Fallen Angel inhabits a world of glamour, longing and not so carefully concealed despair. Once the object of admiration and obsession, she remains caught between the intoxicating memory of being adored and the cruel reality of what that adoration ultimately cost her.



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The Faded Star

The Faded Star is a relic of another age: part thespian, part forgotten glam-rock idol, and something considerably more... or perhaps less... than human. He is a nocturnal creature who still carries himself with the decadent confidence of a man convinced his greatest comeback is just around the corner.



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The Bluesman

There is the Bluesman, whose music carries the weight of a lifetime's disappointments and considerably more besides. His songs speak of longing, temptation, loss and the sort of bargains a man makes when he's run out of better options. Some say the blues comes from suffering. He has had rather longer than most to prove the point.



The Clown

And then there is the Clown.

She never particularly wanted to make people laugh. In truth, she'd be considerably happier if everyone simply left her alone. Unfortunately, misery has developed an inconvenient habit of attracting an audience, and hers keeps returning for another performance. Behind the painted smile is someone painfully aware of the absurdity of her own existence.

CARNIVALE SOLE OBSCURA

Music from the Wrong Side of the Curtain

And what of the soundtrack to this... spectacle? Well, that is every bit as varied and unpredictable as the unfortunate souls performing it.

Dark cabaret rubs shoulders with gothic vaudeville. Blues, theatrical rock, melancholy ballads and the occasional outbreak of thoroughly inappropriate merriment all compete for a place beneath the spotlight. Some songs are intimate confessions. Others are grand theatrical spectacles. There are tales of love and betrayal, desperate hope and magnificent failure.

The performers have been gathered from different times, backgrounds and traditions, bringing their music and their misfortunes together beneath one increasingly threadbare canvas. The carnival does not concern itself with such fripperies as fashion, musical boundaries or the passing of time. A melody from yesterday may sit beside something from fifty years earlier, united not by genre but by the unfortunate circumstances of those performing it.

Every song belongs to someone. Every performance reveals a little more about the performer. And the stories do not end when the music stops.

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For the Damned and the Beautiful

They are not heroes. They are not villains. They are but lost souls who wanted something badly enough to sacrifice everything for it. And now they have all the time in the world to contemplate whether it was worth the price.

For all its gothic imagery and supernatural characters, Carnivalesque Obscura is not simply a collection of desperate stories. Its darkness is tempered by humour, absurdity and a certain affection for the hopelessly flawed individuals who inhabit it.

The Ringmaster may be a villain, but he's also something of a showman. His victims may be damned, but they are seldom entirely innocent.

There is something tragically human about them all. They wanted to be loved. To be admired. To escape obscurity. To matter.

And someone offered to make it happen. For a price.

Carnivalesque Obscura is ultimately about the uncomfortable discovery that getting everything you ever wanted isn't necessarily the same as finding happiness. A collection of deeply flawed individuals, trapped in a theatrical purgatory of their own making.

They may be condemned to perform forever, but they still have their songs. And perhaps that is something.

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Every song belongs to someone.

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Illustrated songs and companion portraits



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Verse 1

Cajun lady dancing in the midnight hour
All she's wearing is a cool breeze
The way she's moving to the rhythm of the music
Got me falling down on my knees
Tantalizing and a terrifying me
Altogether at the same time
I don't know if I can wait another minute
Angel I'm a losing my mind

Chorus

I don't know where to begin
I feel you get under my skin
Your heartbeat is so close to mine
You're the reason I'm feeling so fine

Verse 2

Pour a little wine into this glass of mine
Keep it coming mama all night
The heat of your fire just feeds my desire
Baby, I can make you feel all right
Come a little closer, I just want to hold ya
A little lovin' while the moonshines
I always wanna be here, never want to leave ya
I just wanna make you all mine

Chorus

I don't know where to begin
I feel you get under my skin
Your heartbeat is so close to mine
You're the reason I'm feeling so fine

Bridge

Cajun Lady
Cajun Lady
Cajun Lady
Cajun Lady

Verse 3

Cajun lady dancing in the midnight hour
All she's wearing is a cool breeze
The way she's moving to the rhythm of the music
Got me falling down on my knees
Tantalising and a terrifying me
Altogether at the same time
I don't know if I can wait another minute
Angel, I'm a losing my mind

Chorus

I don't know where to begin
I feel you get under my skin
Your heartbeat is so close to mine
You're the reason I'm feeling so fine

Outro

Cajun Lady
Cajun Lady
Cajun Lady
Cajun Lady

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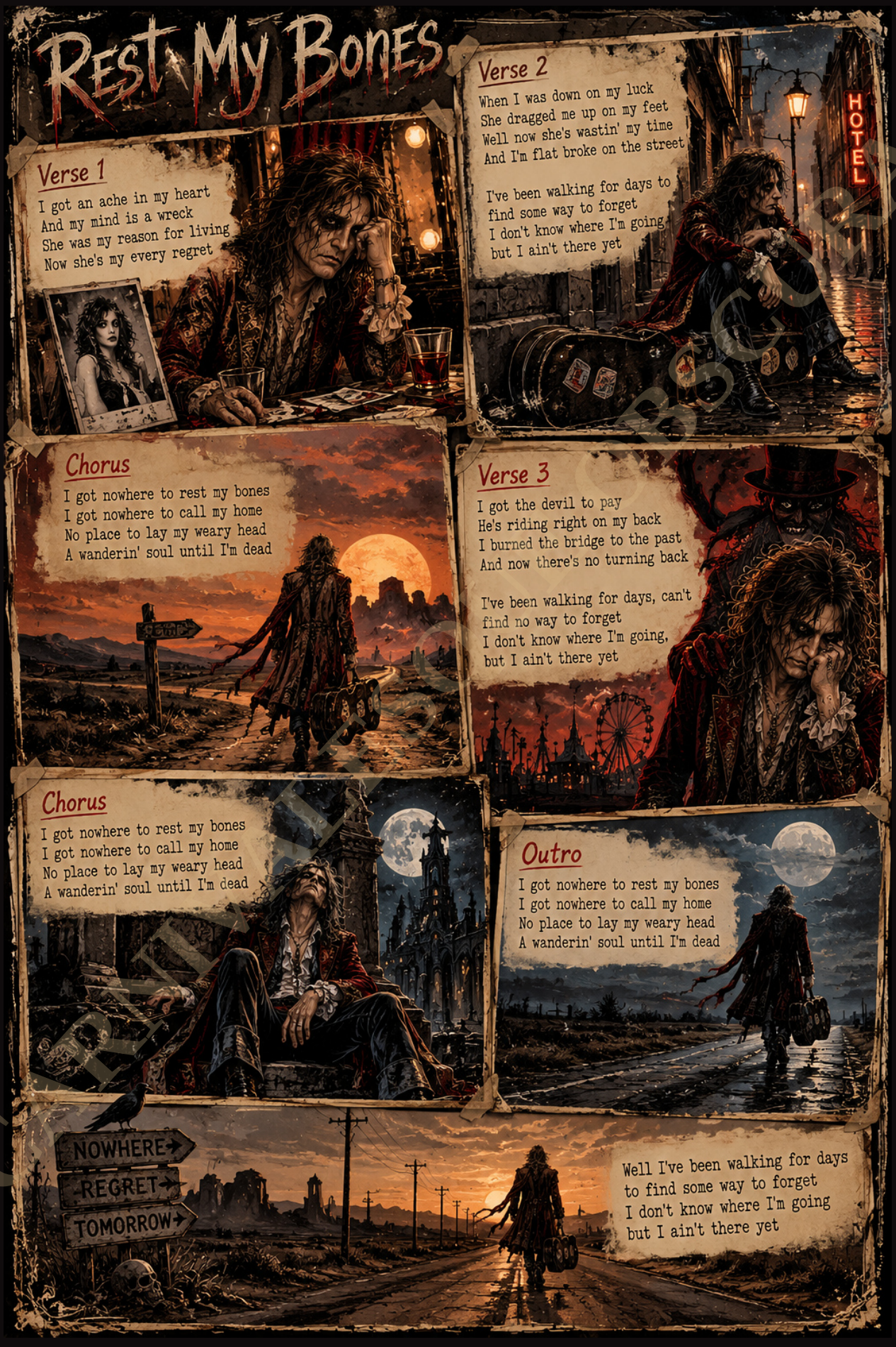


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A Singer of Songs
Verse 1
He took to the stage as the lights grew dim
And danced with a spirit, the muse within
A voice from the heavens shook the still night air
As he stood unafraid of the spotlight's glare
Verse 2
No was a child of the universe
A singer of songs, a weaver of words
A brother of mine who lived and died
A pain filled his heart then stars filled his eyes
Verse 2
No one saw through the mask he wore
'Til it slipped from his face and fell to the floor
And looked to the broken shards in his hands
Reflecting a fragile and mortal man
Chorus
He was a child of the universe
A singer of songs, a weaver of words
A brother of mine who lived and died
If pain filled his heart then stars filled his eyes
Bridge
He cried out against the wind
Forsaking all he could have been
But deep inside his broken shell
There was no shelter... from himself
Verse 3
As there is no beginning, there is no end
Lost to a world he forever transcends...
And the strange and beautiful together are bound
In the spark of a song in the soul of a sound
Chorus
He was a child of the universe
A singer of songs, a weaver of words
A brother of mine who lived and died
If pain filled his heart then stars filled his eyes



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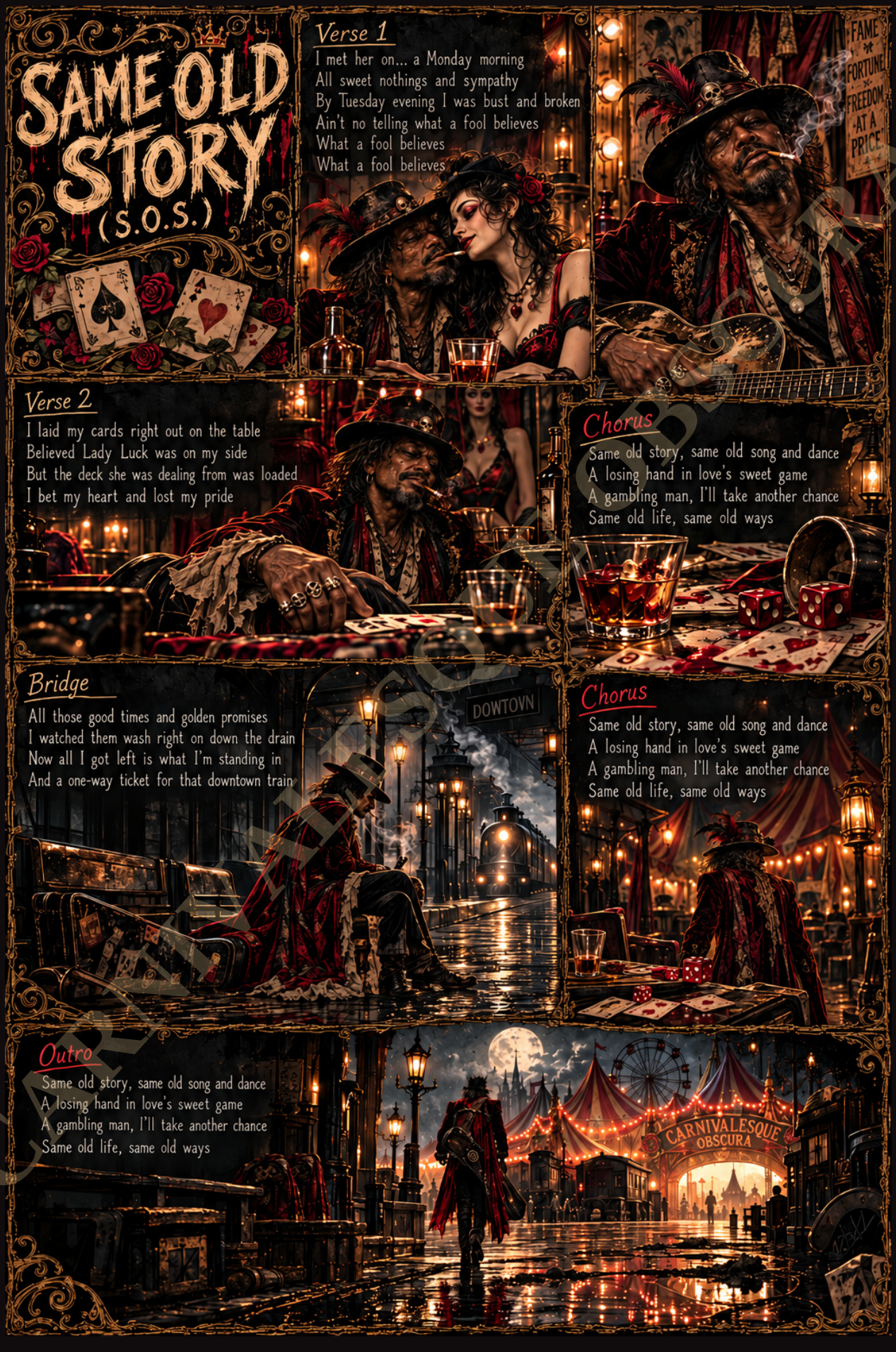


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SAME OLD STORY (S.O.S.)



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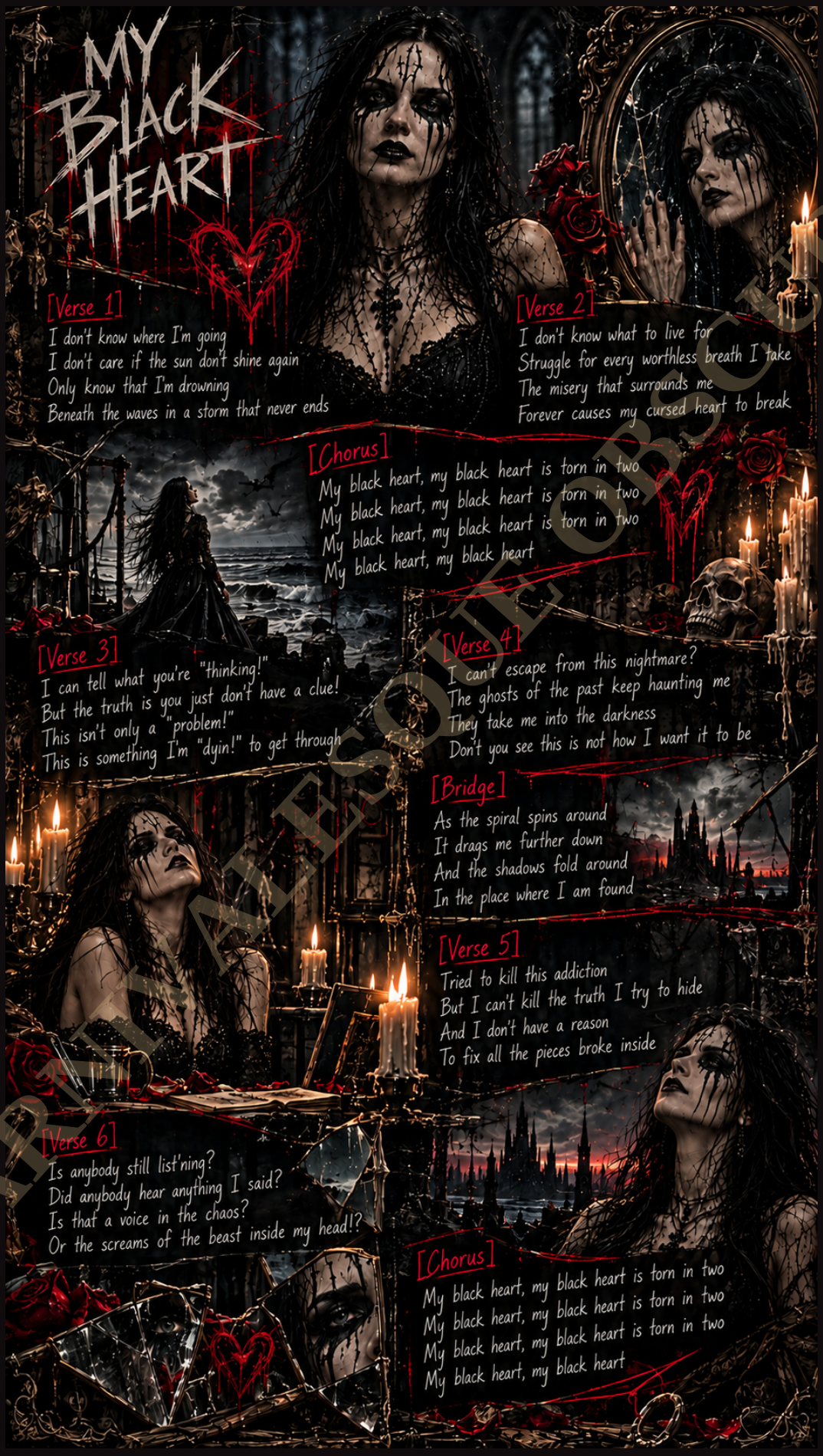
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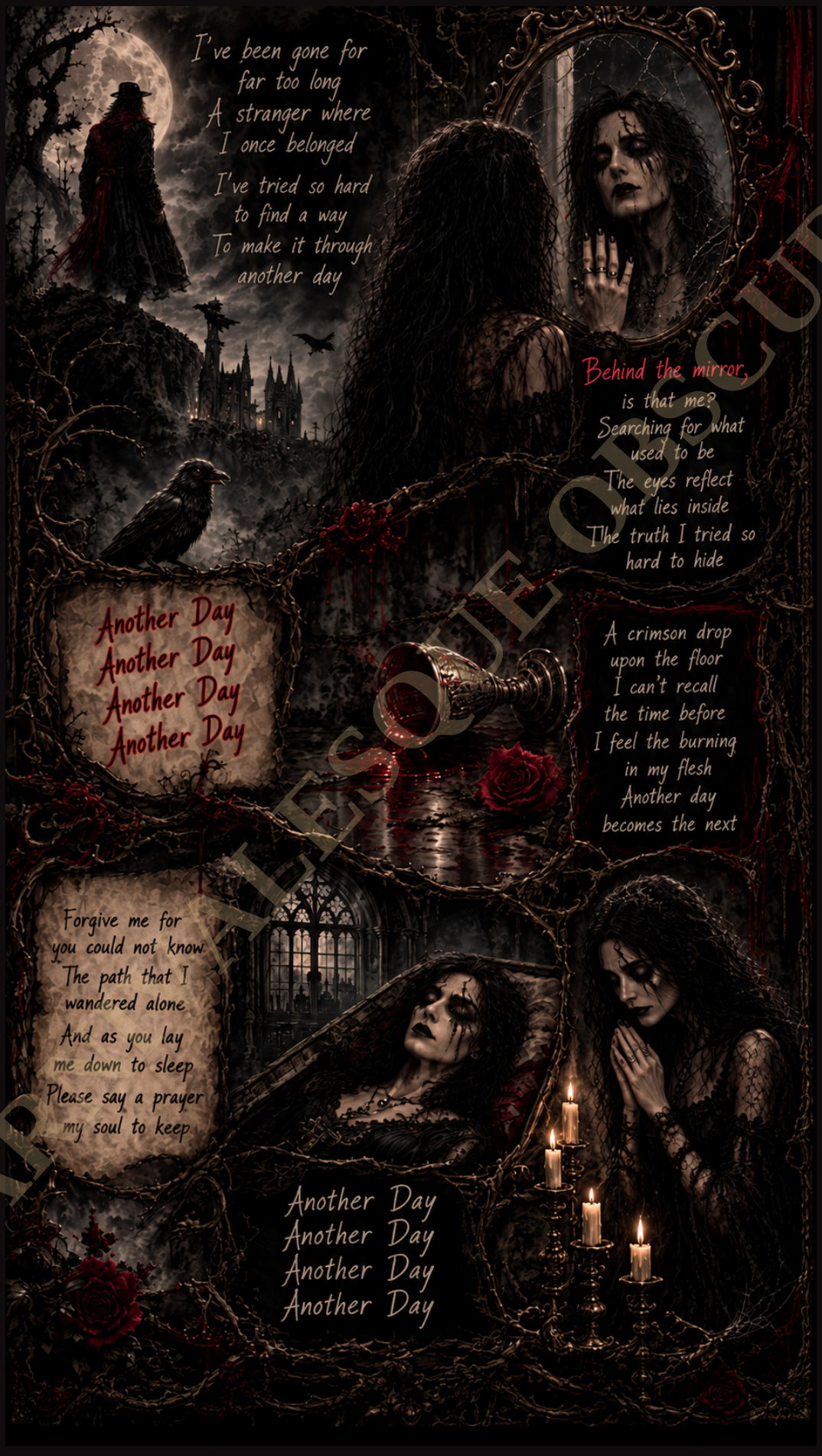
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“Welcome to Carnivalesque Obscura. The show that never ends.”

Story and selected quotations from “Our Story”,
Carnivalesque Obscura.
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