

**SCENE 5: Soothsayer Alley**

*There's a row of rundown storefronts manned by various psychics, fortune tellers, astrologers, etc.*

**ASTROLOGER**

Tarot cards! Palm readings! Amputees get half price!

**PSYCHIC WOMAN**

Lucky heather sir?

**NICK**

Thanks, but... I need more than luck.

*NICK approaches a MAN WITH AN EYEPATCH, checks over his shoulder.*

Psst. Hey. I'm looking for a soothsayer.

**EYEPATCH MAN**

*(pointing)*

Norbert the Knowing. Supposed to be the best.

*A second story window opens, NOSTRADAMUS pokes his head out.*

**NICK**

*(reading)*

"Out of business due to unforeseen circumstances."

*(then...)*

So obviously not the *very* best.

**NOSTRADAMUS**

Did I hear a need for future seeing?

*The window closes. We hear footsteps on stairs, then falling, pots and pans, a cat*

*SCREECH, then a door opens and Nostradamus steps out.*

If seeing is what you need, then I can help you. If help is what you need, then I can see you. If neither is what you need, then I can foresee you leaving very shortly. So— am I hired? Actually, I know I will be, I'm just being polite.

**NICK**

Who are you?

**NOSTRADAMUS**

I— am Nostradamus.

**NICK**

THE Nostradamus?

**NOSTRADAMUS**

No. I'm his nephew. Thomas.

**NICK**

*Thomas Nostradamus?*

**NOSTRADAMUS**

*(raising his hand as if giving oath)*

I promise. But I share the same gifts as my esteemed uncle. And for half a crown, I'll share those gifts with you. And I predict for you a new life... with no teeth! That was a freebie.

**NICK**

Uhhh... I'll keep looking if you don't mind.

**NOSTRADAMUS**

Suit yourself.

*(getting a vision, then eerily)*

But beware the sign of the black dog.

**NICK**

Right. Thank you. Good luck in the asylum.

*NOSTRADAMUS goes one way, NICK goes the other. A PUB SIGN shifts and falls, stopping just before hitting Nick on the head. It says "THE BLACK DOG." (or – a MAN walks past carrying a sign, nearly hit Nick with it. When the man turns, we can see the sign says "BLACK DOG PUB")*

Half a crown you said?

*NOSTRADAMUS returns as NICK pays him.*

**NOSTRADAMUS**

Excellent! Now – what is it you would like the future to tell?

**NICK**

Well, I'm a writer –

**NOSTRADAMUS**

I knew that.

**NICK**

...and I want you to look into the future and tell me...

*(checks to make sure no one's listening)*

What will the next big thing in theater be? – what audiences will be lining up to see.

**NOSTRADAMUS**

Right. Stand back. Give me some space.

*HE shakes out and warms up like an athlete before an event, then more hacking and clearing his sinuses, then squints hard and puts his fingers to his temples. He squints – then gets the shivers.*

Oh. Oh my. Wow. Ooooh, in the future, the theaters are very *niiiiice*. Cushy red seats. AND A ROOF! And wait!... whoa, what is this?? It's UNBELIEVABLE!

**NICK**

What? What?!

**NOSTRADAMUS**

That much?? For a glass of *wine*?!?!

**NICK**

How about what's on the stage?

**NOSTRADAMUS**

Right. Getting to that...

*HE squints, then gets a vision that causes him to stumble backwards. NICK has to catch him.*

Whoa! What spectacle! I have seen the future!

**NICK**

What, what is it?!

**NOSTRADAMUS**

The biggest, most fantastic thing in theater will be...

*(painting it in the air)*

MUSICALS.

**NICK**

What?

**NOSTRADAMUS**

*(painting it again)*

Musicals.

**NICK**

What the hell are “musicals?”

**NOSTRADAMUS**

*(squinting into the distance)*

It appears to be a play where the dialogue stops and the plot is conveyed through song.