

# APOCALAPSE

By Justin Gonzales

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance):

4 males, 1 female, 11 either

Pestilence [m/f] . . . Looks 21. Spry and loud. Likes to keep the energy up.  
War [m/f] . . . Looks 68. Reserved and observant. Strong sense of duty.  
Famine [m/f] . . . Looks 43. Smart, but cocky. Always proving his superiority  
Death [m/f] . . . Looks 35. Level-headed and focused. Trying to get it over with.  
Gabriel [m] . . . 30. The very busy messenger angel.  
Ontario [m] . . . 25. The stereotypical post-apocalyptic action hero.  
Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II [m] . . . 33. He is effeminate, awkward, and kind.  
Styx [m/f] . . . Looks 109. The old man who runs the ferry to Purgatory. Senile.  
Dead 1 [m/f] . . . Any age. Dumb.  
Dead 2 [m/f] . . . Any age. Dumb.  
Deckhand [m/f] . . Offstage voice.  
Dead 3 [m/f] . . . Any age. Dumb.  
Dead 4 [m/f] . . . Any age. Dumb. And Irish.  
Dead 5 [m/f] . . . Any age. Dumb.  
Angel [m/f] . . . Looks at least 30. Busy businessperson.  
Devil [m/f] . . . Looks at least 30. Busy businessperson.  
Secretary [m/f] . . . Looks at least 20. Apathetic.  
Orville McOrville [m] . . . 46. Sleezy, obnoxious daredevil. Revels in mischief.  
Judge [m/f] . . . Looks 90. Authoritative yet spineless.  
Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II [f] . . . 25. A disoriented “blonde bombshell.”  
Nartholomothiles [m/f] . . . Age indeterminate. An ancient demon from the pits of Hell.

Time:

Just after the apocalypse.

Setting:

(Scenes 1 and 3) Meeting room of the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse.

(Scenes 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12) The ruins of a city that has been destroyed beyond recognition.

(Scene 5) A spooky wooded trail that leads to the banks of the River Styx.

(Scene 7) Aboard Styx’s ship.

(Scene 9) The bustling Grand-Central-Station-esque Purgatory.

(Scene 11) A courtroom.

## Scene 1 – The Horsemen’s Meeting Room

(Lights up on an empty, quiet, formal meeting room.  
Pestilence barrels in.)

PESTILENCE

Wooooohooo! Yeah, that is it! What a time to be alive! Heh, heh. Alive. No one’s alive anymore! No more plagues, no more epidemics, no more viral infections from me, I’m donezo! You hear me? Done! That’s a wrap, everybody! Hey, where is everybody? C’mon! I can’t start this party by myself!

(War enters.)

WAR

Who told you we were having a party?

PESTILENCE

Well, nobody, but . . . y’know, this is a big deal! We just finished the apocalypse, we did it! Why shouldn’t we celebrate a little?

WAR

We’re just doing our jobs.

PESTILENCE

Yeah, I mean I guess . . . but, we did a really, really good job, eh?

WAR

Hmm.

PESTILENCE

Gah, I hate when you’re all broody, you’re no fun when you’re broody!

(Famine enters.)

FAMINE

And when, exactly, have you not seen him brood? I swear, it’s all he ever seems to want to do, is just brood, brood, brood. What do you think that accomplishes, just wallowing like that? It certainly can’t be healthy.

WAR

What does health mean to us? We are immortal.

FAMINE

Yes, we may not be able to die, but we can think. As long as we can do that, we must work to keep our minds sharp. Our responsibilities are too important. What do you have to be brooding over anyway? We all kill people. We’ve been doing it for billions of

years. It doesn't faze me anymore. Maybe it never really did. Thought you would've toughened up by now.

WAR

You leave your victims behind to die. I witness the bloodshed firsthand.

FAMINE

Well, the first few murders, maybe.

(to Pestilence)

But, after a while what's one more dead body, right?

PESTILENCE

Hey, man, I'm not here to talk to shit or nothin', I'm just waitin'. Sittin' and waitin', havin' a good time.

FAMINE

Yes, waiting. Just where is our noble leader, I wonder?

(Death jogs in, exhausted.)

DEATH

. . . huh . . . huh . . . hooo . . . hi everyone . . .

PESTILENCE

Hey!

WAR

Hello.

FAMINE

Greetings.

DEATH

. . . hah . . . okay. Sorry I was late everybody, but I had some last-minute business I needed to take care of. Well, now that we're all here, we can wrap up today and go home. Sound good?

WAR

Yes.

FAMINE

Fantastic.

PESTILENCE

Yeah, I guess.

## DEATH

Great. I just need to get through this statement from the boss so I can let you guys go. Just a formality, you know.

## PESTILENCE

Sure.

## FAMINE

Of course.

## DEATH

Okay, here we go. Ahem.

(reading)

"I extend my greatest congratulations to thee, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Thanks to you four, the end of the world has been a mighty success, and I couldn't be happier. Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death, I commend thy diligent and exemplary works upon the Earth. Pestilence, you have made me so proud. It seemed like just yesterday that you were barely causing mild to severe irritation. Now you're making up things like Ebola and Zika and I-know-what! Great job, sport."

## PESTILENCE

Aw, thanks boss. Ain't notta single doctor out there who can keep me down!

## DEATH

"War, you've been so integral to my divine plan. I don't know what I would have done without someone as competent as you leading the charge and getting their hands dirty. Humanity didn't stand a chance. I couldn't have asked for a better warmongering killing machine! Well, I could have, but you know what I mean."

## WAR

Thank you.

## DEATH

"Famine, good job. Finally, Death. I have trouble finding words to describe—"

## FAMINE

Wait a second, you're going to just skip over my section? What did the boss say about me?

## DEATH

That's all there is. It must have just slipped his mind. We all know you're his favorite, after all.

## FAMINE

Yes, well . . . continue, please.

DEATH

“Finally, Death. I have trouble finding words to describe how happy I am with your leadership.”

(looking up)

Oh.

WAR

Are we dismissed, sir?

DEATH

Yes, you are all dismissed. Have a good weekend everyone! Try to get some rest.

(Pestilence, War, and Famine exit.)

DEATH

Man, I’d hate to be the guys down in Purgatory right now.

(Gabriel enters frantically.)

GABRIEL

Death? You’re Death, right?

DEATH

Yes, that’s me.. Can I help you . . . oh, it’s on the tip of my tongue, we met at the swap meet, you gave me this cool horn, right? Uh . . .? Gary—

GABRIEL

Gabriel—

DEATH

Gabriel. Yeah, Gabriel!

GABRIEL

Yes. Listen there’s no time for idle chit-chat. There’s been a mistake. Call your team. I need to speak with all of you immediately.

(Death quickly exits.)

## **Scene 2 – On Earth**

(Ontario enters speaking into a recording device.)

ONTARIO

Day 3 of Ontario’s Log: I continue my harrowing and tragic journey through the wastelands. I’ve managed to survive on nothing but my own sweat and iron will. I have

yet to see another human in this hellish hellscape. But I will not give up! Somehow, somewhere, there must be another . . .

(A voice is heard faintly in the distance.)

ONTARIO

Huh?! What was that? Could it be . . .? Perhaps my search is over! Find out next time on Ontario's Log!

(Ontario exits.)

### **Scene 3 – The Horsemen's Meeting Room**

(Gabriel stands with a binder. The Horsemen enter.)

DEATH

Okay, Gabriel, we're all here. What's the news?

WAR

Have we made a mistake?

FAMINE

Preposterous. Everything was done by the book. I checked and double-checked every detail. Probably just some last-minute paperwork that Death forgot to give us.

PESTILENCE

I dunno, he sounded pretty serious.

(to Gabriel)

Alright, whatcha got, Gabe?

GABRIEL

I am here to deliver information about an error that occurred within your operation. Please take a seat, all of you.

(They sit. Gabriel prepares his presentation.)

GABRIEL

Ahem. Famine.

FAMINE

Yes?

GABRIEL

As I understand it, you had the self-appointed duty of transcribing the names of the two designated survivors. Is that correct?

FAMINE

Why, yes, I was. I double-checked everything. If you found an issue with those names, then you must be mistaken.

GABRIEL

Really? Because there is a very clear issue right here!

(pulling a paper from his binder)

This is the profile for Designated Survivor #2: Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II. Notice the accent on the first “e”.

(pulling another piece of paper)

This is what you wrote on the official survivor documentation: Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II. The accent on the “e” is facing to the right! The wrong direction!

(Confused silence, then:)

FAMINE

Really? All this fuss over a diacritical mark! If anything, you should thank me. A grave accent mark would never be used in the name “Stéphane,” always an acute.

GABRIEL

Normally I’d agree, but in this case, it was no mistake. Stéphane, with an acute accent mark, is an entirely different person!

(Gabriel presents the other profile.)

HORSEMEN

What?!

DEATH

No, let me see those!

(he grabs the papers.)

But . . . What? How?! You’re trying to tell me that there are two entirely different people named “Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens” the boss-damned second?! Spelt the same exact way? What are the odds?

WAR

(to Famine)

You changed the name? Why?

FAMINE

How was I supposed to know about there being two of them? Frankly, it’s incredibly coincidental and contrived. I thought there was a mistake, so I fixed it. That’s my job.

WAR

Your job is to follow orders, as written. Your faithlessness has cost us.



## PESTILENCE

Hey, guys. Aren't the survivors supposed to be meetin', like, right now?

## DEATH

Oh no. War, flip on the monitor!

## WAR

Okay.

(War activates monitor a on the wall.)

## ONTARIO

Day 3 of Ontario's Log, continued: I've reached the spot from which I thought I heard the voice. But, alas, I cannot find its source, even as I stand dramatically upon this mound of rubble.

## WOMANLY VOICE

Help me, help me, I'm stuck underneath this mound of rubble!

## ONTARIO

Wha--? Did you hear that, Ontario's Log? The mound of rubble just spoke to me, and in a strangely sexy tone of voice.

## WOMANLY VOICE

I can barely breath and I'm fading fast! Help me, help me!

## ONTARIO

Of course! Anything for a damsel in distress! Ontario to the rescue!

(Ontario digs until a hand appears. He grabs it.)

## ONTARIO

Day 3 of Ontario's Log, continued: Cha-ching!

(Ontario lifts them out of the rubble, who turns around to reveal himself Stéphane (with an acute accent mark.))

## STÉPHANE

Thank you sooo much for saving me! It was getting lonely in there, you know! Having a strong specimen like you around'll be a nice change of pace from being pinned underneath that pile of rubble, alone and afraid for my life.

## ONTARIO

Yeah . . .

STÉPHANE

You look like a fine gentleman, if your inexplicably perfect hair is anything to go by. I can tell we're going to get along!

ONTARIO

Day 3 of Ontario's Log, continued: If death should come, I pray it be swift. In the face of this uncertain fate, my iron will shall truly be tested. More at 11.

(War turns the monitor off.)

PESTILENCE

(holding Stéphane's profile)

Wow, she looks nothin' like her picture, am I right?

DEATH

Gabriel, what do we need to do? How do we fix this?

GABRIEL

The girl who has been wrongfully replaced should still be in Purgatory. As long as she's down there, she can legally be returned to Earth and switched out for the other guy, provided you bring with you the proper paperwork. Here.

(he hands Death the proper paperwork)

You need to act quickly. If she gets past Judgement and into Heaven—

WAR

Or Hell.

GABRIEL

. . . or Hell, she will not be able to return by any legal means.

PESTILENCE

So, what you're sayin' is . . .

FAMINE

No, Pestilence. We stay within the purviews of the law. I'm sure we're in enough trouble as it is, the last thing we want is to have Michael breathing down our necks.

PESTILENCE

Ya mean, you're in trouble, right? You're the one who wrote the name wrong, stupid!

FAMINE

I've told you already, it was an honest mistake—

WAR

We are wasting time.

(to Gabriel)

Gabriel, thank you.

(Gabriel exits.)

WAR

Our objective is time sensitive. Let's go.

DEATH

Thank you, War, you make a surprisingly good mediator.

(to the others)

He's right, let's get a move on.

(Death and War exit. Pestilence heads for the door.)

PESTILENCE

Hurry up, Famine! Last one out's an inflamed gallbladder!

(Pestilence exits. Famine sighs, then follows.)

#### **Scene 4 – On Earth**

(Ontario and Stéphane enter.)

STÉPHANE

Are we there yet? We've been walking for a good long minute and my feetsies are angry at me!

ONTARIO

Are we where, yet?

STÉPHANE

There! Wherever it is we're going. If we're walking then we must be walking somewhere, hmmmmmm?

ONTARIO

Well, obviously we're going somewhere, just not any specific . . . somewhere. I can't give you an ETA yet. Let's just say . . . we'll know when we find it.

STÉPHANE

And then you'll give me your E-T-A?

ONTARIO

Um . . . yeah. I guess.

STÉPHANE

Hehe! Splendid! I can't wait!

(They exit.)

## Scene 5 – The Road to the River

(The Horsemen enter.)

DEATH

Can you guys believe that, in all of our years, this is only the second time any of us has ever screwed up this bad? I'd say that's a positive. Thought we could've gotten away with only one, but you just had to throw another in there at the last second, huh Famine?

FAMINE

Yes. It seems that I am the fool.

WAR

Wait. Second?

PESTILENCE

Yeah, what are you talkin' about, Death? I don't remember somethin' like this ever happenin' before.

DEATH

Yeah, you guys wouldn't have known, huh? Didn't think it was important, I guess. Basically, a few hundred years ago, there was this guy that kept cheating me over and over again so that he'd live longer. Have no idea how he managed it, but he gave me a lot of trouble for a while. He was almost like an archnemesis. Caused a lot of problems on my end. Man, what an asshole he was. Oh, but what was his name . . .?

PESTILIENGE

Well, did ya ever get 'im?

DEATH

Yeah. He might have been able to escape 'ol Death, but he couldn't escape Time. Time was a friend of mine, you see. I had him pull a few strings . . . out of the fabric of spacetime. Retroactive homicide is a bitch. You know that he went straight to Hell. Man, was he angry!

PESTILENCE

Yeah, I bet! Say, where are we goin' again?

WAR

The River. An old man named Styx ferries the newly dead across it in droves. He is the only way into Purgatory.

FAMINE

The only reliable one, anyway. Hopefully, the last ferry hasn't set off yet. Who knows when it would return?

(Styx enters with an itinerary.)

DEATH

Ah, looks like we might be in luck! Be warned though: Styx is a bit kooky. Might be best if I do all the talking.

(The Horsemen approach Styx.)

DEATH

Ahoy there!

STYX

Hmm? Aaaaaaah, is it just me, or did a cold chill just running down my spine? Death! How are you? Oh, it's been soooooo long!

DEATH

Yes, it sure has.

STYX

Oh, and you brought your merry men with you, too? Wenting on a field trip? Lovely!

DEATH

Mhm. Look Styx, I'm on a deadline, and—

STYX

Now, have you really being that busy up there? I don't believin' it.

(to the others)

Can you belieeeeeeeve that it takes the world ending for him to visiting his old friend down here with the common folks?

DEATH

Styx, please listen to me! Me and my merry men have to get to Purgatory as soon as possible. Is there one more boatload that we can join?

STYX

Yeah. Standing room only though. We leffin' in T-minus five minutes. Choo choo! All aboard! T-minus fiiiiive minutes! Choo choo!

(Styx exits.)

DEATH

(to the others)

Come on! Maid Marian won't wait for us forever!

(Death pantomimes a flute and skips off. Pestilence follows suit, but War and Famine exit unamused.)

### Scene 6 – On Earth

(Ontario and Stéphane duck behind cover. They whisper.)

ONTARIO

Day 3 of Ontario's Log, continued: Me and my ambiguous cohort have—

STÉPHANE

Ahem.

ONTARIO

What?

STÉPHANE

“My ambiguous cohort and I.” That's how you're supposed to say it!

ONTARIO

Hmph. Me and my ambiguous and grammatically informed cohort have encountered a sight for sore eyes. A meaty beast. Specifically, a wild mountain lion of considerable size.

STÉPHANE

(grabbing the recording device)

Yeah, it's really scary! Rrrraaaagggh! Woah, did you hear that, Ontario? I think it's on to us!

ONTARIO

Give me that! Ahem. I'm going to attempt killing the mighty beast with my rifle. There are only a few bullets left in the magazine, but we must eat to survive. Here, in the desolate, cold, unforgiving, ruthless, unsanitary—

(noticing Stéphane)

What are you doing?!

STÉPHANE

(holding a grenade he pulled off of Ontario)

Why waste your bullets when you could just use one of these? It packs way more punch, and you don't have to worry about the noise bothering anyone, because everybody's dead, hehe! Alley-oop!

(Stéphane tosses the grenade which explodes shortly after.)

STÉPHANE

Mm! Doesn't that just smell beautiful, Ontario?

ONTARIO

(into the recording device)

This just in: we are now down a grenade and up about 2 pounds of burnt puma jerky.  
More on this story as it develops.

(They exit.)

### **Scene 7 – Styx's Ship**

(The Horsemen are packed tightly together with the Dead.)

PESTILENCE

So, you guys come here often?

FAMINE

Shove it, will you? I am not having my best day today. I just want to get off this stupid boat and be done with this nonsense.

DEAD 1

(to War)

Hey, uh, guy? I heard we were having some kind of uh, orientation or something? You know about that?

WAR

I was not informed.

FAMINE

Orientation? What for?

DEAD 2

For like, I dunno, what to do off the boat or somethin'? I dunno . . .

DEATH

Well, when is this "orientation"?

(A loud cow bell is heard.)

STYX (VOICE)

Oooooorientation time, everybody! To the bow, ye scurvy dogs! Heh heh heeeeee! Mind the railings! You can't dying again, it'll just hurt reeeeeeal bad!

## PESTILENCE

There's our cue! Let's go, vámonos!

(The Horsemen shuffle slowly to the bow.)

## STYX

Looking like we're all here . . . Aaaaaalright folks! Let's gettin' started! Firstly, I'd like to giving you all a big, warm welcome to Purgatory, the scenic Second-to-Last Frontier on your journey to—

## DECKHAND (VOICE)

Mr. Styx!

## STYX

Yeeeeeeeeeeeah?!

## DECKHAND (VOICE)

Charon's got a drachma stuck in his eye again, and it looks serious this time!

## STYX

Ooooookay, I'll bein' right there!

(to the crowd)

Sorry, folks, I'll havin' to be gone for a little while. Just hold tight while I . . . I invitin' our very special guests to the stage: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalyyyyypse!

(Styx exits. The Horsemen hesitantly take to the stage.)

## DEAD 3

Do something!

## DEATH

Um, hello everyone. I'm Death, and this is my friend, Taxes!

(Death pulls War to his side)

## WAR

What are you doing?

## DEATH

It's a joke. Y'know, "death & taxes?" It's a phrase people say sometimes. It's relatable!

## WAR

Ah.

(to the crowd)

None of you are tax exempt!



(The crowd is completely unresponsive.)

DEATH

Wow. Tough crowd tonight. One might say that you are dead! Ha! Come on, stop killing the mood! Raise your spirits! Live a little!

PESTILENCE

Man. This is bad.

(Pestilence looks to Famine mischievously.)

Watch this!

(to Death)

Hey, maybe you should mention how awkward this is, that always helps lighten the mood!

DEATH

Gee, this sure is awkward, right guys?

PESTILENCE

(chuckling, to himself)

Oh man, that made it so much worse!

FAMINE

(stepping up, to Death)

Just give it up, this is painful to listen to.

DEAD 4

Hey! Are you really Death himself?

DEATH

Wha--? Who said that?

DEAD 4

Me! You said that you was Death, and that you was in the Four Horses, but I says that's a buncha' gobshite is what I says!

(The crowd erupts in agreement.)

DEATH

What? I am Death, that's the truth!

DEAD 3

Oh yeah? You don't look it! Prove it!

DEATH

Prove it? And how do you suppose you want me to do that?

DEAD 3

Uh . . . I know! Kill me, that's how!

(The Dead talk over each other wildly.)

DEATH

Hey, quiet! Settle down, everyone!

THE DEAD

Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!

WAR

Siiiiileeeence!

(The crowd is silenced, save for one.)

DEAD 5

Give me a "K!" Give me an "I!" Give me an-- oh, sorry Mr. Taxes, won't happen again!

DEATH

Thank you. To answer you, hapless citizen of Earth, even if you could die here, which you can't because you are already dead, I would not be able to kill you. I do not kill people and never have.

DEAD 4

What? That makes no sense!

DEATH

Let me explain. The guys behind me do the killing. Taxes—erm, War here is head over all deaths via inter-personal violence.

WAR

Murder, homicide, manslaughter, genocide. It all falls to me.

DEATH

Pestilence is the go-to man for sicknesses of all kinds.

DEAD 1

Like the flu?

PESTILENCE

Yep, that's me!

DEAD 2

The plague?

PESTILENCE

Yea! That was somethin' else!

DEAD 3

Tuberculosis?

PESTILENCE

Stop it, guys, you're makin' me blush!

DEAD 5

AIDS?

PESTILENCE

Ah, yes. My crownin' achievement.

DEATH

And Famine? He makes people hungry.

FAMINE

Correction: I eliminate the means of obtaining food or other sources of sustenance required for any given individual's continued survival.

DEAD 4

So, you make people really hungry?

FAMINE

It's much more serious than it sounds.

(he sighs. He hates pulling out the "potato card")

Any Irishmen in the house?

DEAD 4

Yeah, me. What of it?

FAMINE

I'm the guy that killed the potatoes.

DEAD 4

You monster!

FAMINE

Yep.

DEATH

So, as you can see, they do all the killing, not me. But--

DEAD 3

So what do you do?

DEATH

Well, if you'll let me--

DEAD 1

Nothing! He doesn't do anything at all, is what I'm hearing!

DEATH

Nothing? I do nothing? I do plenty, thank you very much! After War and Pestilence and Famine do their thing, I'm the one who had to drag your sorry souls into Purgatory! I'm like the divine garbage man. They leave the mess, and I clean it up. I have to literally run to the ends of the Earth to collect everybody's souls on time because, mind you, though our concept of time is very much different from yours, people die really fast and I have a tight schedule! Oh, and another thing: remember when your lives flashed before your eyes? Who do you think is the guy who had to make all of those damned slideshows? Me! I did! Sometimes I stayed up all night slaving away on those stupid things, putting effort and care into each and every frame, only for you to see them for half a fucking second, and never to be used again! What is the point of that? And another thing! I'm not allowed to just throw your soul in to Purgatory, no, no, no, I had to wait around for you to walk into the fucking light. You know what that light was? Me! Me holding a fucking flashlight, standing there like an idiot, wasting time for the sake of some theatrics! And now, when I should be getting some well-deserved rest, I'm having to drag myself through Purgatory because of a fucking typo! So shut your ignorant little fucking mouth before you say I do nothing at all! Get out of my way!

(Death exits. The other Horsemen follow. Styx enters.)

STYX

You suuuuure you're alright, Charon? Don't be put any more drachmas in your eyes, you hearin' me?

(to the crowd)

Okay, now, where were we? Ah, right. Welcome to Purgatory, the scenic Second-to-Last Frontier on your journey to your new life!

### **Scene 8 – On Earth**

(Ontario and Stéphane enter. It's gotten dark.)

ONTARIO

Day 3 of Ontario's Log, con—

STÉPHANE

Do you have to say that every time? We get it, it's day 3, that hasn't changed, has it?

ONTARIO

. . . continued. It seems that the cold embrace of night has fallen upon us. This place looks good as any to set up camp. I set out to kindle a fire for warmth and heat.

STÉPHANE

Oh, I love camping! I'll get the tent ready! You know, Ontario, I used to go camping all the time? I'm a real wiz outdoors!

ONTARIO

Really? You never quite struck me as the outdoorsy type.

STÉPHANE

Oh, yeah, absotutley! I always spent a lot of time outside! I never liked the inside all that much. I could never find anyone to talk to inside. So I started going outside instead!

ONTARIO

Oh? And why do you think that was?

STÉPHANE

I don't know. They always seemed to have somewhere else to be or something else to do . . . not one of them ever came back. So I decided: why bother?

ONTARIO

Why do you talk to me so much, then?

STÉPHANE

Because you haven't left yet, silly! That, and I like watching you do cool stuff like in the movies. You're like an action hero!

ONTARIO

You really think so? Well . . . I guess it's not so bad having you around either. Here, you can have the last piece of jerky, it's too burnt for my taste.

STÉPHANE

Thanks!

ONTARIO

You can head into the tent; I'll finish up the fire.

(Stéphane enters the tent. Ontario lights the fire.)

ONTARIO

(into his recording device)

It is finally time for rest. Good night America!

(Stéphane snores loudly from the tent)

Good night, Stéphane.

(Ontario enters the tent. Suddenly, Stéphane awakens.)

STÉPHANE (VOICE)

Oh, oh, Ontario I just remembered!

ONTARIO (VOICE)

What? Remembered what?

STÉPHANE (VOICE)

Remember when you said that you'd give me your E-T-A when we got to where we were going? Weeell, it looks like to me that the going has gotten gotten to, hehe!

ONTARIO (VOICE)

You want the ETA, huh? Considering that we are already here: Estimated Time of Arrival is now! Is that what you wanted? Let's get to sleep, please.

STÉPHANE (VOICE)

That's what E-T-A means? "Estimated Time of Arrival?" That's real poop in my sock! How disappointing!

ONTARIO (VOICE)

What could you have possibly thought it meant?

(Stéphane whispers to Ontario. He exits the tent, appalled.)

ONTARIO

I am sleeping outside!

(Ontario exits. Stéphane pokes his head out of the tent.)

STÉPHANE

Hmph. Just a joke . . . prude.

### **Scene 9 – Purgatory Proper**

(The Horsemen enter, waving offstage.)

PESTILENCE

Hey, thanks a lot whole lot, Mr. Styx! You make a great cap'n, ya know that?

STYX (VOICE)

Get on with it, will ya?

WAR

Purgatory. Quite lively this time of year.

PESTILENCE

Yeah, you're tellin' me! I can barely see through this crowd!

(Death stands idly, glaring out into space. Famine notices.)

FAMINE

Are you alright, Death?

DEATH

If I could have killed them, I would have.

FAMINE

Come on, you know better than to listen to those idiots.

(Looking around, then coming closer to Death.)

Look, mouth-breathers like them are nothing to you. Anything they say is meaningless because you know you work hard, and that's all that should matter.

DEATH

Thanks, Famine. I know I shouldn't've let them get to me like that, but it's hard sometimes, you know?

FAMINE

Yes, I know.

PESTILENCE

'Ey, what's goin' on?

DEATH

Just chatting. But, we've got a job to do, right guys? What's next?

(Death peers over the crowd.)

DEATH

Okay, we need to look for the check-in desk labeled "L," for Laurens. See if you can't find it, everyone!

(Angel and Devil enter, in the midst of a conversation.)

ANGEL

Yeah, I never realized how many humans there really were on Earth 'til they started pouring in here all at once!

DEVIL

I hear you! It is so crowded back home, there are barely enough eternal flames of agony to go around.

ANGEL

Really? I can't say we have the same problem . . .

DEVIL

On top of that, there's been this bozo creeping around the Gates of Hell since Wednesday.

ANGEL

What's he doing?

DEVIL

Probably trying to find a way out. Usually he'd have been thrown into an infernal pit by now, but security's been on overtime preparing for the Apocalypse. They got better things to be doing. Besides, no one ever escapes. Why would that change now?

(Angel and Devil exit.)

FAMINE

Ah, I found it!

(The Horsemen hurry to Check-in Desk L.)

FAMINE

Hello there. I am Famine of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. These are War, Pestilence, and Death. We are here on official business.

SECRETARY

Official business? Of what nature?

FAMINE

Death, you have the paperwork?

DEATH

As you can see, there has been a Class C "Swapping of Survivors" Incident and we need to know if the subject has been through here already.

SECRETARY

Hmm. Yes, I have no idea what any of this is supposed to mean. Way above my paygrade.

WAR

Is the girl in your database or not?

PESTILENCE

Yeah, this ain't rocket science. Just look 'er up on your computer, or whatever.



SECRETARY

Name?

DEATH

Name, uh,

(reading)

Ahem. "Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II."

SECRETARY

Spell it.

DEATH

Okay. Listen closely: S-T-E-P-H-A-N-E,  
space, R-E-N-A-U-D, space, A-U-V-R-A-Y,  
space, L-A-U-R-E-N-S, space, the second.

FAMINE

Okay, really, how many people have those  
particular names in that particular order that they  
have to have him spell it out?

SECRETARY

How is that spelled, sir?

WAR

Two, I think.

DEATH

Just put two "I"s at the end. Oh, with a space  
between the "S" and the "I"s.

PESTILENCE

Not worried about spellin', huh? Remind me:  
why are we here again?

FAMINE

Oh, and don't forget, there is an accent on the first "e," a grave, as opposed to an acute.

(The Secretary stares back blankly.)

FAMINE

It's a little slash to the left!

SECRETARY

Ah, okay. No slash to the left.

FAMINE

What? No!

SECRETARY

Huh?

FAMINE

Listen: No slash to the left. I mean right! No slash to the right! We want the accent  
facing to the left.

SECRETARY

To the left, right?

FAMINE

Right. Left. The left is right, yes.

SECRETARY

Just say what you mean, guy, just say what you mean . . . ah, here she is. Yeah, her trial started a while ago.

(writing on the paperwork, then handing it back)

Courtroom R-6. I'd get a move on if I were you!

DEATH

Thank you. Let's go, guys!

(Suddenly, there's an explosion, pyrotechnics, and a guitar riff. The Secretary runs and hides.)

FAMINE

What the—? What is that?

DEATH

That guitar riff . . . I've only heard it once before . . . But it can't be!

WAR

What? This has happened before?

DEATH

Remember my archnemesis? The one I threw into Hell with a time paradox? Well, I think I just remembered his name.

(Orville emerges from the flames dramatically.)

ORVILLE

I'll tell you what his goddamn name is! Introducing the one, the only! Orville McOrville!

DEATH

"Daredevil Extraordinaire."

ORVILLE

Yeah, at least until you came along and sent me to Hell!

DEATH

You were messing with the order! I had to get rid of you!

ORVILLE

Messing with the order? Bullshit! I cheated you fair and square, reapo-man! You had no right! My time wasn't up yet, and you knew it! You were just mad that I beat you at your own game.

DEATH

Rights or no rights, you were in Hell! How'd you get out?

ORVILLE

A stuntman never reveals his stunts, muchacho!

PESTILENCE

What're ya talkin' about? T-t-that doesn't make any sense!

WAR

What more could you expect from a clown like him?

FAMINE

What does it matter how he got here? What matters is how we send him back!

DEATH

As much as I'd love to take care of Orville right now, we have other pressing issues, remember? Let's go.

ORVILLE

Really? What could be so much more important than talking to your old pal, huh reapo-man?

FAMINE

It's not of your concern!

ORVILLE

Maybe. Maybe not! Give me the paper!

DEATH

No!

ORVILLE

Give me the paper, please?

PESTILENCE

No, thank you!

ORVILLE

Well I can't just let you leave!

WAR

And how do you plan on stopping us?

ORVILLE

I thought you'd never ask!

(Orville plays his air guitar, which entrances the Dead.)

ORVILLE

'Sic 'em!

THE DEAD

Siccing them!

(The Dead restrain the Horsemen.)

DEATH

What? How did you--?

ORVILLE

Ha, ha, ha! You see, buddy-old-pal, during my time in Hell I happened to make friends in very, very low places. And they agree with me: I was taken before my time. It just so happened that they had some dirty work needed doing. So, they helped me escape, and now I'm here. A real win-win situation, if you ask me.

WAR

These mortals won't keep us down forever!

ORVILLE

Yeah, yeah, I know! The paper please!

DEATH

I'll never hand it—hey, give that back!

(A Dead tears the paper from Death's grip for Orville.)

ORVILLE

Ha! Torn from the very clutches of Death itself! I'm sure that's poetic somehow.

(reading)

Now, let's take a looksie here . . . Ah! There it is! "Courtroom R-6!" I hate to leave right after our reunion, reapo-man, but I have a job to take care of. See you losers on the flipside!

(Orville exits. The Dead tear the paper into wads and run around, keeping it away from the Horsemen.)

DEATH

Orville! Damn it, he's getting away!

WAR

But we need that paperwork!

PESTILENCE

Ah crap, ah crap, ah crap! Whatta we do, guys?

FAMINE

Well, we can't just stand here. I'll go grab some tape! You guys chase them down and give the pieces to me!

(Famine looks for tape in the Secretary's desk.)

DEATH

That's as good a plan as we're going to get. Guys, divide and conquer!

PESTILENCE

Got it!

WAR

Understood.

(They scatter and chase down the Dead offstage)

FAMINE

I found it! Where is everyone?

(The Secretary emerges and gestures offstage.)

FAMINE

For the love of my professional superior . . . wait for me!

(Famine briskly jogs offstage.)

### **Scene 10 – On Earth**

(It's morning. Stéphane exits the tent. Ontario enters.)

ONTARIO

Day 4 of Ontario's Log: The sunrise graces the wasteland once more, and . . . and . . .

STÉPHANE

What? What's the matter Ontario?

ONTARIO

The light . . . the light on my recording device. It's gone out. I think it's dead.

STÉPHANE

Ooooh, there, there, Ontario. Everything will be A-OK. We'll find some new batteries, in a jiffy! Batteries! Come on, I know you're out there somewhere! I'm so sorry Ontario!

(Stéphane hugs Ontario but disengages.)

Sorry!

ONTARIO

You know, I thought this moment would be more tragic. That I'd dramatically sink to my knees and mourn the loss of this hunk of junk. But then, I thought I was alone in this world. With no one but myself to hear my tragic and action-packed tale. But I've been thinking. Now, I'm not alone in this world. Now, I have a sidekick by my side. I've got you . . . partner.

(Ontario offers a handshake. Stéphane goes in for a hug. Ontario peels him off and they shake hands.)

ONTARIO

Yeah, you got a few screws loose, but that's okay. Because there's something about you . . . that's real. And if I'm forced to dwell in this barren, unforgiving wasteland for the rest of my life, I guess I don't mind you being the one to go down with me.

STÉPHANE

Wow. Really? Wow. I must be the luckiest guy in the universe.

ONTARIO

Hey, let's settle down a bit. There's no one else left, remember? Kind of thins out the competition.

STÉPHANE

I didn't say on Earth, did I?

ONTARIO

Yeah, I guess not . . . come on, let's pack this up.

### **Scene 11 – Courtroom R-6**

(At the stand is Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II. Before her is the Judge.)

STÉPHANE

(rambling emotionally)

. . . and then, when I was walking back to Kyle's house, I fed a stray dog my extra chocolate chip cookie, but I forgot that chocolate was poisonous to dogs, but the dog already walked away, and . . .

(She blubbers and mumbles incoherently.)

STÈPHANE

. . . and then, that's when the world ended, and I died!

(going over something in her head)

That should be most, if not all, of my sins, sir. I may have missed a couple somewhere though, but you've got guys for that, right?

JUDGE

Right. Thank you, Miss Laurens, but we could've done without such gratuitous albeit very impressive levels of detail. We have many more trials to get to, you know.

STÈPHANE

Oh. So sorry.

(worriedly)

Do I . . . get to go to Heaven now?

JUDGE

By the power of my divine jurisdiction, I hereby sentence Stéphane Renaud Auvray Laurens II to an eternity in—

ORVILLE (VOICE)

Objection, your honor!

JUDGE

What?

(Orville enters.)

JUDGE

What is the meaning of this nonsense? Who are you?

ORVILLE

Who am I? I'll tell you who I am: The one, the only—

STÈPHANE

(beaming)

Oh my god! You're Orville McOrville, Daredevil Extraordinaire!

ORVILLE

That's right, honey, and you must be the pretty little thing I'm here to kidnap.

STÈPHANE

What?

JUDGE

You are interrupting an official divine trial. Leave at once!

ORVILLE

Oh, is this what that looks like? It just so happens that I never got one myself. They just sent me to Hell on the Injustice Express!

JUDGE

You escaped from Hell? What manner of—

ORVILLE

Yessiree, like a bat.

(Orville pretends to use his hand as a gun.)

Let me walk out of here with the girl, and I won't shoot you right between your beady little eyes.

JUDGE

Hmph. Should I dare to even call that a bluff? That's obviously just your hand in the shape of a gun. I'm calling the authorities.

(Orville mimics a gunshot. It fires a real bullet into the judge as they attempt to make off, reeling them back.)

ORVILLE

Overruled.

STÈPHANE

I thought one-liners were for the good guys. He was about to take me to Heaven!

ORVILLE

Come on, little lady. You don't really believe that, do you?

(Orville snaps his fingers and a portal appears. He seizes Stéphane.)

JUDGE

(clutching his wound)

You won't get away with this, daredevil! Your kind never does! Justice will prevail.

ORVILLE

Yeah, tell it to the judge. Oh, wait!



(They disappear into the portal. The Horsemen enter.  
Famine tapes the last few pieces of the paper together.)

FAMINE

Okay, this will have to suffice.

PESTILENCE

That was awesome! Nice work, team! War, when you were like –

(Pestilence makes sounds and gestures implying some kind  
of spectacular feat. The others laugh.)

JUDGE

Ahem? Hello? Are . . . Are you the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse? What are you  
doing here?

DEATH

(getting back on track)

Oh, yeah! Where is the girl who was on trial here? Has she been sentenced?

(noticing the judge's pain)

What happened to you?

JUDGE

Some crazy daredevil came in here, shot me, and took the girl away!

FAMINE

(to War)

It seems we are not so immortal now, are we?

WAR

(to the judge)

Where did they go?

FAMINE

Perhaps they went through that ominous portal. Why else would it be there, after all?

JUDGE

Yes, he's right! Go, and serve justice!

PESTILENCE

Yeah, that woulda' been my second guess!

(The Horsemen disappear into the portal. It closes.)

JUDGE

Godspeed! Ahem. Next!

## Scene 12 – On Earth

(Ontario and Stéphane enter together.)

STÉPHANE

Y’know, part of me hopes there are other survivors, but another part doesn’t. Is that wrong?

ONTARIO

Maybe. Maybe . . .

(Orville and Stéphane suddenly emerge from the portal.)

STÉPHANE

Bloody biscuits on a lawn chair in June, what in the world is that?

ONTARIO

Stand back! Identify yourselves!

ORVILLE

Who am I? I—

STÈPHANE

Orville McOrville. You know, the daredevil turned kidnapper? I’m Stéphane, by the way, and if you’d be willing to lend a hand—

STÉPHANE

Really?! My name is—

ONTARIO

Don’t tell them anything! Who knows what they are.

STÉPHANE

Well, that’s Stéphane, I know that . . .

STÈPHANE

Stop talking and help me!

ORVILLE

Shut up! Look, I probably don’t have much time before some friends of mine show up, so I’m going to try to make this brief.

ONTARIO

You’re being followed? By who? Who in the hell are you?

ORVILLE

More aptly: Who from the hell am I? Ha, ha, ha!

ONTARIO

What? Are you—?!

ORVILLE

A demon? Boy, you wish!

(The Horsemen emerge from the portal. It closes.)

ORVILLE

You!

HORSEMEN

Me!

PESTILENCE

Wait, which one was he talkin' to?

FAMINE

Probably . . .

WAR

Death.

DEATH

Yeah, probably me, all things considered.

ORVILLE

It was more of a collective “you.”

PESTILENCE

Ah. Yo, are you guys seein' this place? Earth got messed up bad. Damn . . . nice work guys!

(The Horsemen commend themselves.)

DEATH

Anyway, we're here to kill you, again!

WAR

Mortals, out of the way!

(Ontario, Stéphane, and Stéphane take cover.)

ORVILLE

Ha, ha, ha! Reapo-man, reapo-man. You haven't learned? I've skirted you more times than I care to count! And now, with a little bit of unholy assistance, I can take you all on!

DEATH

Sure. We both know you're just flash and trash, Hot Wheels! Bring it on! Aaaaaaah!

(The Horsemen charge towards Orville.)

ORVILLE

Woah!

(he fires his finger guns at their feet, halting them)

I only said that I could, not that I would! Let's keep it fair, mono-y-mono. You guys are supposed to be the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, right? Prove it! You don't look like much to me.

WAR

You need to learn respect.

ORVILLE

Then why don't you teach me, wise man? You first!

WAR

You would willingly pick a fight with war incarnate? You are a fool!

ORVILLE

Oh, you're War? I wouldn't have known just looking at you!

WAR

Have at you!

(They fight. War is defeated.)

ORVILLE

Next!

PESTILENCE

Woah! This guy is good! He just whooped War's ass! I got a trick up my sleeve, though, watch this!

ORVILLE

Oh, you make me sick just looking at you! You must be Pestilence! What are you going to do? Sneeze on me?

PESTILENCE

Well, not anymore, I'm not!

ORVILLE

You know what? You can have the first punch! My treat!

PESTILENCE

Really? Heh, dumbass!

(They fight. Pestilence is defeated.)

FAMINE

Stop this at once! I demand it!

ORVILLE

And you must be Famine! You ready to eat it, too?

FAMINE

I will not fight you! I refuse!

ORVILLE

Aw, what's the matter? Are you scared?

FAMINE

I will not stoop to senseless violence! It is as simple as that!

ORVILLE

Yep. I could tell you were the pussy of this rag-tag team. Come 'ere!

(Orville drags Famine by the collar. Death attempts to intervene but is halted by more finger guns.)

ORVILLE

You're going to fight, goddamn it!

(Orville punches Famine.)

ORVILLE

Come on!

(Another punch.)

ORVILLE

Fight back!

(Another punch. Famine is knocked to the ground.)

ORVILLE

Fight me!

(Orville kicks Famine repeatedly.)

DEATH

That's enough, Orville! Leave him alone!

ORVILLE

I was just waiting for you to tell me to stop, you know.

DEATH

Why? Why are you doing this? You were a good man, Orville! Good enough. There may have even been a spot for you in Heaven if you'd just given up the ghost!

ORVILLE

That was then! The past doesn't matter anymore! What matters is now! I gotta job to do, and that's to break up your sky-daddy's little love story here.

DEATH

Not while I'm here, you won't.

ORVILLE

Oh, I know! I've been saving the best part for last; the part where I get to kick your ass, reapo-man!

DEATH

Y'know, Orville, I hate to be one to perpetuate stereotypes. But, just this once . . .

(Death catches a scythe thrown from offstage.)

DEATH

. . . I'll show you a Grim Reaper.

ORVILLE

Leave the one-liners to the good guys.

(Orville winks at Stéphane. They fight. Death is defeated.)

ORVILLE

How about that? You can kill the entire Earth, but you can't get rid of me! Ha, ha, ha! I have the strength of 7 billion men! Ha, ha, ha!

ONTARIO

(stepping up to Orville)

This is your last chance to get lost, fiend!

ORVILLE

(casually shoving Ontario away)

Save it tough guy. Come here, lady!

(Orville seizes Stéphane once more.)

ORVILLE

Alright, so, all this demonic power doesn't come for free, obviously, so I have this here contract to fulfil.

(reveals a dagger, then reads)

It says here . . . oh, where is it . . . it's written in blood, so . . . okay! With this dagger, I have to kill "one and only one of you, with nothing more or less than a stab to the heart." A guy named "Ontario." Okay, Adam and Steve, which one of you is Ontario?

STÉPHANE

Me! That's me! I am Ontario!

ONTARIO

Huh?

ORVILLE

How eager you are. This won't be fun, I promise.

(Orville approaches Stéphane, brandishing the dagger.)

ONTARIO

No, wait! I'm Ontario, not him!

ORVILLE

That's cute kid, but you don't get to play the hero! That shit only happens in the movies!

ONTARIO

Please!

(to Stéphane)

Why?

STÉPHANE

You were the only one to ever look at me like a friend. I think this world needs you in it.

ORVILLE

How sweet. Bye-bye!

(Orville stabs Stéphane. Ontario comes to his side.)

STÉPHANE

Oh my god!

ORVILLE

Well, my work here is done! Lady, enjoy your life with your new, pathetic man. I have rewards to claim! No . . . to reap! Ha, ha, ha!

ONTARIO

Damn you! Damn you!

ORVILLE

Heh, heh. I'm way ahead of you, pal! Orville McOrville, out!

(Orville snaps for a portal, but nothing happens. The Horsemen rise back to their feet. Orville keeps snapping.)

ORVILLE

What? Come on, people are giving me dirty looks!

WAR

Clown.

PESTILENCE

Oh-ho-ho, you messed up now, stupid!

FAMINE

You're not feeling so tough now, are you?

(Famine slaps Orville, who reels back.)

DEATH

Orville, the one thing I did always like about you was your confidence. But if there's one thing we've all learned today? It's that the devil's in the details. And if you're not thorough enough . . . well, it could be the death of you.

ORVILLE

What?

DEATH

All I'm saying is that when Ontario over there told you to think twice, you should have.

ORVILLE

Ontario?

(looking at Ontario)

Oh, no.

(Nartholomothiles appears from a pillar of fire.)

NARTHOLOMOTHILES

Orville! You have failed to honor my contract!



ORVILLE

N-Nartholomothiles! Howdy!

NARTHOLOMOTHILES

You understand that I am not happy, Orville?

ORVILLE

W-w-w-well that's completely understandable, but—

NARTHOLOMOTHILES

“But?!” You are in no position to make excuses, insect! You broke our covenant, and do you know what that means?!

ORVILLE

What?

NARTHOMOTHILES

Immediate and eternal banishment to the domain of the treacherous, the final resting place of the betrayers of masters: The Ninth Ring of Hell!

ORVILLE

Ninth? What's in the n-n-n-ninth ring?

NARTHOLOMOTHILES

Let's find out!

(Nartholomothiles drags Orville into the fire. It dissipates.)

ONTARIO

(hesitantly approaching the Horsemen)

Who are you people? Demons, as well?

DEATH

Hmm, not quite. We are the Four Horsemen.

ONTARIO

Of the Apocalypse?

WAR

That is right.

STÈPHANE

No way!

PESTILENCE

Yeah, way!

STÈPHANE

I always imagined you'd look scarier. And with, ah, more horses.

DEATH

Look, when I got the horses — really expensive by the way, all out of my pocket, don't even get me started on that — I thought we were going to use them way more than we did. The name seemed like a good choice at the time, okay? It's not my fault that—

ONTARIO

Enough! I don't care! I'd rather you explain to me what the hell just happened here!

DEATH

Well I'm not completely sure myself, to be honest. But I guess . . . what was supposed to. Knowing our boss, anyway.

ONTARIO

Your boss? You mean . . .?!

PESTILENCE

Yeah! The one and only!

ONTARIO

(realizing)

So, Stéphane was never supposed to be alive to begin with?

DEATH

That's right.

(referring to Stéphane)

She is the Stéphane that was intended to live.

STÈPHANE

What?

(to Ontario, guiltily)

I . . . I'm so sorry . . . I . . .

(she trails off)

ONTARIO

Well, in that case, tell your boss that . . . that . . . you know what? Don't tell him anything. I don't think I have anything to say to him anymore.

DEATH

You need to leave.

(to the Horsemen)

Guys, go.

**HORSEMEN**

Okay.

(The Horsemen exit.)

**DEATH**

Go on.

(Ontario and Stéphane exit. Death approaches Stéphane. He tosses a small collection of slides over Stéphane's face. He then steps back and shines a flashlight in Stéphane's direction. Stéphane's soul appears walks towards the light. Death puts the flashlight away.)

**DEATH**

I've been doing this for years. Well, that's the understatement of the century. Millennium. Eon. Look, the point is, I've been doing this for a long, long, long time. And today is the first time in 14 billion years that I feel the need to say . . . I'm sorry.

**STÉPHANE**

Don't be! It sure did hurt, but that's okay! What are friends for, right?

**DEATH**

Right. Come on, let's go upstairs. We have a very lengthy incident report ahead of us.

(They exit together.)

**END OF PLAY**