

IN THE TENT OF STARS

Book, Music & Lyrics by
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Developed with & Directed by
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WRITER'S DRAFT
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To discuss producing *In The Tent of Stars*, email: info@misshazeljade.com

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

LINCOLN FOSTER: A boy of around fourteen, male presenting. Any ethnicity. He desperately wants to be involved in the theatre! And while his mom wants to keep him away from the business, he yearns to see his dreams and talent fulfilled. His dad (Oliver) abandoned him, but then comes back for him near the end of Act I – making him choose between two negatives. (*Must have an innocent, but strong standard pop/rock voice – alto or high tenor, unchanged.*)

CHARLEY: Mid to late twenties, male presenting. Any ethnicity. He's a tall, lanky dancer and comedian in the troupe, trying to decide between entertainment and family. (*Must have a playful musical theatre voice with a rock belt – tenor/baritenor. Also, MUST BE ABLE TO PLAY PIANO!*)

ALEX: Twelve-ish; a young transgender boy. Any ethnicity. A mysterious, amiable, but ragged boy who travels with the troupe as an entertainer and popcorn vender. He immediately befriends Lincoln, and wants to disclose his identity to him, but he's unsure whether Lincoln will accept him – so he keeps his emotions behind defensive walls. (*Must have a steady and very fun, but also powerful and innocent musical theatre voice with pop notes – alto or tenor, unchanged.*)

MARGERY FOSTER: Mid-thirties, female presenting. Any ethnicity similar to Lincoln. Lincoln's mom. She's a former Broadway star, who's now reduced to traveling in Midwest tent shows, after a tumultuous separation from her husband and stage partner (Oliver). She's lost her sense of self, and is trying to rediscover who she used to be. (*Must have a fiercely-strong modern musical theatre voice with a unique alternative folk falsetto – mezzo-soprano.*)

ROBERTA / MADAM RAVEN: Thirties, female presenting. Black. She's a snazzy woman with great skill in singing and dancing, coupled with stage illusions. She uses the irony of her stage name () to take power back from racial prejudice and plant seeds of hope. (*Must have a grand and strong '20s jazz voice with a round pop belt – alto or contralto.*)

HELOISE: Older, but her age is quite ambiguous, female presenting. Any ethnicity. Along with her husband (Peter), she's the leader of the troupe, and the 'stage mom' of the entire show. She does everything from props to costumes to general wrangling of the bunch. Heloise is also, secretly, a 12th-Century French writer, scholar, and abbess – the latter against her will. She was the mother to Astrolabe, lost to her now in time (*Must have a strong, folksy voice – soprano.*)

PETER: Older – but like Heloise, he's difficult to date; male presenting. Any ethnicity. Married to Heloise. He's the Emcee, Road Manager, and Director; and he's always watching for meaning in everything. Based on *Peter Abelard*, a medieval French scholastic philosopher, leading logician, theologian, teacher, musician, composer, and poet. Our Peter was castrated by Heloise's father after he had a child with her named Astrolabe, whom the tent theatre is named after. He laments his only child that he hardly got to know. (*Must have a strong, traditional musical theatre voice – baritone.*)

ENSEMBLE.

OLIVER FOSTER: Early thirties, male presenting. Any ethnicity similar to Lincoln. Margery's estranged husband, and Lincoln's father. He's a handsome Broadway crooner, who now regrets running off with a starlet and wants to win his family back. Oliver is as close to the show's 'villain' as we get; but he is really just broken himself, yet can't yet admit it.

GEORGE: Thirties to fifties, male presenting. Any ethnicity. A 'Lou Costello' / 'Nathan Lane'-like figure, who's one of the troupe members to play multiple roles – but George is the only one with lines. Though he plays a rather stern, stuff-looking man in the Pre-Show, he's a comedic (along with Charley), but surprising performer, who casts a shadow of Peter and Heloise's long-lost son (Astrolabe). (*Must have a great pop/rock voice – vocal type.*)

ASTROLABE: Any age and ethnicity, male presenting. *This role is done as a pre-recorded projection on the scrim!*

OTHER TENT MEMBERS – (8 Ensemblists: 3 female presenting, 3 male presenting, 2 genderneutral presenting.)

TIME & PLACE

The spring of 1918, as the war and Spanish Flu are leaving holes in the world, and just before the knee-jerk of the '20s.
In a dusty stock field of a small, north Missouri farming community crossroads – in which a large event tent is erected.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

#00. Pre-Show Music
. (Onstage Band) . . .

01

PROLOGUE - THE TEA

TABLE 01

#00a. Love Is Worth It All
. PETER . . .

01

SCENE I.1 - INSIDE THE

TENT 02

#01. Time to Make Time
CHARLEY, PETER, ROBERTA & HELOISE, feat. ALEX . . .

02

#02. Theatre Kid
. LINCOLN . . .

08

#03. I Don't Know What It Is
. CHARLEY . . .

11

SCENE I.1B: ALEX'S POPCORN

VENDING 00

SCENE I.2 -

LOCATION 00

#04. Washington Post March
. PETER & CHARLEY . . .

00

#04a. Sousa Is So USA
. PETER & CHARLEY . . .

. . . 00

#05. Magic In My Life

.ROBERTA & LINCOLN . . .
00

#06. A Hope Carol
. MARGERY . . .
00

#07. The Obligatory Big-Time Dance Bit
. CHARLEY, PETER & COMPANY . . .
00

SCENE I.XB - THE EMPTY
STAGE.....

..... 00
#07a. In The Dark
. ALEX . . .
00

#07b. Act I Finale: Solo Drumbeats x 2
. (Onstage Band) . . .
. . . 00

SCENE I.X -
LOCATION..... 00

SCENE I.XB -
LOCATION..... 00

#00. Song CHARACTERS & ENSEMBLE . . .
. . . 00
#00a. Underscore
. (Onstage Band) . . .
00

ACT TWO

#08. Entr'acte
. (Onstage Band) . . .
22

SCENE II.1 - THE CORN
FIELD.....

..... 22
#08a. Theatre Kid (Reprise)
. LINCOLN . . .

00
#09. Broken LINCOLN & ALEX
00
#09a. The Deep End CHARLEY, ALEX & LINCOLN
00
#10. In The Dark (Reprise) MARGERY
00
#11. Silly Me, Clever Me ROBERTA
00
#12. If Ever The Twain You Shall Meet GEORGE & THE BOYS
00
#13. We're All Okay, OK? HELOISE, BOYS & ENSEMBLE
00
#14. The Inside Me ALEX
00
#15. A Joyful Heart MARGERY, LINCOLN & ALEX
00
#16. Broken (Reprise) / In The Dark (Reprise) COMPANY
00
#16a. Bows / Exit Music (Onstage Band)
00

SCENE II.X -
LOCATION..... 00
SCENE II.XB -
LOCATION..... 00
#00. Song CHARACTERS & ENSEMBLE

. . . 00
 #00a. Underscore
 (Onstage Band)
 00

STANDARD INSTRUMENTATION (12 Onstage Players)

Instrumentation	Instrument Doubling	Quantity
REED	Flute, Fife	1
HORN		1
TRUMPET 1	Trumpet, Cornet, Mellophone	1
TRUMPET 2	Trumpet, Cornet	1
TROMBONE		1
TUBA	Tuba, Euphonium	1
KEYBOARD/CONDUCTOR	Piano, Synth, Harpsichord, Marching Chimes	1
DRUMS/PERCUSSION	Rock Drum Kit, Cajon, Tambourine, Rainstick, etc.	
1		
VIOLIN 1	[<i>substitute:</i> Banjo Mandolin]	1
VIOLIN 2	[<i>substitute:</i> Banjo Tenor]	1
CELLO	[<i>substitute:</i> Banjo Cello]	1
DOUBLE BASS	[<i>substitute:</i> Banjo Bass]	1

ACT ONE TEST 1

#00 - PRE-SHOW MUSIC
(Onstage Band)

(Onstage, in front of the show curtain, is an Edison Cylinder Phonograph with an oversized broadcast horn. GEORGE - a stuffy-looking man in a period tuxedo, who never smiles - sits next to it and acts to announce the title and singer, change the songs, and wind it up between.)

Just before the show, George bows formally and wheels it offstage.)

Omitted

*

ACT I, SCENE 1A. Inside the Tent

(Light behind the scrim fades in that reveals the tableau from the show curtain - with platforms for a wagon, and dancers posed as the horses. They are in an empty field. Alex hops out of the wagon and addresses the audience.)

#01 - TIME TO MAKE TIME
(Charlie, Peter, Roberta & Heloise, feat. Alex)

ALEX

Treasured friends and friends-to-be - come out laugh and learn what you can see. Come out and laugh. Come out and sing. Come out, for we - to your family - bring: two days of hope, two days of play, two days of joy - which begins today. *WE ARE **ASTROLABE!***

ALL TENT MEMBERS

(one line for each line)

THERE'S A BRAND-NEW DAY THAT'S LIFTING ABOVE YOUR HORIZON.
TIME TO WAKE UP TO WHAT THE NEW DAY HAS IN STORE.
OPEN YOUR EYES TO THE WONDER THAT'S LIVING AROUND YOU.
OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE LOVE THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOURS.
AND YOU CAN FIND YOUR JOY...

Hopping out of the wagon next is CHARLEY - 20s, a dancer and comedian in the troupe.)

CHARLEY

WAKE THAT SLEEP HEAD,
DRAG YOUR CARCASS OUT OF BED.
CHOSE A BRAND-NEW PATH INSTEAD OF --

ALL

DREAMING YOUR LIFE AWAY.

CHARLEY

PLEASANT AS YOUR DREAMS MAY BE,
OPEN UP YOUR EYES TO SEE
EVERYTHING THAT YOU CAN BE IS --

ALL

ONLY THE BEGINNING, IT SEEMS.

(Then, the lights and music grow, introducing us to ROBERTA - 30s, a jazzy Black woman who sings and dances. Her stage name [*Madam Raven*] takes back power from racial prejudice.)

ROBERTA

YOU'VE BEEN TOILING AWAY
WITH YOUR HEAD DOWN,
DAY AFTER DAY.
NOW, YOU SHOULD SAY THAT IT'S --.

ALL

TIME FOR ANOTHER VIEW.

ROBERTA

LIFT YOUR EYE TO THE SKY,
AND MAYBE, THEN, *IF WE ALL TRY*,
YOU CAN FIND SOMETHING NEW.
YOU CAN --

ALL

FIND YOUR JOY!
FIND YOUR JOY!
WE'RE BRING HOPE.
WE'RE BRING LOVE.
WE'RE BRING TWO DAYS TO SPEND
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES AROUND YOU!
WE'RE BRING LAUGHTER.
WE'RE BRINGING PEACE.
WE'RE BRINGING *TIME TO MAKE TIME*
FOR THE ONES THAT YOU HOLD TO YOUR HEART.

TENT GROUP A

TIME TO MAKE TIME...
TIME TO MAKE TIME...
TIME TO MAKE TIME...
TIME TO MAKE TIME...
TIME TO MAKE TIME!

TENT GROUP B

TIME TO TAKE TIME...
TIME TO TAKE TIME...
TIME TO TAKE TIME...
TIME TO TAKE TIME...
TIME TO TAKE TIME!

ALEX

Come out and laugh. Come out and sing. Come out, for we - to your family - bring: two days of hope, two days of play, two days of joy - which begins today. *WE ARE **ASTROLABE!***

(The music, again, continues to underscore. LINCOLN - 14, a kid who desperately wants to be involved - trots inside the tent. Around him, everyone is scrambling around to set up the stage and additional props - some run lines. He is being maneuvered all over, when Heloise enters.)

HELOISE

Lincoln, unless you would prefer to spend the next two days under the stage, I suggest you move out of the way.

(She turns to call off stage.)

Come on, let's get things going. Four hours to curtain.

*(With percussion from the pit, they begin driving stakes into the ground and raise the tent in front of us. Out glides the wagons, and in glides the ONSTAGE BAND. As they continue to play, the rear tent walls drop in and the footlights **pop on!**, and the tent's remaining partial side walls (legs) drop in. It all comes together when the tent's ceiling falls in, revealing a star on top.)*

ANOTHER DAY... *ANOTHER OPENING NIGHT!*
ANOTHER SHOW, ANOTHER MILLION THINGS TO PUT RIGHT.
BETWEEN THE STAGE, AND THE CHAIRS, AND THE LIGHTS,
AND *GOD FORBID*, IF THERE'S EVER A QUARREL OR FIGHT.

PETER

EV'RY WEEK, THE SAME-OLD STORY PLAYS OUT,
AND I WONDER, SHOULD I GIVE IN, TO FRUSTRATION AND DOUBT.
AND MAYBE STAND IN THE FIELD AS I BELLOW AND SHOUT.
SHOULD I JUST LET THEM ALL WANDER 'TIL THEY FIGURE IT OUT?

HELOISE

BUT THE SHOW MUST ALWAYS GO ON.
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT...
WHAT WOULD THE WORLD BE LIKE
WITHOUT THE LAUGHTER AND SONGS?
IN THE COLD, GREY ABYSS
THAT WOULD BE LEFT WITHOUT US...
WHAT WOULD WE DO WITH OURSELVES?

I *might* be wrong.

BUT I KIND OF DOUBT THAT PEOPLE NOTICE ON THE SURFACE,
BUT THEY *DEFINITELY* FEEL THERE'S SOMETHING MISSING IN THEIR
LIVES.
SO WE KEEP ON MOVING THROUGH THE WORLD,
AND EV'RY WEEK... WE DO IT OVER!
EV'RY WEEK, WE MAKE A FRIEND WHO LEARNS A REASON TO SURVIVE.

PETER

AND THAT'S THE MOTIVATION!
SO *THIS* IS OUR VOCATION.
AND SO IT KEEPS US FIXED
ON ON *EACH ELATION!*
ANOTHER OPENING NIGHT, ANOTHER CHANCE TO GET IT RIGHT:
A CHANCE TO LIFT THESE PEOPLE, WHERE THEY SHINE IN THE LIGHT.
AND THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT, AND THAT'S THE REASON WE FIGHT,
TO DO IT OVER AGAIN, AND THOUGH THE PHRASE IS RATHER TRITE...

HELOISE

THE SHOW MUST GO ON...
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT!
WHAT WOULD THE WORLD BE LIKE
WITHOUT THE LAUGHTER AND SONGS?

IN THE COLD, GREY ABYSS
THAT WOULD BE LEFT WITHOUT US...
WHAT WOULD WE DO WITH OURSELVES?

PETER

IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT!
WITHOUT THE LAUGHTER AND SONGS?

THAT WOULD BE LEFT WITHOUT US...
WHAT WOULD WE DO WITH OURSELVES?.

ALL

(a cappella, with only some percussion)

WE'RE BRING HOPE.
WE'RE BRING LOVE.
WE'RE BRING TWO DAYS TO SPEND
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES AROUND YOU!
WE'RE BRING LAUGHTER.
WE'RE BRINGING PEACE.
WE'RE BRINGING TIME *TO MAKE TIME*
FOR THE ONES THAT YOU HOLD TO YOUR HEART.

(the orchestra joins back in)

WE'RE BRING LOVE!
WE'RE BRING TWO DAYS TO SPEND
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES AROUND YOU!
WE'RE BRING LAUGHTER.
WE'RE BRINGING PEACE.
WE'RE BRINGING TIME *TO MAKE TIME*
FOR THE ONES THAT YOU HOLD TO YOUR HEART..

ALEX

We are **ASTROLABE!**

(**END OF SONG.**)

(On the beat, Heloise continues navigating through the bustle of setup. George comes onstage in garter socks and a long-tailed shirt - but no trousers. Those he carries in his arms.

He wears a top hat and a fake beard to look like Abe Lincoln.)

GEORGE

Heloise? – I've lost a button. I have no pants, if I have no button. Do we have time to fix it?

HELOISE

Again?! We'll make time. You're on *third*, right? We'll squeeze it in somewhere.

(George looks at his stomach.)

That's the forth time this month. We either need bigger pants or a thinner Lincoln. Alex...?

(A boy in a cap and short trousers breaks off from the roustabouts – and we finally meet him – ALEX – 12, a mysterious, amiable, but ragged boy who travels with the troupe as an entertainer.)

ALEX

Yes?

HELOISE

Take George's pants and see if you can find a matching button. I'll sew it on when I get a chance.

ALEX

I've got a few minutes. I can handle sewing on a button.

HELOISE

(handing the pants to Alex)
Always the blessing, you are. Thank you, dear.

(Alex runs into Lincoln on his way offstage.)

ALEX

Woah, kid. You don't belong in here. You need to get a ticket and come back tonight.

(He hands Lincoln off to George and exits.)

Do something with him. I'll get these fixed.

LINCOLN

(softly while watching Alex leave)
But I do belong...

(His mother, MARGERY – mid-30s, a former Broadway star, who's now reduced to traveling in Midwest tent shows, after a tumultuous separation from her husband and stage partner – enters.)

MARGERY

Lincoln?

LINCOLN & GEORGE (dressed as Abe Lincoln)

Yes?

MARGERY

The other one, please.

(With his head dropped down, Lincoln walks over to Margery.)

LINCOLN

Yes, Mother?

MARGERY

You have got to stay out of the way. This is *their* show, and you're not in it. They were gracious enough to let you be here, but you can't keep disrupting things.

LINCOLN

But I want to help. I like theatre, and it's boring just watching everyone else work.

MARGERY

They don't need your help, and you know how I feel about you and theatre. You need to study, and do something that will give you a real future – something that isn't just cheap-canvas-painted-to-look-real. My brother is going to set you up to study Law, when you're old enough. If you do well, you can join my father's firm.

LINCOLN

But Father promised --

MARGERY

NO! – Don't talk to me about your father. He promised a lot of things that never happened. We have been over this time and time again.

LINCOLN

No, you've been over this over and over. I never get to say anything.

MARGERY

Because you're a *child*.

(A beat.)

Look... I lived the life you see as so glamorous, and look what it got me. Is this where you want to end up, when you've grown? Playing in some dusty town that you won't remember the name of the next month? Living out of cheap hotels and boarding houses? This will not be your future, Lincoln.

LINCOLN

I don't want to be a lawyer. I want to sing, and dance, and write, and act. If you would just listen to me some time – *hear one of my songs*, you would know.

MARGERY

We are not going to have this talk now, here in front of everyone. Now, *sit* down over there – where you are out of everyone's way.

(*She walks away – leaving Lincoln sitting off in a corner, looking sad – and approaches Peter, who has just entered along with Roberta, Charley, and a few of the other ensemble tent members. Roberta steps up to Margery and offers a hand.*)

ROBERTA

Mrs. Foster, I am very pleased to have you with us. I was feeling somewhat overpowered by the Testosterone Club – fine individuals as they are. I'm Roberta – AKA 'Madam Raven'.

MARGERY

Thank you very much, and please... call me 'Margery'. I am looking forward to seeing your act.

(*shyly with an anxious chuckle*)

This is all so new to me.

ROBERTA

I should imagine so. You are not the usual caliber of entertainer to be found in a company such as ours. It is a boon to *us*, but I cannot help but think this was not a life goal for you.

(A beat. Margery says nothing.)

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I will not pry, but please do not hesitate to call on me for anything I can do to help.

MARGERY

That is very sweet of you to offer. Really. It is no secret that my husband and I have separated.

(A half-beat.)

The Times wasted no effort in letting the world know.

(Peter enters and crosses to center - with a clipboard and a raised voice to get everyone's attention.)

PETER

Gather around, everyone, and let's get this started. Is everyone doing okay?

(The cast murmurs various things, as they all - more entering from offstage - gather around him.)

I'm happy to hear it. First - new business. As you all know, Miss Applegate has left us to be married. Unfortunate for us, but excellent for her. And we wish her all the happiness she can stand. Moving on to the future... we are very excited to welcome her replacement - and if you have not heard her yet, your lives are the poorer for it. Margery Foster has been one of the biggest and brightest stars on the Broadway stage these last few years, along with her estranged husband, Oliver. She is now striking out on her own, and is gracing us with her presence, for the first time, here tonight. This will reorder the show tonight - as we are moving her to the Prime for her debut. So, we are moving George to the Two, and Roberta to Third. After Margery in Fourth, the Chorus skit in the Five, then The Band will do their night one closer. Any problems there?

HELOISE

Only if it takes Alex two hours to sew on a button.

PETER

That's what I want to hear. I have collected mail from the depot, so check with me when you can. Thank you all! Tomorrow will be business-as-usual, so everyone... stay healthy, and get the rest you need, when you can. Anything anyone wishes to add?

(A beat.)

No? - Then, let's get ready, people! We have spells to cast.

(Everyone trails out, and the Onstage Band glides out of view - leaving Lincoln alone in a dark corner of the empty tent. A pool of light forms around him, and we hear a piano in the distance.)

#02 - THEATRE KID
(Lincoln)

LINCOLN

CAN YOU SEE ME? I'M LIKE... NO ONE YOU'VE EVER MET AT ALL.
DO YOU KNOW ME? I'M THAT GHOST YOU PASS BY IN THE HALL.
I'M THE AWKWARD KID YOU NEVER TALK TO:
"HE'S KINDA WEIRD" IS WHAT I'M USED TO,
EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE NEVER SAID A WORD TO ME. *
COULD YOU SEE THAT I'M HUMAN? *
GEE, THAT COMES AS SUCH SURPRISE.
OR THAT I'M FUNNY?
OR THAT THE KID BEHIND THESE EYES
SPENDS HIS DAYS ALONE, WRITING SOULFUL TUNES *
ON A USED GUITAR IN HIS BASEMENT ROOM.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

AND HE WRITES AND SINGS THEM,
THOUGH THERE'S NO ONE TO SING THEM TO.
YOU MIGHT LIKE ME IF YOU TRY...
THOUGH I MIGHT COME OF AS KIND-OF SHY.
I'M TIRED 'F BEING SAD AND LONELY...
I'M NOT STUPID, BAD, OR HOMEELY.
I'M VERY KIND, AND CAN'T HELP IT WHEN I CRY.
'CAUSE I'M A THEATRE KID INSIDE.
YOU LOVE TO QUOTE YOUR PLAYS,
BUT MINE'S THE ONE I'VE LIVED THROUGH.
THAT'S HOW I SPEND MY DAYS,
TURNING SORROW INTO SHOWTUNES.
AND I WATCH YOU HAVING FUN TOGETHER,
RUNNING LINES IS WHAT I'D RATHER DO
THAN HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER
WITH NO ONE THERE...
WHERE NO ONE CARES FOR ME.
YEAH, I KNOW IT - YOU THINK... "DON'T RUN BEFORE YOU CRAWL,
KID".
BUT IT'S IN ME - AND ONE DAY, YOU'LL SEE IT ALL,
AND I'LL STAND IN THE SPOT, AND YOU'LL HEAR ME SING,
AND I'LL SMILE AT YOU STANDING IN THE WINGS,
AND I'LL BELONG TO SOMEWHERE, WHATEVER THAT BRINGS.
BUT I COULD SMILE, 'CAUSE I'VE GOT FRIENDS,
THAT KNOW, AT LEAST I TRIED.
'COURSE, I'M A THEATRE KID INSIDE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO THROUGH LIFE *INVISIBLE*?
SO PARDON ME, IF I AM NOT *DISMISSIBLE*!
I'D BE BRAVE, IF I THOUGHT SOMEONE CARED.
I'D SCRAWL MY NAME IN THE FLY LOFT SOMEWHERE.
AND I'D SHOW YOU, JUST TO PROVE THAT I WAS THERE.
IF YOU DON'T WANT ME... THAT'S OKAY,
BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY.
I'LL STILL HOLD MY HEAD UP,
AND I WILL STAY WITH PRIDE...
I'M STILL A THEATRE KID *INSIDE*!

(**END OF SONG.**)

(The lights on the Onstage Band fade down. And when Charley steps out of the shadow, Lincoln finally realizes he isn't alone.)

CHARLEY

You've got a really great voice, kid.

LINCOLN

I'm sorry. I didn't know anyone could hear me.

CHARLEY

It's a tent. I could hear you halfway across the field. Everyone else could too - if they were paying attention. But I guess I'm it.

(He stretches his long, lanky arm down to for a handshake.)

I'm Charley, by the way. I sing and dance - and at least, SOME people think I do comedy too.

LINCOLN

I'm Lincoln Foster. My parents are Margery and Oliver Foster - I guess. I never get to see my father anymore.

CHARLEY

He's *still* your father - even if he's not around.

(A beat, noticing Lincoln's silence.)

Do you miss him?

LINCOLN

I don't know. I think I do. I should... but he walked out on us – and he lied to me. And my mother won't talk about it, or let me talk about it either.

CHARLEY

Because it hurts, Lincoln. She's in pain too – and dollars-to-doughnuts, I bet that's why she's here now. Y'know, she's a big name. She could be on a Broadway stage right now if she wanted to, but she's spooked. She's hiding in a place she doesn't want to be, from a situation she doesn't want to face – and she's hiding you with her. But you've both got something you can't hide forever – and it's something the entire world needs. That's why you ended up with us!

LINCOLN

What's that mean?

CHARLEY

What's that *mean*?! How do I explain this...? Okay, look at the tent – and tell me what you see.

LINCOLN

It's just a tent. It's got spots of the canvas with no pant, just so the sun can light them up like stars.

CHARLEY

It's a very *old* tent, Lincoln. And it's more than what it seems. It's all around us, yet it is also somewhere else. We call it 'limbo' – if that's what it really is. It was made by a boy, just like you. His name... was Astrolabe!

LINCOLN

The name of the company! – That's a strange name for a boy, though.

CHARLEY

True – but his name proved him out. I'm convinced he's still here, guiding everyone – even though we never see him. Things happen here that we never see coming, and lead us to things we never knew possible. This tent was his gift to the world, stitched with miracles.

(A half-beat.)

So *look deeper*. Look at those stars again – but don't use your eyes. Use her *heart*. And tell me again. I know you understand. You're a sensitive kid.

LINCOLN

Oh! *There it is!* I get it. It's the universe – and it just goes on forever.

CHARLEY

Now you're where you need to be. And do you see where you are in it?

LINCOLN

I'm right here behind my eyes.

CHARLEY

Interesting. –Yes, you are. You *know* it, and that says something about you. But you need to, not only know *where* you are, but *who* you are in that universe – because that universe is *us*. We are all there with you. Knowing how to navigate through our universe is what the Astrolabe is for. That's why we're all here. We're the *tine* representation of the entire universe of ideas and possibilities. We are the 'umbra recta' – the shadow square of the sun. *It* is the shadow that falls upon us, that gives us a bearing to go on with. We are what points towards the light – to what's what is real, and what is *needed*. You and your mother are not here by accident. You were *sent* here, just like the rest of us.

LINCOLN

Sent here by Astrolabe? I still don't think I understand.

CHARLEY

You don't need to – because, despite the reason, this tent understands you. *Trust it.* You are not invisible here. *I see you, Lincoln Foster – and I have a strong feeling that, by the time this is all over, everyone else will, too.*

(During this, he's walks to the tent flap, and pushed it back to walk out of.)

LINCOLN

What about you?

CHARLEY

What do you mean?

LINCOLN

You said, "*sent here like the rest of us*". What about you?

CHARLEY

Oh, you are the slick one, aren't you? That was supposed to be my exit line. Y'know, say something cryptic, then smile and walk out – and let you think I'm the all-wise mentor.

(He crosses over to the piano)

That was the big dramatic moment.

(He sits on the piano keys – producing a cacophonous, dramatic punctuation mark. He stands back up, so it stops.)

The truth is, Lincoln... I'm more the 'wise-guy' than wise. That entire speech, I lifted from Peter – I didn't know what an 'umbra recta' was, either – and I sure don't know the answer to your question. I only know that we're all here because we're stuck!

LINCOLN

Stuck...?

CHARLEY

Yeah – stuck. Somewhere along the way, to wherever we're supposed to go, we got mired down in life. We're all just in some-kind-of waiting room with each other – trying to figure it all out. It sounds like your ma needs to figure out where to turn next in her life – and, it seems to me, you're all wrapped up in that as well. So you ended up here. The tent sorta brings people together that can help each other out – then, they move on, and others fill their place. Some are only here for a little while – some for a long time.

LINCOLN

So, what about you...? Why are you here?

(Charlie sits at the piano bench and begins to play a little reflective lament...)

#03 - I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS
(Charlie)

CHARLEY

I'm still working on that.

I KINDA WANDERED IN ONE DAY, AND NEVER WANDERED OUT.
I WAS FEELING KINDA AIMLESS, AND MY FUTURE SEEMED IN DOUBT.
I WAS ALWAYS GOOD AT ALL THE THINGS THAT MATTERED MOST TO ME.
... BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING MISSING, I'M NOT SURE THAT I CAN DO WITHOUT.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR THE ANSWER TO MY QUANDARY,
SO MAYBE YOU CAN HELP, AND SEE THE THING THAT I CAN'T SEE...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE;
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, OR EVEN IF I OUGHTA CARE.
IT'S RIGHT THERE ON THE EDGE OF WHERE I'M COMPLETELY UNAWARE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE.
DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE,
SO I CAN'T COMPLAIN AND SAY, "IT REALLY ISN'T FAIR."
OF THE KNOWLEDGE SOMETHING OUT TO BE, YOU'RE PAINFULLY AWARE.
IF YOU DON'T KNOW THAT IT EXISTS, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN REALLY
MISS?
OR WOULD YOU GO ON WITHIN YOUR BLISS, AND MAKE YOURSELF
OBLIVIOUS?
WOULD IT DISRUPT YOUR SENSE OF 'SAVIOR-FAIRE'?

That's the great thing about accompanying yourself - you can throw in all kinds of extra syllables, and get away with it.

(He plays a dance break - during which, Lincoln dances a soft-shoe.)

And he dances, too!

BEFUDDLEMENT BECOMES ME, AS YOU PLAINLY SEE.
I SHOULD BE PROUD AND SAY OUT LOUD "I'M GLAD THAT THIS IS ME".
BUT I KNOW THAT I'M UNSETTLED - THAT SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.
SO I'M LOOKING FOR THE ANSWERS TO PUT MY WORLD RIGHT.
PERHAPS IT ISN'T HIDDEN, BUT RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES,
DANCING ON MY CEREBELLUM IN A VERY GOOD DISGUISE.
SO WITH THIS MOTIVATION, I BEGIN INVESTIGATIONS,
IN HOPES THAT I CAN, AT LAST, ARRIVE AT SOME ILLUMINATION.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE;
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, OR EVEN IF I OUGHTA CARE.
BUT I PROMISE I WILL NOT GIVE IN TO SADNESS OR DESPAIR,
AND I SAY WITH HUMBLE GRATITUDE I'M GLAD THAT YOU ARE *THERE*...
... TO SHARE WITH.
I HAVE TO STOP: I'M RUNNING OUT OF RHYMES FOR 'THERE'.
BUT I WILL HELP YOU TOO, JUST... BE AWARE.

(END OF SONG.)

(On the button, Lincoln giggles - with a playful little applause.)

So that's my answer, kid. I guess I'm waiting for discernment.

(He stands.)

Now, if you don't mind... I will try, again, to make my dramatic exit - and walk over here, while making idle chatter. When I reach the tent flap, I turn away and say, "Enjoy the show, Lincoln Foster." It may give you exactly what you're looking for - just in a way you won't see coming. Then, back up and out of sight.

(He does so, and Lincoln smiles at the space he's just left. Then, he walks out after him. But then, we notice another shadow behind Lincoln - it watches him go, then it, too, turns and disappears.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 1B: ALEX'S POPCORN VENDING

(The houselights come up a bit, and a follow spot falls down on Alex coming down the center aisle. He has an old-fashioned snack tray around his waist.)

ALEX

Popcorn

.
#04 - WASHINGTON POST MARCH
(Peter & Charley)

PETER

.
(END OF SONG.)

.
#04a - SOUSA IS SO USA
(*Peter & Charley*)

PETER (CONT'D)

.
(END OF SONG.)

.
#05 - MAGIC IN MY LIFE
(Roberta & Lincoln)

PETER (CONT'D)

.
(END OF SONG.)

.
#06 - A HOPE CAROL
(Margery)

PETER (CONT'D)

.
(END OF SONG.)

(Margery appears backstage to ask Lincoln a question -)

MARGERY

A cage?! Why were you in a cage? What have you done now?

(- but she doesn't see her estranged husband, OLIVER - early 30s - step out of the shadows.)

OLIVER

Hello, my dear - hello, son.

(Everyone turns around, and Lincoln - also surprised - runs into his father's arms for a hug.)

MARGERY

Oliver! What are you doing here?

OLIVER

Tracking you down, of course. You took my son out of state, and hid him from me. Have you forgotten that he's my son, too?

MARGERY

After what you did, do you really think I'd leave him with you and your... *g-girl*-friend?

OLIVER

Miss Cavanaugh is no longer a part of my life - but that is besides the point. In the eyes of the law, you have kidnapped Lincoln. I have not pressed charges yet, because I thought you deserved the chance to explain yourself first. I hope we can be civil and work out our problems - but know that, either way, I've come to take him back to New York, where he belongs.

(Stunned, Lincoln suddenly backs off from his father.)

LINCOLN

Really? To do what you promised?!

(A beat.)

You left me. But you were never there anyway, were you?

OLIVER

I have always been watching out for you. What do you mean?

LINCOLN

You promised me before, and it didn't happen. Nothing ever happened! Maybe Mother is right. Maybe I am better off here now. I kind-of like it.

OLIVER

You liked it when we were a family. I have missed you, and I know I haven't done everything I said I would. Between the shows... rehearsals... and *meetings* - I was never around enough.

LINCOLN

You mean *parties*.

OLIVER

Lincoln... in our business, parties are meetings. That is where you meet people you need - like *producers*. Producers pay for the show. You have to get to know them, and they need to know they can trust you. Without producers, there is no show. And if there is no show, then it doesn't matter how good you are at singing and dancing - you might as well be doing it in the alley behind your home.

LINCOLN

Was Miss Cavanaugh a producer?

(As humble as he can muster, Oliver kneels down to Lincoln's level.)

OLIVER

Miss Cavanaugh was a mistake – and one I deeply regret. But I am not going to discuss that with my adolescent son. The point is... I am here to take you back. Maybe, we can get you into a show, as well.

LINCOLN

You know that's all I've ever wanted.

(A beat.)

But Mother is here now. I can't go without her.

OLIVER

Well... she is quite welcome to return with us. As far as I'm concerned, all is forgiven.

MARGERY

"All is forgiven"?! You seem to have forgotten that you are the one who walked out on us.

OLIVER

Walked out on *him*? Yes. I did, and I will always regret doing something that hurt my child. *You* – on the other hand – stopped being a wife years ago. What did you expect?

MARGERY

I expect fidelity, at the very least. Yes, we have problems – but you were too happy with the status quo to deal with them. I have stood in your shadow for years, and I am tired of being your backup. I'm tired of never being heard.

OLIVER

And *I* am tired of being shut out of my own marriage! There's little point in spending time with you, when you won't even look at me. And what in *God's name* gave you the idea you could just take our son away to somewhere like this, without saying a word?

LINCOLN

Stop it – both of you! You will never be done yelling at each other. I'm tired of listening to you fight. I don't want to do this anymore.

(Lincoln runs offstage.)

ALEX

I'll follow him and bring him back. Don't worry.

(as he runs after Lincoln)

Lincoln... LINCOLN!

MARGERY

He is right, you know. We can't have a conversation anymore that doesn't end in an argument. Don't you think it's time to end this dance?

(Authors Note: This song was omitted early on, but perhaps I was too hasty. I put the demo in vocal demos file 2021 zoom recordings.)

SONG? IN THE DARK (MARGERY AND OLIVER)

Done as a tango, but neither one ever touches the other

MARGERY (CONT'D)

WE STUMBLE BLINDLY IN OUR LIVES
WITH NO OTHER EYES BUT OURS TO GUIDE US
WE CAN ONLY JUST SURMISE
THE EFFECTS OF OUR ACTIONS
AND WHERE IT LEAVES US

INSTEAD OF WONDERING. INSTEAD OF BLUNDERING
WHY DON'T WE JUST SAY WHAT WE THINK. HOW BOUT IT?
JUST SPEAK WHAT'S IN YOUR HEAD. FORGET THE FEAR AND
DREAD
AND WHOSE THE FIRST OF US TO BLINK, AND TRY THE
TRUTH INSTEAD?

I'M TIRED OF STANDING IN THE DARK
GOD KNOWS HOW OFTEN I'VE TRIED
TO REACH BEYOND THE GLOOM YOU CAST
TO THE SUN THAT SHINES SO BRIGHTLY, JUST OUTSIDE

OLIVER

YOU LOOK AT ME WITH SUCH DISTAIN
BUT NEVER BACK TO SEE THE ONE DESPISING
YET THROUGH IT ALL ONE THING REMAIN
COULD THERE BE EMBERS OF OUR LOVE SURVIVING
THE FIRE IN YOUR EYES. HAS NEVER YET TO DIE
AND YET THE ANGER AND THE FEAR HAS SEEMED TO BLIND
YOU
TO ANY SENSE OF SHAME. YOU CANNOT TAKE SOME BLAME
THAT YOU ABANDONED ME AS WELL, YOU KNOW THAT FACT IS
TRUE.

YOU LEFT ME STANDING IN THE DARK
WHERE I STUMBLED MY WAY FELLING LOST AND AIMLESS
YOU CANNOT LEAVE ME IN THE DARK
AND WALK AWAY THINKING YOU ARE BLAMELESS NOW.

MARGERY

IV'E SPENT MY LIFE WITH YOU JUST STANDING IN YOUR
SHADOW

OLIVER

I'VE SPENT MY LIFE WITH YOU, STANDING BY YOUR SIDE

MARGERY

I FEEL I'M ONLY THERE TO HOLD YOU UP BEFORE THEM

OLIVER

NOW STANDING THERE ALONE, I SIMPLY CAN'T ABIDE IT.

MARGERY & OLIVER

SO NOW WE'RE DRIFTING IN THE DARK
AWAY FROM THE LIFE THAT WAS ALL WE'VE KNOWN
I SEE YOU FADING IN THE DARK
WONDERING NOW IF THAT SUN HAS EVER SHOWN

MUSIC CONTINUES AS UNDERSCORE

OLIVER

I don't want to go back without either of you. And there is nothing
that isn't fixable between us. We work *so well* together.

MARGERY

That you would say *that* to me says otherwise. You need to leave now!

OLIVER

We'll talk tomorrow. One way or the other, Lincoln is going back to
New York, where he belongs.

MARGERY

You might want his opinion first. Now, if you will excuse me - I'm
going after our son.

(END OF SONG)

(She exits out the front, and Oliver exits out the back. And a spot falls down on Peter and Charley.)

PETER

Well, folks, that's Part One! But before we go, there is one very important thing we need to do at this point in the show.

CHARLEY

Run for the restrooms as fast as you can.

PETER

NO!

~~**CHARLEY**~~

~~No? Sorry, folks — they're all closed for cleaning tonight.~~

PETER

Theatre owners must hate you!

(A beat.)

That's not what I mean.

~~**CHARLEY**~~

~~Too late. Some of them are already in the lobby, in a state of panic. All right... then what's your impotent message?~~

OLIVER

You mean 'important'.

CHARLEY

Do I...?

PETER

Never mind. ~~They need to know that we'll be back tomorrow for more before we leave town, and~~ We need to give them something rousing to go out on — and get them to come back tomorrow night for all new acts, before we leave town!

*
*
*

CHARLEY

Ohhh! — You mean the O-B-T-B-D.

PETER

That's right! The '*Obligatory Big-Time Dance Bit*'. Every show's got one — just before a break — and it always comes right here.

~~**CHARLEY**~~

~~Sounds a bit manipulative. Who writes these things anyway?~~

~~**PETER**~~

~~Playwrights.~~

~~**CHARLEY**~~

~~(to the audience)
Wow, that's one big ego!~~

~~**PETER**~~

~~So, any other words of wit and wisdom?~~

~~**CHARLEY**~~

~~Just a string of numbers~~

~~**PETER**~~

~~Numbers?~~

CHARLEY

~~Yup.~~ 1, 2, 3, 4...

#07 - THE OBLIGATORY BIG-TIME DANCE BIT
(Charlie, Peter & Company)

Works like magic, don't it?
 There comes a time in everyone's life,
 When you find yourself stuck in toil and strife.
 The best thing to do is kick your heels
 And dance!
(He taps a bit.)
 So if you find
(He taps a bit.)
 And f you can't dance, just close your eyes.
 .
 .
 .
(END OF SONG.)

(And then, the lights come up on -)

THE EMPTY STAGE

(Crickets can be heard in the distance - and from offstage, Alex calls out for Lincoln.)

ALEX

Lincoln... LINCOLN!
(He runs out, as .)

The piano plays a haunting melody backed with flautando cello and violin with very little rosin.

SONG #7 IN THE DARK

ALEX

CHARLEY

(He stops, looking around him, and then out - as a pool of moonlight surrounds him.)

He walks to the thrust stage left, where the wagon is parked, and sits on it. Nondescrip and silent chorus members are "voked" to the tongue and begin to slowly pull it across the stage as Alex sings. On the main stage is a large full moon.

I KNOW THE WORLD FEELS COLD SOMETIMES, MY FRIEND...
I KNOW WHAT ACHING FOR YOUR DREAMS CAN FEEL LIKE.
YOU MAY FEEL LOST RIGHT NOW TO WHAT IS COMING STILL.
BUT KNOW THAT I AM SEARCHING, AND I AM HERE TO TAKE YOU HOME.
(He does a subtle step-ball-turn, ending with his head down.)

(He dances a short modern ballet expressing emotions he feels afraid to show the world ending up on top of the wagon dancing before the moon. He steps off in front of it and resumes singing as the chorus walks the wagon to thrust right.)

WE ALL JUST WANDER IN THE DARK...
IN HOPES THAT WE CAN FIND SOMEONE TO WALK WITH.
I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE IN THE DARK...

(softly, almost a whisper)

'CAUSE I'M HERE TOO: THE DARK IS WHERE I HIDE.

(END OF SONG.)

SLOW FADE OUT.

#07b - ACT I FINALE: SOLO DRUMBEATS x 2

(Onstage Band)

As the light fades, the held note builds in intensity as the shadow appears across the moon and is ended by a solo drumbeat leaving the theatre pitch black and silent.

Again, Alex calls out for Lincoln.

ALEX

LIN-COOLN!

(The show curtain fades in, and after a few seconds, there is a second drumbeat. The moon fades in, like a giant clock face ticking down the minutes. And the houselights come up.)

*
*
*

END OF ACT ONE

*(**Author's Note:** During the interval, the moon slowly fades to just a dim, ominous glow.)*

*
*

ACT TWO

(The house lights go down reprising the drumbeats from before, followed by an orchestral sweep.)

#08 - ENTR'ACTE
(Onstage Band)

ACT II, SCENE 1. The Corn Field

(As we hear the motif of OBTDB, the show curtain begins to rise - revealing a dropped-in scrim.)

#08a - THEATRE KID (REPRISE)
(Lincoln)

(Behind it, we see a shadow runs in and fall to his knees, crying. The scrim slowly begins to rise, revealing Lincoln. Though his voice cracks, he starts to sing a brand-new verse...)

LINCOLN

NEW LYRICS

HAVE I PINNED MY LIFE ON MY CHILDISH DREAM
DO I TRUST MY HEART AND THE SONGS IT SINGS ME
OR WILL IT HURT AGAIN AND LEAD ME BACK TO
FEAR
IF I LISTEN TO MY WOUNDED SOUL SAY,
JUST SIT DOWN AND STAY AWAY,
HOW CAN I LIFT MY VOICE SO YOU CAN FINALLY
HEAR
THAT ISN'T ME, AND CAN'T YOU SEE
THAT TO YOU, I JUST WANT TO CONFIDE
THAT I'M A THEATER KID INSIDE

(END OF SONG.)

(As the music continues to underscore, we hear a VOICEOVER FLASHBACK from before.)

OLIVER (V.O.)

"The point is... I am here to take you back. Maybe, we can get you into a show, as well."

MAR

GERY (V.O.)

"You seem to have forgotten that you are the one who walked out on us."

LINCOLN (V.O.)

"Stop it - both of you!"

OLIVER (V.O.)

"One way or the other, Lincoln is going back to New York, where he belongs."

(Lincoln looks back at the weathered, wooden fence along the cornfield. He crosses back to hit and sits up on it. The music vamps once more, then quickly segues into...)

#08b - BROKEN

LINCOLN & ALEX

LINCOLN

WHEN YOU SAY "I UNDERSTAND YOU",
AND "I WANT TO SHARE YOUR DREAM" ...
I WANT TO TRUST YOU, FATHER,
BUT I NEVER CAN, IT SEEMS.

MY HEART WAS ALWAYS OPEN,
MY LOVE WAS ALWAYS THERE.
BUT YOU LEFT ME BROKEN PROMISES
AND THE FEAR THAT I NOW BEAR.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ABANDONED?
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IGNORED?
YOU NEVER GAD TO RAISE YOUR HAND
TO KNOCK ME TO THE FLOOR.

YOU ONLY HAD TO PROMISE ME
THE CLOUDS UP IN THE SKY,
THEN WAVE YOUR HAND AND LAUGH AWAY
MY SORROW WHEN I'D CRY.

HOW DO YOU JUST GO ON AND ON, WHEN YOU FEEL BROKEN?
HOW DO YOU RISE UP EVERY DAY WHEN THERE'S NO REASON?
HOW CAN YOU KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE WITH YOUR EYES
OPEN?
HOW DO YOU STAND WHEN ALL YOU FEEL IS BEATEN?

IT FEELS LIKE SORROW IS THE SHADOW LEFT BEHIND ME.
I FACE THE CIRCUMSTANCE AND WONDER WHAT IT MEANS.
IF I COULD JUST TURN BACK ANOTHER DAYBREAK,
WOULD I STAND FROZEN IN A WORLD OF IN-BETWEEN?

I'VE TRIED TO HIDE MY FACE, AND YET THE DARKNESS
COMES FOR ME.
I FEEL SUCH DISGRACE FOR NEVER KNOWING WHY.
I THINK I SHOULD UNDERSTAND, BUT NOT CONVINCED THAT
I CAN,
WHEN ALL I FEEL IS HEARTACHE, WAITING FOR ME WHEN I
TRY.

HOW DO YOU JUST GO ON AND ON, WHEN YOU FEEL BROKEN?
HOW DO YOU RISE UP EVERY DAY WHEN THERE'S NO DAWN?
HOW CAN YOU CARRY EXPECTATIONS, THOUGH THEY MAY BE
UNSPOKEN?
WHEN THE WORLD EXPECTS YOU JUST TO CARRY ON?

*(Alex steps out of the darkness to face Lincoln with
understanding written on his face.)*

ALEX

AND YET... WE GO ON WALKING, TO WHEREVER PEACE IS WAITING,
HOPING THAT WE FIND THAT PLACE WE SOMEHOW KNOWING IS THERE.
AND IF WE HOLD EACH OTHER UP AND WALK THAT PATH TOGETHER,
WE FIND OUR SORROW LIGHTER, WHEN OUR SORROW WE ALL SHARE.

(The music continues to underscore.)

LINCOLN

Alex? ... You came after me!

ALEX

You're my friend, *remember?* I meant it. I've been looking for your
everywhere. Everybody has.

(as he, too, climbs up on the fence)

It's dangerous out here at night. This country's full of cornfields
and cows. Y'know... *evil, scary stuff.* Are you okay?

LINCOLN

I'm sorry. I think I needed to be alone. I don't know what to do, Alex - I don't want to leave my mother, but she won't let me be who I want to be. If I go back to New York with my father... he promised to put me onstage - but he doesn't really see me either, only who he wants me to be. He's lied to me before, and I don't think I can ever trust him.

ALEX

I'm sorry, Lincoln. Really. You're in a tough spot, but at least you get a choice. My parents wanted me to be someone I wasn't, and when I refused, they threw me out.

LINCOLN

They threw their child away?! Oh my god, Alex - I'm so sorry. I didn't know.

ALEX

Of course you didn't. I don't like to talk about it. Trust me. I know how you feel.

(The music transitions, as they sing the final refrain together.)

LINCOLN & ALEX

MAYBE WE'LL FIND WE CAN GO ON, WHEN YOU FEEL BROKEN.
MAYBE WE'LL RISE UP TO THE CLOUDS AGAIN SOMEDAY.
AND IF WE SING EACH OTHER'S SONGS,
WHEN NO WORDS CAN BE SPOKEN...
THEN, MAYBE WE CAN STILL FIND OUT WAY.
THEN, MAYBE WE CAN STILL FIND OUT WAY.

(END OF SONG.)

(Charlie enters, spotting Lincoln and Alex on the fence together.)

CHARLEY

Well, there's our wandering minstrel. Are we okay?

ALEX

He's doing better I think.

CHARLEY

(joining them on the fence)
You seem thick as thieves now.

ALEX

It turns out we have a lot in common. He saved me bacon tonight - and after, we had a good laugh about it, and just kinda clicked, I guess.

CHARLEY

Yeah, I heard your old man showed up, so what's the scoop?

LINCOLN

My father's going to take me back to New York City.

CHARLEY

For a kid who wants in the theatre, sounds like you'd be sittin' pretty.

LINCOLN

But my mother doesn't want to go, and I don't think I blame her.

CHARLEY

What do you want to do?

ALEX

To have his mother see him...

LINCOLN

She thinks the theatre is a terrible life – and won't listen to me anymore. *

CHARLEY

Did she see you tonight? I thought you were great! You both had me on the floor. *

LINCOLN

She saw the end from backstage.

CHARLEY

She thought it was funny, right?

LINCOLN

I don't think so.

(He thinks, and then after a pause...) *

CHARLEY

I think I might have a plan. *

LINCOLN

Uh oh. ~~What are you thinking.~~ Do I want to know? *

CHARLEY

Well, do you have a choice?

#09a - THE DEEP END
(Charley, Alex & Lincoln)

YOU GOTTA
THROW YOURSELF IN THE DEEP END, MY FRIEND.
TRUST ME: ON EVERYONE HERE, YOU CAN DEPEND.
BELIEVE IN WHAT FORTUNE CAN ATTEND AND LEND,
WHATEVER FAITH YOU CAN EXTEND.
THINGS HAVE A WAY OF WORKING OUT
IF YOU STAY RESOLUTE AND STOUT.
IT'S REALLY WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT,
LET GO OF THE FEAR AND THE DOUBT AND JUST SHOUT.
THROW YOURSELF IN THE DEEP END, MY FRIEND.
THE FUTURE YOU INTEND 'S ALREADY PENNED.
THE 'YOU' YOU WANNA BE, YOU MUST BEFRIEND.
THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND.

LINCOLN

What's all that mean?

CHARLEY

You write, right?

LINCOLN

Yes. *

CHARLEY

THEN, BRING ME YOUR BEST.
I NEED A SONG FROM YOU, AND I'LL DO THE REST.
I THINK I KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO.
AND IF THIS WORKS, YOUR TROUBLES ARE THROUGH.

LINCOLN

What are you going to do with a song? *

ALEX-CHARLEY

Sometimes – Lincoln, trust is what it takes for the impossible to become the probable. *

(Alex puts his arm around Lincoln) *

ALEX

And you can trust me. I won't lie to you - ever.

CHARLEY

Loosen up, kid. - "Darkest before the dawn", and all that. Trust the tent, remember?

CHARLEY & ALEX

THINGS HAVE A WAY OF WORKING OUT
IF YOU STAY RESOLUTE AND STOUT.
IT'S REALLY WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT,
LET GO OF THE FEAR AND THE DOUBT AND JUST SHOUT.
THROW YOURSELF IN THE DEEP END, MY FRIEND.
THE FUTURE YOU INTEND 'S ALREADY PENNED.
THE 'YOU' YOU WANNA BE, YOU MUST BEFRIEND.
THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND.

ALEX

So...?

LINCOLN

Okay. Fine.

CHARLEY

Hooray!

CHARLEY & ALEX

THROW YOURSELF IN THE DEEP END, MY FRIEND.
THE FUTURE YOU INTEND 'S ALREADY PENNED.
THE 'YOU' YOU WANNA BE, YOU MUST BEFRIEND.
THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND.

LINCOLN

THROW MYSELF IN THE DEEP END, I GUESS.
THE FUTURE I INTEND 'S ALREADY PENNED.
THE 'ME' I WANNA BE, I MUST BEFRIEND.
THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND.

(END OF SONG.)

LINCOLN

Gee, I hope this works.

CHARLEY

Don't. Trust that what will happen will work well. Right now, you've gotta get back to your ma. She has to be worried sick about you.

(He nods to Alex, who escorts Lincoln out. He huffs, then jets out in the opposite direction)

#09b - THE DEEP END (PLAYOFF)

(Onstage Band)

ACT II, SCENE 2. The tea table

(The moon transforms into the sun, the tea table and Edison player return along with Peter and Heloise, who are once again dancing to a new song. The Edison player is behind them, playing on old scratchy instrumental recording that Peter sings words to.)

SONG#12 LOVE IS WORTH IT ALL

PETER

LOVE IS ALL TOO COMMON, I'VE BEEN TOLD
A BILLION TIMES, IN COUNTLESS WAYS, THE STORY UNFOLDS
BUT I WAS TIRED OF READING AND TIRED OF WISHING
EACH TIME THAT STORY WAS TOLD.
THEN ONE DAY, I LOOKED INTO YOUR EYES

IT HIT ME THAT ALL THOSE TALES WERE LIES
LOVE DOESN'T COME LIKE A FANFARE FROM HEAVEN
IT'S WHISPERED IN SOULS LIKE YOURS AND MINE
IT MAY NOT BE EASY
IT MIGHT INVOLVE TEARS
IT TAKES INTROSPECTION
TO FACE ALL YOUR FEARS
BUT LOVE IS WORTH IT ALL
IT CAUGHT ME WHEN I FELL FOR YOU

(END OF SONG)

As the recording ends, they sit at the table and share there cups together.

HELOISE

And I too, my sweet. You just get better with age, you know. You bear it well.

PETER

If either of us looked our age, people would run screaming. It is hard to help them if you can't catch them.

HELOISE

That's not our job. Ours is to give them the same chance our child gave us. And judging from the energy in the air, that chance is already here. I've always enjoyed this calm before the storm. You know it's coming, but never what it brings.

PETER

Mud? Honestly, Heloise, it's been countless years of storms. Is anything really washed clean after them? Has it made a difference? Has the world really changed? Looking back, can you see it? Do people treat each other any better now? Is kindness more common? Is love more prevalent?

HELOISE

I believe life has improved for people overall. We have a long way to go, but I haven't given up hope. If we ever do, then all of this becomes pointless. I trust our child. He knew what he set in motion. This was such a bold idea, dangerous and sad, yet beautiful and kind.

PETER

Yes. He saw what we missed. Sometimes you have to break something again in order to let it heal properly. Watching Alex now, I realize just how much I missed and what we three could have been together.

HELOISE

We cannot change what was. We can only go forward. We both want to see the same thing, but we have to tread carefully. There are a lot of threads at play. But I suspect Lincoln can feel something too, and that gives me fresh hope.

PETER

Then what we need, (Peter stands) is fresh song.

He changes the cylinder, then escorts Heloise up to stand next to her, arm in arm. They begin to promenade.

SONG # 13 DANCE AT EVERY DAWN

PETER & HELOISE

PETER (CONT'D)

EVERY OPPORTUNITY I HAVE TO SPEND WITH YOU
MAKES ME WANT TO SPEND ETERNITY DANCING
EVERY CHANCE THERE IS TO SPIN AND DIP AND HOLD YOU
IN MY ARMS
IS ANOTHER CHANCE TO RELISH IN ROMANCING

FROM THE MOMENT THAT WE MET, THERE WAS NO REASON TO
REGRET
IN MY HEAD, I FOUND ALL OTHER THOUGHTS WERE GONE
AND AFTER ALL THE YEARS HAVE PASSED, I'M STILL SO
GRATEFUL THAT AT LAST
I HAVE THE CHANCE TO DANCE WITH YOU AT EVERY DAWN.

Charly enters as they dance to the musical interlude.

CHARLEY

Good morning. I don't really want to interrupt your dance, but may I speak with you for a moment?

HELOISE

Hold that thought, Charley. We're trying a cakewalk. It's all the rage now, you know.

CHARLEY

Yes I'm sure it has a long future ahead of it. Isn't it supposed to include other couples? And Cake?

HELOISE

SUNSETS ARE FOR CELEBRATING MEMORIES
AND HOLDING CLOSE THE FEELING OF THE DAY
THE SUNRISE CELEBRATES THE POSSIBILITIES
LAID BEFORE YOU, AND YOU'RE CHANCE BEFORE THEY
QUICKLY SLIP AWAY

PETER AND HELOISE

EVERY DAY'S A DIFFERENT JOURNEY TO A PLACE YOU'VE
NEVER BEEN
YOU MIGHT AS WELL BEGIN THE VOYAGE WHILE YOU'RE
DANCING
AND EVERY STEP YOU TAKE INTO THE LIGHT PUTS
LIGHTNESS IN YOUR STEP
IT'S A CHOICE I'VE ALWAYS FOUND A BIT ENTRANCING.

SO WHILE IT'S NATUREL TO FEAR THE DARK UNKNOWN OF
FUTURE YEARS
JUST REMEMBER YOUR INTENT IS WHERE YOU'RE DRAWN
SO FORTIFY YOUR HEART AND LEAVE YOUR BURDENS WHERE
YOU START
AND TAKE THE CHANCE TO DANCE WITH AT EVERY SINGLE
DAWN.
AND TAKE THE CHANCE TO DANCE WITH AT EVERY JOYOUS,
COLORFUL AND OFTEN GLORIOUS, RISKING SOUNDING QUITE
ANNOYOUS DAWN.

(END OF SONG)

HELOISE

And so, Charley, how may we help you?

CHARLEY

I have an idea, and I'd like to talk to you about it. Lincoln has written a song. It's for his mother to sing, but I don't want her to know he wrote it.

PETER

Writing is a dangerous and contagious disease. Best to avoid it, if at all possible. Let me see the song.

(Peter takes the song as Lincoln hands it to him. He gives it a quick look over.)

And the need for subterfuge is what? What is your intent?

CHARLEY

What do you mean?

PETER

"We call an intention good, which is right in itself, but the action is good, not because it contains within it some good, but because it issues from a good intention."

CHARLEY

That's cryptic.

PETER

I prefer inscrutable.

HELOISE

We scrute you already. We just pretend to make you feel better.

CHARLEY

I'm just concerned. He's a good kid, and he deserves his dreams.

PETER

What you're doing is obvious. These lyrics are just what Margery needs to hear.

CHARLEY

I didn't write them; Lincoln did.

PETER

But you are putting them in her mouth. You are trying to break her.

CHARLEY

Isn't that the point of this place? We all come here broken, but we need to be broken again in order to be put back together correctly. I've heard you say something like that. Margery was broken by a terrible marriage, and now she can't see what she's doing to her son. I heard Lincoln sing.

HELOISE

Who didn't?

CHARLEY

But did you hear what he sang? That was real, and I took a risk that he still had more in him, and he delivered. This new song is everything he wants to tell his mother, but she can't hear it if she can't see past who wrote it. Yes, it will break her, in a way that will bring her and her son together because if it doesn't, she will force him into a life he doesn't want, or force him into his father's hands and we can all see where that path leads. She will lose her son one way or the other unless she breaks first.

HELOISE

You have a good heart, Charles.

CHARLEY

I have a broken one. It's worked for me too, I guess. This came yesterday. (He pulls a letter from his pocket and holds it up) My mother died. I'm leaving after the show tonight, so I can be with my dad.

PETER

I'm deeply sorry to hear that. We understand. We will miss you.

CHARLEY

Ya' know, before I came here I grew up knowing my dad and his sister. Then I found out that he had four missing siblings that I had never even heard mentioned before. His whole family split in two, and neither side wanted to mend whatever happened. I pushed, and my father just got angry. Later, I heard him crying when he thought no one could hear him. The big strong rock of a blacksmith, mourning a mystery that

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

drove my family apart in a way that I may never know the answer to. After reading this yesterday, I heard Lincoln singing when he thought no one could hear him. Watching him and Alex together, I suddenly saw what I wanted all along. Nothing can change whatever happened, but I can start over. I want to settle down and get married and have my own family. There's a girl in a St. Jo boarding house I've known for a while, and I want to see if something is there.

PETER

Absence is the tomb of love. If you love this girl, do not tarry. If you seek a family, do not deny yourself that gift.

CHARLEY

I have a ride to St. Joseph right after the show tonight. I don't want to draw attention, so I just need to slip away when my part is done. Please tell Lincoln and Alex thank you and goodbye for me, and let everyone know there's a floor to sleep on if nothing else for anyone who wants to visit.

PETER

Prosperity seldom chooses the side of the virtuous.

HELOISE

That's my quote, get your own.

CHARLEY

Thank you for everything you have done for me. I owe you so much.

HELOISE

Life is about gifting, not owing. When you give your heart, you lose nothing, Charles, but gain more than you ever knew was possible. You will always be family. Now let's put this in motion and see what it brings.

Act II Scene 3 Inside the Tent

Margery is pacing. She sings to herself.

SONG #14 IN THE DARK REPRISE **MARGERY**

MARGERY

WE STUMBLE BLINDLY ON IN OUR LIFE,
WITH NO OTHER EYES BUT OURS TO GUIDE US.
WE CAN ONLY JUST SURMISE THE EFFECTS OF OUR
ACTION AND WHERE IT LEAVES US.

NOW I SEE THAT I WAS STANDING IN YOUR SHADOW,
FOOLING MYSELF THAT I WAS STANDING BY YOUR SIDE.
ONLY THERE TO HOLD YOU UP BEFORE THEM.
ALL THE WHILE, ALL ALONE, BLINDED BY MY PRIDE.

I'M TIRED OF STANDING IN THE DARK,
AND PROTECTING MYSELF FROM THE PRICE OF THAT CHOICE.
I WON'T KEEP SILENT IN THE DARK,
WHEN I HAVE FOUND THAT I STILL HAVE MY VOICE.

WE BOTH SPENT SO MUCH TIME STANDING IN THE
SPOTLIGHT,
SEEING NOTHING OUT THERE IN SO MANY DARKENED HALLS.
BEYOND THE FOOTLIGHTS AND OUR PUBLIC ILLUSION,
THERE'S SOMETHING WORTH PROTECTING, SURVIVING FROM
OUR FALL.

YET YOU KEEP LIVING IN THE DARK,
AND WONDERING JUST WHAT THIS MEANS NOW,
WHEN YOU JUST WANT WHAT NEVER WAS,
AND WHAT WON'T EVER BE AGAIN SOMEHOW.

She turns to see a wispy shadow of a child that makes her jump and stop short in her singing. The shadow begins to dance across the canvas of the tent as the music refrains. A look of surprised recognition illuminates Margery's face.

MARGERY (CONT'D)

Abbey?

The shadow blows her a kiss, then holds it's hand out to Margery, who reaches out, then realizes it is intangible. Margery begins to cry, but the shadow begins to dance again, beckoning her to join. Margery matches her steps, and her tears turn to laughter. In the midst of a spin, Heloise, Peter and Charley pull back the tent flap, and the shadow disappears, leaving Margery startled.

(END OF SONG)

PETER

Margery? Are you all right?

MARGERY

What? Oh, I'm sorry. I don't know. I just thought I saw someone from somewhere long forgotten, but it wasn't her. It couldn't be her. Could it?

CHARLEY

Grabbing a chair
Sit. Catch your breath. What's wrong?

MARGERY

She sits
I must just be overwrought. I'm imagining old sorrows now. I met with Oliver. He is insistent on taking Lincoln back to New York. What is so infuriating is that he's not doing it for Lincoln. He wants me and the act back, and he's using our son as leverage. I'm so sorry I brought all this with me. You have been so kind, and between the disruptions Lincoln caused in the show last night and this --

PETER

Everyone brings trouble to us. That is why we're here. And as for Lincoln, I shall have to call him Chaos. Chaos is the harbinger of change, and change, though we often fear it, is what sets us on the paths we need. We don't want to loose either one of you.

MARGERY

You are very kind, but I'm not sure what I can do now. Oliver has the law on his side.

HELOISE

Let Chaos go, and I believe the outcome will surprise you. Have faith my dear.

MARGERY

You have more confidence than I do.

CHARLEY

This is going to sound strange, but we have an idea for you. It's a new song, and we'd like you to sing it tonight.

(He hands her the song)

MARGERY

How will singing a song help? I'm going to lose my child if I don't submit to my husband's wishes.

HELOISE

Some songs are magic, but only for the right person at the right time, and we think this is that time, and you are that person. Where did this song come from? Did you write this?

CHARLEY

It's from an up-and-coming songwriter. He's got tremendous talent, and your singing it tonight would mean a lot to him.

MARGERY

(She pauses, reading intently). I don't know how this will help me, but I'll do it.

PETER

Excellent. Charley will run it with you. We shall see where it leads.

MARGERY

I feel like whatever I do, it's going to hurt someone. I pray it's not Lincoln. I couldn't face that.

HELOISE

Sing the song, Mrs. Foster. Trust the magic. Trust the chaos. Trust your son.

The light shifts, revealing George standing outside the tent looking into the distance and smoking. His shadow, however, is not his, but one of a child, the same one Margery saw and the same one we saw in act one. This time, the shadow comes through the tent wall, becoming the three dimensional apparition of Astrolabe.

ASTROLABE

Yes, mother. Yes, father. Trust the chaos. It's been moving us for 900 years. That is my gift. I love you both.

As astrolabe fades and disappears, George, still silent, turns to the audience with a smile.

(lights down- end of scene)

ACT II, SCENE 4. Roberta's tent

This takes place on the main stage, which is obscured by the sliding walls of another tent. A changing screen sits upstage center next to a player piano and a rack of costumes.

ROBERTA

Come in, boys. We'll see how long it takes to block out this trick. Remember, you can't tell anyone how we do it.

LINCOLN

You have your own tent? This is so great. I knew you were the star of the show!

ROBERTA

Oh, sweet child, are you that naïve?

(Lincoln looks hurt and confused.)

You are, aren't you? I'm sorry. I have my own tent because I'm colored, Lincoln. It's because I have no choice. I'm not allowed to stay in hotels and boarding houses or eat in these local restaurants. Heloise and Peter are family to me, and they have done their best to see that I have a lovely tent full of lovely things, but its very existence reminds me daily that I am not seen as good enough because I am colored.

The boys sit on a settee as Roberta gathers things.

LINCOLN

That's sad. I never thought about it that way. The only colored people I know are Bert Williams and his wife, Lottie. He was in the Follies with my parents. They come by for dinner, and he tells me stories sometimes. I don't remember anyone being mean to him.

ROBERTA

Bert Williams is the most famous black man in the world, darling. You may not see it when you are with him, but trust me, even atop the mountain he scaled, there are plenty that, given a chance, would throw him back down.

LINCOLN

No one deserves to be treated that way.

ROBERTA

Yet this is the world we live in. Emancipation may have granted us freedom from an existence forced upon us by oppressors, but many of their progeny would like to see their father's world revived. Their actions so far indicate their desire to make the lives of my brothers and sisters difficult and joyless. Sadly, they are succeeding. I was one of them. When I came here, I was angry. No one wanted my act except minstrel shows as the butt of jokes or playing the Dudley circuit for colored audiences down south. This company welcomed me for who I am, but outside of this tent? Not likely. I have a new path and will walk it to the end, but I will never bow down or apologize for being me.

ALEX

What path did you find?

ROBERTA

There wasn't one, darling. I'm cutting as I go. And I'm using the blade they gave us to do it. Some people call us crows because they see us as black vermin, pests who squawk and theft, and murder, and they hate us with every fiber of their being. But they don't know crows at all. Crows are smart. They are resourceful and reward friendship and mourn their dead. So, if the haters want it to be derogatory, then I will wear it like a crown. I will be more than the crow; I will be the Raven. I will be the one who knows, the one who sees and understands. I will twist their hatred and take away their power and stand on that stage and strut and sing and do what to them looks impossible. When I am done, they will stand and applaud me without realizing that I have taken their hate and left them instead with doubt. I will plant that seed in hopes that every once in a while, it will sprout. If enough of them do, then maybe the world will begin to grow a new future.

LINCOLN

How can I help?

ROBERTA

That is why you are here, Lincoln, in this show with us now. We all wield magic, and you are bonded under the spell too. I feel it.

She walks over to a player piano at the back of the tent and gives it a hip bump. It begins to play.

Yes, that's right; I'm the magical black woman. I'll certainly use that trope too. It's my calling card.

As she sings, the background fades into the darkness, and the chorus comes in and out of it, acting out scenes from her story.

(CONT'D)

I USED TO THINK THE WORLD WOULD OPEN UP ITS DOORS TO
ALL OF MY DREAMS.
SILLY ME.
I USED TO SMILE AND WISH UPON ALL THE FALLING STARS
THAT I WOULD SEE.
SILLY ME.

IT WAS THEN SOMEWHERE ON THE WAY IN SOME OLD DINGY
CABARET,
THAT I FINALLY HAD TO SAY THAT, SO IT SEEMS,
THAT THE DREAMS I DREAMED WHEN I WAS YOUNG
WERE EMPTY HOPES TO WHICH I'D CLUNG, FOREVER OUT OF
REACH.
SILLY ME.

LINCOLN

I think everyone should be free to follow their dreams and be who they
want to be.

ALEX

Do you?

LINCOLN

Absolutely.

ROBERTA

I'D HOPED THAT WITH A GOLDEN VOICE THAT I WOULD BE
ACCEPTED IN THEIR MIDST.
SILLY ME.
SO I KNEW THAT I WOULD HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO FLAUNT
MY TALENT WITH A TWIST.
SILLY ME.

I USED AN EXCESS OF LIBATIONS TO QUIET INDIGNATION,
BUT IT SPARKED IMAGINATION
INSTEAD.
THOUGH STILL ABUNDANT IN THEIR SCORN, MADAM RAVEN
WOULD BE BORN, AND NO
ONE COULD RESIST SILLY ME.

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO CHANGE A MIND.
YOU CAN TAKE IT HEAD-ON OR LET IT HIT YOU FROM
BEHIND.
YOU CAN RAISE A FIST OR CHOOSE TO BE KIND,
YOU JUST BE YOU, AND YOU MIGHT FIND,
THERE'S MAGIC IN THE WAY YOU HOLD YOURSELF,

AND YOU GET A LITTLE FARTHER WHEN YOU USE STEALTH.
SO WATCH AND LEARN, BOYS. I'LL CLUE YOU IN.
WHEN THEY RIG THE RACE,
THERE'S STILL A WAY FOR YOU TO WIN.

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO CHANGE A MIND.
YOU CAN TAKE IT HEAD-ON OR LET IT HIT YOU FROM
BEHIND
YOU CAN RAISE A FIST OR CHOOSE TO BE KIND.
YOU JUST BE YOU, AND YOU MIGHT FIND,
YOU'RE NOT SO SILLY AFTER ALL.

ALEX

Clever you!

ROBERTA

You are both clever boys yourselves. Right now, you have to show me
that so you can learn this trick. Now, sit right there while I change.

*She steps behind a screen on a raised platform, where she
changes. The band kicks in full.*

That set splits and disappears in the darkness, and we are on a stage completely covered in triple black velvet amid the show. The boys each take a corner of the dressing screen and pull, splitting it in two, and pull them off either side of the stage.

ACT II, SCENE 4b. Inside the tent

Madam Raven stands on the platform dressed in a dark rainbow-beaded dress, holding a glass of Champaign. (floating bottle, perhaps?) This sequence is to be determined by a professional illusionist, incorporating a quick barrage of smaller illusions and a quick change followed by the chorus concluding in a kick line at the end when the music slows.

SONG #15B CLEVER ME

(ROBERTA)

SO NOW YOU'VE ALL BECOME MY FRIENDS.
CLEVER ME.
YOU NEVER SAW THIS AT THE END.
CLEVER ME
WHERE ONCE YOU'D RUN ME OUT OF TOWN,
YOU NOW SIT THERE WITHOUT A SOUND,
AMAZED BY WHAT YOUR MIND CAN'T COMPREHEND.
AND WITH THAT, THEN, OUR SPIRITS CAN ASCEND.

Dancing with a floating ball. It begins normally, but then, thanks to the black stage, it flies and spins around her, finally hovering over her head.

(CONT'D)

CLEVER ME.

At this point, she raises her 'wings' and dances

(CONT'D)

I DON'T NEED WINGS TO FLY AWAY.
CLEVER ME.
IT'S JUST YOUR SENSES I'LL BETRAY.
CLEVER ME.
SO LET ME PLEASE CONVEY HOW THIS IS CHILD'S PLAY.
SO HERE THEY ARE, TO YOUR DISMAY.

The boys step out 'magically' from behind the wings in white tail coats and top hats.

(CONT'D)

OH, SO CLEVER ME.

The dance begins with her and the two boys

(CONT'D)

IT'S WHO I'M MEANT TO BE.
DOES YOUR MIND BELIEVE WHAT YOUR EYES SEE?

On the following beats, 'that', 'of', '-der', and 'you', the chorus also steps out from behind her wings on alternate sides of the stage, also in white tuxes, where they all form a kick line.

SO LET THAT SENSE OF WONDER SET YOU FREE
OH, SO CLEVER ME.

Full dance line

OH, SO CLEVER ME.
OH, SO CLEVER ME.

(END OF SONG.)

During the last lines, she raises her wings to cover the still hovering ball, then whips them away, where it has become a mirror ball instead, brightly illuminated from the front, to send dazzling light into the audience. In the confusion, so has her dress, blinding white with mirror sequins. Curtain down center stage.

ACT II, SCENE 5a. Inside the tent

We see backtent where Peter is about to step out. The boys come running by. Alex is still wearing the tux but now has a Huck Finn hat. He is hopping, trying to remove his shoes while moving. Behind him, Lincoln is wandering blind, arms in the air, trying to pull the shirt over his head. He bumps into Peter.

LINCOLN

Sorry.

Peter spins him to turn in the right direction and pulls the shirt the rest of the way off, tossing it aside before striding onstage.

PETER

Madam Ravin! Next on tonight's bill, The Astrolabe Theater is proud to present one of your own, a native Missourian who needs no introduction. I guess that makes me redundant. I'll be back later.

He doffs his top hat with a smile and exits right. As the lights come up. George is done up as Mark Twain sitting in a rocking chair down the center in front of the oleo. It is sitting on a dock-like platform with the crates that usually sit outside of the tent stage left scattered about him.

GEORGE

Good evening. I have been asked by the management if I would be so kind as to address you tonight, and being a great fan of adoration, I did not hesitate. It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech, but I shall attempt it anyway.

ACT II, SCENE 5b. Inside the tent

The lights dim on George and he continues to orate without sound, as the lights come up on Margery and Heloise in a box seat above the stage.

MARGERY

What was Lincoln doing out there?

HELOISE

Nothing dangerous... I think. But it's what has to happen tonight. Do you trust me, Margery?

MARGERY

I don't know anymore. You know how I feel about Lincoln being in the show, and you let this happen? Why would you do this?

HELOISE

Because he needs to know what being in a show is really like before he can understand his own dream. This is important, child. You have to give him this one night so you both can see what is real. This is about the two of you, but it is also about things you can't see yet.

MARGERY

I am his mother, the one who gets to make decisions concerning my child, not you. I know he can sing and dance. My son's skill is not something I am blind to. He has spent his whole life watching and learning from legends of the theater. That isn't the issue. Do you know how many of those stars have happy lives? Do you know how many dreams are crushed along the way? He doesn't understand that pain and that loss. I will hold it back by the head if I have to, but I will not let it devour my child, too.

HELOISE

Look at me, Margery. You cannot protect your child if your husband takes him away from you. Trust us. We are trying to save him. We are trying to save you both. I know you can't see that yet, but you will if you truly wish to understand. I have to go get set for my act now, but you need to promise me that you will watch Lincoln and not interfere.

MARGERY

But what about...

HELOISE

Promise me now.

MARGERY

Just for tonight. But we will talk about this later.

HELOISE

I have little doubt.

Heloise walks out, leaving Margery as the lights go out on her and back up on George just as the boys walk out dressed as Tom & Huck

ACT II, SCENE 5c. Inside the tent

GEORGE

You two look familiar. Let me guess. Mr. Dickens had absconded with my narrative and sent me the ghosts of my past? Mr. Sawyer and Mr. Finn, I presume?

LINCOLN (AS TOM)

Thata' be us, mister. Do we know you?

GEORGE

Not yet, but somewhere in the future, only too well, and with an intimacy of knowledge no one else can ever share.

ALEX (AS HUCK)

The more you explain it, the more I don't understand it.

LINCOLN

You didn't answer the question anyway. What's your name?

GEORGE

I most certainly did. You asked if you knew me. Get your facts right first, and then you can distort them as much as you please. My real name is Samuel, but you can call me Mark Twain.

He says this with a flourish and a bit of a bough. The boys lean back a bit looking concerned.

LINCOLN

Um, Shure thing, mister.

GEORGE

Fine. Sit down, and I'll tell you.

(They each take a box on either side of him. Tom dumps sand out of his boots).

ALEX

We were kinda came out here to go fishin.'

GEORGE

Fishing? Sounds like fun. Do you have worms?

ALEX

Yip, but the doc said I could go anyway!

Huck breaks out laughing and falls backward off of his box.

GEORGE

This is why you don't let schooling interfere with your education. You'd get your ears boxed for doing that in class. Now listen up, you two.

The lights come up behind the scrim to reveal the banjo band. They are all wearing boatman's hats.

SONG #16 IF EVER THE TWAIN YOU SHOULD MEET. GEORGE

GEORGE (CONT'D)

SO, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU KIDS SOME ADVICE
SO, TAKE IT FROM A WRINKLED OLD MAN
THERE'S A LOT YOU'VE COME COMING DOWN THE ROAD OF
YOUR LIFE
AND A LOT YOU WON'T UNDERSTAND.

THESE WRINKLES JUST SHOW WHERE SMILES HAVE BEEN.
AGAINST LAUGHTER, NOTHING CAN STAND.
THE HEART IS THE REAL FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.
YOU SHALL NEED IT TO FACE LIVES DEMANDS

THAT LIFE IS SHORT; SO BREAK THE RULES.
FORGIVE YOUR FRIENDS, AND ALL THE WHILE,
WHEN LOVE COMES KNOCKING, PLAY THE FOOL
NEVER REGRET WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE.

DON'T PART WITH YOUR ILLUSIONS.
WHEN THEY ARE GONE, YOU MAY STILL EXIST,
BUT YOU HAVE CEASED TO REALLY LIVE.
AND SONS, THAT LIFE IS YOUR GREATEST GIFT

OBEY YOUR PARENTS, WHEN THEIR AROUND,
AND LAVISH KINDNESS ABOUT
KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLOSED, LET PEOPLE THINK YOU ARE A
FOOL
DON'T OPEN IT UP AND REMOVE ALL DOUBT.

AND IF YOU MEET A MAN WITH A BIG CIGAR,
WHILE STROLLING DOWN THE STREET
IT MIGHT BE YOU IN A HAZY MIRROR
IF EVER THE TWAIN YOU SHALL MEET.

See what I did there, kind of a play on words,
oh, never mind

The boys pull Twain to his feet and they all do a sand dance
YOU'LL ALWAYS REGRET THE THINGS THAT YOU MISSED,
MORE THAN THE THINGS YOU DID,
SO THROW OFF THE BOWLINES AND SAIL AWAY
AND REMEMBER THE DREAMS THAT YOU HAVE AS A KID.

DO WHAT'S RIGHT AND CONFUSE THE WORLD
DISCOVER, DREAM. EXPLORE.

THE POINT'S NOT IN DYING FOR YOUR FRIEND,
BUT IN FINDING A FRIEND WORTH DYING FOR.

AND SOMEDAY, IF YOU PASS TWO KIDS THAT YOU KNOW
YOU'LL BE SURE THAT THE CIRCLES COMPLETE
LET OUR MEMORIES CONFIRM WHAT YOU ALREADY KNEW
IF EVER THE TWAIN YOU SHALL MEET.

How would you boys like some new fishin'
poles, my treat? I think I'm in the mood to
join ya' Git along there.

(END OF SONG.)

They exit right. Lights down on stage

NEW SCENE

ACT II, SCENE 7. Back tent

*Lights up backstage left as Alex comes running from stage
right, pulling off his wig and unbuttoning his shirt as he
ducks in the tent front labeled "Private."*

ALEX

This is why you never do back-to-back acts. Change quick! We've only
got a few minutes!

*Lincoln is trapped in the midst of all the floofie dresses
from the chorus but finally catches up*

and enters the dressing tent front where Alex went.

LINCOLN

Alex? (YELP!)

*Lincoln comes running back out with a shocked look on his
face. Alex comes out looking both*

worried and upset.

I'm sorry... I didn't... you weren't... why...

ALEX

You weren't supposed to know yet. Not this way!

LINCOLN

I wouldn't have ever... Who knows that...

ALEX

So, now you can't talk anymore? Go ahead, say it.

LINCOLN

You're a girl.

ALEX

I'm not.

LINCOLN

But I saw you!

ALEX

I don't care what you saw. I'm not a girl.

LINCOLN

That's ridiculous. You've got... girl... You're just... I saw you! That
means you're a girl!

ALEX

Why? Why should that force me to be someone else? I want to be who I am.

LINCOLN

You can't just hide and choose to not be how you're born. That's insane.

ALEX

I never choose to be anything. In here, I'm a boy. I always have been. Only one part of me isn't, and it doesn't change the rest. It doesn't get to. Do you understand?

LINCOLN

No! I don't. None of this makes sense. Why didn't you tell me? Why wouldn't you trust me?

ALEX

Grow up and open your eyes, Lincoln. Everyone in this show is hiding behind some character we put on that stage, and you're no different. Every one of us is broken. I'm hiding here because it's the only place for me to go. It's the only place I can dare to hope for a future. Any future. Should I have trusted you? Look at your reaction, then tell me. I'm insane? Now you be honest. You're scared of me now, aren't you?

LINCOLN

I... I...

ALEX

I what? I don't know! Kind of, yes! What do you expect? You might as well have lied to my face. You said you never would. You're lying to yourself, too. You are who you're born to be.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Everyone should be free to follow their dreams and be who they want to be. You said that just a few hours ago. Was that a lie? You say you want to trust somebody to tell you the truth. Well, this is it, Lincoln. I'm the truth, and this is my dream!

SONG # 18 THE INSIDE ME

ALEX

ALEX (CONT'D)

I WAS HOPING YOU'D UNDERSTAND ME
I WAS HOPING YOU'D BE MY FRIEND
WITHOUT HAVING SOMETHING BETWEEN US
THAT I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO DEFEND
SO HERE I AM, STANDING BEFORE YOU
AM I DIFFERENT FROM WHO I HAVE BEEN?
IF YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE ME
THEN THIS IS THE PLACE IT BEGINS

CHORUS

THE INSIDE ME; IS WHO I AM
I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR WHO I AM
I'M NOT A MISTAKE, AND I'M NOT OBSCENE
I'M THE SAME OLD ME THAT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE FIRST I HAVE EVER HEARD SCREAM,
AND CHASE ME AWAY?
IT'S THE INSIDE ME; YOU'RE SEEING NOW.
THIS IS HOW I DREAM WHAT YOU SEE NOW.
I'M NO DIFFERENT FROM YOU WHEN YOU LOOK IN MY EYES,
AND I WON'T SPEND MY LIFE IN DECEPTION AND LIES,
SO INSTEAD, I'LL BE SOMEONE THAT THEY ALL DESPISE.
THAT IS MY FUTURE, IT SEEMS.
SO THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO WALK AWAY,
AND THINK WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR HEAD.
YOU WON'T BE THE FIRST, AND YOU WON'T BE THE LAST

TO THINK I'D BE BETTER OFF DEAD.
BUT I HEARD YOU SINGING AND KNOW HOW YOU FEEL,
CAUSE THAT'S HOW I FEEL INSIDE, TOO.
I'M TIRED OF RUNNING AND BEING ALONE,
AND I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I'M THE INSIDE ME; THAT'S WHO I AM.
I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR WHO I AM.
I CAN BE YOUR FRIEND AND STAND BY YOUR SIDE.
I CAN TRUST YOU, AND FINALLY, I WON'T HAVE TO HIDE.
IF YOU ONLY KNEW JUST HOW HARD I'VE TRIED,
TO SEE THAT END AT LAST?
IT'S THE INSIDE ME; YOU'RE SEEING NOW.
THIS IS HOW I DREAM WHAT YOU SEE NOW.
I'M NO DIFFERENT FROM YOU WHEN YOU LOOK IN MY EYES.
CAN YOU SEE ALL MY PAIN THAT I HAVE TO ABIDE?
WILL YOU LISTEN WHEN I TELL YOU JUST HOW MUCH I'VE
CRIED?
COULD YOU STILL CHOOSE ME?
SHORT, FRUSTRATED BALLET. ALEX'S FINAL SPIN BRINGS
HIM FACE TO FACE WITH LINCOLN, AND HE SINGS
HAUNTINGLY AND BREATHLESSLY THROUGH CLENCHED-BACK
TEARS.
SO TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.
IT'S ALWAYS YOUR CHOICE, ANYWAY.
I DON'T WANT YOUR PITY, JUST SOMEWHERE TO REST
WITH SOMEONE WHO FINALLY WILL STAY.
SO JUST ONCE, I DON'T HAVE TO SAY,
I ONLY HAVE ME.

(END OF SONG)

Heloise appears upstage and calls to Lincoln.

HELOISE

Lincoln? She's going on! If you want to go through with your plan, you have to come now. Yes or no?

She cocks her head and smiles, whispering to herself
This is your moment, Chaos.

Alex stands his ground, leaving Lincoln shaking visibly, torn between going on stage or staying with Alex. After a moment, he responds.

LINCOLN

No.

Alex drops to his knees and just stares back at Lincoln in disbelief. Lincoln kneels down to be at eye level with him. Heloise smiles and nods then turns and walks behind the oleo as Charley steps in.

CHARLEY

Hey, Lincoln. Can you hear that? Peter's stalling.

(Lincoln looks shaken and unsure what to do. Alex is too, but speaks up with emotional urgency.)

ALEX

Lincoln! You have to do this. Get dressed now!

Stage goes dark

ACT II, SCENE 8. Inside the tent

Lights up center on Margery in a show dress with a Victorian-style painted pastoral scene. Charley plays the harpsichord with a string trio on the stage with her.

SONG #19 A JOYFUL HEART

MARGERY, LINCOLN, ALEX

MARGERY

SEE THE CHILDREN LAUGHING AND PLAYING.
HEAR THEM SING, SEE THEM DANCING FOR JOY.
WHERE DOES THAT MUSIC AND THE LAUGHTER COME FROM?
WHERE DOES THE DANCE HAVE ITS START?
IN A JOYFUL HEART.
WHY DO YOU WEEP? WHY ARE YOU MOURNING?
SO, YOUR HEART IS WEARY AND TORN.
GONE IS THE JOY; YOUR HEART HAS BEEN SILENCED.
HEAVY THE FEET OF YOUR HEART.
SAD AND HEAVY THE FEET OF YOUR HEART.

Lincoln walks out of the shadows upstage, singing, surprising Margery, who stops.

LINCOLN

SIMPLE THE THINGS THAT MAKE OUR HEARTS MERRY.
SIMPLE THE DREAMS OF A CHILD.
INFINITE SPACES EXIST IN THEIR VISION.
FEEDING THE JOY IN THEIR HEARTS.
THEY'RE DRINKING IN JOY FROM THEIR HEARTS.

Alex steps out of the shadows as well, singing harmony. By this point, Margery has figured it out and is fighting back the tears and losses.

ALEX & LINCOLN

SEE THE CHILDREN LAUGHING AND PLAYING.
HEAR THEM SING, SEE THEM DANCING FOR JOY.
THEY SEE ONLY BRIGHTNESS AS WORTH THEIR ATTENTION.
FILLING THEIR WORLD WITH ITS LIGHT.
COME WITNESS THIS BEAUTIFUL SITE.

Lincoln stands, arm extended in an invitation to dance with his mother. Margery and Lincoln dance together while Alex orbits them like a little planet in ballet, spinning and leaping through an instrumental break. It ends with them both taking Margery's hands and singing to her as she joins in to sing three parts.

MARGERY, LINCOLN & ALEX

SO, CAST OFF THE WORLD THAT HAS SHACKLED YOUR DREAMS.
BREAK FREE OF THE PRISON OF DOUBT.
THROW OPEN THE SHUTTERS THAT BLIND YOU FROM LIGHT.
LAUGH WITH A LOVED ONE, DANCE WITH A CHILD.
RECLAIM THE JOY IN YOUR HEART.

(END OF SONG)

Lincoln and Alex end up bowing to Margery. She curtsies in return, then all three bow to the audience. As the scrim falls between the audience and backstage, it is illuminated from behind where, as Lincoln and his mother hug, Charley grins, then slips off the opposite side of the tent where he puts his hat on, looks over his shoulder, and with a nod of his head to the unseeing boy, says to himself,

CHARLEY

We all see you now, Theater Kid.

He picks up a trunk and exits. Margery and the boys exit 'backstage' where they pass the chorus, this time dressed in Greek togas, walking onto the stage. George is dressed as Eros, carrying a bow and arrow, and stops with a curtsy to Margery. When they pass, we see Oliver, who has been standing behind them upstage in front of the changing tent.

ACT II, SCENE 9. Back tent

MARGERY

Oliver!

OLIVER

I had to come to watch you both. That was amazing. And you too, young man.

ALEX

Thank you.

OLIVER

I wanted to see if you have made your decision. The train leaves first thing in the morning.

MARGERY

I'm staying, Oliver. I blinded myself for so long. My fear nearly led me to do something that would have hurt Lincoln, and I can never return to that. Ever. I'm sorry.

OLIVER

Marge, we can make this work. I just saw a talented woman out there singing with two gifted boys--

ALEX

Thank you!

OLIVER

--and it moved me to change.

MARGERY

Stop it, Oliver. We have played this scene too many times, but nothing has ever changed. It's over. This is about Lincoln now. Can you trust him to make his own decision too? I do.

OLIVER

Well, Lincoln. It's down to us. If you come back with me, you could be singing on Broadway in two months. How 'bout it?

MARGERY

See. There you go, right there. You didn't ask what he wanted. You just started negotiations. Just ask.

OLIVER

Son? Broadway's calling. Do you answer?

LINCOLN

You can't do it, can you? No, Father, I will not replace Mother in your act. I would rather stay here where I have a friend now.

OLIVER

Don't be ridiculous. You are my son. I know what you want.

LINCOLN

Shouts

But you don't know why I want it.

OLIVER

Lincoln, calm down. I can open a lot of doors for you. My latest show is top-rated.

Peter and Heloise walk in from behind the oleo in the tent.

PETER

The review I read said, "Tepid and uninspiring."

OLIVER

Mixed reviews, alright? Mixed! I seriously doubt that my career is over because of a few idiots with a pen.

PETER

By doubting, we come to questioning, and by questioning, we perceive the truth.

OLIVER

Who is this person?

PETER

My name is Peter Abelard, and this is my show.

HELOISE

Our show.

PETER

Our show.

HELOISE

Good boy.

LINCOLN

Father. I understand now it's not about being famous. What matters is being the friend I always wanted for someone else instead.

(He smiles at Alex, who smiles back.)

OLIVER

(gesturing to Alex)

How did this suddenly become all about this boy?

HELOISE

Because everything which comes from before leads to the now. Alex needed to know he can touch the lives of everyone he encounters. Your son was the key, but every choice everyone in this tent made led to this moment, even yours.

OLIVER

Don't try and drag me into your fatalistic drivel.

HELOISE

Fatalistic? We don't know how it will lead any more than you. We are but shadows that point to the light. Until you can understand the shadow, you will dwell in darkness. Do you wish to understand, Mr. Foster?

OLIVER

You people are all mad! I'd sooner make a pact with the devil, and it sounds like my wife already has.

PETER

We may have pitched our tent at the crossroads, but the only devils here are your own. Open your eyes, sir. All of this will be gone soon because the world we know is dying. What it shall become is up to which direction we choose.

OLIVER

None of this mumbo jumbo has anything to do with my son and me. Lincoln, son, we need to get away from this tent revival. This may be your last chance.

LINCOLN

No, father, I don't think it is. At least it's not the right chance. I can't come with you either. I'm not afraid anymore.

SONG IN THE DARK REPRISE (LINCOLN)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I'M ALL DONE LIVING IN THE DARK.
I LOVE YOU, BUT YOU'VE NOT HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID.
BUT I WON'T LEAVE YOU IN THE DARK
SO MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU CAN COME WITH ME INSTEAD.

(END OF SONG.)

OLIVER

Lincoln, I hope so. I really do. I love you, son. Goodbye Margery. I hope you find what makes you happy.

MARGERY

I hope you find your truth, Oliver.

Oliver kisses Lincoln on the top of his head and exits.

PETER

It seems the time to end this show.

Peter exits.

MARGERY

(Looking off where Oliver exited)
Part of me wants to run after him, but the rest wants to stay here.

HELOISE

We fluctuate long between love and hatred before we can arrive at tranquility. When you do, you will know what to do.

MARGERY

I kept seeing some happy ending in my mind, but that perfect thing was never going to happen, was it?

HELOISE

Perfect? No. Happy is up to you, though. Life is always changing, and going to pieces does not mean falling apart. It means finding a new shape to build with from the good that remains.

They walk into the tent as Alex turns to Lincoln

ALEX

Your mother needs to know me too. I'm tired of hiding. And I shouldn't have to.

LINCOLN

Are you sure? You're my friend, Alex, and I don't want to lose you. What happens if she takes me away?

ALEX

Welcome to my world. But if she can't accept me for who I am, then, well, it wouldn't be the first time.

Alex looks at Lincoln, then follows Margery into the tent.

ACT II, SCENE 10. Inside the tent

The stage is empty of scenery, band, and show lighting. Margery and Peter are talking in the center. Heloise seems to be waiting for Alex as he stops in confusion.

ALEX

What happened to the show?

HELOISE

Only our son Astrolabe could say. The show becomes what it needs to be, just like us. Now go become what you need to be.

ALEX

He turns and walks to face Margery.
Mrs. Foster?

Margery turns away from Heloise and Peter, the only others still on stage, to whom she was speaking.

MARGERY

Yes, Alex?

ALEX

I need to trust you too. Can I?

MARGERY

Of course, sweetheart.

Alex looks at Heloise and Peter. Peter smiles and nods

HELOISE

Be brave, Alex. You have waited so long for this.

ALEX

I am a boy, but I wasn't entirely born that way.

MARGERY

What?... Oh... my!

ALEX

Yeah. I figured...

MARGERY

No. That's not it, Alex. I saw a ghost today, and now I know why. Abbey was in my dance class when I was young. She had her own secret, and no one was there for her when- No one would talk about her after - like she never was. I swore I would never forget her, but I did, until today. I was too young to help her, but I can help you now. Maybe Abbey sent you to me. Perhaps you are her second chance. I don't know, but if you tell me you are a boy, you are a boy. Nothing else matters. More than that, you can be family if you want, then we can always be there for you.

ALEX

(hesitantly)
What? You mean like... stay with you? You barely know me.

MARGERY

Oh, sweet child. If chaos brings you to our door, I am honored to let you in.

She takes a step toward Alex, but he backs up, then looks between her and Lincoln.

LINCOLN

Alex?

Alex looks at him with an almost frightened, pleading look on his face.

ALEX

Don't lie. Swear to me, you mean it.

LINCOLN

Alex. It's okay. No one is lying to you now. This is real.

SONG #21 BROKEN/IN THE DARK REPRISE (LINCOLN, ALEX, MARGERY, HELOISE)

I see who you're born to be, and I'm right here with you. You're home, brother.

Alex still doesn't move but begins to cry silently. Margery steps forward to hug him, and again, he backs up, conflicted in his emotions. Margery kneels before him and sings to him.

MARGERY

Oh, Alex.

EVERY STORY HAS TO START SOMEWHERE
EVERY ROAD WE TRAVEL CALLS FOR THE WILL TO CARRY ON.
THOUGH WE MIGHT FEAR THE FUTURE
AND THE PAIN OF LOST ILLUSION
WITH COURAGE, WE CAN DANCE AT EVERY DAWN

Lincoln walks up behind him and puts a hand on Alex's shoulder. Alex flinches slightly and looks at Lincoln.

ALEX

IT'S COLD AND EMPTY IN THE DARK,
BUT AT LEAST NO ONE CAN SEE ME WHEN I'M TOO WEAK TO FIGHT.
I'M TIRED OF HIDING IN THE DARK,
BUT SCARED TO FACE WHAT'S OUT THERE IN THE LIGHT.

LINCOLN

SO THEN, WE GO ON WALKING TO WHEREVER PEACE IS WAITING,
TRUSTING THAT WE'LL FIND THAT PLACE WE SOMEHOW KNOW IS THERE.
'COUSE IF WE HOLD EACH OTHER UP AND WALK THAT PATH TOGETHER,
WE'LL FIND OUR SORROW LIGHTER WHEN OUR SORROW WE ALL SHARE.

Alex joins in, his voice breaking with emotion.

LINCOLN, ALEX

MAYBE WE'LL FIND WE CAN GO ON WHEN WE'VE BEEN BROKEN.
I KNOW WE'LL RISE UP TO THE CLOUDS AGAIN SOMEDAY.
IF WE SING EACH OTHER'S SONGS WHEN NO WORDS CAN BE SPOKEN,
THEN MAYBE WE CAN ALL STILL FIND OUR WAY.

MARGERY

THERE'S NO MORE LIVING IN THE DARK
SO, FROM MY HEART TO YOURS, I SAY
----- EACH OTHER'S SONGS WHEN NO WORDS
CAN BE SPOKEN,
THEN MAYBE WE CAN ALL STILL FIND OUR WAY.

LINCOLN

(Looks at Alex with concern.)
Alex?

Finally, Alex breaks and lets them hug him, and after a moment, he hugs back, letting his emotions loose.

HELOISE

Hold your banner high, Alex, and do not fear the storm, for we stand with you and will hold you fast.

Just like Alex, all the tent walls peel away and drop, revealing the cast and a sun in a starfield upstage. The tent ceiling on stage flies up out of sight.

THE CAST, LED BY HELOISE

HELOISE

WHEN WE REALIZE THAT EVERYONE IS BROKEN,
THEN WE CAN ALL BE THERE TO HELP EACH OTHER HEAL.

PETER

WE CAN HOLD EACH OTHER TIGHTLY, FORGIVING PAST
MISTAKES.

ROBERTA

IF WE CAN LIFT EACH OTHER HIGHER WHEN THE FLOOD OF
HATRED BREAKS,

CHARLEY

IF WE CAN BRING EACH OTHER PIECES OF THE SHATTERED
WORLD MOSAIC,

HELOISE

WE CAN JUST BE LOVING, FOR EACH OTHER'S SAKE.

George walks over from the side and climbs up onto a box so his shadow, Astrolabe's shadow, is silhouetted against the sun as he speaks as the word sake fades.

GEORGE

(Spoken over music)

And so good friends, our tale is done, our
muses have mused, and our songs of been sung.

The tent of stars we'll pack and stow, but
just one thing before we go.

Riches and power are but gifts of blind fate,
whereas goodness you must initiate.

So be good, do good, and let love prevail.
It's all up to you, the course that you sail.

But if you live in limbo still, take the love
and hope that our blessings fill.

Our hearts are open; our hands are out; you
each have worth; this never doubt.

Now-

He spreads his arms in a wide embrace, and the music stops dead. With a rushing sound, the stars extend from the stage to encompass the entire theater. It's Astrolabe's voice that echoes around the theater.

ASTROLABE

-go change the world.

George climbs down as the orchestra comes back full and more up-tempo.

CAST

TIME TO MAKE TIME

Repeat

LINCOLN, ALEX, MARGERY

TO RECLAIM THE JOY IN YOUR HEART!

The orchestra builds to a crescendo as Alex is lifted up to "stand" on Lincoln's shoulders in front of the blazing star by the cast.

ALEX

We are Astrolabe!

(END OF SONG)

BLACKOUT.

*

#16a - BOWS / EXIT MUSIC
(Onstage Band)

The cast takes bows as the song becomes an overture. When it comes to the orchestra's turn to take a bow, the drummer breaks out in a solo that the rest of the band joins with a danceoff to the OBTDB. Then, as the curtain descends, Alex runs to the lip of the stage, reaches to the floor, then rises again as the music stops dead just before the crescendo.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Wait!... I found George's button!

Music resumes for the last bars. Alex is trapped outside the scrim as it falls, and he turns to

wave sheepishly at the audience.

(END OF SONG.)

Lincoln runs out to get him, and they exit to one side, waving as they go. After they leave, just as the house lights go up, the sun on the scrim, still shining, becomes a poem.

Just notice.

Notice for a moment.

Before the future slips away
Into ashes and dust of humility.

Stop, be silent, and notice.

In so many ways, we are the same.
Our differences are unique treasures.
We have, we are, a mosaic of gifts.
To nurture, to offer, to accept.
We need to be.
Just be.

September 11, 2001

Matthew Joseph Thaddeus Stepanek 1990 -2004

Our Astrolabe

END OF SHOW