

LIBRETTO

— IN THE —
TENT OF STARS
A Big Tent Musical

Book and Lyrics by
JOHN CORBIN GOLDSBERRY

Music by
JOHN CORBIN GOLDSBERRY
and JAY GAUMER

Dramaturgy by **Personnel's Name**
Music Supervision by **Personnel's Name**
Arrangements by **Personnel's Name**

Direction by
MISS HAZEL JADE

WRITERS' DRAFT
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To enquire about this musical, email: info@misshazeljade.com

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

LINCOLN FOSTER: A YOUNG, CIS BRITISH BOY, APPROXIMATELY 12 OR 14 YEARS OLD. 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 them, but comes back to offer him stardom near the end of Act One—making him choose between two negatives. (Must be a brilliant dancer and have an innocent yet strong standard pop/rock MT voice – high tenor.)

ALEX Twelve-ish, American trans boy. Any ethnicity. A mysterious, amiable, but ragged boy who travels with the troupe as an entertainer and popcorn vendor. An 'Artful Dodger' type who 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 be a brilliant dancer [including ballet, tap, acrobatic] and have a steady and very fun, but also powerful and innocent soulful MT voice with powerful pop notes – countertenor.)

MARGERY FOSTER: Mid-to-late thirties. British. Lincoln's mom. A former West End & 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 be a mover and have a fiercely-strong modern MT voice with a unique alternative folk falsetto – mezzo-soprano.)

CHARLEY: Mid-to-late twenties. American Midwest. A tall, lanky dancer and comedian trying to

decide between family and entertainment. (Must be a brilliant dance [including tap] and have a playful MT voice with a crisp rock belt – baritenor.)

ROBERTA: Thirties. Caribbean Black. A snazzy woman with great skill in singing and dancing, coupled with stage illusions. She uses the irony of her stage name, 'Madam Raven', to take her power back from racial prejudice and plant seeds of hope. (Must be a strong dancer or mover and have both a strong 1920s jazzy voice with a round pop belt and a strong, folksy voice – alto or contralto.)

HÉLOÏSE DU PARACLETE: French. Her age is quite ambiguous, as she's technically been dead for 800 years. Along with Peter, she's the leader of the troupe and the 'stage mom' of the entire show. She does everything from props to costumes to wrangling of the bunch. Secretly, a 12th-century French writer, scholar, and abbess, the latter against her will. Mother to Astrolabe, now lost to her in time. (This part is intended for an older performer with some dance movement and a seasoned voice.)

PETER ABELARD: French. Like Heloise, he's difficult to date. Married to Heloise. He's the emcee, road manager, and director. Also, the 800-year-old medieval French scholastic philosopher, leading logician, theologian, teacher, musician, composer, and poet. Our Peter was castrated by Heloise's father after having their child, Astrolabe, whom the tent theatre is named after. He laments his only child, whom he hardly got to know. (Must be a mover doing a bit of tap, and have a strong, traditional MT voice – baritone, also intended for an older yet energetic performer.)

GEORGE: Fifties, A troupe member who plays multiple roles. Though he plays a rather stern and stuff-looking in the Pre-Show, he's a comedic yet surprising performer who does impersonations of Abraham Lincoln and Mark Twain. We come to discover he is the assumed image of Peter and Heloise's long-lost son, Astrolabe. (Must be a dancer and have a soulful, fluid pop/rock MT voice – tenor.)

OLIVER FOSTER: Late thirties, early forties. British. Margery's estranged husband and Lincoln's father. 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. He is really just broken himself, but can't yet admit it. (Powerful MT voice-Baritone.)

ASTROLABE, a projection/video shadow of the child Heloise and Peter left behind.

TIME & PLACE

A dusty, northwestern Missouri town. Circa mid-summer of 1918.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

#00	Historical Recordings Edison Player	Pre-Show	1
#00a	A Stroll in the Park(Margery, Oliver)	Pre-Show	1
#00b	An Old Friend	Prologue	1
#00c	Make Time Prelude	I-1	2
#01	Time to Make Time (Pt. 1)(Cast)	I-1	2
#01a	Building the Tent	I-1	3
#01b	Time to Make Time (Pt. 2)(Cast)	I-1	3
#01c	Watching Alex Leave	I-2	6
#02	Theatre Kid (Lincoln)	I-2	8
#03	I Don't Know What It Is (Charley)	I-2	11
#04a	Washington Post March	I-4	17
#04b	Sousa Is So U.S.A.(Peter, Charley)	I-4	19
#05	Magic in My Life (Roberta)	I-5	23
#06	A Hope Carol (Margery)	I-6	27
#07	In the Dark Tango (Margery, Oliver)	I-7	30
#09	The Obligatory Dance Bit (Charley, Peter)	I-9	34
#10	In the Dark (Alex)	I-9	36
#00b	Entr'acte	Intermission	39
#11	Broken (Lincoln, Alex)	II-1	40
#11a	Broken Underscore	II-1	41
#12	The Deep End (Charley, Lincoln, Alex)	II-1	42
#13	Dance at Every Dawn (Edison Player)	II-2	45
#14	In the Dark (Margery)	II-3	48
#15	Regarding Chaos (Heloise)	II-3	50
#16a	Silly Me (Roberta)	II-4	54
#15b	Clever Me (Roberta)	II-4	55
#17	If Ever the Twain You Should Meet(George)	II-5	59
#18	The Inside Me (Alex)	II-6	64
#00a	The Inside Me (Reprise/Underscore.)	II-6	65
#19	A Joyful Heart (Margery, Lincoln, Alex)	II-7	66
#20	In the Dark (Lincoln Reprise)	II-9	70
#00	Finale Ultimo (Company)	II-10	72
#00a	Bows Company, Orchestra	II-10	74

#22	We're All Okay, O.K.? (Full Cast)	II-10		74
#24	Exit Music (Edison Player)	II-10		76

MUSICAL FORCES

Orchestra (13 Players plus Recorded
Augmentation)

Brass

1. Cornet/Trumpet
2. Flugelhorn
3. Tenor Horn (or French Horn)
4. Euphonium

Woodwinds

5. Reed I (Flute/Piccolo/Oboe)
6. Reed II (Bassoon/Clarinet/Bass Clarinet)

Keyboards & Percussion

7. Piano/Conductor
8. Keyboards (historical keyboards, synthesizer, and specialty patches,
including bandoneon as required)
9. Percussion

Strings & Folk

10. Violin
11. Cello
12. Upright Bass
13. Banjo (doubling mandolin and banjo-uke)

Additional Musical Elements

- Prerecorded Edison cylinder playback in selected scenes
- Prerecorded banjo ensemble in selected sequences
- Supplemental prerecorded textures as indicated

- Onstage Martin Horn Chorus performed by ensemble members in designated passages
- Historical keyboard and specialty instrumental colors, including the Stroh violin, Lautenwerck, tack piano, and bandoneon as required

Note on Instrumentation

The score combines the sonority of a traditional British-style brass band with folk, chamber, mechanically amplified period colors, and theatrical sound devices. Certain sequences incorporate prerecorded material, historical instruments, and staged musical effects as part of the storytelling.

Note on the Stroh Violin

The Stroh violin is a mechanically amplified late-19th-century violin fitted with a metal horn rather than a traditional wooden body. Known for its bright, highly directional sound, it is used here as a distinctive period color.

Note on the Lautenwerck

The Lautenwerck (also spelled lautenwerk), also known as the lute-harpsichord or keyboard lute, is a keyboard instrument similar to a harpsichord but strung with gut rather than metal strings. This produces a softer, mellower, more lute-like sound than the traditional harpsichord.

Note on the Tack Piano

The tack piano is a piano whose hammers have been modified to produce a bright, brittle, percussive tone. Often associated with saloon, ragtime, and early mechanical piano sounds, it is used in the player piano sequence in "Silly Me."

Note on the Martin Horn Chorus

Certain ensemble performers operate Martin horns onstage using simplified notational diagrams as part of the staging.

ACT ONE

PRE-SHOW.

#00 - HISTORICAL RECORDINGS (*Incidental*)
(Edison Player) .

(In front of the scrim is a CYLINDER PHONOGRAPH with an oversized broadcast horn. GEORGE winds it up and changes the songs while a magic lantern show is projected overhead. He never speaks, but uses physical comedy with reactions to the songs, slides, and audience. The last song is...)

#00a - A STROLL IN THE PARK WITH YOU.
(Pre-Recorded)

PROLOGUE.

#00b - AN OLD FRIEND (*Dance Sequence*)
(Band Offstage) .

The song fades into a scratchy thin recording which is shallowed up by a wistful 3/4 time music box overture based on "In the Dark." As we witness a dance tableau. George stands to one side and never looks at the scene, only the audience. GEORGE takes a bow as the scene fades away.

(To be confirmed...)

STROBE INTO:

ACT I, SCENE 1. A Field Next to a Midwestern Street
(circa 1918)

#00c - MAKE TIME PRELUDE (Underscore)
(Band Onstage) .

(As George wheels the Edison Player off, and the final slide shows the photo of two show wagons with the Band and cast sitting in a small town street. Fade in behind the scrim in reveal the image as a live tableau – with dancers as the horses. As the scrim rises, ALEX hops out of the wagon and crosses down to the lip, addressing the audience. The Band Platform glides offstage.)

ALEX

(through a megaphone)
Treasured friends, and friends to be,
Come out 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*!

(Four CHORUS MEMBERS distribute flyers to the audience, which advertise the two nights of shows.)

CHORUS MEMBER 1 .

Verse 1
THERE'S A BRAND NEW DAY
THAT'S LIFTING ABOVE YOUR HORIZON...

CHORUS

MEMBER 2
TIME TO WAKE UP TO WHAT
THE NEW DAY HAS IN STORE.

CHORUS

MEMBER 3
OPEN YOUR EYES TO THE WONDER
THAT'S LIVING AROUND YOU...

CHORUS

MEMBER 4
OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE LOVE
THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOURS.

COMPANY

AND YOU CAN FIND YOUR JOY!

(CHARLEY – dancer and comedian – hops out of the wagon next. He moves downstage.)

CHARLEY

ENSEMBLE

Verse 2
WAKE UP THAT SLEEPY HEAD;
DRAG YOUR CARCASS OUT OF BED.
CHOSE A BRAND NEW PATH INSTEAD OF...
DREAMING YOUR LIFE AWAY.

DREAMING YOUR LIFE AWAY.

PLEASANT AS YOUR DREAMS MAY BE,
OPEN UP YOUR EYES TO SEE
EV'RYTHING THAT YOU CAN BE IS...
ONLY THE BEGINNING, IT SEEMS.

ONLY THE BEGINNING, IT SEEMS.

(The music swells, and ROBERTA a/k/a 'Madam Raven' – the show's illusionist – steps forward.)

ROBERTA

ENSEMBLE.

Verse 3

YOU'VE BEEN TOILING AWAY
WITH YOUR HEAD DOWN... DAY AFTER DAY.
NOW, YOU COULD SAY THAT IT'S...
TIME FOR ANOTHER VIEW.

TIME FOR ANOTHER VIEW.

LIFT YOUR EYES TO THE SKY;
THEN, MAYBE SOON– IF WE ALL TRY,
YOU CAN FIND SOMETHING NEW...
YOU CAN FIND YOUR JOY!

YOU CAN FIND YOUR JOY!
YOU CAN FIND YOUR JOY!

COMPANY

Chorus 1

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

$\frac{1}{2}$ of **ENSEMBLE**

OTHER $\frac{1}{2}$ of ENSEMBLE

Refrain 1

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

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

(The vocals continue once under...)

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*!

(**ATTACCA:**)

#01a - BUILDING THE TENT (Underscore)

(Band Offstage) .

(Then, as a percussive underscore kicks in, the Tent Cast gets busy, setting up their operation. Lincoln trots inside the tent – where, all around him, is the bustling activity of the Roustabouts, preparing to raise the tent. He ducks and swerves to avoid the activity. HELOISE and PETER – the tent show's hosts – walk in for the first time.)

HELOISE

Lincoln! Unless you'd rather spend the next two days under the stage, you had best get out of the way.

HELOISE (CONT'D)

(The Band Platform glides back in – the full band intact.)

Look sharp, everyone. Only four hours 'til curtain!

(DIRECT SEGUE:)

(The Roustabouts drive stakes into the ground. The canvas background is hoisted up, footlights are set. The oleo frame is placed – and the tent ceiling flies in, speckled with glowing stars.)

(HELOISE)

Verse 4

ANOTHER DAY... ANOTHER OPENING NIGHT!
ANOTHER SHOW, A MILLION THINGS TO GET RIGHT.
BETWEEN THE CHAIRS AND THE STAGE AND THE LIGHTS,
AND GOD FORBID, IF THERE IS 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 LET THEM ALL WANDER 'TIL THEY FIGURE IT OUT?

HELOISE

Verse 5

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

PETER

We *could* be wrong.

HELOISE

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

PETER

Verse 6

SO, THAT'S OUR MOTIVATION...
SO, *THIS* IS OUR VOCATION.
AND SO, IT KEEPS US FIXED 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, ALTHOUGH THE PHRASE IS RATHER TRITE.

HELOISE

PETER.

Verse 7

THE SHOW MUST GO ON...
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

...IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

HELOISE..

WHAT WOULD THE WORLD BE LIKE
WITHOUT THE LAUGHTER AND SONG?

IN THE COLD, GREY ABYSS
THAT WOULD BE LEFT WITHOUT US...

PETER..

...WITHOUT THE LAUGHTER AND SONG?

COMPANY

(a cappella, with only percussion)

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITH OURSELVES?

Chorus 2

WE'RE BRINGING HOPE.
WE'RE BRINGING LOVE!
WE'RE BRINGING TWO DAY TO SPEND
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES AROUND YOU!
WE'RE BRINGING LAUGHTER.
WE'RE BRINGING PEACE!
WE'RE BRINGING TIME,
TO MAKE TIME FOR THE ONES
THAT YOU...

(Then, the Band onstage returns full force...)

...HOLD TO YOUR HEART!

Chorus 3

WE'RE BRINGING HOPE.
WE'RE BRINGING LOVE!
WE'RE BRINGING TWO DAY TO SPEND
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES AROUND YOU!

COMPANY.

WE'RE BRINGING LAUGHTER.
WE'RE BRINGING PEACE!
WE'RE BRINGING TIME,
TO MAKE TIME FOR THE ONES
THAT YOU HOLD TO YOUR HEART!

ALEX.

*(shouting into the megaphone
downstage)*
WE ARE ASTROLABE!

*(On the button, the oleo flies over the Band that reads: THE
ASTROLABE THEATER COMPANY.)*

(END OF SONG.)

*(Everyone disperses, going their own ways, as the Band
Platform glides off.)*

FADE INTO:

ACT I, SCENE 2. Inside the Tent (*moments later*)

(George quick steps onstage, dressed like Abraham Lincoln, minus pants – those he carries on his arm.)

GEORGE

Heloise!

HELOISE

Yes, George?

GEORGE

I've lost a button. I can't play Lincoln without pants! Do we have time to fix them?

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 smaller Lincoln . . . ALEX?

(A boy in a cap and knickers breaks off from the roustabouts.)

ALEX

Yes?

HELOISE

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

ALEX

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

HELOISE

(handing the pants off to Alex)

Always the blessing you are. Thank you, dear.

(As he runs off, Alex runs into Lincoln lingering.)

ALEX

Woah. Why are you still here? You don't belong in here, kid. You need to collect your ticket and come back tonight.

(He passes Lincoln off to George.)

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

(Alex exits.)

#01c - WATCHING ALEX LEAVE (Underscore)

(Band Offstage) .

LINCOLN

(softly to himself)

But I do belong.

(Lincoln's mother, MARGERY, enters from the opposite direction.)

MARGERY

Lincoln?

Yes? **LINCOLN**

Yes? **GEORGE**

MARGERY

The younger 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 cant keep disrupting things.

LINCOLN

But I want to help. I want to be a part of this.

MARGERY

They don't need your help. You need to study - and do something that'll give you a real future. Something that isn't just cheap canvas painted to look real . . . My brother - your uncle - is setting you up to attend the Milton Academy this fall. If you do well, you can join my father's law firm when you graduate Harvard.

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 time and again. I never get to say anything.

MARGERY

Because you're a child.

(A beat.)

Is this where you want to end up when you've grown? Playing in some dusty town you won't even remember the name of next month? Living out of cheap hotels and boarding houses? This will not be your future - I won't let it.

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, then maybe you would know.

MARGERY

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

(Margery walks away, leaving a sad Lincoln sitting off in the corner. She approaches the cluster of Peter, Charley, and Roberta. For her part, Roberta breaks off and meets her with a smile.)

ROBERTA

Mrs. Foster! I am very pleased to have you with us. I was feeling somewhat overpowered by the old boys club, fine individuals that they are. I'm Roberta - known professionally as 'Madam Raven'.

MARGERY

Thank you very much. And please, call me 'Margery'. I'm looking forward to seeing your act . . . This is all so new to me.

ROBERTA

I should imagine so. You're not the usual caliber of entertainer to be found in a company such as ours. It's a boon to us, but I can't help but think this was not a life goal for you . . . I won't pry, but... please, do not hesitate to call on me for anything I can do to help . . . We are a congenial ensemble.

MARGERY

That's very sweet of you to offer. Really. It is no secret that my husband and I have separated . . . The Times wasted no effort in letting the world know. The invitation to join you here seemed to arrive at the most opportune moment.

(Peter stands on a small riser with a clipboard and a raised voice to get everyone's attention. The Band Platform glides in, listening along with the others.)

PETER

Gather 'round everyone, and lets get this started. Is everyone doing well?

(The Troupe murmurs amongst themselves to the affirmative.)

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. 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 had the pleasure of hearing her yet, your lives are the poorer for it. Margery Foster has been one of the biggest and brightest personalities on the Broadway stage these last few years, and is gracing us with her presence, for the first time, tonight.

(Everyone polite claps.)

Now, this will slightly re-order the show, as we are moving her to the Prime for her debut . . . So we're moving George to the two, and Robert to the third. After Margery in four, the players skit will take five. Then, the special. And finally the Dragoons fronting the first night closer . . . Any problems there?

HELOISE

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

PETER

That's what I want to hear. Any old business?

GEORGE

Just me.

PETER

I have collected the mail from the depot, so check with me when you can . . . Thank you all. Tomorrow will be business as usual, so everyone... break a leg.

(As the assemblage files out, the Band onstage is silhouetted behind the oleo - where we hear...)

CONDUCTOR

Take it from the top.

(A pool of light fades in around Lincoln, still sitting where he was left, alone in the negative space.)

LINCOLN

Intro

THE WORLD WON'T FILL MY DREAMS
IT CAN'T FEEL MY HEART
IF SOMEONE KNEW, WHAT I WANT
WOULD THING CHANGE?
COULD THINGS CHANGE?

Verse 1

CAN YOU SEE ME?
I'M LIKE... NO ONE YOU'VE EVER MET AT ALL.
DO YOU KNOW ME?
I'M THE 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.

Verse 2

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 AN OLD GUITAR IN A HOTEL ROOM?
AND HE WRITES AND SINGS THEM,
THOUGH THERE'S NO ONE TO SING THEM TO.

Refrain 1

YOU MIGHT LIKE ME IF YOU TRY...
THOUGH I MIGHT COME OFF AS KIND-OF SHY.
I'M TIRED OF BEING SAD AND LONELY...
I'M NOT STUPID, BAD, OR HOMELY.
I'M VERY KIND,
AND CAN'T HELP IT WHEN I CRY...
'CAUSE I'M A THEATRE KID INSIDE.

Verse 3

YOU LOVE TO QUOTE YOUR PLAYS,
THOUGH I'M THE ONE WHO LIVES THEM.
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.
WHEN NO ONE'S THERE,
WHERE NO ONE CARES... FOR ME.

Verse 4

YEAH, I KNOW IT.
YOU SAY, 'DON'T RUN BEFORE YOU CRAWL, KID.'
BUT IT'S IN ME.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

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 SOMEWHERE...
WHATEVER THAT BRINGS.

Refrain 2

BUT I COULD SMILE,
'CAUSE I'VE GOT FRIENDS
THAT KNEW AT LEAST I TRIED...
'CAUSE I'M A THEATRE KID INSIDE.

The Build

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE
TO GO THROUGH LIFE *INVISIBLE*?
SO PARDON ME,
BUT I AM NOT *DISMISSIBLE*!

*(The Band Platform fades out, as it slowly glides offstage,
leaving Lincoln truly alone.)*

Bridge

I'D BE BRAVE IF I THOUGHT THAT SOMEONE CARED;
I'D SCRAWL MY NAME IN THE FLY LOFT SOMEWHERE.
AND I'D SHOW YOU, JUST TO PROVE THAT I WAS THERE!

Coda

BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT ME... THAT'S OKAY;
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY.
I'LL STILL HOLD MY HEAD UP,
AND I WILL SAY WITH PRIDE...
I'M STILL A THEATRE KID *INSIDE*!

(END OF SONG.)

*(Lights come up to show a confused Lincoln somehow sitting
backstage now.)*

What?..How...?

*Charley steps in from the tent flap, and Lincoln suddenly
realizes he is not alone after all.)*

CHARLEY

You got a great set of pipes, kid. Granted, most people sing those
songs in their head.

LINCOLN

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

CHARLEY

It's a tent. People could hear you in the next field over.

(He extends a long lanky arm.)

I'm Charley, by the way. I sing and dance, and at least *some* people
think I do comedy as well.

LINCOLN

Pleased to meet you. I'm Lincoln. My parents are Margery... and
Oliver, Foster . . . Well, I think. I never get to see my father
anymore.

CHARLEY

He's still your pop . . . Do ya miss him?

LINCOLN

I don't know. I think I do. But he lied to me. And Mother won't talk about him at all anymore – or let me, either.

CHARLEY

Because it hurts, Lincoln. *She's* in pain, too. And dollars-to-doughnuts, that's why she's here with you now. She could be on a Broadway stage instead, but she's hiding in a place she doesn't want to be... from a situation she's having to learn to deal with – and she's hiding you with her . . . But you've both got something the world needs, so you ended up with us.

LINCOLN

We're here because Mother got a letter in the mail.

CHARLEY

Out of nowhere? At just the perfect time? For a show she would never be in otherwise?

LINCOLN

What does that mean?

CHARLEY

What does that mean? . . . *Hmph.* How do I explain this? . . . Follow me.
(*Lincoln follows Charley through the curtain to the lip of the stage.*)

LINCOLN

I was just out here, and then I was backstage. I don't remember how I got there.

CHARLEY

Welcome to the tent. That's where it wanted you, I guess. Now look at it and tell me what you see.

LINCOLN

It's just an old tent. It's got spots on the canvas... with no paint. So, the sun shines through to light 'em all up... like stars.

CHARLEY

It's a very old tent, Lincoln. And I don't know if you've ever noticed, but the older some things get, the more real they become. I think this tent is more than it seems. When the sun goes down, those stars still shine.

LINCOLN

Really? How?

CHARLEY

Good question. The nearest I can figure is that just on the other side of the canvas is some sort of limbo. That's what's really shining through.

LINCOLN

I think I see it. It's like a whole universe, isn't it.

CHARLEY

Bingo. You understand. Finding your way through that universe is what the Astrolabe's tent is really for.

LINCOLN

Oh, I get it. Astrolabe! One of those old things they used to use to tell where stars and stuff are in the sky.

CHARLEY

Right again. Where the shadows fall point to where you need to go. We are in the umbra recta, the shadow square of the sun, the shadow that points to the light. Your mother and you are not here by accident. You were sent here, just like the rest of us.

LINCOLN

Sent? By who?

CHARLEY

I have no idea, We're here because we need to be here. For some reason, this tent understands us, and sometimes puts us where we need to be. (pointing back stage) So trust it. You are not invisible here. I see you Lincoln Foster, and I have a strong feeling that, by the time this is over, everyone else will too.

During this, CHARLEY walks to the tent flap, and pushes it back to walk out.

LINCOLN

What about you?

CHARLEY

What do you mean?

LINCOLN

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

CHARLEY

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

CHARLEY crosses to the piano

That was my big dramatic moment!

CHARLEY sits on the piano keys, producing a cacophonous, dramatic punctuation mark. He stands back up so stops quickly.

The truth is, I'm more of a wise-guy than wise. Most of that 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 we're here because we're stuck.

LINCOLN

Stuck?

CHARLEY

Yeah, stuck. Somewhere along the road, we got mired down in life. Now we all live here in this waiting room trying to figure it all out. Some of us are here for a little while, some for a long time.

LINCOLN

So, what about you? Why are you here?

CHARLEY

Charley sits down at the piano bench and begins to play.

I've been working on that one.

I KINDA WANDERED IN ONE DAY
AND NEVER WANDERED OUT.
I WAS FEELIN' KINDA AIMLESS
AND MY FUTURE SEEMED IN DOUBT

I WAS ALWAYS GOOD AT EVERYTHING
THAT MATTERED MOST TO ME
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING MISSING I'M NOT SURE
THAT I CAN DO WITHOUT.

I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR THE ANSWER
TO MY QUANDARY,
SO MAYBE YOU CAN HELP AND FIND
THE THINGS I CANNOT SEE

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS
OR EVEN IF I OUGHT TO CARE
IT'S RIGHT THERE ON THE EDGE
WHERE I'M COMPLETELY UNAWARE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT ISN'T THERE.
SO I CAN'T COMPLAIN AND SHRUG AND SAY
"IT REALLY ISN'T FAIR."
OF THE KNOWLEDGE SOMETHING AUGHT TO BE
I'M PAINFULLY AWARE
IF YOU DON'T KNOW THAT IT EXISTS,
DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN REALLY MISS
OR WOULD YOU LIVE WITHIN YOUR BLISS
AND MAKE YOURSELF OBLIVIOUS
WOULD IT DISRUPT YOUR SENSE OF
SAVIOIR-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 an instrumental break and LINCOLN dances a soft shoe.)

And he dances too!

BEFUDDLEMENT BECOMES ME
AS YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE
I SHOULD BE PROUD TO 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 MAKE MY WORLD BRIGHT

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 INVESTIGATION
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 OUGHT TO CARE
BUT I PROMISE I WILL NOT GIVE IN
TO SADNESS OR DESPAIR
AND 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.

CHARLEY stands.

Now, if you don't mind, I will once again attempt my dramatic exit as I walk over here while making idle chatter. When I reach the tent flap, I shall turn 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." Come on. Let's get a soda pop.

He holds the flap open for LINCOLN to exit. CHARLEY notices that LINCOLN'S SHADOW has remained on the oleo. A shadow theme plays as it turns and seems to become smoke. CHARLEY cocks his head slightly, then exits after LINCOLN.

BLACKOUT

ACT I, SCENE 3. Among the Audience

The houselights come up a bit, and a follow spot falls on ALEX coming down the center aisle. He has an old fashioned SNACK TREY and a CHANGE DISPENSERS at his waist. This is a more or less extemporaneous scene, with ALEX wearing his earpiece and being fed lines from backstage. The idea is to make it clear to the theatre goers that they are playing the part of the tent audience waiting for the show to start. He really is selling little greasy lunch bags full of popcorn for five cents, and one really does contain a prize that hopefully will get shared on the winners social media. This is an example of such a sequence.

ALEX

Popcorn! Five cents a bag. Popcorn!. Only a nickel!

He looks around the room

What? None of you got a nickel? One of these bags has a genuine diamond pin. Really! Probably. Popcorn! Get it while its...sort of warm.

If someone from the balcony yells for one, he can look at them in exasperation and say

Who do I look like, Ty Cobb? Give me a break.

If someone tosses a nickel down...

You're very trusting you know.

At this point, he can try and lob it up himself, or get someone from the audience to try. There are different replies for different scenarios. This can go on for a bit, then he calls out...

Who got the prize? Show'em what you won! Wear it proudly! Share it loudly! A dime in pin. A safety pin poked through a dime?

Pausing for groans and silence.

Wow! Take it out on a little kid!

If there's a celebrity in the audience he can hand over a free bag and say in a deadpan....

Surprise. Big wigs get free stuff.

He gives them a wink and a smile. After a bit, he crawls up on the stage as boys will do and pitches whatever is left to people in the audience, reserving one bag.

Nobody wants leftovers. Don't rat me out.

If there a pit, he can look down.

Look! It's the mole people! They never see sunlight so they're ghostly white!

Finally, he ducks behind the scrim, where we see him backstage. LINCOLN is sitting on a steamer trunk, and ALEX walks up to him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey kid. Sorry about the whole "you don't belong here" thing. They usually get some local to hold the sign in exchange for a ticket. I figured you just wandered into the tent afterwards. I'm Alex.

LINCOLN

I'm Lincoln. A pleasure.

ALEX

Of course it is. Have a popcorn.

LINCOLN

Thanks. (*Takes the bag*) Is that your job here?

ALEX

One of 'em. I do a lot of odd jobs and bits in the show. I heard you sing. You're great

LINCOLN

Apparently, everybody could hear it. Great first impression. Crazy kid singing to himself in the tent.

ALEX

It's theatre. Trust me, bustin' out'n song is normal around here. So you want to do shows?

LINCOLN

You bet. Father always brags to his friends that I would follow in his footsteps. He has very big footsteps. Mother wants me to be a lawyer and wouldn't let me have anything to do anything in New York, but maybe, if she gets to know everyone here, she'll let me do something in the show like you. Are you're parents in the show?

ALEX

Na. My folks are gone. Heloise and Peter, that's the owners, in case you haven't met 'em yet, took me in, so I just sorta travel with the show now, and they give me stuff to do. Theatre's a weird life, but the show's fun to do.

LINCOLN

Do lots of people come to see it?

ALEX

They sure do. Most of these little farm towns don't have a theatre, so when we show up, it's a big deal. We do two days of shows, both different, then move to a new town and do it all over again.

LINCOLN

Sounds hard.

ALEX

It's worth it. This is family now. You'll love it too.

LINCOLN

I may not be here long if I get shipped off to prep school.

ALEX

Well, whatever happens, ya got one friend already.

ALEX holds his hand out and LINCOLN shakes it.

LINCOLN

Thanks Alex. Me too.

ALEX

Tell ya what, the shows gona start in just a minute, so keep your seat there and you can watch the show from backstage, or backtent, I guess. I've gotta change for a magic bit, but then I can watch the rest with you and fill you in on the rest of the bunch.

*ALEX exits through an upstage tent marked **Private**, leaving LINCOLN on the trunk with his popcorn. The light crossfades out.*

ACT I, SCENE 4. The Show Begins

A spot comes up on MC PETER. He doffs his top hat to the crowd. Flanking him are two HERALDS with a soprano and a baritone MARTINSHORNS.

PETER

My dearest new friends, patrons, and honored guests, welcome one and welcome from the entire Astrolabe family. The bright spots in the firmament reflect the light in all of us, and tonight, some of those shall shine their brightest for you. These are stars indeed. Welcome to our little universe. Welcome to the Tent of Stars.

All the lights go off except the ones shining through the tent. Chorus members whip covers off of "lanterns" hung around the theatre that project even more. The HERALDS play the opening line to THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA. As it crescendos, there is a drum role from the back of the theatre and the Dragoons march in decked out in their hats and capes.

They conclude on the stage where PETER and CHARLEY both stand watching them. The band drops to a drum cadence as the two talk.

PETER (CONT'D)

I just love a good Sousa march, don't you?

CHARLEY

What's not to love? The man is an American icon.

PETER

Well, certainly! It's right there in his name!

CHARLEY

What do you mean?

PETER

Sousa. So USA.

CHARLEY

I don't follow.

PETER

It's a play on words.

CHARLEY

Is that the same thing as a wordy play? No one likes those.

PETER

(Glairing at him.) You know what I mean. They're kind of like homonyms.

CHARLEY

Homonimanies? Homanemandems?

PETER

No! Homonyms. You know, words with more than one meaning. Like well and well.

CHARLEY

Well, well.

PETER

Exactly. It works with names too, like mine. Justin Thyme.

CHARLEY

In time for what?

PETER

No. That's my name.

CHARLEY

Your parents named you Justin Thyme?

PETER

Yes.

CHARLEY

Did you do something to offend them?

PETER

No! Never mind. This is taking too long.

CHARLEY

Don't blame me. Blame your sister Outa.

PETER

The point is that lots of people's names sound like something else. The whole band has names like that.

He points to band members behind him

Bob White!

A bird call sounds.

Eton Doolittle

CHARLEY

My kind of guy.

PETER

Marshal Law.

CHARLEY

I do declare!

PETER

Howie Diditt

CHARLEY

How would I know?

PETER

Know what?

CHARLEY

How he declared marshal law.

PETER

What?

CHARLEY

At least he did it just in time!

CHARLEY mugs for the audience, then something catches his eye and he runs to the lip.

Oooh, look! A dime in pin!

PETER

Will you get back over here?

CHARLEY wanders around as PETER looks perplexed. A pin spot appears on the stage. CHARLEY hurriedly jumps into it. He looks relieved then turns to PETER.

CHARLEY

My mind wandered and I followed it.

CHARLEY just stares at PETER with puppy dog eyes and a timid grin until PETER loses it. This is a bit of scripted corpsing. The trick is to judge the audience reaction up to that point. If they're guffawing already, the character break will just put it over the top. If they are subdued however, just skip the laugh and go on.

PETER

What are you doing?

CHARLEY

I don't know, but they like it.

PETER

Are you done?

CHARLEY

Well done.

PETER

Overdone.

CHARLEY

Yet still rare!

PETER

Thank God. (pause) Where were we?

CHARLEY

Just past the point that this is funny.

PETER

Oh yah. That's it. And what is you're name, pray-tell?

CHARLEY

You still want to do this?

PETER

It's in the script. We have no choice.

CHARLEY

Your dime. My name is Rusty. Rusty Bedsprings.

The band goes silent and looks on in shock.

PETER

I'm not touching that one.

CHARLEY

Wasn't worth the buildup, was it?

PETER

WELL THERE'S NO DOUBT
THAT IN THE ANNALS OF THIS GLORIOUS TIME
THAT ONE NAME STANDS SO HIGH ABOVE THE REST

WHILE GREAT COMPOSERS COME AND GO
THAT MASTER TUNE AND RHYME
AMERICANS NOW HAVE THE VERY BEST

NOW YOU MAY ARGUE BACH OR BRAHMS
OR SHUBERT MAKES THE GRADE
AND I WOULD NOT DENY THEM OF THEIR SKILL

BUT UNTIL I'VE SEEN ONE HUNDRED CELLOS
MARCHING ON PARADE
THERE'S ONE THAT MAKES MY HEART SWELL
AND IT ALWAYS WILL.

FOR JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IS SO U.S.A.
HIS VERY NAME PROCLAIMS IT , AS YOU SEE
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IS THE SHINING LIGHT WE NEED
UNITING US FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA.

CHARLEY

Cheap rhyme.

PETER

IF THE GREAT MEN OF THE WORLD
WERE ASSEMBLED HERE TODAY
THEY'D ALL AGREE ON ONE THING
IT'S A BET.

CHARLEY

It's really crowded.

PETER

THAT WHEN YOU PLAY A MARCH OF HIS
IT CANNOT BE IGNORED
ANS SOON YOU'LL FIND
YOU'RE TAKING UP HIS STEPS

FOR JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IS SO U.S.A.
RED AND WHITE AND BLUE
FLOW THROUGH HIS VEINS
SO PARDON REPETITION
BUT ONCE MORE I HAVE TO SAY,
THAT JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

CHARLEY

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

PETER

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

CHARLEY

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

PETER & CHARLEY

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IS SO U.S.A.

*Tony winning dance brake ala G. M. Cohan. The chorus comes
out in a cheesy flag waving extravaganza.*

CHARLEY

LEST YOU SCOFF AT MARCHES,
KNOW THAT HE WROTE OPERA TOO

CHORUS

(ala Gilbert & Sullivan)

SO HE'S O.K. AND A C.O.D.
AS WELL AS A P.D.Q.

CHARLEY

From Chris and the Wonderful Lamp, Oscar Hammerstein's Victoria
Theatre, New Years Day, 1900. Rave reviews. You should have seen it.

PETER

FOR JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IS SO U.S.A.
RED AND WHITE AND BLUE
FLOW THROUGH HIS VEINS

CHARLEY

SO PARDON REPETITION
BUT ONCE MORE I HAVE TO SAY,

PETER & CHARLEY

THAT JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

Pointing to the audience

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

PETER & CHARLEY (CONT'D)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

Pointing to the audience

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

PETER & CHARLEY (CONT'D)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IS SO U.S.A.

(END OF SONG)

*They take bows, and an oleo rolls down. PETER steps in front
before it does, to the one.*

ACT I, SCENE 5. George's Act at One

Using the old Vaudeville terms, this act takes place before the oleo, (position one) beginning with the first of several crossover bits, while backstage, the magic act is being prepped. (position three.)

PETER

To keep the momentum going, we have--

HELOISE walks in , stage right.

HELOISE

Excuse me dear, but do you have a moment?

PETER

And so much for momentum. This is my wife folks. Pardon the interruption. Heloise? What are you doing out here? I'm in the middle of a show.

HELOISE

That's lovely dear. I'm sure you're doing a good job. I just wanted to tell you that I was going to nip down to the bakery.

PETER

What bakery?

HELOISE

The one run by Mr. and Mrs. Nickels and their son. I just call them fifteen cents. (turns to the audience) Three nickels? (Turns back to PETER) What have you done to these poor people.

PETER

Nothing yet. I haven't had the chance. Why are you going to the bakery now?

HELOISE

I have to be there in time to climb into their big vat of dough.

PETER

Why would you do that?

HELOISE

I like to feel kneaded.

HELOISE exits stage left

PETER

And now, the Astrolabe Theatre Company is proud to present the finest orator this country has ever produced, Mr. Abraham Lincoln.

PETER exits left as GEORGE enters right in his complete Lincoln outfit. He brandishes a walking stick. He walks center, and strikes a dramatic pose, arm extended.

GEORGE

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this nation---

At this moment we hear a ping sound. One footlight explodes in a puff of smoke and GEORGE'S pants fall to his ankles, just as the lights go out onstage. The light come on backstage at the same time where we See LINCOLN and ALEX sitting on the trunk, where they have been watching.

ALEX

I think we saw that one coming.

LINCOLN

Oh dear!

From the onstage darkness, we hear GEORGE valiantly trying to finish, abet faster than normal.

GEORGE

--and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not parish from the earth.

He runs offstage and calls out in a horse whisper--

Alex!

ALEX

Uh-oh. Hide me!

LINCOLN

LINCOLN hops up and opens the trunk.

In here, quick!

ALEX climbs in and LINCOLN closes the lid just as GEORGE clears the legs. His walking stick is thrust through his beltloops. About this time, roustabouts wheel the trunk onto the stage.

GEORGE

Where is he? Where is Alex? He sewed it on? This is one of his jokes, and it is not funny!

LINCOLN

I don't know. I can't see him anywhere. And didn't I hear this has happened before?

GEORGE

IT's not a coincidence. He has a big lesson to learn.

GEORGE storms off, and LINCOLN runs out behind the (sharktooth) oleo and frantically tries to open the trunk. It appears to be locked.

ALEX

Get me out!

LINCOLN

I'm trying! It wont open!

He ducks behind the trunk as Roberta takes her place behind the oleo. The back lights fade out as the illumination shifts to the front, where Peter takes his place as M.C.

PETER

A most revealing reading of the Gettysburg address. And now we take you to the realm of the exotic, the mystical, and the mysterious. Prepare to be amazed. Prepare to be enchanted. Prepare to be wowed by the beautiful and magical Madam Raven!

The oleo rolls up, and the spotlight hits ROBERTA wearing a dark beaded dress with wings attached to her wrists as she moves through various smaller magic tricks as she sings and dances.

ROBERTA

I'VE BEEN AROUND THE WORLD
AND TASTED MUCH OF LIFE.
BUT YET, THERES SOMETHING LEFT
THAT STILL ELUDES ME
I'M NO T THE KIND TO BE
A MOTHER OR A WIFE,
BUT LOVE WAS S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE
AND WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE.

SO I CONJURED UP THE FUTURE
THAT I LONGED FOR
I CAST THE INCANTATIONS
TO BRING THAT LOVE FOR ME.

I BELIEVE IN THE MAGIC THAT IS LOVE
I BELIEVE THAT FATE CONSPIRES
AND ANGELS UP ABOVE
BRING US WHERE WE NEED
TO FIND THE DREAMS
THAT FIT US LIKE A GLOVE
OH I BELIEVE IN LOVE.

I FEEL THAT HEART IS OUT THERE WAITING
I FEEL THE YEARNING IN MY BREAST
OR AM I JUST ANTICIPATING
SOMETHING THAT WOULD LET MY POOR HEART REST.

I NEED THAT MAGIC IN MY LIFE
WE ALL NEED MAGIC IN OUR LIVES
I NEED THE MAGIC THAT LOVE BRINGS
PLEASE BELIEVE ME
SO, IF THEIRS MAGI LEFT TO SET ME FREE
PLEASE FLY TO ME.

She walks to the trunk still singing and turns it around while emoting. She fails to see LINCOLN clinging to the back and panning past the audience with a look of surprise on his face.

Having compiled the turn, she glances down in shock, and tries to wordlessly ask "Where is ALEX?" LINCOLN gestures and ROBERTA attempts to open the trunk, gives up and yanks LINCOLN up with her to sing.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I FEEL THAT HEART IS OUT THERE WAITING

LINCOLN

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING HERE

ROBERTA

I FEEL THE YEARNING IN MY BREAST

LINCOLN

AND NOW SHE'S SINGING 'BOUT HER BREASTS

ROBERTA

OR AM I JUST ANTICIPATING

LINCOLN

THE LOOK UPON MY FACE IS CLEAR

ROBERTA

SOMETHING THAT WOULD LET MY POOR HEART REST.

LINCOLN

IF I COULD GO THAT WOULD BE BEST

ROBERTA

I NEED THAT MAGIC IN ME LIFE

LINCOLN

I'LL SING, BUT I DON'T KNOW THE WORDS

ROBERTA

WE ALL NEED MAGIC IN OUR LIVES

LINCOLN

I'M LOST AND LOOKING QUITE ABSURD

ROBERTA

I NEED THE MAGIC THAT LOVE BRINGS

LINCOLN

AND NOW SHE'S FLAPPING LIKE A BIRD

ROBERTA AND LINCOLN

PLEASE BELIEVE ME

ROBERTA

SO, IF THERE'S MAGIC LEFT TO SET ME FREE
PLEASE FLY TO ME.

She gives the trunk a kick, and the lid finally opens. ALEX comes up for air, then ROBERTA shoves LINCOLN in the trunk with ALEX and slams the lid closed. GEORGE and the CHORUS come sweeping onto the stage in showgirl outfits with huge feather fans and do a bit of a fan dance around her as she climbs atop the trunk via a small set of stairs pushed up to it. The fans cover her, and when they are swept back, ALEX is standing on the trunk with an obviously fake dove. Both ROBERTA and LINCOLN are absent.

Alex steps off, dances briefly with the dove, then opens the trunk. ROBERTA rises from it, now dressed in an all white beaded dress otherwise identical to the last one. She takes the "bird," from ALEX, who runs offstage and returns with an oversized Victorian round birdcage. ROBERTA puts the dove in the cage. She sings again.

SO IF THERE MAGIC LEFT TO SET ME FREE
PLEASE FLY TO ME.

On the word "ME." she gestures to the cage which erupts in a flash to reveal LINCOLN in it who sings the last line.

LINCOLN

HELP ME, PLEASE!

ROBERTA gives LINCOLN a satisfied nod, takes her bough, and exits the stage.

(END OF SONG)

**OLEO DOWN. FRONT
ILLUMINATION**

ACT I, SCENE 6: MARGERY'S DEBUT

The spotlight comes up on MC PETER on the one.

PETER

And now—

CHARLEY

(entering stage right)
See ya later, Boss. I'm off to get a job.

PETER

What's wrong with this one?

CHARLEY

Whenever I tell people I'm in theatre, they always ask what my real job is, so I guess I need one.

PETER

Do you have any work experience?

CHARLEY

I worked in a candle shop, but only on wick ends. Then I trained to be a glassblower!

PETER

Impressive! How did that work out?

CHARLEY

I got the hiccups and blew 126 fishbowls before they could stop me.

PETER

At least you were productive.

CHARLEY

I did much better repairing the roof over the town clock.

PETER

Oh, yeah?

CHARLEY

Yes, indeed. It was all over time. After that I got a job with a yardstick company.

PETER

How did that work out?

CHARLEY

They're not making them any longer.
(Turns to crowd) They're not going to get any better, so you might as well laugh and get it over with. (back to PETER) Then I tried selling office supplies. I thought writing paper and envelopes would really move'

PETER

Did they?

CHARLEY

Nope. They were stationary. We'll pause so the younger crowd can look that reference up. Cursive, foiled again. This time I've settled on pilot!

PETER

You're going to learn to fly?

CHARLEY

Nope. I'm running for congress. They can pile it deeper than anyone.

He exits left leaving PETER bewilderedly looking at the audience.

PETER

When exactly did I lose control? I don't even remember where I am now.

CHARLEY

(Peeking around the curtain)
Completely on your own, buddy. You're welcome.

The lights go up behind the oleo where we see MARGERY walk on to the stage, just as the cage holding LINCOLN is wheeled past her. LINCOLN waves timidly, and she follows his exit with confusion. Just at that time, PETERS introduction ends and the oleo rises.

PETER

Oh yes, right. It's time for a whole new level of enchantment. We are honored to present the Astrolabe's latest and biggest star, the incomparable Margery Foster.

MARGERY

A DAY WAS NEAR, A NIGHT WAS NEAR.
BETWEEN A DAY AND NIGHT
I HEARD SWEET VOICES CALLING CLEAR
CALLING OUT TO ME

I HEARD A WHIR OF WING ON WING
BUT I COULD NOT SEE THE SIGHT
HOW I LONG TO SEE MY BIRDS THAT SING
HOW I LONG TO SEE
THE VOICES CALLING ME

The lights dim on MARGERY and we see the entire cast backstage gathered to watch her. The volume of the song drops to background level as ALEX helps LINCOLN out of the cage.

LINCOLN

Thanks. That was awkward.

ALEX

But funny. You were ace!

LINCOLN

I 'm done for. I saw the look in her eyes. Mother doesn't like me being onstage. Ever.

ALEX

That's your mom out there now, isn't it.

LINCOLN

Yes

ALEX

She has a beautiful voice.

LINCOLN

(Wistfully)

She used to sing just for me.

ALEX

(watching LINCOLN watch MARGERY. He looks down at the floor.)

Yeah.

Behind this, MARGERY has continued singing. When the dialogue backstage finishes, the lights and volume return to her on stage.

MARGERY

BELOW THE STARS, BEYOND THE MOON
BETWEEN THE NIGHT AND DAY
I HEARD A RISING FALLING TUNE
CALLING OUT TO ME

HOW I LONG TO SEE THE PIPES AND STRINGS
WHERE ON SUCH MINSTRELS PLAY
HOW I LONG TO SEE EACH FACE THAT SINGS
HOW I LONG TO SEE
THE VOICES CALLING ME.

TODAY OR MAYBE NOT TODAY
TONIGHT OR NOT TONIGHT
ALL THE VOICES THAT COMMAND OR PRAY
CALLING OUT TO ME.

SHALL KINDLE IN ME SOUL SUCH FIRE
AND IN MY EYES SUCH LIGHT
THAT I MIGHT FIND MY HEART'S DESIRE
CALLING OUT TO ME
THE VOICES I LONG TO SEE

SHALL KINDLE IN MY SOUL SUCH FIRE
AND IN MY EYES SUCH LIGHT
THAT I MIGHT FIND MY HEART'S DESIRE
CALLING OUT TO ME
THE VOICES I LONG TO SEE

(END OF SONG)

MARGERY takes her bows and exits stage left.

ACT 1 SCENE 7: Backstage Reunion

MARGERY sees where LINCOLN and ALEX are, along with the cast still watching. She passes GEORGE who is currently dressed as a bee, with four members of the CHORUS dressed as a flower garden, who are heading onstage. Everyone gives her smiles, and congratulations, as she approaches' her son.

MARGERY

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

Now that everyone but MARGERY, LINCOLN & ALEX have left, a person steps out from the shadows by the "Private" tent front. It's MARGERY'S estranged husband OLIVER

OLIVER

Hello, my dear. Hello Son.

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. That's kidnapping. Have you forgotten that he's my son too?

MARGERY

After what you did, do you really think I would leave him with you and your bimbo girlfriend?

OLIVER

Miss Cavanaugh is no longer a part of my life, but that is beside the point. I hope we can be civil and work out our problems, but know that either way, I've come to take Lincoln back to New York where he belongs.

LINCOLN

To do what you promised? You let me think that you cared.

OLIVER

I have always cared. I've always been watching out for you.

LINCOLN

You kept promising, and nothing ever happened. Maybe I'm better off here now. I kind of like it.

OLIVER

You liked living in New York when we were a family. I have missed you. I know I haven't done everything I said I would, but between shows, and rehearsals and meetings, I was never around enough.

LINCOLN

You mean parties?

OLIVER

Lincoln, In our business, parties are meetings. That's where you meet the people you need, like producers. Producers pay for the show. Without them, it doesn't matter how good you can sing and dance. You might as well be doing it in the alley.

LINCOLN

Was Miss Cavanaugh a producer?

OLIVER

Miss Cavanaugh was a mistake, and one I deeply regret, but I'm not going to discuss that with my adolescent son. The point is, I'm here to take you back and get you in a show like I promised.

LINCOLN

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

OLIVER

She is quite welcome to return with us. As far as I am concerned, all is forgiven.

MARGERY

All is forgiven? You seem to have forgotten that, despite what you told the press, you were the one who walked out on us.

OLIVER

Walked out on him,? Yes, 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 expected fidelity, at the 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'm tired of always just being your backup. I'm tired of never being heard.

OLIVER

And I'm 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 that you could just whisk our child away to somewhere like this without saying a word?

MARGERY

Because after your press stunt, I couldn't even go home to my family without being hounded by reporters. These people were here for Lincoln and I when we needed them. We never had a marriage. We had an image.

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 off stage

ALEX

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

ALEX follows LINCOLN offstage yelling.

MARGERY

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

They dance a tango, but never touch

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 LEADS 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 WHO'S 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 DISDAIN
BUT NEVER BACK TO SEE THE ONE DESPISING
YET THROUGH IT ALL ONE THING REMAINS
COULD THERE BE EMBERS OF OUR LOVE SURVIVING

THE FIRE IN YOUR EYES
HAS EVER 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
FEELING LOST AND AIMLESS
YOU CANNOT LEAVE ME IN THE DARK
AND WALK AWAY
THINKING YOU ARE BLAMELESS NOW.

MARGERY

I'VE 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 I'M STANDING THERE ALONE
I SIMPLY CAN'T ABIDE IT.

OLIVER & MARGERY

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

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 shows otherwise. You need to leave now.

OLIVER

If that's the way you want to treat me, then we'll talk tomorrow. One
way or the other, Lincoln is going back with me.

MARGERY

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

*MARGERY pushes past OLIVER and exits downstage. OLIVER exits
upstage.*

(END OF SONG)

LIGHTS FADE BACKSTAGE

Act 1 Scene 8: Guest act.

A spot comes up on PETER & CHARLEY in the one. We see the Players trouping offstage behind the scrim dressed like flowers and a bee.

PETER

That was the Astrolabe Players and their artistic rendition of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'Deserted Garden.' I'm sure none of us will forget that spectacle.

CHARLEY

I feel I learned so much about horticulture.

PETER

I do have an announcement to make. There is a slight change in tonight's bill. We had planned on presenting the dancing tarantulas of Santa Fe....

CHARLEY

(Opens his mouth to sing, manages to get out "Santa"...but is interrupted by Peter's accusatory finger point.)

PETER

I swear, I will turn this show around right here !

CHARLEY

Testy, Testy!

PETER

As I was saying, unfortunately someone left the cage open, and we seem to be missing two dozen tarantulas. If any of you happen to see one, please alert management by some sort of signal if you would be so kind.

A scream from backstage
Not particularly discreet, but that works. We are not going to leave you with a lack, however, so last minute though it may be, we were most fortunate to procure and even greater find, so if I may, I would like to introduce....

(insert guest act.)

Alt. I seems Percy, the Poet Perch of Lake Pontchartrain has been purloined! Alex walks across the stage with a lemon. They watch him in silence as he slows down when he passes them then walks rapidly off stage. Charley pulls a napkin from his pocket, and tucks it under his chin while following him out. Peter looks about at the now empty stage, and begins edging his way to the wing and he introduces the guest act, then runs after the others.

Alt. Rogers Rollicking Racoons. They discovered the bar. We are working to restock as quickly as we can. A raccoon puppet drops from the loft with a thud. Charley picks him up and puppeteers him. He's, fine. I hear him snoring.

*Charley's checker playing chicken. The don't call me the chicken whisperer for nothing! What, that have to pay? Roosting in the fly loft. Its a tent. We don't have a... Henrietta! Don't peck at that...Flashes of sparks. *rubber chicken* falls to the stage. Charley, you just invented Electrified Chicken. Charley attempt mouth to beak.*

To soon? Who am I going to play checkers with now? That's not even a real chicken. Where are it's fathers? Chicken Schick. The chicken laughs at the joke. Henrietta is fine, but cusses Peter out.

Act One SCENE 9 Night one closer

PETER

This brings us to the end of night one. But before we go, there's one very important thing that must happen now.

CHARLEY

Run for the restrooms as fast as you can.

PETER

No!

CHARLEY

Then what's your impotent message?

PETER

You mean "important."

CHARLEY

Do I?

PETER

Never mind. We need to give them something rousing to get them to come back for all new acts, before we leave town.

CHARLEY

Ohhh! You mean the O-B-T-D-B!

PETER

That's right. The Obligatory Big Time Dance Bit. Every shows got one , just before a break, and that's right here!

CHARLEY

Right after the numbers.

PETER

What numbers?

CHARLEY

Ah 1, 2, 3, 4.

Works like magic, don't it?

PETER take position directing the band.

WELL THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERYONE'S LIFE
WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF STUCK IN TOIL OR STRIFE
THE BEST THING TO DO IS KICK UP YOUR HEELS AND DANCE

(Tap)

SO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF WAY DOWN IN THE DUMPS

DON'T WALLOW IN THE PITY WITH ALL THE OTHER CHUMPS
JUST PICK YOURSELF UP, KICK UP YOUR HEELS AND DANCE

(Tap)

AND IF YOU CAN'T DANCE, JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES
IN YOUR IMAGINATION YOU'LL BE PRESENTLY SURPRISED
TO SEE YOURSELF IN MOTION AS YOU MIGHT HAVE SURMISED
NEVER MIND THE CIRCUMSTANCE NO NEED TO COMPROMISE.

SO JUST RELAX AND NOD YOUR HEAD
AND WE'LL DO THE FANCY STUFF INSTEAD
YOU PAID A PRETTY PENNY, THAT'S A LOT OF BREAD
SO JUST SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE NIGHT AND THE

OBLIGATORY BIG TIME DANCE BIT
THE BIG IMPRESSIVE NUMBER THAT JUST WON'T QUIT
TO MAKE IT TO THE END YOU'VE GOT TO REALLY BE FIT
SO I'LL BE IN THE WINGS WITH AN OXYGEN MASK.

IT MAKES ME WISH THAT IT WAS JUST A COMEDY SKIT
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP IT UP TO MAKE THE SHOW A HIT
DO YOU WONDER HOW I SING AS WELL? I HAVE TO ADMIT
I'M STARTING TO WONDER MYSELF.

Big groundbreaking legendary tap break ala the Nicholas brothers. CHARLEY then stops to breath while PETER sings.

PETER

SO I'LL JUST STAND HERE AND WAVE MY ARMS
AND WATCH YOU KEEP IT UP WHILE DOING BODILY HARM.
BUT EVEN I ADMIT THAT I AM GETTING ALARMED
AND I JUST MIGHT HAVE TO....

Oh, who am I kidding.

PETER jumps in with his own tap bit. The DRAGOONS even stomp in time through one rest before CHARLEY jumps back in to dance a duet.

PETER & CHARLEY

IT'S THE OBLIGATORY BIG TIME DANCE BIT
THE BIG IMPRESSIVE NUMBER THAT JUST WON'T QUIT
THE WAY YOU KNOW A SHOW LIKE THIS IS REALLY LEGIT
IT'S TIME TO BRING THE REST OF THE CAST IN NOW.

The chorus, ROBERTA, GEORGE and HELOISE, all dressed in the costume we last saw them in, dance on to impeccably choreographed moves warranting a Tony.

CAST

IT'S THE OBLIGATORY BIG TIME DANCE BIT
THE BIG IMPRESSIVE NUMBER THAT JUST WON'T QUIT
BUT NOW THAT IT'S OVER, YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO SPLIT
SO HURRY BACK. WE'VE GOT AN ACT TWO!

On the button, CHARLEY falls backward in exhaustion and the rest of the cast pretends not to notice.

(END OF SONG)

THEATRE GOES DARK

ACT1, SCENE 9: Alex under the moon

Soft blue lighting comes up on ALEX walking and calling

ALEX

Lincoln? Where are you?

ALEX stops to rest on a show wagon from the opening number that has been parked off on a thrust throughout the first act. It's dark and we hear cicadas singing in the night. GEORGE walks in and moves towards ALEX.

GEORGE

Alex?

ALEX

Stop right there. I didn't do it. Okay?
I sewed that button on real good.

GEORGE

I know. I did that to myself.

ALEX

You what? Then why were you yelling at me?

GEORGE

Because the world's more full of weeping, than you can understand.

ALEX

What?

GEORGE

I said you had a lesson to learn. You needed a kick in the pants to get where you needed to be. There are holes in the world. Alex. All around us are empty spaces where something should be. War and disease and mistrust have left too many holes. It's far too easy to want to step in and fill someone else's, but you can't. The only hole you can fill is your own. But if you can do that, if you can be brave enough to face that void in your own life, you can make some solid ground for those who have no hope to fill their own. Now, go find your friend.

GEORGE exits as the curtain goes up to reveal an empty stage with a full moon hanging above it. ALEX speaks to the moon.

ALEX

Why do I have to do this again? I'm so tired.

The piano plays a haunting melody backed with flautando cello and violin, with very little rosin. Nondescript and silent chorus members yoke themselves to the wagon and begin to slowly pull it across to center stage as Alex begins dancing on and off the wagon. Eventually he ends up on top silhouetted by the moon where he begins to sing. He steps off as he sings while the wagon is pulled offstage leaving ALEX alone in a beam of moonlight.

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
TOWARD WHAT IS COMING STILL
BUT KNOW THAT I AM SEARCHING
AND I'M HERE TO TAKE YOU HOME
WE ALL JUST WANDER IN THE DARK
IN HOPES THAT WE CAN FIND
SOMEONE TO TALK WITH
I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE IN THE DARK

*(in a whisper. The music cut out on too, then swells back on
"hide.")*

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

*The last note holds and swells in intensity as the shadow
appears across the moon accompanied by the shadow theme. A
giant drumbeat plunges the theatre into darkness and silence
except for ALEX calling out one more, fading into distance.*

Lincoln? Lincoln!

*A second drum beat sounds and the moon returns as a clock,
counting down intermission. The house light go up.*

INTERVAL ACTION

ON THE ONE.

(As the house lights are dimming at the end of the Interval,)

*

About three to four minutes into the interval, ROBERTA, CHARLEY, GEORGE, PETER, HELOISE and chorus and band members, filter onto the stage with chairs, drinks, smokes, playing cards, and a banjo ukulele. They sit beneath the moon, and talk and laugh in an impromptu night one afterparty, singing a song like ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND, SHINE ON HARVEST MOON, OH, YOU BEAUTIFUL DOLL, etc. It can change every show. It's all very casual, and after were ready to start act two, we start hearing their conversation as the house lights dim, but not go out.

BAND MEMBER

I swear to God, Charley, every night you start that last dance faster. You trying to get it over with?

CHARLEY

It's good for the constitution, Fred.

BAND MEMBER

Yeah, well you're not the one trying to grab a breath in a run of 16th notes.

PETER

I have to say, Roberta, you handled tonight's magic act creatively. Good save.

ROBERTA

Needless to say, there were a lot of surprises tonight. Admit it. Which one of you switched my dove for a dummy?

BAND MEMBER

We'll never tell.

ROBERTA

It's like working with a room full of children.

CHORUS MEMBER

Speaking of which, the new kid was hilarious.

CHARLEY

Your tellin' me. The look on Lincolns face was priceless, but he pulled through like a trooper. Admit it Roberta. Your act needed a spiff-up to keep you on your toes.

ROBERTA

I happen to like my act the way it is, thank you. But, yes. It did go rather well. There was a certain satisfaction to leaving the boy caged at the end. The audience ate it up.

MARGERY enters.

MARGERY

Excuse me, but I can't find my son. Has anyone seen him?

GEORGE

No, but I did see Alex, and he's out tracking him. He'll do it too. He has the knack.

CHARLEY

All the same, maybe we should all take a stab at it. We can rendezvous back here in a half an hour to make sure we're not still looking for something that's already been found.

HELOISE

An excellent idea.

(*To Margery*)

You come wait with me and have a cup of tea, dear, We will find your son.

They all collect their chairs and things, exiting the stage to Peters voice as the light including the houselights go down.

PETER

Then everyone need to rest up for tomorrow. I think it's going to be a busy day.

ACT TWO

ALEX

We hear ALEX'S voice in the darkness. Only the moon is illuminated.
Lincoln?Lincoln!

#00b - ENTR'ACTE
(Orchestra) .

ACT II, SCENE 1. Cornfield at night

The entr'acte ends with the shadow theme, and we see dark silhouette center stage. It gestures to the spot where LINCOLN enters without noticing it. It fades out before LINCOLN reaches the same spot, and looks up to the moon mirroring ALEX in the final scene from act one. LINCOLN has been crying and his voice cracks.

LINCOLN

You cold have fixed everything, Father. Why don't you ever do that?

LINCOLN sits on the fence.

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 FELT ABANDONED?
HAVE YOU EVER FELT IGNORED?
YOU NEVER HAD 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'

I'VE TRIED TO HIDE MY FACE
BUT YET THE SORROW COMES FOR ME
I FEEL SUCH DISGRACE
FOR NEVER KNOWING WHY

I THINK THAT I SHOULD UNDERSTAND
BUT NOT CONVINCED NOW 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 DO YOU CARRY EXPECTATIONS
THOUGH THEY MAY BE UNSPOKEN
WHEN THE WORLD EXPECTS YOU
JUST TO CARRY ON.

ALES step into the scene with understanding written on his face, and sings his own verse.

ALEX

AND YET WE GO ON WALKING
TO WHATEVER PEACE IS WAITING
HOPING THAT WE FIN THE PLACE
WE SOMEHOW KNOW IS THERE'

AND IF WE HOLD EACH OTHER UP
AND WALK THAT PATH TOGETHER
WE'LL FIND OUR SORROWS LIGHTER
WHEN OUR SORROW WE ALL SHARE.

#11a - Broken UNDERSCORE
(Orchestra) .

LINCOLN

Alex! You came after me!

ALEX

You're my friend, remember? I meant it. I've been lookin' for ya' everywhere,

ALEX climbs on the fence neat to LINCOLN

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

(Pauses)
Are you okay?

LINCOLN

I don't know what to do. I don't want to leave my mother, but she wants me to go to some boarding school to be who she wants me to be. If I go back to New York with Father, he promised to put me on stage. It's what I really want, but he's lied to me so many time before, I don't think I can ever trust him.

ALEX

Sorry Lincoln. It's tough when people you love can't see you for who you really are. But I do.

LINCOLN & ALEX

MAYBE WE'LL FIND WE CAN GO ON
WHEN WE FEEL BROKEN
MAYBE WE'LL RISE UP TO THOSE CLOUDS AGAIN, SOMEDAY.
AND IF WE SING EACH OTHERS SONGS
WHEN NO WORDS CAN BE SPOKEN

THEN MAYBE WE CAN ALL
STILL FIND OUR WAY.

*On the button ALEX gives LINCOLN a little punch to the
shoulder. CHARLEY enters, and joins the two boys on the fence.*

(END OF SONG.)

CHARLEY

Well, there's our wandering minstrel. You two seem thick as thieves
now.

ALEX

I turns out, we're a lot alike. He just needs to figure things out
right now.

CHARLEY

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

LINCOLN

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

CHARLEY

For a kid that wants in theatre, sounds like you'd be sittin' pretty.
(Grins at LINCOLN) Sorry. Turning everything into a song is an
occupational hazard.

LINCOLN

But my mother doesn't want to go, and I don't think I blame
her. (pause) Everything my father says should come with a disclaimer.

CHARLEY

Oh, you're good. So what do you want?

ALEX

To have his mother see him.

LINCOLN

She thinks theatre is a terrible life, and wont listen to anything I
try and do with entertainment.

CHARLEY

Did she see you tonight? It was a dilly! 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.

CHARLEY pauses to think for a moment.

CHARLEY

I think I might have a plan. And a song.

LINCOLN

Uh oh. Do I want to hear it?

CHARLEY

Do you have a choice?

THERE'S TIMES IN LIFE FOR SORROW
THERE'S TIMES IN LIFE FOR JOY
THERE'S TIMES TO REIN ENTHUSIASM
AND TIMES TO SPUR YOUR "AT-A-BOY."

BUT NOW YOU OUGHTA' THINK ABOUT
THIS OPPORTUNITY
TO PUT YOUR BACK INTO THE CHANCE
TO SEE WHO YOU MIGHT BE

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
WHEN 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 INTENDS ALREADY PENNED
THE "YOU" YOU WANT TO BE YOU MUST BEFRIEND
THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND

ALEX

Maybe if your mother could see you on stage doing everything you can do, she'd change her mind. Or better yet, sing with her.

CHARLEY

That's it. Alex, you're a genius.

ALEX

You only now noticed?

CHARLEY

Lincoln, I need a song from you that your mother can sing. Do you have one?

LINCOLN

I wrote one when she seemed so sad, but I never showed it to her. Why?

CHARLEY

I SEE NOW WHAT I'M MISSING
IT'S THERE IN BOTH OF YOU
AND I THINK IT'S MISSING
FROM YOUR MOTHER TOO

BUT NOW I HAVE A PLAN IN MIND

IT'S LIKE THE STARS HAVE ALL ALIGNED
TO HELP HER SEE THAT THEATRE KID
INSIDE OF YOU

YOU'VE GOT TO....

*The son, having ramped up leaves CHARLEY with on foot in the
air for the drop, when LINCOLN interrupts bringing everything
to a screeching halt.*

LINCOLN

What plan? How does a song help?

CHARLEY

Look up, Lincoln. There's no roads up there. If you want "Sky's the
limit,"
~~Sometimes, Lincoln, trust is what it takes for the impossible to
become the probable.~~ You just have to make that choice. Trust the
tent, Remember?

ALEX

You can trust me. I'll never lie to you.

LINCOLN

*(Looks between the, than up at the stars, then back to
Charley.)*
Okay. Fine

CHARLEY

At-a-boy!

LINCOLN

I GUESS IT'S TIME TO STAND UP
FOR THE ME I WANT TO BE

ALEX

PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN
IN THOSE PUDDLES IN YOUR HEAD

(stomp-stomp-stomp)

LINCOLN

MARCH MY WAY OUT OF THE GLOOM
TO THE FUTURE THAT I SEE

CHARLEY

FIND THE GARDEN SPOT
THAT PERFECT PLOT
TO PLANT YOURSELF INSTEAD

LINCOLN, ALEX & CHARLEY

THINGS HAVE A WAY OF WORKING OUT
WHEN YOU STAY RESOLUTE AND STOUT
IT'S REALLY WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT
LET GO OF THE FEAR AND THE DOUBT AND JUST SHOUT

CHARLEY & ALEX

THROW YOURSELF IN THE DEEP END,
THE FUTURE YOU INTENDS ALREADY PENNED
THE "YOU" YOU WANT TO 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 INTENDS ALREADY PENNED
THE "ME" I WANT TO BE I MUST BEFRIEND
THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND

CHARLEY

TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF FEAR
AND YOU MIGHT FIND THAT FATE TO DEAR

LINCOLN, ALEX & CHARLEY

THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND

CHARLEY

SO LET ME SAY IT ONE MORE TIME
IN CASE IT AINT' SUNK IN

LINCOLN, ALEX & CHARLEY

THE GARDEN THAT GROWS IS THE ONE YOU TEND

CHARLEY

But first, we gotta plant the seed.

On the button, the lights go out.

(END OF SONG)

Act 2, scene 2: Sunrise by the tent

The moon is replaced by the rising sun in a soft blue sky. We see the tent in the background, and PETER and HELOISE doing a cakewalk to the music from the Edison player behind them playing Dance at Every Dawn, by Margery and Oliver. There is also a tea table set for two. They talk over the music as they dance.

PETER

I feel blessed every morning I see the sun shine on that face.

HELOISE

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

PETER

If either one of us looked our age, people would run screaming. You can't 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. I trust what our boy set in motion. This was such a bold idea, dangerous and sad, yet beautiful and kind.

PETER

He understood belief. He saw what we missed. Sometimes you have to break something again in order for it to heal properly. Watching Alex now, it reminds me just how much I missed.

HELOISE

You know I would do anything to be able to rewrite that story, but 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 Lincoln gives me fresh hope.

CHARLEY enters as they continue dancing.

CHARLEY

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

HELOISE

Go right ahead Charles. We're trying a cakewalk. It's all the rage right 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? Never mind. I have an idea and I'd like to talk to you about it. Lincoln has written a song for his mother to sing, but I don't want her to know he wrote it.

PETER

Writing is a dangerous and contagious idea. It's best to avoid it if at all possible. Let's take a look.

As the song ends, PETER & HELOISE sit at the table.

HELOISE

I didn't know Lincoln wrote music.

CHARLEY

Apparently, neither does his mother. Or at least she won't listen to them. I stayed up all night scoring it. It's good.

PETER

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

CHARLEY

To save Lincoln. Why?

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 gives him a dumfounded look.

CHARLEY

That's cryptic

PETER

I prefer inscrutable

HELOISE

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

CHARLEY

I'm just concerned. He's a good kid that needs to catch a break. He deserves his dreams.

PETER

What you're doing is obvious. These are the words that Margery needs to hear.

CHARLEY

I didn't write the. Lincoln did.

PETER

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

CHARLEY

We all come here broken, but we need to be broken again in order to heal properly. I just heard you say that. Margery was broken by a bad marriage, and now she can't see she's doing the same thing to her son her husbands has been doing to her. I heard Lincoln sing.

HELOISE

Who didn't?

CHARLEY

But did you listen to what he sang? That was real. I Took a risk that he had more in him, and he delivered. This 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 Lincoln into a life he doesn't want, or force him into the hands of his father. Either way she will lose her son if she can't break first.

HELOISE

You have a good heart Charles.

CHARLEY

It's a broken one. ~~It worked for my new too.~~ This came in the mail yesterday. My mother has died. I'm leaving after the show tonight to be with my dad. I guess I found my direction.

PETER

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

CHARLEY

Ya' know, before I came here I found out by pop had four siblings I'd never even heard about. When I asked him, he just said they made their choice, and got angry. Later I heard him crying when he thought no one could hear him.

(Thoughtful pause)

I almost didn't come for this job, because of that, but I did anyway because entertainment was just what I did. Now I wonder if it's who I really am.

PETER

It's the crux of every life, my friend. What did you discover?

CHARLEY

Lincoln. And his shadow it seems. He sang when he thought no one could hear him. But I did just like last time, and I had to ask myself Lincoln's question. Who am I inside? When he and Alex became friends so quickly, I knew. I can't fix my family's past, but I can build a future for where it goes next. There's a girl in St. Joe I took a fancy to. I want to see if there's something there.

PETER

Absence is the tomb of love. If you see your intent in family, do not tarry. Do not deny yourself that gift.

CHARLEY

I found a ride to St' Joe right after the show tonight. I don't want to steal the spotlight from Lincoln and his mom, so I'll slip away after my bit's are done. Please tell the kids thank you, and goodbye for me. Let everyone know there at least a floor to sleep in for anyone who wants to visit.

HELOISE

Prosperity seldom chooses the side of the virtuous.

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 gain more than you ever knew was possible. Now let's put your plan in motion and see what it brings.

ACT 1, Scene 3: Dressing tent in the 2

MARGERY stands determinedly as OLIVER exits the tent.

OLIVER

So it's settled. We leave in the morning.

MARGERY looks at the flap where Oliver has exited from and sings.

MARGERY

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

WE BOTH SPENT SO MUCH TIME STANDING IN THE SPOTLIGHT
SEEING NOTHING OUT THERE IN SO MANY DARKENED HALLS
BEYOND THE FOOTLIGHTS, AND THE PUBIC 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 WONT EVER BE AGAIN SOME HOW.

We hear the shadow theme play, as MARGERY turns to see the shadow of a child on the wall of the tent. It tips to one side while standing on one leg. When it's perpendicular, the shadow waves excitedly, then leaps back and does a plié. A look of surprise illuminated MARGERY'S face.

These are the same moves made by the girl's shadow in the prologue.

Abbey? You're...You Can't be....Why? How...?

The shadow blows her a two handed kiss, then continues to hold it's arms out. MARGERY begins to take them, then stops herself.

Oh, Abbey, my sweet friend. I can't hug a memory.

WHEN I HURT YOU, I CRIED
AND FOUND MYSELF ALONE
SO WHO HAVE I BECOME NOW
THAT I'M ON MY OWN?

DID I COME BACK TO FIND YOU,
NO. IT'S TOO LATE TO FIND YOU.
NO ONE COULD EVER FIND YOU
AND NOW IT'S ONLY ME WHOSE GROWN.

WITH A CHILD OF MY OWN NOW,

WHAT DOES THIS FOREBODE
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS TO FIND YOU HERE
WHY, MY FRIEND, WOULD IT BE YOU
THAT FINDS ME ON THIS ROAD?

The meter changes to a waltz, and the shadow begins to dance, beckoning MARGERY along. She begins reluctantly, but soon finds herself smiling and laughing dancing with her friend once again. In the midst of a spin, ROBERTA pulls back the tent flap, and the shadow vanishes, the music stopping short.

(END OF SONG)

No! Abbey! I don't want to lose you again!

ROBERTA

Margery, are you all right?

MARGERY

No! She was here, wasn't she? She's been gone since I was a child. Tell me that was real!

Roberta pulls a chair over.

ROBERTA

Sit. Catch your breath. What's wrong?

MARGERY

I'm sorry. I must be overwrought. I'm imagining old sorrows now.

ROBERTA

Let me guess. A shadow.

MARGERY

How did you know?

ROBERTA

Yes, it was real. Everyone who comes here sees the shadow eventually. It's different for everyone. I think they are the shadows of our regret. They come here to confront us.

MARGERY

Regret? It certainly is. But why? There is so much pain in that memory.

ROBERTA

I can't tell you that. Only the shadow can. You just have to be willing to listen.

MARGERY

Did you see it? How did you handle it?

ROBERTA

With great soul-searching. I was to the point I didn't think I could go on. My shadow saved my life. I suspect you are at such a crossroads now.

MARGERY

I met with Oliver again. He is insistent on taking Lincoln back to Broadway, so I have no choice but to follow him.

MARGERY (CONT'D)

What's so infuriating is that he isn't doing it for Lincoln. He want's me back in the act and he's using our child for leverage.

ROBERTA

You saw the shadow. That was the voice you long to see. Trust, Margery. Some choice is still coming, and you still have freedom.

From outside the tent, comes a call from HELOISE.

HELOISE

Margery? It's Perter, Charley and I. May we come in?

MARGERY

Of course. Please do.

ROBERTA

I have to rehearse a new bit. Find your shadow.

ROBERTA tips her head to the group coming in as she leaves.

MARGERY

I'm glad you came. I wanted to apologize to you while I still can. I'm so sorry I brought all this with me. You have all been so kind to us, and between the disruptions Lincoln caused last night, and now Oliver...

PETER

Everyone brings trouble to us. That is why we are here. And as for Lincoln, we 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 path we need. We don't want to lose either one of you.

MARGERY

You are very kind, but I'm not sure what I can do now. I took Lincoln away and hid him. That means the law is on Oliver's side. I don't want to go back with him, but I'm being forced into it to protect Lincoln.

HELOISE

Let Chaos go, and I believe the outcome will surprise you. Trust it, my dear.

MARGERY

Everyone keeps saying that. You all have more confidence than I do.

CHARLEY

Well, to that point, 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.

CHARLEY hands MARGERY the song.

MARGERY

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

HELOISE

Some songs are magic, but only for the right person at the right time. We think this is that right time, and you are that person.

MARGERY

Where did this song come from? Did you write this?

CHARLEY

No. It's from an up and coming songwriter. He has tremendous talent, and your singing it tonight would mean a great deal to him. And if this is the last song you get to sing with us, it needs to be a special one.

MARGERLY

More mysteries. Fine. I was told to be open minded, so I'll do it.

CHARLEY

Excellent. Charley will run it in the main tent with you. We shall see where it leads.

MARGERLY

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

HELOISE

(To PETER and CHARLEY)

Would you two give us a minute. Shoo shoo.

They exit leaving HELOISE and MARGERLY alone.

HELOISE (CONT'D)

I understand all too well what you are facing, and I want to share something I never share.

LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY
MY LOVE WAS STRIPPED FROM ME
I WAS LEFT WITH DREAMS OF YESTERDAY
SEEN THROUGH THE HAZE OF TRAGEDY
I HAD A SON I LEFT BEHIND
I HAD NO CHOICE, IT SEEMED
WE BECAME EACH OTHERS MEMORIES
THAT ONLY SPOKE IN DREAMS

THERE IS CHAOS IN THE WORD, DEAR ONE
I KNOW JUST HOW YOU FEEL
YOU WANT TO SCREAM AND FIGHT AND RUN,
AND THE FEAR IS ALL TOO REAL
BUT HISTORY PLAYS THE LONG GAME
TRUST ME, THIS I KNOW
THE ONLY WAY TO REACH THE SHORE,
IS SURRENDER TO THE FLOW

MARGERLY

Give up? Let Oliver take Lincoln away from me? Never!

HELOISE

That's not what I'm saying at all.

I MADE THE MISTAKE OF THINKING
THAT I NEVER HAD A CHOICE
AS I RAILED IN INDIGNATION
I DROWNED OUT THAT INNER VOICE

I CHOSE MY FUTURE FOR MYSELF
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE TO BLAME
AND I SPENT MY LIFETIME
LIVING WITH THAT SHAME

SO NOW YOU FACE THE SAME UNKNOWN
I UNDERSTAND YOUR DREAD
AND I HOPE THAT YOU CAN TRUST ME
THOUGH CERTAIN THINGS ARE LEFT UNSAID
BUT WHERE CHAOS REINS, SO THERE GOES HOPE
SO DO NOT COURT THE TRAGIC END
TRUST THE CHAOS, TRUST THE MAGIC
TRUST WHAT YOU INTEND

THERE IS CHAOS IN OUR MIDST MY DEAR
THAT CAN TEAR THE WORLD APART
IT CAN LEVEL MOUNTAINS, FILL THE SEAS
THEN SET YOU WHERE YOU NEED TO START
IF THOSE MOUNTAINS LEFT YOU STRANDED
IF THOSE SEAS KEPT YOU FROM LOVE
IF THE ONLY WAY TO REACH YOUR SON
IS CLOSE YOUR EYES AND DREAM EACH OTHER
THEN LET THE CHAOS TAKE YOU
TOSS YOU RIGHT INTO THE FRAY
SURRENDER TO THE CURRENTS
AND LET THEM SWEEP YOU
FAR ABOVE.

MARGERY

Above what?

HELOISE

Yourself. You have to put out your intent, then get out of the way.

MARGERY

Everything in me wants to stand and fight!

HELOISE

Then you will only be fighting yourself

MARGERY

I will try.

MARGERY turns to leave.

One more thing. The shadow. What is it? Have you seen it?

HELOISE

HELOISE stops ,but does not turn around.

I would give anything to see it, but no. Not in all my years in the tent. Sing the song, Mrs. Foster. Just sing the song.

The light shifts, revealing the SHADOW, watching. When HELOISE and MARGERY leave the space, the shadow comes free of the tent wall and becomes the three dimensional apparition of ASTROLABE.

ASTROLABE

We are both shadows mother. Maybe that's why you don't recognize me.
But you do see me. I have always loved you, and I'm always dreaming
with you.

*The shadow theme, which we now realize is the first line of
HELOISE'S song, plays as ASTROLABE disperses and disappears.*

(END OF SONG)

LIGHTS FADE.

ACT 2 SCENE 4. Roberta's tent.

The middle scrim lifts as Margery's dressing table rolls off stage, leaving the 3 space open, the orchestra behind a triple black velvet wall in the 4 space. There is a dressing screen midstage, a player piano, a rack of costumes and a settee. ROBERTA lead ALEX and LINCOLN in.

ROBERTA

Sorry I'm late boys. I had a friend who needed a little help. Now we can buckle down and see how long it takes to block out this routine. Remember you cannot tell anyone how this is done.

LINCOLN

You have your own tent? I knew you were the star of the show!

ROBERTA

Oh, sweet child. I have my own tent because I'm colored. Trust me, I'd rather have four wall and a door that locks. Heloise and Peter have done their best for me, but this tent's very existence reminds me that most of the world will not accept me as an equal.

LINCOLN

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

ROBERTA

Burt Williams is the most famous colored man in the world darling. You may not see it when you're 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 fathers world revived.

LINCOLN

Why? I think the world's a lot better now.

ROBERTA

To quote Mr. Maeterlinck, "At every crossroads on the path that leads to the future, tradition has placed ten thousand men to guard the past." Sadly, they are succeeding.

ALEX

Change is uncomfortable for anyone who's already settled.

ROBERTA

That may be the wisest thing I've ever heard from that mouth of yours.

LINCOLN

But it's not fair. You're great.

ROBERTA

I appreciate the complement child, but you have yet to discover how little of life is fair. That realization might be the true door to adulthood.

ALEX

Or where the magic dies.

ROBERTA

Not on my watch. Fair or not, there are things worth protecting. Wonder is one of them. I know now what I needed to know my whole life, and this company gave that to me. For that I am grateful. When I came here, I was angry. My choice of venues were minstrel shows, or some Godforsaken Dudley Theatre in Tuscaloosa.

ALEX

Wow! Wha'da ya' got against Tuscaloosa?

ROBERTA tosses a cloth over ALEX'S head.

ROBERTA

There is a reason we call him smart Alex. This place showed me a new path and I intend to walk it to it's end, but I will never bow down and apologize for being me.

ALEX pulls the cloth off of his head, reveling a serious expression.

ALEX

What path did you find?

ROBERTA

There wasn't one love. I'm cutting it as I go. I'm using the tool the oppressors gave us to do it with. Some people call us crows because they see us as vermin who squawk and thief and murder. But they don't know crows. Crows are smart, resourceful, reward friendship and mourn their dead. If the haters want it to be derogatory, then I will wear it like a crown. I will be more. I will be the Raven. I will twist their hatred and take their power and stand on that stage and strut and sing and do what for them is the impossible. When I am done, they will stand and applaud me without realizing I have changed that hate to doubt. That is the real magic.

LINCOLN

I want to help!

ROBERTA

That's why we are all here in this show Lincoln. We all wield Magic and you are goin to help me put it back into the limelight where it belongs.

She walks to the player piano and gives it a hip bump. It begins to play. During g the first half of the song, the chorus dips in and out of the shadowed stage, playing out her story in dance.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I USED TO THINK THE WORLD WOULD OPEN UP

IT'S 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 SOMEWHERE ON THE WAY
IN SOME OLD DINGY CABARET
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 really are.

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 TALENTS 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
OR YOU CAN JUST BE YOU, AND YOU JUST 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.
THOUGH 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
OR YOU CAN JUST BE YOU, AND YOU JUST MIGHT FIND
YOU'RE NOT SO SILLY, AFTER ALL.

ALEX

Clever you!

ROBERTA

You are both clever boys yourselves. You make wonderful muses. I think it's time to put some real magic back into the world.

As the full band kicks in, shadow suited chorus members push all the props off stage except for the dressing screen that ROBERTA steps behind. The BOYS grab a corner each and spin it around to show she isn't behind it anymore. When its back in position, the BOYS pull the screen in two and off stage leaving ROBERTA standing there in her rainbow on black beaded dress, brandy snifter in one hand, and a bottle in the other. The glass hovers in the air as she fills it, then she tosses the bottle away where it vanishes in mid air. She steps off the platform the screen was on, and it too glides off stage. Above her stars twinkle and the moon from earlier has returned.

SO NOW YOU'VE ALL BECOME MY FRIENDS
CLEVER ME
YOU NEVER SAW THIS IN THE END
CLEVER ME
WHERE ONCE YOU'D RUN ME OUT OF TOWN
NOW YOU SIT THERE WITHOUT A SOUND
AMAZED AT WHAT YOUR MIND CAN'T COMPREHEND

With this she plucks the moon from the sky.

AND WITH THAT THEN OUR SPIRITS CAN ASCEND

The moon floats up and circles behind her head like a halo.

CLEVER ME.

She dances with the floating ball. She picks up a tube and hold it above her head and the moon enters it to come out the other side. In reality, there are two moon globes, the second wired to travel at 90 degrees from the first.

I DON'T NEED WINGS TO FLY AWAY
CLEVER ME
IT'S JUST YOUR SENSES I'LL BETRAY
CLEVER ME

As the moon pauses above her head ROBERTA spreads iridescent dark wings

SO, LET ME PLEASE CONVEY, HOW THIS IS CHILDS PLAY
SO HERE THEY ARE, FOR YOUR DISMAY

She drops the wings and ALEX and LINCOLN are "magically" standing next to ROBERTA dressed in white tails and top hats.

OH SO CLEVER ME.

The three dance together with the boys walking up invisible steps on either side.

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

On the word see, she extends the wings again

WELL, LET THAT SENSE OF WONDER SET YOU FREE

On the beats of "that, of, -der, and you," she alternately drops the wings and two chorus members appear on each side of her, then step sideways, making a total of eight taking the position between Roberta in front, and the boys standing in mid air behind.

OH, SO CLEVER ME

They dance a kick line.

OH, SO CLEVER ME

On the word "me," Roberta dramatically thrusts her arms forward, and the moon shoots out over the audience, and in a flash of light becomes a mirror ball sending dazzling light into the crowd. In the 1.6 seconds it takes for their eyes to adjust to the light, ROBERTA'S dress has become silver mirrored beads.

OH, SO CLEVER ME.

(END OF SONG)

A big oleo scrim rolls down with a scene of a steamboat on a river, obscuring the magic set.

ACT 2, SCENE 5: Mark Twain in the one.

We see PETER behind the scrim while the stage is being cleared. ALEX and LINCOLN come running by. ALEX is still wearing the tux coat, but now sports a Huck Finn hat. He is hopping trying to remove his shoes while running. Behind him, LINCOLN has unsuccessfully tried to remove his shirt over his head without unbuttoning it, hence is wandering blind. LINCOLN bumps into PETER

LINCOLN

(Muffled)
Sorry.

PETER spins LINCOLN to turn him in the right direction, and pulls the shirt the rest of the way off, tossing it aside while stepping out around the scrim which changes it's lighting to the front. He gives a bow to the audience as the spotlight hits him. He puts his top hat back on his head only to discover he is actually wearing LINCOLN'S smaller white hat. He sighs, but goes on.

PETER

The amazing, Madam Raven! Next on tonight's bill, The Astrolabe Theatre is proud to present one of your own, a native Missourian who needs no introduction. That makes me redundant, so, we'll see you later.

A dock containing the trunks from backstage, and a rocking chair slide in as PETER exits. On the chair sits GEORGE dressed as Mark Twain.

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 a good week of so to prepare a good impromptu speech, but I shall attempt it anyway.

The light fades on GEORGE, and comes up backstage where we see HELOISE directing traffic. MARGERY steps up to her in a huff.

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. Why would you do this?

HELOISE

Because he needs to understand his own dream. This is important, child. You have to give him this tonight so you can both see what is real. This is about the two of you, but it's also about things you can't see yet.

MARGERY

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

HELOISE

Look at me Margery. You cannot protect your child if your husband takes him away from you. Trust us. We are trying to help him and show him the truth behind his dream. We are trying to help you both. You will see that if you truly wish to understand. I have to go do my job, but you need to promise that you will watch Lincoln and not interfere.

MARGERY

But what about...

HELOISE

Get out of your own way, Margery. Rise above and trust chaos.

HELOISE walks out leaving MARGERY in contemplation. She steps back when LINCOLN and ALEX pass without seeing her. As the lights shift to illuminate GEORGE again. LINCOLN and ALEX, dressed as Tom and Huck respectively, walk out onto the "dock."

GEORGE (AS TWAIN)

You two look familiar. Let me guess. Mr. Dickens has 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 somewhen 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 know me. Get your fact right first, 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 bluster. The BOYS lean back looking concerned.

LINCOLN

Uh, sure thing mister.

GEORGE

Fine. Sit down and maybe I can explain better.

The boys take a seat on a box an barrel. LINCOLN take of his boots and dumps sand all over the dock.

LINCOLN

Better.

ALEX

Is this gonna take long? We were on our way to go fishin'.

GEORGE

Fishin'? Sounds fun. Do you have worms?

ALEX

Yip, but the doc said I could go anyway!

ALEX breaks out laughing but falls backward off of his box, bare feet in the air.

Behind the oval in the scrim, we see the BANJO BAND dressed in boatmen's hats.

GEORGE

This is why you don't let scoolin' interfere with your education. Now Listen up, you two.

NOW I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU KIDS SOME ADVICE
SO TAKE IT FROM A WRINKLED OLD MAN
THERE'S A LOT YOU'VE GOT COMMUN' DOWN THE ROAD OF YOUR LIFE
AND A LOT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

THESE WRINKLES JUST SHOW WHERE THE SMILES HAVE BEEN
AGAINST LAUGHTER, NOTHIN' CAN STAND
THE HEART IS THE REAL FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH
YOU NEED IT TO FACE LIFE'S DEMAND

LIFE IS SHORT, SO BREAK THE RULES
FORGIVE YOUR FRIENDS, AND ALL THE WHILE
WHEN LOVE COMES-A-KNOCKIN', PLAY THE FOOL
AND NEVER REGRET WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE

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

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

AND IF YOU MEET A MAN WITH A BIG CIGAR,
A-STROLLIN' DOWN THE STREET
IT MIGHT BE YOU IN A HAZY MIRROR
IF EVER THE TWAIN YOU SHOULD MEET.

See what I did there? Kind of a--Oh, never mind.

The boys pull him to his feet and they all 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

*(looking directly int the boy's eyes and with a much more
serious tone)*

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

(snapping back to the joviality of the song)

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.

*George puts a hand on each boys shoulder and they walk off
together.*

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)

Lights down on the button

ACT 2 SCENE 6: Backstage

Lights up backstage as LINCOLN followed by ALEX run behind the scrim. The run into HELOISE and the chorus coming on stage in 18th century court outfits. ALEX stops to let them pass, but LINCOLN plows through spinning HELOISE, in he Pannier dress, like a turnstile. When LINCOLN gets backstage, he trips behind the trunk and comes up with the brim of his Tom Sawyer hat around his neck. He rips it off in frustration and runs for the dressing tent just as ALEX catches up.

ALEX

Whoa, bud. Slow down.

LINCOLN

We have to get back out there. My mother is watching!

ALEX

This is why you don't do back to back bits. You're going to hurt yourself. Just breathe so you have enough air to sing with her later.

LINCOLN

She has to see me do this!

ALEX

Do what? They tacked us on the Chorus to stand around in a costume. No one will miss us. Why do you want to be on stage so bad anyway?

LINCOLN

It's what I'm good at

ALEX

That's not what you sang. I heard you, remember?

LINCOLN

It's what I'm born to do.

ALEX

Liar.

LINCOLN

I'm not lying!

ALEX

You are too. You're just too chicken to say it. What's so all fired important that you'll hurt yourself just to be on stage?

LINCOLN

If I sing and dance, maybe people will like me, Okay? Maybe my mother will like me! Then she wouldn't take me from everything I know, from my father, then ship me off to boarding school just to be rid of me.

ALEX

Dou you really think that?

LINCOLN

If she loved me she would listen to me. She should care about what I want. I don't know whether to go with Father or not. It's up to whatever she chooses, not me.

ALEX

Looks to me like she already chose you. She brought you here. She loves you, but she has to figure out her own life too. Give her a chance.

LINCOLN

She's known me my whole life and still doesn't see who I really am. Do you know what that's like?

ALEX

Yes I do. Way more than you know.

LINCOLN

Not like this. Not so much it hurts.

ALEX

Oh really? You think you're the only one who feels invisible? The only one who has to make choices they don't want? Everybody has to do that Lincoln, even if it hurts.

LINCOLN

It's not fair!

ALEX

Fair? Didn't you hear anything Roberta said? Life isn't ever fair. I get that you're mad, but don't get whiny about it.

LINCOLN

I'm not whiney! My parents are making me choose between two bad things. I don't want to do this! I want to be like you!

ALEX

No you don't

LINCOLN

Yes I do! You're lucky. Everyone loves you and no one makes you do anything, do they?

ALEX

Lucky? Lucky? At least you've got parents. Mine didn't want me anymore so they threw me away!

LINCOLN

What? Oh my gosh, Alex. I... I.... didn't know.

ALEX

There are a lot of things you don't know. So what? Besides, this whole plan is supposed to be about you.

LINCOLN

But if you had told me...

ALEX

It's personal, all right? I don't owe you anything.

LINCOLN

But why would they do that to you? Everybody likes you.

ALEX

Leave it.

LINCOLN

But you're the neatest boy I've ever met!

ALEX

Because they didn't believe I was a boy, Okay? Feel better now?

LINCOLN

Wha... What's that mean?

ALEX

When I didn't want to be the girl I'm not, they said I was a freak.
They didn't want me anymore. So now... I don't get bossed around.
(sarcastically) I'm so lucky.

LINCOLN

What? (pause) What? You've been lying to me? You said you never would.

ALEX

I have never lied to you. This is about me, Okay? (plants feet) Why?
Does it make a difference?

LINCOLN

I don't know, I'm still trying to figure this out. You mean, you
don't have boy... (Trails off awkwardly)

ALEX

Stop it! Just stop already. I'm a boy, alright? Only one part of me
is wrong. That don't get to change the rest. Understand?

LINCOLN

No! Well, maybe, I...I don't know what to think.

ALEX

And this is what I get every time. Every time I like someone. I just
wanted it to be different this time. I'm so tired of this. Why do I
have to do this again?

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
I'M NO DIFFERENT THAN WHO I HAVE BEEN
BUT IF YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE ME
THIN THIS IS THE PLACE IT BEGINS

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
THE SAME ONE WHO SHOOK WHEN MY PARENTS WOULD SCREAM
AND CHASE ME AWAY.

IT'S THE INSIDE ME YOUR SEEING NOW
THIS IS HOW I DREAM, WHAT YOU SEE NOW
I'M NO DIFFERENT THAN YOU WHEN YOU LOOK IN MY EYES
AND I WON'T SPEND MY LIFE IN DECEPTION AND LIES
SO INSTEAD I'LL BE SOMEONE WHO'S ALWAYS DESPISED
THAT IS MY FUTURE, IT SEEMS.

LINCOLN

Why didn't you tell me?

ALEX

I've known you for two days. You wan 'a talk about your body parts?
Jeeze!

LINCOLN

Don't you trust me?

ALEX

I don't know you. I want to, if there's still a chance. Augh! This Is so stupid. Nobody else has to explain who they are. Do you know why I'm here? It's the only safe place for me, and I can't leave. Not if I want a future. Any future. So everyday I play the happy-go-lucky kid, and everybody thinks things are hunky-dory. Then no one will get to close and I won't have to do this over and over.

LINCOLN

All I wanted was to have people tell me the truth, to stop treating me like a little kid.

ALEX

Shut up Lincoln. Shut up and grow up. You want truth? Look at me. Everyone in this show is hiding behind some character we put on. We're all broken, and so are you. You only want to hear your truth. You'd better be prepared to see everyone else's too. You better decide whether you ready to grow up.

SO THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO WALK AWAY
AND THINK WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR HEAD
CONVINCED YOU'RE ALONE WITH THE WORLD ON YOUR BACK
OR WAKE UP AND SEE ME INSTEAD

I HEARD YOU SINGING AND KNOW HOW YOU FEEL
'COUSE THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL TOO.
BUT 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 AKE NO APOLOGIES FOR WHO I AM
I CAN BE YOUR FRIEND AND STAND BY YOUR SIDE
I CAN TRUST YOU, THEN MAYBE, I WON'T HAVE TO HIDE
IF YOU ONLY KNEW JUST HOW HARD I TRIED
TO SEE THAT END AT LAST.

IT'S THE INSIDE ME YOUR SEEING NOW
THIS IS HOW I DREAM, WHAT YOU SEE NOW
I'M NO DIFFERENT THAN YOU WHEN YOU LOOK IN MY EYES

CAN YOU SEE ALL THE PAIN THAT I'VE HAD TO ABIDE
WILL YOU LISTEN WHEN I TELL YOU JUST HOW MUCH I'VE CRIED
COULD YOU STILL CHOOSE ME?

LINCOLN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you mad. This is just kinda hard to understand.

ALEX

Nobody understands. That's what hurts.

SO TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME LIKE EVERYONE ELSE
IT WAS ALWAYS YOUR CHOICE ANYWAY
I DON'T WANT YOUR PITY, JUST SOMEWHERE TO STOP
WITH SOMEONE WHO FINALLY WILL STAY
SO JUST ONCE-I DON'T HAVE TO SAY
I ONLY HAVE ME.

(END OF SONG)

On a discordant note, ALEX runs off stage just as HELOISE appears upstage and calls to LINCOLN.

HELOISE

Lincoln? She's going on now. Are you going to do this?

LINCOLN looks off at where ALEX ran, then to HELOISE, then back towards ALEX again. It's only then that he sees the shadow. It's him, but as he watches it grows to that of his father. The Lights go dark.

#00a - THE INSIDE ME TO JOYFUL HEART SEGWAY
(Orchestra) .

ACT 2 SCENE 7 ON the tent stage

.The Scrim rises and we see MARGERY standing in front of a harpsichord. CHARLEY is playing it. Next to him is a string trio. Behind them is a painted pastoral scene .

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 IT'S 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 from upstage surprising MARGERY

LINCOLN

SIMPLE THE DREAMS 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 from the shadows as well, singing harmony.
MARGERY has figured out what is happening and is fighting
back tears.*

LINCOLN & ALEX

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

*ALEX take LINCOLN'S hand with a smile, and joins it with
MARGERY'S, then bows to them both. MARGERY and LINCOLN dance
with each other while ALEX orbits them like a little planet
in ballet, spinning and leaping through an instrumental
break. Finally all three stand in an arc with MARGERY in the
center, and they sing together.*

LINCOLN & ALEX & MARGERY

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.

*ALEX and LINCOLN end by bowing together to MARGERY, who
curtsies back, then all three bow to the audience. As the
scrim falls, we see LINCOLN and MARGERY hug.*

CHARLEY grins, then slips across the stage where he puts his hat on and turns to look back and says to himself.

CHARLEY

We all see you now, Theatre Kid.

CHARLEY picks up a small trunk and exits, while *LINCOLN*, *MARGERIE*, and *ALEX* go backstage the other direction.

(END OF SONG)

ACT 2 SCENE 9 BACKSTAGE

MARGERY and THE BOYS pass the chorus now dressed in Greek togas walking onto the stage. GEORGE is dressed as Eros and stops to curtsy to MARGERY, who smiles and turns to LINCOLN.

MARGERY

Lincoln. I'm sorry. I wouldn't let myself understand. You know exactly who you are. You always have.

When the Chorus takes the stage, MARGERY, ALEX and LINCOLN see OLIVER standing and watching them.

It's not morning yet. Why are you here?

OLIVER

I wanted to watch you sing. I haven't done that enough. You were magnificent. I wasn't expecting Lincoln too. And you as well, young man. You're quite talented.

ALEX

(with a happy shrug)
Thank you!

OLIVER

When we get back to New York, we need to see that the two of you are highlighted in the new act.

MARGERY

I'm staying Oliver. I blinded myself for so long. Fear kept me with you and nearly led me to do something that would have hurt Lincoln. I can never do that again. Ever. I'm sorry.

OLIVER

I thought we had settled this.

MARGERY

No. You just manipulated events so I felt I had no choice. As it turns out, one was waiting for me. I just couldn't see it then.

OLIVER

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

ALEX

(With an even bigger "Aw shucks" gesture.)
Thank you!

OLIVER

.....and it moved me to change.

MARGERY

Stop it Oliver. We have played this scene too many times, but nothing ever changes. Its over. This is about Lincoln now. Can you trust him to make his own decisions? (She looks at her son) I have discovered that I can.

OLIVER

I will never give up on you Margery, despite you giving up on me, but so be it. Well, Lincoln, It looks like it's down to us. If you come back with me, you could be singing in the Follies this year. How about it?

MARGERY

Oliver! See? There you go, right there. You didn't ask, you just started negotiations. Just ask.

OLIVER

Son, Broadway is calling. Do you answer?

LINCOLN

(With disappointment)

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

OLIVER

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

LINCOLN

(shouting)

But you don't know why I want it!

OLIVER

Lincoln. Calm down. I can open a lot of doors or you. My latest show is top rated.

PETER

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

OLIVER turns to see PETER & HELOISE walking in'

OLIVER

(Haughtily)

Mixed reviews. Alright? Mixed! I seriously doubt my career is over because of a few numbskulls with pens.

PETER

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

OLIVER

(Exasperated and played for comedy)

Who is this person?

PETER

(With authority)

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

(Quick three shot)

HELOISE

Our show.

PETER

Our show.

HELOISE

Good boy.

LINCOLN

Father. A few minutes ago, I didn't know what to do. Then I saw my own shadow, and... I didn't recognize myself anymore. I saw you instead. I understand now. I want a different future. It's not about being seen. What matters is being the friend I've always wanted for someone else instead.

LINCOLN puts his arm over ALEX's shoulder

OLIVER

(Angerly gesturing to ALEX)

How did this suddenly become all about this boy? What does he have to do with any of this?

HELOISE

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

OLIVER

Oh, don't try and drag me into your fatalistic drivél.

HELOISE

Fatalistic? Nothing is set in stone. We don't know where this will lead anymore than you. We are but shadows that point to the light. Until you understand the purpose of shadow, you may never find your way out of darkness. Do you wish to understand, Mr. Foster?

OLIVER

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 as we know it is dying. What it shall become is up to which direction we choose.

OLIVER

None of this mumbo jumbo has anything to do with me. I sacrifice for my son. Do you know how many shows I'm missing? Do you know what that's costing me? Come on, Lincoln. 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 go with you either. I'm not afraid anymore.

I'M ALL DONE LIVING IN THE DARK

I LOVE YOU, BUT YOU'VE NOT HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID
BUT I WONT LEAVE YOU IN THE DARK.
SO MAYBE, SOMEDAY, YOU CAN COME WITH ME INSTEAD

OLIVER

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

MARGERY

I already have, Oliver. I hope you find your truth as well.

OLIVER kisses LINCOLN on the top of his head, breaths him in, then turns and walks offstage.

(END OF SONG)

PETER

It seems it's time to end this show.

PETER walks into the show tent.

MARGERY

(Looking off to 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.

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.

MARGERY looks HELOISE in the face.

MARGERY

Heloise and Abelard. I know that story. It's tragic. But that was 800 years ago. It can't possibly be you. Can it?

HELOISE

I told you. History plays the long game. This tent is more than it seems.

MARGERY

Then Astrolabe isn't a thing.

HELOISE says nothing, turns and walks into the tent with MARGERY following her. This leaves LINCOLN and ALEX sitting together on the trunk.

LINCOLN

You're still the neatest boy I know. Thank you for being honest. With me and about me. You were right about everything.

ALEX

I told you I wouldn't lie. I'm tired of lies. I won't live like that anymore. I want your mom to know me too.

LINCOLN

What happens if she wigs out and takes my away? You're my friend and I don't want to lose you.

ALEX

Everybody else in the tent knows. Were both growin' up, and that'll change things. If she can't accept me now, then there's no point in waiting.

ALEX stands, looks at LINCOLN.

Welcome to my world.

ALEX walks in the tent, followed by LINCOLN.

LIGHTS FADE BACKSTAGE

ACT 2 SCENE 10 The Empty Tent

We follow THE BOYS in to see that the tent has been emptied. There is no band, show lighting, oleos, props, etc. Only the canvas walls remain, it's stars shining brightly overhead. Center stage is MARGERY and PETER. Just inside the tent HELOISE stands quietly. ALEX steps up to her.

ALEX

What happened to the show? Where are all the people?

HELOISE

Right where they've always been. Watching, experiencing, discovering. Our boy Astrolabe sewed this tent with love and magic to give Peter and I the life we never had together. We honor him by taking it into the world to give everyone who shelters in it a second chance, like it did for us. That's you dear boy. The tent of Stars is here to guide whoever seeks, so the show always becomes what it needs to be. It became what you needed, and now its time for you to become who you need to be.

HELOISE points to MARGERY, and gives ALEX a squeeze on his shoulders. ALEX walks over to MARGERY.

ALEX

Mrs. Foster?

MARGERY

Yes, Alex?

ALEX

I need to trust you too. Can I?

MARGERY

Of course sweetheart.

ALEX looks to PETER, who nods

PETER

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

ALEX

(hesitantly)

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

MARGERY

(Confused, then as a revelation.)

What?-Oh-My ...!

ALEX

Yeah. I figured

MARGERY

(With dawning joy)

No!, That's not it at all Alex. You are my shadow!

ALEX

What?

MARGERY

(With strong emotion)

Roberta was right. I saw a ghost today and now I know why. I took dance lessons when I was young, and had a friend named Abbey. We shared silly dance moves. It was kind of like our own language. Then, one day, I discovered she was a lot like you, but I didn't understand. I hurt her, and after that, I never saw her again. Then I heard she had - No one was there for her. I could have been, but I wasn't. No one would talk about her after - like she never was. It was so long ago, and I've carried the pain and sorrow of that "what if" ever since. Until today.

(Tearfully)

She danced with me, Alex, one last time. She forgave me. Now, here you are. I understand now. Just like Lincoln, you are already who you are supposed to be. None of us are alone, and you don't ever have to be if that's what you want. If you want a family, Lincoln and I will be that for you.

ALEX

(shocked and hesitantly)

What? Like, live with you? But you barely know me.

MARGERY

Oh, sweet boy. If chaos has brought you to our door, I am honored to let you in.

ALEX

MARGERY takes a step towards ALEX, but he steps back, then looks between her and LINCOLN

This isn't right. Why?

LINCOLN

Alex?

ALEX looks back to LINCOLN with an almost frightened, pleading look on his face.

ALEX

Don't do this to me. Not if you don't really mean it.

LINCOLN

Alex, It's okay.

ALEX

(cries out in desperation)

Don't lie. Nobody want's me.

LINCOLN

No one is lying to you. I will never lie to you. This is real. You're home... brother.

ALEX begins to cry silently. MARGERY steps forward to hug him, but again, ALEX backs up, conflicted in his emotions. MARGERY kneels before 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 to ALEX and puts his hand on ALEX's shoulder. ALEX flinches, 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'LL GO ON WALKING
TO WHATEVER PEACE IS WAITING
TRUSTING THAT WE'LL FIND A PLACE
WE SOMEHOW KNOW IS THERE
CAUSE IF WE HOLD EACH OTHER UP
AND WALK THAT PATH TOGETHER
WE'LL FIND OUR SORROWS LIGHTER
WHEN OUR SORROWS WE ALL SHARE

Alex joins in, voice breaking with emotion.

LINCOLN & ALEX

MAYBE WE'VE FOUND WE CAN GO ON
WHEN WE'VE BEEN BROKEN

I KNOW WE'LL RISE UP TO THE CLOUDS
AGAIN ONE DAY

AND IF WE SING EACH OTHERS SONG
WHEN NO WORDS CAN BE SPOKEN

MAYBE WE CAN ALL STILL
FIND OUR WAY

MARGERY

THERE'S NO MORE LIVING IN THE DARK

SO FROM MY HEART TO YOURS I SING

WHEN NO WORDS CAN BE SPOKEN

MAYBE WE CAN ALL STILL
FIND OUR WAY

Finally, ALEX let's them hug him, and after a moment, ALEX hugs back, letting his barriers down at last. Just like ALEX, all the tent walls peel away revealing the CAST, the orchestra, and a blazing sun in a deep starfield upstage. The tent ceiling flies up out of sight, and the stage is flooded with light.

HELOISE

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

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

PETER

WE CAN HOLD EACH OTHER TIGHTLY
FORGIVING PAST MISTAKES

ROBERTA

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

CHARLEY

WE CAN BRING EACH OTHER PIECES OF
THE SHATTERED WORLD MOSAIC

HELOISE

WE CAN JUST BE LOVING
FOR EACH OTHERS SAKE.

George steps to center stage

GEORGE

(Spoken)

AND SO GOOD FRIENDS OUR TALE IS DONE.
OUR MUSES HAVE MUSED,
AND OUR SONGS HAVE 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 IS YOURS TO INITIATE.

SO BE GOOD, DO GOOD, AND LET LOVE PREVAIL
IT'S ALL UP TO YOU THE CORSE THAT YOU SAIL

BUT IF YOU LIVE IN LIMBO STILL
TAKE THE LOVE AND HOPE THAT OUR BLESSINGS FILL

OUR HEART ARE OPEN, OUR HANDS ARE OUT
YOU EACH HAVE WORTH, THIS NEVER DOUBT.

*GEORGE is engulfed in a swirl of stars, and becomes
ASTROLABE, who addresses the audience.*

ASTROLABE

We are all who we need to be. Listen to the shadow of your regrets,
and let them point you to the light. You might find it in the hearts
of those around you now. Wouldn't that just change the world forever?

*ASTROLABE spreads his arms in a wide embrace and begins to
spin, transforming into a ball of stars. The in turn, seem to
fly from the stage to engulf the entire theatre in swirling
galaxies, stars and planets. The orchestra play the final
rendition of the shadow theme, which ends on a major this
time which , in turn, becomes the swelling reprise of the
opening number.*

HELOISE

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

PETER

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

ROBERTA

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

CHARLEY

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

MARGERY

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

LINCOLN

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

ALEX

IT'S TIME TO MAKE TIME

MARGERY, LINCOLN & ALEX

TO RECLAIM THE JOY IN YOUR HEART.

*ALEX is lifted up in front of the sun by the cast as the full
band kicks in and horns blare the final cadence.*

ALEX

We Are ASTROLABE!

(END OF SONG)

BLACKOUT.

#00a - BOWS
(Company & Orchestra) .

*As the orchestra concludes with the opening bars of Mouret's
Fanfare/Rondo, HELOISE steps center stage.*

HELOISE

We would like to thank you all for attending our little falderal
today. If you enjoyed it, please tell everyone you randomly meet.

CHARLEY

If you didn't, we're Hamilton!

HELOISE

Tent theatre was once the most frequented form of theatre in the United States, and presented what were referred to in the industry as "Rag Opries." They consisted of a two act drama or comedy, interspersed with "Clean" vaudeville acts. It seems that is exactly what you just witnessed. But there was one traditional element missing.

CHARLEY

Talent?

HELOISE

Speak for yourself, Charley. I meant this.

HELOISE (CONT'D)

IT MIGHT APPEAR THAT IT'S UNCLEAR
AS FAR AS HOW YOU SEE US
AND IF YOU THINK IT'S KIND OF QUEER,
IT'S EVEN TOUGH TO BE US.
BUT LET US PUT YOUR FEARS TO REST
AND TAKE THE TIME TO SAY
THOUGH YOU MIGHT THINK ITS INDISTINCT
WE'RE ALL OKAY, OKAY?

That's right. It's a singalong! Oh, Stop it right now. I can see you getting all squirmy. You get one word. I think you can handle that. Think of this as your bonus professional audition. You don't get one of those in LE Mis without adding to the body count. All you have to do is say Okay, whenever I say Okay, Okay?

(rolls eyes at lackluster reaction)

God help us. Okay?

AUDIENCE

Okay!

HELOISE

Okay?

AUDIENCE

Okay!

HELOISE

Okay.

ALEX

Okay.

HELOISE

Okay!

AUDIENCE

Okay

HELOISE

Alright!

AUDIENCE

???

HELOISE

Now pay attention.

IF YOU LOOK AROUND WHERE YOU SIT NOW
THERE'S PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW
YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY CAME FROM
OR WHERE THEY SOON WILL GO

THEY MIGHT BE SOMEONE JUST LIKE YOU
OR DIFFERENT, WHOSE TO SAY?
SO GIVE THEM ALL A SMILE AND WAVE
AND TELL THEM THEY'RE OKAY

AUDIENCE

Okay!

HELOISE

Well, go ahead. You just agreed. Smile , nod, wave. You know the drill. All right, that's enough. Back to me. Eyes this way.

SO JUST LIKE ALL THOSE STRANGERS
WE'RE KIND OF STRANGE OURSELVES
AND WE'RE MOVING IN ACROSS THE STREET
SO YOU CAN SAY OH HELL--O NEIGHBOR.

Right?

BUT ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW US
IN THE NORMAL DAY TO DAY
YOU MIGHT FIND WE'LL CHANGE YOUR MIND
TO THINK THAT WE'RE OKAY

AUDIENCE

Okay!

CAST

THERE'S A BETTER LIFE AHEAD OF YOU
JUST FOLLOW YOUR HEART
THAT LITTLE KID INSIDE YOU
WILL TELL YOU WHERE TO START
YOU KNEW WHAT WAS IMPORTANT
WHEN YOU TODDLED OFF TO PLAY
IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEN
IT'S EVEN BETTER FOR TODAY.

HELOISE

SO BEFORE YOU THINK YOU'VE SEEN THE NEED
FOR TIMELY INTERVENTION
LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT WE ALL GAIN
TO STATE OUR TRUE INTENTION
EVERYONE'S IN COSTUME
WE WEAR ONE EVERY DAY
TO FACE THE WORLD SO THEY CONFIRM
THAT WE ARE ALL OKAY

AUDIENCE

Okay

HELOISE

BUT DO YOU NEED OPINIONS
TO VALIDATE YOUR DREAMS?
DO YOU KNOW JUST WHO YOU ARE
DESPITE WHAT IT MAY SEEM?
SO REMEMBER ALL THE SMILES
THAT YOU TRADED ALRIGHT
THAT'S THE REAL EVERYBODY'
IN OUR STORY TONIGHT

CAST

THERE'S A BETTER LIFE AHEAD OF YOU
JUST FOLLOW YOUR HEART
THAT LITTLE KID INSIDE YOU
WILL TELL YOU WHERE TO START
YOU KNEW WHAT WAS IMPORTANT
WHEN YOU TODDLED OFF TO PLAY
IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEN
IT'S EVEN BETTER FOR TODAY.

HELOISE

Ah ha! See? I knew you could sing, or at least mouth the words. This will make it easier. Bring her in boys. Careful. She's an antique'

The boys walk in carrying the sing along board from the original production of Pippin.

Well, they weren't using it anymore. It's called upcycling now. We used to just call it outright theft.

She gesture to the boys to turn it around. On the backside, our lyrics are hastily scrawled.

Yes, all our budget went for doughnuts.

SO, THANK YOU FOR THE LAUGHTER
AND FOR LENDING YOUR VOICE
THOUGH IT ISN'T LIKE I REALLY GAVE YOU
MUCH OF A CHOICE
BUT MAYBE SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM
CAN MAKE A FRIEND TODAY
AND OPEN UP A FUTURE
WHERE THEY'RE FINELY OKAY.

AUDIENCE

Okay

HELOISE

I'm so proud of you.

CAST

THERE'S A BETTER LIFE AHEAD OF YOU
JUST FOLLOW YOUR HEART
THAT LITTLE KID INSIDE YOU

WILL TELL YOU WHERE TO START
YOU KNEW WHAT WAS IMPORTANT
WHEN YOU TODDLED OFF TO PLAY
IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEN
IT'S EVEN BETTER FOR TODAY.

CAST (CONT'D)

THERE'S A BETTER LIFE AHEAD OF YOU
JUST FOLLOW YOUR HEART
THAT LITTLE KID INSIDE YOU
WILL TELL YOU WHERE TO START
YOU KNEW WHAT WAS IMPORTANT
WHEN YOU TODDLED OFF TO PLAY
IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEN
IT'S EVEN BETTER FOR TODAY.

Okay?

CAST AND AUDIENCE

Okay!!!

(END OF SONG)

*The cast runs off stage with a final wave, as the houselights
go up. The sun becomes a poem. And we hear Mattie's voice...*

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

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#00b - EXIT MUSIC
(Edison Player) .

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