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Down by the River

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ABSTRACT

Down by the River is a two-act comedy that depicts four eclectic twenty-two-year-old friends as they vacation in New Orleans for Memorial Day weekend. The father of one of the friends also plays a prominent part in the play. The characters face a string of unexpected, somewhat exaggerated, obstacles during their weekend stay in town. *Down by the River* concentrates on the subjects of friendship and family. The play also challenges socially-constructed associations of masculinity in the US.

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CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Down by the River is a productive feminist text. Earlier in the writing process, I thought how can I be the best feminist I can be in this play? The answer lay not with women, but with men. Most feminist stimulus rises from the less-than-agreeable actions of men. So if I, a male writer, speaking to a partly male audience, help said male audience improve their own characters a little, then *Down by the River* will have been worthwhile. With *Down by the River*, I wanted to set examples for men to follow through the main male characters in my play.

After seeing *Down by the River*, men will realize that satisfaction with their own lives, comes through productive work and strong and intimate ties with family and chosen family. Some men harbor this aversion to intimacy and communication, probably thinking society will judge them for partaking in such natural human acts. Little do these men know how wonderful and empowering closeness and attachment are. I trust *Down by the River* will be savvy enough to assist men into recognizing the sheer force that affection generates. Men need to help other men change their general views of masculinity and remove stigmas attached to emotional expression and affection. Most feminists would prefer a world with more types like Dallas, Medgar, Bo-bo, and Senator Lombard, and less types like Guy 1, Guy 2, and Guy 3. As a male writer, I can help feminism best by creating respectful male characters that men seek to emulate and that women can appreciate as well.

In terms of artistic precedent that influenced *Down by the River*, two movie scripts come to mind: *Rio Bravo* (1959) and *Amarcord* (1973). *Rio Bravo*, a western starring John Wayne, is abnormal for its time. *Rio Bravo*'s plot all takes place in one single town, no escapades outside of the town, and the main male characters show care and affection for each other and women, even for 2018 standards. In a somber moment at the end of the film, Dude (Dean Martin) says to

John T. (John Wayne), “If you want to jump in, I’ll take care of you” (2:15:38-2:15:42). *Rio Bravo*’s characters are the main reason I let the film influence my work. In other words, *Rio Bravo* provided the most inspiration for my male characters and their dynamic between one another. I turned to *Amarcord* for non-character related influence.

With the backdrop of 1930’s fascism, *Amarcord* takes place in a fictional, northeastern, seaside, Italian town during the stretch of one year. *Amarcord* is exaggerated, colorful, and nostalgic. While still being a critical success, critics complain of *Amarcord*’s loose plotline. The film is more so a string of anecdotes regarding the most interesting characters in the town, so *Amarcord*’s own setting is what gives it unity. *Amarcord* influenced *Down by the River* in its treatment of setting, exaggeration and nostalgia. *Down by the River* also uses its setting, New Orleans, as a character of its own. Like *Amarcord*, my scenes seem amplified and intend to tap into an adult’s sense of nostalgia.

Down by the River is not as reliant on its characters as *Rio Bravo*, and it is also not as reliant on its setting as *Amarcord*; *Down by the River* lies somewhere in the middle of the two scripts; it is, in some ways, a compromise of the two scripts.

On a lighter note, I want grownups to feel like kids every time they read or watch *Down by the River*. The world offers enough harsh realism and tragedy, so I want to discuss heavy themes but make these themes feel like lullabies or old children’s stories that one barely remembers. *Down by the River* should play as a children’s story for adults. If successful, adults will reflect on their adolescence, feel nostalgic, yet find and use an almost-forgotten current of energy that will refresh their jobs and their private lives. If one remains hesitant towards *Down by the River*, this play describes additional subject matter that might be of interest.

Down by the River covers many topics: family, friendship, religion, nuns, New Orleans, racism, homosexuality, heterosexuality, mental disabilities, masturbation, flirting, dancing, singing, politics, political parties, patriotism, violence, mobs, physical comedy, smartphones, media outlets, drag queens, and food & drink.

I originally intended *Down by the River* to be a narrower tale about the friendship between a gay man and a heterosexual woman. Then I changed my play to a collection of unrelated scenes that all held together thanks to the setting. Finally, I decided to revisit my original script and add more characters and themes into the mix. I like to think the collection-of-scenes period, in turn, helped me improve my original draft into the present version of *Down by the River*.

Down by the River

Written by: Gio Bradley

Author's Note

The setting of New Orleans carries its local dialects along with it, specifically the Louisiana Creole dialect and the Cajun dialect (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 102). Since I am not from New Orleans, I did not attempt to implement any dialects into the script; however, if anyone else producing this play truly knows New Orleans dialects, feel free to include them into the speech of the local characters.

Stage Manager: Dear Americans. Americans. Americans. I am the stage manager. Remember, remember but some centuries ago we took and then made this land our great nation? You tell me, ‘describe America.’ Describe an American. Give me a small free sample of it with my checkout of the big deal with the famous USA. Fine. Are you ready, folks?

Aye, audience in attendance say, ‘aye.’ Come on. Foreign countries know we’re loud and energetic. Aye, audience, repeat after me, aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Stage Manager: Play ball! America, land of hot dogs, due process, pickup trucks, lipstick & lip gloss. Who’s the boss! Subway-train make outs. Kentucky-Blue-grass make outs. Oil—gasoline, ready, set, hike, the original 13 original colonies. California Gold Rush. Levi’s Jeans. Beer and Bourbon and Rye and Chardonnay, heyy. Yankee Doodle went to town dandy—then Susan, Elizabeth, and the rest, went hard to vote. MLK, Douglass, and Tubman on the mountaintop. Ta-ta-touch screen, ice cream, sun screen, big screen. TV. I Love Lucy to Friends of Jenn Anniston. Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or undecided and uninterested, all under one house. National parks. The beaches, all the beaches on every coast. Thanksgiving—Thanksgiving: The most American thing, but Christmas also became ours—shout out to Mariah Carey. Oh, Biggie, Biggie, Biggie, can’t you see—that star-spangled banner yet wave.

[*Pause.*]

Thank you. Thank you. Now, remember. I love the word remember. It’s my favorite word. Remember adolescence used to end at about 18 or, say, 21? Yeah, well, that number has changed to 30. Long live the young and underdeveloped brains of the young. Dear, God. Anyway, today, they are having me—they being the spirits and ancestors of this nation—they are having me present a tale of patriotism. So, sit back and stop trying to guess how many likes your latest Gram pic got since you last checked your notifications. Off we go, down South: New Orleans. You been there? It’s a very honest city. Where the filthy rich and the dead-ass broke all mingle closely together. Many people travel there for vacation, including the subjects of tonight’s entertainment.

Our four freshly college graduated young characters decide to take the trip for Memorial Day Weekend. An eclectic group of friends: A white girl, a gay white guy, a black guy, and a mentally disabled guy: Sarah, Dallas, Medgar, and Bo-bo, good, patriotic, American kids. Again, I use kids loosely. Well, let’s jump into the fray. It’s Saturday night in NOLA and the kids find their footing.

Act I, Scene I

[Late at night in New Orleans on the Mississippi riverfront walkway, around the east tip of the Bywater neighborhood. No pedestrians. Curtains rise, and a loud tugboat horn sounds across the theater. Lots of commotion, screaming, movement onstage. Two young guys, about eighteen, harass Bo-bo.]

Guy 1: Let's tie him up!

Bo-bo: I-I want it to stop.

Guy 2: What the hell are we gonna tie him with?

Guy 1: Our shirts. Come on. It's hot as balls.

Guy 2: All right, you hold him first.

[Guy 1 holds Bo-bo. Guy 2 takes off his shirt. Then they switch.]

Bo-bo: Let's-let's talk it out.

[They manage to push him onto the ground.]

Bo-bo: Ow. Stop.

[Bo-bo kicks and squirms on the ground, but, by now, the two control both Bo-bo's arms and legs.]

Guy 1: Ha, can you believe this big man-baby? 'Ow, stop.'

Bo-bo: *[Hurt.]* I'm smart. I know, and I remember, more-more than you and you. I'm smart. I know I am.

Guy 2: 'I'm smart.' I'm not a total dumbass.

[Both of them finish tying his legs together and then his arms together.]

[Dallas and Medgar run onstage, out of breath, carrying a paper bag with three bottles of booze. They see the two guys on Bo-bo, put the bag down, but wait.]

Guy 1: *[To Bo-bo.]* What's four times three?

Guy 2: Yeah, what's that?

Bo-bo: Four, four, time—s three? It's, um, uh, four, four, and four together is . . . twelve.

Guy 1: Good job, big retard.

Bo-bo: That's mean. Please apologize.

[Dallas and Medgar creep up behind them. After a while, both Medgar and Dallas are at their backs, and off they go towards them. Since the two guys sit linearly on Bo-bo, Dallas and Medgar each stand behind one of the guys from behind. Both Medgar and Dallas stretch their arms wide, cup their hands, grab the head of the guy in front of them, and then knock the two guy's heads together. The two bullies fall off of Bo-bo, yelling and groaning.]

Dallas: *[Jumps on Guy 2 and starts swingin'.]* How's it going? You want to knock it out or not?

[Medgar goes after Guy 1.]

Bo-bo: Dallas! Medgar! Is that you? I can't see.

Dallas: *[In-between fighting.]* Yeah, Bo-bo, we're here.

Medgar: We're gonna be fine, Bo-bo. You're doing great. Hang in there. *[Switches his attention.]* Oh loverboy.

Bo-bo: Let me help. *[Bo-bo rolls around a bit.]*

Guy 1: Like that's gonna help.

Medgar: It. Is. Helping. Bo-bo, keep rolling, but away from the Mississippi.

Dallas: Yeah, thank you, Bo-bo. I'm feeling better.

Bo-bo: I can't see.

Dallas: *[Still holding up with Guy 2.]* He's better than I thought.

[Successive swings from Dallas break up every word in the following two sentences.]

Dallas: Once-upon-a-time-two-assholes-went-to-the-river.

[Swings end. Guy 2 is weak and can't get up.]

Dallas: Medgar I'll— *[Dallas burps.]* help you.

Bo-bo: Stop fighting, guys.

Medgar: Bo-bo, almost. You see that steamboat coming?

Bo-bo: Where? *[Sees it.]* Yeah. I wonder how many knots fast.

[Unfortunately, in the meantime, Guy 2 gains back enough strength, moves to the paper bag Dallas and Medgar brought, and grabs a bottle. He runs to Dallas and Medgar, still dealing with Guy 1, and from behind, wham, hits both Dallas and Medgar on the head with two blows.]

Guy 1: Sweet Dreams.

[Guy 2 picks up limping Guy 1, and together they wobble offstage.]

Bo-bo: Help.

[Pause.]

[Sarah enters upstage.]

Sarah: Medgar, Dallas, Bo-bo.

Bo-bo: Sarah! Sarah! Over here.

Sarah: What in the—I just wanted to try a couple testers, and now. *[Goes over to Dallas and Medgar, kneels down, and checks their breath/pulse.]*

Sarah: Dallas, Medgar. *[Slaps both lightly on the face.]*

[No reaction from either of them.]

Bo-bo: Where is everybody?

Sarah: I don't know, Bo-bo. I'll be right there.

[Sarah sees the remaining bottles Medgar and Dallas brought in the bag. She goes to it, opens them, and drains them onto the pavement. After that, Sarah runs to the river, fills up the bottles, rushes back to Dallas and Medgar, and pours the bottles on them.]

Bo-bo: Good idea, Sarah.

Sarah: I'm coming, Bo-bo.

[Medgar and Dallas budge slightly. Sarah repeats the process two more times. By the end of the third, both can mumble.]

Bo-bo: Wake up, guys.

Dallas: Hey . . . what kind of water you got there? How long it been sitting in your bag? Someone douche with that?

Medgar: Really fuuunked up.

Sarah: [*Happily.*] I didn't bring a purse. That was Mississippi River on you two.

Bo-bo: Untie me. Untie me.

Sarah: Yes, Bo-bo, coming.

Dallas: Huh. [*Pause.*] I prefer it at a distance.

Medgar: Two pervs make a getaway?

Sarah: [*Unties Bo-bo.*] I guess. I don't know what happened.

Bo-bo: [*Jumps up.*] I'm free. I'm free again. Thanks, Sarah. [*Goes to Dallas and Medgar.*] These mean guys ran after me. They got me here and tied me. They were mean. Then Medgar and Dallas came.

Sarah: Uh huh. You two want an ambulance? Let me call an ambulance—

Dallas: No, I don't need help.

Medgar: I don't need no whambulance.

[*Bo-bo laughs.*]

Medgar: Do you know the inflation rate of bandages and gauze once you're on a gurney?

Sarah: Of all times, you worry about money now.

Medgar: Yeah. Yeah, yes, I do.

[*Pause.*]

Dallas: I wonder how we hit the deck.

Bo-bo: I don't know, but I heard glass from that pink bottle Sarah got.

Dallas: Another reason for me to hate Rosé.

Sarah: So, during your time off, I drained your beers, filled them with river, and you know the rest.

Medgar: Could use a beer.

Sarah: Oh, I'll get you guys a whole round of drinks once we get back.

Bo-bo: I want a soda.

Medgar: You all right, Bo-bo?

Bo-bo: Yup. I'm thirsty.

[Medgar and Dallas slowly stand back up.]

Dallas: Come on. Let's go. It's a Holiday. If we took a holiday—

Bo-bo: Holiday.

[They walk back, upstage.]

Sarah: Where do you think they went?

Dallas: I don't know. Don't care.

Medgar: And I don't want anyone to know they got away from us.

Act I, Scene II

[After walking all the way back to the hotel and into Sarah and Dallas' room, Dallas, Sarah, Medgar Facetime/Skype/Video call with their parents at the same time on their smartphones. The fly system rolls down split screens on which the respective parent for each appears. Bo-bo sits somewhere amidst Dallas, Sarah, and Medgar and observes until he participates.]

Senator Lombard: Sarah, how are you? You nice and settled in your room?

Mr. Williams: Medgar! How's NOLA going? You guys having fun?

Ms. Powell: Dallas, there you are! Did you find out if the \$700 extra charge was just the preliminary credit card hold?

Sarah: *[Complies with her dad's formal, initial address protocol.]* Yes, pop, the flight flew fine, the taxi cab traversed terrifically, and the hotel hosts us handsomely.

Dallas: Hi, mom. Yup, their usual line of credit and security hold.

Medgar: The three of us are off to a great start here.

Senator Lombard: And Sarah, now, shoulders back, chin level. You look a little off.

Ms. Powell: Okay. Dallas, remember, don't drink--or more than one drink--but, no, don't drink.

Mr. Williams: Medgar, bring me back some chicory coffee, and I want you to tell me what you did, where you went, and how it made you feel, all right? None of that 'it was good' when you come back.

Sarah: Yes, pops. Everything good with you? Why are you still on the senate floor?

Dallas: Mom. We've been through and through with this.

Medgar: Yeah, dad, OK, I got it.

Senator Lombard: Swell, Sarah. Yeah, we're in the twelfth hour of a filibuster against the tax cut. Oh, it's gonna pass. It's gonna break through. It's alive, and it's on fire. Bless my Freedom. Bless my lucky stars, and all fifty states. I'm ready to run down and tear that pee bucket from the junior senator if they even try it.

Ms. Powell: Don't disobey your mother. Do you hear me? And have fun. There's still so much packing left. Tomorrow I have meetings all morning, but don't forget to text me!

Mr. Williams: Your mom's betting you four will get into some trouble before this weekend ends. Prove her wrong, please.

Sarah: I hope the junior senator holds. You already know how I feel.

Dallas: Yeah, mom. Otherwise, you all right, mom?

Medgar: Sure. Mom teaching night classes right now?

Senator Lombard: My very own daughter tantalized by liberal agenda. What's next—vacations in Nicaragua? To hell with that! You go there yourself, Sarah. You play beach ball with Ortega and the whole Sandinista company. No, not me. Ah, it has been a great day. Great day here, and a great kickoff to your trip. Well . . . Where's Dallas, Medgar and Bo-bo?

Ms. Powell: Yes. My stomach's better. Have fun, but be careful.

Mr. Williams: Yes, she is. Well, I'll let you guys be. Love you, Medgar. Holler if anything happens.

Sarah: Dallas and Medgar are talking to their parents right now as well. We all decided to check in with you guys at the same time. And Bo-bo is here.

Dallas: Glad to hear it. Catch up with you later. Have a good night, mom.

Medgar: Love you, too. Night, dad.

Senator Lombard: Good. Yes, smart use of time. Will Medgar and Dallas be done soon? I wanna talk to all of you guys. I'd say I have about five minutes. This guy's gonna pee soon. He's gonna tinkle. Look at his legs knock together. Ha!

Ms. Powell: Bye, Dallas. Sleep well. Bye-bye.

[The split screen unifies to just show Mr. Lombard.]

Sarah: Lucky you, Dallas and Medgar just finished. Medgar, Dallas—Bo-bo.

Dallas: What, what's up?

Medgar: Yeah?

Bo-bo: *[Imitates Sarah's call.]* Sarah—Senator Lombard.

[Sarah motions Dallas, Medgar, and Bo-bo to come close to her screen. They sit around her.]

Dallas, Bo-bo, and Medgar: Evening, Senator Lombard.

Senator Lombard: Bo-bo, you feeling fresh, huh? Ha. Good to see you guys. Chins up, damn it. All four of you.

Sarah: My bad, pop. I held the screen at a low angle.

Senator Lombard: Figure it out. Work on it. Complete it. Now let me take a good look at you four. [*To someone else.*] Give me a damn minute to talk to the kids. I've been talking to you guys for over half a news cycle. [*Back to them.*] Let me look at you four. [*Quick pause.*] You all look a little off. Dallas—Medgar, what the hell are those bruise—. [*Pause. Senator Lombard's intuition hits. The rest of the dialogue he barks out, rapid fire.*] Well, was it a good one? How many? Why'd it happen? One, two rounds? Medgar—Dallas, now I trust nothing happened to Sarah or Bo-bo. As the strongest ones, you're both responsible for—they musta' scrambled or something. Otherwise, why the long faces?

Sarah: Pop, we don't know what you're talking about.

Bo-bo: [*Giggles.*] No-no, Senator Lombard. Don't jump. Don't jump—jump to conclusions.

Dallas: Senator Lombard, uh, your mind racing a little too fast as you wait for that final cloture on the senate floor?

Medgar: Yeah, Senator Lombard, there's no shame in feeling tired from working so hard.

Senator Lombard: [*Grins.*] Bastards. My bastards. I remember. I remember that age . . . just rousing up in the dead of night, sweating, wanting to punch jerks out, cold-cock. Ah, sweet nostalgia. [*Pause.*] Oh, Bo-bo, I had your somewhat abstract painting of the *USS President* and the *HMS Belvidera* framed. I love it. You'll see it next time you come over for dinner.

Bo-bo: OK!

Senator Lombard: Sarah, remember to practice the Schrödinger equations some more for your Quantum chemistry. Speed it up.

Sarah: Yes, the three dimensions wavefunction solutions aren't my favorite, but I'll get them. Hey! Did you snoop through my exam copies again?

Senator Lombard: Snoop. You forgot them on the dining room table before you left.

Bo-bo: Sauerkraut wasn't my favorite, but I got used to it.

Senator Lombard: Good, Bo-bo. Right on time for baseball season. Medgar and Dallas?

Dallas: Yeah?

Medgar: Yeah?

Senator Lombard: You two warming up to politics yet?

Dallas: Not sure I'd be any good.

Medgar: Maybe with some time.

Senator Lombard: Of course you two would. At your ages, you don't know what you want. I can see beyond your nervous angst. I'm already telling people. Some GOP senators damn near choked on their sandwiches at lunch when I told them you are gay and you are black. I said they're getting delicate. Our party needs to catch up.

Sarah: Yes, your party does, and it needs to catch up on a whole lot more.

Senator Lombard: Don't start with me, Sarah.

Sarah: Fine.

Senator Lombard: Oh, I'm dropping in at some point tomorrow, late afternoon.

Sarah: You're what?

Senator Lombard: Yeah, Sarah, yeah.

Bo-bo: Woo.

Senator Lombard: So make sure you all get your young, rebellious vice and depravity out of the way tonight, all right? No silly shit when I get there.

[Dallas, Sarah, Medgar and Bo-bo look at each other, uncertain.]

Senator Lombard: Time for me to go. Listen up, you three. Behave yourselves. Ice those bumps. Now get lost.

[Senator Lombard ends the video-chat.]

Medgar: Your dad picks up quick on things.

Sarah: Not all things, but yes, if it has to do with fighting, he does.

Dallas: You guys wanna go out?

Sarah: Let's shower up first. Medgar what floor are you and Bo-bo on?

Medgar: Fourth.

Bo-bo: Sarah, give me one of your Lush Bath Bombs.

Sarah: Yes, Bo-bo. Medgar, make sure he keeps the door slightly open. Check if anything—

Medgar: I got it now. Don't worry. We'll be done fast.

[Sarah gets and hands the Lush Bath bomb to Bo-bo.]

Bo-bo: Thank you. Bye guys.

Dallas: Bye.

Sarah: Bye.

Act I, Scene III

[The friends split up into their two separate rooms to shower up. Medgar and Bo-bo room together on a separate floor, and Dallas and Sarah room together. We remain with Dallas and Sarah.]

Dallas: Do you hear?

Sarah: Yes, I can.

[They run to the side and press their ears to the wall that separates the two rooms. Dallas and Sarah continue to listen.]

Sarah: It's going down in the DM.

Dallas: I think he's rather good.

Sarah: Yeah.

[A loud exclamation from the other side makes them jump.]

Sarah: She's really into it. She's actually into it.

Dallas: There's all this movement. They're moving around an awful lot.

Sarah: Well, you know, he's the one who's flinging them around. That's nice. 'Cause he's trying. Instead of the usual face up or face down. Give me a break. Surprise me. Chuck me out the window. Imagine . . . she's with him, she likes it, he's throwing her around, he likes it, and it's good, so—so good, so she gets passionate and wild she yells, 'Chuck me out the window.'

Dallas: *[Imitates.]* Chuck me out the window.

[They laugh.]

Dallas: Then, then . . . once she smashes through the glass, she's like, 'yas' as she drops down ten stories.

[Pause.]

Dallas: Wonder what their foreplay was like?

Sarah: You're always hung-up on foreplay. But the average—well—

[Another loud movement from the other end.]

Dallas: What do you think they're doing right now?

Sarah: Oh, like, how do they look? [*She jumps onto her bed.*] Purely judging from the sounds, I'd say she's like this. [*Sarah throws her legs up in a V.*]

[*Both laugh.*]

Dallas: [*Runs over to the front edge of his bed.*] And considering nothing but the sounds, I'd say he's now like this. [*He starts humping the metal bed frame.*]

Sarah: Yes, and I'd say he's now like this. [*New position.*]

Dallas: Yeah, and I'd say she's now like that. [*New position.*]

[*Sarah and Dallas touch themselves while they move.*]

Sarah: Oh, now she's like this. [*New position.*]

Dallas: And he's like this. [*New position.*]

Sarah: And she's like that. [*New position.*]

[*The bed sheets, the pillows, are all over the place.*]

Dallas: She's like that. [*New position.*]

[*They're so absorbed that they've forgotten each other. At this point, Dallas and Sarah should sound like a DJ scribbling and scratching his/her turntable. A standard hip hop beat is added into the background audio. The lights onstage should fade in and out. Sarah's and Dallas's positions become sloppier, faster, and more alike, yet ever exaggerated.*]

Sarah: Like this. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: Like that. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: Like that. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: Like this. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: Like th-th-th-that. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: Like th-th-th-this. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: Th-th-th-this. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: Th-th-th-that. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: That-that-that. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: This-this-this. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: That-that-this. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: This-this-that. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: This-that-this. [*Different position.*]

Dallas: That-this-that. [*Different position.*]

Sarah: Stop!

[The hip hop audio ends. Dallas and Sarah both look at themselves and then over at each other and realize how carried away they've gotten. But the urge's still strong. Their eyes keep looping around and they don't focus on anything for long. The couple on the other side keeps at it.]

Sarah: I, I need a cold shower. I'm going to take a shower.

Dallas: Me too, me next.

Sarah: Okay.

[Sarah grabs a couple personal items from her luggage on the floor and shuffles towards the bathroom. The door slams, the shower turns on, the happy couple continues. Dallas sticks his hand in his pants and starts. He looks around, undecided on where to place himself. Dallas moves behind the bed frame and lies down. Dallas's legs are visible as they shake against the metal bedframe. Everything continues for a couple solid beats. Then, Sarah runs out of the shower, already in underwear, with a towel wrapped about her head.]

Sarah: Woo, all done. I left it running.

Dallas: [*Gets up, throws his shirt over his head, starts to unbutton his pants—remembers and grabs at his luggage—then continues to unbutton his pants while he heads for the bathroom.*] Just in time. [*Door Bangs.*]

Sarah: [*Stares at the wall.*] Oh, girl, please. That has to be round two. And I heard no pause, before, they called, round, two. [*Sarah slips into a Maxi dress. The couple finally stops. Sarah starts to applaud. Fifteen seconds later, the water cuts. Sarah goes to the window and watches Canal Street.*]

Dallas: [*Opens the door and walks center.*] Ah, better. I feel better. Sarah, do you feel better?

Sarah: Yup. All fresh, all new.

Dallas: It's strange, you know? As it's ending, just as it ends—I think a person's downright split in two. You look back at your old, horny self of two seconds ago, as if it was a completely different person. That happen to you?

Sarah: Yes, but only when I touch myself. If I'm with someone, someone with talent that is, I'm all glows and smiles at the end.

Dallas: Oh.

Sarah: You'll find out someday.

Dallas: Yeah.

Sarah: Come on, Dallas. Get dressed.

Dallas: They had a good run, those two, didn't they?

[Sarah and Dallas move out.]

Sarah: Out of this world. I'm telling you, a sexation like that isn't possible. Neptune, Jupiter and Mars are turning green with envy. I don't know what that was. But what it was.

Act I, Scene IV

[*They are all outside and back in the Quarter, around Jackson Square.*]

Sarah: Dallas, I think that guy's checking you out.

Dallas: Me? He's probably checking you out.

Sarah: No, no. Why don't you say hi?

Dallas: I don't know.

Medgar: Dallas, you're twenty-two and you've never even held someone's hand.

Dallas: But I'm with you guys right now.

[*Medgar sees something he dislikes a little ways up.*]

Sarah: Just see where it goes and don't do anything you don't want to, but you should say hi.

Bo-bo: Say hi—say hi—say hi.

Medgar: I'm gonna—I need to go talk to this person. He's not acting right.

Dallas: You need help?

Medgar: No, go say hi to your new loverboy over there.

Sarah: [*Looks at her phone.*] Mason called me. I'll take Bo-bo on that carousel we passed, then I'll call him back. I know you two don't want to come.

Bo-bo: I want to sit on the yellow horse not the green one.

Medgar: See that bar down there with the tables outside. Let's meet up there if anything goes wrong. If not, see you all back at the hotel at some point.

Dallas: All right.

Sarah: Sure. But we have our shared GPS locations on our phones if anything really happens.

Medgar: Yeah. I'm gonna go before this jerk gets away.

Sarah: Don't start anything, though.

Medgar: I won't.

Dallas: Later Medgar.

Medgar: Bye guys.

Sarah: Go Dallas.

Dallas: I'm going. I'm going. Pimping me out like that.

Sarah: Bye.

[Dallas, Sarah, and Bo-bo exit the stage in two different directions. Medgar walks goes up to a middle-aged white man.]

Man: Boy, what? What do you want, boy?

Medgar: I am no boy. I saw you. I saw what you did behind the backs of those black people just now.

[The white man tenses up a bit but still ignores Medgar.]

Medgar: *[Louder.]* Sir, I am not a boy. And you don't disrespect people like that.

Man: All right, all right, I heard you the first time. Will you stop harassing me?

Medgar: I am not a boy. Is that clear to you, Sir?

Man: Calm down. Why you gotta think everything is racist—black people, I mean.

Medgar: Stop all that.

Man: Well, isn't this something? I'm just trying to enjoy my night, and now you are ruining it and saying I'm harassing black people.

Medgar: You ruined my night first by being racist and calling me a boy.

[No response from the white man.]

Medgar: Well!

Man: You know what! *[Changes attitude.]* I just—*[Exasperated.]* there are so many black people, so, so many black people—everywhere.

Medgar: *[Laughs.]* Yeah. There are so many white people.

Man: Slavery's been over. It's been over, but I don't know what to do. We can't get along. It's not happening. Sorry about what I did just now. I just kind of gave up a long time ago.

Medgar: My three closest friends are white. We love each other enough.

Man: Yeah, that's a one in a million chance. It can't work. It won't work.

Medgar: Slavery lasted so long. Black people, we became full citizens less than sixty years ago. Less than sixty years ago, less than sixty years ago. Do you understand what I'm saying? Less than sixty years ago, damn it. My people waited quite a couple centuries for basic, unalienable rights, so the least you can do is have some more patience.

Man: Sixty years is long.

Medgar: No, it's not.

Man: Sure it is.

Medgar: It's less than a human life. Sir, are you an American?

Man: What the hell of a—yes, I am. Are you saying I'm not?

Medgar: No, I just wanted to make sure. Even with all the racist white people and bullshit, I'm still a proud American. Are you an American?

Man: Yes, damn it I am.

Medgar: Great, so stop your bitching, all right? You've gotten a bit too comfortable. Do you talk to black people?

Man: No, I—there are no—it's not that I don't—it's.

Medgar: I know. I know. Well, it's your lucky day. I'm a black man. You in a hurry or waiting for someone?

Man: [*Hesitates.*] Uh, no.

Medgar: Let's go get some ice cream then. You like ice cream?

Man: Yeah. Yeah, OK, I know a place a couple over.

Medgar: Fine. I'm Medgar.

Man: I'm Thomas. Call me Tom.

[They walk off.]

-Scene-

Act I, Scene V

[*Outside on a busy street in the Quarter. Sarah calls Mason back. Bo-bo is next her. An unused side-area of the stage lights up. We see Mason; his friends stand around him.*]

Mason: Yo, she's calling back.

Mason's Friends: Just like we practiced. Put her on speaker.

Mason: Shh, shut up.

Sarah: Mason, hello?

Mason: Hey, Sarah—

Sarah: Oh, Mason, it's good to hear you. I miss you. We are having so much fun. We should come here one day ourselves.

Mason: Sarah . . .

Sarah: Yes, Mason, can you hear me? Everything all right?

Mason: Listen, Sarah, I've been meaning to talk to you about something, meaning to tell you something. [*His friends rub their hands together and make low-noised sounds.*]

Sarah: Yeah . . .

Mason: It's not easy. There's never a good moment . . .

[*Heavy breathing on Sarah's side.*]

Sarah: For what?

Mason: I think things have been kinda' lousy, lately.

Sarah: What?

[*Guys snicker.*]

Mason: Well, you're so busy and wrapped up in your stuff all the time that even when we're together, you don't think about me, about us. You're sort of a lazy lay, too. You're, you're not enough.

[*Static on Sarah's side.*]

Mason: You know what I mean? I know this is hard, Sarah.

Sarah: Um, that doesn't mean we can't try to work it out, talk it over. There's no reason to . . .

Mason: It's never a good time. That's why I thought I'd tell you now. You'd be too busy having fun, exploring, to really worry about it.

Sarah: [*Dryly.*] Yeah, great idea.

[*Mason's friends make noise.*]

Sarah: Mason, what is that in the, Mason . . . are your friends—

Mason: So I do think it's best. Love you, Sarah, but not enough to—

Sarah: [*Embarrassed laughter dispersed throughout.*] Yeah, ha-ha, maybe it's for the best. Let's not get heavy on each other. I didn't know I was doing that to you, but I don't want to.

Mason's Friends: Laugh it up, slut. [*Other perversities chanted as well.*]

[*Sarah hangs up.*]

Mason: [*Looks down at his phone. He then turns to friends.*] Done.

[*Mason's friends cheer. They get on their way.*]

Mason's Friends: Come on, Mason.

Mason: Yeah. Be right there.

[*Mason's alone. He looks around, sad and unsatisfied.*]

Mason's Friends: Mason . . .

Mason: Coming.

[*The stage light fades out, and Mason exits.*]

[*It begins to rain on Sarah and Bo-bo.*]

Bo-bo: Sarah.

[*Pause.*]

Sarah: Mason and I won't see each other anymore.

Bo-bo: Why?

Sarah: I don't know.

Bo-bo: Huh?

Sarah: Never mind. He quickly turned out to be a real dummy. I don't know why.

Bo-bo: Why?

Sarah: Sometimes there is no why. It just dies and drops and stinks at your feet, and no one can remember anything. Then, one day, while you're minding your own business, it hits you.

Bo-bo: You're mad, Sarah.

Sarah: Mad and disappointed.

Bo-bo: You still have me, and your pop, and Dallas, and Medgar.

Sarah: I know. Yeah, I know. I know that, Bo-bo. Let's just walk some. Let's walk. I need to keep walking.

Bo-bo: Okay.

Sarah: But no talking.

Bo-bo: Okay.

Sarah: Unless I want to vent.

Bo-bo: Okay.

Sarah: But don't talk, just listen.

Bo-bo: Got it.

Sarah: All right, let's go to church.

Bo-bo: They have mass at this hour?

Sarah: To church!

Bo-bo: [*Nods.*]

[*They walk slow.*]

[*Sarah sings the melody in the bridge of a Spanish song called "Teléfono" by Aitana. For the rest of the singing parts, one can refer to the melodies found in that song.*]

Sarah: Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh.

Bo-bo: You didn't say you'd sing.

Sarah: It blossomed from within me. I—

Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh.

Bo-bo: Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh.

Sarah: Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh.

[Sarah takes out her phone and holds it up in front of her face.]

Sarah: You're the worst.

[Sound effect plays of a woman throwing up. Sarah looks away from her phone.]

Bo-bo: Look, Sarah. That lady's—

Sarah: *[Nods.]* Yeah. Yes, cheers, sister!

Bo-bo: All on her clean shoes.

[Sarah drifts back to her thoughts.]

Bo-bo: The rain washes it away.

Sarah: Couldn't he have waited until we got back for a breakup? Such a considerate person. Let me text him. Let me text him something. Not like he'll respond, anyway.

[Sarah takes out her phone and starts texting.]

Bo-bo: What did you write?

Sarah: I told him that I'm going to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry one day and that my boobs just made an eighteen-wheeler crash into traffic and that it's too bad he'll never see me again.

[Pause.]

Sarah: He doesn't deserve my vulnerability.

[They reach the steps of the St. Louis cathedral. Sarah reaches her arms up to the sky and walks up and down and around the church steps.]

Bo-bo: Can we change after this?

[Sarah goes back into the sing-song melody, still looking upward with arms wide open.]

Sarah: Why do I ————— love you —————.

Why do I ————— love you —————.

Why do I ————— love you —————.

Bo-bo: *[Imitates.]* Why do I ————— love you —————.

Sarah: Why do I ————— love you —————.

Sarah & Bo-bo: Why do I ————— love you —————.

[Sarah gets on her knees on the church steps, still in big, diva, sing-song style.]

Sarah: Only when it rains do you hold me —————.

[A sound effect of a Greek chorus of choir 'ah's' hits in tempo with their style.]

Sarah: Only when it rains, I get lonely —————.

Sarah: And I know you'll forget about us before I begin to forgive. Solely in our dreams will we begin to relive.

Only when it rains do you hold me —————.

Only when it rains I get lonely —————.

Sarah & Bo-bo: Only when it rains do you hold me —————.

Only when it rains I get lonely —————.

[Sarah lies down completely on the steps and lounges out a pose. Followed by one of the only two profanities Sarah will ever sing/say in the play.]

Sarah: You are such a lame-ass phony ————— yeah-yeah.

[Back to regular speech.]

Sarah: Well, no matter how it ends, I still feel the same way.

Bo-bo: But Cupid, but Cupid must've had a reason.

Sarah: I think he covers his eyes when he shoots.

Bo-bo: You gonna tell your dad about it?

Sarah: No. No, not yet. Don't worry about it. Leave it alone.

Bo-bo: Why do you still want to stay out here?

Sarah: People don't notice tears when it's raining.

Bo-bo: So next time I need to cry, you'll come outside and stay soaked with me?

Sarah: Yes, Bo-bo.

Bo-bo: Why can't grown-ups cry in public?

Sarah: Because otherwise we're all reminded of what emotional bags of pulp we still are and will always be. But, Bo-bo, grown-ups can cry in public, only at a wedding, a funeral, a sporting event, a movie, or a stage performance and only cry, never weep.

Bo-bo: And a rainstorm.

Sarah: You got it. Come on. Let's go change again at the hotel and then come back for food.

[They walk down the church steps.]

Bo-bo: You hungry?

Sarah: Am I! I'm break-up hungry. I gain weight after a break-up. I probably added about five pounds since the call.

Bo-bo: *[Sings.]* Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh. Sarah, sing with me.

Sarah: Sure. Give me your hand. But we have to skip our way back, and we can only stop for traffic lights and cars. If someone yells or pushes you, say, 'join us.' The safe word is yellow. Ready?

Bo-bo: Yeah.

[Off they go, skipping and holding hands all the way. One hears their singing even when they're offstage.]

Sarah: Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh. Sing, Bo-bo.

Sarah & Bo-bo: Oh ————— Oh ————— Oh.

Sarah: Why do I ————— love you —————.

Sarah & Bo-bo: Why do I _____ love you _____.

Oh _____ Oh _____ Oh.

Oh _____ Oh _____ Oh.

Sarah: Why do I _____ love you _____.

Act I, Scene VI

[Scene change. Dallas follows Liam to the balcony of Liam's second-floor flat. The audience sees the flat's balcony but not the inside of the flat. Liam and Dallas speak almost all of their dialogue on the balcony. Two Drag Queens onstage end up watching most of the interactions between Dallas and Liam.]

Dallas: Sweet place you got.

Liam: Thanks.

Dallas: It must be fate. Sometimes it must be fate: Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. Those ladies hold a tight string, and I feel the pull right now.

Liam: I don't know those Spanish girls. No. There's no fate. Hey, Fate, maybe ya' had a good reason to take my pa' away with cancer at 55.

Dallas: I'm sorry. You two must have been close.

Liam: No, not really, but I still want to know why your so-called fate did that.

[Pause.]

Dallas: Liam, what did you think when you first saw me?

Liam: That I wanted to move beyond sight.

Dallas: But anything about me specific?

Liam: Nah. I got excited really quick, and I'm still feeling it.

Dallas: Where to start—

Liam: Let's get inside and figure it out.

Dallas: No, I mean, let's talk a bit first.

Liam: If you really want to—'cause I don't.

Dallas: I do.

Liam: So . . . you're here for the weekend?

Dallas: Who's your favorite president?

Liam: I never knew any personally. None of those stiffys.

Dallas: Teddy Roosevelt's mine.

Liam: Great. My turn. Why remain a virgin twenty-two years?

Dallas: I never said that.

Liam: Come on. Your whole roll. I take you back up here, for what--a book club discussion? Sorry, I forgot to put the coffee on. You must be.

Dallas: I like men. Knew when I was thirteen. No one out there made me want to try.

Liam: Until me, huh.

[Dallas moves in and kisses LIAM on the mouth, lightly.]

Liam: Hello.

Dallas: Hi.

[Liam grabs Dallas and smooches a long one. Below, two drag queens walk by at the right moment.]

Drag Queen 1: Ooh, look at him go in. He's going in.

Drag Queen 2: Yes, take control. Rescue me.

Dallas: *[Recovers.]* Does that one have a name?

Liam: It's the get-ready-to-rumble kiss.

Dallas: Biggest fear as a kid?

Liam: Spiders, but the big ones. One time I stepped on a tiny spider, and I still feel guilty.

Dallas: First degree murder never seemed so cute.

[They make out a little more. Then Liam stops.]

Liam: I gotta pee. Why don't we go inside; I'll be right there.

Dallas: All right.

[Liam and Dallas head inside. A door is heard opening and closing. Soon the theater hears the sound effects of pee, and they see Dallas emerge back onto the balcony with a bed sheet.]

Drag Queen 1: What happened? He go crazy just now? Don't do it honey. He's not worth popping off for.

Drag Queen 2: Yeah, just ditch his fine ass.

Dallas: What? No, no, I'm not going to kill myself, but, yes, I am ditching his ass.

[Dallas ties the sheet to the iron balcony and descends himself down to the pavement below.]

Drag Queen 2: Now why would he ditch his fine ass? I don't know. Maybe he bumped his head while he was in there.

Drag Queen 1: You're so unromantic. I got this. He escaped because, deep down, he knew that if he stayed a second longer, he would fall madly in love with the hot guy who's peeing right now. And you know what? Sometimes a bitch doesn't have time to fall in love.

Liam: Dallas? Dallas? Dallas! Where in the world.

[Liam runs out onto his balcony, sees his bed sheet, and then looks about.]

Liam: Dallas, what hell are you doing? Come on, man.

Dallas: I think you've got a lot of energy, a lot of sexual energy, and you need to be with a lot more bodies before you'll feel ready to settle down.

[Pause.]

Liam: No, yeah, you're probably right.

Dallas: So, Liam, how long will that take?

Liam: Fifteen years.

Dallas: That's a date.

Liam: Ha, it's gonna' be a long, lonesome fifteen years.

Dallas: I think you'll do fine.

Liam: All right, baby. You take care.

Dallas: I will. Bye now. Thanks for the kisses.

Liam: Bye, sport.

[Dallas walks away towards the bar. Liam watches for a bit then exits stage.]

Act I, Scene VII

[A waiter comes over to Sister Tori, a black nun, and Sister Pamela, a white nun, sitting on a bar's outside table. Both Sisters wear habits.]

Waiter: Sisters of Jesus and all his men, what are we having tonight?

Sister Tori: I would like myself a glass of your house white wine.

Sister Pamela: I could go for your house red.

Waiter: Everything good at the convent?

Sister Tori: Yes, thanks.

[The waiter nods and exits.]

Sister Pamela: [Looks out on the rainy plaza and points.] What in world is that young woman going on about? You see her?

Sister Tori: Oh, my, yes, and there's a little guy following her around, too.

Sister Pamela: Singing isn't for everyone.

Sister Tori: They're just having fun or something. You hush now with your singing mightiness. You intimidated about seven nuns, seven nuns—the last one Sister Josephine—from ever getting up in the choir again.

Sister Pamela: And everyone dislikes me, but nobody is complaining about their removal from the choir. Besides, they can practice and then come back. I didn't say, 'No, Sisters, never set foot up here again.'

Sister Tori: Yeah, yeah. You were a real profile of patience that day.

[The waiter leaves the wine glasses on the table and exits.]

Sister Pamela: She's now on the church steps. I can't tell if she's going for sexy or for tragic or for sexy tragic?

Sister Tori: Pamela!

Sister Pamela: What? I wasn't always a nun. At that age, please, the body's leading. It's leading. It's leading away. Goodbye and good luck to whatever's behind it.

Sister Tori: Some of us managed just fine. Thank you.

Sister Pamela: *Thank you.*

Sister Tori: I still have no idea what they're wailing about. Can you make any of that out?

Sister Pamela: No, your guess value matches my guess value. Like I said, at that age, they could discontinue your favorite nail color, and you go off screeching in a downpour. What a mess.

Sister Tori: Look. They're holding hands now, all happy and skipping. Might as well be Paul and the Barnabas.

Sister Pamela: It's the hormones.

Sister Tori: Why *did* you become a nun *again*?

Sister Pamela: Because since my love for God is stronger than all other loves—all other loves—I joined the Sisterhood. Sometimes it takes a decade more to hear it, but that's all right.

Sister Tori: Amen.

[Medgar and Thomas appear upstage, and then Thomas exits. Since it's raining, Medgar hurries to the same bar hosting the two Sisters. The Sisters watch Medgar approach.]

Medgar: Sisters, evening.

Sister Pamela: Evening.

Sister Tori: Evening.

Medgar: Sisters, you like getting cold and wet? You two might catch something.

Sister Tori: Young man, I was cold and wet in 1963 in Birmingham when some *oh so righteous* men of the law saw fit to hose me down for wanting to be equal to them, so this here tonight is mighty swell . . . catch something, please.

Sister Pamela: I once jumped into a cold lake once. It was colder and wetter than tonight's rain.

Sister Tori: Bless her heart.

Sister Pamela: Young man, she's teasing. The two of us been friends just shy of half a century. She knows very well I helped with Civil Rights because I was soon right there beside her. Sure, I managed to conveniently join right after the hosing moments, but I've always been more of a second or third responder than a first responder.

Medgar: *[To Sister Tori.]* The Birmingham Campaign! Oh, Ma'am, uh, Sister, it's an honor.

Sister Pamela: And what am I? The disgusting one?

Medgar: No, Sister, you're not. I'm Medgar by the way.

Sister Pamela: I'm Sister Pamela.

Medgar: Nice to meet you.

Sister Pamela: I wasn't actually heated up just now, just joking around.

Sister Tori: I'm Sister Tori.

Medgar: Pleasure to meet you.

Sister Pamela: Nice for me, a pleasure for her. You're doing it on purpose now.

Medgar: [*Smiles.*] Yeah.

Sister Pamela: I knew it, Medgar!

Sister Tori: Medgar, I knew the Medgar you were probably named after.

Sister Pamela: Yeah, so did I, but I didn't feel the need to spread it all over Medgar's face.

Medgar: You two Sisters are something. How did you meet?

Sister Tori: When I was making my way home from a grocery store in 1964, this raging white woman comes up to me from across the street, and, at the same time, I saw Sister Pamela, then a stranger, walking my way as well. The angry white woman lets her little racist heart bleed on and on. She told me that I can go to all these very unpleasant places and stay there. By then, Sister Pamela—

Sister Pamela: I was just Pam then.

Sister Tori: By then, Sister Pamela joined close. I thought she would join the other white woman and tell me more places I could visit, but she didn't. Miss angry pants probably assumed the same thing 'cause she looked at Sister Pamela and said, 'Don't you agree?' Well, Sister Pamela paused. Hehe, then she looked the other white woman straight in the face and said, 'Why don't you go take a shit in your purse?' We became fast friends.

Sister Pamela: Yes, we did, honey.

Sister Tori: Now what brang you to this place before you saw us?

Medgar: I wanted to go inside and get away from the wet.

Sister Pamela: And who did you say bye to earlier over up there?

Medgar: This white guy, Thomas. Don't know him and probably won't ever see him again. He wanted some encouragement.

Sister Pamela: To do what?

Medgar: To be less racist.

Sister Pamela: So many do.

Medgar: If things went bad, all my friends decided we would meet up here.

Sister Tori: Medgar, we'll join you inside. No use waiting for your friends all alone.

Medgar: Does the church give Sisters wine breaks?

Sister Tori: Watch it. And, yes, it's a progressive, more liberal convent.

Sister Pamela: The other ones wouldn't grant me admission.

[Sarah enters with Bo-bo.]

Sister Tori: Look it's the two songbirds.

Medgar: *[Confused by the remark.]* Sister Pamela and Sister Tori, these are my two friends, Sarah and Bo-bo.

[Sarah and Bo-bo greet the nuns.]

Sarah: Hi, Sisters, how are you.

Bo-bo: You don't have old sisters.

Sarah: Excuse me. Bo-bo takes everything literally. No, Bo-bo, Sisters also means nuns sometimes. And nuns are women who pray a lot and help others a lot.

[Meanwhile, Medgar is whispering a long explanation between the two nuns.]

Sister Pamela: Bo-bo, how was the carousel ride?

Bo-bo: Good. I won the prize. I caught it before anyone else.

Sister Tori: Good job, Bo-bo.

[Dallas Enters.]

Medgar: That would have been the quickest quickie ever, Dallas.

Dallas: No, I just made out with him then left before anything else happened. [*Now sees the two nuns.*] Sisters. Uh, Sisters, uh.

Sister Pamela: Don't worry we're liberal Sisters.

Sister Tori: Just like Jesus.

Dallas: Hi, Sisters, I'm Dallas.

Sarah: Great, so Mason broke up with me.

Dallas: No.

Sarah: Yes.

Medgar: I never liked him.

Sarah: Now you tell me.

Dallas: Your pop didn't either.

Sarah: What!

Medgar: Yeah, he told us one time.

Dallas: He said, 'I'll let them be, but if he tries to get serious with her, I'll—'

Sarah: I'll talk to him about that tomorrow after I see the jazz concert.

Dallas: [*To the nuns.*] Sarah's dad is Senator Lombard.

Sister Tori: Oh.

Sister Pamela: Huh.

[*Lights fade.*]

-Intermission-

Act II, Scene I

Stage Manager: Hi again, everyone. It's the following night. No, you didn't miss much. The four of them slept and lazed around during the day anyhow. Sarah is now going to her jazz concert alone. Bo-bo, Medgar, and Dallas are somewhere walking around the Quarter.

[The Stage Manager exits.]

[Lights change. A street in the Quarter, probably right off Preservation Hall. A long line of people wait for a jazz concert to begin. In the line, about halfway up, is Sarah. Dizzy, an infatuated stranger across the street, tries it with Sarah.]

Dizzy: *[Yells.]* Hey, you.

[Most people turn around. Sarah hears, but hesitates to turn.]

Dizzy: Yes, you. Only you. Looking at the dusty stars and not me. How can that be? How can that be swe—

[Sarah engages.]

Sarah: Don't try, "sweetie."

[Dizzy moves to where Sarah stands.]

Dizzy: Ah, thank you for looking back at me. Was that hard, baby?

Sarah: Holding my patience is hard. And if you want a "baby," go to a children's hospital.

Extra: Hey, pow! There's a line here, pal. Did you know that?

Dizzy: I don't know anything. Except it's nighttime and I'm alive. *[Dizzy pauses then turns his attention back to Sarah.]* I'm Dizzy.

Sarah: Fine. Have a seat on the curb. That might help.

Dizzy: Ha, no, that's my name. My name is Dizzy.

Sarah: That won't be hard to remember. Dizzy of New Orleans.

Dizzy: I'm the only Dizzy up and down the whole Mississippi. *[Pause.]* You have a name?

Sarah: My name, my name, you know, Dizzy, I don't remember.

Dizzy: Sure, you don't.

Extra: Come on now, uh, Dizzy, please, like, there's a line.

Dizzy: You're not jazz, Sir. If you were jazz personified, you'd let me slide through and a couple hundred more. You'd kiss and whisper nice stuff to your girlfriend instead.

Extra: Hey now, that's it. You're—

Other Extras: Yeah, Dizzy pal, get out of here. Go to the back. Get to the back.

[Dizzy starts but Sarah cuts him off.]

Sarah: Time to dip? I'll dip out of the line with you.

Dizzy: You would? Yeah, then.

[Both step off and slowly walk away as they resume their conversation.]

Sarah: Even if you're cute, Dizzy . . . Dizzy, who are you?

Dizzy: I'd love to te—

[The rest of the dialogue should be recited as a spoken melody, with exaggeration and silliness. The rhythm continues to change. The two walk further away.]

Sarah: You've got the right flow, but, I might say 'no.' Any STDs, broken batteries, baby mamas or girlfriends with pregnancies, toxic regrets, a love you just can't forget? Do you signal before you turn? Are you willing to learn? Yeah, I want this to be the new era. I need you to touch base. Be clear with me, no parallel interface. And it's Sarah. My name is Sarah.

Dizzy: Sarah, no car on me. Rather pick you up in a Harley. Cruise at two when you reapply your mascara 'cause I like you, I like you, Sarah. Wouldn't text, I'd call every time. And if you're busy, I'll wait on the line. See my body, is it enough? If not, I'll gym it up. No son of mine yet under this sun. Loved no woman enough to have one. Only married to the moon's shine on that Miss lazy Miss. Wanna, wanna, wanna go—

Sarah: Your words are fluffy and sweet, fluffy and sweet. Sweet corny thoughts thought no man had the balls to speak. Dizzy, I don't wanna jump, don't wanna jump. I don't wanna jump, Dizzy. But I am tired of myself, myself always seated. The image of myself, always down on myself, down and heated. *[Quick pause.]* What's love? An old, weary-ass song, only the melody's left. That's all that's left. The only thing left. Sing-sing-singing along.

Dizzy: Come, come on, grab my hand, Sarah. Wanna dance, wanna sway, to the old ass song? Hard wooden floors, clapping, shouts, the whole place shakes to the baseline rhythm. Great lakes 'cause of the baseline rhythm.

Sarah: Uh huh, yeah, take me to a dancehall. Let's dance. Let's sway. Take me to a dancehall. Take me away. Love me, dance, love me, Saint Valentine's Day. Would the world shut up. Shut up and shut up. Sangria all night. I'm lost—I'm off track—and I'm not coming back.

Why does time hurt so much? Why does time smell so much? Why does time sell so much?

If I had three or four centuries left, I'd jump all the damn time. But no, selective, selective, Dizzy. Running through the noise. Selective, selective, I lose never-found friends, never-found lovers, left, right, left and right. Selective, selective, Dizzy, Don't you just hate it?

Dizzy: Stop. Dalai Lama, Dalai Lama. Breathe, breathe. Stop. Dalai Lama, Dalai Lama, swimming under the deep blue sea.

[Sarah laughs.]

Dizzy: Laugh, lift yourself up. Laugh, Sarah, laugh. Make your revenge. Slap your sorrow, retroactive, back to Stonehenge.

[They arrive in front of a dancehall.]

Dizzy: And here it is. And here we are.

Sarah: Mmm-hmm.

[Move closer to the dancehall.]

Dizzy: Sarah.

Sarah: Yes?

Dizzy: Sarah.

Sarah: Dizzy.

Dizzy: Sarah.

Sarah: Dizzy.

Dizzy: I like saying your name, Sarah.

Sarah: Let's head in. Say my name all you want while we sway.

Act II, Scene II.

[Dallas, Medgar, and Bo-bo walk on Bourbon St. Towards a gathering they see ahead.]

Bo-bo: You-you guys don't have to be my friend if you don't want.

Medgar: What's this?

Dallas: Well, well.

Bo-bo: You guys are smarter—faster, so it's okay. It's okay if you don't want to. I got us stuck last night with those mean people.

Dallas: You know, I think Bo-bo wants a hug.

Medgar: Dallas, I think you're right about that.

Dallas: Group hug.

Medgar: Here we come!

[Bo-bo laughs. Dallas and Medgar hug Bo-bo from either side.]

Dallas: The only people who got us stuck last night were those mean people.

Medgar: Yeah, exactly. *[Pause.]* We'll be your friend for a long, long time.

Bo-bo: How long?

Dallas: Me love you long time.

Medgar: That's politically incorrect.

Dallas: I've got it down to once a year.

Bo-bo: Let's go race up over there.

Medgar: on your mark, get set—

Dallas: Go!

[Bo-bo takes off. Dallas and Medgar run slow on purpose.]

Bo-bo: I won! I won.

Medgar: Good job, Bo-bo.

Dallas: High five.

[Now they turn their attention to the gathering before them.]

[Fruitella, a large, magnificent drag queen, takes a stand onto the slightly elevated, soap box in the center of Bourbon and St. Ann St. to address all the people. She's dressed in a checkered-car-racing-inspired flag. Dallas, Medgar, and Bo-bo walk up close and listen.]

Fruitella: Hey, everyone. Hi. It's Fruitella, ho. I'm MC-ing this Drag Queens of NOLA event. Get Ready. Oh. Come here, baby. Itchi gitchi, gitchi, uh, uh, ya, ya, ooh, ooh, la, la, ta, ta, ta.

Embrace your inner self. Free yourself from yourself. Don't look back. Never look back. Unless you're looking back at it, eeeoow!

Bubble bath, bubbles, and Lush bombs. Boom. Boom. Boom. You love me so strong.

Bo-bo: She's happy.

Medgar: Yeah, I'll say.

Bo-bo: What she want?

Dallas: Don't know, yet. She's still gotta tell us. This is all just the prep.

Fruitella: Come here—come here—come here, everyone. Gather close. I mean everyone. Don't be shy. Y'all have never seen anything quite like this before. Such movement, a race, a display of merchandise like no other. Yes, a race, a Drag race. Vroom—vroom on you hoes. Exporting looks all up and down Bourbon here. If y'all stay here, what wonderful seats y'all shall get. Yes, not one, not two, not three, not four, or five, but six sexy mammas ready to work their stuff. If you wanna get mathematical, that's three Drag races. There's a panel of three judges, behind me, ready to judge.

No Drag race cover charge. Oh, what's the charge? Free of charge. What's the charge? Free of charge. Oh, shit, man, it's free of charge? Well, what am I doing here still contemplating!

[A formidable crowd now gathers around Fruitella.]

Medgar: You got that, Bo-bo? A Drag Queen race.

Bo-bo: Vroom—vroom. Maybe, maybe I'll dress up in a dress someday.

Dallas: Why not! Any kind of dress, Bo-bo?

Bo-bo: Oh, I want it real practical. The ones that are short enough that I could pee standing up without taking it off.

Medgar: Practical indeed.

Fruitella: We're a simple bunch of folks, us Drag Queens. It's not a tournament, no. There will be three winners out of the six Drag Queens. Yes, three winners. The winners will each win a bottle of *Veuve Clicquot* champagne and a voucher for a free roast chicken. Ah, chicken and champagne. Lucky bitches.

This is our third biggest event of the year, so, yes, some of our funding has gone into rewarding the hard work—work—work—work—work—work of these Drag Queen—queen—queen—queen—queen—queens.

Now, the Drag Queens are almost ready, and the drag race will begin momentarily, ladies and gentlemen. I have my handy Walkie-Talkie for communication. We use Walkie-Talkies because they're retro and sexy and vintage.

[Senator Lombard enters the stage and stands on the outer edge of the gathered crowd.]

[Fruitella operates the Walkie-Talkie.]

Fruitella: *[Half singing.]* Breaker 1-9, Breaker 1-9, ooh, Breaker 1-9.

[Fruitella buries the Walkie-Talkie into her big, poofy wig and listens to it.]

Yes. Are the girls ready? Ready to work the block and twirl on their haters? All along those haters. What? Two minutes? Fine. Fine. Well, tell her to bake her face faster!

[Back to the crowd.]

You guys like a bit of Guerrilla theater? I do. Ladies and gentlemen, fasten your seatbelts, hold down your wigs, get ready for the Drag Race. *[Commercial speed.]* We would appreciate as much social media traffic as possible, thanks.

It's my pleasure to introduce the contestants in the first match: Luscious Lola and Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes. Luscious Lola teaches American history at Lusher Charter School. Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes is a Loan Officer at the Chase Bank in Leonidas.

[Into Walkie-Talkie.] Everyone good now? *[Listens.]* Good. *[To both the crowd and the Walkie-Talkie.]* First race, on your mark, get set, work!

[Cheers from the crowd. Luscious Lola and Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes runway walk down two blocks, starting on St. Philip St. More cheers.]

Fruitella: Let's see what the judges say! Ah, it's 2-1 for Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes. Congratulations. Thank you, ladies. Move over to the side and greet your fans. Next.

For our second match we have Sarah Strawberry and Lasagna Lindsay.

[Bo-bo, Medgar, and Dallas laugh.]

Fruitella: Is something funny over there, guys?

Dallas: No, no, we love it. Our good friend's name is Sarah, and we just found a new nickname for her.

Fruitella: Ah. Anyway, Sarah Strawberry farms sweet potatoes right outside of NOLA. Lasagna Lindsay was just hired as *sous-chef* at The Commander's Palace. Yes. Second race, on your mark, get set, work!

[Cheers from the crowd. Sarah Strawberry and Lasagna Lindsay runway walk down.]

Fruitella: And the judges give Sarah Strawberry the win, two-one for her. Move. Next. And don't forget to give me my dress back, Miss. Strawberry. Thank you, honey.

Lastly, for our third match we have Coco-choo-choo Charlette Chanel and Barbie Beauty Bells. Coco-choo-choo Charlette Chanel is a railroad engineer for Amtrak, and Barbie Beauty Bells is a Wedding Planner. Third race, on your mark, get set, work!

[Cheers from the crowd. Coco-choo-choo Charlette Chanel and Barbie Beauty Bells runway walk down.]

Fruitella: Our judges give Coco-choo-choo Charlette Chanel—damn, girl, your long-ass name—our judges declare you the winner, honey. Congratulations. That concludes our magnificent drag race. Now let's distribute the prizes to our three winners.

[By now, media vans and reporters are already upon the event, having gotten word of the drag race.]

[Sarah enters onstage without Dizzy and moseys her way to Medgar, Bo-bo, and Dallas.]

Sarah: Hey guys.

[They turn around, surprised.]

Medgar: How was the live jazz?

Sarah: It was nice. Their version of Basie's "One O'clock Jump" really hit the spot, and their encore "When the Saints Go Marching In" made me tear up a bit.

Bo-bo: Sarah, where's your dad?

Sarah: Not sure. He said he would run into us about now. I told him where we are.

Bo-bo: I'm hungry.

Sarah: We'll get something soon enough or go somewhere. My dad probably has some plans already. Come with me to say hi to the drag queens.

Dallas: Let's go.

Medgar: Local celebrity drag queens.

Bo-bo: Choo choo chanely char.

[The crowd remains large. Everyone mingles, lots of movement. As Medgar, Sarah, Dallas, and Bo-bo are about to greet one of the contestants, a group of men close up on them and the drag queens.]

Guy 1: Hey, all you. Enough with this stuff.

[Senator Lombard moves in closer to where all four of them stand, but he does not show himself to them, yet.]

Coco-choo-choo Charlette Chanel: My freedom is your freedom, so don't shit on my freedom.

Guy 2: You gays—

Dallas: *[Moves up to Guy 2.]* What? What?

[By now, the pedestrians, the drag queens, and the media start to turn around towards the sudden tension. Medgar, Dallas, Sarah, Bo-bo, and the six drag queens face the intruding men.]

Lasagna Lindsay: What do you guys want? It's a happy day.

Guy 3: We want you all to disappear.

Medgar: Why don't you take care of the ache in your own soul instead!

Guy 1: Why don't you go back in a field!

[All the men start grumbling in agreement.]

[Senator Lombard moves still closer to the front.]

Barbie Beauty Bells: What that dumbass just say?

Luscious Lola: Those are fighting words.

Sarah Strawberry: *[To Sarah and Bo-bo.]* Honeys, sashay away.

Bo-bo: Not again!

[Sarah and Bo-bo move out of the center. As Sarah moves out, she catches a glimpse of her dad moving in, and she smiles to herself. Sarah starts dialing 911 on her phone.]

Guy 2: We're done talking.

[The intruders begin to fight with Dallas, Medgar, and the Drag Queens.]

[Violent chaos ensues. Many drag queens and pedestrians join. The whole fight scene should seem horrible and scary, yet exaggerated and cartoonish.]

Sarah Strawberry: Let's get into it.

Guy 1: Let me FB Live this to bae.

Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes: Eight-inch pumps coming at you, Nutcracker style.

Guy 2: No sissies gonna win over me.

Medgar: *[The Princess Bride style.]* Hello, my name is Medgar Williams. You killed my people. Prepare to—

Guy 3: Show them something.

Dallas: I'm the big Kahuna.

Coco-choo-choo Charlette Chanel: Raining on our parade. Let me put on some more Vaseline.

Media News Reporter: Breaking news. Ah! A mob fight—a mob fight has broken out in the middle of the French Quarter. Drag queens, locals and tourists are defending themselves against what appears to be some sort of white nationalists? It's a bit too soon to tell. Ah!

[The brawl continues onstage for about thirty seconds. Then, out of nowhere, Sister Pamela and Sister Tori mount the drag queen contest stage from behind. They grab the mic from the stand and share it while singing a spiritual. Everyone begins to slowly stop and look over at the Sisters. As everyone looks at the two of them, the lights fade, and police sirens wail in the background.]

Act II, Scene III

[It's about 11:30 p.m. The Merry-go-round Bar is practically empty. Sister Pamela, Sister Tori, and Grandfather Patrick sit on their slowly revolving stools and wait for their company to arrive. Soon enough, Medgar, Dallas, Sarah, Bo-bo, and Senator Lombard enter. Dallas, Medgar, and Senator Lombard each have a cast-up, broken arm. Bo-bo broke his thumb. They see the three at the bar and hurry over to greet them.]

Sarah: Grandpa! Sisters!

[Sarah hugs Grandfather Patrick.]

Medgar: Mr. Patrick!

Dallas: Hey, Mr. Patrick.

Grandfather Patrick: Well—I see we got the bumps, cuts, bones and bruises all bandaged and plastered up. That emergency room must be a circus tonight. I saw the fight all on the TV screens. Sure fast enough I'm waiting here for you guys—to surprise you, and then Wolf Blitzer on CNN and Gretchen Carlson on FOX cut to the five of you. It went national that fast. Now I'm the surprised one! I'm too old to come up over there in the scuffle, so all I could do was watch and cuss and cheer. That was just about the most fun I've had this whole year! First Bo-bo and Sarah leave; then the way Medgar and Dallas went in! All those tall, strong women in dresses bustin' it up—bustin' those jackasses' faces. They were good, those women. I don't know what juice they drank when they were little to sprout up so much, but thank God they were there. And all the people helping you guys. It was kinda beautiful in a twisted way. It shouldn't have happened, though. Son!

Bo-bo: Ooh . . .

Senator Lombard: Yes, dad.

Grandfather Patrick: Now I don't care how old you get; as long as I'm still breathing, I'll have my two cents. You were the grown up in that situation. You shouldn't have gotten the kids in danger.

Senator Lombard: I agree, but, dad, how was I supposed to expect those bitter bigots—

Grandfather Patrick: Quiet! Do not argue with me, Andrew. Expect. Expect them. It's always been the same way since the beginning of time. There have always been bitter bigots bitching 'bout. You took History. You have college credits—that I paid for. Anticipate even more than you already do.

Senator Lombard: Yes, dad.

Grandfather Patrick: People's lives were at stake. I find it damn near miraculous that nobody got shot. Then, Andrew, you would have had a ball defending your NRA in that tomato soup. Luckily, it didn't come to that, luckily. Some long weekend, huh? Drinks? A round of drinks?

Dallas: Nah, you don't have to do that.

Grandfather Patrick: What the hell am I saving money for? Hello. Now grant me this satisfaction, all right, Dallas?

Dallas: Yes, Sir.

Grandfather Patrick: [*To the nuns.*] Sisters, I would offer you something, but I know you all refrain from libations.

Sister Pamela: We do not.

Sister Tori: Yeah, all these monks brewing their beer for centuries, but nuns can't have a glass of wine?

Sister Pamela: Mr. Patrick, we gratefully accept.

Grandfather Patrick: Fine. Glad to hear it. [*To the bartender.*] Are you ready?

Bartender: Always.

Grandfather Patrick: I'll have a Brandy. Sisters?

Sister Pamela: Two Pinot Noirs, thanks.

Grandfather Patrick: Sarah?

Sarah: Chardonnay, please.

Grandfather Patrick: Medgar?

Medgar: A Dark 'N' Stormy.

Dallas: Same for me.

Grandfather Patrick: Two of those. Bo-bo, what do you want to drink?

Bo-bo: Coke.

Grandfather Patrick: Son?

Senator Lombard: I'll start with an Old Fashioned.

Bartender: Right away.

Grandfather Patrick: Well, you might have to start and finish faster than you thought; it's just about midnight; this gentleman's gonna punch out soon.

Bartender: I will gladly stay longer.

Senator Lombard: Thank you, man.

Grandfather Patrick: Are you married?

Bartender: No, Sir.

Grandfather Patrick: Girlfriend or boyfriend?

Bartender: Yes.

Grandfather Patrick: Well, call them and tell them to come over. You're working overtime, anyway.

Bartender: Sure. I'll do that.

[The six drag queens and company enter the bar, say hi, order drinks, chat, and sit about.]

Grandfather Patrick: *[To Lasagna Lindsay.]* You big girls are much stronger than I thought.

Lasagna Lindsay: You wanna arm wrestle?

Grandfather Patrick: After I finish another drink.

Senator Lombard: Barbie Beauty Bells, that was some good stuff. Nice overhands.

Barbie Beauty Bells: Thanks.

Luscious Lola: Which I taught her.

Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes: *[To Sister Pamela and Sister Tori.]* Hi Sisters, I don't mean to be off base, but could I rent one of your nun outfits from your convent as a donation? I need it for an act I wanna do.

Sister Pamela: Will you break any of the commandments while you wear our convent's habit?

Annie of the Green-Gabled C-Notes: No, but I can't speak for my audience.

Sister Pamela: Maybe. I will ask Sister Catherine. *[To Sister Tori.]* Hey, let's wake up our Sisters.

Sister Tori: Oh, I know what you are thinking!

Sister Pamela: Yes, we could ring the catholic alarm in the convent.

Senator Lombard: How?

Sister Pamela: With our phones, Senator. Please keep up with your catholic constituents in your state. You have elections in two years.

Senator Lombard: Yes, Sister.

Grandfather Patrick: We shouldn't disturb the Sisters. It's late and dark now.

Sister Tori: Okay, here I go.

[Sister Tori presses a couple buttons on her smartphone. Then she puts the phone to her ear, waiting on the line.]

Sister Tori: Don't worry, Mr. Patrick. The Sisters would love to be a part of this. They would love to meet you guys. No doubt they were already jealous that Sister Pamela and me are here with you. Why not bring everyone together. It will make all the Sisters feel like they are going out on an important mission.

Sister Pamela: So, an alarm is going off right now throughout the convent, and the head nun, Sister Catherine, will soon enough pick up the line and speak with Sister Tori.

Sister Tori: Sister Catherine. No, no, no. Please calm down. Nothing urgent. Yeah, I'll tell you why I rang the alarm then if you let me talk. You and the rest of the Sisters saw the news? Yes, we're still all right. So Senator Lombard and company would like to meet the rest of the Sisters. And I know it's late, but since they just got back from the emergency room, they haven't eaten any dinner. Uh huh. Uh huh. Yes, bring some of the stuff from the locked pantry. Meet us at the Merry-go-round Bar. See you all soon. Uh huh. Thanks.

Sister Pamela: They should be here in half an hour.

Dallas: How many nuns, Sister Pamela?

Sister Pamela: About twenty, give or take.

[A tugboat sound echoes.]

Bo-bo: What was that?

Bartender: Tugboat down by the river.

[The bartender distributes the drinks.]

Senator Lombard: I will make a toast.

Grandfather Patrick: Fine, but keep it short.

[Everyone raises their glass.]

Senator Lombard: I love you all.

Everyone: Cheers!

[Thirty seconds of silent acting continues onstage. After that, the lights fade out. A spotlight shines on the Stage Manager, who enters from a wing with a flute on his mouth. An audio loop of “Yankee Doodle Dandy” plays on the theater’s speakers. The Stage Manager walks across and stops center stage.]

Stage Manager: Good night, folks.

[“Yankee Doodle Dandy” resumes. The Stage Manager continues to walk across stage and exits into the opposite wing. Spotlight cuts.]

—Curtain—

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The Learning Center, Penn State Abington August 2017 - Present
English and Writing Tutor

- I help fellow students develop and focus their ideas for papers and projects
- Trained to edit for grammar and usage
- Communicate with students from many different cultures and nationalities

Peer Mentor for students, Penn State Abington August 2018 - Present

- Guide college freshman through their passage from high school to college
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Act II Playhouse, Ambler, PA May 2014
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- Learned to comply with the demands of patrons
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- *The Lion's Roar* (Newspaper), Editor-in-Chief Sept. 2014 - Dec. 2015
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