

LA GIARA - The Water Jug
A Tale of a Family Curse

A musical that blends opera, jazz, & Brazilian rhythm with memorable songs

Book, Script, Music and Lyrics
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ABOUT LA GIARA - (la gee-ahr-a) The Water Jug

La Giara's narrative and powerful music uplift and offer meaning to women and the immigrant story, reaching audiences of all ages, ethnic, and socio-economic groups. This work is suggested for theaters interested in a piece that lies between musical theater and opera, suited for well-trained singers/actors seeking songs with emotional depth and range. Written in a variety of styles (jazz, opera, music theater, Brazilian rhythm), songs are relatable to a wide range of audiences. The live orchestra members may participate on stage, jumping into a variety of minor roles. Performed by six main characters who also double, or as a larger cast, *La Giara* requires a simple set — a proscenium on wheels, six levels or tiers, and a screen for shadow puppetry and video projections.

Rooted both in the past, yet relevant today, *La Giara* is about longing for our past and the cultures from which we originate. Narrated by five family characters, along with Sicilian Water God Anapos, whose commentary and timeless presence represents other-world realms and Sicilian culture, characters perform dramatic/comedic songs touching on the notion of family, human fragility and strength. Based on a true story, the author's mother runs away from her tyrant father in the 1930s, bringing along her sister and mother. Haddad's auto-biographical work addresses themes of immigration, oppression, mental illness, and sexism that her Sicilian family experiences in adapting to a new world. Water, mirrors and reflection serve as metaphors throughout the story in the process of tragedy, illumination, and evolution of characters. Moving song performances illustrate psychological challenges characters face when irrelevant old-world traditions no longer serve, and a family must evolve in order to pave a brighter future.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

LA GIARA has been performed four times as a narrated concert production with visual projections to full houses in Philadelphia, PA, at World Cafe Live (2014, 2017, 2019), and The International House of Philadelphia 2015.

Isn't It Love was voted "Best Love Song" by New York's York Theater in 2019.

LA GIARA was invited to present two songs in a "New Musical Works" event created by Carol De Giere with Stephen Schwartz in 2019.

SYNOPSIS

When arrogant Nunzio Minissale cuts in the water line at his home-town fountain in Sicily, he breaks his aunt Vincenza's heirloom jug-La Giara- and is blamed for creating a family schism. Consequently, the

breaking of the jar unleashes Sicilian water spirit, Anapos, and a lifetime curse that follows a fleeing Nunzio from Sicily to America. Upon arriving in Philadelphia, Nunzio ironically encounters Vincenza's daughter, Annunziata, falls in love, and persuades her to marry him. They go on to create a successful bridal business and family, even as Annunziata finds that she must endure Nunzio's constant betrayals.

The family curse finally surfaces in full force when abusive Nunzio forbids their older daughter Norma's star-crossed love. Impelled to run away, Norma devises a secret plan that ultimately diverts their family's destiny. When sister Mimi discovers Norma's intentions, she pleads to come, leaking the news to mother Annunziata who exclaims, "I'm coming, too!" The three women break away to Colorado and create their own successful business, while Nunzio hires a private detective to find his family. The three women find that severing from family traditions creates a familial void that has left them with a deep longing for their lost heritage; however, these courageous women realize that they have paved a brighter future for themselves, as well as their families to come.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS:

Three women, three men. Suggested doubling of minor roles below.

NARRATOR/ANAPOS: M/F, baritone/tenor/or alto. Age range: ageless. A Sicilian Water God/Goddess and Shadow Puppeteer. Satirical, playful, compassionate, ANAPOS is a Sicilian Water God/Goddess figure, unleashed in the breaking of the water jug, and the instigator of the family curse. ANAPOS is the main storyteller and ultimately plays a part in the family's healing. Performs shadow play, and minor roles of

MARIO, BLUE-EYE, POLICEMAN, DINO and SERENADER as needed.

NUNZIO MINISSALE: M, Bass Baritone. Age range 18-70's. Maria's son, father to Norma and Mimi. The one who breaks the water jug, the impetus that drives the story. A moody, precocious, rascal who outgrows his Sicilian village and makes his way to America. Handsome, and charming, yet vulnerable, lonely, and explosive, marries Annunziata and becomes a tyrant. The so-called villain of the story.

ANNUNZIATA PICCIONE F, Legit Soprano. Age range 20's-70's. Vincenza's daughter, mother to Norma and Mimi. Talented, ambitious, and levelheaded Annunziata is wooed by Nunzio. When betrayed by Nunzio, she finds her own independence. Can also play MARIA and other small roles.

NORMA MINISSALE F, Belt Soprano. Age range 20's-40's. Annunziata & Nunzio's disobedient daughter. Flirtatious and reckless, Norma breaks from family tradition and is the instigator of the family women's "runaway" plan; she never gives into her father's dominance and is the only character who creates a brighter future for herself. Can also play VINCENZA and other small roles.

MIMI MINISSALE, F, Legit Soprano. Age range 20's-40's. Annunziata & Nunzio's obedient daughter. The beauty of the two daughters, Mimi is cultured, coy and obedient; lives her tragic life catering to her parents in their dark, lonely mansion, robbed of any love relationships. The one most damaged by the "water jug curse." Can also play NICOLE.

ALFREDO/EUGENE COHEN, M, Tenor. Age range 20's. ALFREDO is Nunzio's cousin, already living in America when Nunzio arrives. The same actor doubles as EUGENE, Norma's Jewish boyfriend, and a violinist. When harassed by Nunzio about NORMA'S whereabouts, a guilty Eugene divulges their secret. This actor can also play ANTONIO and additional small roles.

MINOR CHARACTERS to be doubled by principal actors, or played by the musicians or an ensemble of actors who are strong singers.

MALE DOUBLE #1: ANTONIO, ALFREDO, STREET GUY, SHADOW PERFORMER

MALE DOUBLE #2: SERENADER, SHADOW PERFORMER

FEMALE DOUBLE #1: VINCENZA PICCIONE (ANNUNZIATA's mother), STREET GAL,
SHOP PERSON

FEMALE DOUBLE #2: MARIA MINISSALE (NUNZIO'S mother, Mezzo Soprano),
STREET GAL, SHOP PERSON, NICOLE (NORMA'S granddaughter)

MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTATION

The musical style of LA GIARA is a combination of Puccini-like melodies, Jazz harmonies, Gilbert and Sullivan style lyrics and Brazilian rhythms. Vocalists perform a mix of operatic, musical theater, and jazz approaches.

Instrumentation can be as simple as piano accompaniment, or an ensemble of piano, bass, guitar, accordion, mandolin, percussion and clarinet.

Musicians can also participate on stage as minor characters.

VISUALS/SET DESIGN/SOUND

For the main visual treatment of the production, video projection of historical photos of Philadelphia, Sicily, the mansion, real life characters, and old black and white footage can all help to illustrate location and

time period. Abstract visuals enhance theatricalization and song performances. Visuals used in previous readings and productions <https://minasmusic.com/la-giara> (link to photos used in prior productions)

A stark unit set with five levels can accomplish the numerous settings well. A smaller moveable framed unit can serve as the dress shop, a train. Fabrics, mirrors, etc. can be used throughout to represent water imagery and water's symbolism in the story. Sound cues such as moving water or the sound of sewing machines can augment the overall sound tapestry of the piece.

SHADOW PLAY/PUPPETRY

Puppetry is reminiscent of Sicilian culture and can bring a playful, surreal element to naturalistic scenes, and to explore other realms or bigger than life characters such as gods, or Nunzio.

MUSICAL NUMBERS (NOTE: Recording links are included in the body of this script, and are from past concert readings. Lyrics on the recordings may differ from the current text, where indicated.)

ACT ONE

1. LONGING (GODS/GODDESSES/CAST)
2. THERE ONCE WAS A FAMILY (GODS/GODDESSES, ANAPOS)
3. IT WAS JUST A FAMILY WATER JAR (TOWNSPEOPLE)
4. SICILIA (NUNZIO)
5. ADDIO (MARIA AND NUNZIO)
6. WELCOME TO AMERICA (STREET GUY + 2 SALOON GALS)
7. YOUR LOVE AND AFFECTION (NUNZIO + ANAPOS + SERENADER(S))

8. DILEMMA (ANNUNZIATA)
9. CHEZ MARIE (NORMA AND MIMI + SHOP WORKERS)
10. THROW YOU TO THE LIONS (NUNZIO + NORMA)
11. BROKEN PROMISES (ANNUNZIATA)
12. NO MORE (NORMA/ MIMI/ ANNUNZIATA AND CHORUS)

ACT TWO

13. MR. EVIL (EUGENE + CHORUS)
14. I LONG FOR THE SUN (NUNZIO)
15. ISN'T IT LOVE? (MIMI AND NORMA)
16. WATER (MIMI)
17. A LITTLE PINCH OF THIS & THAT (ANNUN., MIMI, NORMA, NUNZIO + CHORUS)
18. STITCHES OF TIME (NUNZIO AND ANNUNZIATA + CHORUS)
19. ISN'T IT LOVE (NORMA and CAST)
20. LONGING - REPRISE (CAST)

ACT ONE

Act I, Scene One

PROLOGUE: VOICES OF THE PAST - TIMELESS

(AT RISE: a bare stage. Percussionists play evocative sound effects throughout the opening narration while a double bass plays sustained lines.

ANAPOS and five hooded GODS/ESSES played by NUNZIO, ANNUNZIATA, NORMA, MIMI, EUGENE enter and stand on multiple levels, representing mythological voices of the past. THEY are lit one by one as they speak.)

GODDESS #1/NORMA

I've had a longing ever since I can remember. A constant craving, a void that needs to be filled. That void deepens at times asking to be noticed, while other times it fades from recognition. This persistent longing begs its resolution. So I have been on a quest, a mission, to find what it is that was lost.

GODDESS #2/ANNUNZIATA

(Distant church bells) This longing reaches back to ancestors who traveled from afar - seeking new horizons, carrying around their sacks of broken dreams. In their comings and goings, fleeing and uprooting, what was lost when they were forced to turn their backs on their past?

GOD #3/NUNZIO

(Wind) This longing that flows through our veins, like water that once flowed from a certain water jug, has been with us for a very long time. The belief that this longing would be appeased by an epiphany, or culmination of events... has evaporated - like water droplets, absorbed into our ancestral arid land, Sicily.

GOD #4/EUGENE

(HE holds a two-foot cracked jug.) A family water jug, cracked by a swift hand in one thoughtless gesture, begot our broken family, cursing us with an insatiable longing to be united again. And while some look forward, some of us agonize over a lifetime - a past that is too remote to define - and too profound - to forget.

GODDESS #5/MIMI

(Water sounds.) So we choose to tell our story— to remind us all that our essence continues to pour forth. And like our old broken water jug with all its cracks and flaws, this story affirms that our deep connection to our past can somehow sweeten our constant longing.

(SONG: *LONGING*. Sung by five principal actors. [Longing/Opening](#))

NORMA: WE ALL HAVE LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND
A PERSON, A PLACE, A CERTAIN TIME
WITH MEMORIES THAT LINGER TO REMIND
NUNZIO: THAT WE CAN NO LONGER TURN BACK
TO A TIME THAT ALREADY HAS PASSED
THAT LIES BEYOND OUR FOREVER REACHING GRASP

MIMI: THE MORE WE TRY TO HOLD OUR MEMORY NEAR
THE MORE DISTANT IT APPEARS

EUGENE: LEAVING TRACES BITTER SWEET AND OH SO DEAR

CAST: WE CAN TASTE IT & EVEN SMELL IT, WE CAN HEAR IT AND ALMOST SEE IT
BUT WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TOUCH IT AGAIN

ANNUNZIATA: LONGING MAKES US PRONE TO FEEL
WHAT IS GONE, IS STILL VERY HERE AND REAL
SO CLOSE, SO FAR, LIKE THE DISTANCE OF A BURNING STAR

NUNZIO: IMPRESSIONS LODGED IN MEMORIES
IN CORNERS OF ETERNITY
SO PRESENT, YET CONFINED TO PAST REVERIE

CAST: THE MORE WE TRY TO HOLD OUR MEMORY NEAR
THE MORE DISTANT IT APPEARS
LEAVING TRACES BITTER SWEET AND OH SO DEAR
WE CAN TASTE IT AND EVEN SMELL IT, WE CAN HEAR IT AND ALMOST SEE IT
BUT WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TOUCH IT AGAIN

(Please disregard the narration on the link.)

(MUSIC FADES. LIGHTS OUT on GOD/GODESSES one by one. THEY EXIT IN BLACK.)

Act I, Scene Two
GRAND OPENING

(SPOT on ANAPOS with the water jug at his feet.)

ANAPOS

Such inherent stories faded and blurred through time. Once in a while cries from below summon us Gods to attend to these earthly matters. Such are the ways of human and superhuman existence. Sometimes we sweep up broken pieces of an altercation, or set lovers on their path, even create a little trouble! In this case, there was a curse to resolve that was distressing certain members of the Minissale family.

Now, by the time that patriarchs, Nunzio and Annunziata Minissales stepped into the World, a *water jug* was of utmost importance in their old Sicilian village. And *that* is precisely why *I* am here — (annoyed) because of *Nunzio* Minissale and that water jug incident —

You see, there were, uh, some complications. (Clears throat.) Well..it was said that if this *certain* family jug were ever broken, the powers of the Sicilian Water God, “Anapos”, would be unleashed. I mean...Anapos... (apologetically) *Me*. Can you imagine my boredom after so many years in that baked clay? Certainly, I expected to quickly resolve this family curse —but how did *I* know that a curse could last for three generations?!

But!... When we look into the future we see that Nunzio somehow made his way in the New World, eventually finding himself in the most *impressive* of circumstances — living in an Italian Palazzo with his love, Annunziata...(squinting) where life seemed like quite a fairytale.

(HE walks excitedly to a projection of the Minissale mansion, like a professor showing a map.)

For this house was no ordinary house! It was enchanted with (shows images) fountains, gilded mirrors, and extraordinary gardens – (sensually) where sounds of opera, singing canaries, and exquisite aromas from Annunziata’s kitchen filled their grand house!

And when patriarch Nunzio found himself in good spirits—(gulps)which was rare, curtains were parted, windows pried open, and the grand piano lid lifted to accompany musical gatherings! Nunzio and Annunziata’s daughters, Norma and Mimi loved their grand parties — *despite* their controlling father who manipulated everyone - as if they were puppets on strings! (Cackles.) No wonder, his family had such tales to tell! And like most tales, their story had a villain of some sort - and that villain – (Looks over their shoulder to Nunzio Sr. on the screen.) - was their father...(Circus leader tone:) Nunzio Minissale!

(MUSIC vamp begins. ANAPOS motions GODS/ESSES forward. Cape hoods come off, characters wear masks to conceal faces. THEY perform Commedia dell’Arte/Waltz, with objects from song—birdcage, puppets, etc. in front of projected Mansion)

(SONG: *THERE ONCE WAS A FAMILY*. Sung by the six principal actors.
[There Once Was a Family](#))(With slight lyric changes)

ANAPOS: THERE ONCE WAS A FAMILY WHO LIVED IN A MANSION
RULED BY AN ANGRY OLD MAN
WHO SHUNNED ANY VISITORS AND ALL HIS NEIGHBORS
WHO PUZZLED TO UNDERSTAND
WHY CHILDREN(GIRLS) IN THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE WERE NEVER OUTSIDE TO PLAY
HIS WIFE, 2 DAUGHTERS, AND GRANDCHILDREN (?) WERE HARDLY SEEN AT DAY

WOMEN: HIS FAMILY TRIED TO PLEASE HIM
BUT HIS TEMPER NEVER CALMED DOWN
THEY GROVELED, THEY YIELDED, THEY EVEN BOWED

BUT HE ONLY GAVE THEM A SCOWL, HE ONLY GAVE THEM A SCOWL

ANAPOS: THIS MANSION STOOD LIKE A HAUNTED CASTLE
EVERYONE HELD IN HIS SPELL
HE TREATED HIS FAMILY LIKE GUARDED PRISONERS
OH WHAT A SAD FAIRY TALE!

ALL: TO SEE THEIR HAPPINESS LOCKED AWAY, WITH HIS POSSESSIVE KEY
THEY TRIED TO WIN HIS LOVE AND FREEDOM
BUT HE WOULD NEVER EVER FEED THEM
A MORSEL OF LOVE OR AFFECTION
THEY WERE JUST PART OF HIS COLLECTION.

ANAPOS THE HOUSE WAS MAGICAL, ENCHANTED BUT SO ILLOGICAL
ALL: AND ALL LIVED IN A CONSTANT FEAR WHEN THEIR PAPA WAS NEAR
WOMEN: LIKE BIRDS INSIDE A CAGE, CRINGING AT HIS AWFUL RAGE
HIS POOR FAMILY RULED BY A NASTY TYRANT

ANAPOS: ONE DAY THE GIRLS INVENTED A PUPPET SHOW
A COMEDY TO HELP THEM SURVIVE
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MAZE IN THE MANSION
FILLED WITH DARK SECRETS AND LIES
EUGENE: WHEN PAPA SAW HIS FAMILY HAVE FUN
HE RANTED, RAVED & THEIR PLAY WAS DONE
THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE MAGIC HOUSE, WAS DESTROYED AS HE MADE A SCENE
ALL: IT WAS CRUEL, IT WAS RUTHLESS, HEARTLESS, MALICIOUS, AND MEAN
SELFISH AND SENSELESS, AND VICIOUS, IT WAS SO MEAN.

THE HOUSE THAT STOOD LIKE A CASTLE, WAS HAUNTED BUT ALSO DAZZLED
AND ALL THOSE DRAWN TO THE SPELL, DISGUISED SO NO OUTSIDER COULD TELL.
WHILE LIVING IN THE HOUSE, ONE CREPT LIKE A TIMID MOUSE
THOSE POOR YOUNG WOMEN RULED BY A NASTY TYRANT
THEY TRIED TO WIN HIS LOVE AND FREEDOM
BUT HE WOULD NEVER EVER FEED THEM
A MORSEL OF LOVE OR AFFECTION
THEY WERE JUST PART OF HIS COLLECTION - 3X

(MUSIC FADES. LIGHTS DOWN. ACTORS cross back to their platforms.)

ANAPOS

Now, Nunzio Minissale didn't always live in this amazing mansion. (*moves to screen, shows projection of Mount Etna*) You see, Nunzio started out as a simple country boy living in the hills of Sicily, close to the volcanic Mount Etna. (*Whispers loudly*) It was said that was *why* he always exploded like fireworks! And that's exactly what happened in Sicily in 1912.

(LIGHTS FADE on ANAPOS.)

Act I, Scene Three
SICILY: 1912

(LIGHTS RISE. PROJECTION of Sicily landscape. In peasant clothes, eighteen year old NUNZIO approaches his younger brother ANTONIO, who is sweeping.)

NUNZIO

Hey, Antonio! Grab the jugs. Mama needs water from the fountain.

ANTONIO

Really?

NUNZIO

And hurry - I have to get to a marble game. (ANTONIO grabs jugs, grumbling.) Oh, come on - maybe you'll see your little girlfriend at the fountain.

ANTONIO

What are you talking about, stupido?

NUNZIO

I've seen you and Cassia in church make goo-goo eyes. No wonder you've been going to mass lately. Never saw *you* so pious before. Pretty soon you'll be making confessions to Padre Roberto! Ha-ha! (HE punches ANTONIO, pushing him over.) Tell me that you wouldn't like to meet Cassia in the olive grove?

ANTONIO

You're the one that needs to say a few confessions! In fact, how come *I* haven't heard about this marble game? Maybe *you* have someone to hurry to? Someone— with *long*, curly lashes and silky hair! (HE rubs a hand over NUNZIO'S beard growth)— Ouch - watch out for those manly stubbles! (HE shakes his hand.)

NUNZIO

(HE shoves ANTONIO) *You* don't know the first thing about girls. *I've* been reading extensively about the subject in my poetry book. But *you* wouldn't understand -

ANTONIO

Oh - poetry? All those fancy words that you and Mama read?

NUNZIO

Yeah... (*Melodic.*) You ever look at the Madonna statue in church?

ANTONIO

What about the Madonna? Nothing is special to look at.

NUNZIO

That's because it takes a keen heart to see into the ways of love. Let me explain to you, little brother. Studying those curves of the Madonna and her feminine properties helps one understand what a woman's made of.

ANTONIO

Boy, are you getting in over your head—or some *other* part of your body. That's your problem, Nunzio — (HE pokes NUNZIO'S forehead.) You got too much up in that head of yours.

NUNZIO

Her lipsssss—now see, if you're a poet, like me, you can transform those marble lips into delicious, eatable grapes. (Makes a kissing sound.)

ANTONIO

Eeeewww—disgusting! (HE steps away.) That's what this girl—who I suppose you're meeting this afternoon—has done to you! (HE rocks nervously.) You've been poisoned by Cupid's arrow! Be careful, brother, I've heard Papa say that God can disguise the Devil as a woman!

NUNZIO

Antonio, calm down. There's no Devil, for one, and God would never punish us because of *love*. Just think — why did God make women so beautiful? For us worthy men to have a mission, a *purpose* in life! (Lowers his voice.) I've studied the methods of love —and the best way to approach a female is with ...the art of language. You can do anything—a-ny-thing—if you know the right words.

ANTONIO

(HE thinks) I'm sure Papa didn't do that to Mama.

NUNZIO

Your words have to be ... suave, poetic. For example, "Your eyes are as mesmerizing as the aqua ocean" You see??! Words can jump out and grab one's heart... believe me!

You'll see... I'm becoming an *expert*. *And...*getting results! (HE puffs out his chest.)

ANTONIO

Results??

NUNZIO

(Exasperated.) Listen - while you worry about the devil, I'll be on my way to becoming a master writer of love letters. Someday, lines of people with love requests will be waiting outside my door.

(NUNZIO walks towards town.) Now let's go see who's at the fountain. (HE flashes a smile.) Always a sweet-eyed girl leaning over the fountain, exposing her soft skin. And by the way, Antonio, don't say anything to Mama about my marble game.

(THEY approach a projection of a fountain, townspeople in a long line including VINCENZA, carrying the large jug, uncracked.)

NUNZIO

This is going to take forever! Look — there's Aunt Vincenza talking away in line. Just go distract her for a minute. (HE shoos ANTONIO.) Ask her how her fig trees have been growing. She loves to brag about her garden.

ANTONIO

No way, Nunzio.

NUNZIO

Don't be such a weakling. You distract her - I'll do the hard part and'll sneak in front of her while she's blabbing away—

ANTONIO

Let's just wait.

NUNZIO

Antonio, you'll never get anywhere in life. (HE takes out a coin) How do you think I got this? (ANTONIO's eyes widen) This coin will be yours if you just go and talk to that old meanie.

ANTONIO

Oh ... all right, but back me up, Nunzio.

NUNZIO

Understood.

(NUNZIO pushes ANTONIO toward VINCENZA, who is holding the beautiful jug.)

ANTONIO

Aunt Vincenza, how's your very beautiful fig tree growing in your splendid garden?

(While VINCENZA turns to ANTONIO, NUNZIO steals in front of her, staring ahead.
VINCENZA turns around with a birdlike gaze and pokes her finger into NUNZIO'S shoulder.)

VINCENZA

Hey, little man - you think I didn't see you steal in front of me?

NUNZIO

(With a broad smile.) Oh! Aunt Vincenza, it's *so* nice to see you. I didn't realize you were standing *right* next to me. And I was *just* going to say what a *lovely* dress you have on today.

(SHE sputters something unintelligible, then quickly recovers.)

VINCENZA

Don't sweet-talk me, Nunzio. You just stole my place in line.

NUNZIO

I've been here all along—How can I help it if *you* have to get your glasses adjusted? (grips water jar)

VINCENZA

How rude! You move young man, or—I'll move you myself!

(NUNZIO settles his weight to ground as VINCENZA shoves. NUNZIO turns, swings his jug, crashing it into VINCENZA'S. A collective gasp sweeps through the townspeople.)

VINCENZA

You scoundrel! You broke my jug! That was my grandmother's heirloom jug!

(SHE kneels, collecting broken pieces, whimpering, as consoling women help.)

VINCENZA (Cont.)

I'm just sick. I'll never forgive you — Never! (To TOWNSPEOPLE.) You know this is a bad omen! We will ALL be cursed! And Nunzio is to blame! Prepare for imminent doom!

(BIG PIANO/PERCUSSION RUMBLE. The TOWNSPEOPLE gesticulate fear and form a whisper line, which builds to a rhythmic chant, and takes us into the song. ANAPOS, all in black, weaves in and out dancing through the crowd, grabs a piece of the jar and tucks it away, winking at us.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

A curse, a curse, a curse...

(NUNZIO, pushed into the middle of a circle, hysterical TOWNSPEOPLE parading around him, fights to get out of the circle. Chaos, commotion, full light, blaring.)

(SONG: *IT WAS JUST A FAMILY WATER JAR!* Sung by TOWNSPEOPLE.
[It Was Just a Family Water Jar](#))

TOWNSPEOPLE: IT WAS JUST, IT WAS JUST, IT WAS JUST A FAMILY WATER JAR
HOW COULD WE LET IT START THIS FAMILY WAR?
WITH A CRASH, WITH A CRASH, IT TOOK A BLOW, AND NOW WE'RE ETERNAL FOES!

(Lyrics/Arrangement differ from link.)

WOMEN: THAT RUDE BOY BROKE INTO THE WATER LINE
HIT AUNTIE'S JAR WHO STARTED TO WHINE
SAID SHE'D NEVER EVER, EVER FORGIVE
SHE SAID SHE'D NEVER EVER FORGIVE HIM, AS LONG AS SHE LIVED!

ALL: WE MUST FIND THE MAGIC TO FIX WHAT WILL BE TRAGIC FOR YEARS
WE MUST FIND SOMEONE TO TELL
HOW BREAK THIS EVIL SPELL AND ALL OUR TEARS!
WE HAVE A NOTION, LOVE'S THE SECRET POTION
TO HEAL OUR FEARS AND ALL OUR TEARS, THAT WE WILL CRY FOR YEARS.

NUNZIO

(Screams above crowd) Stop! Basta! All of you - Stop!

(To be written) ALL OF YOU WHO CAST YOUR STONES
WITH SCOWLS UPON YOUR EMPTY THRONES
FENCED BY MOUNTAINS FROM ALL SIDES
YOUR MINDS IN VALLEYS CRITICIZE
MY MISTAKES YOU READILY DAMN
YOU HARDLY KNOW - WHO I AM
BUT I HAVE SIGHTS, I HAVE SCHEMES
THAT THIS SMALL TOWN'S NEVER SEEN
I HAVE HOPES TO CLIMB A LADDER
TO A PLACE WHERE I WILL MATTER
TO A PLACE WHERE I WILL MATTER

(The TOWNSPEOPLE start to chant again.)

TOWNSPEOPLE: IT WAS JUST, IT WAS JUST, IT WAS JUST A FAMILY WATER JAR
HOW COULD WE LET IT START THIS FAMILY WAR?
WITH A CRASH, WITH A CRASH, IT TOOK A BLOW, AND NOW WE'RE ETERNAL FOES!

WOMEN: THAT RASCAL CAUSED THE WATER JAR TO CRACK
THAT'S WHEN THINGS GOT SO VERY, VERY OUT OF WHACK
THAT LITTLE DEVIL'S NOT ONE TO TRUST, CAUTION IS A MUST!

ALL: WE MUST FIND THE MAGIC TO FIX WHAT'S BEEN TRAGIC
WE MUST FIND SOMEONE TO TELL HOW TO BREAK THIS EVIL SPELL!
WE HAVE A NOTION, LOVE'S THE SECRET POTION
TO HEAL OUR FEARS AND ALL OUR TEARS
THAT WE WILL CRY FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS (CRASH)

WE MUST FIND THE MAGIC TO FIX WHAT'S BEEN TRAGIC
WE MUST FIND SOMEONE TO TELL HOW TO BREAK THIS EVIL SPELL!
WE HAVE A NOTION, LOVE'S THE SECRET POTION
TO HEAL OUR FEARS AND ALL OUR TEARS
THAT WE WILL CRY FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS (CRASH)

(The TOWNSPEOPLE fall to the ground, struck by a curse. ANAPOS holds up a broken piece of the water jug. NUNZIO is left standing, strong and determined. LIGHTS DIM.)

Act I, Scene Four

(The broken water jug is lit against a projection of Mount Etna. Mournful MUSIC. NUNZIO and his mother MARIA work the field. NUNZIO digs with a spade.)

NUNZIO

Those land barons have taken our best land. Look at this meager bit of potatoes - can hardly feed our family. (HE throws his spade.) Nothing seems to be going right these days. A season of bad crops, Aunt Vincenza's scolding— and now this *supposed* curse... (HE looks off) I'm tired of working in that stone quarry, treated like a nobody.

MARIA

But just think how well you do in my classroom! How you read faster than everyone.

NUNZIO

I wish I had more time for my studies ... to do something exciting with my life.

MARIA

But it's good to dream ..*Somebody* has to dream. Some day, one of us will have to venture from here to find a better life... Why not you, Nunzio?

NUNZIO

Papa says that this is where we belong.

MARIA

(SHE holds NUNZIO's face in her hands.) You're forgetting that this land is less and less our own. Open your eyes, Nunzio. What future do we have? We are blind to not see the better life beyond these mountains. And now with this water jug incident. Nunzio, you have become a victim of the town's hunger for drama! The damage is done! You have to leave, Nunzio!

NUNZIO

(Impatiently) Leave? Where Mama - where could I ever go??

MARIA

What about America —the land of promise!

NUNZIO

America?? (Exasperated) How can I turn my back on Papa -and the land that our family worked for years?? Our family endured— why can't we? I was taught all my life to believe in *this*. (HE picks up dirt; it runs through his fingers.)

(SONG: *SICILIA*. Sung by NUNZIO. [Sicilia](#))

O SICILIA TERRA MIA
QUAN/AMURI CIAIU PI TIA
KINA DI SULI E KINA DI LURI
KU NU MARI CA SEMPRI CANTO DA MURI
TI PIENSU SEMPRI SICILIA MIA.
LU CORI A LA VITA TI DUNGNU A TI
O SICILIA SEMPRI MIA
OGNI NOTTI MI SUOGNO DI TIA.
SICILIA VERSE: BRIDGE

MARIA

(Discouraged) I have to repair Vincenza's jug. It won't be an easy fix..and neither will Aunt Vincenza.

NUNZIO

Wait, Mama. You're right. It's not going to ever get better for me if I stay here....

(MARIA turns around and gives NUNZIO a sad hug. SHE pulls a ring from her apron pocket. MUSIC under simulates NUNZIO'S travel across the sea to America.)

Act I, Scene Five

PHILADELPHIA circa 1912

(PROJECTIONS of 1912 era Philadelphia throughout the scene. LIGHTS RISE. Eighteen year old NUNZIO arrives at a dock in Philadelphia wearing peasant clothes, meets well-dressed cousin, ALFREDO who spots NUNZIO and waves his hat, jumping to be seen.)

ALFREDO

Nunzio! Over here! So good to see you cousin!

(HE hugs NUNZIO, who is intimidated by ALFREDO'S nice outfit.)

You look like you could use a good meal, my cuz. Wait 'til you see what Aunt Emma cooked up for you. And you and I get to share a room and all...

(NUNZIO walks, dizzy with movement of the big city.)

NUNZIO

Dio - what tall buildings! Everything moves at such a fast pace! And the language — it's as crisp as the cold air!

(ENSEMBLE/MUSICIANS come on stage and play a "Welcome Vamp" surrounding NUNZIO New Orleans jazz style. ENTER the STREET GUY, and flirtatious STREET GALS in flashy dresses and hats, who eye NUNZIO.)

STREET GAL

Well, hello stranger— Don't look so lost! Welcome to America! You're gonna love this place in no time! (STREET GALS link arms with NUNZIO.)

(SONG: WELCOME TO AMERICA, sung by STREET GUY, GALS)
[Welcome to America](#)

ALL: DOO- DOO -DOO DOO - DOO

STREET GUY: WELCOME TO AMERICA

COME AND STEP INTO THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY
THERE'S A HUNDRED WAYS
TO SHINE YOUR POCKET WITH A LITTLE BIT OF MONEY
WELCOME TO PHILADELPHIA
YOU'RE IN THE CITY OF PROMISE AND PLEASURE
SO MUCH OPPORTUNITY, THERE'S NO WAY THAT YOU CAN EVEN MEASURE.

GALS: IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'RE FROM FOREIGN DESCENT
TO THE NEW LAND YOU HAVE BEEN SENT
TO FIND, FOLLOW AND BUILD YOUR DREAMS
TO CHOOSE FROM A 1022 SCHEMES

STREET GUY: STRUTTIN' DOWN CHESTNUT STREET
YOU'RE IN THE PLACE WHERE NIGHT LIGHTS ARE DAZZLIN'
CLICK YOUR HEELS TO THE BEAT, COME JOIN US WITH SOME FANCY DANCIN'!

ALL: DOO- DOO -DOO DOO - DOO
GALS: YOU'RE IN THE LAND OF RAGTIME AND BLUES
YOU CAN DANCE TO THE MUSIC YOU CHOOSE
THERE'S A RHYTHM IN THIS CITY'S STEP
A SNAPPY TEMPO YOU WILL NEVER FORGET
STREET GUY: WELCOME TO AMERICA
YOU'RE IN THE LAND OF PROMISE AND PLEASURE
SO MUCH OPPORTUNITY,
GALS: YOU CAN'T MEASURE
STREET GUY: A PLACE TO FIND A HONEY
GALS: AND MAKE A BIT OF MONEY
STREET GUY: OH LIFE'S RICH AND SNAZZY,
ALL: CUZ AMERICA'S BRIGHT AND JAZZY!
DOO-DOO

(LIGHTS OUT.)

Act I, Scene Six

(Scene Six features multiple settings to create a montage progression of NUNZIO's first months in America: a barber shop, ALFREDO's/Emma's home, a dock, the street. NUNZIO'S costumes become increasingly fine during this scene.)

(We see a barber shop where NUNZIO is employed. The opera singer MARIO arrives, sees NUNZIO tediously pronouncing big words from the newspaper. NUNZIO seats him.)

MARIO

Mighty impressed with you, Nunzio. Your vocabulary is quite sophisticated for the short time you've been here!

NUNZIO

I've been working on my English... *and* poetic writing!... Actually, I'm the person to see if one needs a special love letter to impress a sweetheart!

MARIO

Ha! Maybe you can write a letter for me! I've got my eye on one of the chorus girls in the opera.

(NUNZIO sharpens his razor. MARIO, soaped up, sings "Un bel Di Vedremo" dramatically waving arms.)

UN BEL DI, VEDREMO
LEVARSI UN FIL DI FUMO
SULL'ESTREMO CONFIN DEL MARE
E POI LA NAVE APPARE

(NUNZIO is astounded. MARIO notices.)

MARIO

Bravo, Nunzio, you like the music - heh? Listen, I happen to have an extra ticket to my performance tonight.

(MARIO pulls out a ticket; NUNZIO looks at it shyly.)

Take it! Go enjoy yourself! And wait til' you see the leading lady - hmmm!

NUNZIO

Grazie, Mario - Grazie!!

(LIGHTS DOWN. LIGHTS RISE on ALFREDO'S home. HE is watching NUNZIO get dressed up)

ALFREDO

Where are you going *now*??

NUNZIO

To see the opera *Madame Butterfly* and the leading lady! (HE begins knotting a fancy tie.)

ALFREDO

Aren't you a little overdressed?

NUNZIO

Why not? I've earned every penny to pay for these fancy clothes. In America one can use ambition to one's advantage!

ALFREDO

Just remember, stay away from the blue-eyed boys. Make sure you walk on your side of the street.

NUNZIO

(His expression darkens.) Don't you worry, Alfredo. If they mess with me, I'll show them.

(LIGHTS CROSSFADE to show a street scene. Dark walls and an alley. A member of the "blue-eyed" gang enters and points to NUNZIO hurrying to the opera.)

BLUE-EYE

There's the uppity Dago - the one that goes to the fancy theater with the rich folks. I'm tired of seeing his face around!

(BLUE-EYE exits, warily. ANAPOS enters and speaks to us. MUSIC: “Water Jug” theme begins, under.)

All was going well in Nunzio’s life— until those blue-eyed gangs began to harass him — “the dark, Sicilian boy” —who didn’t keep to his side of the street. Eventually, Nunzio knew he needed to defend himself... and that’s why one night he made a trip to the barbershop, borrowing the implements that he hid deep in his pocket as he walked the dark street.

(ANAPOS and ENSEMBLE actors enact a SHADOW PLAY behind the back-lit framed set unit, while MUSIC plays the “Water Jug Theme” and additional percussion provides suspense. PUPPET BLUE-EYE hurls an orange, just missing PUPPET NUNZIO’s head, PUPPET BLUE-EYE closes in on PUPPET NUNZIO, there is a scuffle, PUPPET NUNZIO lifts his razor and strikes; PUPPET BLUE-EYE falls, MUSIC and rhythm stop abruptly. SHADOW PLAY LIGHTING fades and LIGHTS RISE to the street, daytime.

NUNZIO and ALFREDO enter, NUNZIO explaining this to ALFREDO.)

NUNZIO

I swear it was self-defense! But I never thought this scuffle would result in a murder!

ANAPOS

Nunzio stayed off the streets while the Italian neighborhood kept the incident hushed from city officials. Life in America was becoming more complex than he ever imagined. Then he began to feel depressed...then euphoric! Like a ship tossed from one wave to the other! That was when Nunzio found comfort in cards and women — diving into a deep pool of endless urges. Thankfully, on one of his darkest days, a letter arrived.

(MUSIC: “Water Jug” theme stops as NUNZIO reads a letter aloud.)

NUNZIO

“Mama and Papa are on their way to America!”

(NUNZIO kisses the letter over and over. LIGHTS DOWN)

(LIGHTS RISE on ALFREDO and NUNZIO at a dock waiting for their family to arrive. It is now 1915.)

ALFREDO

It’s amazing that my mama is coming on the same boat with your Mama! Aren’t we lucky today!

(NUNZIO is looking sick about meeting Alfredo’s mother, VINCENZA.)

ALFREDO

There they are!

(MARIA, AUNT VINCENZA and COUSIN ANNUNZIATA arrive at the dock. NUNZIO sees his mother and father and gives them a big hug, then avoids AUNT VINCENZA who scoffs at NUNZIO and struts off, revealing her daughter, ANNUNZIATA. NUNZIO is stunned by her beauty.)

NUNZIO

Annunziata! What a surprise! Don’t you remember me?

ANNUNZIATA

Yes, How can I forget you - *Nunzio*?

(SHE lifts her chin, walks on. NUNZIO follows with a new purpose.)

(LIGHTS shift to ALFREDO's HOME -1917. Enraptured NUNZIO sits at a desk writing love letters, one after another, handing them to ALFREDO, who delivers them to ANNUNZIATA who sits at a sewing machine. ALFREDO gradually becomes exhausted, running back/forth.)

(Each delivered letter elicits a different reaction from ANNUNZIATA.)

ALFREDO

(Breathlessly.) Annunziata, It's been two years - Can't you just respond to *one* of these letters??

ANNUNZIATA

I'm keeping my distance from that cousin — the one with the questionable reputation - and don't forget - the one who broke our mother's water jug! Anyway, I'm determined to become a successful dressmaker in America, and I'm *not* going to let anyone distract me from my dreams!

(SHE returns to sewing.)

ALFREDO

But - uh, Nunzio's *here*.

ANNUNZIATA

Here?

ALFREDO

Yes - He wants to personally deliver his last letter!

ANNUNZIATA

His *last*?

(NUNZIO, ALFREDO, SERENADER joined by ANAPOS approach. NUNZIO kneels, MUSICIANS serenade ANNUNZIATA while NUNZIO spryly jumps about and sings his mating dance!)

(SONG: *YOUR LOVE AND AFFECTION* Sung by NUNZIO Sr., ALFREDO, ANAPOS & SERENADERS.)

[Your Love and Affection.](#))

NUNZIO: ANNUNZIATA, WITH YOUR EYES SO GOLDEN BROWN,
YOU HAVE HAS WON MY HEART AND I FAULT YOU FOR THIS LOVE IN WHICH I DROWN
YOUR SMILE OPENS THE SKIES INTO A THOUSAND SPLENDID RAYS
OH YOUR BEAUTY INSPIRES ME TO LOVE YOU THIS WAY.

OH THIS LETTER SEALS MY LOVE IN EVERY THOUGHT AND WORD PLEASE DON'T
BLAME MY SILLY HEART FOR THIS LOVE THAT HAS OCCURRED FOR YOUR BEAUTY
REIGNS MY HEAD AND MAKES ME ACT A FOOL HOW CAN A YOUNG MAN LIKE
MYSELF REMAIN SO CALM AND COOL

AND LET OUR DESTINED LOVE PROCEED.

ALFREDO/SERENADERS:

ALL SHE HAS TO SAY IS YES, MIO AMORE,
AND LET THIS LOVE PROCEED
LET THIS DESTINED LOVE PROCEED!

(LIGHTS OUT.)

ACT I, Scene Seven

(A few days later. A dress shop set piece rolls in. NUNZIO passes, sees ANNUNZIATA sewing,
and pokes head inside the shop.)

NUNZIO

Hello there!

ANNUNZIATA

Oh, Nunzio! You scared me!

NUNZIO

Well, I saw this beautiful girl working away and thought she looked kind of lonely.

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE rolls her eyes.) I'm not lonely...Anyway, I *like* being alone.

NUNZIO

Not always...

ANNUNZIATA

Most times...

NUNZIO

Mind if I come in?

ANNUNZIATA

I'm afraid there's nothing here to interest you. I'm just sewing up bridesmaid dresses.

NUNZIO

I myself like a fashionable piece of clothing...

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE notices his outfit.) So— I've noticed.

NUNZIO

(HE looks through a dress rack.) These dresses are quite unique, Annunziata. Have you thought of selling more?

ANNUNZIATA

My space is too small — and I'd need more machines. (*Dreamily.*) But someday I'll have a magnificent shop in Center City!

NUNZIO

Annunziata, your work *is* magnificent... And you—well, you know how wonderful I think *you* are.

ANNUNZIATA

Don't start Nunzio...

NUNZIO

(Suddenly serious.) Annunziata, you have to know how I feel by now.

ANNUNZIATA

You and your friends embarrassed me to death, serenading me like that. (SHE playfully throws a tape measure at NUNZIO.) Now everyone is making all kinds of comments about you and me.

NUNZIO

I meant everything I said...

ANNUNZIATA

Your words are beautiful, Nunzio. (SHE holds fabric to the light.) Sometimes I wonder how you can mean all those things.

NUNZIO

Annunziata, the day I saw you come off the boat, I knew immediately.

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE falls quiet, cutting.) How do you know these things so quickly?

NUNZIO

Listen, I'm thinking of taking a job in another city.

ANNUNZIATA

(Stops.) Why? Why would you leave?

NUNZIO

Because I want to start my life. And I need to know if there's any chance of your consideration... (HE fumbles with his hat.) Please at least give me the satisfaction of knowing... I mean... Aren't you at all interested in settling down?

(SHE places scissors down, giving NUNZIO full concentration.)

ANNUNZIATA

Nunzio, honestly, you're like no one I've met. But ... I hardly know you. (SHE looks down.) Even though all those promises sound so wonderful in your *letters*...

NUNZIO

So what is holding you back?

ANNUNZIATA

You know, Nunzio... your past.

NUNZIO

Christo! Why do people keep bringing up my past?? Jesus - - I was just a kid!

(HE slaps his hand on the cutting table, turns from ANNUNZIATA to hide his agitation.)

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE boldly steps forward.) Trust is important to me, Nunzio...

(ANNUNZIATA'S strength has an effect on NUNZIO, who quiets down, exhales.)

NUNZIO

Annunziata, What does your heart say?

ANNUNZIATA

I don't have time to pay attention to my heart ... (SHE turns her back to him.)

NUNZIO

You've been avoiding your heart for too long. (Persistently.) I'd change everything for you. You mean that much to me.

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE challenges him.) How can I believe that?

NUNZIO

(HE crosses to HER.) Please give me a chance, Annunziata. Just get to know me. Then, you can decide. (HE takes her hand, pulls her closer.) I have dreams like you, Annunziata. I can help you build your business. (HE steps closer.) I promise to give you a life bigger than you ever imagined. Just give me a chance to prove myself.

(HE pulls her up, strokes her face, gently kisses ANNUNZIATA, SHE softens.)

Trust me, Annunziata...

(HE backs away, holding her eyes in his, slipping toward the door.)

Trust me...

(HE exits.)

(ANNUNZIATA is stunned, reads NUNZIO'S letter, bewildered, tosses it aside.)

(SONG: *DILEMMA* Sung by ANNUNZIATA. [Dilemma.](#))

ANNUNZIATA: TOO MANY LETTERS, TOO MANY THOUGHTS, TOO MANY WORDS.
I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU, YOU SEEM SO DIFFERENT
FROM WHAT I HAVE HEARD
BUT WHEN I READ THE WORDS YOU WRITE AND WHAT THEY MEAN
I FIND YOU MORE THAN I EVER DREAMED.
YOUR PAST HAS STORIES, I'VE HEARD THE RUMORS THEY TALK ABOUT
YET IN YOUR LETTERS, I UNDERSTAND YOU MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE
IN MY DILEMMA, YOUR WORDS FIND WAYS TO CONSOLE ME
WHEN LOVE IS COUNTING MY LONELY DAYS
LONELY NIGHTS, WHILE YOU QUESTION MY LIFE

SHOULD I LISTEN TO MY YEARNING HEART
OR TO REASONS THAT WOULD JUST KEEP US APART?
I'VE WAITED TOO MANY YEARS AND TOO LONG
TO BUILD A LIFE WITH SOMEONE YOU BELONG.
I'VE SEEN TWO DIFFERENT SIDES THAT YOU SHOW

ONE SIDE TO FEAR, ONE TO FILL MY SOUL.
I BELIEVE YOU COULD CHANGE FOR US TO START ANEW
WOULD I EVER MEAN THAT MUCH TO YOU?

TOO MANY DOUBTS, TOO MANY VOICES, I CAN'T DENY
YOUR PASSION'S STRONG, PULLS ME ALONG, I PRAY IT'S NOT A LIE
YOUR CHARM, YOUR KISS, BLINDS MY REASONING
THIS LOVE'S A RISK, BUT ALL YOUR PROMISING
CONFUSE MY THOUGHTS, I FEEL SO LOST AND CAN'T RESIST
THIS LOVE, THIS RISK, I CAN'T RESIST!

MY FRIENDS HAVE FAMILIES AND HUSBANDS TO LOVE
AND I'VE NEVER FOUND ONE WHO INSPIRED ME ENOUGH
NOW I'M OLDER AND WITHOUT A MATE
AND I FEAR MY TIME WILL SOON BE TOO LATE
I CAME HERE WITH A HANDFUL OF DREAMS
TO MAKE A LIFE I COULD SOMEDAY ESTEEM
WOULD YOU CHANGE – IS YOUR LOVE SO TRUE
WOULD I MEAN THAT MUCH TO YOU?

TOO MANY OFFERS, TOO MANY QUESTIONS, NO ANSWER APPEARS
I MUST DECIDE NOW, BEFORE YOUR WORDS, UNCOVER ALL MY FEARS
I'M TIRED OF WAITING, FOR LOVE'S ARRIVAL HAS BEEN LATE
WHEN YOUR PROMISES COULD CHANGE MY LONELY FATE.

(LIGHTS DIM on ANNUNZIATA's face in a grimace.)

ACT I, Scene Eight

CHEZ MARIE DRESS SHOP – 1940's - PHILADELPHIA some twenty years later.
NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA married in 1919 and now have two daughters: MIMI born in 1921, and
NORMA, born in 1923. It is now 1941 - ANNUNZIATA and NUNZIO are 43 and 45 years old, MIMI and
NORMA, 20 and 18.

(ANAPOS enters, commanding a larger and fancier dress shop unit to roll in, while a PROJECTION shows a photo of the exterior. The dress shop includes two sewing machines, two mannequins, bolts of fabric. During the scenes of this time period, the family dresses in clothes that show wealth, their ages.)

ANAPOS

In those first wonderful years of marriage, Nunzio and Annunziata raised their girls, Mimi and Norma — of course named after opera characters, and Nunzio worked on proving himself to Annunziata, managing her new CHEZ MARIE dress shop. Their business grew more and more successful with Nunzio scoring various real estate deals on the side! (Whispers:) Although, he wouldn't want me to mention his gambling habit.

(LIGHTS: late night. MUSIC: Percussion punctuates this scene. ANAPOS crosses to one side of the stage, and joins an enacted card game between NUNZIO and several of his buddies, played by MUSICIANS or ENSEMBLE. HE clearly has been using the shop at night to gamble until ANNUNZIATA walks in on them. There is general upheaval as the buddies disperse. ANAPOS smirks and picks up the discarded cards.)

ANNUNZIATA

Can't you think of our girls for once? And don't think Norma and Mimi don't know what you're up to!

ANAPOS

Poor Norma and Mimi were expected to work long hours in the back of their plush Chez Marie bridal shop.

Nunzio insisted it was their family duty and kept Norma and Mimi under a tight watch.

(LIGHTS SHIFT to daytime. WE hear the oppressive ticking clock. MIMI and NORMA are seated at their machines.)

MIMI

Papa said this order has to be done today! Ugh! All this cutting and stitching...

NORMA

(SHE sighs.) Pinning and hemming...

MIMI

(SHE huffs.) Basting and snipping...

(MUSIC: a lively intro begins. Percussion instruments assimilate sewing machines. SHOP PEOPLE join in this upbeat dance number – dressmakers dance with fabrics and mannequins, fabric flies across the stage, etc.)

(SONG: *CHEZ MARIE*. Sung by MIMI, NORMA and NUNZIO. [Chez Marie](#).
Verses switched/arrangement differs)

Note:

NUNZIO: IT'S TIME TO WORK, IT'S TIME TO SEW
WE HAVE MANY HOURS TO GO
DRESSES TO FASHION WITH ARTISTIC PASSION
TO PUT ON A FABULOUS SHOW
YOU MUST WORK FASTER, YOU MUST BE A MASTER
OF EVERY STITCH THAT YOU SEW
CUSTOMERS WAITING, NO TIME FOR DEBATING
NO TIME TO EVER BE SLOW.

MIMI: OFF TO THE STORE, JUST ANOTHER DAY TO BEAR
OF SEWING PEARLS AND BUTTONS
EVENING GOWNS AND BRIDAL WEAR
WITH ALL THEIR FANCY CUFFINS.
FLASHING NEEDLES, THE ROARING MACHINES
AS RUMBLING PEDALS WAIL
IT'S MADDENING ALL THE GOWNS I'VE PRESSED AND STEAMED
OF ENDLESS BOLTS OF CHIFFON AND VEIL.

NORMA: OH, ALL THE SEQUINS THAT WE SEW, ALL THESE TINY LITTLE BOWS
ALL THIS BEADING MAKES MY EYES CROSS AND BURN
ALL THE SATIN AND THE SILK, I'M FEELING RATHER ILL
OH THE MONEY WE WILL NEVER EVER EARN

MIMI: OH MY HANDS WILL NEVER LAST, OR MY FINGERS MOVE THIS FAST
TO SEW THIS SEAM STRAIGHT AND EVEN
IF THE WORK DOES NOT GET DONE, TO THE CONVENT TO BE A NUN
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

BOTH: THE GROAN OF THE MOTORS SEWING AWAY
TO THE RHYTHM OF THE PECKING NEEDLE
ALL THE WHEELS AND BELTS SEEM TO HUM

WEEDLE NEEDLE TEEDLE WEEDLE DEEDLE, WEEDLE NEEDLE WEEDLE DEEDLE.

NORMA: SNIP, SNIP, SNIP, CUT HERE, CUT THERE
ROLLS OF FABRIC AND THREADS GALORE
SCISSORS CUT EVENING WEAR
DISPLAYED ON DRESS FORMS IN THE STORE
MIMI: STITCH STITCH HERE, GOWNS TO PREPARE
TO ADORN MANNEQUINS IN THE WINDOW
CUSTOMERS WILL GASP AND STARE
AT THE NEXT FASHION THEY WILL FOLLOW.

BOTH/CAST: THE DRAPING, THE FITTING, THE CUTTING, THE SNIPPING,
SPINNING SPOOLS OF THREADS MAKES ME DIZZY.
ALL THE HEMS AND ALL THE LINES GO
ZIGGY ZAGGY ZIGGY ZAGGY ZIGGY
ZIGGY ZAGGY ZIGGY ZAGGY ZIGGY

(NUNZIO bursts in, followed by ANNUNZIATA. ANAPOS joins the ensemble dancing in and out of the mannequins using fabric and props to add to the rhythm of the song. MUSIC: instruments assimilate tick-tock clock rhythm for NUNZIO'S verse.)

NUNZIO: IT'S TIME TO WORK, IT'S TIME TO SEW
WE HAVE MANY HOURS TO GO
DRESSES TO FASHION WITH ARTISTIC PASSION
TO PUT ON A FABULOUS SHOW
YOU MUST WORK FASTER, YOU MUST BE A MASTER
OF EVERY STITCH THAT YOU SEW
CUSTOMERS WAITING, NO TIME FOR DEBATING
NO TIME TO EVER BE SLOW.

MIMI: THE HATS, THE SHOES, THE BAGS THE GLOVES
ON THAT SPECIAL DAY ALL DRESSED IN WHITE
TELL ME IS IT REALLY WORTH ALL THE LOVE
DOES IT MATTER IF THE BRIDE VEIL HANGS JUST RIGHT?

NORMA: THE SNAPS, THE BOWS, BRIDESMAIDS IN ROWS
LIKE FLOWERS IN A GARDEN
PASTEL COLORS IN FORMAL POSE
POLITELY BEGGING LOVE'S PARDON.

BOTH/CAST: THE THINNING, THE PINNING, THE BASTING, THE LACING
SUCH A FRANTIC STATE, OH THE WORRY
THE PACING, THE PACING, THE DESPERATE RACING
HURRY SCURRY WORRY HURRY SCURRY! HURRY SCURRY WORRY HURRY SCURRY!

OH TIME IS QUICKLY RUNNING OUT, ANOTHER DEADLINE LOOMS ABOUT
ANOTHER WEDDING PARTY TO PREPARE.
SO SNIP AND CUT AND SEW, ONLY HOURS 'TIL THE SHOW
TIL LOVERS MAKE A SACRED PAIR.
AND LITTLE DO THEY KNOW, ALL THE DAYS WE HAD TO SEW

TO MAKE THIS BRIDE TO APPEAR SO DEMURE
AS WE SEW IN OUR CELL , HELD HOSTAGE NOT TO TELL
'BOUT CHEZ MARIE AND ALL WE ENDURED!
'BOUT CHEZ MARIE AND ALL WE ENDURED! WE ENDURED!
WEEDLE NEEDLE TEEDLE WEEDLE DEEDLE
ZIGGY ZAGGY ZIGGY ZAGGY ZIGGY HURRY WORRY SCURRY HURRY SCURRY!

(MUSIC fades as the ENSEMBLE collapses. LIGHTS OUT.)

ACT I, Scene Nine

(LIGHTS RISE on the interior of a music studio in Philadelphia, where NORMA is sitting down at a piano. NUNZIO has dropped her off and is exiting as he cautions her:)

NUNZIO

I'll be back at 5 sharp - don't make me wait.

NORMA

(Sarcastically) Yes, I know. Don't dilly dally, don't talk to anyone...(SHE huffs.)

ANAPOS

That afternoon while Norma was practicing at the music school, she heard the most beautiful violin float through the window of her studio.

(ANAPOS opens the window with a mischievous grin. EUGENE enters and plays his violin, fixed on Norma. She startles, and stops playing the piano.)

Something *unlocked* in her heart.

(NORMA tries to concentrate on her practice. EUGENE listens outside her studio, swooning. HE crosses downstage and reveals a letter he has written. HE recites from it.)

EUGENE

"Dear Norma, each song you play brings me such joy -as if I can sense who you are in *every* note. Every melody you play sets my heart into ... into...A-ha!- into a very rapid rhythm!"

(HE happily adds these last words and seals the letter. Just as NORMA opens the door to the studio, EUGENE jumps in front of her.)

Oh hello! I'm Eugene.

(HE smiles awkwardly and snaps fingers on his violin strings.)

EUGENE

We've never met each other formally.

(HE straightens, holds out hand to Norma.)

I always hear your beautiful playing! Excuse me, I don't mean to be forward, but I wrote something for you.

(HE hands her the letter, NORMA grabs it, scurries back to the door of the studio, turns, and quickly blurts:)

NORMA

I.I...I loved your violin playing, also!

(SHE slams the door. On the other side she reads EUGENE'S letter, swoons. NUNZIO enters ready to escort NORMA home. SHE is exploding, but must contain herself. As soon as she arrives home, NUNZIO exits and NORMA calls out to her sister.)

NORMA

Mimi...Mimi!!

MIMI

(Entering.) What's all the excitement?

NORMA

I just had the most beautiful encounter!

MIMI

Oh no, Norma! Who???

NORMA

Don't burst my bubble—just for once! (SHE spins.) I'm in love! I am in *love*, Mimi!

MIMI

Just like that- (SHE snaps her fingers)- the minute you meet a boy, you're in love??

NORMA

Oh—but it's been a while! I've been watching him at the opera—the back of his cute, curly brown head of hair...and he always looks back at me. (SHE gushes.) Read what he wrote to me!

(MIMI quickly reads EUGENE'S letter.)

MIMI

His name is Eugene *Cohen*?? Papa will have a fit...

NORMA

Papa would never understand a thing about true love—

MIMI

Oh, Norma, be careful. (SHE whispers:) Don't forget what Papa would do if he ever found out.

ANAPOS

But one thing Norma and Eugene had never thought of was... that she was *Italian*, and he was *Jewish*. The timing of World War II was *not* a good era to be in love with a *Jewish* boy - *according* to Nunzio Minissale.

(NORMA crosses the stage and ANAPOS hands her several more love letters from Eugene, which NORMA re-reads, staring off in bliss, absentmindedly drops one of them on the ground as she walks on. NUNZIO enters, sees the letter, snatches it and reads it, furious.

HE runs after NORMA, shaking the letter in her face.)

NUNZIO

"Lovvvve, Eugene —*Cohen*???" What is this nonsense?

(SHE gasps, realizing she dropped the letter.)

NORMA

How could you? How could you snoop into my life?

NUNZIO

That's what happens when someone goes about dropping their love notes! Don't think that you can go around acting like some loose American girl.

NORMA

Well, I *am* American! And why would *you* - of all people - have anything to say about love letters?

(MUSICIANS stomp rhythm in song, imitating heavy footsteps. NUNZIO sings the following song in monster-like fashion.)

(SONG: *THROW YOU TO THE LIONS*. Sung by NUNZIO and NORMA.

[Throw you to the Lions.](#))

NUNZIO: DO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT LOVE?

YOU CAN'T MAKE ME LAUGH, ENOUGH

YOUR UNFEMININE , MODERN WAYS

DON'T FORGET WHILE IN MY HOUSE

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO SAY

DO YOU THINK HIS WORDS SPEAK OF LOVE

YOU'RE SO NAIVE, SO RIDICULOUS

SO IMMATURE, SO DEFIANT

YOU BETTER WATCH GIRL, OR I'LL THROW YOU TO THE LIONS.

NORMA: DO YOU THINK YOUR WORDS SCARE ME SO

YOU WOULD NEVER GO THAT LOW

NUNZIO: KEEP YOUR EYES TO THE GROUND

OR THROW YOUR LOVER BOY OUT OF TOWN

KEEP YOUR EYES TO THE GROUND

OR THROW YOUR LOVER BOY OUT OF TOWN

OOO - THROW YOUR LOVER, THROW YOUR LOVER

THROW YOUR LOVER BOY - OUT OF TOWN!

(NUNZIO tears up the letter and stomps out with band musicians making rhythmic stomping sounds. LIGHTS OUT.)

ACT ONE, Scene Ten

(LIGHTS UP. Minissale Dress Shop opening, 1942. MUSIC: "Chez Marie" instrumental.

NUNZIO, ANNUNZIATA, MIMI and NORMA are all dressed in high fashion. THEY run about preparing a celebration.)

ANAPOS

Nunzio continued to watch his daughters carefully. But while he was distracted building Annunziata's bridal business and gaining affections from his talented wife, Norma found ways to hide her activities from her father.

(NORMA and EUGENE enter on one side of the stage, secretly talking, holding hands. MIMI dutifully carries fabric bolts around, helping at the shop, ANAPOS serves champagne to NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA, then takes some for himself.)

NUNZIO

Here we are - celebrating—Philadelphia's most elegant Chez Marie dress shop! (HE energetically hugs ANNUNZIATA.) It's what you dreamed of Annunziata, right? Your store in Center City! And look - all these grand flower arrangements, champagne, and a string quartet that I ordered!

ANNUNZIATA

You never cease to surprise me, Nunzio Minissale. Shhh...before Alfredo arrives, I have something for you.

(SHE hands him a small purse, inside is money. ALFREDO walks in, carrying dresses, but THEY don't see him.)

NUNZIO

Where did you get all this cash?

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE proudly smirks.) We've had a good year - I've been saving.

NUNZIO

You are my golden angel.

(THEY embrace. The shop bell rings, and NUNZIO runs to accept a delivery. ALFREDO pulls ANNUNZIATA to the side.)

ALFREDO

I thought you and Nunzio had a spat about his gambling. Why are you giving him *more* money?

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE sighs) I know — one day we're fighting - the next day he wins me over.

ALFREDO

Annunziata, he never changes...You know how he gets when he's in his elated moods!

ANNUNZIATA

But you should see the flowers he sent me last night. He can be so kind at times. Then he takes me to the opera, to the most beautiful places to dine, and introduces me to artists. He makes me forget everything...

(LIGHTS DOWN. A SPOT on ANAPOS.)

ANOPOS

In the 1940's, Annunziata and Nunzio owned *three* dress shops, including Minissales, one of the largest bridal businesses in Center City. Sharing her skills with her younger brother Alfredo, Annunziata taught him to design and cut dress patterns. But when she decided to give her brother money to open his own business down the street, little did she know that his talents would surpass her own. This did not make Nunzio happy – but *when* was Nunzio ever happy? To appease Nunzio, Annunziata gave him *more* money

to invest in a real estate property --

(LIGHTS UP ON NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA fighting.)

ANNUNZIATA

And what do you do? You make a bad deal!

NUNZIO

It was just a “quick visit” to the gambling house. I thought I could win it back! I was gonna give all the money to you.

(HE reaches out to ANNUNZIATA.)

ANNUNZIATA

You don't care about us - all you ever cared about is the money!

(Enraged, NUNZIO advances towards ANNUNZIATA - she raises her arm in defiance of his physical aggressiveness and HE pounds a wall instead of hitting ANNUNZIATA.)

ANNUNZIATA

You've betrayed me. I'm done with you, Nunzio! Just leave!! Just le-e ave!

(NUNZIO grabs his hat, forgets coat, exits, slamming the door. Crying, ANNUNZIATA closes up the shop, grabs NUNZIO'S coat and an envelope falls from its pocket. SHE hesitates before opening it.)

ANNUNZIATA

(SHE recites the letter in disbelief.) “My dearest Nunzio, your love has given me a new life....”

(In a rage, ANNUNZIATA rips the letter up.)

You and your countless love letters! Full of lies and lies! (Mustering her strength.) I will stay with you only for one reason – to raise my family. For my love for you Nunzio - is *gone*.

(ANAPOS hands a container of love letters to ANNUNZIATA who rips them up as she sings through *Broken Promises*.)

(SONG: *BROKEN PROMISES*. Sung by ANNUNZIATA. [Broken Promises](#).)

ANNUNZIATA: I WASN'T ONE TO BELIEVE SO EASILY
IN THE PROMISES THAT YOU FIRST MADE
IT TOOK ALL MY FAITH TO FOLLOW THROUGH
TO BE PERSUADED THAT YOU, ALWAYS WOULD BE TRUE

I GAVE YOU MY LOVE, I GAVE MY YOUTH
CONVINCED IT WAS THE THING TO DO
I THOUGHT OUR LOVE HAD A SPECIAL PLACE
THAT ONLY YOU AND I KNEW ITS SECRET ESCAPE

YOU PROMISED HEAVEN WITH OUR OWN STAR
HOW COULD I THINK YOU'D REACH THAT FAR?
A BROKEN PROMISE IS WORSE THAN NO PROMISE AT ALL

YOU PLEDGED UNDIVIDED LOVE, DON'T YOU RECALL?

I GAVE YOU MY LOVE, I GAVE MY YOUTH
CONVINCED IT WAS THE THING TO DO
I THOUGHT OUR LOVE HAD A SPECIAL PLACE
THAT ONLY YOU AND I KNEW ITS SECRET ESCAPE

I WHO WAS AFRAID TO FLY, YOU GAVE ME WINGS THEN SAID GOODBYE
AFTER FIRES WERE SET AND SOULS WERE BEARED
WITH NOTHING LEFT AND NOTHING SPARED, AFTER ALL WE SHARED

(Despondent, ANNUNZIATA rips Nunzio's letters as she sings)

I GAVE YOU MY LOVE, I GAVE MY YOUTH
CONVINCED IT WAS THE THING TO DO
I THOUGHT OUR LOVE , WOULD RISE ABOVE AND SOAR TO THE SKY,
LIKE BIRDS WHO LIVE TO SING AND FLY, TO THE OTHER SIDE
I THOUGHT OUR LOVE WOULD RISE TO THE SKY
LIKE BIRDS WHO LIVE TO SING AND FLY - TO THE OTHER SIDE
(SHE collapses in a chair, letters strewn about.)

ACT I, Scene Eleven

(LIGHTS RISE on NORMA and MIMI playing cards. NUNZIO enters, banging the door open.)

NUNZIO

Norma! There you are.

(Fearfully, NORMA rises. At that moment, ANNUNZIATA enters. MIMI, sensing trouble, rises and crosses to join her mother.)

NORMA

Mama — Papa saw me with Eugene today!

NUNZIO

Annunziata, do you know our daughter is dating a J-ew-ish boy? Have you read the papers? These are dangerous times!

ANNUNZIATA

Yes, Nunzio, and we can all discuss this together as a family.

NUNZIO

No, Annunziata. This is for me to handle, *alone* with Norma.

NORMA

I know what you're going to say, Papa, and you can't change my mind.

NUNZIO

I'm the one who makes the rules here!

(NUNZIO roughly grabs NORMA'S chin.)

If I ever see him again —or find one of your silly love letters —

NORMA

I hate you!!!

(ANNUNZIATA tries to come between NORMA and NUNZIO, NORMA gets away, but NUNZIO grabs her and lands a blow on her face. HE storms out of the room, leaving ANNUNZIATA who consoles a sobbing NORMA.)

ANNUNZIATA

Hold on - I'll be back. I have some words for your father—

(ANNUNZIATA walks out of the room muttering.)

Of all people in the world not to understand the power of love letters.

(NORMA crosses to a mirror, examining her bruised face.)

NORMA

It's not the first time... But it will be the *last*!

(SONG: NO MORE. Sung by NORMA, MIMI, ANNUNZIATA and ENSEMBLE.

[No More.](#))

NORMA:: NO MORE, NO MORE, WHAT AM I WAITING FOR
NO MORE, NO MORE, TIME TO EXIT OUT THIS DOOR
SEASONS TURNED INTO SO MANY YEARS
WHILE I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO DRY MY TEARS
NO MORE, NO MORE, NOW I REALIZE, NOW REALIZE, IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

THE LAST TIME YOUR HAND WILL CROSS MY FACE
THE LAST TIME I FEEL YOUR PENETRATING GAZE
TOO MANY YEARS HAVE HARDENED YOUR BLOWS
WELL LET ME TELL YOU THAT THIS TIME WAS MY LAST DOSE
THE LAST TIME I'LL HEAR YOUR BITING WORDS
FILLED WITH DISGUST AND YOUR UGLY ANGER
SO WHEN I STASH MY LIFE BELONGINGS IN THIS SACK
YOU CAN BET THAT I WILL NEVER BE BACK!

NO MORE, NO MORE, WHAT AM I EVER WAITING FOR
NO MORE, NO MORE, TIME TO EXIT OUT THIS DOOR
YOU'LL WAKE UP ONE DAY AND FIND ME GONE
DID YOU EVER WONDER THAT I WAS ALREADY DONE?
WITH YOUR OWNERSHIP AND ALL OF YOUR CONTROL
I'M ON MY WAY NOW, CUZ I'VE FINISHED THIS ROLE!

(MUSIC: A piano vamp begins. NORMA and MIMI enact the following ANAPOS narration using a simple dressing room curtain.)

(Narration/Dialogue revised from link.)

ANAPOS

Norma planned her escape. Every day she dressed in two layers of clothing and when she arrived at the bridal shop, Norma stole into the dressing room, removed the second layer of her outfit, and *secretly* stashed it in a hidden suitcase. All was going according to plan...until *Mimi* happened to walk into the dressing room — *just* as Norma was removing the second layer of clothes!

MIMI

What is going on, Norma??

NORMA

Close those curtains! Sshh! Mother will hear you!

(MIMI steps into the dressing room and closes the curtains.)

MIMI

What are you *doing*?

NORMA

(Haughtily.) I'm running away. I've been planning it for weeks. (MIMI is incredulous.) Don't you dare give me away!

MIMI

You're insane! It's too dangerous to travel on your own! (Suddenly fearful.) You're going to leave me alone with Papa?!

(MIMI closes the curtains, stomps away, suddenly turns around and snaps open curtains. MUSIC stops.)

I'm coming with you!

(SONG: Part Two of *NO MORE*.)

MIMI: THE LAST TIME YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE I'M NO ONE

CUZ YOU DON'T EVEN THAT KNOW THAT I'M READY TO RUN
FAR FROM THIS PLACE FROM THIS BURNING HOLE
CUZ YOU NEVER GUESSED THAT THIS WAS THE FINAL BLOW!

MIMI: IT'S MY LIFE, MY LIFE!, YOU TRIED TO MAKE IT YOURS
IT'S MY LIFE, MY LIFE, YOU TRIED TO USE YOUR FORCE
IT'S MY LIFE, MY LIFE, YOU TRIED TO SHUT OUR DOORS
YOU TRIED TO OWN EVERYTHING THAT I AM
WELL GUESS WHAT, NOW - I DON'T REALLY GIVE A DAMN!

(MUSIC continues with a piano vamp, under. NORMA arrives with two travel bags and

tickets, hands MIMI one of the bags.)

NORMA

Eugene and I made plans to post messages in the back of a magazine. Now, here are our tickets to California! You're Susie Smith and I'm Annie Rice!

MIMI

You changed our names? Gee, Norma! ...This is getting kind of dangerous...you know, two young girls traveling by ourselves. Maybe if we had an adult, or ...

NORMA

Mimi, don't get any ideas. Just the two of us.

MIMI

I know, but ...

NORMA

But what? (SHE crosses her arms, cornering MIMI.)

MIMI

It's just that—well ...

NORMA

Well what??

MIMI

I told Mother.

NORMA

You told Mother???

(MUSIC stops. MIMI bites her lip, whimpers.)

MIMI

Yes-but- she said she's coming, too!!

(ANNUNZIATA appears with a suitcase.)

ANNUNZIATA

(*Empowered.*) And while Nunzio's in New York, we'll escape under new identities! On route to California!

(SONG: Final verse and chorus of *NO MORE*.)

ANNUNZIATA: THE LAST TIME YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE I'M NO ONE
CUZ YOU DON'T EVEN THAT KNOW THAT I'M READY TO RUN
FAR FROM THIS PLACE FROM THIS BURNING HOLE
YOU NEVER GUESSED THIS WAS THE FINAL BLOW!

TRIO: IT'S MY LIFE, MY LIFE!, YOU TRIED TO MAKE IT YOURS
IT'S MY LIFE, MY LIFE, YOU TRIED TO USE YOUR FORCE
IT'S MY LIFE, MY LIFE, YOU TRIED TO SHUT MY DOORS

NORMA: SO I COULD NOT BE WHO I REALLY AM

MIMI: YOU TRIED TO KNOCK ME DOWN AND OFF OF MY STAND
ANNUNZIATA: YOU NEVER THOUGHT I'D KNOW HOW TO LAND
WELL GUESS WHAT, NOW - WE DON'T REALLY GIVE A DAMN!

(On the refrain, whole cast joins on "No More")

ALL: NO MORE, NO MORE, NO MORE.

(LIGHTS FADE at ANAPOS' command, as the women regard each other, holding their suitcases. END of ACT ONE.)

ACT TWO

Act II, Scene 1

PHILADELPHIA, 1942-44

(LIGHTS RISE on the Minissale home. ANAPOS enters.)

ANAPOS

Nunzio hadn't a clue what was waiting for him as he sipped his port at the New York train station. On arriving home, he pushed open the door to a dark, silent house.

NUNZIO

Where's my family? What the hell?

(HE phones the dress shop.)

Emma, how come the girls aren't home yet? What?... You thought they were with me in New York? For the past *two days*??

(MUSIC: *PERCUSSION* plays a train rhythm.)

ANAPOS

Nunzio gunned his car all the way down to the police station, filed a report, and hired a private detective. But by that time...his women were miles and miles away...

(PROJECTION: Denver with mountains in the background.)

ANAPOS

When their train stopped in Denver, Annunziata stepped out and saw the purple-tinged mountains that reminded her of Sicily.

ANNUNZIATA

Oh this reminds me so much of *home*. Oh—that mountain - just like Mount Etna. Norma! Mimi - please, let's stop here - just for a quick stop!

ANAPOS

(The rhythm stops.) That “quick stop” turned into *two years!* (The rhythm starts up again.) While days passed ever so slowly, Nunzio’s private detective had not located his family. So, Nunzio took matters into his *own* hands! Finding Eugene, he made it his routine to harass the poor boy about his family’s whereabouts. And like a hound hunting down a fox, his search only intensified.

(EUGENE runs on stage. Stops. Percussion stops.)

EUGENE

Everywhere I look – there he is! The music studio – the coffee shop – the bank!

(Percussion resumes. NUNZIO grabs EUGENE as he runs by.)

NUNZIO

Not so fast young man, let's take a little detour. (NUNZIO fakes friendliness) Listen, I know'a who you are - and that *you* know where Norma is. (EUGENE doesn't flinch.) She must'a be so scared out there and I'm sure she's regretting everything by now. You wouldn't want her to fall into any danger, would you? (A sneaky tone.) Oh —by the way, I didn't catch your last name?

(Spooked, EUGENE releases NUNZIO's grasp - runs as a POLICEMAN played by ANAPOS passes by. Percussion stops.)

POLICEMAN

Is there a problem Mr. Minissale?

NUNZIO

Accidenti!

POLICEMAN

(POLICEMAN addresses EUGENE.)

Everything okay?

EUGENE

(MUSIC: “Mr. Evil” music vamp begins. EUGENE complains to the POLICEMAN.)

Can you imagine being stalked by a man like Nunzio Minissale? Watching your back constantly? Waiting for him to jump out at you from nowhere - with his fierce eyes and hot breath blowing anger in your face??!!

(SHADOW PLAY: *EUGENE chased by NUNZIO.*)

(SONG: *MR. EVIL*. Sung by EUGENE and CAST. [Mr. Evil.](#))

(SHADOW PLAY: *EUGENE chased by NUNZIO*)

EUGENE: HE'S MR. EVIL, HE'S MR. EVIL
HE'S CHASIN' ME AROUND, AS I RUN ABOUT TOWN TO HIDE!
HE'S MR. EVIL, HE'S MR. EVIL
SNIFFIN' LIKE A HOUND, I'M AFRAID I'LL BE FOUND, I CAN'T HIDE

HE'S ON MY PATH, WITH HIS WRATH
HE'S EVERYWHERE, SNIFFIN' AIR
HE'S CUNNING, SO TIRED OF RUNNING
THAT DARK OLD FOREIGNER, HUNTS ME INTO A CORNER
CATCHES ME W/ HIS BAIT, TO INTERROGATE, SO WORRIED 'BOUT MY FATE!

HE'S MR. EVIL, HE'S MR. EVIL
NEWS IS LEAKING OUT, HE'S SEEKING US OUT, THERE'S NO DOUBT!
HE'S MR. EVIL. MR. EVIL
HE'S ON OUR TAIL, GOT A WHIFF OF OUR TRAIL, WE'LL BE FOUND!
HE'S ON OUR PATH, WITH HIS WRATH
HE'S EVERYWHERE, SNIFFIN' AIR
HE'S CUNNING, SO TIRED OF RUNNING
THAT DARK OLD FOREIGNER, HUNTS ME INTO A CORNER
CATCHES ME W/ HIS BAIT, TO INTERROGATE, SO WORRIED 'BOUT MY FATE!

CHORUS: ENDLESS CONFRONTATION - FOR INFORMATION
HIS DETERMINATION WANTS EXTERMINATION
WE ALL NEED A VACATION FROM MR. EVIL'S INVASION!
FROM MR. EVIL'S INVASION!
HE'S MR. EVIL! MR. EVIL . HE'S MR. EVIL, HE'S EVERYWHERE!
HE'S MR.
EVIL! (3X)

(LIGHTS: BLACKOUT.)

Act II, Scene Two
PHILADELPHIA and DENVER

(Split Shadow vignettes— NORMA in their Denver home, NUNZIO in Philadelphia. Puppets enact the following:)

ANAPOS

When Eugene's letter reached Norma, complaining about Mr. Minissale, she knew that their love didn't have a chance. She crawled under her bed covers for days, until Mimi coaxed her to sit up. Brushing Norma's hair, dabbing her tears, promising Norma that she'd find another love.

(NUNZIO holds his head in his hands. HE is not well.)

In those two years, the Minissale women's lives *expanded*, as they developed a successful dress business —while Nunzio's life *diminished*, gambling and entertaining mistresses, as he fell into a deep depression. That's when the thin coat of ice around Nunzio's heart began to crack just a measure. As winter winds blew through his opened heart, Nunzio found that nothing could fill the void of his lost family. But — it was *Nunzio*, who was the one that was truly lost.

(The shadow play ends, as a PROJECTION of the sun appears and NUNZIO enters.)

(SONG: *I LONG FOR THE SUN*. Sung by NUNZIO. [I Long for the Sun.](#))

NUNZIO: I HAVE A SOUL THAT'S BEEN DARK SINCE I KNOW
A SHADOW HOVERS NEAR, NEVER LETS ME FEEL WHOLE

HOW I REMEMBER FROM THE START
THIS HEAVINESS THAT CONSTANTLY INVADES MY HEART, MY HEART.
I HAVE A HUNGER THAT NEVER GOES AWAY,
THAT EATS MY BEING AND TORMENTS MY DAY
I TRY TO FIX MY UNFORGETTABLE PAST
BUT HAUNTING MEMORIES ARE MADE TO LAST
I TRY TO SEEK THE PATH OF THE SUN
BUT GOODNESS SOMEHOW COMES UNDONE
WHEN I LONG FOR THE SUN
FORGIVE ME, I NEVER MEANT TO BETRAY
THOSE I LOVE MOST, I'VE PUSHED AWAY
HEAL ME I NEVER ASKED TO BE THIS WAY.
OH HOW I LONG FOR THE SUN MORE THAN A DAY
OH HOW I LONG FOR THE SUN

I HAVE A SOUL THAT HAS LOST ITS LIGHT
THAT NEVER SEEMS TO CHOOSE THE PATH THAT LEADS ME RIGHT
WHEN I LONG FOR THE SUN
FORGIVE ME, I NEVER MEANT TO BETRAY
THOSE I LOVE MOST, I'VE PUSHED AWAY
HEAL ME FROM ALL THAT I'VE DONE
OH HOW I LONG FOR THE SUN MORE THAN A DAY
OH HOW I LONG FOR THE SUN.

(LIGHTS FADE.)

Act II, Scene Two
PHILADELPHIA

(LIGHTS rise on NUNZIO's apartment. A phone on a table downstage, along with a framed wedding photo. The phone rings for a long time. Finally, NUNZIO enters, unshaven, wearing a robe. DINO, a detective, walks into a spot with a phone in his hand. NUNZIO picks up the phone, wearily.)

DINO

(Speedily.) Hey - never thought you'd pick up! Listen, Nunzio - you are never gonna believe it. Last night I came across a gold mine of information. The kid, the Jewish kid— I ran into his cousin at Vinnie's last night.

NUNZIO

Whoa, whoa - slow down! You mean Eugene's cousin, the one who owes the money?

DINO

Oh man, I'm tellin' you, he just served it right up! He was so scared that I was comin' after him, and told me *everything*! (Has a fit of laughter.) Thought I was the goddamn Mafia! He was shakin' like a leaf! Well, he told me that your Norma and Eugene secretly communicate messages through some magazine— but not only that. I have some news that is going to make you happier than a gurglin' baby. (HE clears his throat.) You ready, Nunzio? I found out where your girls are!

(DINO's laughter wheezes out. NUNZIO rubs forehead)

Your family is ... guess—just guess—where the hell do you think they are?

NUNZIO

Dino, how the hell do I know where they are? That's what I hired you to figure out *two* years ago!

DINO

Get this, Nunzio! Ready? (HE bursts into hysterics.) They are in ... drumroll ... your family is living ... drumroll ... far away'a ... really far away ... all the way out in the god-damn West, in some freakin' state called Colorado!

NUNZIO

(HE stiffens, steadies his voice.) I never want to see them again.

(NUNZIO picks up the wedding photo on the table and looks at it sadly, turns it face down.)

DINO

Oh come on, Nunzio, just give it some time. It's a bit of a shock— hee hee—but a good shock! Right, my friend? Don't take it so hard. This is what you've wanted for so long.

NUNZIO

Dino—I'm in no shape to see them.

DINO

Aww, Nunzio - you don't mean that! Listen, come meet me at the coffee shop, cuz do I have a plan! And by the way, Eugene's cousin thinks he gave me that info so he don't have to pay up— so I gotta skip out of town for just a little while.

(DINO wheezes again, laughing, and EXITS, walking out of his spot. NUNZIO stares at the receiver in his hand and slowly hangs it up. LIGHTS FADE.)

Act II, Scene Four
COLORADO, 1945

(PROJECTION: Denver, exterior of the Mansion. ANAPOS enters.)

ANAPOS

Nunzio's spirit was broken by the time he arrived in Denver, thin and deeply melancholic, asking for forgiveness. He had come to convince Annunziata that he was a changed man and bought that most magnificent mansion to offer as a peace treaty. Of *course*, Annunziata caved in!

But it didn't take long for Nunzio and Norma to get back to their usual disputes— Norma resenting Nunzio for destroying her love life —and Nunzio holding a grudge against Norma for taking his family so far away.

Then, luckily one day a friend asked Mimi to arrange a blind date with Norma for his buddy, Captain John King.

(MIMI opens the front door with ANNUNZIATA peering from behind.)

ANAPOS (Cont.)

Well, when John King arrived at the door, Annunziata and Mimi saw that smil-ing - dark-haired - blue-eyed soldier...

MIMI

Oh! Captain King — please come in. Umm — Norma is still getting ready. Uh..please excuse us - we will be right back!

(MIMI leaves HIM waiting in the foyer, and SHE and ANNUNZIATA make a dash to find NORMA who wanders into the living room area wearing a bathrobe and reading a book.)

Norma - what the heck?

NORMA

I told you I didn't want to go on a blind date!

(ANNUNZIATA crosses to the girls, out of breath, hair disheveled, using an exaggerated accent.)

ANNUNZIATA

Oh, Dio – he is'a so hand-a-som-a!

(MIMI shakes finger in NORMA's face as ANNUNZIATA grabs the book from her hand.)

MIMI

You better get yourself presentable! Your future husband is waiting for you!

(MIMI and ANNUNZIATA grab NORMA and duck behind the dressing screen to prepare her for company.)

Now, you be pleasant, Norma Minissale!

(THEY push NORMA unwillingly to the front door. NORMA sees JOHN, who is invisible to the audience, and becomes speechless, almost fainting, then greets him melodically.)

NORMA

Oh..so nice to meet you, Captain King!

(NORMA moves toward the exit, beaming. LIGHTS DIM and then RISE to show the passage of time.)

MIMI

Mama, Norma was speechless alright when she saw John King — but you should have seen her when she got on that date — she made up for it the rest of the night (*Sassy*) – gushing, oohing, and awing, all over Captain King. It was unbearable—watching those two lovebirds – giggling, whispering - so oblivious to the rest of the world...

ANNUNZIATA

Your time will come, Mimi...(SHE pats MIMI'S cheek)remember what Norma has been through...(as SHE leaves the room.)It's been such a relief —she's been so happy since she's been with John.

(ANNUNZIATA exits. MIMI tries to distract herself - picks up a book. NORMA arrives

in a bad mood, throws her coat off.)

MIMI

What's eating you? It's not as though you've been sitting here like I have, night after night for these past two months while you've been out with Captain John King! What do you have to be so upset about?

NORMA

(SHE whips off scarf. Mimics NUNZIO.) "Why can't you date an Italian for once," Papa says. Then, as usual, we had a big quarrel! (Impatiently unknottng her head scarf.) He's trying to ruin everything! (SHE throws the scarf down.)

MIMI

Oh, Norma...what are you gonna do?

NORMA

Well, when I told John about our spat, he said I shouldn't be treated like that! (SHE sits, serious) Then he said he thought we should get married - (Slowly.) and that he wanted to move back East.

(MIMI is taken aback. NORMA abruptly stands.)

NORMA

I don't know what to do! I can't leave you and Mother! (HER eyes are filled with love.) I haven't felt this way since...

(MUSIC: *Isn't It Love* Intro starts.)

...since Eugene. (MIMI is quiet.) Mimi? Why aren't you saying anything?

MIMI

After watching you get over Eugene—well—you just have to go, Norma. This time you *have* to follow your heart...

(SONG: ISN'T IT LOVE? Sung by MIMI and NORMA. [Isn't It Love?](#))

(Link recording doesn't reflect DUO performance.)

MIMI: ISN'T IT LOVE THAT WE LIVE FOR?
ISN'T IT LOVE THAT OPENS HEART'S DOOR?
OH, ISN'T IT LOVE THAT WAKES OUR HOPES AND DREAMS
AND BRINGS US A NEW DAY IT SEEMS?

NORMA: ISN'T IT LOVE THAT LIGHTS THE ROOM
OH ISN'T LOVE THE ANSWER TO GLOOM
ISN'T IT MAGICAL WHEN LOVE HAPPENS AT FIRST SIGHT
DOESN'T LOVE COMPLETE YOU WHEN IT'S RIGHT

ISN'T LOVE WRITTEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY
THE QUEST OF ALL MEN AND WOMEN WE MEET
WHO CHASE LOVE FROM THE MOMENT THEY BREATHE?
SO YOU MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART
NEVER QUESTION FROM THE START
LISTEN TO LOVE WHEN IT TAKES ITS HOLD AND MAKES ITS CALL

ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?

MIMI: ISN'T IT LOVE THAT RISES WITH THE SUN
ISN'T IT LOVE THAT MOVES EVERYONE
OH, ISN'T IT LOVE THE STRONGEST MEMORY WE HOLD
THAT LASTS A LIFETIME I'VE BEEN TOLD

BOTH: ISN'T LOVE WRITTEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY
THE QUEST OF ALL MEN AND WOMEN WE MEET
WHO CHASE LOVE FROM THE MOMENT THEY BREATHE?
SO YOU MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART
NEVER QUESTION FROM THE START
LISTEN TO LOVE WHEN IT TAKES ITS HOLD AND MAKES ITS CALL
ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?

(Tenderly)

NORMA: WITH ONE TOUCH, ONE EMBRACE

MIMI: LOVE HEALS US WITH GRACE

BOTH: ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?

OH ISN'T IT LOVE? ISN'T LOVE,

ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?

(NORMA shows them her wedding ring, hugs MIMI and ANNUNZIATA. NUNZIO reluctantly says goodbye. MIMI, stands behind, alone, bewildered.)

Act Two, Scene Five

COLORADO. The Denver Mansion - around 1946- 15 years later.

(LIGHTS RISE on the interior of the Mansion. MIMI, now 35, enters sadly as ANAPOS crosses the stage, holding the water jug from Act I.)

ANAPOS

Over the next five years, Norma found a new life with John, while Mimi stayed behind and tended to Nunzio and Annunziata in their lifeless, vacant mansion. As Norma's world became enlivened by John and their children — it only reminded Mimi of *her* empty love life... all the men on whom Nunzio had slammed the door, or hung up the phone. You see, Norma had the guts to stand up to Nunzio, while obedient Mimi did not.

What did Mimi's devotion matter when her goodness brought little reward? Maybe *she* was the one most affected by this cursed, water jug.

(ANAPOS holds up the broken water jug.)

Just as water overflows its containment when filled beyond capacity, Mimi's boundless unhappiness drifted into a river of depression. Life had passed through her hands like water...along with love, and all that mattered.

(BLUE LIGHTING. We see a PROJECTION of water imagery. MIMI walks in front of the screen, sings "Water" immersed in the imagery. A PROJECTION of a water jug breaking is shown at the song's tragic climax. NUNZIO watches MIMI, guilt-ridden.)

(SONG: *WATER*. Sung by MIMI. [Water](#).)

MIMI: LOVE HAS PASSED THROUGH MY LIFE LIKE WATER
TRAVELED FAR, FLOWED AWAY LIKE A RIVER
LIFE HAS PASSED THROUGH MY HANDS AND FINGERS
THROUGH MY HEART AND ALL THAT EVER MATTERED
I TRIED TO GRASP HOPE, BUT I COULD NOT SAVE
DREAMS THAT FLOATED AWAY
ON A SILENT FORCEFUL WAVE, I WATCHED MY YOUTH DRIFT AWAY

TIME HAS PASSED THROUGH MY LIFE LIKE WATER
ALL THE YEARS AS YOUR FAITHFUL DAUGHTER
LOST IN CURRENTS OF TROUBLED WATERS
ERODED STONES OF HOPE IN A RIVER
I TRIED TO LISTEN AND FOLLOW THE TIDE
THROUGH WORK AND SACRIFICE
THAT I THOUGHT WOULD FILL MY LIFE
WITH HAPPINESS REWARDING STRIFE.

OH SADNESS I CANNOT BEAR , MEMORIES OF LOVES LOST CANNOT REPAIR
GOODNESS DECEIVED ITS SCHEME AND ELUDED MY DREAMS
AND LEFT ME DESPAIR, LEFT ME DESPAIR, I CAN NO LONGER BEAR

LOVE HAS PASSED THROUGH MY LIFE LIKE WATER
OVER DAYS, OVER YEARS, SEEMS FOREVER.
MY DESIRES RINSED HANDS OF OTHERS.
IT'S TOO LATE TO EVER LOVE ANOTHER, ANOTHER, OH -

(PROJECTION of a water jug crashing to the ground, breaking into pieces.)

OH SADNESS I CANNOT BEAR , MEMORIES OF LOVES LOST CANNOT REPAIR
GOODNESS DECEIVED ITS SCHEME, AND ELUDED DREAMS
AND LEFT ME DESPAIR, LEFT ME DESPAIR, I CAN NO LONGER BEAR
I TRIED TO GRASP HOPE, BUT I COULD NOT SAVE
DREAMS THAT FLOATED ASTRAY
AS I WATCHED MY YOUTH DRIFT AWAY
MY LIFE JUST WASHED AWAY. ON A SILENT MIGHTY WAVE
MY LIFE JUST DRIFTED AWAY.

(A PROJECTION OF water imagery reappears and engulfs MIMI who collapses, NUNZIO crosses and catches and holds a listless MIMI in arms.)

NUNZIO

Dearest Mimi, after you broke, you were never the same...I saw it coming— and I did nothing. All my life, always thirsty for something...and not even with all the water about me, could I drink. This weighs on me, like the ocean's might pressing my heart against a rock.

(NUNZIO bows his head and weeps.)

NUNZIO

I wanted to be more than this...I came here to become someone—someone who mattered...

(SONG: *IT WAS JUST A WATER JUG*, NUNZIO reprise. Note: This song is not in the recorded link.)

NUNZIO: I HAD HOPES TO CLIMB A LADDER
TO A PLACE WHERE I WOULD MATTER
TO A PLACE WHERE I WOULD MATTER
TO A PLACE WHERE I WOULD MATTER

(LIGHTS OUT on MIMI and NUNZIO. CROSSFADE to light ANAPOS.)

ANAPOS

(Somberly.) Water takes many forms and appearances – at times damaging, turbulent, or murky... in some instances, its reflection mirrors one’s life with such clarity.

ACT II, Scene Six
COLORADO. 1950’s.

(We see a PROJECTION of the Denver Mansion. It is fifteen years later. NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA are now in their 70’s, MIMI is 50, NORMA is 48. ANNUNZIATA runs into the living room.)

ANNUNZIATA

Nunzio! Norma is on her way!

NUNZIO

You answer the door when she comes — I’m sure she won’t want to see me first—or at all...

ANNUNZIATA

Come on, Nunzio, perk up! Why, this house of ours has been so quiet since she left. When did we last open the curtains - play the piano — throw a party?? You need to make an effort —at least for Mimi’s sake. Seeing her sister will do her some good.

(A doorbell chimes. ANNUNZIATA rushes to door, joyfully hugs NORMA, while NUNZIO hangs in the back.)

Nunzio, come say hello to Norma!

NUNZIO

(HE stops short of hugging her.) *Your* sister is dying to see you.

(HE grabs her suitcase, avoiding NORMA.)

ANNUNZIATA

I’ll tell Mimi that you’re here - she’s been waiting all day!

(SHE leaves NUNZIO and NORMA awkwardly alone.)

NORMA

Well, Papa - it’s been quite a while. (SHE looks around.) Being here certainly brings back so many memories.

NUNZIO

Yes... ..all kinds of memories...

NORMA

So much has changed since then. Let's remember the good times...right Papa?

NUNZIO

(HE avoids her gaze.) It would have been nice to have had an apology.

NORMA

(Incredulous.) *Me?* Apologize? I think it's the other way around!

NUNZIO

You left your sister behind - there are some things that I can't forgive.

NORMA

But, Papa - Mimi was not my responsibility. And if I hadn't left...I don't know what I would have done.

NUNZIO

You betrayed your family.

NORMA

That's according to you, Papa. I was saving myself.

NUNZIO

Saving?? From what??

NORMA

All my life I was scared of your anger -I was always trying to run from you, Papa ... and then, I fell in love...

NUNZIO

Love? And what about family?

NORMA

Well - I have my *own* family now - and—

NUNZIO

(Hurt.) So you can just forget about *us*?

NORMA

(SHE softens.) Oh, Papa, how can I forget you?

(SHE steps forward and hugs NUNZIO. HE hesitantly hugs her back.)

NUNZIO

The problem is that you and I are so similar - that's why we have always had words. We are closer than you think, Norma. To tell you the truth - I've been proud of you all these years. You're a fighter. I always respected that.

(MIMI runs into the room, overjoyed.)

MIMI

Oh, Norma I have missed you more than anything!

NORMA

(Hugging her.) Oh, Mimi —it’s been too long!

(ANNUNZIATA enters.)

ANNUNZIATA

My dear family — when was the last time we were together? Come - let’s all go to the kitchen - let’s cook a fabulous dinner - just like old times. (She kisses each one.) Come on! We don’t have all night!

(The family gathers while ANAPOS walks in pushing a dining cart loaded with pots of food.)

ANAPOS

And suddenly the mansion filled with laughter while Annunziata filled the house with her spectacular cooking, as she fluttered around the kitchen – sprinkling and tossing ingredients–

ANNUNZIATA

With a little pinch of this, and a little pinch of that!

ANAPOS

Oh... the aromas! Somehow life’s ingredients folded into a new alchemy; souls were soothed, troubles forgotten, as the family feasted on Annunziata’s dishes —always finished with a spice of joy!

(MUSIC: Piano Intro to “Pinch.” The family stands around ANNUNZIATA and several boiling pots. NORMA and MIMI are competing to stir a pot; NUNZIO peers into ANNUNZIATA’S pot, telling her what to do but she shoos him away. With a large spoon, NUNZIO bangs on a pot, stopping the commotion. This all morphs into a dance number.)

(SONG: *A LITTLE PINCH OF THIS, A LITTLE PINCH OF THAT*. Sung by the CAST. [A Little Pinch of this, A Little Pinch of that.](#))

EUGENE/ALFREDO: A LITTLE PINCH OF THIS AND THEN, A LITTLE PINCH OF THAT
A HANDFUL OF PARSLEY, IT’S SUCH A SIMPLE TASK
TO COOK WITH SIMPLE MASTERY AND CULINARY EASE
TO MAKE A RECIPE THE WAY YOU PLEASE.

WOMEN: A LITTLE PINCH OF SALT AND THEN, A DROP OF OLIVE OIL
SAUTE SOME GARLIC WHILE YOUR POT BEGINS TO BOIL
TIMING IS IMPORTANT, YOU MUST ALWAYS BE AWARE
TO COOK WITH STYLE AND CULINARY FLARE.

ANNUNZIATA: THE KITCHEN IS MY PRIVATE DOMAIN
MY COOKING NEVER TASTES THE SAME

ALL: AROMATIC DISHES AND DELECTABLE TASTES
FROM THE KITCHEN RIGHT TO YOUR DINNER PLATE.

MEN: MASTERING FOOD REQUIRES A SPECIAL FEEL
NOT EVERYTHING IS MEASURED IN A SCRUMPTIOUS MEAL

ALL: ANCESTORS’ SECRET RECIPES, PERFECTED OVER CENTURIES

NUNZIO: FOR COOKING IS A MASTERY, ONE DOES WITH AUTHENTICITY

WOMEN: YOU MUST HAVE TENACITY TO COOK TO YOUR CAPACITY

TIME TO BOIL THE MACARONI, MAKE THE SAUCE FOR RIGATONI
IT'S A MAGNIFICO, IT'S A FANTASTICO!
WOMEN: SIMMER CHICKEN CACCIATORE, WITH TUTTO L'AMORE

ALL: AND WHEN THE FIRST COURSE ARRIVES
EVERYONE FEAST THEIR EYES ON THE SAVORY SURPRISE
FOR COOKING FROM THE HEART IS THE SECRET INGREDIENT
THAT WITHOUT IT, ONE CAN NEVER DUPLICATE OR REPLICATE
A RAVISHING, TANTALIZING MEAL

ANNUNZIATA: A HANDFUL OF HERBS AND THEN, A SPRINKLE OF HOT SPICE
I NEVER MEASURE ANYTHING, THE PORTIONS MUST BE RIGHT
MAGICAL COOKING AND DELECTABLE TASTE
FROM THE KITCHEN, RIGHT TO YOUR DINNER PLATE.

MEN: MASTERING FOOD REQUIRES A SPECIAL FEEL
NOT EVERYTHING IS MEASURED IN A SCRUMPTIOUS MEAL

ALL: ANCESTORS' SECRET RECIPES, PERFECTED OVER CENTURIES

WOMEN: FOR COOKING IS A MASTERY, ONE DOES WITH AUTHENTICITY
YOU MUST HAVE TENACITY TO COOK TO YOUR CAPACITY

MEN: IMPROVISE AND VISUALIZE, SYNTHESIZE AND RITUALIZE

WOMEN: TENDERIZE AND VITALIZE, CRYSTALIZE AND EQUALIZE,
VAPORIZE, AND HYPNOTIZE

ALL: TANTALIZE AND MESMERIZE, ANALYZE AND FANTASIZE
FLAVORS THAT MAKE US SING AND RHAP-SO-DIZE

OUR FOOD IS HOLIER THAN THOU

AND WITH GRACE WE LOWER OUR HEADS IN REVERENT BOW

TO HONOR THE FLAVORS OF THE GODS, WE APPLAUD

AND BLESS THE CULINARY MARY WITH A CEREMONY

FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE, MEMORABLE, PLEASURABLE, IMMEASURABLE
FANTASTICAL, CULINARY FEAT

ALL: MANGIA BENE...LET'S EAT! LET'S EAT, LET'S EAT!

(Big ending – all chorus)

(ANAPOS takes a bite of food and gives a sound of satisfaction, then walks over and
adds a piece to the water jug somewhere on stage. LIGHTS OUT.)

Act II, Scene 7

PHILADELPHIA. 1960's.

(LIGHTS RISE on the interior of Minassale Dress Shop, and we see a PROJECTION of
its exterior. The characters are all ten years older. NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA are closing up the
shop, and packed boxes lie about. NUNZIO is taking a dress off a mannequin.)

NUNZIO

Where should we pack this gown, Annunziata?

ANNUNZIATA

I never did finish that dress - it just needed a few more stitches —

(SHE looks around the shop with satisfaction.)

Look - so many gowns! Just think: all the stitches that were made. Some perfect; some that should have been ripped out.

NUNZIO

(HE stops, reminiscing) Even with the imperfections...we just carried on....

ANNUNZIATA

So many dreams, hopes, and strife—stitched together in time —all the stitches that we have sewn...

(SONG: *STITCHES OF TIME (PUNTI DI TEMPO.)* Sung by ANNUNZIATA and NUNZIO. [Stitches of Time.](#))

ANNUNZIATA: STITCHES OF TIME SEWN IN SEAMS AND LINES

STITCHES THAT BIND MEMORIES LEFT BEHIND

SOME PERFECT, SOME, WEAK THAT FRAYED

SOME MISTAKEN, SOME THAT SEWED OUR FATE

NUNZIO: PUNTI DI TEMPO, FATTI DI AMORE

PUNTI DI DESTINO, FATTI DI RANCORE

PUNTI DI GOIA PUNTI DI FOLIA

PUNTI PERFETTI, PUNTI ERRATI.

ANNUNZ: WE'VE LEARNED TO FORGIVE MISTAKES THAT WE HAVE LIVED

FABRICS MADE OF JOY AND STRIFE WOVEN FROM LIFE

NUNZIO: STITCHES OF LOVE, TENDER MAD AND ROUGH

STITCHES OF FORCE, BEARED IN-SPITE OF

PUNTI DI GOIA PUNTI DI FOLIA, PUNTI PERFETTI, PUNTI ERRATI

(The ENSEMBLE joins.)

BOTH/CAST: ALL THE STITCHES WE HAVE SEWN.

ONE BY ONE WE HAVE GROWN

STITCHES MADE OF FLESH AND BONE

THAT WE CALL OUR OWN

NUNZIO: NOI IMPARIAMO PARDONE I NOSTRO ERERRORI

TESUTO DI LINO DELLA NOS-NOSTRA VITA

BOTH/CAST: STITCHES OF HOPE AND STITCHES OF TEARS AND STITCHES TO COPE

STITCHES OF JOY AND STITCHES OF SADNESS, STITCHES OF LIES

NUNZIO AND ANNUNZIATA: STITCHES OF MADNESS

ANNUNZIATA: PUNTI DI TEMPO PUNTI DI AMORE

NUNZIO: PUNTI DI SPERANZA, PUNI TI DELLA VITA

NUNZIO AND ANNUNZIATA: ALL THE STITCHES WE HAVE SEWN.

(ANNUNZIATA stores the dress from the mannequin into a box. SHE and NUNZIO walk down-stage, holding hands, until they vanish, suggesting the end of their lives. LIGHTS OUT.)

Act II, Scene Eight
PHILADELPHIA, 1990

(LIGHTS RISE on the interior of the dress shop. NORMA, now 80 years old, has just answered the phone.)

NORMA

Hello? Yes, this is Mimi Minissale's sister. Yes, I knew she wasn't doing well... Oh, no.

(SHE weeps, and exits. ANAPOS crosses the stage wheeling several large mirrors and an illuminated water jug with several pieces missing. A bridal dress on a dress dummy stands at right.)

ANAPOS

When Nunzio, Annunziata, and Mimi left this world and the large house behind, their family's beloved mansion had become a container of memories, much like their family water jug.

What was left of the Minissale business was the last bridal shop in Philadelphia. And on a bright and promising morning, Norma and her granddaughter had found their way to Alfredo's family's bridal store. You remember – Alfredo – Annunziata's little brother – who she had taught to design bridal wear? It was one of those days where a ray of sunlight could slice through your heart and heal a lifetime of anguish.

(NICOLE, 22, and her grandmother NORMA enter the shop, now owned by cousin ALFREDO's daughter. NICOLE twirls in bridal gown before one of the mirrors— NORMA is admiring her granddaughter.)

NICOLE

(Plaintively.) Nonna, How does one know if they're making the right decision?

NORMA

My dear Nicole, we all have to make big life decisions; Ones we hopefully don't regret.

NICOLE

Regret? Truthfully, I don't think I've ever regretted anything. How about you, Nonna — is there anything that you ever regretted? (Pause.) I *do* know the story about you running away — Mother told me...that you were responsible for changing the course of our family...

NORMA

(Dismissively at first.) Oh - that's all speculation. (Exhales.) Well, I guess you're at an age where I can be honest with you. My biggest regret is that I ran away from a problem when I should have stayed and worked it out.

(NICOLE'S eyes are asking for more.)

You see, I was fairly young when I found the love of my life—not that I don't love your grandfather—but this Eugene and I —we were such a tender age. (SHE reassures NICOLE.) Oh, in those days it was all so innocent... But then my father brought an end to everything. (SHE shakes her head.) Oh, how we weathered my father's madness...

NICOLE

Mother said that you fought your father for all of us to have a normal life...

NORMA

I had to fight him *all* my life — with all my strength! He was stronger than Mount Etna itself. My father destroyed my love life - I thought I'd never recover... (Pause.) Life is bold, life is fragile. We have been torn apart and put back together time after time. (SHE stands and squares her shoulders.) But here we stand...*(pause)* We Sicilianas are not made of paper.

NICOLE

Did you ever see Eugene again?

NORMA

(Saddened.) I don't know what ever happened to him.

(MUSIC: "Isn't It Love?" underscores.)

He was the nicest person I ever knew. *(Brightening)* But, if I hadn't met Eugene, I may never have had enough reason to run away. Or maybe if I weren't so *much* like my *father*, I would have never had the gumption to

NORMA (Cont.)

flee. And if I hadn't had the gumption to flee — I would have never met *your* grandfather, and all of you would never have existed!

NICOLE

So... you made a practical decision...

NORMA

Yes— maybe. But— you never forget your first love. You just know when it hits you. You can't deny it.

NICOLE

It's all you can think of —day and night!

NORMA

Yes! —it's *everything*...

(SONG: ISN'T IT LOVE REPRISE. Sung by NORMA and CAST.)

NORMA: ISN'T IT LOVE THAT WE LIVE FOR?
ISN'T IT LOVE THAT OPENS HEART'S DOOR?
OH, ISN'T IT LOVE THAT WAKES OUR HOPES AND DREAMS
AND BRINGS US A NEW DAY IT SEEMS?

(The GOD/GODDESSES and ANAPOS enter and stand in the background, on their original multiple levels or tiers, half-lit and join in singing the chorus.)

ALL: ISN'T LOVE WRITTEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY
THE QUEST OF EVERY MAN AND WOMAN WE MEET
WHO CHASE LOVE FROM THE MOMENT THEY BREATHE?
SO YOU MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART
NEVER QUESTION FROM THE START
LISTEN TO LOVE WHEN IT TAKES ITS HOLD AND MAKES ITS CALL

ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?

(NORMA pulls NICOLE in with a hug.)

NORMA: WITH ONE TOUCH, ONE EMBRACE
LOVE HEALS US WITH GRACE

ALL: ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?
OH ISN'T IT LOVE?

ISN'T LOVE, ISN'T LOVE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL?

(The song ends with NORMA and NICOLE in a hug. Then NORMA pushes NICOLE back to view her bridal attire.)

NORMA

Oh, Look, how beautiful you are - my goodness - that's a design my mother created *years* ago!

(SHE looks for a tissue for tears, and fishes an object from her purse.)

NORMA (Cont.)

Listen, I've been wanting to give you something - it might as well be now.

(SHE hands a water jug piece to NICOLE.)

NORMA

Take this, my dear Nicole. My mother gave it to me and told me to keep it for the family. (NICOLE looks puzzled.) It's what started all that trouble. It's a piece from that water jug. (NICOLE turns it in her hands.) Hold onto it — because one day you will long for your past - and you'll have this piece to prove that all those memories were *true*.

NICOLE

That sounds *so* romantic, Nonna...

NORMA

And let me tell you - all we *really* have are our memories.

NICOLE

I promise to hold onto this — for my family...for *our* family.

(NICOLE crosses to the mirrors that reflect her image, symbolic of the passage of time, and holds the missing jug piece. SHE whirls, her image freezes like an old photo. LIGHTS FADE on NICOLE, as she twirls.)

ANAPOS

Longing floated in the room, lingering amidst the clouds of gowns, the smell of fabrics, weaving through threads of generations. I imagined my fellow gods reflecting on our mortal story —happy to see our water jug in repair — knowing that love endures... and certain events are meant to be - that life takes its time to put pieces back in order. I'm supposing that's how the Gods determined it would be that day — when Nunzio forced his way in the water line.

(All CHARACTERS wearing GOD/GODDESSES attire walk towards NORMA and the water jug, as the “Longing” intro begins. NORMA addresses the CHARACTERS as distant church bells begin to chime.)

NORMA

How far so many of us have traveled - by distance or time - over one horizon into another - from one era to the next – leaving a life that our ancestors took generations to create.

GOD/DESS #2/EUGENE

(Wind sound.) And as memories fade... we are left with a longing that only becomes more pervasive with time.

GOD/DESS #3/NUNZIO

This bitter-sweet longing... this pang ...triggered by a voice...a melody...an aroma...all stilled in the past— like photographs frozen in time.

GOD/DESS #4/ANNUNZIATA

(Water sounds.) All the hands through which this water jug has passed. We are vessels, recipients of the past, carrying our memories forward.

GOD/DESS #5/MIMI

The flowing, spilling, untamed course of water has made us who we are—or more accurately ... who we have become: survivors of survivors of survivors.

(ANAPOS takes his last water jug piece, gives it a nostalgic look, and adds it to the jar - one piece will remain missing. SPOT DIMS on vanishing ANAPOS. While the CAST sings “Longing” we see a collage of PROJECTIONS of antique photos: grandmothers, ancestors, memorable objects such as old clocks, gloves, baby shoes, etc.)

(SONG: *LONGING*. Sung by the CAST. [Longing Reprise.](#))

ANNUNZIATA AND NUNZIO: WE ALL HAVE LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND

A PERSON, A PLACE, A CERTAIN TIME
WITH MEMORIES THAT LINGER TO REMIND

MIMI AND NORMA: THAT WE CAN NO LONGER TURN BACK,
TO A TIME THAT ALREADY HAS PASSED
THAT LIES BEYOND OUR FOREVER REACHING GRASP

ALL:THE MORE WE TRY TO HOLD OUR MEMORY NEAR
THE MORE DISTANT IT APPEARS

LEAVING TRACES BITTER SWEET AND OH SO DEAR
AS IF WE CAN TASTE IT AND EVEN SMELL IT
AS IF WE CAN HEAR IT AND ALMOST SEE IT
BUT WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TOUCH IT AGAIN
WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TOUCH IT AGAIN

ANNUNZIATA AND NUNZIO: LONGING MAKES US PRONE TO FEEL
WHAT IS GOBE IS STILL VERY HERE AND REAL
SO CLOSE, SO FAR LIKE A BURNING STAR
IMPRESSIONS LODGED IN MEMORIES
IN CORNERS OF ETERNITY
SO PRESENT, YET CONFINED TO PAST REVERIES

ALL: THE MORE WE TRY TO HOLD OUR MEMORY NEAR
THE MORE DISTANT IT APPEARS
LEAVING TRACES BITTER SWEET AND OH SO DEAR
AS IF WE CAN TASTE IT AND EVEN SMELL IT
AS IF WE CAN HEAR IT AND ALMOST SEE IT
BUT WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TOUCH, NEVER BE ABLE TO TOUCH IT AGAIN

-- *MODULATION*

ALL: WE ALL CAME FROM ANOTHER PLACE
WHERE WE BELONGED THAT WILL NEVER ERASE
WE TRY TO RELIVE OUR LIFE, AS IF IT WERE A MYTH

BUT LONGING'S A FEELING WE CAN'T DEFINE
FROM A PLACE, A THING, A PERSON, A TIME
WE CAN NEVER REACH THE PAST WE FOREVER SEEK.
WE CAN NEVER REACH THE PAST WE FOREVER SEEK.

(LIGHTS FADE slowly on the CAST, and the water jug. END OF PLAY.)

(MUSIC: BOWS accompanied by an instrumental of *ISN'T IT LOVE*.)

LA GIARA YOUTUBE/TRACKS

WATER JUG CONCERT READING (Note: Lyrics have changed since the recordings below were made. Some specifics are included in the text of this version of the play.)

ACT 1

1. LONGING - OPENING + (old NARRATION) - https://youtu.be/A4yNryX_oss
2. THERE ONCE WAS A FAMILY - <https://youtu.be/kUwZPjbOdd8>
3. IT WAS JUST A FAMILY WATER JAR! <https://youtu.be/s4VxEEC8Ego>
4. SICILIA - [Sicilia](#)
5. ADDIO - <https://youtu.be/bhIO4Kcmk3A>
6. WELCOME TO AMERICA - <https://youtu.be/3THBocq6-SQ>
7. YOUR LOVE AND AFFECTION - https://youtu.be/Cl_nhbEOEds
8. DILEMMA - <https://youtu.be/-389FMLL7GM>
9. CHEZ MARIE - <https://youtu.be/qDPKWXRbpm4>
10. THROW YOU TO THE LIONS - <https://youtu.be/WMZjrEr9DCE>
11. BROKEN PROMISES - <https://youtu.be/xESLEQIVRHI>
12. NO MORE – 2017 -TRIO - <https://youtu.be/uB03nwWNHGQ>

ACT 2

13. MR EVIL 2014 - <https://youtu.be/FbcLZkJ8Hyo>
14. LONG FOR THE SUN - <https://youtu.be/5MSMLuItI8M>
15. ISN'T IT LOVE? - <https://youtu.be/kxdeO4h8IG0>
16. WATER – <https://youtu.be/CqQ6F5xOOoA> (5:02)

17. A LITTLE PINCH OF THIS AND THAT - <https://youtu.be/Vn2tg1g8sM8>

18. STITCHES OF TIME – (2019) <https://youtu.be/igtvp2y1fSA>

19. ISN'T IT LOVE REPRISE

20. LONGING REPRISE - <https://youtu.be/CexBPSkFxoM>

**LA GIARA 5 MINUTE PREVIEW - https://youtu.be/_HKn1DYBQ-s

**LA GIARA – EXTENDED PREVIEW – <https://youtu.be/DQcwsxLf35s>

LA GIARA TIME LINE and AGE REFERENCE

1894 - NUNZIO - born 1894, 1896 - ANNUNZIATA born

1912- NUNZIO Arrives in Philadelphia (18 years old)

1915 - NUNZIO'S parents, VINCENZA, ANNUNZIATA Arrive, Nunzio and Annunziata meet ANNUNZIATA -19 yrs NUNZIO -21yrs.

1917 - NUNZIO proposes to ANNUNZIATA

1918 - NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA ENGAGED

1919 - NUNZIO and ANNUNZIATA MARRY

1921 - MIMI born

ANNUNZIATA 25 yrs., NUNZIO 27 yrs.

1923 - NORMA born

1941 - CHEZ SHOP

MIMI - 20 yrs., NORMA 18 yrs. NUNZIO - 47, ANNUNZIATA - 45
(CHEZ MARIE, BROKEN PROMISES, MR. EVIL)

1941 - 1943 - ESCAPE - 2 YEARS.

1944 - NUNZIO FINDS FAMILY

1945 - JOHN KING AND NORMA MEET AT THE MANSION

MIMI - 24 yrs., NORMA 22 yrs. NUNZIO - 51 ANNUNZIATA - 49

(DENVER MANSION, NORMA MARRIES, WATER)

MID 1950'S

MIMI - 39 yrs., NORMA 37 yrs. NUNZIO - 66, ANNUNZIATA - 64
ANNUNZIATA AND NUZIO are grandparents. Norma visits Denver
(PINCH)

MID 1960'S

(MIMI - 49 yrs., NORMA 47yrs. NUNZIO - 76, ANNUNZIATA - 74
(SHOP CLOSED. STITCHES)

MID 1990s (30 YRS. LATER)

MIMI - 70 -DECEASED., NORMA 77yrs. NUNZIO - DECEASED 106, ANNUNZIATA - DECEASED -
104 - GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER NICOLE - BORN 1970 (20yrs)
(ISN'T IT LOVE, LONGING)