

UPSTAIRS

A musical



CAST OF CHARACTERS

BUDDY Bartender at the Up Stairs Lounge

ADAM His lover

MITCH Deacon at the local gay church

LOUIS Mitch's lover

JEAN Louis' brother

INEZ Mitch and Louis' mother

MARCY A local drag queen of some renown

REGINALD Marcy's assistant

AGNEAUA troubled young man

UNCLE A dread specter

SETTINGS

The Up Stairs Lounge
Agneau's apartment

ACT 1

SCENE 1

IN DARKNESS.

"Prelude"

UNCLE

LITTLE LAMB, BEWARE OF THE THINGS THAT YOU DO,
THERE'S A MAN UPSTAIRS AND HE'S WATCHING YOU.

Do you understand me, Agneau?

AGNEAU

Yes, Uncle.

Lights up on Buddy.

"Sanctuary/Carry On"

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

Buddy listens expectantly for a moment
then, hearing nothing, continues.

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

From offstage, as if banging on a door:
"BOOM-BOOM!"

BUDDY

Haha! They're here!

Rushing to the "door" of his bar.

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

From offstage: "BOOM-BOOM!"

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

From offstage: "BOOM-BOOM!"

LOUIS

(from offstage) SANCTUARY! SANCTUARY!

From offstage: "BOOM-BOOM!"

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

MITCH

(from offstage) SANCTUARY! SANCTUARY!

From offstage: "BOOM-BOOM!"

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

Buddy opens the door, letting the patrons
all come in.

CAST

(except Buddy) SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY

IN A CITY SINKING FROM ITS WEIGHT,
FROM HISTORY AND SWEAT AND HEAVY AIR.

CAST

(except Buddy) SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY

EVERYONE NEEDS A HIDING PLACE,
AND THAT IS WHAT MY LITTLE CORNER'S FOR.

CAST

(except Buddy) SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY

IN A PLACE WHERE GHOSTS YET WALK,
CRYPT CITIES, YELLOW-FEVERED GRAVES,
WEALTH RAISED ON BACKS OF SILENT SLAVES.

ALL

GOTTA HAVE A SANCTUARY.

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

CAST

(except Buddy) SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
WHERE WE CARRY

JEAN

ON!
CARRY ON!

CAST

(except Buddy) SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

JEAN

(taking a seat at the piano, starts to play) SANCTUARY, WHERE WE CARRY ON!
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

LOUIS

CABBY STALLED US,
THEN HE CALLED US
FAGGOT, PUNK, AND QUEER.

INEZ

I GOT A RUN IN MY HOSE
AND A GUN TO MY NOSE
BEFORE I WAS HALFWAY HERE.

JEAN

WORE A CHAPEAU, SO
NOBODY KNOWS I
SHOW UP HERE SUNDAYS.

ALL

BUT HERE WE'RE SAFE TO

GAILY
LAISSEZ
LES BONS TOMPS ROULER!

JEAN
LET'S CARRY ON! CARRY ON!

OTHERS
LET US SING AND LET US DRINK AND LET US GET REAL TIGHT.
LET US FIND THE BACKDOOR TO THE BACKROOM LATE TONIGHT.

JEAN
CARRY ON! CARRY ON!
LET US MAKE A SPECTACLE OF OURSELVES IF WE CAN.
'CAUSE, BY EARLY MONDAY MORNING, WE'LL BE HIDING FROM THE MAN.

AGNEAU
IN A PLACE WHERE SIN HAS FLOWED DOWNSTREAM,
CORRUPT SILT AS PLEASURE-DOME FOUNDATION.

ADAM
MUFFLED MASKS WILL HIDE YOUR DEVIATION.

ALL
'TIL YOU GET TO SANCTUARY.

INEZ
I'M RED AND BLUE
'CAUSE A TOURIST THREW
A HURRICANE ON ME.
GUESS I SHOULD BE THANKFUL
SINCE IT'S NINETY-TWO DEGREES.

JEAN
THEY THREW ME OUT
OF A BAR DOWNTOWN.
DIDN'T LIKE THE CROWD I DREW.
BUT THE CROWD HERE NOW
CAN GET LOW DOWN
AND I LIKE THAT KIND OF KREWE.
LET'S CARRY ON! CARRY ON!

OTHERS
LET US SING AND LET US DRINK AND LET US GET REAL TIGHT.
LET US FIND THE BACKROOM TO THE BACKDOOR LATE TONIGHT.

STILL OTHERS
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY
DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA

DAT-DA-DAT!

LOUIS

CARRY ON! CARRY ON!

OTHERS

LET US MAKE A FAMILY OF OURSELVES IF WE CAN.

'CAUSE, COME TOMORROW MORNING, WE WILL BE HIDING FROM THE MAN.

STILL OTHERS

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA

TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA

TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA

DAT-DA-DAT!

Everyone ends in tableau. Lights off. Spots remain up on six figures in tableau: ADAM seated at a barstool, MARCY GOODMAN in a performance pose, MITCH and LOUIS in an embrace, and INEZ and JEAN together near the piano.

Pre-recording counting is heard, and a sound as of scraping rattling. Scrape...rattle...1...Scrape...rattle...2...scrape...rattle...3.

Spots down on all but ADAM, others move to different areas, milling about, doing bar things, then lights up on the whole bar, empty except for ADAM and BUDDY.

SETTING: JUNE 24, 1973.

ADAM

A gin and tonic.

Lights come up to reveal the rest of the stage. Stage right features a bar angled toward upstage center. ADAM sits at the center stage end of the bar, while BUDDY works behind it. The center stage features a table and some chairs, one of which is occupied by LOUIS and MITCH. Stage left features a small cabaret stage and a piano, where JEAN concerns himself with sheet music while INEZ hovers around him.

BUDDY

Not yet. Wait until the show starts.

ADAM

One. Just one.

BUDDY

It's too early.

ADAM

It's boring. They're boring.

BUDDY

Bored is just depressed on a break, dear. Read your book.

ADAM

She wrote it drunk, I should read it drunk.

BUDDY

You know, drinking doesn't make you an intellectual. It just makes you a sot.

ADAM

No, what makes me an intellectual are the degrees I hold, the books I've read--

BUDDY

And what makes you a sot is Tanqueray, smart-ass.

ADAM

Give me one. Just one.

BUDDY

Why should I?

ADAM

Because I--

BUDDY

Uh-uh! In Italian. You know I like that.

ADAM

Sigh. Perche' vengo qui come un bravo fidanzato a farti compagnia mentre apri questo buco.

BUDDY

Oh yeah (gets frisky with Adam, while Adam pretends to annoyance, fending him off). And why else?

ADAM

Because I won't stop nagging.

BUDDY

You know where the bottles are. Make it yourself.

ADAM

Lo fai come piace a me.

BUDDY

What would you do without me?

ADAM

Make with the gin and we won't have to find out.

BUDDY

(making the drink) One day I'll learn how to say no to you.

ADAM

(Aside) I know.

LOUIS

Oh dear Lord, I hope people show up for this thing.

MITCH

Well, why wouldn't they?

LOUIS

There's that darn Stonewall Riot anniversary pride thingie going on. Couldn't they have consulted with us? I've been planning this benefit for months!

MITCH

Well I'm sure if they'd known, they'd have had that riot on a different day.

LOUIS

Mitch, I'm serious!

LOUIS

The Lord will provide, Louis. I promise. It'll be fine.

Having entered stage right and wandered through the room, ignored by all, AGNEAU leans on the bar, waiting to order a drink. He spies ADAM as ADAM walks behind the bar to make his drink.

AGNEAU

What are you reading?

ADAM

(picking up a stack of napkins with numbers written on them behind the bar) Hm? Oh. Flannery O'Connor

AGNEAU

What?

ADAM

Flannery O'Connor

AGNEAU

Oh. Yeah. He's good.

ADAM

Mmhm. Back to his book)

MARCY

(entering) Hello everyone! I'm here for the benefit. We've got to get that church some air conditioning, because no one needs to sweat in church. (to Buddy) Except maybe you.

BUDDY

Marcy! (greetings are exchanged)

MARCY

(seeing Agneau) Oh Buddy! Is this your new man?

BUDDY

(wincing, indicates Adam)

MARCY

(disappointed) Oh. (to Adam) It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm Marcy.

ADAM

Hello.

MARCY

You hold on to that one, you hear? He's a good man. (lasciviously) A really, really good man.

ADAM

Thanks.

BUDDY

Come on. I'll show you the dressing room.

MARCY

(as they cross) I bet you will. This is my roadie Reginald.

BUDDY

Hi.

REGINALD

Hi. Marcy's told me a lot about you. Is it true you own this place? It's very nice. I bet it's huge. The place. And I like the decor. It's like what would happen to the Long Branch Saloon if Miss Kitty married Festus. I mean that as a compliment. Who--

MARCY

Reginald.

REGINALD

Sorry, Marcy.

MARCY

(Winkingly, to Buddy) I think you make him nervous.

Reginald, Marcy, and Buddy exit.

AGNEAU

You, uh... You like to read a lot?

ADAM

Yes. I prefer it to talking, in fact. (back to his book)

AGNEAU

(after a beat) I don't talk much, either.

ADAM

Is that right? (back to his book)

AGNEAU

(after a beat) Never was too good at...

ADAM

(Looks up, waiting for Agneau to finish. Looks back to book.)

AGNEAU

(after a beat) coming up to people and...

ADAM

(Looks up, waiting for Agneau to finish. Looks back to book.)

AGNEAU

(After a beat) talk--

ADAM

(Interrupting) Indeed. You know, you should read some Flannery O'Connor. SHE is a southern writer of some renown. I think you'd.....relate to her characters.

AGNEAU

Wow. Thanks.

ADAM

(Positively disgusted) You can read, can't you?

"A Good Man Is Hard To Find (But He'll Do)"

AGNEAU

A PERFECT ASS
PRETTILY PERCHED ON THAT STOOL.
HE THINKS I'M A SWAMP-RAT, A REDNECK, A FOOL.
BUT I KNOW ENOUGH TO KNOW HE'S IN NEED.
HE'LL DO.

INEZ

(After watching Agneau stare at Adam) Don't waste your time, hon. He's already got a good man. But, since you're looking, maybe you should meet my son. (indicating Louis) Cute, no? Now I can see you're a little...shy. What if I get you a couple of drinks and you can bring him one. How's that sound?

AGNEAU

Uh. Sure!

INEZ

Great. That'll be fifty dollars.

AGNEAU

What?

INEZ

Well, You didn't expect ME to pay, did you?

AGNEAU

No, I--I guess not.

INEZ

And I should get a drink, too, right? For my trouble?

AGNEAU

I guess. But...fifty dollars?

INEZ

I'm a very good tipper.

ADAM

I'M NOT NAÏVE, TO THE NUMBERS THEY LEAVE
ON THE NAPKINS THAT COME WITH THEIR DRINKS
KNOWING HE'S TAKEN, YET SIMPLY UNSHAKEN
THEY SCRIBE THEIR BONA-FIDES IN SMEARED INKS.
THIS ONE'S A DOCTOR, FRAIL, BUT DREW HIS COCK TO SCALE.
THIS ONE'S A DOW CEO.
THIS ONE'S A SOLDIER
AND THIS ONE, THOUGH OLDER,
CLAIMS TO HAVE UNLIMITED BLOW.
BUT MY MAN'S A STRONG MAN,
NOT PRONE TO TEMPTATION,
NOT APT TO STRAY FOR A SONG.
A STRONG MAN,
HOW DID THAT HAPPEN.
HARD TO BELIEVE,
A MAN SUCH AS HE COULD
COME ALONG.

AGNEAU

Can---can I buy you a drink?

ADAM

(laughingly) Probably not.

AGNEAU

HE'S GOT A SHARP TONGUE,
BUT I BET I CAN CUT IT.
HE'S CRAVING ATTENTION
AND NO TELLING WHAT HE'LL DO.
HE'LL DO.

INEZ

(seeing this transpire) You know, I've got another son if you don't like my youngest. He's more sophisticated. And white. Kind of--

LOUIS

(approaching with Mitch) Mom! What are you doing?

ADAM

(to Louis) She's trying to hustle this...person.

LOUIS

You know I don't do that.

INEZ

Not anymore. Since you found Jesus. And him. (Scowls at Mitch)

MITCH

(Shakes his head and walks away.)

LOUIS

Mom, stop it.

INEZ

He's not right for you.

LOUIS

He's letting you live with us!

INEZ

Then he's not right for US.

LOUIS

(Adam, hearing Louis, joins singing) MY MAN IS A GOOD MAN
GOOD AS THEY COME.
BETTER THAN MOST MEN I SEE.

AGNEAU

(at Adam) HE'LL DO!

LOUIS & ADAM

A GOOD MAN
GOOD TO THE BONE
WAY TOO GOOD FOR ME.

ADAM

BETTER TO FIND JUST A FINE MAN.

SOMEONE A LITTLE FAULTY.
A FINE MAN WOULD FINALLY DO.

AGNEAU

HE'LL DO!

ADAM

A good man is great, but a fine man's virtue is he'll work to be good enough for you.

INEZ

Yeah, until he decides he's TOO good for you. Better to spread the liability around. You used to like hustling, boy.

LOUIS

No, I just learned how to take from them before they took from me!

LOUIS

THOUGH MY CHUCK WAS A HUCKSTER,
DOWN ON HIS LUCK, TO
ME HE SEEMED SUCH A GOOD FIND.
I CAME HOME ONE FRIDAY
TO FIND THAT MY GUY HAD MADE
OFF WITH A FEW CHECKS I'D SIGNED.

ADAM

LEO, MY HERO, CONFIRMED MY WORST FEAR, OH
WHY DIDN'T I NOTICE HIS RASH?
CHESTER, THOUGH BLESSED,
WHEN MY HAIRLINE RECESSED,
THREW ME OUT JUST LIKE YESTERDAY'S TRASH.

AGNEAU

HE'S FINE FOR NOW, HE'LL DO, HE'LL DO.

LOUIS & ADAM

BUT MY MAN'S A TRUE MAN, TRUE AS CAN BE.
THOUGHT THEY'D STOPPED MAKING THAT KIND.
A TRUE MAN, FAR AS I SEE.
LIKE EVERYONE HOPES TO FIND.

AGNEAU

A FINE MAN IS GOOD AND HARD.

ALL

A HARD MAN TO FIND IS GOOD.

LOUIS & ADAM

A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND,
HARDER TO KEEP.
AND HARDEST TO DESERVE.

During applause, Buddy returns, notices his napkins out of place, puts them in his

pocket. Adam notices. Buddy then quietly leads Inez away with a lecture about hustling, depositing her with Jean.

SCENE 2

SUMMER, 1974. AGNEAU'S SQUALID APARTMENT.

AGNEAU is sitting in a chair, the table in front of him and the area around him cluttered with pills. Also in the apartment is a big book entitled "The Complete Works of Flannery O'Connor". Also present: a knife hidden from Buddy's view, but visible to the audience, if possible.

UNCLE is standing over AGNEAU's shoulder. BUDDY approaches from behind. It should be clear that UNCLE is seen only by AGNEAU.

UNCLE

Oh, look. One of your sodomite friends is here.

AGNEAU

(Surprised, quickly covering his pills with a cloth or newspaper.) How did you get in?

BUDDY

The door was wide open.

AGNEAU

Shut it on your way out.

BUDDY

Lot of pills you've got there.

AGNEAU

I need them to sleep.

BUDDY

(sitting down) Yeah. I don't sleep good, either.

UNCLE

Aw, little thing feels bad. Pathetic. Get rid of him.

AGNEAU

What do you want?

BUDDY

I don't know. To talk, I guess.

AGNEAU

What do we have to talk about?

BUDDY

Well, the fire. What happened.

AGNEAU

I wasn't there.

BUDDY

I know. You left.

AGNEAU

You kicked me out!

UNCLE

Now YOU kick HIM out! Do it!

BUDDY

That might have saved your life.

AGNEAU

Yeah, thanks. Big hero.

BUDDY

I'm not...I didn't mean--

UNCLE

We are busy!

AGNEAU

That's what they all say now. You kept your cool. Led all those people out the back way.

BUDDY

Not all. Not enough.

UNCLE

Too many.

AGNEAU

Still. You risked your life--

BUDDY

I ain't no hero!

UNCLE

He'll burn too.

AGNEAU

All right, you're not a hero. Suit yourself.

BUDDY

(sits, clearly not leaving)

UNCLE

(Gestures at AGNEAU to get BUDDY to leave.)

AGNEAU

You, uh. Listen, it's late...

BUDDY
It's 6pm.

AGNEAU
Yeah, but I've got...

BUDDY
What? Work?

AGNEAU
No.

BUDDY
Me neither.

AGNEAU
What do you--

BUDDY
How far did you get?

AGNEAU
What?

BUDDY
That night. With Adam.

UNCLE
I don't want to hear this.

AGNEAU
Man, what difference does it make?

BUDDY
I just want to know.

AGNEAU
Why?

BUDDY
Was he--was it--were you...kind?

AGNEAU
Kind? Yeah. It was...nice.

UNCLE
Oh, Christ.

BUDDY
Was he happy? He deserved to be happy, at least for a moment.

UNCLE
Bullshit.

AGNEAU

Happy. I don't know. How could I know? Come on.

BUDDY

Yeah.

AGNEAU

Listen, you, uh...Want something? I got some beer...

UNCLE

What are you doing?

BUDDY

No. I ain't drinking much, these days.

UNCLE

He doesn't want your beer. Get rid of him!

AGNEAU

Yeah? I'm drinking TOO much.

UNCLE

You're TALKING too much. What the fuck is this?

AGNEAU

Come on. One beer. (grabbing beers) Fact is, we ought to be thankful. We should both feel...happy.

UNCLE

Oh, you wanna suck his dick, don't ya?

AGNEAU

At least a little. We're lucky to be alive.

UNCLE

Pitiful. As if he'd even let you.

BUDDY

Yeah. Cheers to that. Lucky to be alive.

"If I Could Only Breathe"

BUDDY

THE HEART BEATS.
SLOW AFTER FAST.
WITH AN UNDYING PASSION THAT I CAN'T EXPLAIN.
WITHOUT REGARD FOR ITS SAFETY, UNMARRIED,
A STRANGER TO PAIN.
THE HEART BEATS,
UNSEEN IN ME.
NOW, IF I COULD ONLY BREATHE.
BREATHE.

AGNEAU

THE MIND SEES
 EACH SEASON TURN,
 EACH PERSON YEARN, AS HIS DREAMS AGE AND DIE,
 FOR CHILDHOOD'S OLD SOLACE,
 FEIGNED SAFETY FROM ALL OF HIS WHEREFORES AND WHY'S.
 THE MIND SEES,
 UNBEATEN IN ME.
 NOW, IF I COULD ONLY BREATHE.
 BREATHE.
 I'D INHALE THE SMELL OF CAROLINA JASMINE,

BUDDY
 I'D EXHALE THE HAZE OF REGRET.

AGNEAU
 I'D TAKE IN THE MEM'RY OF GULF BRINE AND CHICKORY.

BUDDY
 I'D TAKE IN MY LOVER'S LAST BREATH.

BUDDY AND AGNEAU
 THEN, LIVING, DECIDE
 TO GET ON WITH LIFE,
 OR WITH DEATH!
 THE SOUL FAINTS,
 A HEARTH WITHOUT BELLOWS,
 A TORCH IN A WINDOWLESS ROOM.
 A HOT EMBER BURIED
 IN MOUNTAINS OF ASHES,
 EXPIRED, NOT EXHUMED.
 THE SOUL FAINTS,
 THE MIND SEES,
 THE HEART BEATS!
 NOW IF I COULD ONLY BREATHE.
 BREATHE.

As the song ends, BUDDY places his hand on
 AGNEAU'S.

SCENE 3

The pre-recorded sound is heard again...
14... 15... 16.... Spotlight up on Marcy.

MARCY

Wait, wait. These are too much. (Pulls padding from her bra and hands the pads to REGINALD) And this wig needs help.

Lights up on Cabaret Stage. Mitch looks in, urges Reginald to hurry things along.

REGINALD

People are arriving. If you don't hurry you won't be ready in time.

MARCY

"Ready in time?" Hah! You have seen drag queens wearing everything from condoms to cockatoos, but you ever seen a drag queen wearing a watch?

REGINALD

These are church people. They're used to starting promptly.

MARCY

They're gays. How prompt can they be?

REGINALD

You're missing a spot. Here. (Assists Marcy with the wig as they talk.)

MARCY

What would I do without you? You're like the Ricky to my Lucy.

REGINALD

I am like the Giovanni Meneghini to your Maria Callas. The difference, among others, is that Ricky and Lucy were were both performers. Though, in fairness, those are both inter-racial couples. But, we're not a couple at all. You won't even make me breakfast in the morning. Or walk my dog when I'm away on business. Or--

MARCY

Reginald. Okay.

REGINALD

You know how I get...

MARCY

Buddy makes you nervous doesn't he? Doesn't he? (picking at Reginald)

REGINALD

Maybe a little. But it's not just him. It's all the people. The drunks. The talk. The gays.

MARCY

You're gay.

REGINALD

Yes, but at least I don't talk about it. Announce it. Display it.

MARCY

Oh, honey. I'll have you up here in full drag, someday.

REGINALD

I'm happy being backstage, Marcy. And I'd look terrible in a dress.

MARCY

Oh, it's fun! You just need to learn how to talk to people. How to be heard.

REGINALD

Oh, they don't want to hear what I have to--

MARCY

Listen: finish setting up the stage while I get my pumps on, sweetie. It may be a minute, so get Mitch to sing something. Oh, and go convince a bunch of people to wear these stickers.

REGINALD

But I just said--

MARCY

Get to work. Mwah!

Near the piano, INEZ and JEAN are speaking quietly. LOUIS approaches.

LOUIS

Mama, you can't talk about Mitch that way right to his face. He's family now.

INEZ

Family? No, baby. We're family. He's got a family and they're not here.

LOUIS

He left her. Awhile ago.

INEZ

No matter. Listen to your mama, because she knows: In the end, a man always chooses the one he married. And he ain't marrying you.

LOUIS

He can't marry me.

INEZ

Exactly.

LOUIS

Mama, this is ridiculous! He's changed my life! And yours! Where would you be if he hadn't taken you in? He's a good man.

INEZ

You think he's the first man to rescue a stray? That might make him a good Christian, but it does not make him a good man.

LOUIS

What's the difference?

INEZ

Man like that wants to play church, play house, play town. How's he gonna do that with a hustler on his arm? He'll always take you for street trash, baby.

LOUIS

You're wrong. And I'll prove it.

MITCH

(approaching) Everything's ready for the show. Except the talent, of course.

LOUIS

Mitch. Sweetie, I've always been up-front with you about my--

MITCH

I know it. But you always spared the details and I'd like to keep it that way. All I ever wanted to know is that you've left it behind for good.

LOUIS

(interrupting) ---that I've left it behind for good. And I have. You do know that, right?

MITCH

Well, I did. But she's the one that got you doing that in the first place. And now that she's out--

LOUIS

Honey. I've outgrown the need for Mother's approval.

INEZ

Now--

LOUIS

It's true, Mama. All I need now is one man. And I've found him. Just promise me you'll never leave.

MITCH

(nervously quiet)

LOUIS

You can promise that, can't you? Mitch?

MITCH

Our church friends are arriving. I'd better go say hi.

LOUIS

Mitch?

On the cabaret stage, REGINALD futzes with the mic.

REGINALD
(into a dead mic) Mitch? Is this thing on?

ADAM
(trying to take the mic from Reginald)

REGINALD
No! Marcy said Mitch was supposed to sing.

ADAM
Mitch can wait. Give me the mic.

REGINALD
But Marcy--

ADAM
Did Buddy hire you to work security or something?

REGINALD
No.

ADAM
You're gonna have to bounce me. Do they pay you enough to bounce me?

REGINALD
No.

ADAM
There you go. (Takes the mic.) Lights!

Lights up on Adam on stage.

ADAM
Music!

During this song, Reginald approaches Buddy to express frustration. Reginald puts a sticker on Buddy's chest. Buddy and Reginald become very friendly, even flirtatious, as the song proceeds.

"You're Gonna Ache for Me"

ADAM
YOU SAY YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE ME,
EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE, EVEN
WHEN I KNOW YOU'RE LOVING OTHER MEN.
BUT A MAN BREAKS HIS VOWS

LIKE A BABY BREAKS HIS BOUGHS,
 AND FALLS JUST AS FAR, BY THE END.
 BRIEFLY, I'LL CRY WHEN YOU LEAVE, DEAR.
 BUT YOU'LL SEE, EVENTUALLY,
 THAT YOU'RE THE ONE IN NEED, HERE.
 MY HEART MY BREAK,
 BUT, BABY, YOU'RE GONNA ACHE FOR ME.
 LIKE MEDICINE, MY LOVE MAKES IT BETTER.
 BUT GIVE UP THE DRUG
 AND YOU'LL HURT FOREVER.
 WHATEVER YOU TAKE, BUDDY,
 YOU'RE GONNA ACHE FOR ME.
 YOU'LL NEVER RECOVER
 FROM LEAVING A LOVER,
 WHEN YOU KNOW HIS LOVE NEVER STRAYED.
 DON'T THINK FOR A SECOND, IT
 WON'T COME TO A RECKONIN'
 TIME WON'T BE KIND TO A MIND COME UNMADE.
 YOU'LL WAKE IN A SWEAT BY THE HOUR.
 YOUR MOUTH SICKLY SWEET, AND YOUR STOMACH SOUR.
 YOU'LL SHIVER AND SHAKE, BABY
 YOU'RE GONNA ACHE FOR ME!
 FATE HATES A FAKE, BUDDY! YOU'RE GONNA ACHE FOR ME!

AGNEAU

(Bringing a drink to Adam.) Here's that gin and tonic. Sorry it took so long. The bartender is pretty busy.

ADAM

Don't I know it. Thank you, Mister...

AGNEAU

Just call me Agneau.

ADAM

My name's Adam. (They clink glasses. Awkward silence ensues.)

ADAM

You really don't like to talk, do you?

AGNEAU

(Trying to think of something to say) ...no.

ADAM

My kind of guy. (Kisses Agneau. Agneau grabs ADAM by the arm and leads him offstage.)

SCENE 4

SUMMER, 1974. AGNEAU'S SQUALID APARTMENT.

BUDDY

The buzzer went off around 8:30. They ring it downstairs when there's a delivery in the day, so we can unlock the big metal door that opens to the front stairwell, but it only gets rung at night if there's some kind of trouble. Cops or something. So somebody went and opened the door, to see what was happening.

"You'll Burn"

UNCLE

RUN, FAGGOT, RUN.
HAVEN'T YOU HAD FUN.
BUT, FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE,
YOU'LL BURN!

BUDDY

The flames blew into the room like they had their own mind. The panic spread even faster than the fire. Carpet, clothes, that old furniture...people... It was everywhere in seconds.

UNCLE

SISSIES NEVER WIN.
DOMINION GOES TO MEN.
PRIDE FALLS FIRST AND THEN,
YOU'LL BURN!

BUDDY

Marcy was in back. Never saw it coming. Reginald tried to get to her, but the curtains were in flames. The smoke... Reginald was lucky to get out, himself. So many didn't.

AGNEAU

Thirty-two didn't.

UNCLE

EACH INVERT, FROM A CHILD IS
FOUND WANTING IN THE BALANCE,
NO HEED TO NEED OR TALANTS,
YOU'LL BURN!

BUDDY

Those damn bars on the windows! People kept trying to squeeze through. It was like a frenzy. But I knew a back way out. So I went through the room, tapping people, saying—Come with me. We ran through a wall of smoke and flame, and somehow made it out to the roof, then down the fire escape.

UNCLE

WITH LUCK AND LAW AND GUILF,
YOU MAY RUN ON AWHILE,
BUT, AFTER YOUR LAST MILE,

YOU'LL BURN!

YOU'LL BURN!

BUDDY

A few managed to squeeze through those bars. Most died trying. When I close my eyes at night, they're branded in my vision, up there trying to get through those bars. Screaming, pleading, dying. And I keep feeling like...If I had stayed longer...Done something more...

AGNEAU

You gotta let that go. If you'd done anything else, you'd be dead too.

BUDDY

You don't know that.

UNCLE

He's not telling you everything.

AGNEAU

You're a hero.

BUDDY

Stop saying that!

UNCLE

Ask him about Adam.

AGNEAU

You don't have to believe it, but you have to stop blaming yourself.

UNCLE

Ask him! ASK HIM! God-dammit, quit playing grab-ass and ask him!

BUDDY

Maybe so, but--

AGNEAU

(To UNCLE) Leave me alone! I don't want to know!

BUDDY

(beat) Who are you talking to?

AGNEAU

No one.

BUDDY

No, you were talking to someone! Or you thought you were. Man, what are those pills for?

UNCLE

He knows! They'll think you're a little girl! A crazy little man for talking to your poor old Uncle!

AGNEAU

(panicking) Wh-- What about Adam! What happened to Adam! Tell me!

BUDDY
He...died. In the fire.

UNCLE
But why him?

AGNEAU
But why him?

BUDDY
What do you mean?

UNCLE and AGNEAU
(Accusingly) You saved all those people. Why didn't you save Adam?

BUDDY
That's what I came to--

AGNEAU
He was the one person that needed you the most.

BUDDY
He was--

UNCLE
This is how y'all are.

AGNEAU
He thought you were the world.

BUDDY
I know!

AGNEAU
What the fuck is wrong with you?

BUDDY
(After a beat, turns to go.)

AGNEAU
No! Wait. (grabs him) Don't go. (pulls him back. It looks like they might kiss. AGNEAU breaks it.) It's okay. You can tell me.

UNCLE
Now, hold on, I--

AGNEAU
(To UNCLE, fiercely) Shut up! (To BUDDY, sweetly) Not you. You talk.

BUDDY

(Looks around tentatively, but decides to stay, sitting again. AGNEAU puts a hand on BUDDY'S shoulder as they talk.) You understand, we were having problems. What am I saying? Of course you do.

SCENE 5

SOUND EFFECT AGAIN. Counting,
scraping...18...19...20...Spots up on Mitch
and Louis.

MITCH

Sure does take them awhile to get ready.

LOUIS

Mmmhm.

LIGHTS up on the rest of the bar.

REGINALD

(hovering awkwardly) Sticker? Happy Gay Pride Day.

MITCH

(nodding assent to Reginald) Well, I guess you can take your time if you're
THE Marcy Goodman. We're lucky to have her for this.

LOUIS

MMHhm.

REGINALD

Happy Pride. Sticker?

MITCH

Louis? What--

LOUIS

I can promise I'll never leave you. Why can't you do the same?

REGINALD

I'm...going. (hastily removes himself)

LOUIS

Well?

MITCH

Because I don't make promises I can't keep.

LOUIS

Oh. Well that's not helpful at all.

MITCH

I'm sorry. I did that before, with my wife and--

LOUIS

You think I'm like her?

MITCH

No, but she's the mother of my--

BUDDY

(interrupting) Mitch, you've got a phone call.

LOUIS

Speak of the devilled eggs.

MITCH

(After an apologetic look to LOUIS, goes to the bar to take the call)

BUDDY

(to LOUIS) Hey, have you seen Adam?

LOUIS

(distractedly) No. Not since he sang.

BUDDY

Well, if you see him--

LOUIS

Yeah.

As BUDDY takes off, MITCH returns.

MITCH

I gotta go.

LOUIS

What? You can't just--. I'll come with you.

MITCH

No, this is your benefit. You stay. I'll be back.

LOUIS

But we're right in the middle of--

MITCH

I'm sorry! It's the kids. I'll be back. I promise.

LOUIS

(to himself) You sure about that?

Light change to spotlight Inez, who watches Mitch leave, then sings to herself.

"Favorite Son"

INEZ

LATE IN THE NIGHT,
WHERE THE WHITES FROM UPTOWN RARELY VENTURED.
TO A HOUSE THAT HE KEPT FOR ME,
FAR FROM HIS MANSION, HE'D RUN.
HIS WIFE, A SOCIETY LADY,
COULD NOT MAKE HIM MISS HER.

SHE HAD HIS RING,
BUT I HAD HIS FAVORITE SON.
MY LOVER, HE GAVE
TO HIS FAVORITE SON EACH ADVANTAGE.
TUTORS AND LESSONS:
PIANO AND FRENCH, FOR A FEW.
BUT WHILE THE YEARS PASSED,
MY BABY BECAME HIS OWN PERSON.
SENSITIVE, SWEET,
NOT LIKE ANY BOY MY LOVER KNEW.

I'D KNOWN IN MY HEART FROM START
THAT MY BOY WOULD BE DIFFERENT.
BUT MY LOVER DESPISED EVERYTHING
THAT HIS CHILD WOULD BECOME.
WHEN HIS STERNNESS TURNED VIOLENT
I SWORE THAT I WOULDN'T PUT UP WITH IT.
SO, IN OUR POVERTY, HE LEFT ME
AND HIS FAVORITE SON.

I NEVER TOLD HIM
INSIDE OF ME I BORE ANOTHER.
SEE, MY LOVER WAS STUBBORN,
AND I WOULDN'T BEG FROM HIM NOW.
WHEN LOUIS WAS BORN,
I SAID JEAN, LOOK AFTER YOUR BROTHER.
WENT OUT AND MADE US A WAY
THE ONLY WAY I KNEW HOW.

SOMETIMES, IN THE NIGHT,
WITH A STRANGER INSIDE ME, I'D
THINK OF THE HANDSOME MAN
COURTING ME AS I WOULD CLEAN,
AS IF I WERE SOMEONE
AN UPPER-CLASS WOMAN,
EVEN THOUGH I WAS POOR, BLACK,
AND ONLY THIRTEEN.

I RAISED THEM TO LIKE WHO THEY LIKE,
BUT TO GUARD THEMSELVES CLOSELY.
YOUTH, BEAUTY, INNOCENCE—
DON'T SELL THEM ALL TO JUST ONE.
SOME MEN WILL TAKE FROM YOU,
KNOWING THEY'LL NEVER BE PUNISHED.
'CAUSE, YES, WE'RE ALL HIS CHILDREN,
BUT EVEN GOD HAS HIS FAVORITE SONS.

NOW ONE BOY'S A CHARMER,
A TRUE BON VIVANT, AND A LOVER,
BUT IT'S PLAIN TO ME
THAT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM HE HATES.
THE OTHER CONFUSES HIS PASSIONS FOR LOVE,
LIKE HIS MOTHER.
AND, JUST LIKE HIS MOTHER, BOUND TO MAKE A MAN HIS MISTAKE.

FRIENDS, NOW AND THEN, WANT TO ASK ME
TO SAY WHO'S MY FAVORITE.
AS IF THAT'S A THING
THAT A MOM CAN EXPLAIN ON A WHIM.
I TELL HIM THAT EVERY GOOD MEM'RY
HAS SORROW TO PAY FOR IT.
AND MY FAVORITE SON IS THE ONE THAT REMINDS ME OF HIM.

AND EACH, IN A WAY, EVERY DAY,
CAN REMIND ME OF HIM.

INEZ

I need a drink. (Takes all the money from Jean's tip jar and makes her way
to the bar)

JEAN

Wait! That's my--

REGINALD

Happy Gay Pride! (sticks a sticker in the tip jar)

ELSEWHERE. IN A DARKENED CORNER.

AGNEAU

Yeah. Fuck yeah. Get down on that.

Dim light up on AGNEAU and ADAM in a
darkened corner. Adam is on his knees.
Agneau's pants are undone.

ADAM

(rising.) Wait.

AGNEAU

What?

ADAM

I don't know. Can't we, just, I guess kiss more?

AGNEAU

No. (pushing Adam's head back down)

ADAM

Yes. (resisting)

AGNEAU

(sighing) Why?

ADAM

Because--you're a good kisser.

AGNEAU

Really? Ain't had much practice.

ADAM

Agneau. That's French, right?

AGNEAU

Yeah, I'm from Thibodeaux. I thought you wanted to kiss, not talk.

ADAM

Can't we do both?

AGNEAU

Why don't you go back to what you were doing before.

ADAM

What, scared?

AGNEAU

Horny.

ADAM

No, you're scared.

AGNEAU

Of what?

ADAM

Scared someone will find something in you to really like. (getting closer)
And you should be. (They start making out) Lamb!

AGNEAU

(Frustrated) What?

ADAM

I remembered my lessons. Agneau means "Lamb," right?

AGNEAU

(scoffing) Yeah.

ADAM

Is that a typical name for a boy?

AGNEAU

No. My parrain named me. My Uncle. He's... religious.

ADAM

"Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me..."

AGNEAU

Don't do that.

ADAM

What?

AGNEAU

Mock God.

ADAM

I'm sorry. I didn't know you were--

AGNEAU

I'm not. But still.

ADAM

And I'm sorry about before.

AGNEAU

What?

ADAM

Being rude. Relating you to Flannery O'Connor's characters. That's never very nice.

AGNEAU

(disappointed) You're a smart one, ain't ya?

ADAM

Too smart, I guess.

AGNEAU

No. I like it. A lot. We can talk more if you want.

ADAM

Oh, we can do a lot more than talk. After all, everything that rises must converge.

BUDDY

(Suddenly intruding, catching AGNEAU and ADAM in the act.) Back off. (MUSIC ends)

AGNEAU

(Fastening pants.) You can't--

BUDDY

(Threateningly) Back off!

AGNEAU

(Stares at Buddy a moment. Backs away.)

BUDDY

(To Adam) What the hell is this?

ADAM

What the hell is what, dear?

AGNEAU

(With his back to the others, pulls a knife from his back pocket and quickly opens it. He stands there with the knife, considering what to do.)

BUDDY

Don't play dumb.

ADAM

It's called turnabout. Or are you so shocked someone wants to fuck me?

BUDDY

Of course not.

ADAM

Now you know how it feels, watching you cuddle up to your fan club all night.

AGNEAU

(Eventually calms down and puts away the knife.)

BUDDY

That's my job!

ADAM

Nice work, if you can get it.

BUDDY

How many drinks have you had?

ADAM

Don't change the subject.

BUDDY

That IS the subject, It's ALWAYS the subject!

ADAM

Your precious admirers can drink all they want. Doesn't bother you a bit.

BUDDY

They're not my husband.

ADAM

Husband. You don't know the meaning of the word.

BUDDY

I just caught you with another guy!

ADAM

Oh, you were going to leave me anyway.

BUDDY

What makes you--

ADAM

You're going to. I can tell. Why be tied down? Especially to a drunk sissy like me.

BUDDY

...where'd you get that idea?

ADAM

Don't patronize me. Why have you stayed so long, Buddy?

BUDDY

Stop it.

ADAM

Tell me! Why?

BUDDY

I-- (hesitating) Because you need me.

ADAM

(slaps Buddy) Fuck you, Buddy. YOU need ME.

BUDDY

For what?

ADAM

To make you feel like a god-damn hero.

BUDDY

You need to go home and dry out. I'm calling a cab.

ADAM

Deny it. Deny it! Fuck.

AGNEAU

(Stepping forward.) Screw that guy. You can do better.

ADAM

(With a withering look.) Obviously not. (Walks away.)

"Not Enough"

AGNEAU

REBUFFED
NOT UP TO SNUFF
EVEN FOR A SAD LITTLE PUFF LIKE THAT.
GOT ROUGHED,
NEARLY CUFFED,
AND GOD DAMNED, EVEN BEING WHERE I'M AT.

UNCLE

THERE'S A MAN UPSTAIRS AND HE'S WATCHING.

AGNEAU

IT'S NOT ENOUGH
THAT I'M NOT ENOUGH
FOR THE MAN UP THERE,
I'M NOT EVEN ENOUGH
FOR A LITTLE LOVE

FROM THE MEN UPSTAIRS.

UNCLE

LITTLE LAMB, BEWARE.
OF THE MEN UPSTAIRS.

AGNEAU

SO TOUGH.
MISTER BUFF.
MASTER OF HIS OWN QUEER LITTLE WORLD.

UNCLE

DEN OF QUEERS WILL NEVER KNOW YOU.
TOO CONTENT TO WALLOW IN THEIR SIN.

AGNEAU

BIG MAN,
TO HIS FANS,
BET HE FUCKS JUST LIKE A TEENAGED GIRL.

UNCLE

TAKE FROM THEM OR THEY WILL, WILL OWN YOU.
TIL THEIR CRIMES ARE CLEAR TO YOU,
UNCLE WILL BE HERE FOR YOU.

AGNEAU

I'VE HAD ENOUGH
OF THIS UPPITY GUFF
FROM SMUG LITTLE FAYS,
BUT I'LL LINGER ENOUGH
FOR SOME HUFF AND PUFF
'CAUSE HE MADE ME THIS WAY.

UNCLE

GOT TO MAKE THEM PAY.

AGNEAU

THEN SET ME ASTRAY.

UNCLE

TAKE SOMETHING AWAY!

AGNEAU

BUT IT WON'T BE ENOUGH,
'CAUSE I'M NOT ENOUGH.
AND THEY'RE NOT ENOUGH.
AND HE'S NOT ENOUGH.

UNCLE

IT'S SO UNFAIR THAT IT'S
VILE TO A GOD, WHO IS ALWAYS JUST.
THEIR SIN IS ARROGANCE.
MORE THAN SODOMY, MORE THAN LUST.

AGNEAU
Not enough.

UNCLE
Take from them.

AGNEAU
Not enough.

UNCLE
Take from them.

AGNEAU
No, not enough.

UNCLE
Little lamb, beware!

REGINALD
Happy Gay Pride Day! Here, have a sticker.

REGINALD takes a sticker off the roll and
tries to put it on AGNEAU.

UNCLE
(laughs)

AGNEAU
(Back onstage, clearly upset and drunk by now, to REGINALD, as he hands him
a sticker) Wait, what is this?

REGINALD
It's a sticker. For Gay Pride Day. It's the anniversary of Stonewall!
You're supposed to wear a sticker. Show your pride.

AGNEAU
Pride. Here's your Pride. (He knocks the stickers out of the REGINALD'S
hand.)

REGINALD
(Stopping AGNEAU from leaving.) But they're free of charge.

AGNEAU
Fucking...politics! Where's the sex around here? What kind of a queer bar
is this?

REGINALD
I understand your point. The New York riots notwithstanding, a lot of us
would prefer our little world to remain firmly counter-cultural. These
attempts to give what we do a veneer of bourgeois respectability look kind
of silly, sometimes. Plus, they take all the fun out of--

AGNEAU
What? Get out of my face!

UNCLE

Take from him.

REGINALD

I only mean to underscore your frustr--

UNCLE

Take from him!

AGNEAU

(menacingly) Just shut up!

MARCY

Hey! What the world is going on over here?

REGINALD

We were just discussing--

MARCY

No. You wait. I'm having words with this gentleman. (To AGNEAU) No piss ant little street trash is gonna come in here and start to harass my friends, lurking 'round here like a hungry, whipped dog, eager to eat, too scared to come to the trough? You're just a hick, looking to stick it, but he wouldn't do you with your mama's dick. Now step away, little boy, Before I break you like a K&B toy.

AGNEAU

(retreats)

MARCY

That's what I thought. (Turns on Reginald) Now you. You should have showed him he was messing with the wrong little nerd. You need to quit babbling and start being heard. You can hide, they won't notice you're missin'. Or you can shine with pride and let 'em watch you glisten. You can talk all night and have no one listen, or you can say one word and be heard.

REGINALD

We were simply discussing the--

MARCY

No, you were not "discussing." He was threatening you. Why would you let him talk to you like that?

REGINALD

Well what was I supposed to do?

"Say The Word (Testify)"

MARCY

DEEP INSIDE YOUR HEART
THERE LIVES A WORD
THAT ONLY YOU CAN SPEAK.
SOMETHING UTTERED ONLY TO THE NIGHT.

OR MURMURED WHEN YOU'RE WEAK.
AND DEEP INSIDE OF SOMEONE,
THERE'S A DESPERATE NEED
TO HEAR THAT WORD IN YOU.
BUT, FEARFULLY, YOU WRAP IT UP IN PRATTLE,
SO IT WON'T WHISPER THROUGH.
MAYBE YOU DON'T THINK YOUR WORD
EXCITING OR PROFOUND,
BUT THAT SOMEONE'S OUT THERE WAITING, LISTENING,
DESPERATE FOR THE SOUND..

OF YOUR WORD, SAY THE WORD, TESTIFY.
IT AIN'T UP TO YOU TO SET THE WHOLE THING STRAIGHT,
BUT IT'S A SIN AND A SHAME NOT TO FIND A WAY TO SAY
YOUR WORD, SAY THE WORD TESTIFY.
LET IT PIERCE THE NOISE OF THIS WORLD'S LIES!
SAY THE WORD.
TESTIFY!

DEEP INSIDE OF SOMEONE THERE'S A WORD
THAT ONLY THEY CAN SPEAK.
SOMETHING UTTERED ONLY TO THE NIGHT,
OR MURMURED WHEN THEY'RE WEAK.
I SEE, FROM HOW YOU STRAIN AGAINST THE CLAMOR OF THE CROWD.
INSIDE, YOU'RE PLEADING DESP'RATELY TO HEAR THAT WORD ALOUD.
YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART
WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:
SHOUT YOUR OWN WORD OUT AND LET ONE ECHO BACK TO YOU!

REGINALD

ECHO BACK TO YOU!

MARCY

SAY THE WORD, TESTIFY!
IT AIN'T UP TO YOU TO SET THE WHOLE THING STRAIGHT,
BUT IT'S A SIN AND A SHAME NOT TO FIND A WAY TO SAY
YOUR WORD, SAY THE WORD TESTIFY.
LET IT PIERCE THE NOISE OF THIS WORLD'S LIES!
SAY THE WORD.
TESTIFY!

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

SCENE 1

"Sanctuary/Carry On Reprise"

JEAN

(taking a seat at the piano, starts to play) SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, WHERE WE CARRY ON!

Lights up. LOUIS is sulking in his spot,
ADAM is sulking in his. MITCH is still
gone.

ALL

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

REGINALD

A SHOW DELAY,
A PASSION PLAY,
A FUSS, A FEUD, A FIGHT.

JEAN

A LITTLE DRAMA,

INEZ

A LITTLE KARMA
A TYPICAL SUNDAY NIGHT!

BUDDY

(to Adam) TAXI CAB AIN'T COMING,
SO JUST SIT THERE
AND BEHAVE.

ALL

THERE'S STILL TIME TO
GAILY
LAISSEZ
LES BONS TOMPS ROULER!

AGNEAU

LET'S CARRY ON! CARRY ON!

OTHERS

LET US SING AND LET US DRINK AND LET US GET REAL TIGHT.
LET US FIND THE BACKDOOR TO THE BACKROOM LATE TONIGHT.

AGNEAU

CARRY ON! CARRY ON!
LET US MAKE A UNITY OF OURSELVES IF WE CAN.
'CAUSE, BY EARLY MONDAY MORNING, WE'LL BE HIDING FROM THE MAN.

STILL OTHERS

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

MARCY

IN MAKE-UP.

REGINALD

IN SILENCE.

AGNEAU

IN MEN.

MITCH

IN JESUS.

INEZ

IN MAMMON.

ADAM

IN GIN.

BUDDY

YOU CAN GET IT ALL RIGHT HERE.
COME WITH ME, THE MAN UPSTAIRS.

STILL OTHERS

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY
SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

MARCY

WHERE THEY ALLOW, IF TACITLY,
UNUSUAL MORALITY.

LOUIS

EVEN IF THE VICTOR.

ALL

OR THE VICTIM.
IS ME.

BUDDY

IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, INDULGENCES COME DANGEROUSLY.

ALL

THAT'S WHY WE NEED.

STILL OTHERS

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

SANCTUARY, SANCTUARY

BUDDY

DA-DA-TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
TA-DA-DA-DAT-TA-DA-DA
DAT-DA-DAT!

From offstage: "BOOM-BOOM". All look
fearfully at the door. Lights out.

Counting/scraping resumes. 24...25....26...
Spot up on Jean.

JEAN

Little brother. What's the matter, man? You look like your dog died.

"Take From Him"

JEAN

WHAT'S THE MATTER, BROTHER?
YOU'RE LOOKIN' DOWN.
SIT DOWN HERE AND
JUSTIFY THAT FROWN.

Lights up on the rest of the bar. LOUIS and
JEAN are at the piano. AGNEAU is nearby,
intently listening and watching throughout
this scene. INEZ is over at the bar.

LOUIS

It's Mitch. Mama got him thinking I might go back to hustling. I told him
I'm not, and he says he believes me, but--- anyway, now he's gone off
somewhere.

JEAN

MAMA ALWAYS SAID, IT'S FLEETING, BEING A WIFE.
BUT, LIKE IT OR NOT, HUSTLING'S FOR LIFE.

LOUIS

Maybe Mama's right. Maybe I'll always be a whore in his eyes. Maybe I ought
to show him what a whore I can be.

LOUIS

DAMNED IF YOU DO.
DAMNED IF YOU DID.
DID IS SO DEAD.
I OUGHTTA DO INSTEAD.

JEAN

Okay, then, do it. There's a man over there.

LOUIS

What?

JEAN

LOOK AT HIM, THERE, WITH THE FRIGHTENED EYES.
HIS HABERDASHERY BESPEAKS A WALLET OF SOME SIZE.

LOUIS

What about Mitch?

JEAN

A MAN CEASES TO APPRECIATE A THING, ONCE HE GETS IT.
SO IT'S HARD TO KNOW YOUR VALUE WITH NO MARKET THERE TO SET IT.
SURE, IT'S NICE TO BE COURTED, FOR ALL THAT IT COULD BE,
BUT IT'S BETTER TO BE WANTED QUANTIFIABLY. BY A GUY OR THREE.
YOU CAN TELL WHERE YOU RANK, BY WHAT YOU CAN

TAKE... FROM HIM

TAKE FROM HIM BET HE CAN DROP A HUNDRED ON WHIM.
GO NEGOTIATE, AND THEN YOU'LL KNOW YOUR GOING RATE'S
WHAT YOU CAN TAKE FROM HIM. TAKE FROM HIM.

LOUIS

Come on. I wasn't serious. I'm done with that, Mitch or no. I'm a church
lady now.

JEAN

Weren't some of them prostitutes, too?

LOUIS

That's not--

JEAN

TAKE FROM HIM
TAKE FROM HIM
WHEN DID THAT CHURCHY STUFF MAKE YOU SO PRIM?
YOU'LL NEED IT MORE THAN HE DOES,
LIVING MAMA'S LIFE IN REDUX.
WON'T YOU TAKE FROM HIM.
TAKE FROM HIM.

TAKE FROM HIM, AND GIVE A LITTLE, TOO.
IT'S CERTAIN HE'LL MAKE MORE, BUT THEN AGAIN, SO WILL YOU.
TAKE FROM HIM.

LOUIS

I'D SAY MISTER, HAVE YOU GOT THE BLUES.

JEAN

TAKE FROM HIM.

LOUIS

BET I CAN TELL YOU WHERE YOU GOT YOUR SHOES.

JEAN

SEE HOW FAR YOU'LL LURE HIM OUT THERE ON YOUR LIMB.

LOUIS

FOR A LITTLE CASH, YOU CAN STASH 'EM AT THE FOOT OF MY BED.

JEAN

YOU CAN'T DENY YOUR LUCK, FER
A SHEER SUCKER IN SEERSUCKER,

LOUIS

A MAN CAN DEPRECIATE, LOSE HIS VALUE.
SO, TO BE APPRECIATED ONCE IN AWHILE, YOU.

JEAN AND LOUIS

TAKE FROM HIM.
TAKE FROM HIM.

LOUIS

AND WHEN YOU'RE FEELING WORTHLESSLY,
REMEMBER THERE'S NO DEARTH OF EASY,
PICKINGS, THEN.
TAKE FROM THEM.

LOUIS

(Spoken to offstage "John") Hey, man. What's happening?

Mitch enters, oblivious to LOUIS'S recent
song, handing JEAN some music to play.

MITCH

This is for you, Louis. (A nod to the JEAN, who begins.)

"I'll Always Return"

MITCH

THINGS GO LONG,
CLOCKS GO WRONG,
COMPROMISES COME ALONG.
I CAN'T PROMISE I'LL NEVER LEAVE,
BUT I'LL ALWAYS RETURN.

MODERN AGE,
LIFE TO WAGE.
TO GET AHEAD, MUST TURN THE PAGE.
I CAN'T PROMISE I'LL NEVER LEAVE,
BUT I'LL ALWAYS, I'LL ALWAYS RETURN.

SURETY'S UNCERTAIN.
UNCERTAINTY'S A FACT.
TAKE YOUR STRENGTH, WHEN WE'RE APART,
FROM KNOWING I'LL BE BACK.

COULDN'T VOW UNTIL NOW.
HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW SOMEHOW,
I DON'T MAKE PROMISES I CAN'T KEEP.

AND I CAN'T PROMISE I'LL NEVER LEAVE.
BUT I'LL ALWAYS.
I WILL ALWAYS
RETURN.

During applause, LOUIS approaches the
stage, they kiss.

LOUIS
Where did you go?

MITCH
The sitter got sick. It sounded bad, but she's fine. I had to drop the kids
off at the movies. Are we okay, Louis ?

LOUIS
Of course we are.

INEZ
Well I'm not.

LOUIS
Mama--

INEZ
I don't mind you making your own mistakes, but, Baby, please don't make
mine. There's a hundred men out there, all happy to pay a little for what
this guy wants for free. Sure, they're not permanent, but neither is this
one.

LOUIS
How do you know?

INEZ
He left his wife. Why wouldn't he leave you?

LOUIS
Like dad left you.

INEZ
Do not mention that man to me!

LOUIS
You're getting old and bitter. Is that what you want? You have to forgive
that man.

INEZ
Even if he never asked?

MITCH
(approaching) Especially if he never asked.

INEZ
(scowling) You people are crazy. I'm going home.

LOUIS

I'll walk you.

JEAN

You're busy here. I'll--

LOUIS

They need your piano more than they need my hovering. It's okay. Don't stop the music.

INEZ

(at the door) No. No! You stay here.

LOUIS

Mama--

INEZ

I have walked these streets more than you have, honey. Just---Let me be.

SCENE 2

BUDDY faces out, sitting with Agneau while action takes place behind him.

As he begins to sing, there's a lighting change. BUDDY moves into the space occupied by the bar.

"Come with Me/He Should Know"

BUDDY

COME WITH ME.
ON THE WAY, I'D TAP THEM, I'D SAY.
COME WITH ME.
HAH. COME WITH ME.

MITCH

Come on. Let's go.

LOUIS

Mom-- She went home.

BUDDY

SO THEY GOT UP AND FOLLOWED.
KEEPING LOW.
UNDER THE SMOKE.
HARDLY SEE,
BUT, ANYONE I DID SEE, I SAID COME WITH ME,
AND I KNOW I TOUCHED ADAM, GOD, I SWEAR I TOUCHED ADAM.

ADAM sits on his barstool in dim, flickering light, staring ahead, unmoving. The same pose as the start of the show. He remains there.

INEZ

This way, baby. Jean?

JEAN

(coughing)

INEZ

Jean, baby! Oh God. Louis! LOUIS!

INEZ and JEAN freeze in their pose from the start of the show, at the piano, JEAN on the ground.

LOUIS

Mama? (leaves Mitch, turns back, peering through the smoke for INEZ)

BUDDY

I THOUGHT THEY WERE RIGHT BEHIND ME.

I HAD TO MOVE SO FAST.
I KICKED THE BACK DOOR DOWN,
THEN FINALLY LOOKED BACK
TO SEE HIM
FROZEN.
PARALYZED.
AND I COULDN'T GO BACK,
C'MON, HOW COULD I GO BACK, THERE WERE
ALL THOSE PEOPLE COUNTING ON ME!
WE GET OUTSIDE AND I HEAR MITCH SCREAM--

MITCH
Louis!

BUDDY
Mitch. No.

MITCH
I made a promise!

BUDDY
So he took off. I could have gone in after him. I didn't.

MITCH re-enters the bar, finds LOUIS, they
look around futilely. They embrace and
freeze in this position, the same as their
position at the start of the show.

BUDDY
I could have tried to reach Adam. I didn't.

BUDDY
COME WITH ME.
HAH. COME WITH ME.
YEAH. OKAY. I SAVED A FEW MEN.
BUT ADAM WAS RIGHT.
I NEEDED HIM!
AND WHEN PEOPLE LIKE YOU GO
AND CALL ME A HERO
I WANT TO BE SICK.

AGNEAU
Listen. It's okay. You did--

BUDDY
He needed me!

UNCLE
(oily) HE SHOULD KNOW.

AGNEAU
NO!

UNCLE

HE'S A GOOD MAN, HE'S A GOOD MAN,
YOU OUGHTTA TELL HIM,
HE SHOULD KNOW.

AGNEAU
AIN'T TELLIN' NO ONE, NO!

UNCLE
(chidingly) HE HAS MADE HIS BLUNDERS TOO!
HOW COULD HE LOOK DOWN ON YOU?

AGNEAU
NO! HE WOULD LEAVE ME HERE ALONE!

UNCLE
THEN BURN THE ALTAR YOU'VE PUT HIM ON!

BUDDY
HE NEEDED ME TO BE HIS SANCTUARY,
TOLD HIM I WAS FOR REAL AND I'D NEVER GO.

UNCLE
YOU THINK HE'S A HERO, HE SHOULD KNOW
(A SLOW DAMNATION, OH!)

AGNEAU
NO! NO ONE, NO ONE KNOWS!

BUDDY
I TOLD HIM I WOULD SAVE,
LET HIM GO TO HIS GRAVE,
NOT KNOWING HOW I FEEL, OH!

UNCLE
HE'S A HERO,
HE'S YOUR HERO,
GO ON AND TRY HIM,
HE SHOULD KNOW!

AGNEAU
HE'D LEAVE ME HERE! NO!

BUDDY
HERO, I WAS HIS HERO.
ADAM. I WOULD SHOW HIM WHAT WAS HAPPENING, IF
I COULD ONLY TALK TO HIM.

UNCLE
SEE, HE'S PUT HIMSELF IN HIS OWN HELL.
YOU SHOULD TELL HIM.
YOU SHOULD TELL HIM.

BUDDY
TALK TO HIM, TALK TO HIM.

TALK TO HIM, TALK TO HIM.

AGNEAU
MAYBE YOU SHOULD!

BUDDY
WHAT?

AGNEAU
MAYBE YOU SHOULD, TALK TO HIM, I MEAN.

BUDDY
HE NEEDED ME!

UNCLE
NOW YOU'RE THE ONE IN NEED,
BUT HE CAN'T DO AUGHT BUT WALLOW,
YOUR QUEER HERO!

AGNEAU
STOP SAYING THAT!

BUDDY
HE NEEDED ME!

UNCLE
TELL HIM AND WATCH HIM GO,
YOUR LITTLE QUEER HERO.
OF EVIL, HE SHOULD KNOW
HOW HELL FIRE FEELS!

AGNEAU
OH HE SHOULD KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE,
SHOULD KNOW!

BUDDY
OH, HE SHOULD, HE SHOULD KNOW,
KNOW, KNOW, HOW I FAILED HIM,
HE SHOULD KNOW.

UNCLE
QUEER HERO!
QUEER HERO!
QUEER HERO!
QUEER HE—

BUDDY
NEEDED ME!
NEEDED ME!
NEEDED ME!
NEEDED—

AGNEAU
STOP! (to Buddy) LOOK HOW YOUR EGO WANTS

TO TAKE THIS WHOLE THING ON,
WELL, BUDDY, YOU'RE NOT IN CHARGE OF LIFE.
YOU'RE NOT GOD!
YOU'RE JUST A MAN.

BUDDY
HE NEEDED ME!

AGNEAU
YOU DIDN'T SET THAT FIRE.

BUDDY
BUT I-

AGNEAU
YOU DIDN'T SET THAT FIRE!

BUDDY
BUT-

AGNEAU
YOU DIDN'T SET THAT FIRE!

BUDDY
What are you saying?

UNCLE
HEH. NOW HE KNOWS.

AGNEAU
What do you think I'm saying?

UNCLE
Now watch him betray you.

BUDDY
No. No way. Don't even joke like that. It was...it was some frat-boy. Or one of those KKK types. Or a religious nut.

UNCLE
Your queer hero.

AGNEAU
Part of you had to know.

BUDDY
One of those KKK types.

AGNEAU
You must remember what happened that night.

BUDDY
Some religious nut.

AGNEAU

Don't you remember what I said?

BUDDY

...when I kicked you out...

AGNEAU

See? You knew. You had to know, and you came here anyway...

BUDDY

No! I never thought that anyone could...

UNCLE

Someone did.

AGNEAU

I was drunk. Angry. I didn't know it would-

BUDDY

All those people. Adam. You monster.

UNCLE

Monster-killer.

AGNEAU

No. No! You do for me what I did for you!

UNCLE

Leave him here! Queer hero!

AGNEAU

Make it okay! Make it okay!

UNCLE

Let him suffer. Here alone.

AGNEAU

I hardly even remember. Maybe I didn't even-

BUDDY

I'm calling the police.

UNCLE

Go your way! Mind your own!

AGNEAU

No! No! Make it okay! I helped you. Now you forgive me!
Forgive me!

BUDDY

Forgive you?

AGNEAU

Yes. Please. Forgive me.

BUDDY

I would, but... Well it's like you said. I'm not God. Enjoy your pills,
Agneau.

UNCLE

Yes. Let's.

UNCLE uncovers the pills. Counting begins
again.

SCENE 3

INEZ

It's hot out there. I need money for a cab. (Rummages around in Jean's tip jar, pulls out the Gay Pride sticker). What the hell is this? (shrugs, goes back to rummaging in the tip jar. Pulls out money.)

JEAN

(approaching) Mom! I need that!

INEZ

Fine. Take it. (Slaps the sticker on Jean's chest.)

JEAN

(argues quietly with Inez over the money)

Lights up on the "back room" area where Agneau and Adam had previously been caught. AGNEAU is there, sitting quietly, UNCLE standing over his shoulder. MITCH enters.

MITCH

(surprised) Oh. Didn't know anyone was--. Just needed a place to count the t-- (suddenly aware he's carrying a lot of money, turns to go, but stops short) Hey, are you all right?

AGNEAU

Did you mean it?

MITCH

Mean what?

AGNEAU

What you sang out there. To that guy.

MITCH

Course I did.

UNCLE

He's a liar.

AGNEAU

Why so sure?

MITCH

Because I love him.

UNCLE

He can't love. Love is for humans.

AGNEAU

Love is for...women.

UNCLE

You sweet on him, boy? You wanna be his woman?

MITCH

Do you want to be alone? I can just--

AGNEAU

I want--

MITCH

Pardon me?

AGNEAU

Your hand (takes MITCH'S hand, unbuttons his shirt's top buttons with another hand).

MITCH

What are you---

"Take From Him (Reprise)"

UNCLE

(disgusted) FINE. DO YOUR FILTH.
BUT TAKE FROM HIM, BOY.
DO YOU HEAR ME?
HE'S TAKING YOUR SOUL, YOU
TAKE FROM HIM!

AGNEAU

Fifty dollars, all right? You've got plenty there. (places MITCH'S hand on his chest).

MITCH

(tempted, hesitates)

UNCLE

LOOK AT HIM SHIVER,
LIKE A BABY DEER.
I THINK IT'S THE SEASON
FOR HUNTIN' SOME QUEER AND HE'LL DO.

AGNEAU

(guides MITCH'S hand down his chest with one hand, unbuttoning his shirt with the other)

UNCLE

TAKE HIS PRIDE.
TAKE HIS MONEY.
TAKE HIS HIDE.
LEAVE HIM BLOODY.
TAKE FROM HIM!

AGNEAU

(lets go of Mitch's hand, unbuttoning his jeans. The other hand shakily reaches for the knife in his back pocket)

MITCH

Wait. No. This...this isn't me.

AGNEAU

What?

UNCLE

What?

MITCH

And I don't think it's you, either.

UNCLE

It's both of y'all.

AGNEAU

I just--

MITCH

I know. We've all been horny and broke, man. But you don't have to be just that, you know? Anyway, you won't get any action back here this early.

AGNEAU

I just needed to...calm down.

MITCH

Yeah. I guess I did, too. So now that we're...calm, why don't you come on out here with me and stop lurking in the dark.

AGNEAU

I don't--

MITCH

I can introduce you to people. If you promise not to hustle them too much. What's your name, anyway?

AGNEAU

Agneau. Means lamb.

MITCH

Well, Lambchop, the benefit show is starting. Should be something!

UNCLE

Where are you going? Stay with me!

MITCH

And we've got cake and a few...SOFT drinks. Come on. I can count this church money later. (leads AGNEAU out)

AGNEAU

Church money?

MITCH

Well, yes. That's what this fundraiser is for. Our church.

UNCLE

What kind of--

AGNEAU

What kind of a church?

LOUIS

Gay church.

MITCH

And lesbian.

LOUIS

And lesbian.

UNCLE

(bursts into laughter)

AGNEAU

Gay church. Are you serious?

MITCH

What?

AGNEAU

It doesn't work that way. You can't have both. That's...

UNCLE

Profane.

AGNEAU

Profane.

MITCH

Now--

AGNEAU

Ain't that the word? Profane? When you take a curse and treat it like a blessing.

MITCH

It is a blessing.

UNCLE

Like hell!

AGNEAU

You're mocking God with that.

MITCH

You know... Agneau... Jesus said he'd leave the whole flock to find the one lost sheep. Maybe we're that sheep.

AGNEAU

Don't fucking preach at me.

UNCLE

Language, boy.

AGNEAU

You...you don't have the right.

MITCH

When God said that surely goodness and mercy would follow us, he didn't say, "except queers".

AGNEAU

That was...I don't know. Implied. Know your place, man. Do your filth if you have to, but this... God won't be mocked. You should read the Bible.

MITCH

We are the Word. Made made flesh.

AGNEAU

Flesh can burn.

LOUIS

Stop it! That's vile.

AGNEAU

Pick one. Heaven or hell. God or flame.

LOUIS

No, it doesn't have to be like that! We can live a good life. Mitch showed me that.

MITCH

Yeah. Look at us.

AGNEAU

Yeah, look at you. You're just another Sodomite fraud.

MITCH

The Bible says the sin of Sodom was not taking care of the poor. God does love you, Agneau.

AGNEAU

But you have to pay a whore to love you. (Rips cross from Mitch's neck and throws it to the ground)

LOUIS

(lunges at AGNEAU)

MITCH

You get away from us. (holds Agneau and Louis away from each other. In so doing, he's a little rough with Agneau. Ideally, Agneau falls.)

BUDDY
(intervenes) Out! Get Out!

AGNEAU
He started it.

BUDDY
Knowing you both, I'm sure you gave him a reason. Get out.

AGNEAU
But not him? You got a problem with me?

BUDDY
It's my job to keep these people safe. I got a problem with anyone that messes that up. Now shut up and go.

AGNEAU
No place is safe, Buddy. (picks up the cross from the floor) You'll burn.
(Exits.)

BUDDY
What?

SCENE 4

AGNEAU'S SQUALID APARTMENT. SUMMER 1974.

Agneau is scraping pills across the table, counting them out, dropping them into a pill bottle.

AGNEAU

Thirty-one. Thirty-two.

UNCLE

Good. You're done.

AGNEAU

No. One more.

UNCLE

Thirty-two died. Thirty-two is plenty.

AGNEAU

One more!

UNCLE

This is enough! Do it! Now!

AGNEAU

(Picking up one more pill.) One. More! (takes the pill, chasing it with the other pills slowly) Thirty...thirty-three.

Lights spotlight on Agneau. Picks up the knife and lies back, waiting. A lighting change reveals ADAM, MITCH and LOUIS, INEZ and JEAN, and MARCY in their poses from the start of the show. They break their poses to move into position behind AGNEAU as the music begins.

MITCH

HE COMES WITH US.

ADAM, INEZ

NO.

MITCH

HE DIED FROM THE FIRE.

LOUIS

HE SET THE FIRE. ALL THOSE PEOPLE.

INEZ

MY PEOPLE.

MITCH

UNCLE
STRUCK A LITTLE MATCH.

ADAM
HE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE!

MITCH
DID HE?

LOUIS
ARE YOU SURE?

UNCLE
NOW YOU KNOW THE CATCH.

ADAM
HE TOOK MY LIFE!

MITCH
DID HE?

LOUIS
ARE YOU SURE?

UNCLE
FAGGOT NEVER LEARNS. YOU'LL BURN!

ADAM
(to Uncle) HE COMES WITH US.

UNCLE
NO.

ADAM
AGNEAU, MY KIND OF GUY

MARCY
NOBODY EVER NEEDS TO SWEAT IN CHURCH, AGNEAU.

AGNEAU
THERE'S A MAN UPSTAIRS, HERE INSIDE OF ME.

LOUIS
TAKE A STICKER. SHOW YOUR PRIDE.

AGNEAU
I CAN'T RUN AWAY AND I CAN'T MAKE HIM LEAVE.

UNCLE
WHEN THE SINNIN'S THROUGH

MARCY, ADAM, LOUIS
TESTIFY-YI-YI-YI

AGNEAU
HE WON'T BE REPLACED AND I WON'T BE REPRIEVED.

ADAM, LOUIS
FIRMLY COUNTERCULTURAL.

UNCLE
SPIRIT'S HELL IS DUE.

MITCH, MARCY, ADAM, LOUIS
MAKE-UP, IN JESUS, IN...

UNCLE
WHEN THE SINNIN'S THROUGH.

MITCH
WE'RE THE LITTLE LAMB AGNEAU.

UNCLE
NOTHING YOU CAN DO, YOU'LL BURN!

AGNEAU
AND THE MAN UP STAIRS WILL NEVER LOVE ME. NO THE MAN UPSTAIRS WILL NEVER LOVE ME!

ADAM
PLEASE. COME WITH US. WE FORGIVE YOU. (looks at Inez who looks away) I FORGIVE YOU.

AGNEAU
IT'S NOT ENOUGH. NOT FOR ME. (takes Adam's hand) THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS VIOLENCE.

ADAM
AND THE VIOLENT BEAR IT AWAY.

ADAM begins to depart, with the others,
except Inez, who waits.

LOUIS
YOU COMING MAMA?

INEZ
(surveys Uncle and Agneau, looks at her sons) YEAH. I DO BELIEVE I AM.

INEZ follows the others, Adam is the last
to go.

UNCLE
(to Agneau) YOU STAY RIGHT HERE.

AGNEAU

(reaching towards the others as they go) SANCTUARY!

Lights out.

SCENE 5

OUTSIDE THE CHARRED REMNANTS OF THE UP STAIRS LOUNGE.

REGINALD

Are you sure you want to do this?

BUDDY

Did you know that the cops already knew about Agneau. But they never even tried to arrest him.

REGINALD

Typical.

BUDDY

I'm done with this city. Gonna move up to Arkansas, I think. I got kin up there.

REGINALD

Better you than me. I'll hold out here. For now.

BUDDY

You can stand it? All those people asking about it? Wanting to talk?

REGINALD

SO THEY ASK "WHAT WAS IT LIKE? HOW DID YOU GET OUT?"
AND I REALLY DON'T REMEMBER.
SO THEY SAY, "SO SORRY ABOUT MARCY. I KNOW SHE WAS YOUR..."
BUT THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE WAS TO ME. AND I DON'T TELL.

WHY'S THERE ALWAYS GOTTA BE A WORD
FOR WHAT SOMEONE IS TO YOU?
FRIEND, LOVER, GRANDMA MOTHER,
AIN'T IT ENOUGH THAT WE LOVED ONE ANOTHER?
ALWAYS GOTTA BE A WORD,
FOR WHAT SOMEONE MEANS TO YOU.
WHERE THEY COME FROM, WHERE THEY'RE GOING,
LIKE HOW TO GRIEVE DEPENDS ON KNOWING.

SO THEY SAY "AT LEAST NOW, THERE'S AWARENESS."
AND I SAY "AWARENESS OF WHAT?"
I WAS ALWAYS AWARE THAT THESE BUILDINGS WERE OLD.
I WAS ALWAYS AWARE THAT THE NOPD IS A JOKE.
I WAS ALWAYS AWARE THAT THE MEN IN CHARGE
DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT A FEW POOR QUEERS.

WHY'S THERE ALWAYS GOTTA BE A WORD
FOR SOMETHING YOU WENT THROUGH?
BIG MOMENT, GALVANIZING,
A TURNING POINT, CAPITALIZING.
ALWAYS GOTTA BE A WORD, FOR WHAT JUST HAPPENED TO YOU.

WELL, THERE IS NO WORD.
THINGS HAPPEN, SOMETIMES.

SOMETIMES THEY ARE EVERYTHING.
SOMETIMES YOU LOSE EVERYTHING.
SHE WAS EVERYTHING
AND I WON'T FORGET,
AND I SWEAR I'LL NEVER LET ANOTHER LOVE DIE IN SILENCE.

BUDDY

(rushing to comfort REGINALD) It's okay. It's okay. Listen. We don't have to go through with this.

REGINALD

Oh no. You're not getting off that easy.

Together, they enter the charred remains of the Up Stairs Lounge. Late Summer, 1974.

BUDDY

Hello? Adam? Are you here? Ah, fuck. I feel ridiculous.

REGINALD

It was your idea.

BUDDY

It was Agneau's idea. Not the greatest example. Talking to people who aren't here.

REGINALD

They're still here, Buddy. They just...go inside. And I'm going outside. Call if you need me.

BUDDY

Listen, Adam, I... I want you to know that...I... miss you... and... I don't know what to say. (after a moment, and a deep breath) Adam. Adam, I...I loved you. I love you and I miss you and it hurts so much 'cause I'm without you. More than I ever thought it would... And I'm lying. I'm fucking standing here lying to no one. Yes. It hurts. It's not because I'm without you. It hurts because I left you behind. You remember that summer we went down to Grand Isle? You decided you were going to walk out into the Gulf as far as you could. You went too far, of course, so I have to strip down, swim out and bring you back. Remember us lying there on the shore, coughing up brine? I was bare-ass nekkid and you were in your robe, splayed out on the sand like Venus on her shell. That's when I decided you were someone I could care about. Someone I could save. Fuck. I DO think I'm God sometimes. But I'm not. And, Adam, you have to believe me: if I were, you'd still be alive. I didn't mean to leave you there. Every part of me wishes you'd... Wishes you'd stood the fuck up! Moved! Run! Something! But no. It was just like at the beach. You just...waited to be saved, like it was fine with you if you just died. That's where I went wrong. Trying to save someone who didn't want saving. Trying to save you instead of loving you. No. I didn't love you. Not the way you wanted. Not the way you deserved. I said I did, while you knew I didn't. And that lie broke your heart every day. I'm sorry for that. And I'm sorry you're gone. And I'm sorry I didn't do better. But I'm just a man. I did the best I could. And that's just going to have to do.

SCENE 6

Another bar, later. Regina in dim light
adjusts her wig. Inspects her boobs,
determines that they are not big enough,
removes MARCY'S padding, installs pads.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen: Miss Regina Goodman!

Spotlight up on REGINA.

"Carry On"

REGINA (formerly REGINALD)

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY
NURSING MY CHILDHOOD DREAMS
IN A LITTLE HOUSE IN A LITTLE TOWN, FULL OF
BIG FAMILY.
GRANDMA WOULD SAY TO ME
THAT I HAD A DESTINY.
AND THAT, IF I WERE A GOOD BOY I COULD
BE ANYTHING.
WELL, GRANDMA DOESN'T SPEAK TO ME ANYMORE.
GUESS I COULDN'T BE THAT GOOD BOY SHE WAS HOPING FOR.

BUT I COULD THINK.
I COULD HEAR.
I COULD LEARN ENOUGH TO OVERCOME MY FEAR.
I COULD BE
TRULY ME,
EVEN IF IT MEANT I LOST MY FAMILY.
I COULD CARRY ON
CARRY ON!
CARRY ON!
CARRY ON!

STILL NOT THE PERSON GRANDMA PRAYED I'D BE,
BUT I'M STILL HOLDING TO THESE CHILDHOOD DREAMS.
MAYBE I WON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH, OR EVER LEARN TO PLEASE.
BUT I CAN SHARE THE WORD THAT LIVES INSIDE OF ME!

I CAN SPEAK,
I CAN TEACH,
I CAN MAGNIFY THE COMPASSION I'VE RECEIVED.
I CAN BUILD.
I CAN SING.
I CAN HONOR ALL THE LOVES
THAT HAVE PASSED AWAY FROM ME,
BY SHARING ALL THE GOOD THAT THEY HAVE EVER SHOWN TO ME.
I CAN LIVE MY LIFE!
I CAN CARRY ON.
CARRY ON!
CARRY ON!

Lighting change to reveal ADAM, MITCH and LOUIS, JEAN and INEZ, and MARCY in their poses from the start of the show. CURTAINS.