



WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFE

A New Musical

WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFÉ
CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

Cast size 11, 6 women and 5 men. Actors serve as customers during Café and bar scenes. Characters can be of unspecified age, except Cynthia and Anne, about 40 and Katie, 18. Casting can be color-blind except for Alexis and Marcus, an African American couple. All female roles can be sung by an alto; all male roles by a baritone bari-tenor.

1. JOE, (m) a recovering alcoholic, former bar owner, and no-nonsense co-proprietor of the Hard Luck Café, with a soft spot for his second wife, Mimi
2. MIMI, (f) Joe's kind, but preoccupied wife, also in recovery, and yearning for connection with her estranged children.
3. DAN, (m) a nice-guy, gun-shy waiter in recovery, studying to be a financial planner.
4. HAZEL, (f) a lively, street-wise waiter, finishing college and volunteering at the detox unit.
5. ALEXIS, (f) waiter/nurse in recovery, at the end of her rope with long-term boyfriend Marcus.
6. MARCUS, (m) recovering addict and commitment-phobic boyfriend of Alexis.
7. GREG, friend of Marcus and Dan's from rehab, mourning the loss of his partner, Tom.
8. ANNE, (f) a disenchanted single clinical psychologist and Cynthia's lifelong friend.
9. KATIE, (f) Cynthia's angry teenaged daughter, about to go to college.
10. RICHARD, (m) a self-absorbed "drying drunk", periodically in recovery.
11. CYNTHIA, (f) a care-worn, alcoholic divorced woman, mother of 18 year old Katie.

Synopsis
Welcome to the Hard Luck Café

The story of a friendship between two women intertwines with those of the colorful staff and patrons of the Hard Luck Café, owned by recovering alcoholics, Joe and Mimi. The Café, known for its friendly atmosphere and all-day breakfasts, provides employment and an opportunity for those recently out of rehab to reintegrate. Together Joe and Mimi have helped many lost souls get back on their feet. A favorite breakfast place for Anne, a therapist, and her lifelong friend Cynthia, a divorced mother estranged from her teenaged daughter, Katie, the Hard Luck Café eventually welcomes Cynthia as a fragile recruit aiming to get her life back on track. The staff of the Hard Luck, - the charmingly naïve Dan, the street-wise Hazel, and the frustrated Alexis, - support one another and shore up their patrons in recovery, even as they seek to restore love to their own fractured lives. Patrons, including Greg, grieving for his partner, Tom, Alexis's commitment-phobic boyfriend, Marcus, and the drying drunk Richard, hang out in the Café as they used to hang in bars, knowing that at the Hard Luck Café they will find support for the struggle, or, if need be, a figurative swift slap upside the head. Through shared experiences, friendship and the "grid-dle" therapy served up at the Café, Cindy and her coworkers learn to overcome regret and live gratefully day by day. Not everyone survives. After grieving the loss of their friend Greg, staff and patrons gather to celebrate Cindy's long delayed graduation from college, Katie reemerges, cautiously acknowledging her mother's transformation.

Time: Present time, over the course of about one year.

Setting: An unidentified urban area

WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFE

Act I

Scene I Hard Luck Café
Scene II Cynthia's Home
Scene III Hard Luck Café, a few days later
Scene IV Jimmy's Bar
Scene V Hard Luck Café- 2 weeks later
Scene VI Hospital room
Scene VII Hard Luck Cafe- a few weeks later
Scene VIII Halfway house

Act II

Scene I Hard Luck Café- six weeks later
Scene II Hard Luck Café- several months later
Scene III Phone call
Scene IV Anne's office
Scene V Hard Luck Café, a short time later and after
 hours
Scene VI The arboretum
Scene VII A graveyard

Epilogue

Scene VIII Hard Luck Café, months later

SONG LIST

ACT ONE

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFÉ | ALL |
| 2. | DIVORCED WHITE MALE | Hazel, Mimi, Alexis |
| 3. | THIS HOUSE WAS ONCE A HOME | Cynthia |
| 4. | LEAVE ME ALONE | Cynthia |
| 5. | BE HONEST WITH ME | Alexis (Mimi/Hazel) |
| 6. | CHOOSIN' | Marcus |
| 7. | PAL FOR THE NIGHT | Richard |
| 8. | WHAT DO WOMEN WANT? | Joe, Marcus, Dan |
| 9. | NOW YOU'VE DONE IT | Cynthia |
| 10. | LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN | Anne |
| 11. | I TRIED TO ERASE MYSELF | Cynthia |

ACT TWO

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------|
| 12. | ONE FOOT | Cynthia |
| 13. | I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL
NIGHT, BUT INSTEAD | Dan (Hazel) |
| 14. | OBSESSED | Richard (Hazel) |
| 15. | 90 in 90 | Marcus, Dan |
| 16. | Delayed Gratification | Mimi, Alexis, Hazel |
| 17. | Today | Mimi/Joe |
| 18. | YOU ARE NOT MY MOTHER | Katie |
| 19. | GUILTY | CYNTHIA |
| 20. | MY FRIEND | Cynthia, Anne |
| 21. | TIME AND AGAIN | Marcus |

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 22. | TIME AND AGAIN, (Reprise) | Joe, Mimi |
| 23. | CHOOSE LIFE | ALL(No Anne, Katie) |
| 24. | AUTUMN WAS OUR FAVORITE TIME | Greg |
| 25. | FORGIVE, MOVE ON, LET GO | Joe, Mimi |

Epilogue

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------------|
| 26. | MAKING A COMEBACK | HAZEL, ALL |
| 27. | DAY BY DAY | ALL |
| 28. | HARD LUCK CAFÉ (Reprise) | ALL |

WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFE

Act I Scene I

(MARCUS enters and sings the intro to WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFÉ. MIMI, DAN, and HAZEL enter from the house and climb the stairs to the stage.)

(MUSIC #1: Welcome to the Hard Luck Café)

MARCUS

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS THE MISTAKES OF LIFE
WON'T EVER GO AWAY. YOU MAKE A BAD MOVE

MIMI

My name is MIMI and I'm an alcoholic.

MARCUS

YOU TAKE A WRONG TURN

DAN

My name's DAN and I'm an alcoholic.

MARCUS

YOU'D LIKE TO KISS THE PAST GOODBYE
AND JUST BE ON YOUR WAY.

HAZEL

My name is HAZEL and I'm an alcoholic.

MARCUS

BUT CLOUDS AND CLOWNS AND MORE BAD LUCK
STILL HAUNT YOU EVERY DAY

(The rest of the cast enters from the house and from UL/UR)

BUT YOU CAN'T LOSE HOPE, YOU CAN'T DESPAIR.
YOU CAN'T JUST SIT THERE IN YOUR UNDERWEAR!
COME ON DOWN TO THE CORNER PLACE
WHERE A SMILE AND A FRIEND WILL GREET YOUR FACE.

WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFE
WHERE WE'RE ALL ON OUR WAY
TO A BETTER LIFE.

ALEXIS

WE HAVE ABUSED.
WE'VE BEEN MISTREATED AND MISUSED.

JOE
BUT WE'VE JUST REFUSED
TO BE DEFEATED BY THE BLUES.

ENSEMBLE
WE HELP EACH OTHER SURVIVE.
WE HELP KEEP HOPE ALIVE.
'CAUSE WHEN THE CHIPS
ARE REALLY DOWN
THERE'S ALWAYS A FRIEND TO BE FOUND

HAZEL
AT THE HARD LUCK CAFÉ

HAZEL AND DAN
WHERE YOU KNOW WE'RE ALL ON OUR WAY
TO A BETTER LIFE.

MIMI
AND YOU KNOW THAT THINGS COULD BE WORSE.

ENSEMBLE
DON'T THROW YOUR LIFE INTO REVERSE.

ALEXIS
WELL YOU CAN YELL AND YOU CAN CURSE

ENSEMBLE
OR COME ON DOWN AND QUENCH YOUR THIRST.

MIMI
FILL YOUR CUP WITH COFFEE AND KINDNESS.

(During the rest of the song, the actors bring on the set pieces from offstage and set up the café.)

MIMI AND ALEXIS
HAVE A CHAT AND YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY.

ENSEMBLE
AND JOE'S ALWAYS HERE TO REMIND US:

JOE
HIT THE THROTTLE!GET THE LEAD OUT!
KICK THE BOTTLE!THROW THE BUM OUT!

ALL

HARD LUCK CAFE.
WHERE WE'RE MOVIN' FORWARD DAY BY DAY
TO A BETTER LIFE.

HAZEL

MAMA ALWAYS CALLED ME THE HARD LUCK KID.
WHEN THINGS COULD GO WRONG THEY USUALLY DID.

MARCUS

IF IT WEREN'T FOR HARD LUCK I'D HAVE NO LUCK AT ALL.
BUT SOMETIMES,

ENSEMBLE

WE HAVE US A BALL AT THE
HARD LUCK CAFE. THE HARD LUCK CAFE!

(If they haven't done so earlier, the actors playing KATIE and ANNE exit UR. The rest of the ensemble dances until the end of the number. ANNE and CYNTHIA's daughter, KATIE, enter the café UR and look around for a seat.)

ANNE

Your mom and I used to come here a lot. They serve a great all-day breakfast.

(Heads for a table)

KATIE

I'm not hungry.

ANNE

Just take a look at the menu. Maybe something will appeal to you.

KATIE

I said, I'm not hungry. Just coffee.

ANNE

O.K. *(Beat)*. You know, I wanted to talk to you about your mom before you leave for school.

KATIE

I figured. What is there to say?

DAN

Why so glum, ladies? Need coffee?

ANNE

Desperately, thanks.

(DAN pours into ANNE'S extended cup and then KATIE'S.)

DAN

Here you go. My name's Dan and if you'll excuse me, I'll be right back with some menus.

(DAN heads for the counter as focus shifts to HAZEL.)

HAZEL

(Approaches RICHARD with a pot of coffee and hands him a menu.)

Morning!

RICHARD

So it is.

(RICHARD extends his cup while continuing to read his newspaper.)

HAZEL

Do you want to hear about our specials or...?

RICHARD

I'll have the Number One.

HAZEL

How would you like your eggs?

RICHARD

Surprise me.

HAZEL

Scrambled? Fried?

RICHARD

(Finally looking up at HAZEL)

Allow me one break from the utterly predictable monotony of my day!

HAZEL

Scrambled with cheese is my favorite.

RICHARD

(Returns to his newspaper)

Don't ruin the surprise.

HAZEL

Gotcha.

(Turns on her heels and hands ticket sharply to JOE.)

Jerk!

JOE

Take it easy. He's probably just drying out.

HAZEL

I'll be on my best behavior.

(Focus returns to ANNE and KATIE.)

ANNE

Katie, this has been hell for you. And you must be pissed that you won't have your own room to come back to next school break.

KATIE

Not really. I don't plan to be back.

DAN

(Returning with menus)

Ladies, our specials today - homemade roast beef hash topped with a fried egg, buckwheat cakes with fresh blueberries, short or tall stack, and spinach feta cheese omelet. Need a minute to reflect?

ANNE

Yes, thanks.

DAN

OK. I'll check back later. (Departs)

ANNE

Katie, I hope you will consider my home to be yours. You are always welcome, no matter what.

(KATIE stares off into space)

I haven't given up on your mother. I'll never give up on her. I hope...

KATIE

(interrupting)

I know you and Cindy best buds, but how many times have you found her comatose on the floor or had to clean up after her?

(Beat) You might as well get used to it. She is never gonna stop. (Beat) Until she's dead.

(Focus shifts to JOE, who sees MIMI lost in thought at the counter.)

JOE

Mimi? Earth calling Mimi!

(A bit sharper)

MIMI!

MIMI

(Startled, coming out of a fog)

Oh! Sorry, Joe! I...Today is Brenda's 22nd birthday. I can't help wondering...how...where she is? Is she--?

JOE

Don't go there again, Mimi.

MIMI

It's not her fault she had me for a mother.

JOE

Mimi...It's not just every birthday, it's every day. What's the point? You've got to stop beating yourself up!

MIMI

Ah, Joe! How do you let go of your children! I wanted...a chance to make it up to them.

JOE

Maybe your kids will come around, maybe they won't. Are you going to put the rest of your life on hold waiting to find out?

MIMI

It's a huge hole in my life, Joe.

JOE

I know, Mimi, but staring at the holes doesn't fill 'em. Just keeps you from seeing what's right in front of you. Me, for instance.

MIMI

Oh, my darling Joe, you deserve better.

JOE

Will you stop already? I've married a broken record! You're lonely for your kids - I'm lonely for my wife!

(JOE shuffles off. MIMI is on the verge of tears, as HAZEL approaches and puts her arm around MIMI. Focus turns to DAN, greeting MARCUS and GREG, who have seated themselves.)

DAN

Hey guys! Great to see you!

MARCUS

(Shaking hands with DAN)

How's my main man?

DAN

(Shaking hands with Greg).

Not bad. Not bad at all. Greg, I hope you're keeping an eye on this guy.

GREG

Yeah, yeah. We watch out for each other, but this one's (gesturing his head toward Marcus), a bit all over the map.

MARCUS

(Ignores this. Addresses Dan)
Does this pay the bills while you launch your career as a financial planner?

DAN

Well, almost.

MARCUS

Save those tips!

DAN

Yeah, there's a winning strategy! Can I interest either of you in investing in your future?

MARCUS

I keep my assets under the mattress where I know they're safe.

GREG

Just gathering dust! Not working for you under there!

MARCUS

What do you mean? They're holding up the mattress!

DAN

You could get a new bed with the interest you've forgone.

MARCUS

You don't have to convince me, Danny boy. If I had anything to invest right now, you'd be the first to know. (Beat) Hey, here's Hazel!

HAZEL

Hi Marcus. Hi Greg.

MARCUS

You're lookin' good, Hazel!

HAZEL

Why, thank you Marcus.

(Checks to see if DAN agrees, but he's oblivious.)

GREG

Hazel, I hear about you all the time from Alexis and Dan.

HAZEL

I hope you'll listen to my side of it.

GREG

Believe me, they only sing your praises.

DAN

That's right! And I've told Hazel about our time together in treatment. First time in my life I really got to know a black guy and a gay guy, so it messed up my stereotypes but good!

MARCUS

(To Greg)

I didn't know you was *black*!

GREG

(To Marcus)

I didn't know you was *gay*!

DAN

Twenty-eight days of non-stop abuse.

MARCUS

Ol' Earnest Dan we called him.

GREG

He really wanted to understand the "black experience". What it's like to have all that rhythm and sexual prowess?

MARCUS

Funny, he wasn't that curious about being gay!

HAZEL

Thanks for the insight into this mysterious man.

(Giving DAN a friendly once-over)

Now, duty calls. Nice seeing you two.

MARCUS

Likewise, Hazel. Keep an eye out for our friend Dan. He's special.

HAZEL

(as she walks away)

Yes he is!

(Focus returns to KATIE and ANNE)

KATIE

Anne, I've gotta go...finish packing and figure out what to do with the rest of my stuff.

ANNE

You can store anything you want at my place. I'll be by soon and can pick it up.

KATIE

Don't hurry on my account. When she wakes up, I'm outta there.
(KATIE gets up to leave.)

ANNE

OK, Katie. Take care of yourself, and please, don't hesitate to call. Any time. Good...bye.

(Reaches out, but KATIE unceremoniously departs.)

My God. Cindy is really going down the tubes.

(As lights return to HAZEL and RICHARD, ANNE leaves money on the table and quietly departs.)

HAZEL

Can I take that for you?

RICHARD

What do you mean, take it for me? You could take it from me or take it for yourself, but under what circumstances would you take it for me? Induct me into the Clean Plate Club?

HAZEL

Got up on the wrong side of the bed?

RICHARD

Got up on the wrong side of the day. I generally miss this part if I can avoid it.

HAZEL

I hear you.

RICHARD

Look, I haven't had a drink in weeks. I don't mean to take it out on you, but I heard that this is a place where drying drunks are tolerated.

HAZEL

Tolerate is the operative word. We don't condone bad behavior.

RICHARD

Better a bad boy than a fool.

HAZEL

Would you like your check?

RICHARD

There you go again. You'd like to give me my check. Why don't you just say so!

HAZEL

Mimi told me there'd be days like this.

RICHARD

Who's Mimi?

HAZEL

She and Joe own the place. Kind of a public service for people in recovery - giving us jobs, helping us get back on our feet.

RICHARD

I don't need a job.

HAZEL

Lucky you.

RICHARD

You find me cross.

HAZEL

You're not the first grouchy customer. Believe me.

RICHARD

Why should I believe you? I don't even know you.

HAZEL

Good point. Will there be anything else?

RICHARD

No. That's enough abuse for one day. What if I leave you a big tip? Will you wait on me again?

HAZEL

I'm not for sale.

RICHARD

Look, I'm...sorry if I was an ass. Some people are better drunk.

HAZEL

Not in my experience. Give yourself time. You could be a closet nice guy.

RICHARD

Yeah, I'm really a wonderful person.

HAZEL

(Laughing) Well...It's been swell, but I really must tear myself away. Do drop in again.

(Walks to the counter where MIMI and HAZEL are out of Richard's earshot.)

NOT!

ALEXIS

Dare I ask?

HAZEL

Some days it takes all the self-control I have just to...

(Hits one fist against the other)

MIMI

I know it tries your patience, my dear, but weren't we all a bit testy at first?

HAZEL

You're saying I was no angel?

MIMI

I'm saying, we've got to find you a good man. Someone who'll give you backrubs...

HAZEL

And foot rubs!

(Glances in DAN'S direction, MIMI'S gaze following)

MIMI

You deserve the best. Checked the personals lately?

HAZEL

For those of us without iPads? Yeah.

(Pulls a well-worn copy out from under the counter.)

Who'd want to jump into that pool?

ALEXIS

There's got a be something...Wait! This one describes you to a T: "Savvy, street smart and sexy!"

HAZEL

"Successful and yet subservient?" Yeah, I read that one. Listen. This is the pick of the litter:

(MUSIC #2: Divorced White Male)

HAZEL

DIVORCED WHITE MALE
FORTY-ONE AND NONE THE
WORSE FOR WEAR.
NOT BAD LOOKING AND AS
CUDDLY AS A TEDDY BEAR.

IF YOU WANT SOMEONE WHO'S
HANDSOME AND SWEET.
KINDLY LAY YOUR
SELF AT MY FEET.
'CUZ I'M THAT RARE VINTAGE FIND. A
SINGLE, FORTY-ONE YEAR OLD MALE.

MIMI

(Grabbing the paper, continues)
STEP RIGHT UP.
LEAVE A MESSAGE. LET ME
HEAR YOUR VOICE.
GOD'S GIFT TO WOMEN IS
GEARING UP TO MAKE HIS CHOICE!
PLEASE BE BLOND AND BLUE-EYED.
WELL-ENDOWED. (Nods to Hazel)
CIGARETTES ARE NOT ALLOWED.
CUZ I'M THAT ONE OF A KIND.
A SINGLE FORTY-ONE YEAR OLD MALE.
(HAZEL, MIMI and ALEXIS alternate lines, slightly
accelerating speed.)

ALEXIS

BE SEXY, NOT SLUTTY

HAZEL

BE NORMAL, NOT NUTTY.

ALEXIS

NO HOARDERS. NO SNORTERS.

HAZEL
NO EGO DESTROYERS.

MIMI
NO POTHEADS. NO DEADHEADS.

ALEXIS
NO BRUNETTES. NO REDHEADS.

HAZEL
NOBODY AT ALL!

HAZEL, MIMI, ALEXIS
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

A DIVORCED WHITE MALE
KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR.

MIMI, ALEXIS
THE BALL IS IN MY COURT

HAZEL
AND I'LL
FIND SOMEBODY TO ADORE—

MARCUS
ME!

HAZEL, MIMI, ALEXIS
IF YOU'RE DROP DEAD GORGEOUS AND HALF WAY BRIGHT
YOU'RE LUCKY DAY MAY BE IN SIGHT

HAZEL
FOR WHEN I'VE MADE UP MY MIND

ALEXIS
YOU'LL LEAVE THE OTHERS BEHIND

MIMI
BECAUSE THERE'S NO BETTER FIND

HAZEL, MIMI, ALEXIS
THAN A SINGLE 41 YEAR OLD MALE.

MARCUS
Single forty-one year old?

(HAZEL sings, swinging her hips while circling a dish towel suggestively over her head, MIMI joins in.)

HAZEL, MIMI, ALEXIS
I SAID A SINGLE
FORTY-ONE YEAR OLD

HAZEL, MIMI,
READY AND WILLING AND EAGER AND ABLE WHITE MALE!

ALEXIS
(JOINS ON) MALE!

HAZEL, MIMI, ALEXIS
OH YEAH!

End Scene I

Scene II, Living room of CYNTHIA's house (corner of stage)

(A haggard-looking CYNTHIA, disheveled hair, rumpled clothing, stands surrounded by packing boxes, wads of newspaper, and liquor and beer bottles. Slowly she picks up a bottle and despondently salutes what has been her home.)

CYNTHIA

(MUSIC #3: This House Was Once A Home)

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THIS WAS A HOME.
THERE WAS A DAY OF HAPPINESS.
SOMETIMES A COZY FIRE TO BE FED.
A STORY TO BE READ.
A CHILD TUCKED INTO BED.

WHERE IS THE HOME THAT HELD A HEART?
WHERE IS THE HEART THAT HELD OUR DREAMS?
GONE WITH THE LOVE THAT BLEW APART.
LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS.

WAS IT A CHOICE AND WHY WOULD I CHOOSE?
NOTHING TO GAIN AND SO MUCH TO LOSE.
THERE WAS A DAY BUT NOW IT'S GONE.
TIME TO GET OUT AND MOVE ALONG.

(CYNTHIA takes a slow drink from her bottle as ANNE appears.)

Dammit, Anne! I told you not to come!

ANNE

Cindy, please! At least let me help you pack.

(Takes in the chaos, sits down on a box, dejected. Picks up an empty bottle from the floor.)

Jesus, Cynthia. I know how hard this has been for you, but you've got to pull yourself together.

CYNTHIA

Anne, don't start on me again! My life and choice of poison are no longer your business! I have my home for a few more days, and I'll be damned if you're going to come barging in here, offering me...therapy!

ANNE

(Continues to fold and pack throughout the following)
Cindy, I'm the daughter, the granddaughter, the sister of dead

alcoholics. Don't make me add best friend to that list! Look beyond your pain for Christ's sake and think about Katie! This can't be your legacy to her! Who else does she have? (Beat) Think about **her future**. You'll want to be there. She needs you. I need you, and I'm not going to stand by and watch you drink yourself to death!

CYNTHIA

You're not hearing me, Anne! Katie would be better off without me, and you - you can't tell the difference between a friend and a client.

(CYNTHIA sings pacing and begins to advance aggressively, while ANNE watches, eventually backing towards the door.)

(MUSIC #4: Leave Me Alone)

LEAVE ME ALONE
DON'T TRY TO CHANGE ME.
DON'T EVEN THINK OF REARRANGING MY MIND.
I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO LIVE
THE WAY I WANT TO LIVE.
YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT TO GIVE ME A HARD TIME!

WHO ASKED YOU TO COME HERE?
PUSHING INTO MY LIFE
WHAT ON EARTH MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN
STAND IN MY WAY?
IF I EVER NEED YOU
I KNOW WHERE TO FIND YOU.
TILL THEN I REMIND YOU TO
LEAVE ME ALONE!

YOU. YOU KNOW A LOT.
YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT
THE ANSWER TO MY PROBLEMS.
BUT YOU. YOU DON'T KNOW ME.
WHY CAN'T YOU SEE
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS?

(NOTE: THESE 16 measures added since recording was made)

THIS, THIS IS MY LIFE.
THIS IS MY PLAN
AND I'VE GOT ALL THAT I NEED TO SUCCEED.
YOU'VE HAD YOUR SAY.
STAY OUT OF MY WAY.

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO FIX ME.

DON'T THINK OF CALLING.
DON'T BOTHER TRYING.
I'M NOT JUST DYING TO TALK ON THE PHONE.
I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO DRINK.
I'VE GOT A RIGHT TO THINK
I CAN HAVE PRIVACY IN MY OWN HOME.
WHO ASKED YOU TO COME HERE?
PUT THE PAST BEHIND YOU.
ALL I WANT TO DO IS TO
FORGET YESTERDAY.

IF I EVER NEED YOU
I KNOW WHERE TO FIND YOU.
CLOSE THAT DOOR BEHIND YOU AND
LEAVE ME ALONE!

(ANNE gives up and leaves as door slams behind her.)

End Scene II

Scene III Hard Luck café, a few days later

(DAN stands talking with MARCUS, who is seated)

HAZEL

Alexis! Are you sure about this?

ALEXIS

It's got to be done.

(Heads for the table)

MARCUS

Hey, baby!

ALEXIS

Apologies, Dan, but...will you excuse us for a moment? I need to talk to Marcus. Alone.

DAN

No problem. Sounds serious!

(Shrugs at MARCUS and exits as ALEXIS glares at MARCUS.)

ALEXIS

Marcus. Where've you been?

MARCUS

Oh, you know, baby. So many meetings to keep me out of trouble-AA, NA, NBA. (*Shoots an imaginary basket. Beat*). Something wrong, baby? C'mon now. Sit down. Tell me about it.

ALEXIS

(Remains standing).

Marcus, don't "baby" me. I'm quittin' you! I just can't go on like this any...

MARCUS

But, baby!

ALEXIS

That's it! I've waited long enough. I want a husband, a home, children. I want the whole package, Marcus. I deserve it. But what am I doing...waitin' for you to grow up? You ain't never gonna change!

MARCUS

Change...?

ALEXIS

Yeah, Change!

(MUSIC #5: BE HONEST WITH ME)

ALEXIS

I NEED A MAN
TO SPEND MY DAYS WITH.
LOVE TO GROW WITH.
LOVE TO STAY WITH.
I NEED A MAN.
SOMEONE WHO LOVES ME TOO.
GOT A FEELIN' IT WON'T BE YOU.
AND IF YOU DON'T WANT ME BABY.

MARCUS

But, I do want you!

ALEXIS

LET ME GET ON WITH MY LIFE.
LET ME FIND THE MAN WHO'LL
BE PROUD TO MAKE ME HIS WIFE.

BE HONEST WITH ME.
BE HONEST WITH ME.
YES THAT IS MY PLEA.
BE HONEST WITH ME.

BE HONEST WITH ME.
OR JUST LET ME BE.
THAT'S MY REMEDY.
BE HONEST WITH ME.

(MIMI and HAZEL join ALEXIS, as she sings:)

ALEXIS

YOU SAID TO ME
I MUST BE PATIENT.

MARCUS

Well, it wouldn't hurt!

ALEXIS

THAT YOU NEEDED A BIT MORE TIME.
WELL, WAS I PATIENT
OR WAS I A FOOL?

MARCUS

I'm not going to answer that!

ALEXIS

WATCHIN' YOU JUST KEEP YOUR COOL, MAN.
I DON'T SEE YOUR LOVE GROWIN'.
YOU WILL NEVER BE MINE.
IT'S UP TO ME TO GET GOIN'

CUZ YOU'RE JUST WASTIN' MY TIME.

BE HONEST WITH ME.
OR JUST SET ME FREE.
YES THAT IS THE KEY.
BE HONEST WITH ME.

(HAZEL and MIMI join in harmony.)

BE HONEST WITH ME.
HAVE MERCY ON ME.

ALEXIS, WITH HAZEL, AND MIMI

I NEED YOU TO BE
HONEST WITH ME.

MARCUS

But...

ALEXIS

(Sings verse while MIMI and HAZEL sing backup.)

H-O-N-E-S-T-Y
HONESTY IS WORTH A TRY

DON'T GIVE ME AN ALIBI
NO MORE WILL I LIVE A LIE

H-O-N-E-S-T-Y
IT'S TIME FOR ME TO SAY
I'VE GOT TO SAY
GOODBYE.

(MARCUS, looking stricken, stumbles out of the café.)

Lights fade. End of Scene III

Act I Scene IV - JIMMY'S Bar, later.

GREG and CYNTHIA are seated at opposite ends of the bar, both with drinks.)

(MARCUS enters and is taken aback to see GREG).

MARCUS

Jesus, Greg! What in hell are you doing here?

GREG

What? You expected I'd go to a gay bar?

MARCUS

Hell, no! I wasn't expecting you to be *bad*! I mean, Alexis *offed* me. What's your excuse?

GREG

It's...the anniversary of Tom's death.

MARCUS

God, has it been a year?

GREG

A year today. (Beat) Tom made me promise, literally on his deathbed, that I'd go into rehab. Which I did. But, sometimes I wonder, what was the point? These fall nights...

MARCUS

What is it about fall?

GREG

We met in the fall. He died in the fall. Fall was our season.

MARCUS

He was a beautiful man, ...and so young.

GREG

Thirty-eight. And no one can take his place.

MARCUS

(Puts his arm around GREG and embraces him.)
I know. (Beat).

GREG

You think nobody dies anymore, but they've only got so many drugs, you know? First line, second line,... end of the line.

(Raises his glass)
Here's to Tom!

MARCUS

Oh, man! Don't make me remind you what your doctor said! Now I got responsibilities!

(MUSIC: #6 Choosin') <<Track 6)

YOU'RE EITHER CHOOSIN' TO LIVE OR
YOU'RE CHOOSIN' TO DIE.
THERE'S NO IN BETWEEN FOR YOU MY FRIEND AND
THAT'S THE REASON WHY
I WON'T STAND HERE AND SMILE IF
YOUR GONNA GET HIGH.
YOU'RE EITHER CHOOSIN' TO LIVE OR
YOU'RE CHOOSIN TO DIE

(MARCUS opens his mouth as if to sing another verse when GREG interrupts, holding up his hand).

GREG

And they call me a drama queen. Enough already!

MARCUS

That was a close call. C'mon. Let's grab some coffee at the Hard Luck.

GREG

(Exasperated)

God! Its hard to be around someone who's so sanctimonious.

(Leaving money on the counter).

Shortest relapse on record.

(They exit.)

(Focus shifts to RICHARD, who has entered the bar and is observing CYNTHIA, reasonably dressed and made up, seated alone at the counter).

RICHARD

Hello, Miss. Can I join you?

CYNTHIA

I want to be alone.

RICHARD

Yeah, OK Greta..... Listen. I'm harmless. I just want someone to talk to.

CYNTHIA

Sorry. Not interested.

RICHARD

C'mon! I'm not looking to score here. I'm a great conversationalist, if I do say so myself. You'll warm up to me!

(MUSIC: #7 PAL FOR THE NIGHT)

IF YOU'RE A GOOD TIME GAL
OR A SOLITARY DRINKER
LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.
I CAN'T BEAR TO GO HOME.
I DON'T DARE BE ALONE.
LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.

WE CAN SIT HERE TOGETHER
AND COMPLAIN ABOUT THE WEATHER.
OR DISCUSS WHATEVER YOU LIKE
AND I WON'T BE A PEST
I WON'T MAKE YOU DEPRESSED.
IF YOU LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.

PLEASE DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU'D RATHER SIT ALONE HERE.
LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN.
IT IS PERFECTLY PLAIN
THAT YOU NEED A PAL FOR THE NIGHT.
I'LL BE YOUR ONE NIGHT FRIEND
YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN SO
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SO UPTIGHT.
AND I WON'T MAKE A PASS
I'LL JUST FILL UP YOUR GLASS
IF YOU'LL LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.
PLEASE, LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.

I CAN SEE QUITE CLEARLY THAT YOU
YEARN FOR CONVERSATION.

LET ME PLAY THE ROLE FOR THE NIGHT.
I WON'T TALK OFF YOUR EAR
CAN'T I BUY YOU A BEER?
LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.

WELL, THE EVENING'S YOUNG AND THE FUN HAS JUST BEGUN SO
LET'S NOT START IT OUT WITH A FIGHT.
WON'T YOU WIPE OFF THAT FROWN
AND LET ME SIT DOWN?
SO I CAN BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.
PLEASE, LET ME BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.
I JUST WANNA BE YOUR PAL FOR THE NIGHT.

CYNTHIA

Your insecurity is really not my problem. Not tonight. Not any night!

(Buries her face in her hands).

Offside

Leave the lady alone, buster.

RICHARD

The lady. Ok. Ok. ...the lady!

(Moves away, muttering to himself.)

(CYNTHIA is seen semi-staggering from the bar to edge of the dark stage. She pulls a flask from her purse, wanders tipsily for a short distance and sits down heavily, as if near a bush on a deserted street. She opens the bottle and holds it up to the light, singing in a half-spoken, tuneless stupor.)

CYNTHIA

What a comfort!
That you're with me tonight.
You fortify me! You're holding me tight.
I won't have to face the morning's light
Alone.

(long swig).

Right up to the end I can pretend
You're not my enemy. You are my friend!
(as she slumps)
You alone I can't offend.

(Night fades to early morning. CYNTHIA is partially concealed by a bush, but cars are beginning to be heard on nearby streets. She wakes, confused, disheveled, unable to understand at first where she is. She starts to get up, becomes ill, falls back. Finally, she is on her feet, stuffs the bottle inside her coat, walks a few steps, collapses).

Fade out.

End of Scene 1V

Scene V Hard Luck Café, later.

(JOE is behind the counter. DAN waits on a customer, MIMI is in the kitchen, as Marcus and Greg enter and sit down.)

GREG

So, enough about me. Are you holding up OK?

MARCUS

Hell no! I invested a lot of years in that woman. And she's off me - just like that!

GREG

Not just like that. You've been stringing that fine woman along for years.

MARCUS

I ain't stringin' nobody! I got just one woman in my life!

GREG

Well, then? I know you love her.

MARCUS

Hell, yes, I love her. She's my best friend! But in my neighborhood, you don't necessarily marry over that. Even Oprah ain't married!

GREG

What's Oprah got to do with it? From what I see, Alexis is her own woman.

MARCUS

And I don't want to disappoint her! (Beat)

GREG

Fair enough. What can I do to help?

MARCUS

No offense, Greg, but I don't know how much light you can shed on this.

GREG

Try me.

(DAN returns with coffee, and is all ears.)

(MUSIC #8: [What Do Women Want?](#))

MARCUS

WELLA WELLA WELLA
WELLA WELLA
WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

MARCUS AND DAN

WELLA WELLA WELLA
WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

DAN

DO THEY WANT NICE?

MARCUS

I GOT NICE

DAN

DO THEY WANT KIND?

MARCUS

I GOT KIND
WELL I GOT KIND

MARCUS AND GREG

I GOT SWEET

MARCUS

I GOT SWEET LOVE IN THE MORNING
FOR MY GIRL
WELLA WELLA WELLA

MARCUS, GREG AND DAN

WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?
WELL WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

MARCUS

CAN A MAN BE HUMBLE?

DAN AND GREG

BE SO HUMBLE

MARCUS

CAN A MAN BE AFRAID?

DAN AND GREG

BE AFRAID

MARCUS

CAN A BROTHER BACK DOWN?

WON'T BACK DOWN DAN AND GREG
 CAN HE RUN AWAY? MARCUS
 HE WON'T RUN AWAY DAN AND GREG
 CAN A MAN BE UNCERTAIN? MARCUS
 NO HE CAN'T. DAN AND GREG
 CAN A GUY BE SHY? MARCUS
 CAN'T BE SHY. GREG AND DAN
 CAN A MAN BE PRIVATE? MARCUS
 (Silence)
 AND CAN A GROWN MAN CRY? MARCUS, GREG AND DAN
 WELLA WELLA WELLA MARCUS
 WELLA WELLA WELLA
 WELLA WELLA WELLA MARCUS, GREG AND DAN
 WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?
 WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?
 DO THEY WANT MONEY? MARCUS
 THEY WANT MONEY GREG AND DAN
 IS IT EVER ENOUGH? MARCUS
 IT'S NEVER ENOUGH. GREG AND DAN
 FOR THE SEASON TICKETS MARCUS

GREG AND DAN
SEASON TICKETS

MARCUS
AND THE COUNTRY CLUB?

GREG AND DAN
AND THE COUNTRY CLUB

MARCUS
IS A MAN NOT WORTH IT

GREG AND DAN
HE'S NOT WORTH IT

MARCUS
UNTIL HE HAS THE BREAD?

GREG AND DAN
TIL HE GOT THE BREAD

MARCUS
DOES HE HAVE TO PLAY GOLF?

GREG AND DAN
DOES HE HAVE TO PLAY?

MARCUS
WELL I'D RATHER BE DEAD!

DAN
You don't like golf?

MARCUS
Man, that's not the point!
WELL, WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

MARCUS, GREG AND DAN
WELL, WHAT THE HELL DO WOMEN WANT!
WELL, WHAT DO WOMEN NEED?

MARCUS
WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE!

End of Scene V

Scene VI A hospital.

(A white-curtained enclosure. CYNTHIA appears asleep as HAZEL enters, but stirs when HAZEL speaks.)

HAZEL

Mrs. Crockett? Hi. I'm Hazel Martin - a volunteer at Renooze. Dr. Dutton tells me you're ready to check out-in more ways than one.

(CYNTHIA turns back towards the wall.)

HAZEL

I may be the last person you want to see right now, but here's the deal. The doctor says you come into treatment, or you won't survive. Are you on board with us, Mrs. Crockett?

CYNTHIA

(Turns to face HAZEL.)

He said...?

HAZEL

That's right. Maybe not tomorrow, but soon. (Beat) Have you been through treatment before?

CYNTHIA

No...but I know...I can't quit.

HAZEL

You'll surprise yourself. Not long ago I had this same conversation. Being stubborn is more useful when you're aim is to stay sober.

CYNTHIA

I...need to think about it.

HAZEL

(Ignores this.)

First, you spend several days in detox, whatever it takes to get your addiction under control. You will be made comfortable. Actually, you'll sleep through most of it.

CYNTHIA

I haven't...

HAZEL

Then, the fun begins. A month will pass before you know it. Most of us develop a strong support network. Some of my closest friends are former drunks. Our success rates are among the best!

CYNTHIA

Good for you.

(Turns away for a moment and then back to HAZEL.)
You're a volunteer?

HAZEL

Yes, and in recovery for about a year now. (Checking her watch).
Sorry. I gotta get to work. Is there someone I can call for
you?

(Hands her flip top cell phone.)

CYNTHIA

No, not really. (Beat) Maybe...my friend Anne.

(Enters a number and hands phone back to HAZEL.)
Thanks.

HAZEL

I'll call her and I'll see you tomorrow. Sleep well.
(Exits)

CYNTHIA

(MUSIC #9: Now You've Done It)

NOW YOU'VE DONE IT
YOU'VE HIT BOTTOM
WHAT'S LEFT BUT TO DIE?
NOW YOU'VE DONE IT.
IT'S ALL OVER.
NO NEED TO ASK WHY.
NOW YOU'VE GOTTEN WHAT YOU WANTED.
NO POINT TO DENY.
NOW YOU'VE FOUND IT.
HELL ON EARTH SO
KISS YOUR ASS GOODBYE.

WHEN YOU'RE HELL-BENT
ON DESTRUCTION
WHO'LL STAND IN YOUR WAY?
TAUNT THE DEVIL:
"COME AND GET ME"
WHAT'S THE PRICE TO PAY?

YOU'VE SOARED THE HEIGHTS. NOW
MINE THE DEPTHS
FOREVER AND A DAY.
JUST FORGET.
DON'T ASK FORGIVENESS
NOTHING'S LEFT TO SAY.

NOTHING'S LEFT TO SAY.
NOTHING'S LEFT TO SAY.

(Beat. CYNTHIA drifts off. ANNE enters, sits on CYNTHIA'S bed, and reaches out tentatively to stroke her hair.)

ANNE

Oh, Cindy, Thank God you're ...OK. You scared the hell out of me!

CYNTHIA

(Shifting slightly, faces ANNE)

Let me go, Anne.

ANNE

I can't do that, Cindy. You know I won't go down without a fight.

CYNTHIA

I've made such a mess of things. Especially with Katie...

ANNE

And you are not to blame for what happened to Katie!

CYNTHIA

You'll never convince me of that. I married the jerk.

ANNE

For God's sake, you couldn't know what he'd become--

CYNTHIA

(Interrupting)

You never liked him.

ANNE

I didn't want you to be alone! After Danny was killed, you were so... (Beat.) But, forget the past. You're here now. It's time to...

(MUSIC #10 Lay Your Burden Down)

LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN

WEARY TRAVELER.

LAY IT DOWN AND REST YOUR WEARY HEAD.

I AM HERE FOR YOU.

I WILL LISTEN TO

WHATEVER YOU SAY.

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR WAY

WEARY TRAVELER?

MADE A WRONG TURN.

LIFE HAS GONE ASTRAY.

NOTHING YOU CAN SAY
WILL DRIVE ME AWAY
SO LAY IT DOWN.
WHY DON'T YOU LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN?
(CYNTHIA rests her head in ANNE'S lap with eyes closed as
ANNE sings.)

THERE IS AN END IN SIGHT
OH WEARY TRAVELER.
THERE IS A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN REST THE NIGHT.
AND IN THE MORNING'S LIGHT
OH WEARY TRAVELER
YOU WILL FIND THE PEACE THAT YOU'RE
LONGING FOR TODAY, MY FRIEND

LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN
WEARY TRAVELER
I AM HERE TO LEND A HELPING HAND.
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
SO LAY IT DOWN.
NOW YOU CAN LAY YOUR BURDEN DOWN.

End of Scene VI

Act I, Scene VII Hard Luck Cafe, a few weeks later

ANNE

(Focus shifts to ANNE who enters, looking out of sorts, sits down, gets up and approaches MIMI.)
Good morning, can I speak with you a minute?

MIMI

Sure, sweetie. Want some coffee?

ANNE

No, thank you. I don't have much time. My name is Anne Winthrop.

MIMI

I'm Mimi. What can I do for you?

ANNE

My friend Cindy and I come in sometimes for your wonderful breakfasts.

MIMI

Thank you dear. I knew I'd seen you before. Don't tell me you found a hair in your omelette!

ANNE

No, no. Everything is fine, at least as far as that goes. Cindy...is in rehab right now, which is a good thing, but...

MIMI

Yes. Good for her.

ANNE

Yes. Well, let me get straight to the point. I know you hire people in recovery and soon, Cindy will need a job. She lost hers, as well as her home, her daughter, pretty much everything. I'm hoping you might help her get back on her feet.

MIMI

Her daughter?

ANNE

Is no longer in contact.

MIMI

I know something about that.

ANNE

I'm sorry. That's hard.

(Both women nod in silence.)
Cindy is a kind, decent person who got seriously off track. She needs far more than I can give her. (Beat) Are you hiring?

MIMI
Not any time soon, I'm afraid.

ANNE
She waited tables in college and I know she'd do her best.

MIMI
Joe doesn't want folks to make a career out of this place, but the economy is kinda tough right now, so we don't have much turnover.

ANNE
Please consider her if...She's just moved to an extended rehab program and...here's my card, just in case...

MIMI
You're a good friend, Anne. I'll let you know if something turns up.

ANNE
Thank you. Thanks for being here.

JOE
(JOE passes ANNE as she exits and he enters with produce bags, putting them on the counter.)
Good morning, Love. Who was that?

MIMI
Somebody's best friend.

JOE
And...?

MIMI
(Turns to give him a kiss, as she puts ANNE'S card in her pocket)
Nothing. Just a girl chat.

JOE
Don't give me that. I know a scheming look when I see one. Someone's got to watch out for the bottom line around here, MIMI, and you've either got your head in the clouds or in someone else's business!

End of ACT I Scene VII

Act I, Scene VIII, A halfway house, two months later.

(CYNTHIA is lying on a cot, reading the Big Book. ANNE approaches and they embrace.)

ANNE

Cindy! You're looking... so much better. How are you feeling?

CYNTHIA

Ashamed.... Grateful.... In equal measures. (Beat)
Oh, ANNE! How did I fall so far?

(MUSIC #11 I Tried to Erase Myself) <<Track 15>>

I TRIED TO ERASE MYSELF!
WIPE MYSELF OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.
ANNIHILATE, ERADICATE MYSELF.
OBLITERATE, ELIMINATE MYSELF.

BUT I ONLY DISGRACED MYSELF
DIDN'T VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE.
COULDN'T LIE IN THE BED I MADE.
NOR ESCAPE ALL I HAD BETRAYED.

BY SOME FLUKE OR UNDUE GRACE
I HAVE HELD ON TO MY SPACE.
I SHOULD BE DEAD, BUT SINCE I'M NOT
I'M GRATEFUL FOR HOW HARD YOU FOUGHT AND
GREEDY FOR ALL LIFE HAS GOT TO GIVE.

I WANT TO LIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE!

(Anne and Cynthia embrace)

End of Act I

Act II, Scene I Hard Luck Café, 6 weeks later.

(MARCUS walks in, first making sure that ALEXIS is not working.)

MARCUS

Is the coast clear?

(Heads for a table. HAZEL approaches with a coffee pot.)

HAZEL

No Alexis. Hey, Marcus. How're you doing?

MARCUS

Can't you see, Hazel? I'm a broken man! How about Alexis? Is she bad-mouthing me?

HAZEL

Oh hell to the no. Alexis has way too much dignity for that. She's moving on, Marcus...At least that's what she tells herself.

MARCUS

Have I still got any skin in the game?

HAZEL

Maybe that's the problem, Marcus. Alexis doesn't want to play games anymore.

MARCUS

But, Hazel! I've only got 13 months. Thirteen! What if I screw up? Again.

HAZEL

From what I hear, MARCUS, the love of a good woman can only help. Maybe you have to have faith in yourself. And in Alexis.
(Marcus, nods and departs. Hazel checks her watch.)

HAZEL

Plebe alert! Morning guys. New recruit on her way. She's a bit fragile, Joe. Take it easy on her.

JOE

This is a democracy, Hazel. All former drunks receive equal treatment.

HAZEL

Yeah, but you could be a little less gruff, maybe, Joe. You can intimidate! This one's a bit premature for the likes of our customers.

HAZEL (Cont)

(As CYNTHIA enters)

Meet Cynthia Crockett. She's living at the Net while she gets back on her feet.

JOE

(Reaches out to shake hands with CYNTHIA)
Joe Cardozo. You've met my wife, Mimi.
(CYNTHIA nods, smiling shyly)

DAN

Hi, I'm Dan.

MIMI

Welcome to the Hard Luck Cafe, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Thanks for the opportunity.

JOE

That's a good way to look at it.

HAZEL

This is your home away from home. Don't take any grief.

MIMI

Don't expect any either, Cynthia (glancing at JOE.)

CYNTHIA

Please, call me Cindy.

JOE

OK, Cindy. We'll be busy in a minute here, so I won't stand on ceremony. Fill out this W-4. Despite evidence to the contrary, this is not a non-profit public service organization but a business struggling to stay afloat. We don't ask for a resume because we know you are starting from scratch. But there are four things that I expect from everyone. Complete honesty, dedication to good service, punctuality and complete sobriety. A two-week notice would be nice. Don't even think about coming in if you're not sober, and if you have to call in sick, you might as well forget it too.

HAZEL

Joe...

CYNTHIA

(Whispers to Hazel)

What if I'm really sick?

JOE

Mimi will bring you some chicken soup. Now get to work. Hazel will show you the ropes. She's been here for nearly a year. Time to get a move on, Haze.

HAZEL

You're pushing me out?

JOE

Your destiny awaits. Mustn't get stuck at the Hard Luck, much as we all love it---and you of course. I know why you're hanging around.

HAZEL

I haven't graduated yet!

JOE

Yeah. Right. So finish already. Make room for new recruits - like Cindy. We're glad to have you, Cindy. And glad you have experience. You'll need it.

(Walks away)

HAZEL

Listen, this can be a real trial by fire, as if we haven't had enough humiliation for one lifetime. But all the same, it's a great little family. Don't let Joe scare you. He's got a heart of...

CYNTHIA and HAZEL (in unison)

Pure gold.

CYNTHIA

(Laughs, nervously).

So I've heard.

HAZEL

Don't worry. Waiting tables is waiting tables. You were younger the last time you did this so your feet will hurt more. I soak mine in Epsom salts. Let me show you where we keep the family jewels.

(Moving to a supply shelf)

Salt, pepper, ketchup, hot sauce, napkins, jams and jellies. That's about it. (Beat) Oh! Don't let me forget coffee! The most important item on the menu for most of our customers. Here's our private label.

(CYNTHIA examines the coffee tin)

Honey, this ain't Starbucks. But we make it strong and don't get too many complaints. You've done this a hundred times, but...

(Quickly makes a new pot of coffee.)

Ok, kiddo. It's time you ventured forth. Can you bring some ketchup to that table and see if they need anything else?

(Grabs a bottle of ketchup to hand to CYNTHIA)

Here you go!

CYNTHIA

(Reaches for the bottle but misses the hand-off and the bottle falls to the floor. Fortunately, it is plastic but CYNTHIA looks stricken as HAZEL retrieves it.)

Sorry! I'm...so clumsy!

HAZEL

Don't give it a thought. We don't call it the Hard Luck Café for nothing!

CYNTHIA

(Nervously)

Thanks. I'd better earn my keep.

(Heads off to the other table. Stops and faces the audience.)

(MUSIC #12: ONE FOOT (Day by Day intro))

ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER
AND STRAIGHT AHEAD.
ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER
AND STRAIGHT AHEAD.
DAY BY DAY
I MAKE A NEW BEGINNING
PIECE BY PIECE
I'M BUILDING BACK MY LIFE
ONE BY ONE
I'M PICKING UP THE PIECES
DAY BY DAY
DAY BY DAY.

(CYNTHIA resumes walking toward a table. HAZEL, looking glum, heads back to the counter where DAN is making coffee. She drops her head into her hands)

DAN

What is it? Are you ok?

HAZEL

Joe says I need to move on.

DAN

He says that to everyone who's been here more than six months. He doesn't mean, like, tomorrow.

HAZEL

I hope not. If I have to look for another job before I finish school, there goes any hope of a personal life.

DAN

I thought that's what AA was for.

HAZEL

Ha! Struck up any AA romances lately?

DAN

Well, no, but I've been...celibate for quite some time now. My sponsor said--

HAZEL

(Interrupting)

Celibate! Perhaps you mean abstinent? A temporary state of affairs, no pun intended. Even I go through it.

DAN

How long before abstinence turns into celibacy?

HAZEL

When abstinence fails to make the heart grow fonder. (Laughs) Get it?

DAN

You're way ahead of me!

HAZEL

I doubt that. When was the last time you went to something besides a meeting?

DAN

I went to the Unitarian singles dance a couple weeks back.

HAZEL

That's brave! How'd it go?

DAN

Well, it seems I have totally lost my nerve!

(MUSIC #13: I Could have Danced All Night, But Instead)

I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT
BUT INSTEAD,
I WENT HOME EARLY, SAFELY TO BED.
WHY SHOULD I TAKE A CHANCE
IN LETTING A ROMANCE
BREAK MY HEART?

I DON'T BELIEVE IN LOVE ANY MORE.
IT ALL TOO QUICKLY WALKS OUT THE DOOR.
AND I'LL NOT TAKE THE RISK
OF LETTING THAT FIRST KISS
LEAD TO MORE.

WHEN I COME HOME AT NIGHT
THERE'S NO ONE TO HOLD ME TIGHT.
BUT EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.
THERE'S NO SHOUTING.
NO ONE'S POUTING.

I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT WITH HER THERE
AND FELT THE THRILL OF THINKING SHE'D CARE
BUT BY THE MORNING'S LIGHT
WHAT'S FANCIFUL AT NIGHT
CAN'T BE DARED.
AND MORE AND MORE IT SEEMS
ROMANCE IS BETTER LEFT TO MY DREAMS.

THERE IS LITTLE TO BE SAID
FOR A COLD AND EMPTY BED.
BUT WORSE THINGS THAT I DREAD
LIKE A BROKEN HEART THAT TEARS ME APART.

I WOULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT
BUT COULD NOT.
WHY SHOULD I MAKE MYSELF OVERWROUGHT?
WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE
I'M SATISFIED ENOUGH WITH MY LOT.
AND MORE AND MORE IT SEEMS.
ROMANCE IS BETTER LEFT TO MY DREAMS.

HAZEL

That's a bit jaded, even for a Unitarian!

DAN

I'm not really Unitarian.

HAZEL

No? The difference between you and me, sweetheart? I've been burned too, but life is a learning process, practice makes perfect, and someday, I'm going to get it right!

DAN

(A bit intimated)

You'll find him, Haze. And he'll be a lucky guy.

HAZEL

Think so? For all my bravado, I'm going home to my cat and the crosswords--unless you want to grab a coffee?

DAN

(Nervously)

Let's not rush into anything.

(HAZEL shrugs, departs. Focus shifts to MIMI and CYNTHIA)

MIMI

How's it going at the Net, Cindy?

CYNTHIA

So far, so good. I just arrived from the "extended stay" program.

MIMI

That means they really liked you. Any family?

CYNTHIA

(Beat) A daughter--a freshman in college...but...Do you have children?

MIMI

Four before I was 30! Two of them still don't speak to me.

CYNTHIA

My daughter, too. Out of touch. My counselor says, she'll come around, but I..

MIMI

My younger daughter's addicted to meth.

CYNTHIA

Oh,...I'm so sorry. That's very tough.

MIMI

(Interrupting)

Yes, it is. But we try to put our personal trials behind us, just for the day, and be there for our customers. Many are also in recovery. They can be shut down, irritable. Sometimes they just stare into space...

CYNTHIA

I hope I can measure up.

MIMI

You'll be fine. Our bottomless cup of coffee is no moneymaker, but some folks say we've saved a life now and then. We look out for each other when the going gets rough. You can count on us.

CYNTHIA

Thanks. I'm very grateful.

HAZEL

Hold that thought when you see your first paycheck.

MIMI

(Spotting RICHARD as he enters)

Here comes one of our more colorful customers. Cindy, I suggest you steer clear--just for today.

HAZEL

(HAZEL walks over to DAN, behind the counter.)

Oh, not again! He's been in every day this week!

DAN

And nobody but *you* can wait on him!

RICHARD

(RICHARD hails HAZEL.)

Hazel, my muse! Have you missed me?

HAZEL

What can I bring you, Richard?

RICHARD

How about a smile for starters? My, but you look ravishing today!

HAZEL

You're apparently alone in that opinion, Richard, but thank you.

Now, what'll it be?

RICHARD

Truth is, I can't get you out of my mind!

(MUSIC #14: Obsessed) NOTE: Now arranged as a samba which Richard dances while pursuing Hazel around the room)

OBSSESSED.
I AM OBSSESSED WITH YOU.
OBSSESSED
NO OTHER WORD WILL DO
AM I CURSE OR BLESSED?
WHAT'S YOUR POINT OF VIEW?

HAZEL

Cursed, cursed!

RICHARD

THOUGHTS OF YOU ARE ALL CONSUMING.
YOU COULD WELL BE MY UNDOING.

HAZEL

Are you off your meds?

RICHARD

OBSSESSED
I AM OBSSESSED WITH YOU.
HAVEN'T YOU GUESSED
HOW MUCH I YEARN FOR YOU?

MY HEART IS YOUR POSSESSION
AND IT WILL HAVE NO REST
TILL YOU SAY THAT YOU'RE OBSSESSED
WITH ME TOO.

HAZEL

What on earth are you talking about?

RICHARD

OBSSESSED.
I AM OBSSESSED WITH YOU.
NO SECOND BEST.
NO OTHER LOVE WILL DO.
BUT WILL I PASS THE TEST?
I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE.
WON'T YOU PLEASE GIVE ME A SIGN IF
THERE'S A CHANCE THAT
YOU'LL BE MINE?

HAZEL

I'll give you a sign alright.

RICHARD

OBSESSED.

WHAT AM I TO DO?

NOW I'VE CONFESSED.

THE FUTURE'S UP TO YOU.

OH WHAT WILL BE YOUR ANSWER?

I PRAY THAT IT IS YES.

PLEASE SAY THAT YOU'RE OBSESSED
WITH ME TOO.

HAZEL

Certifiable!

RICHARD

WON'T YOU SAY THAT YOU AT LEAST
LOVE ME TOO?

HAZEL

Man, you need help!

(RICHARD attempts to grab HAZEL'S hand but DAN intervenes.
Quietly, to DAN.)

He's out of his mind!

DAN

You got a problem?

(DAN places hand on HAZEL'S shoulder.)

RICHARD

Nothing that a scolding from this lovely lady won't fix.

HAZEL

You are delusional.

RICHARD

You are sensational!

DAN

She is, but you are way out of line.

RICHARD

Since when does a little flirting constitute harassment?

DAN

You barely know this woman, and she doesn't want to know you better.

RICHARD

And who are you to say?

DAN

I'm her...friend and you either behave yourself or...

HAZEL

It's OK, Dan. He's just a lone ranger. No AA. No support, other than coming in here and alienating everyone he meets.

RICHARD

That's harsh!

DAN

Look I don't want to have to ask you to leave, but can I sit down for a minute?

RICHARD

Don't add injury to insult!

DAN

(Sits down and extends hand)
No, of course not. I'm Dan.

RICHARD

(Beat) Richard.

DAN

Richard, if I might say, flying solo is not really working for you. In treatment, I--

RICHARD

(Sanctimoniously)
I didn't go to treatment.

DAN

That's obvious, but if you had...
(Motions to MARCUS)

Marcus, help me out here. What did they tell you before you left rehab?

MARCUS

They said "Get your ass to a meeting--every day for 90 days."

RICHARD

Why 90? Why not 75 or 50?

MARCUS

90 is the sweet spot, man! It takes 90 days to *evolve*. (Beat)
You might need 100.

(MUSIC 15. 90 in 90. NOTE: Intro revised and shortened)

MARCUS:
THEY TOLD ME I WOULD HAVE TO GO
TO 90 MEETINGS IN A ROW
FOR 90 DAYS TO BEAR MY SOUL
TO PEOPLE I DON'T EVEN KNOW
IT'S NOT AN OPTION TO SAY NO
WHEN FIGHTING THAT SWIFT UNDERTOW.

MARCUS, DAN, HAZEL
GO MAMA GO.
GO DADDY GO.
GET YOU TO A MEETING AND
DON'T BE SLOW.

GET THERE ON A BUS
GET THERE ON A BIKE
HITCH A RIDE OR GRAB A CAB OR
TAKE A HIKE.
ANY WAY YOU CAN
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER THAN
STAYIN' HOME ALL ALONE OR GOIN' ON A LAM.

RICHARD
I WANT A DRINK, GOD! I
WANT ONE SO BAD!
THIS MAY BE THE WORST CRAVING
I'VE EVER HAD.
IF I AM DETERMINED, I WILL FIND A WAY AND
MY HIGHER ANGELS I WILL DISOBEY.
IF I HAD A SPONSOR I KNOW WHAT HE'D SAY:
DON'T THROW IT AWAY. YOU WILL BE OK IF YOU
JUST FIND A MEETING AND DO NOT DELAY.

CHORUS
90 DAYS WILL HELP YOU STAY SOBER.
90 DAYS WILL STRENGTHEN RESOLVE.
YOU'LL ATTEND ALL THE GROUPS IN THE CITY
FIND THE ONES THAT CAN HELP YOU *EVOLVE*.
90 DAYS AT FIRST SEEMS FOREVER
BUT 90 DAYS GOES BY IN A FLASH.
YOU'LL MAKE FRIENDS AS YOU WORK THE PROGRAM

MARCUS
AND IT'S FREE! YOU NEVER NEED CASH!

CHORUS

GO BROTHER GO.
GO SISTER GO.
GET YOU TO A MEETING AND
DON'T BE SLOW.

GET THERE ON A BUS
GET THERE ON A BIKE
HITCH A RIDE OR GRAB A CAB OR
TAKE A HIKE.
ONCE YOU HAVE ARRIVED
KNOW THAT YOU'VE SURVIVED
YOU'RE RENEWED. BACK
IN THE GROOVE
AND GLAD TO BE ALIVE.

NINETY IN 90!

RICHARD

Enough already.
(He starts to leave.)

HAZEL

There's one at St. Barnabus in half an hour.

MARCUS

Do you want company? I could use a tune up.

RICHARD

Lead the way!
(MARCUS bows and motions to the door. They depart.)

End of Act II, Scene I

Act II, Scene II, Hard Luck Café, several months later.

(MIMI, JOE, HAZEL and CYNTHIA are working as MARCUS enters.)

MARCUS

Hey y'all. Anyone seen Greg?

JOE

Nope.

MIMI

He hasn't been in for ages Marcus. Is everything all right?

MARCUS

I don't know, MIMI. He's not calling me back, and when I go 'round his place, he's never home. I'm wo.....Oh!

(ALEXIS has just entered, and brushes past Marcus, ignoring him.)

Gotta run! If you see Greg, tell him I'm looking for him.

JOE

Will do, Marcus! ALEXIS! You're late!

MIMI

It's my fault....I forgot to tell you that ALEXIS...

JOE

That's par for the course. (Stomps offstage).

ALEXIS

(Embarrassed, changes the subject).

Sorry. How you doing, Cindylamb?

CYNTHIA

I haven't broken anything yet today, but there're still several hours to go.

ALEXIS

Nothing here is irreplaceable. Including me, I guess.

(CYNTHIA looks puzzled.)

MIMI

Alex will soon be leaving us. Moving up in the world.

CYNTHIA

Where to?

ALEXIS

Back to Critical Care at the hospital. Pill-free for a year and

they're giving me another chance.

HAZEL

You sure saved my ass. Maybe now Joe will get off my case about finding another job before I finish school.

ALEXIS

Glad to assist. At least something's goin' right.

MIMI

Alex, are you still hurting?

ALEXIS

(Changing the subject)

And more than my heart--Look at these shoes! The heels are so run down, I look bowlegged!

HAZEL

And wouldn't I love a new hair-do!

MIMI

Tell me about it!

HAZEL

What good is it to tell you, MIMI? You can't afford to pay us more! We're all in the same damn fix!

ALEXIS

(To Mimi)

At least you have a husband.

(Mimi turns to look in Joe's direction.)

(MUSIC: Delayed Gratification) <<Track 16>>

HAZEL

I WANT

MIMI

I WANT

ALEXIS

I WANT WHAT I CAN'T HAVE

MIMI

CAN'T HAVE

HAZEL

CAN'T HAVE AND

ALEXIS
I CAN ALMOST SALIVATE FOR

MIMI
THINGS I KNOW I'LL
HAVE TO WAIT FOR

HAZEL
NEVER KNEW DELAYED GRATIFICATION
HURT SO BAD!

CHORUS (ALL)
AH-OO AH-OO AH-OO-OO-OO-OO.
MOULA, I CAN'T WAIT NO MORE FOR YOU.

ALEXIS
MY CLOCK IS TICKING
LIKE A TIME BOMB
THAT WILL SEAL MY FATE
IF IT DON'T HAVE A BABY SOON ITS
SURE TO BE
TOO LATE!

HAZEL
BUT I DON'T
HAVE MY LIFE ON TRACK
NOR DO I HAVE A MATE!

CHORUS (ALL)
AH-OO AH-OO AH-OO-OO-OO-OO.
LOVER, I CAN'T WAIT NO MORE FOR YOU!

HAZEL
I CAN'T MOVE TO PITTSBURG
CUZ I'M STILL ON PROBATION

ALEXIS
I CAN'T TAKE A DAY OFF
CUZ I'VE GOT NO PAID VACATION.
(Glaring at Joe)

MIMI
EACH DAY THAT PASSES BY IS SUCH A
PAINFUL WAITING GAME

HAZEL
WHERE I'M SO FILLED WITH ENVY THAT I
THINK I'LL GO INSANE!

ALEXIS
I WANT

MIMI
I WANT

HAZEL
I WANT WHAT I CAN'T HAVE

ALEXIS
CAN'T HAVE

MIMI
CAN'T HAVE AND

ALEXIS
I CAN ALMOST
SALIVATE FOR

HAZEL
THINGS I KNOW I'LL
HAVE TO WAIT FOR

MIMI
NEVER KNEW
DELAYED GRATIFICATION
HURT SO BAD.

ALL
AH-OO AH-OO
AH-OO-OO-OO-OO.
FUTURE, I CAN'T WAIT NO MORE FOR YOU.

JOE
Enough fun, girls. Back to work. MIMI!

MIMI
What?

JOE
Did you order the coffee filters?

MIMI

Oh, oh.

JOE

You said you'd take care of it! I can't do everything around here!

MIMI

I'm hopeless!

JOE

It was easier running the bar where I knew I had only myself to depend on. Maybe it's too tough to be both business partners and life partners.

MIMI

Joe, what are you saying?

JOE

I'm saying I'm frustrated! Stop letting things slide! The café was your idea, Mimi. Are you all in or not?

MIMI

(trying to put her arms around JOE's back as he faces away from her.)

Please don't be mad at me, Joe. I...know it's not fair to you, and...you are everything to me.

JOE

It sure doesn't feel that way sometimes, Mimi.

MIMI

I know.

JOE

What can I say that won't become fodder for you to feel worse about yourself? You're great with our customers and crew--you give 100 percent. But when you zone out, it tends to be on my time. And maybe I'd like not to be the heavy all the time.

MIMI

You're right, Joe. I know I'm not always there for you.

JOE

Mimi...

MIMI

I'm sorry, Joe! Please! I'm gonna do better. I promise.

(MUSIC: TODAY) <<TRACK 17 >>

TODAY IS THE TOMORROW OF YESTERDAY.
AND TODAY'S THE YESTERDAY OF TOMORROW.
BUT TODAY IS ONLY FOR TODAY.
LET ME LIVE IT.

LET ME GIVE IT A CHANCE.
I SPEND SO MANY DAYS REGRETTING YESTERDAY.
OR FRETTEING ABOUT TOMORROW.
WHILE TODAY JUST SEEMS TO SLIP AWAY.
AND I LOSE IT.
DID I CHOOSE IT SOMEHOW?

WHILE THE PLAY'S ON THE STAGE
I AM OFF IN THE WINGS
MY MIND ON OTHER THINGS.
THEN THE CURTAIN FALLS AND
I CAN'T RECALL
ANY LINES FROM THE PLAY AT ALL.

I WANT TO BE HERE IN THE MOMENT.
NOT CAUGHT IN THE FUTURE OR PAST.
WITH YOU NOW
OH WON'T YOU SHOW ME HOW?
WON'T YOU HELP ME
LEARN TO MAKE THE TIME LAST?

FOR EACH DAY IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
AND OUR MOMENTS TOGETHER ARE FEW.
I DON'T WANT TO WAKE UP AND DISCOVER
THAT I'VE RUN OUT OF TIME WITH YOU.

MIMI AND JOE

TODAY IS THE TOMORROW OF YESTERDAY.
AND TODAY'S THE YESTERDAY OF TOMORROW.
BUT TODAY IS ONLY FOR TODAY.
LET ME LIVE IT.
LET ME GIVE IT A CHANCE!

JOE

(Embrace)
That's my girl.

(Focus shifts to ANNE as she enters the café and approaches CYNTHIA. They hug.)

ANNE

Cindy! You look great. Do you have a second?

CYNTHIA

(Checks to see that no one needs attention before they sit.)

It's going pretty well, considering I am such a klutz. The staff is very forgiving. The customers a bit less so. They're used to better service than I'm able to give, I'm afraid.

ANNE

I doubt that. Remember the aching feet and the cranky customers on the graveyard shift at Embers? How I wanted to just dump the food on their heads sometimes! (Beat). But the breakfasts here have got to be worth something.

CYNTHIA

Yeah, I'm sure nutritional support is part of Mimi's secret plan. It would be a demanding job for someone firing on all cylinders, and...I guess you know how many cylinders I've got left.

ANNE

Cylinders regenerate Cindy, and I'm proud to be your friend right now.

CYNTHIA

You've always been there for me, but I miss Katie so much.

ANNE

Maybe it's time to reach out and tell her where you are.

(Before CYNTHIA can protest, ANNE has dialed the number on her own cell and handed her the phone)

CYNTHIA

Anne!

KATIE

(Offside, answers phone with resignation.)

Hello, Anne.

CYNTHIA

(Beat). No, Katie. Es tu Mama.

KATIE

(Long silence)

(MUSIC #18: You Are NOT My Mother!)

YOU ARE NOT MY MOTHER!
A MOTHER WOULD BE TRUSTWORTHY
A MOTHER WOULD BE KIND.
SHE WOULD NOT NEGLECT HER CHILD TO
DRINK HERSELF HALF BLIND.

A MOTHER WOULD BE SENSITIVE.
AND YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE.
A MOTHER WOULD PROTECT HER CHILD
FROM THE LIKES OF YOU.

THEY SAY YOU'RE IN RECOVERY
WELL I'VE RECOVERED TOO
ENOUGH TO KNOW I'LL NEVER NEED A
MOTHER SUCH AS YOU.

AND JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE FINALLY STOPPED
DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE START.
THE HARM IS DONE.
I'M DAMAGED GOODS.
I DO NOT HAVE A HEART.

IF ANYONE SHOULD ASK ME
I WILL TELL THEM THAT YOU'RE DEAD.
I WILL NOT LIVE ANOTHER DAY
WITH YOU INSIDE MY HEAD.
SO IF YOU THOUGHT TO MAKE AMENDS
I'M TELLING YOU, DON'T BOTHER!
FOR I AM NOT YOUR CHILD AND
YOU ARE NOT MY MOTHER!

(KATIE and CYNTHIA both slam down their phones. CYNTHIA rises.)

Jodete! (or appropriate expletive)

CYNTHIA
What on earth were you thinking!

ANNE
Cindy!

You're always pushing, pushing, pushing!

ANNE

For God's sake!

CYNTHIA

I really didn't need this now!

ANNE

(As CINDY walks away, ignoring her)

You think I would have called if I had known. (Head in hands)

End of Act II, Scene II

Act II, Scene III A phone conversation

(Center stage in darkness. Spotlight on CINDY, stage left, with cell phone in hand and MIMI, in her work clothes, stage right. MIMI'S phone rings.)

MIMI

Hello?

CYNTHIA

Mimi. It's...Cynthia. You said to call...if...I'm in trouble.

MIMI

Where are you, Cindy?

CYNTHIA

I'm downtown...within shouting distance of a liquor store.

MIMI

Well, for God's sake, don't shout. I'll be right there.

CYNTHIA

I messed up, Mimi. I really can't undo it.

MIMI

No, Cindy! You did the right thing. Just tell me where you are.

(Phone goes dead. Fear enters her voice.)

Cindy? Cindy?

MUSIC 19. Guilty

CYNTHIA

(alone on stage Sings "Guilty")

I'M GUILTY.

GUILTY AS A WOMAN CAN BE

OH I'M SO GUILTY

GUILTY AS A WOMAN CAN BE

I WOULDN'T BE IN THE MESS I'M IN NOW

IF I'D ONLY DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

I SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING

SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THE SIGNS

ALL THAT I CAN SAY IS

WELL YOU KNOW THAT

LOVE IS BLIND

THAT'S WHY I'M GUILTY

GUILTY AS A WOMAN CAN BE

I WOULD NOT BE IN THIS MESS NOW

IF I'D ONLY DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

YOU SAY THAT IT'S NOT MY FAULT.
YOU SAY I'M NOT TO BLAME.
WELL TELL ME THEN WHY IT IS
THAT I'M FEELING SO MUCH SHAME

IF I'M NOT GUILTY
GUILTY AS A WOMAN CAN BE.
I WOULD NOT BE IN THIS MESS NOW
IF I'D ONLY DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Fade out.

End of Scene III

ACT II Scene IV Anne's office

(KATIE sits across from ANNE, her body language closed and hostile.)

ANNE

What are you taking next term?

KATIE

Calculus, English Lit, Biology. (Beat) Did you know a thousand soldiers a year die from stupid stuff, like car accidents.

ANNE

And why did your dad have to be one of them? Katie, there's no denying that you've had more than your share. The only way to come out ahead is if you can lead a happy life in spite of it all.

KATIE

That's bullshit! Your mother is not a drunk.

ANNE

No, but my father was. Your mom's in recovery.

KATIE

I can't wait to see how that turns out.

ANNE

You feel that your mother didn't protect you. (Beat) Of course, you have every right to be angry, Katie, but your mother's life was also damaged.

KATIE

Yeah, let's make it all about her.

ANNE

I can only imagine how hard it has been for you.

KATIE

Can you? Imagine being on a date with a baby-faced freshman and flashing back to a middle-aged man crawling all over you?

ANNE

That would unnerve anyone.

KATIE

Unnerve? I opened the door and threw up! Try explaining that to

a poor, insecure nerd. "Oh, I'm so sorry! It's not you. It's me!"

ANNE

No one should have to go through what you did, Katie. But if you talk about this, it will lose its...

KATIE

Not with you. You're too close to her.

ANNE

(Nods). Before you came along, your mom and I loved to solve the world's problems over a couple of beers. Then, everything changed. She stepped up, over-night it seemed. *(Beat)* As her best friend, I can tell you - she was completely devoted to you.

(ANNE realizes she sounds a little jealous and tries to reassure KATIE. KATIE remains silent.)
Can you at least trust that I'm on your side?

KATIE

I don't even trust myself.

ANNE

You can trust yourself, Katie. Your mom did screw up, no question. The humiliating...

KATIE

I know about the DUI. She coulda killed someone.

ANNE

(Nods). Forgiving her will be hard, but--

KATIE

Yeah, maybe she'll finally give me driving lessons.

ANNE

(Flustered) Well...let me just say that with determination and support, people really can change--

KATIE

(Caustically interrupting)
Now I'm inspired!

ANNE

(ANNE'S telephone buzzes, as she realizes she is getting

nowhere)

OK. Thanks. (Beat). I'm sorry, Katie, but a client has arrived.

(KATIE leaps up, relieved to be leaving.)

If you do want to talk, please know that I'm here for you.

(As KATIE shrugs off ANNE'S attempted hug.)

Or if you prefer, I can recommend someone else.

(KATIE is out the door, ANNE calling after her.)

Please, stay in touch, Katie.

End of Scene IV

Act II Scene V The Hard Luck Café, a short time later

(The end of the workday. ALEXIS, MIMI and JOE are cleaning up. CYNTHIA is about to leave when ANNE arrives.)

ANNE

Cindy! I'm glad I caught you.

CYNTHIA

I'm not.

ANNE

I want to apologize. I don't blame you for being upset. I should not have made that call. But honestly, I thought Katie was coming around, and that she needed to hear from you.

CYNTHIA

You're always trying to make decisions for me! You've done your job. I've gone through treatment. Now, let me mend my own fences.

ANNE

I said, I'm sorry! Please! Can we talk for a minute? (Cynthia reluctantly moves to a table and sits down with Anne. They sit in silence for a moment.)

Do you ever think about how differently our lives have turned out from what we imagined? We both thought we'd get married, have kids. (Beat). That didn't happen for me. And then, Danny died and your marriage to Paul was a train wreck. But...you still had Katie! I was so envious!

(Cynthia remains silent while looking for more from Anne)

I may have been jealous of how much Katie took over your life, but I would never, never intentionally harm your relationship with her! You've got to believe that!

CYNTHIA

(Hesitates, then reaches her hand out to ANNE).

I...do. Of course, I do. It was just so raw, so painful, to hear her anger, and know how justified it was! How could I have put her through this? I was furious at you for making the call, but Katie has every right to hate me!

(They sit in silence for a moment.)

Later that day, I came this close (indicating with two fingers) to relapsing.

ANNE

(ANNE is taken aback)

Did you call someone?

CYNTHIA

Mimi. And, despite her good advice, I hung up on her and loitered around a liquor store for nearly an hour.

ANNE

Did you go in? (Cynthia shakes her head "no") Why not?

CYNTHIA

I thought of how I'd let Katie down, again and again. An older woman came out, clutching a paper bag. We locked eyes for a few seconds, and hers seemed to say "You don't want to go there." (Beat) Besides, Mimi and Joe have faith in me.

ANNE

I have faith in you.

CYNTHIA

I know you do. Maybe it's pride or shame...or envy. I still can't figure out why I slipped on that ice and you didn't.

ANNE

You had Paul to give you a shove.

CYNTHIA

Yeah, I'd love to blame it all on Paul! (Beat) Speaking of men, you haven't mentioned Ted lately.

ANNE

No. I'm afraid Ted is history.

CYNTHIA

Oh, I'm sorry, Anne. (Beat) I know it's been a one-way street lately, but you used to confide in me.

ANNE

How many breakups do you want to hear about? I seem incapable of maintaining a relationship. Or perhaps unwilling to. (Beat) You said yourself, I can be pushy! Maybe I push too hard.

CYNTHIA

Sometimes, yes, and (laughs) not just with men. But, I wouldn't be here today if you hadn't pushed.

ANNE

Commiserating was easier when we were drinking buddies. Now you've got a whole new circle of friends.

CYNTHIA

But only one best friend.

(MUSIC #20 My Friend)

MY FRIEND.
YOU'RE SO IMPORTANT TO ME
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW
I CARE.
YOU'VE ALWAYS SEEN RIGHT THROUGH ME
AND YOUR LOVE HAS HELPED ME GROW.

SO OFTEN YOU'VE REVEALED MYSELF TO ME.
AND FOR A CHANGE I'M LIKING WHAT I SEE.
MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND.

AT TIMES,
IT HURT SO MUCH
THE THINGS YOU'D SAY TO ME.
BUT NOW,
I'M GLAD YOU HAD THE COURAGE TO
STAND UP AND CHALLENGE ME.

CYNTHIA AND ANNE

OUR FRIENDSHIP HAS A LIFETIME WARRANTY.
SO IF YOU NEED ME I CAN GUARANTEE
I WILL BE THERE FOR YOU.
I CARE FOR YOU,
MY FRIEND.

CYNTHIA

I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER THAT YOU'RE
STILL HERE BY MY SIDE
FAIRER WEATHER FRIENDS LEFT LONG AGO
BETTING ALL YOUR STUBBORNNESS
AGAINST MY FOOLISH PRIDE
YOU ARE THE TRUEST FRIEND I'LL EVER KNOW.

CYNTHIA AND ANNE

MY FRIEND.
YOU'RE MORE IMPORTANT TO ME
THAN I EVER LET YOU KNOW.
I CARE.

YOU'VE FINALLY GOTTEN THROUGH TO ME.
YOU'VE HELPED MORE THAN YOU KNOW.

CYNTHIA
SO MANY DAYS ARE JUST A HAZE TO ME.

ANNE
BUT YOU WILL WRITE A BRAND NEW HISTORY

ANNE AND CYNTHIA
CUZ YOU/I CAN SMILE AGAIN
AND YOU/I CAN TASTE AGAIN AND YOU/I CAN FEEL!

I AM ALIVE AGAIN!
MY FRIEND.

(Focus shifts to MARCUS who has just entered. MARCUS sits
down, rubs his hands together with glee and terror.)

MIMI
Uh-oh, Alexis. Look who's here. Do you want Cynthia to...

ALEXIS
No, thank you. I'll handle it.
(Reluctantly heads to the booth)
Marcus, what are you doing here?

MARCUS
Thanks for...comin' over, baby. You're lookin' good! Sit down for
a minute.

ALEXIS
Don't you baby me. What's up, Marcus? I've got work to do.

MARCUS
Baby, I've been doin' a lot of thinkin', and a whole lot of
missin'.

ALEXIS
Don't start this again.

MARCUS
Hear me out, baby. I've made up my mind. I can't live
without you!

(MUSIC #21: Time and Again)

TIME AND AGAIN
I'VE TRIED TO FORGET YOU.
WASN'T GONNA LET YOU

UNDER MY SKIN. BUT

TIME AND AGAIN
I BEGAN TO DOUBT
I COULD REALLY LIVE WITHOUT
YOUR TENDER LOVIN'.
TIME AND AGAIN
YOU'VE BEEN HAUNTING MY DREAMS.

NOW IT SEEMS
I'LL NEVER BE FREE
OF LOVIN' YOU.

I KNOW I'M HOOKED.
MY GOOSE IS SURELY COOKED.
I HAVEN'T OVERLOOKED WHAT ALL OF THIS MEANS. SINCE
I WILL REFORM
WHY NOT MAKE IT EASY?
LIFE COULD BE A BREEZE INSTEAD
OF A STORM. AND

TIME AND AGAIN
I'LL MAKE CERTAIN YOU KNOW
THAT I'M GLAD I'LL NEVER BE FREE
OF LOVIN' YOU.

I BUILT A WALL YOU COULDN'T PENETRATE.
MY HEART WAS SAFE FROM YOUR CHARMS.
NOW LIKE A CHILD WHO JUST COULDN'T WAIT
I LONG TO BE SAFE IN YOUR ARMS.

OH, TIME AND AGAIN
MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT I
ALMOST DIDN'T GET IT
TILL LOVE WAS DEAD. BUT
TIME AND AGAIN
IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY
LOVE IN ALL ITS GLORY
CONQUERS THE HEAD. AND
TIME AND AGAIN
I'LL MAKE CERTAIN YOU'LL SEE
THAT I'M GLAD I'LL NEVER BE FREE
OH, TIME AND AGAIN
YOU'VE BEEN HAUNTING MY DREAMS
NOW IT SEEMS I'LL NEVER BE FREE

OF LOVIN' YOU.

ALEXIS

Oh, Marcus, don't do this! I'm getting on with my life.

MARCUS

Alexis, Marry me.

(Gets down on his knees beside the booth and shouts to the whole café.)

As you are all my witnesses, I'm asking this woman to marry me. What do you say, Alexis. I love you, Woman!

ALEXIS

Marcus! Get up. You're making a fool of yourself.

MARCUS

I am a fool for you, baby, and I'm not getting up till you say yes.

JOE

Say yes, for cryin' out loud, Alexis. We're tired of seeing you mope around here.

MIMI

You know you've been miserable without him.

ALEXIS

Oh, all right. Yes! If you stay for the meeting, I will marry you!

MARCUS

The meeting? Whatever you say!

(MARCUS grabs her in an embrace and they swirl around the room.)

Oh, baby! You've made me a happy man! I feel like bustin' a move!

(MARCUS dances ALEXIS offstage. Brief fade out as JOE and MIMI begin to rearrange chairs for the AA meeting.)

MIMI

What a day!

JOE

You know what day it is?

MIMI

'Course I do. It's Tuesday-our weekly AA night.

JOE

Not just any Tuesday--

(Pulls a bouquet of roses from behind the counter.)
Happy Anniversary, Love of my life!

MIMI

(Clearly she has forgotten.)
Ah, Joe. You are too wonderful for words. I'm sorry...but ...you know how I am.

JOE

Yes, and I love you just the way you are. Well, maybe a little less self-flagellation wouldn't hurt. Remember the night we met? I said to myself "Grant me the courage to talk to this wonderful creature!"

(MUSIC #22 Time and Again reprise)

TIME AND AGAIN
MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT
ALMOST DIDN'T GET IT
THOUGHT LOVE WAS DEAD. BUT
TIME AND AGAIN
YOU'VE BEEN HAUNTING MY DREAMS
NOW IT SEEMS I'LL NEVER BE FREE
OF LOVIN' YOU.

MIMI

OF LOVIN' YOU.

JOE AND MIMI

OF LOVIN' YOU.

MIMI

I LOVE YOU.

DAN

Am I interrupting?

MIMI

No!

JOE

(Simultaneously)

Yes!

MIMI

We're just...It's our anniversary.

DAN

(Tempering his sarcasm with awe.)
And you're spending it hosting an after-hours AA meeting. We are truly grateful for your sacrifice.

MIMI

This is where it all started for us, Dan.

DAN

Well, many happy returns of the day! But Joe, you don't usually hang around for the meeting. Mimi tells us you've taken up meditation.

JOE

Yeah, Peace brother. I'm trying to see what it's all about. Maybe I can stop scaring people.

(Returns to rearranging chairs)

DAN

(Genuinely)

Thanks for joining us.

MARCUS

(Entering with Alexis)

Yeah, yeah. One Day at a Time, Easy Does It, and so forth.

DAN

(Shaking MARCUS' hand)

Hey, my friend. Glad you skipped "Keep it Simple, Stupid."
I really can't stand that one.

(Kisses ALEXIS. CYNTHIA has arrived. Alexis and Marcus sit where MIMI has just left her flowers. ALEXIS assumes they are a gift from MARCUS and hugs Marcus, who just shrugs)

HAZEL

(Enters, blowing kisses)

KISS, KISS!

(To DAN)

You cleaned up nicely.

DAN

You're not too bad yourself!

MARCUS

(To Dan)

I was hoping Greg would be here.

DAN

Haven't seen him in weeks. I'm afraid he's isolating. (Beat). If you'll excuse me, I'm the designated driver tonight. We'll talk later.

(Turns to the group)

Hey, everybody. We all know each other. Shall we skip introductions and get started?

MARCUS

I like sayin' "Marcus is an alcoholic and an addict!"

ALL

Hi Marcus!

RICHARD

(Marcus turns hopefully as RICHARD rushes in)

I'm not too late? I'm Richard...and I'm an alcoholic.

ALL

Hi Richard!

DAN

Glad you made it. Welcome, everyone. A nice, intimate group. Plenty of time for discussion. We're pretty informal here, Richard. May not be what you're used to, but you're up to trying new things, right?

RICHARD

I'm a new man.

(waves away concern.)

DAN

Great. Anyone want to suggest a Step, or....

HAZEL

(Raising her hand, diving in at the same time).

Step Two? I still stumble over the God concept. Basically, I'm an agnostic, maybe even an atheist. Who is my Higher Power? It feels disingenuous to pray when I'm not a believer. Not that it stops me. I just feel guilty doing it.

DAN

Ever wonder where guilt comes from if not from a belief that our actions are being judged by a higher power?

JOE

But there's the rub. I've seen more people trip up on this step than any other. If your Higher Power has little to do with religious beliefs, so be it.

ALEXIS

That'd be my Granny T-Bone. Granny was always my moral compass growing up. She taught me right from wrong, and when I need a good talking to, I conjure up a 4 foot-10 inch rotund little dynamo with wispy hair and wire-rims. Granny T-Bone says,

(ALEXIS stands and speaks in a crochety voice:

"Alexis, I love you no matter what, but I know you can do the right thing here. I expect it of you."

So Granny T, you are my Higher Power!

MARCUS

And damned if Granny T doesn't wield the power of God in that woman's life!

ALEXIS

It works for me.

MARCUS

Well, Granny T's got nothin' on Hal.

HAZEL

Who's Hal?

MARCUS

Don't you know? Ever since I was this high (gesturing low) we prayed--"Our Father, Who art in heaven? Hal'd be thy name. The King done come!"

ALEXIS

Oh, Marcus!

DAN

Hal and Granny T-Bone would have a lot to talk about!

MARCUS

That's not happening!

HAZEL

Thanks, everyone. It's good to know I'm not alone in this.

DAN

Not at all. Be creative. Other questions - concerns?

MIMI

Making amends is still my biggest bugaboo. I screwed up. That's all there is to it. I have apologized, but others have to live with the harm I've done.

CYNTHIA

It's like a debt that can never be repaid.

ALEXIS

Amen to that, but even though we screwed up, shouldn't we care for ourselves? We've all got a lot to answer for, but endlessly beating ourselves up? What good is that? Compassion. And a whole lot of humility. That's what we need.

RICHARD

I need to make amends to some of the people in this room.
(Looking at HAZEL)

MIMI

We're glad you're here Richard. That's a start.

RICHARD

I was an angry SOB, and I took it out on you folks. According to my sponsor, (nodding to Dan), I received the Asshole of the Week award on more than one occasion. (beat) If I appeared rude, and, probably obnoxious, I ...

HAZEL

(Aside)
Probably?

RICHARD

...apologize.

HAZEL

(Shrugs)
Apology accepted. See, that one wasn't so tough.

DAN

Nobody's perfect. Or those that claim to be often turn out to be more flawed than the rest of us.

MARCUS

Wait a minute! I challenge anyone to be less perfect than me. I'm bad!

ALEXIS

Oh, Marcus!

HAZEL

At least you're not drowning in self-pity, Richard. Sometimes, hearing the sad stories, including my own, makes me want to

scream! Getting sober is only half the battle.

MIMI

And medicating that pain just postpones the inevitable, doesn't it?

ALEXIS

Anytime I started to feel pain, anxiety, even too much happiness - I made sure to fuzz it up.

RICHARD

Fuzzy Wuzzy feels no pain. Fuzzy Wuzzy has no brain!

ALEXIS

Look who's talking. When I finally stopped getting fuzzy, the misery of growing up overnight, was unbearable!

CYNTHIA

I cried for days on end.

ALEXIS

Good for you, baby. Let it all out.

MIMI

Let it out and let it go.

DAN

Good advice. Let's all move on. Hazel, I think you have an announcement?

HAZEL

Yes, indeed. Tonight, I have the honor of presenting a five year medallion to our guardian angel, and dear friend, Mimi. She and Joe are blessings for whom I know you share my feelings. When I saw that Mimi treated customers and everyone who worked for her with respect and compassion, eventually, maybe, a little rubbed off on me. It's hugely because Mimi always assumed I would do the right thing that I'm here tonight. How could I disappoint such a trusting soul? Mimi?

(As MIMI arises, HAZEL hands her a medallion and they embrace to clapping and cheers.)

ALEXIS

(To MIMI) What do you have to say for yourself, girl?

MIMI

Only that I'm very.... touched...and...just know that these have been the five happiest years of my life, - not

to mention the only recent ones I can remember! Thanks for this...milestone. I really owe so much to my dear Joe. He's taught me...you've all taught me...

(JOE shuffles and smiles)

(MUSIC #23: Choose Life)

YOU CAN EASILY SPEND
THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF OR
YOU CAN DECIDE
YOU'RE NOT GONNA HIDE AND
CLIMB DOWN FROM YOUR SHELF.
YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN TRAGIC AND
WE HAVE NO MAGIC TO
MAKE THE PAIN GO AWAY BUT
YOU CAN DECIDE TO
REGAIN YOUR PRIDE AND
YOU CAN
CHOOSE LIFE.

ENSEMBLE

CHOOSE LIFE

HAZEL

WHY TRY TO MAINTAIN
THAT WORN-OUT REFRAIN
IT'S TIME TO START ANEW.
WHAT MORE CAN YOU GAIN BY
RE-LIVING PAIN
YOU'RE MAKING YOURSELF BLUE.
YOUR PAST WAS UNKIND BUT YOU CAN
PUT IT BEHIND YOU AND
THROW THAT BAGGAGE AWAY
CUZ LIFE IS A CHOICE AND
YOU HAVE A VOICE AND

ENSEMBLE

YOU CAN CHOOSE LIFE!
CHOOSE LIFE!

NO IT ISN'T VERY PRETTY
IF YOU WALLOW IN SELF-PITY.
BETTER LET IT GO!
YOU CAN DO IT.
WE'LL HELP YOU PULL THROUGH IT.
LET IT GO.

ALL

LET IT FLOW.

DAN AND HAZEL

YES, DAY AFTER DAY THINGS
GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR SERENITY.
IT'S MORE OF THE SAME. FIND
SOMETHING TO BLAME FOR
YOUR REALITY.

ENSEMBLE

IT'S SUCH A TEMPTATION
YOU'VE GOT VINDICATION
TO SAY "WHAT THE HELL, ANYWAY!"
BUT YOU CAN REVISE
TAKE THE WORLD BY SURPRISE
IF YOU WILL
CHOOSE LIFE!

DA DA DA DA DA DA
CHOOSE LIFE!
DA DA DA DA DA DA DA
CHOOSE LIFE!
DA DA DA DA DA DA
CHOOSE LIFE!

End of ACT II Scene V

ACT II, Scene VI Later that night

GREG

(Alone on stage, sitting beneath a tree).
Tom! Look at these gorgeous colors! One of the prettiest falls
in memory and you're not here to share it. (Beat) Oh, Tom! I'm
tired. So tired of doing this alone.

Music 24. AUTUMN WAS OUR FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR

I CAN'T WATCH THE AUTUMN LEAVES
TURN TO RED AND GOLD
WITHOUT REMEMBERING
HOW I LONG TO HOLD YOU AND TO
HAVE YOUR ARMS ENFOLDING ME.
OH HOW I MISS YOU SO!

HOW CAN I FORGET YOUR FACE?
TELL ME, HOW CAN I FORGET YOU?
AND THE WARMTH OF YOUR EMBRACE.
I NEVER QUITE BELIEVED THAT YOU WERE
REALLY GOING TO LEAVE ME, DEAR.
OH HOW I MISS YOU SO!

AND MY LIFE GOES ON BUT WITHOUT YOU
IT SEEMS I'VE LOST MY WAY.
AS I WATCH ANOTHER SLEEPLESS NIGHT
TURN INTO RESTLESS DAY.

SOON THE TREES WILL BE AS BARE
AS MY HEART IS IN THE WINTER.
AS I STRUGGLE WITH DESPAIR FOR
ALL THAT I HAVE LOST AND
ALL THAT LOSING YOU HAS COST ME, DEAR.
OH HOW I MISS YOU SO!

AND I'LL MISS YOU IN THE SUMMER
AND THE WINTER AND THE SPRING.
BUT THIS SEASON WILL REMIND ME
OF THE SORROW LOVE CAN BRING.

REMEMBERING THAT AUTUMN
WAS OUR FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR.

(Greg has prepared a syringe. He injects and immediately
slumps). Lights out. A short time later, Marcus's anguished cry

is heard offstage

MARCUS

No!

End Act II Scene VI

Act II, Scene VII

(Joe, Mimi, Hazel, Dan, Alexis, Marcus and Cynthia are gathered outdoors, holding umbrellas. Cynthia hangs back)

MARCUS

Greg, why wasn't I there for you!

DAN

Don't be so hard on yourself up, Marcus. No one knows the dark night of another man's soul.

HAZEL

You were a good friend to Greg, Marcus. You tried your best. You too, Dan.

ALEXIS

He's left a big hole in all of our hearts.
(Places a bouquet on the ground.)

MIMI

Greg, we miss you more than we can say.

JOE

Peace, brother.

MARCUS

The rest of us - we just gotta keep on keepin on.

(MUSIC : 25. FORGIVE, LET GO, MOVE ON)

FORGIVE, MOVE ON. LET GO.

ENSEMBLE

THE BEST THERAPY THAT WE KNOW.
OUR MENTAL AFFLICTIONS JUST
FUEL OUR ADDICTIONS
I KNOW WE FIND PEACE ONLY
WHEN WE RELEASE AND

LET GO, MOVE ON. FORGIVE,
THE WAY WE HAVE LEARNED HOW TO LIVE
LEARNED TO UNWIND
AND QUIET THE MIND
LET GO, MOVE ON. FORGIVE

CYNTHIA (almost to herself)
IS THERE HOPE FOR ME ?
I DON'T WANT TO BE
ANGRY ANYMORE.
I DON'T WANT TO BE AFRAID.
I YEARN TO FIND A LITTLE PEACE OF MIND
AND BANISH MY DEMONS
BEFORE THEY BRING ME DOWN.

ENSEMBLE
DON'T LET THEM BRING YOU DOWN.

ENSEMBLE
FORGIVE OURSELVES AS WELL
FAREWELL TO OUR PERSONAL HELL
WE MAY FIND REDEMPTION
OUR OWN AMNESTY
WHEN WE CEASE TO BE OUR OWN
WORST ENEMY SO

FORGIVE, LET GO. MOVE ON
OUR MANTRA FOR GETTING ALONG.
A LINE TO RECITE
ALL THROUGH THE DARK NIGHT
FORGIVE, LET GO, MOVE ON.
FORGIVE, LET GO. MOVE ON.

(The ensemble continues to sing as they leave the stage).

FORGIVE, LET GO, MOVE ON.
FORGIVE, LET GO. MOVE ON.
FORGIVE, LET GO, MOVE ON.
FORGIVE, LET GO. MOVE ON.

End Act II Scene VII

Epilogue: Scene VIII The Hard Luck Cafe, a number of months later

(JOE, MIMI, ANNE and CYNTHIA arrive at the cafe.)

ENSEMBLE

Surprise!

CYNTHIA

(Embarrassed, confused)

Whoa! What are you all doing here?

MARCUS

Where there's cake, there's Marcus!

HAZEL

We're here for you, Cindylamb. You are the latest Comeback Kid. This one's for you!

ALL (Sing)

(MUSIC 26. MAKING A COMEBACK)

OH, I'M MAKING A COMEBACK!
TAKING MY SECOND BOW
GOT MY LIFE BACK ON THE TRACK.
NOTHIN'S GOING TO STOP ME NOW!
OH I'M MAKING A COMEBACK
LOOK OUT WORLD I'M COMIN' BACK FOR MORE!
I SAID
LOOK OUT WORLD I'M COMIN' BACK FOR MORE!

HAZEL (*Sings*)

I'M RISING UP OUT OF OBSCURITY
DOES ANYBODY STILL REMEMBER ME?
AND IF YOU DO I'LL BET YOU THOUGHT
"THAT GAL WAS HISTORY!"
WHEN I HIT BOTTOM I HIT IT GOOD.
MUST HAVE DISGRACED MY NEIGHBORHOOD.
I'D LIKE TO MAKE IT UP TO THEM IF I COULD
BY BEING KIND AND DOING GOOD AND
LIVING MY LIFE BETTER DAY BY DAY.
I SAID
LOOK OUT WORLD I'M COMING BACK TO STAY!

CYNTHIA (*sings*)

I'VE RENEWED MY SUBSCRIPTION TO LIFE.
JUMPED BACK INTO THE STORM AND STRIFE.
BUT THIS TIME I WILL PLAY IT STRAIGHT.
YEA, NO MORE WILL I TEMPT MY FATE
BY LIVING MY LIFE ALWAYS ON THE EDGE.
I SAID LOOK OUT WORLD,
I'M GOING TO TAKE THE PLEDGE!

ALL

I'M MAKING A COMEBACK.
I'VE GOT MY SECOND WIND.
NOW I'VE SAILED AROUND THAT BEND,
I'LL NOT GO BACK THERE AGAIN.
NO, I'M MAKING A COMEBACK.
LOOK OUT WORLD I'M COMIN' BACK FOR MORE!
I SAID LOOK OUT WORLD
I'M COMIN' BACK FOR MORE!

ALEXIS

NOW I'M SHOUTING RIGHT OUT LOUD
THAT I'VE DONE THINGS OF WHICH I'M NOT PROUD.
BUT I'VE PICKED MYSELF UP OFF THE FLOOR AND
NOW I'M KNOCKIN' AT YOUR DOOR SAYING,
WON'T YOU PLEASE JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE CHANCE?
I SAID LOOK OUT WORLD

ALL

YOU'D BETTER LOOK OUT WORLD!
LOOK OUT WORLD
I'M COMIN' BACK FOR MORE!

MIMI

Thank you for graduating, Cindy. After losing Greg, we really needed something to celebrate.

CYNTHIA

You've been so good to me. I'm embarrassed, but...(Beat) Forgive me. You've all met my friend, Anne.

HAZEL/DAN/ALEXIS/MARCUS

Yes, Welcome, Anne!

ANNE

Thanks! I'm happy to be part of the festivities for my oldest friend.

MIMI

We knew she had what it takes.

MARCUS

Yeah, the girl has grit.

CYNTHIA

What I've got is friends. All of you.

ALEXIS

Will you keep in touch once you're working up town, Cindy?

CYNTHIA

Of course! We'll meet for lunch at the Hard Luck and leave those big tips we always yearned for.

(Begins to tear up)

The truth is... I don't really want to graduate from the Hard Luck Café.

(As she fumbles for a handkerchief, JOE hands her his.
ANNE leaves the stage.)

JOE

Don't worry kid. We know it's hard to leave us.

MARCUS

Tell us, Professor Crockett, what's next?

(KATIE appears. All eyes turn towards her, but only CYNTHIA and ANNE know who she is. Mimi soon guesses.)

CYNTHIA

(Stunned, CYNTHIA is frozen for a few seconds before moving toward her daughter.)

Katie!

(KATIE is stiff, but as she sees the effect that her appearance has on her mother, they embrace cautiously, CYNTHIA crying, KATIE whispering something inaudible.) ANNE rejoins the group.)

MIMI

This gives me hope.

ANNE

(TO the group.)

This...is Cynthia's daughter, Katie.

ALL

Hello Katie!

MARCUS

That's some graduation gift!

MIMI

(Moving right in to give KATIE a big hug.)
Bless your heart! You've made your mom's day!

ALEXIS

We've heard so much about you, Katie. (Extends her hand) I'm
Alex, and this is my husband, Marcus.

MARCUS

Husband! I like the sound of that! Pleased to meet you, Katie.
(Others come forth to introduce themselves and shake
KATIE'S hand. KATIE is gracious but shy.)

JOE

Your mom means a lot to us.

KATIE

You...mean a lot to her too.

(Holding hands with KATIE, CYNTHIA links arms with ANNE and
the others. CYNTHIA begins singing, joined by others.)

CYNTHIA

(MUSIC #27: Day by Day)

ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER AND
STRAIGHT AHEAD
ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER AND
STRAIGHT AHEAD
DAY BY DAY
I MAKE A NEW BEGINNING

DAN

PLAY BY PLAY
I'M LEARNING HOW TO LIVE

ALEXIS

ONE BY ONE
I'M PICKING UP THE PIECES

ENSEMBLE

DAY BY DAY

DAY BY DAY

HAZEL

PIECE BY PIECE
I'M SORTING OUT THE PUZZLE.
BLOCK BY BLOCK
I'M BUILDING BACK MY LIFE.

MIMI

INCH BY INCH
I'M GAINING SELF-ACCEPTANCE.

ENSEMBLE

DAY BY DAY.
DAY BY DAY.

DAN

SOME NIGHTS ARE SO LONELY.
SOME DAYS ARE SO LONG.

RICHARD

SOME TIMES I THINK ONLY THAT A
DRINK CAN MAKE ME STRONG!

ALEXIS

BUT HOUR BY HOUR
I CALL MY HIGHER POWER.
DAY BY DAY
I'M LEARNING HOW TO PRAY.

MARCUS

STEP BY STEP
I'LL FOLLOW TO GET THROUGH THIS.

ENSEMBLE

DAY BY DAY
DAY BY DAY

CYNTHIA

AND THE BLESSINGS OF FRIENDSHIP.
THE GIFT OF A SONG.

ANNE

THE PROMISE OF SUNRISE ALL
HELP ME TO GET ALONG.

JOE

AS DAY BY DAY
I PUT THE PAST BEHIND ME.

MIMI

ONE BY ONE
I'M MAKING MY AMENDS.

KATIE

MILE BY MILE
I'M WALKING MY OWN PATH NOW.

KATIE AND CYNTHIA

DAY BY DAY.
DAY BY DAY.

ENSEMBLE

DAY BY DAY
DAY BY DAY
DAY BY DAY
DAY BY DAY!

(MUSIC #28: FINALE HARD LUCK CAFE REPRISE)

ENSEMBLE

WELCOME TO THE HARD LUCK CAFE
WHERE WE'RE ALL ON OUR WAY
TO A BETTER LIFE.

NO MATTER WHERE YOU'RE GOING OR WHERE YOU'VE BEEN
THERE'S JUST NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A FRIEND. AND
LIKE MOST FOLKS THAT COME DRAGGIN' IN HERE.

WE WERE BATTERED.
DREAMS WERE SHATTERED.
CLOTHES WERE TATTERED.
NOTHING MATTERED. TILL THE

HARD LUCK CAFE
HELPED US TO GET STARTED ON OUR WAY
TO A BETTER LIFE.

MOMMA ALWAYS CALLED ME THE HARD LUCK KID
WHEN THINGS COULD GO WRONG THEY USUALLY DID.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR HARD LUCK CAFE
I'D HAVE NO LUCK AT ALL, BUT SOMETIMES
WE HAVE US A BALL AT THE

HARD LUCK CAFE. THE
HARD LUCK CAFE!

THE END