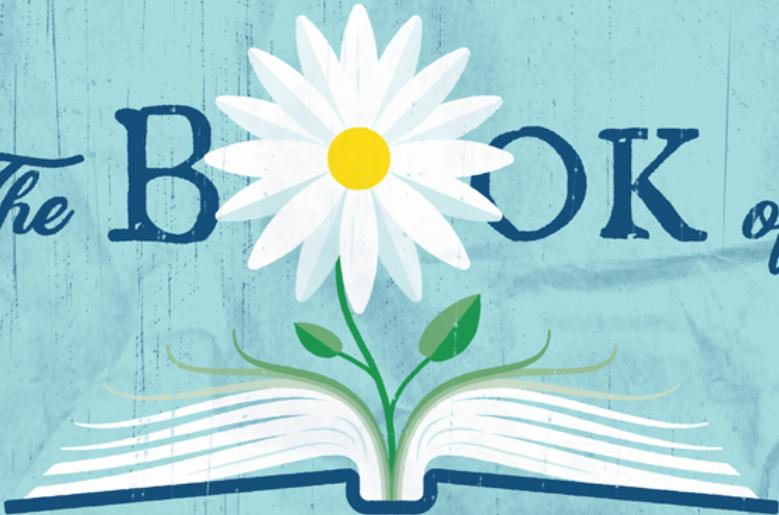


A NEW POP MUSICAL BY BRANDON M. ROCKSTROH

*The* **BOOK** *of*  
  
**EMPTY PAGES**

“LIVE & LIVE ON.”

TO AVAYA LYN & OSCAR RYAN,  
MAY YOU EMBRACE THAT WHICH DEFINES YOU  
AND KNOW THAT LOVE IS ALWAYS WORTH IT.

## BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Not only is **Sam** president of his fraternity, but he can now officially call himself a college graduate! He is on top of the world, with a pilot's license in hand and his long-term girlfriend by his side. After celebrating at a frat party a little too much, Sam's girlfriend grabs the keys and he and two friends all get into a horrific car crash. Amidst the shock and fear of the aftermath, the other three passengers flee the scene and leave Sam alone in the car, paralyzed and bleeding.

Meanwhile, **Daisy**, the daughter of a preacher and a very likable 25-year old, is stuck in an abusive marriage. In response to her constant marital fights over money, Daisy decides to get a job in the Long Term Recovery Unit at Franklin Mills ICU, where Sam is placed 11 days after the accident, due to a fracture in his skull dangerously close to his brain stem.

In the Long Term Recovery Unit, every patient receives an empty book to notate the legacy they want left behind, in the event of their passing. After having lost his parents and with his friends having ditched him, Sam dismisses the book as pointless.

While at Franklin Mills, Sam undergoes a series of tests to see if he can qualify for the only possible treatment for his condition. The problem is: even if he qualifies, the treatment is overwhelmingly expensive. Thankfully, the patients and staff rally around him to try and raise the necessary funds for him to have another chance.

As fate would have it, Sam and Daisy fall madly in love in the age-old *relationship that can't happen*. Meanwhile, several other characters try to either help the relationship or break it up along the way.

After several twists and turns, some expected and some unexpected, the book is empty no more. It essentially becomes a handbook on how to get the most out of life while we are here and to leave a legacy after we are gone.

Hence, the moral of the story: live and live on.

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**FOR REHEARSAL PURPOSES:****A SCENES (All)**

1-1 (5 pages), 1-4 (13), 1-9 (5), 1-10 (7), 2-1 (5), 2-6 (4)

6 scenes, 39 pages, 7 songs (1 non-chorus)

**B SCENES (Mostly Sam/Daisy)**

1-2 (1 page, with Dr/paramedics/nurses), 1-3 (2, with Dirk/Jack), 1-6 (7, with Nurse/Larry), 1-7 (3, with Jack/Dirk),

1-8 (4, with Dr/Viv/Nurse/Larry), 2-2 (5, with Charlotte/Larry), 2-4 (4, with Nancy), 2-5 (5, with Viv/Jack/Larry)

8 scenes, 31 pages, 7 songs (all solos or duets)

**C SCENES (Miscellaneous)**

1-5 (4 pages), 1-11 (3), 2-3 (3)

3 scenes, 10 pages, 2 songs

PRINCIPAL ROLES: [4f, 3m]

**Sam:** 23-year old popular recent college graduate; nearly dies after a drunk driving accident. Protagonist of the show.

*3 solos, 3 duets, 1 cameo*

**Daisy:** 25-year old ingénue; charming and sweet, but stuck in an abusive marriage. Falls in love with Sam.

*2 solos, 4 duets, 2 cameos*

**Nancy:** 45-year old night custodian; crabby, wrinkly, & chain-smoking antagonist. Think Frances McDormand.

*2 solos*

**Jack:** 50-year old traditionalist pastor; also Daisy's father. Dynamic character.

*1 solo, 2 cameos*

**H:** 35-year old day custodian; provides some comedic relief to this serious show. Think Dave Chappelle.

*1 solo, 1 duet, 2 cameos*

**Vivian:** 40-year old hospice director; well-spoken and confident. Think Viola Davis.

*2 cameos*

**Charlotte:** 20-year old hospice receptionist; bubbly, helpful, and upbeat redhead. Think Ellie Kemper.

*1 duet, 2 cameos*

SUPPORTING ROLES: [3f, 2m]

**Dirk:** Daisy's husband. 28 years old with a rugged appearance. He is a downer with a scary temper. *1 duet*

**Larry:** Sam's roommate who's been at Franklin Mills for 5 years, since his wife died. He ranges from crabby to generous.

**Dr. Edwards:** Sam's doctor. 35 years old and attractive and well-spoken. Many long lines in 1-8.

**Denise/Alice:** Nancy's right-hand girls. They have singing and speaking lines in multiple scenes.

FEATURED ROLES: [2f, 7m, 4 either]

**Nurse (Bonnie):** appears in several scenes as Sam's nurse. Her longest interaction with him happens in 1-6.

**Ralph Gunderson:** a college freshman who is roped into the rap-off in 1-1. He is the class clown type.

**Paula Ragnowski:** leader of the popular sorority girls at the frat party in 1-1. She is the ultra confident feminist.

**Oswald:** graduation party host who raps in 1-1. Cocky, clean-cut, attractive, frat boy, who is known for his drunkenness.

**Thomas, Geno, TCHARLOTTEr, Bobby:** custodians on H's team with various featured moments in 2-1.

**Patients #1-4:** at least one singing line and/or several speaking lines in 1-4, 1-9, & 2-1

CAMEO ROLES: [7f, 5m, 10 either]

**Elizabeth:** Sam's Barbie-esque girlfriend, **Double** for Sam, **Nerdyman, Beatboxer:** characters in "Head Over Heels"

**Grandpa #1-4, Grandma #1-4:** singing patients in "Head Over Heels." **Man #1-2, Woman #1-2, Partyer #1-2,**

**Patients #5-9:** speaking partyers in 1-1 or patients in 1-8 or 2-1. **Chorus:** paramedics, partyers, patients, medical staff.

# \* THE BOOK OF EMPTY PAGES \*

BRANDON M. ROCKSTROH

## \* #1: Overture \*

### I-I: A College Graduation Party

*Old couches, end tables, lamps, coffee tables, rugs, and a beer-pong table create a stereotypical college housing scene. Moving colored lights flash glimpses of the various party activities around the room. Although flip-cup, beer pong, keg stands, kissing, smoking, and dancing are all taking place at various pockets of the room during the song, everyone has at least part of their attention on the song itself. Our attention quickly goes to fraternity president, SAM, an attractive young man with tattoos, quarterback charm, unflappable confidence, and a pretty girl on his arm. A sign hanging from the table reads "The 153<sup>rd</sup> Kappi Sigma Passing of the Presidential Torch." Characters are frozen as overture finishes.*

## \* #2: Anything & Everything \*

ALL:

OH! (2x)

DJ:

Ladies and gentlemen, give it up...for *one* last time as *President* of Kappi Sig...

*("let's get ready to rumble" voice, as SAM and ELIZABETH come upstairs from the basement)*

...SAM LIVINGSTON!!!

SAM:

Thank you, thank you. Well, these past four years have been...unforgettable.

Until college, I never knew it was possible to procrastinate an entire's semester's worth of material till the morning of the final! That is, until I roomed with Davis freshman year.

*(points to his left to an obnoxious drunk guy, who scrunches his nose to smile with pride about his own irresponsibility)*

Until college, I didn't realize that \$5 left on your lunch card...means "guess I'm go' be hungry' cuz I need dat coffee fo' my 8am!!"

*(straight arm point to his right, after somebody shouts out a remark about PROF. CARPENTER)*

Especially in Carpenter's English class, YES!

Truth is...I never knew I would meet *so many* amazing people. Like ...the one and only: Elizabeth Rose...

*(there is a mixture of “aw” and gagging reactions, as he grabs her hand, and then tries to defend the comment)*

...who I actually met in this very room. Just sayin.

Anyway, I propose a toast. To those of us who walked across that stage yesterday...we did it!

*(raucous cheers)*

Remember...tomorrow we dream, but tonight we believe that living for the moment is the legacy we leave!!!

**ALL:**

*(everyone halts their individual activities to join together to dance and sing the refrain)*

THROW ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING YOU LEARNED OUT THE WINDOW

COME TO A PLACE WHERE GOOD TIMES ROLL, THE ONLY PLACE I WANNA GO

LOSE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING; COLLEGE NOW IS LONG AGO

AND RAISE YOUR GLASS TO PARTYIN’; THROW ONE BACK TO START THE SHOW

**SAM:**

*(with a smile, knowing everybody is anticipating it)*

Alright, gather ‘round, folks. Now, back by popular demand...I am proud to present...your 2017 graduation rap-off!!

*(wild cheers)*

So, here’s how it works. Throughout the night, you have all nominated younger members to challenge...

*(gestures to self with a confident half-smile)*

...your outgoing president to a freestyle rap-off. Let’s see who we got.

*(reaches into a hat to draw some names...after drawing the first name, he laughs and shakes his head)*

Going last will be...well, let’s hope he’s sober enough to do it this time...OSWALD!!!

*(as he picks the second name, he is pleasantly surprised and very ‘up’ for the challenge)*

Next up, we got...oooooo, the defending CHAMP! Paula Ragnowski, everybody!

*(finally, the third name makes him give a look resembling “of course,” as he picks the class clown)*

And first up will be...of course. Ralph Gunderson!

*(the crowd reacts accordingly after the announcement of each name; meanwhile, SAM preps GUNDERSON)*

So how about this: I’ll start as a professor, and you be the obnoxious freshman, k?

**GUNDERSON:**

I can do that!

**SAM:**

*(noticeably changing his demeanor to “uppity,” he is clearly mimicking somebody)*

Shhhh!!! Calm down. Pupils, please!

IT'S THE FIRST DAY OF COLLEGE, I'M THE DEAN OF THIS SCHOOL  
SO SIT DOWN, SHUT UP, HERE ARE MY RULES

*(hand over his chest, as if he's pledging to the rules)*

"NEVER WILL I CHEAT; NEVER WILL I LIE"

**GUNDERSON:**

*(acting as the rebellious student in the back of the room)*

HE BETTER WATCH WHAT HE EATS, OR YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A BUTTON IN YOUR EYE

**SAM:**

IN FORTY YEARS, I'VE NEVER HAD A CLASS LIKE THIS!

**GUNDERSON:**

IN FORTY YEARS, I BETCHA NEVER BEEN KISSED!

**SAM:**

YOU WATCH YOUR TONGUE WITH ME, YOUNG MAN!

**GUNDERSON:**

GETCHA FAT ASS BACK IN YOUR MINIVAN!

*(various shouts erupt, the party is clearly into it...they each raise some fingers, as if grading the rap on a scale of 1-10)*

**SAM:**

Wow. Not bad at all, rookie. Now, onto our defending champ, Paula Ragnowskiiiiiiiii!!!!

*(crowd cheers again)*

YOU GIRLS ALWAYS THINK WE THINK WE'RE BETTER THAN YOU

**PAULA:**

THAT'S CUZ YOU BOYS THINK US GIRLS CAN'T DO WHAT YOU DO

**SAM:**

CAN YOU PARTY ALL NIGHT TILL THE SUN COMES UP?

**PAULA:**

YES, AND WE'LL GET A'S THE NEXT DAY, CUZ WE KNOW WHEN TO PUT DOWN THE CUP!

**SAM:**

YOU WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE LIKE US, NO

BUT THAT'S OKAY, CUZ DIFFERENT IS GOOD, Y' KNOW?

**PAULA:**

NO, NEVER WILL I EVER BE AFRAID TO SAY:

"SEVENTY CENTS TO YOUR DOLLAR? HA! NO THANKS."

*(the crowd erupts in cheers, as she receives basically all tens; SAM high-fives her)*

**SAM:**

Woah! I think that one might take the cake, folks! And now, please welcome the legendary Oswaaaaaaaaald!

**OSWALD:**

*(typical popular frat guy; he is a cocky womanizer who thinks he's the Alpha of the party, and is clearly inebriated)*

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, I'LL SHOW YOU WHO IS BOSS  
CUZ I'LL BE TAKIN' HOME TWO A' THESE BROADS!  
I'M SAYING STEP DOWN AND BOW  
CUZ IMA COMIN' TO TAKE YO' CROWN!

*(partyers cheer as if he dropped the mic; SAM cuts in almost to save OSWALD from saying something he'd regret)*

**SAM:**

Nice!

WELL WHEREVER WE GO,  
MAY TONIGHT BE A NIGHT TO REMEMBER, YO  
CUZ THIS IS THE TIME, THIS IS THE PLACE,  
SO LIVE IT UP, AND TURN UP THE BASS!

**ALL:**

THROW ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING YOU LEARNED OUT THE WINDOW  
COME TO A PLACE WHERE GOOD TIMES ROLL, THE ONLY PLACE I WANNA GO  
LOSE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING; COLLEGE NOW IS LONG AGO  
AND RAISE YOUR GLASS TO PARTYIN'; THROW ONE BACK TO START THE SHOW

**POLICEMAN:**

Hey!

*(as the policeman enters, everybody scrambles to exit; and SAM, ELIZABETH, and two friends head towards the car)*

**ALL:**

GO!

**ELIZABETH:**

WUDDYA' SAY WE GO FOR A SPIN? GIVE ME THE KEYS, AND YOU GET IN

**SAM:**

WAIT, WOULDN'T YOU SAY WE'RE ALL A LITTLE DRUNK?

**OTHER 3:**

OH YEAH!

**ELIZABETH:**

OH LIGHTEN UP, YOU KNOW I'M FINE! I'VE DRIVEN DRUNK A THOUSAND TIMES  
PLUS, YOU KNOW IT'S BETTER...

*(tough swallow, as if about to burp)*

...IT'S BETTER THIS WAY

**OTHER 3:**

HELL YEAH!

*(SAM, still reluctant, joins the others and gets in; lights black out with shaky headlights appearing briefly around the theatre; a sound effect is heard of a car driving off, screeching its tires, and eventually crashing)*

**\* #2A: Scene Change Music \***

**1-2: Crash Scene/Hospital**

*The curtain closes on the upstage party scene to reveal the aftermath of a car crash. Broken glass, random car parts, and spinning police lights create a mess of a scene. Low stage lighting and fog help mimic the blurriness of the moment. We see three characters stumble out of the wreck and leave in different directions, followed by paramedics putting SAM on a stretcher. The scene quickly transforms into a hospital scene with a rolling hospital bed, IV, and doctors everywhere. SAM sings the song from the front of the stage, as we watch his double act out his words in slow-motion behind him.*

**\* #3: Reality \***

ONE MOMENT, I'M THERE; NO WORRY OR CARE.

JUST MY FRIENDS AND ME; I'VE NEVER FELT MORE FREE

I WANNA GO BACK THERE RIGHT NOW

OH, IF ONLY I KNEW HOW TO REWIND THE TIME

WELCOME TO REALITY, WHERE EVERY LITTLE THING I SEE

REMINDS ME OF WHO I USED TO BE:

A MAN WHO BELIEVED IN HIS DREAMS, WHO NOW DREAMS TO BELIEVE

HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED, LYING HERE IN PAIN

THE DOCTOR ENTERS THE ROOM, AND HE BREAKS THE NEWS

I WANNA GO BACK THERE RIGHT NOW

OH, IF ONLY I KNEW HOW TO REWIND THE TIME

WELCOME TO REALITY, WHERE EVERY LITTLE THING I SEE  
 REMINDS ME OF WHO I USED TO BE:  
 A MAN WHO BELIEVED IN HIS DREAMS, WHO NOW DREAMS TO BELIEVE

GOD, I KNOW THERE'S MORE FOR ME TO DO  
 IF ONLY I HAD ONE MORE CHANCE; I'D MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE

I WANNA GO BACK THERE RIGHT NOW  
 OH, IF ONLY I KNEW HOW TO REWIND THE TIME

WELCOME TO REALITY, WHERE EVERY LITTLE THING I SEE  
 REMINDS ME OF WHO I USED TO BE:  
 A MAN WHO BELIEVED IN HIS DREAMS, WHO NOW DREAMS TO BELIEVE

**#3A: Scene Change Music**

**1-3: Daisy's Home (later, church in background)**

*DAISY is a cute 25 year old, who is well put-together, optimistic, charming, and immediately likeable, even though she is somber after recently losing her mother. To begin the scene, she is laying in bed, when her drunk and abusive husband, DIRK, returns home late. She waffles back and forth between being fed up with him and adopting the approach she grew up with (that marriage is forever, no matter what). Her father, JACK, is also a pastor, who gives them both advice.*

**#4: Only Answer**

**DAISY:**

IT'S THREE IN THE MORN, AND I'M AWAKENED BY HIS HEADLIGHTS AGAIN  
 HE'S *FINALLY* HOME!

That jerk!

*(the music momentarily stops, as she breathes and puts her stiff palms out in front of her, to talk herself down)*

...control!

MEN WILL BE MEN  
 AS LONG AS HE'S SAFE, DAISY, WELCOME HIM...  
 SMILE AND DON'T YOU CRY  
 FOR HE'S A GROWN MAN, REMEMBER:

SHOW SUPPORT AND LOOK IN HIS EYES

*(DIRK enters the room, with a beer in his hand, as he heads for his recliner across the room)*

HI HON, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HOME!

What?

**DIRK:**

*(talking down to her, he shakes his head and snickers, eventually speaking in a mocked baby voice)*

Cut the crap and say what you *really* mean... "you left me alone!"

**DAISY:**

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

IT'S LIKE I GIVE AND GIVE;

YET YOU JUST DISAPPEAR, AND THINK:

"I WON'T EVEN ASK HER"

I'D FORGIVE AND FORGET,

IF YOU'D BE SO KIND TO CALL ME BACK

AND SAY: "HEY BABE, I'LL BE OUT LATE..."

**DIRK:**

Oh shut up!

**DAISY:**

*(extends her hand out as if to say "see!")*

THAT'S YOUR ONLY ANSWER!

**DIRK:**

Hey, listen...I am not gonna stand around and take this. Djoos get a job yet?!

*(a brief silence is followed by condescending head shake and open mouth gum chewing)*

I knew it. Who are *you* to tell me not to go the bar. I'll spend *my* money however *I* damn please.

**DAISY:**

But, Dirk...we have bills. Loans. Debt piling up!

**DIRK:**

Then, make yourself useful and get a job. Un-be-lievable...

**DAISY:**

*(visibly hurt, she speaks under her breath and returns to bed and writing in her journal)*

Ugh. Classic.

IT'S THREE IN THE MORN, IT'S JUST ME AND YOU,

LITTLE LETTERS ON A PAGE

WE'RE BACK TO SQUARE ONE, TIME TO START ANEW,

BREAK OUT OF THIS CAGE

AS MOM ALWAYS SAID, I SHOULD STRIVE TO: LIVE AND LIVE ON

SO DOWN GOES MY PEN, AND UP GOES MY STOCK;

LET'S GET ME A JOB!

HI HON, I'VE CHANGED MY MIND:

YOU WERE RIGHT THIS TIME

*(he proceeds to stumble up from recliner to approach her, while she's pensive and contemplative...first, he grabs hand kisses it, and makes his way up to her neck, blatantly disregarding her pain for his own pleasure; until she denies him)*

I WILL GO BACK TO WORK,

EVEN THOUGH I DON'T FEEL CLOSE TO BEING READY,

FOR I KNOW IT'S WHAT YOU WANT

MOM, I KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN,

EVEN PROUDER THAN YOU WERE BEFORE, CUZ TODAY,

Get off<sup>a</sup> me!

I CHOOSE TO FIGHT...IT'S MY ONLY ANSWER

*(the music dies down, as the two characters fall asleep side by side...a fast forward happens, when lights shine as if it's morning; the music picks back up and DAISY quickly approaches and knocks on JACK's door)*

SO ON EARLY SUNDAY MORN, I RUSH TO GET TO CHURCH

"DADDY, CAN YOU SPARE A MINUTE OR TWO?"

HE OPENS THE DOOR; HE KNOWS WHY I'M HERE;

HE'S HEARD THIS STORY OVER AND OVER BEFORE

HE RESPONDS WITH A NOD AND A WIPE OF MY TEARS,

YET HIS WORDS HAVEN'T CHANGED OVER ALL THESE YEARS:

**JACK:**

*(gentle and kind JACK appears at church in his minister attire, to counsel his daughter)*

DAISY, YOU HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO GOD.

DIRK'S ONLY HUMAN; WE ALL ARE FLAWED.  
 A GRUDGE HAS NO PLACE FOR HUSBANDS OR WIVES;  
 BUT FORGIVENESS BELONGS IN ALL OF OUR LIVES

**DAISY:**

Thanks, Daddy.

**JACK:**

Of course, dear.

*(quick, goes to get a ripped piece of paper from his desk and puts his readers on)*

Oo, I almost forgot. I just saw a job posting in the church bulletin this week...for a, uh, caretaker. Wuddya think?

**DAISY:**

*(she is surprised, but intrigued)*

*A caretaker?*

**JACK:**

Who knows? Might be worth a call.

**DAISY:**

*(she lifts her eyes from the piece of paper up to him, and goes in for a hug; it must be time for church)*

I love you, Daddy...

**JACK:**

I love you too, baby girl. Alright...gotta go!

**DAISY:**

*(gets her cell phone out, as if it's her only option)*

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE IN HAPPILY EVER AFTER,  
 WHEN MORE AND MORE QUESTIONS ARE MY ONLY ANSWERS

I hope they don't answer.

*(her faces looks surprised; it's clear that someone has picked up on the other end)*

Uh, yeah, hi...my name is Daisy Belmont. I submitted an application two days ago and I just wanted to call and...uh...

*(shaking her head, realizing how dumb she sounds)*

...make sure you received it.

*(certain this what a bad idea, until she surprisingly starts nodding her head, speaking, and eventually hanging up)*

Oh, ok. Yeah, no...um...Tomorrow? Sure. Ok. I'll be there at 4:30. Thank you so much!

IF ONLY I HAD THE RIGHT WORDS TO SAY

IF ONLY TODAY WERE A BRAND NEW DAY

---

**1-4: Franklin Mills ICU-Long Term Recovery Unit: Upstairs & Sam's Room**

*Upstairs, we see a large sign that reads "Franklin Mills ICU: Long Term Recovery Unit." On one end of the hallway, there is a reception desk, manned by a spunky 20-year old named CHARLOTTE. Further down the hall, is VIVIAN's office, the Director of the Long-Term Recovery Unit. She is warm, well-spoken, and motherly. DAISY soon meets H, the head day custodian and comedic relief of the show. She is up against NANCY for the job, who happens to be the villain of the show. She is a crabby, wrinkly, and gravelly-voiced 60-year old night custodian, who smokes like a chimney, lugs around her "woe is me" mentality, and does not take well to other people's happiness. Eventually, they meet all of the patients.*

---

**CHARLOTTE:**

Hi. You must be Daisy! I'm Charlotte. Welcome. Cute *purse!*

**DAISY:**

Aw, thank you.

**CHARLOTTE:**

*(to just DAISY, almost as if she shouldn't be saying it)*

You're gonna *love* it here! Come on back; I'll introduce you to Vivian.

*(knocks on wall outside her door...her office is open for the audience to see)*

Vivian, this is Daisy!

**VIVIAN:**

Hi Daisy! It's very nice to meet you.

*(DAISY hiccups out of nowhere. Wide-eyed and mortified, she covers her mouth)*

Oh! Have a seat, dear. So it looks like we're just waiting on...

*(hiccup, VIVIAN giggles)*

**DAISY:**

I'm so sorry.

**VIVIAN:**

No, it's fine. Charlotte? Can you get, uh, Daisy here a glass of water? And...where's Nancy?

*(CHARLOTTE sticks up one finger to answer the first question, because she is on the phone, and shrugs for the second)*

**H:**

*(smiley and blunt, he speaks in slang and always through a smile)*

That you, V? One water fa' da mama, comin' right up!

**VIVIAN:**

That's H.

**DAISY:**

H?

*(hiccup)*

**VIVIAN:**

*(almost embarrassed, but not)*

Yeah. Henry Harrison Howard. He's our head custodian during the day.

**H:**

*(arrives at doorway, with water; his first word reveals his obvious attraction; VIVIAN rolls her eyes)*

Helloooo!! These new employees are looking kinder and cuter each day, V.

**VIVIAN:**

H, this is Daisy.

**DAISY:**

*(wide-eyed, she nervously leaves her sip of water to shake his hand, only to slightly choke and let out a hearty cough)*

I'm sorry. It's nice to meet you.

**H:**

The pleasure is all mine, sweetheart. Well alright, I'll leave you guys to it.

*(almost under his breath, but loud enough for DAISY to hear, he turns to VIVIAN as NANCY walks across the hallway)*

Oh. Hey Viv, before you leave tonight, can you talk to Nancy again? She's still leavin' her cigarette butts all over da place. And I'm getting complaints left and right that she's don't even shower before work!

*(makes a frown face with a shiver and a guttural groan, as if repulsed)*

You *know* dat ain't safe fo' dem patients.

**NANCY:**

*(unexpectedly interrupts with an oversized winter coat, fast food bag in one hand, lighting a cigarette with the other)*

You *know* what "ain't" safe for them patients? Blatant racism in the workplace. 'at's right, *white* lives matter too, H.

*(lets out an airy smoker's laugh, which quickly turns into a deep cough. She then picks some leftover food out of her teeth)*

Who'z iss?

**VIVIAN:**

*(sighs at classic NANCY)*

Uh, Daisy...meet Nancy. She is currently in charge of our *night* custodial team. Nancy is also here to interview for the caretaker position. Nancy, this is Daisy.

**NANCY:**

*(shaking her head, she rolls her eyes and ignores DAISY's handshake offer; she instead picks a hair off her cigarette)*

18 years here. People come, people go. The one thing ‘at never changes? Cute little teenagers gettin’ jobs over people who’ve served their time.

**VIVIAN:**

Nancy, please.

**H:**

Well, I’ve officially overstayed my welcome here. Please excuse me.

*(stands in hallway with CHARLOTTE, who is now off the phone; both listen in as VIVIAN tries to recover)*

**VIVIAN:**

Now. The way I generally prefer to conduct interviews is to bring in our top two candidates for a given position and interview them *together*...on the same questions, so that each candidate has an equal opportunity. That make sense?

*(the women answer simultaneously; DAISY is polite while NANCY is annoyed, slouched in her chair, biting her nails)*

**DAISY:**

It does.

**NANCY:**

Yup.

**VIVIAN:**

Alright then. So the first question is: what makes you interested in this position. Nancy, we’ll start with you.

**NANCY:**

*(starts out with a huge sigh, followed by a tired yawn, and a “I don’t know” hand in the air)*

Uhh, well...I dunno. I’ve seen a lot over my time here. I know this place like the back ‘a my hand. And, uh, 18 years is a helluva long time in one position, ya know? So I think I’m just, uh, ready for a change...know what I mean?

**VIVIAN:**

Ok, thank you. Daisy?

**DAISY:**

*(her tone is genuine and real; not one bit condescending or boastful)*

Well, first of all, thank you so much for having me here. I’m honored. And Nancy, 18 years is incredibly impressive...you should be very proud of yourself. I...

*(shrugs for a moment, like she doesn’t stand a chance; her eyebrows raise)*

Look. I don’t have a college degree...or years of experience...I’ve never even *been* to this hospital before. I don’t...

*(stops herself and closes her eyes for a moment, before deciding what she really wants to say; she speaks slowly)*

All I have...is what I know to be true.

*(finally starting to sound more resolute)*

Life isn't easy. But it's worth living. At least that was my mom's message to me...especially while she was sick. Even as cancer...*silenced* her pride and energy...she'd remind me, day after day...to: *live and live on*.

*(NANCY has started to smirk condescendingly, look down, and shake her head as if she can't believe it)*

At first, I thought it was some cheesy Mother Teresa quote or something. But now I get it...our purpose in this short life is to truly *live* while we're here. And eventually to *live on* through whatever legacy we choose to leave behind.

**NANCY:**

Oh my GOD. I think I'm gonna be sick.

**VIVIAN:**

*(reprimanded her in a motherly way)*

Nancy, please.

**NANCY:**

No, ya know what? I shoulda known this was a waste 'a my time anyways. You knew you were gonna hire her in the first place, didn't you?!

**VIVIAN:**

Nancy, this is why we're having an interview right now. To see who...

**NANCY:**

*(she picks up her coat off the back of the chair, lets out a small cocky laugh, and starts to walk out)*

Save it, Vivian. H doesn't like me, so *you* don't like me. At least *I* can admit it. Welcome to Franklin Mills, Barbie.

*(walks out, cocky and slowly, resumes smoking, and talks 'under her breath,' but loud enough for the others to hear)*

**VIVIAN:**

Nancy, come *on*!

**NANCY:**

*(cocky and slowly walks down hallway, and talks 'under her breath,' but loud enough for the others to hear)*

I've always said: milk is only in business 'cuz 'a chocolate. I was born on the wrong side of the tracks, I swear.

**VIVIAN:**

*(shakes her head to ignore NANCY's confusing rhetoric, then turns her attention back to DAISY)*

Okay. I'm so sorry. I'd say that life around here isn't normally as...*eventful* as that. But, I'd be lying. This place is a zoo most of the time. And H is a total goofball...you would love him. Anyway, I digress. What do you think is your *best* trait?

**DAISY:**

*(shakes her head and shrugs, as if to say "I'm a simple girl")*

Hmm. What you see is what you get. I am as genuine as they come. The patients would know the same Daisy that my family and friends do. And I think that's important.

*(VIVIAN raises her eyebrows and nods her head, clearly pleased; she pauses for a beat, then smiles as if she was 'made')*

**VIVIAN:**

When can you start?

**DAISY:**

Are you serious?!?

**VIVIAN:**

I almost never make decisions this quickly. But my first impressions are almost always spot on. And you seem like exactly what we're looking for in a caretaker!

**DAISY:**

Wow, thank you so much!

*\* #5: The Other Side \**

**VIVIAN:**

You bet. Now come on up; let me show you around.

**DAISY:**

Can I leave my stuff here?

**VIVIAN:**

Certainly, dear.

*(they look over railing, as lights reveal PATIENTS of various ages/ailments, who are playing games during rec time)*

Daisy, welcome to Franklin Mills!

*(the four leads need to be very articulate to make sure their words are understood)*

WHAT PERFECT TIMING

**CHARLOTTE:**

LET'S WATCH THEM PLAY THEIR GAMES

**NANCY:**

No thanks. I'd rather smoke in someone else's face.

*(sitting at the other end of the hallway by the window, she blows smoke down at patients, who cough)*

**H:**

*(leaning over the railing, they explain the point of the games)*

SO THE GOAL IS TO BEAT YOUR FRIENDS

*(somebody wins and gloats)*

**CHARLOTTE:**

AND BE THE ONE THEY ALL PRETEND TO LOVE

**H:**

It's...basically Facebook.

**VIVIAN/H/CHARLOTTE:**

FRIEND, WELCOME

*(shows off the PATIENTS, who are singing and dancing, even though they look tired, medicated, or in pain)*

TO THIS OLD HOME!

**ALL:**

LEFT TO WALK A PATH IN WHICH YOU CAN'T FIND

YOU WON'T EVER SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES

TESTS AND DRUGS WILL MAKE YOU ALL THE MORE BLIND, BUT

HAPPINESS WILL MEET YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE; THE OTHER SIDE

*(dance break #1: 4 chord progressions...they harmlessly pull DAISY into their dance, teaching her along the way)*

**CHARLOTTE:**

WE COULD BE THE BEST OF FRIENDS

**NANCY:**

Just stay away from me.

**H:**

MEET AND GREET

*(head nods over to NANCY)*

Just don't get too close to her *teeth!*

**CHARLOTTE:**

WE ALMOST FORGOT TO ASK:

**VIVIAN:**

How do you like your coffee?

**DAISY:**

Just black.

**H:**

*(as he crosses to take coffee from VIVIAN to give to DAISY; he says to VIVIAN/CHARLOTTE, as they walk down stairs)*

See, I knew she was into me!

**VIVIAN/H/CHARLOTTE:**

FRIEND, WELCOME

TO YOUR NEW HOME!

**ALL:**

LEFT TO WALK A PATH IN WHICH YOU CAN'T FIND  
 YOU WON'T EVER SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES  
 TESTS AND DRUGS WILL MAKE YOU ALL THE MORE BLIND, BUT  
 HAPPINESS WILL MEET YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE; THE OTHER SIDE

*(dance break #2)*

**PATIENT #1:**

*(in wheelchair)*

SOME HALLWAYS SEEM NARROW

**PATIENT #2:**

*(apologizes to everybody on patient #1's behalf; making an apologetic face while circling her finger near her ear)*

Don't mind her; she has no more bone marrow!

**DAISY:**

SO WHY AREN'T YOU ALL GOING CRAZY?

**PATIENTS #3/4:**

WELL, AT LEAST WE'RE NOT PUSHIN' UP DAISIES

**ALL:**

*(the final chorus is sung a cappella as cast members stomp to mimic a heartbeat, as they inch closer to DAISY)*

LEFT TO WALK A PATH IN WHICH YOU CAN'T FIND  
 YOU WON'T EVER SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES  
 TESTS AND DRUGS WILL MAKE YOU ALL THE MORE BLIND, BUT  
 HAPPINESS WILL MEET YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE; THE OTHER SIDE

**VIVIAN:**

*(a dinner bell sounds, as VIVIAN claps and dismisses the masses)*

Okay, dinner time, everybody!!

*(the patients disperse, excited; VIVIAN pauses while holding her clipboard and papers, then turns to DAISY)*

So, I think I've got just the case for you to start on.

**DAISY:**

Oh, really?

**VIVIAN:**

Yep. The file just came in yesterday and the patient should be arriving...

*(looks at her watch)*

...well, he should be here by now, actually. Ready for this?

**DAISY:**

As ready as I'll ever be!

**VIVIAN:**

Good.

*(pulling out her readers and puts them at the edge of her nose, she assumes a more informative disposition)*

Well before we go in, this case is...different. Which is actually why I think it'll be the ideal first case for you. It says here that "Sam" is a 23-year old male who was in a drunk-driving crash on the 13th and has been in the ICU ever since.

**DAISY:**

Wow.

**VIVIAN:**

Mhmm. Apparently, they are still awaiting test results for further diagnosis, but what we know now is that he is a paraplegic,

*(turns to DAISY, in case she doesn't know what that means)*

paralyzed from the waist down. He also has severe internal bleeding due to a skull fracture. And his chances of survival appear...non-existent, at this point.

**DAISY:**

Ugh. That's terrible!

**VIVIAN:**

On the bright side, it sounds like he has come to terms with his condition and, for the most part, is coherent...which will be good for you.

*(removes her glasses and sighs)*

Daisy, this is *not* an easy job. What we do for a living is: help people come to terms with the fact that they are most likely dying. You sure you're up for that?

**DAISY:**

I am.

**VIVIAN:**

Our on-staff nurses will handle the vast majority of the medical assistance. Your job is simply to...be a friend.

Sometimes, that means being a physical presence the room. Other times, it means listening to the *same* story 42 times or *telling* the same story 42 times...it really varies per client.

Ooo, and I almost forgot. This book. I'll explain more when we get in there; but for many of our clients, *this* ends up being their most prized possession in their final days. I'm sure you can understand that life isn't always roses, Daisy. You'd be shocked to know the loneliness that some people deal with on a day-to-day basis.

**DAISY:**

*(raises her eyebrows, as if to say "if you only knew")*

I can imagine.

**VIVIAN:**

Alright, let's do this.

*(they enter as lights come up on LARRY, a sleeping old man, and SAM, who is barely recognizable with head bandages)*

Hi, Sam? My name is Vivian; I am the Program Director for the Long Term Recovery Unit here at Franklin Mills. I would first like to offer my sincerest condolences for your accident. I read your file and I can't imagine the pain you must be going through right now...both inside and out. I will assure you that our staff here is the very best. And they will do absolutely everything in their power to tend...

**SAM:**

Who's she?

**VIVIAN:**

*(obviously taken off guard, she turns to DAISY)*

Uh, this is...Daisy. The newest addition to our team. She will be taking care of you each day. So anything you need, don't hesitate to ask.

**SAM:**

*(surprisingly flirty, even from his stiff body position)*

Does Daisy talk?

**DAISY:**

*(taken off-guard, she grins, cocks her head, and tries desperately to be professional, but fails with numerous pauses)*

Uh...well, I...I am excited to w-...I mean: I'm...*honored* to work with you, Mr....uh...Sam.

**SAM:**

*(smiles with audible nasal exhalation)*

I'm...honored to work with you, too.

**VIVIAN:**

*(noticing her sudden 'third wheel' status, she hands him the book)*

There *is* something I'd like to talk to you about, Sam. It's quite important. Every patient that comes to Franklin Mills receives one of these.

**SAM:**

What is it?

**VIVIAN:**

It's...a book.

**SAM:**

It's...blank.

**VIVIAN:**

Right. We like to think of this book as a “blank slate.” During your time here, if you ever feel the urge to...write a letter, draw a picture, share a memory, these...empty pages are here for you. There's even a spot in the front for a dedication; so that, when you pa-...*if* you pass on, we will make sure this book gets to the right person, or people.

**SAM:**

*(shrugs and leans his head forward while shaking head, while he thinks of a weird name just to be difficult)*

So, what if I dedicate it toooooooooo...I dunno...Shrek?

**LARRY:**

*(wakens abruptly, with a stylized gravely, almost incoherent old man voice)*

That damn book hasn't done jack for me.

**VIVIAN:**

Aaaaand...that's Larry.

*(knowing profanity is routine for him, she rolls her chair over and covers LARRY up as he turns over)*

**SAM:**

*(to DAISY, as he pretends his arms don't work)*

Can you help me with that water?

**VIVIAN:**

Larry is our longest tenured patient.

*(DAISY helps him drink the water, as SAM looks up at her)*

**LARRY:**

Six years in this hell hole.

**VIVIAN:**

He is also our most profane patient.

**LARRY:**

Damn straight.

**SAM:**

*(SAM audibly burps; DAISY can't help but giggle at how unexpected everything is)*

Thank you.

**VIVIAN:**

Okay.

*(like “could anything else go wrong?”)*

I’m gonna let you two get to know each other a little bit. I’ll be in my office, if you need me.

**DAISY:**

*(VIVIAN leaves; DAISY notices SAM scratch his eyebrow, revealing he can use his arms; she gets flirtatiously accusatory)*

So, do you always ask for assistance with things you can already do yourself?

**SAM:**

*(as if he can’t avoid the innuendo, they begin to flirt)*

Why? Are you offering?

**DAISY:**

Well, I have to admit. This is THE craziest first day I’ve ever had at a job!

**SAM:**

Is that so? Cuz it was the craziest first day I’VE ever had as an ICU patient. So...cheers!

**DAISY:**

*(smiles, as she rolls her eyes as she starts to turn introspective)*

Truth is, I needed a day like today. Badly. My life has been awful lately.

*(looks over at him, in his condition, and covers her face in shame)*

Oh my gosh, I’m SO sorry. I didn’t mean to--

**SAM:**

No, it’s fine. To be honest, it’s actually refreshing. The doctors keep saying:

*(imitating others, he starts with an uppity nerdy voice, which DAISY finds hilarious, eventually covering her face)*

“Well, sir...the paraplegia is permanent. So. You won’t be getting on with your bike races anytime soon...”

*(his voice quickly changes as he mimicks LARRY)*

And meanwhile, Larry’s all like, “The lad can’t even use his legs no more. He won’t be ‘gettin’ on’ anytime soon!”

**DAISY:**

*(wiping the subtle laughing tears from her eyes)*

How’d you get so good at doing voices?!

**SAM:**

*(in his best Sean Connery-esque bravado accent to mimic the “Dos Equis” commercials)*

“I don’t always do voices; but when I do...”

*(can’t think of anything witty or clever)*

I...do.”

**DAISY:**

You goofball.

*(pauses to change the subject)*

So. What’s your story, *Mister* Sam?

**SAM:**

Excuse *me*, Miss...what’joo say your name was again...Lily? Petunia!

**DAISY:**

*(still smiling, she flirtatiously rolls her eyes, as if she’s heard that a million times before)*

Daisy.

**SAM:**

Ah, Carnation. My favorite.

**DAISY:**

Oh shush.

**SAM:**

My story, huh? Well. I just graduated college two weeks ago. I’m a Capricorn. Used to like long walks on the beach...but now?

*(raising eyebrows to enhance the sarcasm, he looks at his wheelchair and breaks a smile)*

I suppose I’ll have to...‘reinvent the wheel.’

**DAISY:**

You cope with humor. I like that.

**SAM:**

You cope with beauty. I like *that*.

**DAISY:**

So. How is it that a 23-year old ends up in a place like this?

**SAM:**

You know my age? Creepy.

*(after a noticeable pause, he switches from flirty to serious)*

You know: I’m afraid *that* story doesn’t have as happy an ending. Does it, Miss Daisy?

**DAISY:**

You don’t know that yet.

**SAM:**

Guess you’re right. But you *really* wanna hear about how my life fell apart?

**DAISY:**

Just give me the cliff notes...

*\* #6: The End \**

**SAM:**

Alright. I can do that. But you gotta promise not to cry.

**DAISY:**

Ok. I promise.

**SAM:**

NOT TOO LONG AGO, I STOOD ATOP THE WORLD  
AND IN MY MIND, I DESERVED IT ALL  
TILL ONE NIGHT, ONE CHOICE OF MINE; I EVEN SAW THE SIGN  
WHAT I DIDN'T SEE: I'D SOLD MY LIFE FOR FREE

FORTUNE AND FATE GRABBED MY HAND AND GUIDED ME  
I'M NO LONGER THE MAN I LONG TO BE

YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT HAS LED ME HERE?  
CHOOSING ME OVER ALL THESE YEARS  
SO NOW WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR,  
I FACE THE TRUTH: THE END IS DRAWING NEAR

WHEN I WAS YOUNG IN SCHOOL, I HAD ONE LONELY RULE  
YOU MUST MASK YOUR PAIN, OR YOU WILL ALWAYS LOSE  
SO I LAUGHED AND JOKED; I EVEN SOMETIMES SMOKED  
WHATEVER HELPED MY HURT; I HID LIKE A TRAINED EXPERT

FORTUNE AND FATE GRABBED MY HAND AND GUIDED ME  
I'M NO LONGER THE MAN I LONG TO BE

NOW I KNOW WHAT HAS LED ME HERE?  
CHOOSING ME OVER ALL THESE YEARS  
SO NOW WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR,  
I FACE THE TRUTH: THE END IS DRAWING NEAR

**DAISY:**

I'm sorry, Sam...but I just don't buy it.

**SAM:**

Buy what?

**DAISY:**

*(shaking her head)*

Well, here's what I think...

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT YOU MUST BE GOING THROUGH  
SO PLEASE FORGIVE MY MIND AND MY POINT OF VIEW  
FROM WHAT YOU SAY AND DO, YOU SOUND SO CALM AND COOL  
BUT YET YOU LIE HERE CRUSHED, LIKE YOU'RE GONNA LOSE

FORTUNE AND FATE WON'T GRAB WHAT YOU WON'T LET THEM TAKE  
YOUR BODY HAS CHANGED, BUT YOUR HEART'S THE SAME!

**SAM:**

*(overlapping the same pre-chorus melody in canon with DAISY, who starts one measure later)*

BUT FORTUNE AND FATE WON'T LET ME LIVE THE LIFE I DREAMED  
MY CHANCES ARE SLIM; THAT'S ALL I MEAN

**DAISY:**

BUT FORTUNE AND FATE ARE TWO EXCUSES NOT TO DREAM  
THAT'S ALL I MEAN

YOU CAN FIND YOUR WAY OUT OF HERE  
JUST CHOOSE TO FACE YOUR DARKEST FEARS  
THEN, WHEN YOU LOOK IN THE MIRROR  
YOU'LL FACE THE TRUTH: THE END IS NOT SO CLEAR

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said anything. It's your life. I'm gonna go.

*(stops before opening the door to leave; SAM is pleasantly surprised at her boldness)*

**SAM:**

No, thank you for speaking up. Seriously. Nobody does anymore. I want you to know that...

I'M TRYING MY BEST TO FIND PEACE. TO BE READY FOR THE NEXT STAGE  
BUT WHEN LOVE NO LONGER LIVES IN YOU, IT'S TIME TO TURN THE PAGE

*(DAISY exits, lights fade to black)*

**\* #6A: Scene Change Music \***

**1-5: Custodial Break Room**

*Twelve custodians are hanging out in their office. H strolls into the room, sucking on a sucker, clipboard in one hand, to lead the meeting (which is supposed to be with NANCY, but she just sits and smokes. Among the six are DENISE and ALICE, wannabe-NANCY's, who serve as her complaining-homies. They strongly dislike H, but the others love him.*

**H**

Bam...jussike that...quarter three is in the books, y'all. We just *two* months away from Christmas bonuses. Aw-ye-uh!

*(cocks head to the side and fist-pumps; NANCY is biting her nails)*

**NANCY:**

Whoop-dee-do. Another \$35 bucks I *should* be gettin' from child support.

**ALICE:**

Frickin' government always taking their cut!

**H:**

So. Quarter three was tight, y'all! Night crew, you guys have been doing a much better job 'a mopping them halls in the 200 wing. Ay-ya-go, Betsy! And day crew, I got a very positive review from Vivian after the fall birthday bash...

**NANCY:**

'Course you did.

**H:**

...but, we are still struggling in the recycling department. Apparently, somebody left a...uh, soiled pile a toilet paper...in the break room trash the other day.

**DENISE:**

*(raises her hand, curls her lips, nods, and shamelessly looks around at the group, a la Melissa McCarthy)*

Yup. 'at was me.

**H:**

*(he pierces his lips, then freezes while his wide eyes wonder and he speaks slowly)*

G-ross. I had assumed that was one 'a the patients.

**DENISE:**

Nope. Didn't want it to plug.

**H:**

Disgusting. Alice, what the hell? Get those hobbit-looking feet off my counters! Day crew just washed those.

**NANCY:**

Ah, day crew, shmay crew. ‘Tired a you always kissing up to *your* crew. We do just as much work with half the people!

**H:**

*(not in the mood to have this argument again, he shakes his head and addresses all)*

Anyway, keep up the good work, er’body...see ya at next month’s meeting. On the, uh, fourteenth at seven!

*(everybody grabs their stuff and leaves, except NANCY’S posse, who proceeds to spit in people’s refrigerator drinks, wipe crumbs on the floor, and engage in intentionally rude conduct, as they drink from flasks and dance slightly intoxicated)*

**ALICE:**

If I have to sit through one more goddamn speech about how “day crew-this, day crew-that,” I’m gonna shove a hot cigarette right up his happy ass!

**NANCY:**

*(lights a new cigarette, she is sarcastic)*

Tell me about it. What pisses me off even more is the fact that Vivian hired ‘cute little Daisy Dukes’ instead a *me*.

**DENISE:**

*(shocked)*

*You* applied for that caretaker position?!

**NANCY:**

Hell yeah, I did. Better hours. Easier work. More time away from the kids.

*(forcibly burps, as she wipes food from the corners of her mouth)*

‘Course H’s little girlfriend upstairs needed to fulfill her ‘pretty little liar’ quota for the month.

**ALICE:**

That’s bull. You deserved that job!

**DENISE:**

Yeah, what have *you* ever done wrong?

**NANCY:**

Sure, I said some things in the past. But who hasn’t? Apparently, my...

*(condescending impression of a previous boss with air quotes)*

...“words didn’t belong in the workplace,” but c’mon, people. ‘slike 10 years ago!

**ALICE:**

Have ya’ gotten written-up since then?

**NANCY:**

*(says it in a way that indicates she was wrongfully accused)*

Yeah, but...always for petty little crap. Being late. Smokin'. Not being "presentable" to clients. The whole thing's a crock-a-shhh....

**DENISE:**

*(after pouring the coffee into her flask, to mix with the alcohol in there, she tries to drink it)*

...Sheezus Christ, that's hot!

**ALICE:**

*(as if she wants to start a revolution or something)*

Well, why don't we do something about it?

**NANCY:**

*(surprised they'd want to help)*

What's in it for you guys?

**DENISE:**

*(pouring some creamer into the drink and holding it up to the light, as if to see how full it is)*

We're only here on work release, honey. If we lose *this* job, we'll just find another.

\*

**#7: Nothing But Perfect**

\*

**ALICE:**

Plus, I *hate* people like Vivian. Reminds me of my parole officer. Has her little favorites and then lets the rest of us suffer.

**DENISE:**

*(knowing full-well that she's throwing NANCY a verbal alley-ooop)*

So what do we do about it?

**NANCY:**

I dunno. But I'll tell ya what: it's time *we* start callin' the shots around this place...

**DENISE:**

*(simultaneously with ALICE's next line)*

Got *that* right!

**ALICE:**

*Mmmhmm.*

**NANCY:**

WHY DO THEY ALWAYS HIRE THEM FOR THE JOB?

SOMEHOW, SOME WAY, I'M ALWAYS GETTING ROBBED

I'VE WORKED THE SAME DAMN JOB YEAR AFTER YEAR

I MIGHT AS WELL BE JUST A VOLUNTEER

**DENISE:**

IT'S TIME WE STAND UP FOR OURSELVES; WHATEVER WE DO

**ALICE:**

JUST GET THE BOSSES TO LISTEN TO OUR POINT OF VIEW

**ALL:**

*(to audience, as if they're talking to their bosses)*

YOU'VE GOT A GREAT THING GOING: WE GIVE AND YOU GET

SO YOU GO HIRE SOME NEW CHICK THAT TODAY, YA JUST MET?

DON'T YOU KNOW THE RIGHT THING IS: TO FORGIVE AND FORGET?

CAN'T YOU SEE: WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN NOTHING? NOTHING BUT PERFECT, YEAH

**NANCY:**

I BET THEY WANT SOMEONE TO BEG AND PLEA

BUT, SISTAS, YOU KNOW THAT JUST ISN'T ME

I AIN'T NO PERFECT FREAKIN' SANDRA DEE

GET OFF YOUR HIGH HORSE AND JUST LET ME BE!

**DENISE:**

IT'S TIME WE STAND UP FOR OURSELVES; WHATEVER WE DO

**ALICE:**

JUST GET THE BOSSES TO LISTEN TO OUR POINT OF VIEW

**ALL:**

YOU'VE GOT A GREAT THING GOING: WE GIVE AND YOU GET

SO YOU GO HIRE SOME NEW CHICK THAT TODAY, YA JUST MET?

DON'T YOU KNOW THE RIGHT THING IS: TO FORGIVE AND FORGET?

CAN'T YOU SEE: WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN NOTHING? NOTHING BUT PERFECT, YEAH

**NANCY:**

WHY CAN'T YOU OPEN UP YOUR MIND AND SEE THAT WE ARE NOTHING,

NOTHING BUT PERFECT

OH WE'D GIVE ANYTHING FOR YOU TO SEE THAT, WE ARE NOTHING,

## NOTHING BUT PERFECT, YEAH

## \* #7A: Scene Change Music \*

## i-6: Sam's Room

*The next day, DAISY enters and parts the window curtains as SAM wakes up, rubs his eyes, yawns, and stretches.*

**SAM:**

Well, good morning, mis...

*(he simultaneously lets out multiple hearty chest coughs; she props his head up on the pillow, then tidies up the room)*

**DAISY:**

You don't sound too good, Mr. Sam.

**SAM:**

Yeah. The nurse should be here any minute.

**DAISY:**

Well. I won't keep you then.

*(starts to exit, but he grabs her forearm)*

**SAM:**

No, stay. I rather *enjoy*...“keeping up with the Carnations.”

**DAISY:**

*(rolls her eyes at his cheesiness, but is clearly flattered)*

Cute. I'll stop back in a bit.

*(peppy middle-aged NURSE enters on opposite side of bed; SAM keeps holding her arm until she finally pulls it away)*

**NURSE:**

Goooooooood morning.

**SAM:**

*(non-chalant but polite to NURSE, trying desperately to return his attention to DAISY)*

Hi.

**NURSE:**

Wrist. And how are we today?

**SAM:**

Fine, thank you.

*(to DAISY)*

You had something to tell me the other day.

**DAISY:**

I did?

**NURSE:**

K. Now we're gonna check your blood pressure...

**SAM:**

*(waits for a moment, then blows past the awkwardness of having somebody else there)*

You said you were having a bad day.

**DAISY:**

*(not trying to be standoff-ish)*

But I didn't say I had something to tell you.

**SAM:**

Yeah.

*(relentless in his pursuit)*

I wanna hear about your bad day.

**NURSE:**

*(finishes the blood pressure assessment, wraps up the cord, and grabs the thermometer)*

And...open.

**SAM:**

Ahh.

**DAISY:**

*(embarrassed, she widens her eyes, tightens her jaw, and side-nods to the NURSE)*

Well, now is not exactly the best time.

**NURSE:**

*(DAISY looks away and bites her nails; the NURSE, clearly loving her job, raises her pitch at the end of each statement)*

Okay! Blood pressure looks good. 106 over 72. Resting heart rate is at 84. And temperature is at 98.2. So everything looks great on my end! Now, let's get rid of this bandage here...

*(she slowly peels off the bandage that had been partially covering his head, revealing a couple cuts. SAM winces, as the area is obviously tender. DAISY casually glances over to see his head for the first time uncovered and quickly does a double-take, resulting in a subtle grin, wide eyes, and parted lips. SAM looks over at her. Embarrassed that he saw her attraction for him, DAISY quickly jerks her head away. The NURSE continues to speak, oblivious of their flirtation)*

Will ya look at that! As good as new.

**SAM:**

*(to DAISY, acknowledging that he saw her reaction)*

Do I look *younger* than you expected, or...?

**NURSE:**

So, as you know, the labs we took last week at the hospital should be in sometime today. Doctor Edwards will review the results, consult with her team, and meet with you sometime tomorrow afternoon to discuss where we stand. K?

**SAM:**

Sounds good.

**NURSE:**

Well, unless you need anything else, I'm gonna get outta your hair.

**SAM:**

Thank you.

**NURSE:**

Yooooou're very welcome!

*(raises her eyebrows and smiles at DAISY, as she exits)*

Take care.

**SAM:**

Tell me about your bad day now.

**DAISY:**

'Smore like a bad *year*.

*(audibly sighs)*

Knowing about my problems isn't gonna make yours any better.

**SAM:**

Try me.

**DAISY:**

*(after a moment, she cocks her head and recollects a memory, pausing intermittently throughout)*

My mother used to always tell me I was making a mistake by getting married so young. That was four years ago. I was 21. She'd say, "you usually have to wait for that which is worth waiting for." I had no idea what it meant at the time, so I obviously didn't listen. But, so much has changed since then. My mom has passed on and my marriage is...well, let's just say I should have listened more carefully to her advice.

**SAM:**

I'm sorry about your mom. Is the marriage salvageable at this point?

**DAISY:**

I don't even know, honestly. The mountain of problems is...overwhelming. And my effort has changed so much. I used to put everything I had into the relationship. But time and time again, he walked all over me. So now, I just feel numb.

**SAM:**

Well...don't give up on it, if it's worth fighting for.

**DAISY:**

'ts very optimistic advice, coming from mister "it's time to turn the page."

**SAM:**

I just know that love can be taken away in an instant.

*(DAISY almost asks something, but he cuts her off, not wanting to overshadow her heartache with his own)*

What happened to your mom?

**DAISY:**

Cancer. Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. I'll never forget the day I found out either.

*(almost in a daze, she stares off into the distance, visualizing her memory.*

*She eventually steps out towards the audience and gets less and less articulate, as if sleepy)*

My mom had been my dance teacher since I was 4. We had a thousand recitals and competitions throughout the years; I swear my parents were gonna have to take out a second mortgage just to pay for it all!

When she got sick, I used to train with Carly, her assistant. But it was never the same. Mom would miss one week per month during her treatment; she wouldn't let herself miss any more than that. Til her final week.

\*

### **#8: Memories of Old**

\*

*(as the music begins, a dance silhouette of her past appears behind a screen; the silhouette raises her hand like*

*Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" painting, and begins to slowly re-enact a sensitive dance routine, while explaining)*

I had a recital that Saturday and she was supposed to meet with me for a dress rehearsal on Tuesday night at 5pm. She called at 4:40 and said she just didn't have the energy. I offered to come over, but she refused. As my coach, she was adamant that I rehearse my routine. Even telling me on the phone that night, "don't forget to lift your wings."

"SUPPORT that rib cage!" "Fly, Daisy, fly!"

*(she ends her dance with a graceful bow as the music momentarily cadences)*

**SAM:**

Wow. It's beautiful.

*(music picks back up with the same theme; DAISY pauses; she remains in a dream-like state throughout the song)*

**DAISY:**

Thank you. She passed later that night. I was at rehearsal.

I just wish I had one more chance to tell her how I feel.

*(music momentarily stops, while she closes her eyes, until she starts singing)*

**SAM:**

What would you say?

**DAISY:**

Hmm.

JUST AS THE SUN COMES UP  
 YOU HAVE BEEN THERE WHEN THE GOING GOT TOUGH  
 YET I CAN'T SEEM TO FEEL  
 YOUR ONE AND ONLY LOVE  
 EVEN WHEN I LOOK BACK UPON  
 A LIFE THAT NOW IS FOREVER GONE  
 I CAN'T STOP WANTING YOU  
 TO LIVE AND LIVE ON

*(as in: I keep thinking my life will 'even out' emotionally, but I can't seem to stop 'flooring it')*

WATER SEEKS ITS LEVEL, YET MY PEDAL'S TO THE METAL

**DAISY**

I NEED YOU BY MY SIDE TO DRIVE,  
 FOR ME TO GAIN CONTROL  
 OR MORE MOMENTS WILL TURN FROM TICKING CLOCKS  
 TO MEMORIES OF OLD

**CHORUS (2x)**

I PRAY THAT THEY  
 JUST MAY OBEY  
 AND SAY "OKAY,  
 TODAY'S THE DAY!"

**SAM:**

*(wanting desperately to comfort her)*

She is proud of you. You've gotta know that.

**DAISY:**

You're right. Thank you.

**SAM:**

*(apprehensive, he asks anyway)*

What about your husband...what if you could say something to him?

**DAISY:**

*(music momentarily stops, but then she comes back in with a tone of anger mixed with disappointment)*

So many things...

WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN 'US?'  
 A BOND THAT ONCE WAS BUILT ON TRUST

NO LONGER BRINGS ME JOY,  
 BUT JUST DISGUST  
 IF YOU REALLY WANT ME HERE  
 THEN DON'T GO DISAPPEAR  
 JUST LOOK ME IN THE EYES,  
 AND BE SINCERE

WATER SEEKS ITS LEVEL, YET MY PEDAL'S TO THE METAL

**DAISY**

I NEED YOU BY MY SIDE TO DRIVE,  
 FOR ME TO GAIN CONTROL  
 OR MORE MOMENTS WILL TURN FROM TICKING CLOCKS  
 TO MEMORIES OF OLD

I KNOW I'VE TAKEN PART IN BREAKING MY OWN HEART  
 BUT NOW, THE TIME HAS COME: NEW MEMORIES MUST START

**DAISY**

I NEED YOU BY MY SIDE TO DRIVE,  
 FOR ME TO GAIN CONTROL  
 OR MORE MOMENTS WILL TURN FROM TICKING CLOCKS  
 TO MEMORIES OF OLD

**CHORUS (2x)**

I PRAY THAT THEY  
 JUST MAY OBEY  
 AND SAY "OKAY,  
 TODAY'S THE DAY!"

**CHORUS (2x)**

I PRAY THAT THEY  
 JUST MAY OBEY  
 AND SAY "OKAY,  
 TODAY'S THE DAY!"

**SAM:**

Huh. Now it all makes sense.

**DAISY:**

What's that?

**SAM:**

A quote I used to doodle on my notebooks is, "the soul that sees beauty may sometimes walk alone."

*(pauses to let it sink in; she is taken aback and wants to hear more)*

I think the world would be surprised to know that such a blissful person carries so much burden. You disguise it well.

**DAISY:**

It's...not something to be proud of. But thanks. I should get going. I gotta grab a quick lunch before my appointment.

*(grabs her sweater and goes to the door, arms folding in front of her; his words halt her)*

**SAM:**

For what it's worth, I think you're right on track. By seeking clarity with those loved ones, you just might find clarity for yourself.

**DAISY:**

You sure are a man of quotes, aren't you?

**SAM:**

What can I say?

*(head nods over to LARRY, who is zonked out in his bed)*

The old man's been teaching me a "damn" thing or two.

**DAISY:**

I should be back by the time Dr. Edwards drops by. Don't go runnin' away now.

**SAM:**

*(looks down at his hospital bed)*

Oh, I won't.

*(she exits; after a pause, he shouts extremely loud, as if she'll hear)*

But I just might be tempted to *roll* myself down to Mickey D's for a 59 cent ice cream cone, if you don't bring me one!!

**LARRY:**

*(obnoxiously gravely and extra cranky)*

Will ya shutcha damn mouths already?! Sheezus.

### **1-7: Pastor Jack's Office**

*DAISY and her husband, DIRK, are diagonally facing upstage left. He is dressed like a farmboy, chew in his mouth, with raggedy jeans, scruffy five o'clock shadow, plaid shirt, and a trucker's hat. Wrapping up a counseling session with them is JACK, who sits across the desk, kicked back in his chair, with his hands folded behind his head. The faint sound of a church choir and organ are heard in the background, as if rehearsing. The reprise is a much slower tempo of 55bpm.*

### **#8A: "Memories of Old" Reprise**

**JACK:**

And so, Dirk...if *you* had to sum up where things stand right now, what would you say?

**DIRK:**

*(dull, somewhat monotone voice with a subtle drawl, as he stumbles through what he feels he should say)*

Well for starters, I realize that...there's a lotta things I need to change within...

*(swallows, as he fumbles to string together the “right” response, he mumbles out a clearly cCHARLOTTEd response)*  
 ...within myself, ya know. Uh...money isn’t everything. And I know that I...I need to lighten up on Daisy about that. And, umm...y’ know, I think my drinking gets the best of me from time to time. So yeah...I gotta work on that too.

**JACK:**

Ok. Good. And as far as the “constant bickering,” that Daisy described, the Bible says in the Book of James that, “what causes fights...”

**DIRK:**

*(cuts him off in a resolute, but disappointed tone)*

Yeah, I know what it says. It’s just that...I know...that she knows that we haven’t been doin’ so hot, know what I mean? So, it’s like...why am I gonna give effort if she’s just gonna sit there.

**DAISY:**

Sit here?! I’ve given everything!

**JACK:**

*(interjects before the fight escalates)*

Ok, ok, ok...what...made you two first fall in love?

*(after some awkward silence, DAISY head-nods over to DIRK in a condescending way, as if he should go first)*

**DIRK:**

Well...I guess, after dating all throughout high school, we just really got to know each other well...and...uh...

**DAISY:**

That’s all you can say?

**DIRK:**

I dunno; what would *you* say?

**JACK:**

*(the peacekeeper in him comes alive, as he does the hand motion for “calm down”)*

Look. I think you two just need to get back into a routine. Daisy’s new job, Dirk’s pressure from work...you are both just a little overwhelmed right now in your own lives. And what you’re starting to see is that it’s rearing its ugly head in your marriage now. Right?

*(reaches back to retrieve a book from the loaded shelf behind him)*

Here. This is a book I’ve recommended to nearly every couple I’ve ever counseled. Short, very easy read. It’s kind of a reality check on your day-to-day lifestyles. *But* it puts in the perspective of how meeting your spouse’s needs can actually give *you* fulfillment. Try it out. Let me know what you think.

**DAISY:**

*(takes book and cuddles it up to her chest. DIRK, elbows on knees, is visibly distant from her)*

Thank you, Daddy.

*(gets up and goes in for the routine father-daughter kiss on-the-cheek and hug)*

**DIRK:**

Yeah, thanks Jack. ‘preciate it.

**DAISY:**

I love you.

**JACK:**

I love you too, sweetheart. Dirk, we outta do some ice fishing sometime again.

**DIRK:**

*(hands in pockets, he nods, now doing the “I’m waiting for you, spouse” pose, angled out towards audience)*

We should.

**JACK:**

Well. I better be on my way. You two take care. Love ya...

*(immediately once JACK closes the door, DIRK’s “real” tone is revealed, as his volume escalates; the organ and choir in the background get louder, as they walk out, through the sanctuary...or theatrically, the house)*

**DIRK:**

Claaaaassic.

**DAISY:**

*(genuinely surprised)*

What?

**DIRK:**

You bringing up the whole,

*(mocks her with a condescending whiny mumbled tone, followed by a hyper-masculine bully tone)*

“we don’t even have real conversations anymore...all we do is bicker.” That’s a load ‘a bullshit, and you know it.

**DAISY:**

*(as if her anger has reached a point of virtually shouting, which she expresses through singing)*

You’ve gotta be kidding me...you’re unbelievable. You know that?

**DIRK:**

*(his tone oozes with sarcasm, as they both started walking towards their separate cars)*

Oh, and you’re miss perfect. Unbelievable.

**DAISY:**

*(she can’t take anymore as the music gets louder and her speech turns to song)*

WHY ARE YOU TWO-FACED NOW?

**DIRK:**

OH SHUT UP, MISS 'HOLIER THAN THOU'

**DAISY:**

YOU'VE MANAGED TO MAKE ME FEEL EVEN LESS, SOMEHOW

**DIRK:**

I'M NOT THE ONE WHO DRAGGED YOU HERE  
AS IF I'M NOT ENOUGH, YOU NEED 'DADDY'S EAR'

**DAISY:**

JUST COME HOME TONIGHT AND TRY NOT TO SMELL LIKE BEER!

**DIRK:**

WELL YOU CAN BE DAMN SURE I'M NOT COMIN' BACK HERE.

Tell ya that right now.

*(blackout as we hear the sound of two car doors shutting)*

**\* #8B: Scene Change Music \***

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**1-8: Sam's Room**

*SAM is in his wheelchair, with VIVIAN ready to push him. LARRY is still rolled over in bed. DR. EDWARDS is attractive and well put together; she enters alongside NURSE with a file in her hand. Lights come up as DR. EDWARDS shuts the door behind her, offers SAM a handshake, and opens with a very inviting welcome.*

---

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Hello. How's everybody doing today?

**VIVIAN:**

*(caught her off-guard; but her tone reveals how flexible she is willing to be)*

Oh. Good! I was actually just going to get Sam and Larry here for their recreation time. But we can do that afterwards.

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Alright...well I finally got a look at your lab results from last week's tests. And if we take a look here at the ca...

**SAM:**

Hang on. We should probably wait fo...

*(he turns to VIVIAN, who gives an, "oh well" shrug; he then shakes his head)*

Ah, nevermind. Go on.

**DR. EDWARDS:**

*(pulls out the cat scan results to demonstrate; she points to certain areas with her pen)*

Ok. Here are the results from your cat scan. This area here is called the occip...

*(DAISY enters, momentarily distracting everybody. Embarrassed, she gives the facial expression for “my bad” and quickly takes a seat by the door, setting her purse, bag, and McDonald’s drink carrier down beside her)*

**DAISY:**

So sorry.

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Quite alright. So, you see here: this is the occipital bone of the skull, and within it is an opening where the spinal cord attaches to the brain stem. It appears that, upon the moment of impact, this part of the skull was fractured, leaving a fragment of bone near the brain stem. This is extremely concerning as the brain stem is vital in life-sustaining functions such as breathing and circulation.

**DAISY:**

What about his legs...will he ever be able to walk again?

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Um...no, ma’am. The paraplegia is permanent. However, though the spinal cord suffered permanent damage at that area, it has not yet done so in the area of the skull fracture.

**DAISY:**

So what is the prognosis from here?

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Well, if I’m being completely candid, I think it’s a miracle that the bone fragment, given its size and location, hasn’t already harmed the brain stem. If it *does*, immediate life-threatening complications may arise. Unfortunately, it is for this reason that a standard surgical procedure to remove the fragment would pose too large of a risk.

Now, there *is* a new cutting edge treatment option, if you decide to pursue it. The problem is: it’s expensive and relatively unproven. It’s a form of robotic surgery that offers the precision necessary to successfully remove a fragment of this location. But because it’s so new, statistics are not yet out, proving its effectiveness.

If you do decide to go this route, you will have to pass a pre-approval process. So I’ve already sent your file over to Mayo, just in case. We should have the results within a couple of days here.

**SAM:**

Okay. So, do you think it would give me a chance?

**DR. EDWARDS:**

*(knowing full well that he is trusting her expertise above anything, she hands him an informational pamphlet)*

I do. It is the most advanced technology in the world for high-risk areas in and around the brain.

**SAM:**

*(forever the optimist)*

That's...*great!* Now, I just have to qualify.

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Well. There's also the cost as well. Because it is still in its infant stages of development, insurance providers won't even touch it. The cost of the surgery is about \$50,000.

*(audible groans and sighs from the other three)*

I know. And to make matters worse, these type of "trial procedures" almost always require the payment *before* the surgery.

**SAM:**

Oh my gosh, that's...

*(shaking his head and exhaling, like there is no possible way he will have money for it, even if he qualifies)*

So what happens if I don't pursue *any* treatment?

**DR. EDWARDS:**

Well, I hate to speculate. But, if I were a betting woman, I would guess that that fragment will eventually damage that brain stem. And due to it potentially leading to cardiac or respiratory failure, it could be fatal.

**SAM:**

I understand. Thank you, doctor.

**DR. EDWARDS:**

You bet. Obviously, you've got some things to think about. I will give you some time to digest all of this. Bonnie will keep stopping by to see how you're doing and we'll go from there, ok?

**SAM:**

K.

*(as doctor exits; NURSE refills his water while VIVIAN stops to softly caution DAISY, before they both leave)*

**VIVIAN:**

I love that you care. Seriously. But don't make this personal. This is what we do. You being sad will only make *him* sad, y'understand?

*(sniffing, on the verge of tears, DAISY nods)*

Alright, now go be by his side. He needs somebody. You've got this.

*(VIVIAN exits, leaving just SAM, DAISY, and a rolled-over LARRY;*

*all choked up, DAISY's lips quiver; she cocks her head as her eyes meet his; SAM fights his own emotions with humor)*

**SAM:**

Stop. Aren't you supposed to be getting paid to cheer me up?!

**DAISY:**

*(a laugh bursts through her tears; it is followed by a sniffle; her sadness can be heard through her response)*

Yeah.

**SAM:**

Her report didn't change anything. I knew the end was coming. Now, I know when. Well...kinda.

**DAISY:**

*(wiping her nose, she's still sniffling)*

I know. I just...wish I could take away some of your pain.

**SAM:**

*(raising his eyebrows at how endearing her sympathy is, his eyes well up)*

You *have*! C'mere. It'll be ok.

**DAISY:**

Thank you.

*(she leans over to him for a long hug; there is a break in dialogue)*

Hey, can I ask you something?

**SAM:**

Of course.

**DAISY:**

I haven't brought it up because it might be a sore subject.

**SAM:**

*(the mood is still somber)*

That's ok. Shoot.

**DAISY:**

Why haven't any of your family or friends visited?

**SAM:**

Oh wow.

**DAISY:**

I'm so sorry!

**SAM:**

No, I just can't believe I haven't told you yet.

Well, for starters, I'm an only child. My parents both passed away in a plane crash the summer after my senior year of high school. We were never really close with their families before that anyway. And...my friends?

*(exhales as he pierces his lips together and slightly shakes his head in disappointment)*

...let's just say they're...pre-occupied.

**DAISY:**

With what?

**SAM:**

Their own guilt, I guess.

**DAISY:**

Wuddya mean?

**SAM:**

You don't know what happened?

*(she sheepishly shakes her head "no"; he pauses and exhales; his sentences are choppy, as he tries to recap)*

I was at a frat party with my girlfriend. More like a graduation party, really. Elizabeth, as usual, thought she was sober enough to drive. I warned her.

*(says this next sentence as if it bears weight)*

But I didn't stop her. Anyway, a couple friends of ours hopped in with us. And the next thing I knew, there was glass everywhere, streetlights in my eyes, and I was alone on my back. They were all gone.

*(DAISY puts her hand over her mouth and lets out a small sympathetic moan)*

I haven't seen them since.

**DAISY:**

I'm so sorry. So, Elizabeth never even called?

**SAM:**

*(it's evident that his emotion for her has been replaced by his disdain for how everything turned out; he's over her)*

Nope. To be honest, I'm not surprised though. Things hadn't been going as well as everyone thought they were.

**DAISY:**

Now, *there's* something we have in common!

**SAM:**

*(casually repeats the societal clichéd response for a situation that is out of one's control)*

'Oh well'...right?

**DAISY:**

*(surprised he'd give up so easily, she reluctantly agrees)*

I guess.

*(after a noticeable pause, she stands up, determined to take a deep breath and change the mood)*

Sam, I have something for you.

**SAM:**

Oh yeah? What's that?

**DAISY:**

Well. It may have lost some 'beauty' by now...but it looks like it's...still hangin' on for dear life!

*(retrieves the ice cream cone, which has begun to melt over the sides)*

**SAM:**

Sounds like *me*.

*(DAISY hands him the ice cream cone; he lets out a hearty surprised gasp/laugh)*

Aw. That's really sweet of you! Thank you.

**DAISY:**

Hey I figured: if you have to put up with Larry 24/7, the least I could do is reward you with cheap ice cream!

**LARRY:**

*(still turned over, basically yelling into his pillow)*

Hey! I heard that, ya hooligans!!

*(SAM and DAISY simultaneously raise their eyebrows, widen their eyes, like they were caught)*

**DAISY:**

Hey, gimme summa that!

*(to his amusement, she steals the cone and takes a big messy bite while she starts to stage whisper; they both giggle)*

### **1-9: Franklin Mills Commons**

*In a continuous scene change, DAISY wheels SAM out of the room; H and CHARLOTTE are helping with the games, which are mostly gender-separated. Patients are chatting when VIVIAN's voice is announcer-esque over the loudspeaker.*

**VIVIAN:**

Attention staff: will a custodian please report to the women's bathroom *immediately*, with a cleaning cart?

**H:**

Ughhh...why is it *always* the women?!

*(walks away to get some privacy while he calls a custodial colleague on his walkie)*

**CHARLOTTE:**

Now, that is *not* fair.

**MAN #1:**

Of course it is. You women have a problem with everything!

*(a few "oh's" and "mmhmm's" are heard from a quickly-rising crowd, as if a fight is about to happen)*

**WOMAN #1:**

That's cuz you men never listen to us!

**CHARLOTTE:**

Daisy, come on over here. It's time us girls have a little 'chat.'

*(the girls respond with "yeah, it is" or "about time" or "damn right" as they all congregate on stage left around DAISY)*

**H:**

Fine! Well we boys are go' have ourselves a lil smack-talking session over here! C'maw, Sam.

*(the guys respond with "damn right" and "you bet" and the like; they all congregate stage right around SAM)*

**WOMAN #2**

Daisy, I'm sorry to burst your bubble, girl, cuz you seem like a nice kid...but whatever you've got going with "tattoes" over there, it's gotta stop.

**DAISY:**

*(like "you've got the wrong idea")*

Oh no, I'm mar...

**WOMAN #2:**

*(cuts her off and talks over her)*

I've said it before and I'll say it again...it don't matter how hot the guy is, he's just like aaaaall the rest of 'em.

**MAN #2**

Listen Sam, if you're trying to sweep that chick off her feet, it ain't gonna happen.

**SAM:**

*(confident in his wit, he looks down at his wheelchair)*

Why not? She clearly already swept me off mine.

**\* #9: Head Over Heels \***

**MAN #2:**

*(somewhat condescending and annoyed)*

I'm just saying: one minute, they're sweet and cute when you lock eyes in the grocery store. And the next, they're nagging you about which brand 'a chapstick you bought them at that very same store. They're crazy, man!

**WOMAN #1:**

Ladies, let's teach Daisy here a lesson or two about who men *really* are.

**DAISY:**

I don't think you underst...

**CHARLOTTE:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A BOY, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO

YOU MUST BE ON YOUR TOES, OR HE'LL BE ALL OVER YOU!

**GRANDMA #1**

THAT IS BEYOND TRUE!

**CHARLOTTE:**

AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'LL BE HEAD OVER HEELS

**GRANDMA #2**

FOR A GUY WHO OWNS THREE OLDSMOBILES!

**H:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A GIRL, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
JUST REMEMBER SHE WILL NEED TO TALK IT OUT

**GRANDPA #1**

“JUST EXPRESS YOURSELF”

**H:**

BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT IT; INSTEAD, GET A CLUE

**GRANDPA #2**

A GOOD SEVEN DAYS A MONTH, SHE'LL TRY AND KILL YOU!

**CHARLOTTE:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A BOY, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
JUST REMEMBER HE WILL NEED THE REMOTE CONTROL

**GRANDMA #3**

AND THE CAR KEYS TOO!

**CHARLOTTE:**

BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT IT; JUST SPIT IN HIS CUP

**GRANDMA #4**

CUZ EVERY DAMN TIME, HE'LL LEAVE THE TOILET SEAT UP!

**H:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A GIRL, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
JUST REMEMBER: GETTING READY TAKES AN HOUR OR TWO

**GRANDPA #1**

“WHERE ARE MY SHOES?”

**H:**

BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT IT; JUST WATCH MORE TV

**GRANDPA #3**

AND PRAY THAT SHE DOESN'T DRIVE EVER AGAIN. PRETTY PLEASE!

**CHARLOTTE:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A BOY, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
JUST KNOW THAT REAL CONVERSATIONS WON'T HAPPEN SOON

**GRANDMA #3**

BIG WHOOP-DEE-DOO!

**CHARLOTTE:**

JUST DON'T STRESS ABOUT IT; READ A GOOD BOOK

**GRANDMA #4**

AND WHEN THAT HOT SHIRTLESS NEIGHBOR MOWS HIS LAWN,  
GET A DAMN GOOD LOOK!

*(other ladies take a moment to dream, "ahhh," while an oiled-up shirtless man walks out with a toy mower and fake grass; he hip-thrusts into a mowing motion, while sharing his bedroom eyes with all the ladies)*

**H:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A GIRL, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
YOU MUST HIDE YOUR WALLET, OR SHE'LL "LOSE" THAT TOO

**GRANDPA #1**

YUP, YOU'LL BE SCREWED

**H:**

AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'LL BE HEAD OVER HEELS

**GRANDPA #2**

FOR 50 SHADES OF A GIRL WHO SPENT THE LAST \$67 IN YOUR JOINT CHECKING ACCOUNT ON  
FRICKIN' KOHL'S CASH DEALS...

Sorry.

*(there is a noticeable pause, as everybody makes him aware of how much he over-reacted)*

**GRANDMA #3:**

TRUST ME ALL GUYS, THEY WANT ONE THING WITH YOU

**GRANDMA #4:**

THEY'RE RUDE AND THEY'RE MEAN,  
AND THEY SMELL LIKE POO-POO

**GRANDPA #3:**

THEY'RE CHEAP, THEY'RE NEEDY

**NERDYMAN:**

BUT SOMETIMES SWEET

**ALL MEN:**

WHO THE HELL ARE *YOU*?

**ALL:**

*(slower before building back up; LARRY enters from his room after just waking up, with no help from anybody)*

OH WHEN YOU LIKE SOMEONE, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
YOU MUST OVERWHELM THEM WITH YOUR LOVE TOO

**GRANDMA #2:**

YES, IT'S TRUE

**ALL:**

AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'LL BE HEAD OVER HEELS

**GRANDMA #3:**

FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN'T TASTE THEIR MEALS

**LARRY:**

Huh?

*(someone rolls him to the center, and everybody gathers around an annoyed LARRY for the final pose)*

**ALL:**

OH WHEN YOU LIKE SOMEONE, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO  
YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE IN BECAUSE YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE

**GRANDMA #1:**

YEAH, WE KNOW IT'S TRUE

**ALL:**

AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'LL BE HEAD OVER HEELS

FOR SOMEONE WHO REAL...

SOMEONE WHO REAL...

SOMEONE WHO REALLY LOVES YOU!

**LARRY:**

I'd rather have another colonoscopy than sit through that again...sorry to burst your bubble, folks. But love...it sucks.

*(throws one hand up and it falls back on his lap like a heavy weight)*

But apparently, you're all too blind to see that.

**BLIND PATIENT:**

*(leans on his cane towards LARRY, and speaks the punch line behind his dark sunglasses)*

Beats being senile.

*(giggles are heard throughout, while some roll their eyes about LARRY; they dismiss upon VIVIAN's directive)*

**VIVIAN:**

Alright, folks. On *that* note...I think it's time we all 'hit the hay' for the night. Gooooodnight, everybody!

**1-10: Franklin Mills Commons**

*In a continuous scene change, DAISY goes back to SAM, as everybody departs. The overhead lights are audibly and visibly lowered to 'night mode' at the hospital. The commotion dissipates as the attention goes back to SAM and DAISY.*

**DAISY:**

Wow. *That* was entertainment at its finest.

**SAM:**

You're telling me! My favorite part was Larry at the end. Like, does he actually...have a heart?

**DAISY:**

I know, right?! So guess what just hit me during that song...

**SAM:**

What's that?

**DAISY:**

*(flirty boastful)*

I think I know what you should write your book about.

**SAM:**

Hot shirtless neighbors?

**DAISY:**

*(answers with ascending pitch, through an exhaled burst of laughter)*

No....

**SAM:**

*(flirting like Jim from "The Office")*

You know, it's a shame you have a suggestion for my book, because...I think I've already got that covered.

**DAISY:**

*(legitimately surprised; these next few lines happen faster)*

You do?!

**SAM:**

*(with minimal pause; he gets super confident)*

Mhmm. I can even sum it up for you in one sentence.

**DAISY:**

Impressive!

**SAM:**

I know.

**DAISY:**

Well...?

**SAM:**

Oh, so you wanna know?

**DAISY:**

Yeah, dumbo. Spit it out!

**SAM:**

Well...what will I get in return?

**DAISY:**

*(confused, she furrows her brows, without losing her grin, and shakes her head)*

What are you talking about?

**SAM:**

*("it is what it is" facial expression; he grabs his cup of water to drink after his line)*

This *is* confidential information you're seeking, Missy. 'ts gonna cost ya.

**DAISY:**

Fine. What do you want?

**SAM:**

*(looking in her eyes, he is as direct as he's ever been)*

A dance.

**DAISY:**

*(completely taken off-guard, her flattered reaction is instantly revealed by a dropped jaw, grin, and head tilt)*

Wait. What?!

**SAM:**

You heard me. I tell you the premise of my book and in return, you dance with me.

**DAISY:**

Uh...

*(uncomfortably laughs; after not knowing how to respond, she suddenly becomes resolute)*

Okay. One dance.

**SAM:**

Good.

**DAISY:**

Where will we get music?

**SAM:**

I'm sure you have something on your phone...

**DAISY:**

Ok.

*(pauses to make sure no other questions come to mind, then she flirts back)*

So you gonna tell me or what?

**SAM:**

I am.

*(gets really serious after a dramatic contemplative pause)*

When I think about what this accident has done to me, I believe there are five words that belong on the cover of my book.

*(closes his eyes and exhales as if he's super emotional; then he sings the famous tune, laughing at the end, then coughing)*

CARNATION-WIDE IS ON YOUR SIDE.

**DAISY:**

*(shaking her head out of annoyance, she still can't help but grin)*

Ugh. I should've known. First of all, if you call me that one more time, I am done getting you ice cream! And secondly, you tricked me!

**SAM:**

Did not!

**DAISY:**

Did too.

**SAM:**

Ok, maybe a little. But your reaction was too priceless for me to stop. Gotta cut me some slack there.

*(she rolls her eyes as he pauses before changing the subject)*

So what was your book idea?

**DAISY:**

Nevermind. The moment's passed.

**SAM:**

Does that mean I don't get my dance?

**DAISY:**

*(after a flattered nasal exhale, she smiles, then looks him in the eye)*

A deal's a deal. You're lucky, you know that?

**SAM:**

I do. You can hook your phone up to that speaker right over there.

**DAISY:**

Oh, good idea. Now. I just gotta find a song here...

*(scrolling options on her phone; meanwhile, he returns to flirting)*

**SAM:**

Hey, just so you know: even though I might need a little assistance, I can still bust a move with the best of 'em.

**DAISY:**

We'll see about that. mister.

*(clearly finds a song and clicks it with her thumb, then sets the phone down)*

Ooo, here we go. Believe it or not, this was actually my parents' wedding song.

**SAM:**

Aw. Perfect.

**\* #9A: Peace \***

*The two slow dance, with constant smiles and fervent eye contact throughout. DAISY is slightly bent over, but they make it work with the wheelchair. Towards the end, VIVIAN is enters across the room, paperwork in hand, as SAM takes the lead to spin her. DAISY ends up in his lap as she leans back to his left, so they can see each other. His arms are around her and their faces look as though they are about to kiss. Recognizing the moment, VIVIAN quietly backs up, enough to see but not be seen. SAM and DAISY's focus alternates between eyes and lips as their faces converge)*

**DAISY:**

*(abruptly tilting her head away from him; she audibly exhales and shakes her head in disappointment)*

Ugh. Why?

**SAM:**

I know.

*(matching her disappointment and almost coming across as angry, he pauses between each statement)*

I keep asking myself the same thing. Why didn't I meet you six months ago? Hell...even three weeks ago. Why do you have to be so perfect for me and yet, so...unavailable. Why does this all have to end?

**DAISY:**

*(small snuffles and a quick wipe of each eye, she grabs her keys and purse, still avoiding eye contact)*

I should go. I'm sorry.

*(she walks past VIVIAN to exit, as both faces reflect the sadness of the moment. The stage stays silent for a moment, while VIVIAN pauses to think. SAM eventually exits stage right. VIVIAN then pulls out her phone to call CHARLOTTE.)*

**VIVIAN:**

Charlotte, it's Viv. I just...

*(meanwhile, DENISE, ALICE, & NANCY stroll out of the custodial break room, laughing and stumbling as if drunk. The first one sees VIVIAN and quickly stops the other two behind her, as they listen to the phone conversation.)*

I know we keep talking about Sam and Daisy.

*(pause for a quick response on the other end, mumbled through the speakers)*

Well, I just happen to be walking by his room, when I...I see them dancing together. They even started to *admit* their feelings...it was the most beautiful thing in the world, I swear.

*(pause for a brief mumble on the other end; her voice turns optimistic)*

I...I think I've got an idea for how we can help them!

*(brief pause, as if CHARLOTTE said "yeah?!")*

Yeah. I wanna meet with you and H to discuss it first and then, we can call a meeting with the entire floor.

*(pause)*

Awesome. I'll meet you guys there!

**DENISE:**

*(VIVIAN exits while DENISE, ALICE, and NANCY come out more towards the commons area, livid)*

Ugh. Can you even believe her?!

**ALICE:**

The nerve! First, she spoon-feeds the job to...little miss sunshine. Then, she gets the entire frickin' facility to jump on board with helping them! Who does she think she is?!

**NANCY:**

*(as if she's used to it by now)*

She's the head honcho; that's who she is. Which means she can do whatever the hell she wants...*whenever* she wants!

Even if it means taking things that rightfully belong to others...like my job.

**DENISE:**

Preach!

**ALICE:**

The worst part of it all is that there is absolutely nothing we can do about it.

**NANCY:**

Ooo, I wouldn't speak too soon there, sweetheart.

**DENISE:**

Yeah? You got an idea?

**ALICE:**

*(they drop jaws in excitement, like two kids who just got asked to go to their favorite place)*

Aw, I shoulda known!

**\* #10: Give Me What's Mine \***

**NANCY:**

*(the other girls giggle and can hardly wait for each detail, hanging on every one of her words while she smokes)*

Sure do. It involves us...perfecting our acting skills.

**ALICE:**

Ooo, I like it.

**DENISE:**

Tell us more!

**NANCY:**

This time, we tell *our* story. *Our* way.

*(the others answer with comments like, "ooo!", "mmhm," and "now we're talking.")*

And so, whatever details we choose to share, or change, or...not say...oh well.

*(others giggle)*

You see, this time around, it's our story to tell.

**DENISE:**

Our song to sing.

**ALICE:**

Our dance to dance.

**NANCY:**

*(begins with a teasy little dance break, showing how excited they are to be meddlers; GIRLS sing background throughout)*

THIS IS OUR CHANCE, FINALLY OUR TIME

WE CAN COMMIT A HARMLESS CRIME

WE WILL EXPOSE THE TRUTH OF HER LIE

HOPING HER MAN JUST PEACEFULLY DIES

THIS IS THE TIME  
 TO LET THE LIGHT SHINE  
 SO STEP OFF CLOUD NINE  
 AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE

*(short dance break)*

HIS LITTLE BOOK OF EMPTY PAGES  
 MIGHT JUST BECOME SOMEONE'S RAGE IF  
 IN THE RIGHT HANDS, WE LET IT REVEAL  
 A VIOLENT FATE THAT BEGS TO BE SEALED

THIS IS THE TIME  
 TO LET THE LIGHT SHINE  
 SO STEP OFF CLOUD NINE  
 AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE

*(extended dance break, followed by a mellow third verse, and key change)*

AS FOR THEM ASKING THE PATIENTS TO HELP OUT  
 WE WILL CREATE A SHADOW OF DOUBT  
 BY PITTING THEM ONE AGAINST ANOTHER  
 IN HOPES THAT THEY'LL TURN ON EACH OTHER

THIS IS THE TIME  
 TO LET THE LIGHT SHINE  
 SO STEP OFF CLOUD NINE  
 AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE

*#IOA: Scene Change Music*

### **I-II: Franklin Mills Commons**

*The PATIENTS are all gathered for the weekly meeting. There is tons of side conversation going on as H and CHARLOTTE, try to gain everyone's attention from up above, before VIVIAN strolls out with urgent optimism.*

*The song is sung from various parts of the stage, all circling around a central theme.*

\* **#11: Different & the Same** \*

**CHARLOTTE:**

*(she is meak, so the conversation doesn't immediately taper until VIVIAN starts singing)*

Alright, alright!!! Gather around, folks. Um, can we have your attention, please?

**VIVIAN:**

LISTEN UP, EVERYBODY, DO YOU BELIEVE THAT LOVE OR LIFE IS BETTER?  
 CUZ OUR VERY OWN SAM AND DAISY HAVE FOUND A LOVE THAT COULD LAST FOREVER  
 BUT SHE'S UNHAPPILY MARRIED, AND HIS HOURGLASS IS LOSING SAND  
 I BELIEVE WE CAN DO SOMETHING, BUT YOU'VE GOTTA TRUST MY GAME PLAN

**H:**

WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE BEFORE: UNHAPPY AND LOSING TIME

**CHARLOTTE:**

SO IF WE CAN HELP THEM OUT, WE'RE ALONG FOR THE RIDE

**VIVIAN:**

*(almost as if leading a revolt at a politically-charged event; the PATIENTS agree)*

LET US RISE AS ONE WHEN THEY CALL OUR NAME  
 STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE, AS DIFFERENT AND THE SAME  
 LET US LIFT THEM UP WITH OUR WORDS AND FAITH  
 THAT LIVING FOR LOVE BEATS DYING WITH HATE

**H/CHARLOTTE:**

*(to SAM)*

SO GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HERS  
 GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HERS

**VIVIAN:**

So the long and short of it is that Sam only has a couple more weeks, unless he gets this 'Miracle Maker' Treatment. The challenge is: the treatment is \$50,000 up front.

**PATIENT #1:**

Holy moly.

**VIVIAN:**

It's money Sam just doesn't have. Well...who does, for that matter? But, I *do* believe that if we can somehow fundraise that money, he will get a second chance at a life he never envisioned would be cut short. And the treatment would also encourage Daisy to gain the strength to stand up to her own demons.

**PATIENT #2:**

And how do you expect us to come up with fifty grand?!

**PATIENT #3:**

Yeah, if I had that kinda money, I'd be out at the roulette table instead rotting in here with you folks, ha ha!!

*(other PATIENTS chime in with similar responses, agreeing with #3)*

**VIVIAN:**

*(sounding temporarily defeated)*

Well...here in lies the problem. This is why we need to come together!

**DAISY:**

DADDY, I NEED YOU; I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE  
I'VE FINALLY FOUND HAPPINESS; BUT IT'S TOO LATE, THEY'RE CLOSING THE DOOR  
I'M MARRIED TO A STRANGER; I NO LONGER WANT TO BE HIS WIFE  
MEANWHILE I MET A MAN, BUT HE'S ABOUT TO LOSE HIS LIFE

**JACK:**

DARLING, YOU HAVE BEEN MY GREATEST PRIDE AND JOY IN LIFE  
BUT YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL: YOU ARE HIS WIFE

**ALL:**

WE SHALL RISE AS ONE WHEN THEY CALL OUR NAME  
STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE, AS DIFFERENT AND THE SAME  
WE WILL LIFT THEM UP WITH OUR WORDS AND FAITH  
'CAUSE LIVING FOR LOVE BEATS DYING WITH HATE

**TENORS/SOPRANOS:**

GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HERS

**BASSES/ALTOS:**

YOU SHOULD GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HIS

**DAISY:**

HERE I COME, LONELINESS  
IT WON'T BE THE FIRST OR THE LAST TIME  
IF ONLY I COULD BE WITH HIM  
IT JUST MIGHT LAST FOR A LIFETIME

**DAISY:**

MOM, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I BET YOU'D FOLLOW YOUR HEART TOO  
'CAUSE I THINK THAT'S WHAT I WILL DO

**SAM:**

*(writing, for the first time, in the book)*

THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO SAY WHAT'S REALLY ON MY HEART,  
 I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY OUT LOUD; OK, I'LL START,  
 THERE'S A BLANK LINE ON THE FIRST PAGE HERE FOR MY OWN DEDICATION,  
 I FINALLY KNOW WHAT WORDS TO WRITE: I LOVE YOU, MY CARNATION!

Wow, I said it!

**SAM & DAISY:**

FOR WHAT IS DONE IS DONE  
 I'M IN LOVE!

*(NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE enter upstairs, and are still visibly upset; but it is now clear that a war has begun)*

**ALL:**

WE SHALL RISE AS ONE WHEN THEY CALL OUR NAME  
 STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE, AS DIFFERENT AND THE SAME  
 WE WILL LIFT THEM UP WITH OUR WORDS AND FAITH  
 'CAUSE LIVING FOR LOVE BEATS DYING WITH HATE

**TENORS/SOPRANOS:**

GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HERS

**BASSES/ALTOS:**

YOU SHOULD GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HIS

**SAM & DAISY:**

HERE I COME, LONELINESS  
 IT WON'T BE THE FIRST OR THE LAST TIME  
 IF ONLY I COULD BE WITH HIM  
 IT JUST MIGHT LAST FOR A LIFETIME

**SAM & DAISY:**

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO  
 I CAN'T BREAK HIS/HER HEART IN TWO  
 YET I KNOW THE END IS COMING SOON

**DAISY:**

I DON'T EVEN WANNA THINK ABOUT TOMORROW

**SAM:**

I JUST WANT YOU IN MY ARMS TONIGHT!

**NANCY:**

I CAN'T STAND TO BE AROUND THIS,  
 IT'S NOT FINE TO BE BLIND IN YOUR MIND!  
 NO MORE JUST STANDING HERE,  
 NO, THIS TIME, WE MUST LIE TO SURVIVE

**PATIENT #4:**

Hey, *I've* got an idea! What about Larry?! Word on the street is he's got money.

**VIVIAN:**

Yes, I plan on talking to Larry myself.

**CHARLOTTE:**

*(interrupting with a burst of excitement, then tapering it back)*

*I'll* do it! Oh, I'm sorry. It's just that: Larry knows me, and...it's the least I can do.

**VIVIAN:**

Great! I will petition the medical board first thing in the morning to see if they can grant forbearance on his payment as a special one-time exception.

**H:**

Oo, and don't forget: we have an all-floor meeting tomorrow for all patients and staff...so if anyone has other fundraising ideas, we'll discuss them then!

**VIVIAN:**

Perfect.

*(to H)*

That reminds me: I'll be coming from another meeting downtown...so H, you'll have to lead if I'm late.

**H:**

No problem.

**VIVIAN:**

Thank you so much...let's do this, Franklin Mills!

*(key change, as LARRY and DIRK are the last to join)*

**ALL:**

WE SHALL RISE AS ONE WHEN THEY CALL OUR NAME  
STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE, AS DIFFERENT AND THE SAME  
WE WILL LIFT THEM UP WITH OUR WORDS AND FAITH  
'CAUSE LIVING FOR LOVE BEATS DYING WITH HATE

**TENORS/SOPRANOS:**

GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HERS

**BASSES/ALTOS:**

YOU SHOULD GO FOR IT; YOU WILL BE HIS

**SAM, DAISY, LARRY, & DIRK:**

HERE I COME, LONELINESS  
IT WON'T BE THE FIRST OR THE LAST TIME  
IF ONLY I COULD BE WITH HIM  
IT JUST MIGHT/WON'T LAST FOR A LIFETIME

**SAM & DAISY:**

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

I CAN'T BREAK HIS/HER HEART IN TWO

YET I KNOW THE END IS COMING SOON

*(the above phrase happens with NANCY, DENISE, ALICE, LARRY, & DIRK sing this next phrase)*

**NANCY, DENISE, ALICE, LARRY, & DIRK:**

I CAN'T STAND TO BE AROUND THIS,  
IT'S NOT FINE TO BE BLIND IN YOUR MIND!  
NO MORE JUST STANDING HERE,  
NO, THIS TIME, WE MUST LIE TO SURVIVE!  
THIS LIFE FLIES BY, WE'RE NOT GONNA LOSE THIS TIME!

**ALL:**

YOUR TIME LEFT IS SHORT, SO TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED

**JACK:**

MAKE NO MISTAKE,

**VIVIAN:**

THIS IS A GIFT YOU'VE BEEN HANDED

**CHARLOTTE:**

IF THE LIGHTNESS WERE DARK

**H:**

OR THE DARKNESS WERE LIGHT,

**ALL:**

NO MATTER THE COST, I WOULD STILL FIGHT FOR YOU...

**SAM & DAISY:**

...TONIGHT.

**END OF ACT ONE.**

**2-1: Franklin Mills Commons**

*It's an all-floor meeting for everybody. Upstairs, H walks in to lead a group-wide brainstorming discussion on fundraising ideas. The patients and staff are mostly turned upstage and stand when they have an idea to share. They are very loud.*

**H:**

Ugh.

*(everybody is too rowdy for him to grab their attention, despite his fleetingly patient efforts)*

Excuse me.

Attention, please.

Wouldjoo SHUT UP?!

*(they finally do; as H straightens the ends of his shirt by his sides, and nods, as if to say "darn right")*

Now, we' talkin'. So. With Vivian at a meeting downtown, I'll get the ball rolling until she gets here. And thankfully, Daisy is out taking a stroll with Sam, so we're free to discuss things as a group. Does anybody have any fundraising ideas?

**TANNER:**

*(uber-nerdy, he is boyishly lanky, with a tucked in shirt, clean shave, and hair combed to the side, his S's whistle)*

Yes. In fact, the chess committee was thinking about organizing a black tie chess night for community members. Each person would pay a \$25 entry fee and we would provide hors d'oeuvres and punch. We'll call it "Dress for SucChess!"

**H:**

*(trying his hardest to be kind, he's not a great actor)*

Okaaaaaay...

*(practically begging for a better idea)*

Anybody else?

**PATIENT #6:**

What about a sewing party?

**H:**

*(less polite now; disgust is plastered all over his face)*

Mm...I...I don't think so.

**PATIENT #7:**

Chili cook-off.

**PATIENT #8:**

Bingo night.

**PATIENT #9:**

A garage sale!

**H:**

*(interrupts, as if he's had enough, even though he's still trying to be kind)*

Guys! We have to pick things that are (A) going to attract a lot of people and (B) gonna raise a ton 'a money. Ooo wait, Vivian's calling.

*(answers his cell phone)*

Sup, V?

Yeah...it's...coming along.

We've had some discussion so far, but nothing concrete yet.

**THOMAS:**

*(calls out, loud enough to interrupt H's phone conversation)*

Hey, H?

**H:**

*(looks up to see who is calling his name so urgently, and then he covers the phone speaker with his other hand)*

Yeah?

**THOMAS:**

*(40-year old, clean cut, and well-respected around the hospital as a custodian; his optimistic tone is infectious)*

Put her on speaker-phone for a sec.

**H:**

I o'know how to do dat.

**TANNER:**

Ilch. Here.

*(strolls over to help him; H is annoyed that he needed the help and tisk's back at TANNER)*

**H:**

Ts. Aight, Viv, you on speaker.

**VIVIAN:**

Hi everybody. Unfortunately, I had no luck with the medical board. They say it takes about 4-6 weeks to process the application alone and we just don't have that kind of time. How's it going on your end?

**THOMAS:**

Hi Vivian, it's Thomas. From facilities. I actually think we could combine a lot of the ideas that have been said so far.

**VIVIAN:**

*(interested)*

I'm listening.

**THOMAS:**

Well, it would be tricky to pull together in just over a week; but what if, say, next Saturday, we organize a "give back" event for the entire community. Something for everybody...kids, grandparents, neighbors, coworkers. I'm thinking the event itself would be free and we'd get everything else donated.

**H:**

*(skeptical)*

So how we go' make money?

**THOMAS:**

Well...people would pay for concessions, game tickets, raffle prizes, you name it. I actually think the flea market thing could work. Endless possibilities. Hell, we could even sell tickets for Bobby and Geno's a cappella group to close the festival!

*(H is visibly surprised and intrigued about this so-called a cappella group)*

I bet businesses would sponsor us, and I'm pretty sure local media would cover the event for free advertising. It certainly wouldn't net fifty grand, but maybe we could raise enough for a down payment. I used to work in medical insurance and they usually want 15% down. I know it's still a lot, but seven-and-a-half grand sounds a lot more doable than fifty.

**PATIENT #5:**

Sounds like a longshot to me.

**PATIENT #6:**

*Mmmhmm.*

**CHARLOTTE:**

Well...it might be all we've got, folks.

*(slight pause while she makes a decision; then she exudes confidence)*

**VIVIAN:**

I like it. H, get more details...I'll be back in the office later, and we'll connect then. Thank you, Thomas. Keep up the great work, team! See you guys in a bit.

*(various people say: "alright" and "see ya later" and "ok, sounds good" etc, before H hangs up)*

**H:**

Bobby, you and Geno have an *a cappella* group?!? How'd I not know this?!

*(various people say: “yeah” and “come on” and “wuddya mean?” etc, overlapping the next line, into the chant)*

Well? Tell us about it!

**ALL:**

*(chants, with growing intensity, until BOBBY gets up on a table to explain)*

Bob-by, Bob-by, Bob-by...

**BOBBY:**

*(downplaying it, he waves his hand down, as if to temper people’s expectations)*

Alright, I’m comin’. Well, it’s in the *very* early stages, so don’t get your hopes up. But me and a couple-a-the custodialns like to hum a tune from time to time.

*(various people say: “who doesn’t” and “I betcha do” and “don’t we all” etc.)*

Since everybody loves “improv” and “a cappella” is comin’ back, we figured: why not combine the two? Improvappella.

**H:**

What’s that even mean?!

**BOBBY:**

How ‘bout we give ‘em a little taste, ah?!

*(the rest of the g-member group stands on various tables; the patients and staff get visibly and audibly excited)*

H, come on down here!

*(“H” cheers erupts as he gets helped up onto the main table, alongside BOBBY, who now acts as a grand emcee)*

So everyone knows H’s classic story of...“the one that got away,” right?!

*(various people say: “of course we do” and “I don’t” and “how could we forget?” etc.)*

Most ‘a you? Good. Then you can help us out. Now. First, everybody repeat *this* phrase over-and-over: boom-see-gotcha, boom-see-gotcha...

### **\* #13: Custodial School Crush \***

*(he repeats it several times, with increasing volume until everybody has joined in, bobbing their heads to the beat)*

Ay-ya-go! Alright Geno, give us the notes.

**GENO:**

*(he doesn’t speak English)*

Huh?

*(someone whispers the directive in his ear; he answers in a very nasal-y, almost ET-esque tone)*

Ahhhhh!!

*(he blows the pitch pipe, then arpeggiates the chord on the word “doo” with one note per measure, chorus is still going)*

**BOBBY:**

1...2...uh 1-2-3-and...

*(the a cappella group starts singing the chord progression on vocal percussion syllables; the most featured people are: H with the melody, GENO with the harmony, some other custodian, who embellishes the beat-boxing from the chorus, BOBBY, who narrates, and TANNER, who acts as ANGELA)*

Look, Tanner here will even be your Angela.

**TANNER:**

*(BOBBY pushes him forward; somebody chucks a wig up to him, TANNER catches it without thinking)*

I will?

**BOBBY:**

You will. Now, H...you've got the easiest part.

**H:**

I do?

**BOBBY:**

Yeah. Just simply *sing* the story.

**H:**

Wuddya mean?!

**BOBBY:**

Look. We're all dying to hear your Angela story again! Ah?

*(cheers, like a pub-style song is about to begin)*

See. Just...sing it instead a speakin' it. Easy.

**H:**

*(shaking his head and raising his eyebrows like he doesn't have a clue how this'll go, he pauses briefly before caving)*

Alright. I'll give it a whirl. But no promises!

**BOBBY:**

That's the beauty of improv, brotha. No *expectations*! Ladies and gentlemen, give it up for our very own: H!

*(more cheers)*

**H:**

EVERY SO OFTEN, I'LL SEE SOMETHING  
 THAT REMINDS ME OF MY COLLEGE FLING  
 WHERE TWO YOUNG BUCKS FROM BOTH EXTREMES  
 BECAME EACH OTHER'S HOPES AND DREAMS  
 IT WAS THE SUMMER OF SIXTY-NINE  
 OR WAS IT THE SUMMER OF EIGHTY-FIVE?

*(from now on, lighting changes and chorus members bring out props; the song is re-enacted as if it were happening now)*

EITHER WAY, AT REGISTRATION,  
I FELL IN LOVE WITH MY EDUMACATION

*("rarr's" like a lion)*

WAS IT LOVE OR WAS IT LUST? CUZ IT COULD BE THAT...  
QUITE POSSIBLY, MY EYES WERE FILLED WITH DUST

*(burst of a cough)*

HER SEXY SWEEP MADE MY HEART RUSH  
MY ONE AND ONLY: CUSTODIAL SCHOOL CRUSH

I COULDN'T WAIT FOR SCHOOL TO START  
I KNEW WHAT I NEED TO WIN HER HEART  
FIRST, A CARTON OF SOME DOVE,  
TO LOSE MY STINK, AND WIN HER LOVE  
I ALSO WANTED TO SHOW SOME SKILL  
SO I BUSTED OUT MY CORDLESS DRILL  
BUT ON THAT VERY FIRST DAY OF CLASS  
I COULDN'T STOP STARING AT HER...

Pants! What?!

*(vigorously struggles to remove the screw that he just put into the registration table or some other item on stage)*

WAS IT ME OR WAS IT JUST THAT MY ONE AND ONLY  
GOLDEN SCREW, OF COURSE, WAS FULL OF RUST  
YET HER EYES CAUGHT MINE; SHE TURNED AWAY TO BLUSH  
MY ONE AND ONLY CUSTODIAL SCHOOL CRUSH

**PATIENT #3:**

IF YOU KNEW YOU SHE LIKED YOU TOO, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST MAKE A MOVE?

**H:**

I'M GETTING TO THAT PART OF THE STORY, YOU IMPATIENT FOOL!

*(PATIENTS: "oh!;" he cuts off the a cappella group, then speaks slowly as if he's telling the scary part of a bonfire story)*

It was right then and there...that I asked her to dance!

*(H and TANNER dance as partners; the crowd dances in the background and goes nuts, shouting "hey" on the offbeats)*

**H:**

AT OUR FIRST CLEANING ASSIGNMENT, I KNEW IT WASN'T LOVE, BUT LUST  
FOR WHEN I WENT IN FOR THE KISS, SHE BACKED OFF IN DISGUST

BUT THEN I REALIZED WE WERE STANDING BY A TOILET I HADN'T FLUSHED

*(various "ew" and "gross" comments from the company)*

SO MY ONE AND ONLY REGRET IS NOT FLUSHING FOR MY CUSTODIAL SCHOOL CRUSH

*(dinner bell sounds, PATIENTS applaud, then scatter, as H yells over them, with his palm forward, like a golf thank you)*

**H:**

Thank you so much, er'body! I'll tell Vivian the a cappella group is in!

\*

**#13A: Scene Change Music**

\*

**2-2: Sam's Room**

*CHARLOTTE helps LARRY get out of his wheelchair and into his bed. He sits up facing her, grumpy as usual.*

**CHARLOTTE:**

So. Lare-bear.

*(he groans back at her, almost like a under-the-breath dog growl; she ignores it)*

I've been wanting to have a talk with you.

**LARRY:**

Why'zat?

**CHARLOTTE:**

I'd...like to hear more about your late wife...is it Ingrid?

**LARRY:**

Yeah. What about her?

**CHARLOTTE:**

Well, all I hear is what travels around this hospital, you know. And I'm just wondering what's correct and what's legend.

**LARRY:**

So, whadja hear?

**CHARLOTTE:**

I heard you moved here to be with her...what, like two or three years ago?

**LARRY:**

Five.

**CHARLOTTE:**

Right. And she died of cancer a couple months later, correct?

**LARRY:**

Three and a half months later.

**CHARLOTTE:**

What type of cancer?

**LARRY:**

Liver. She never stood a chance.

**CHARLOTTE:**

So why'd you stay then?

**LARRY:**

*(suddenly not crabby, he even gets intentionally humorous; he looks out into the distance, while reminiscing)*

Ingrid was...my home. We didn't have kids and we were both only children, so this place is the closest I got to be to her. And *thankfully*, I've had chronic issues with my intestines and bladder, so they let me stay.

**CHARLOTTE:**

Aw. That's honestly...adorable.

**LARRY:**

What, my bladder problems?

**CHARLOTTE:**

*(smiles and exhales to hold for laughter. walking on eggshells, she slowly works up to her main point)*

So. What was Ingrid like?

**LARRY:**

She was...amazing. Always put others before herself. Loved to bake. She would make the sweetest apple pie you've ever tasted. I'm sure I have the recipe somewhere around here still, if you...

**CHARLOTTE:**

Sounds like she was a good wife.

**LARRY:**

The best.

**CHARLOTTE:**

I'm sure she would do absolutely anything for you, huh?

**LARRY:**

That's the thing. I didn't even have to ask, and it was done.

**CHARLOTTE:**

*(more direct)*

Larry, I've got a tough question to ask.

**LARRY:**

Go ahead.

**CHARLOTTE:**

It's about Sam's treatment.

**LARRY:**

*(immediately returns to crabbiness)*

God darn it! You're hitting me up for money, aren'tcha? Shoulda figured. Save your breath, lady. Coupla patients already talked to me.

*(LARRY lays down, turning his body away from her; she pauses between each sentence; he stays silent)*

**CHARLOTTE:**

Larry, you are in here every single day. Sam and Daisy have that...that *glow* about them lately. And you know, as well as anybody, that glow only happens as a result of that special, once-in-a-lifetime love. Now, I am not a begger. Nor am I about to pretend like I know your financial situation. But I *am* a fighter. And I think you are too. When something is right, you know it deep down inside you. You just do. And if you're anything like me...well, I can't just stand by and not do anything. It's why I'm here, talking to you. I'm fighting for something that has nothing to do with me.

**LARRY:**

*(under his breath, into his pillow)*

I'm not interested.

**CHARLOTTE:**

What's that?

**LARRY:**

Thanks, but no thanks.

**CHARLOTTE:**

*(defeated, she gets one more plug in as tears well up in her eyes)*

Ok. I won't bring it up again after today. But I encourage you to think about what Ingrid would do. Cause I'd bet she's a fighter too.

*(pauses to let that last phrase sink in)*

Anyway. Thank you for talking to me. I hope we can get to know each other more in the days ahead. Have a good night.

*(she departs without him saying a word; it appears as though he's sleeping while DAISY rolls SAM in, both giggling; it is clear that they are returning from a walk and we catch them in the middle of a conversation)*

**SAM:**

I still can't believe you didn't know that the black-scented marker smells like black licorice! Didn't anyone ever try to make you smell it and then push it in your face, so you had a big black dot on your nose the rest of the day?!

**DAISY:**

Ha, no! Quite frankly, that sounds...inhumane.

**SAM:**

Yeah, it definitely was not pleasant.

**DAISY:**

*(they are holding hands and doing cutesy things like a newly-in-love couple does)*

Sam, I have to tell you: I haven't been this happy since...well, ever! I don't think I've stopped smiling since the moment I first walked into this room.

**SAM:**

ME TOO!

*(NANCY, meanwhile, drops by and listens from the doorway until the song begins)*

Daisy, it's the weirdest thing...the doctors keep telling me how bad of a situation I'm in and I keep wanting to say: I literally have never been better!

**DAISY:**

You're sweet. So, when will you get your test results from Mayo?

**SAM:**

*(has an uncanny ability to turn any moment into a flirting opportunity)*

Tomorrow. In fact, what do you say we make a night out of it?

**DAISY:**

*(confused, but flattered)*

Wuddya mean?

**SAM:**

*(visibly head over heels, he unveils a clearly thought-out plan)*

Well, I've made use of that book. For real, this time.

**DAISY:**

You have?!

**SAM:**

I have written in every page. And I wanna share it with you. Tomorrow night. 6pm?

*(intro of song plays for :40; dialogue must be timed out perfectly)*

We can celebrate with ice cream. And candles. I'll get you flowers!

*(his excitement tones down)*

\*

**#14: And If You Want**

\*

And we can open my results *together*. I know it's a long shot, but one of the nurses said it'll be obvious even from the moment I open the envelope; cuz apparently, they use different colored forms for positive and negative results. Bonnie said blue's good news and I've qualified for treatment! And if it's red, well...

*(smiles and cocks his head to the side)*

...let's hope it's not red.

**DAISY:**

Oh Sam, I'm so honored you asked!

*(resolute)*

And just so you know, I'm not exactly sure when or how I'm gonna to talk to Dirk about all of this, but I'm going to.

**SAM:**

*(surprised, but flattered)*

You're gonna tell him off?

**DAISY:**

I am. "By seeking clarity with my loved ones, I just mind find clarity for myself" ...right?

**SAM:**

You remembered?!

**DAISY:**

Of course I did. Sam, I really want tomorrow night to be special. Can we dance again?

**SAM:**

*(smiles so hard, a giggle escapes)*

I'd love that! Daisy...

**SAM:**

FOR MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE ALWAYS TRIED  
TO BE THAT GUY WHO'D NEVER CRY  
YET, I WAS THE ONE WHO TRIED IT ALL ONCE  
A COWARD I WAS, IT WAS ALL JUST A FRONT

**SAM & DAISY:**

CAUGHT IN A WEB OF WHO I THOUGHT I WAS  
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I FOUND YOU

AND IF YOU WANT, I WILL SIT/STAND BESIDE YOU  
AND IF YOU WANT, I WILL BE YOUR REFUGE  
NEVER BEFORE HAS IT FELT SO TRUE  
TO SAY WITH ALL MY HEART: I LOVE YOU

**DAISY:**

This is so crazy...I know I should feel guilty and ashamed and a million other negative things.

*(pauses to look in his eyes)*

But honestly, Sam, all I feel right now is the truest and most genuine of emotions: *love*.

FOR MY WHOLE LIFE, I ALWAYS TRIED  
TO BE THAT GIRL WHO SET FEELINGS ASIDE  
TO BE THERE FOR OTHERS, EVEN WHEN THEY WEREN'T THERE  
FOR ME AND MY NEEDS, WHICH I KNOW IS UNFAIR

**SAM & DAISY:**

CAUGHT IN A WEB OF WHO I THOUGHT I WAS  
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I FOUND YOU  
AND IF YOU WANT, I WILL SIT/STAND BESIDE YOU  
AND IF YOU WANT, I WILL BE YOUR REFUGE  
NEVER BEFORE HAS IT FELT SO TRUE  
TO SAY WITH ALL MY HEART: I LOVE YOU

*(there is a momentary buildup for what both have been longing for, and then it happens: their first kiss)*

**SAM:**

I CAN GIVE YOU NOTHING...

**DAISY:**

ALL I HAVE IS NOTHING...

**SAM & DAISY:**

BUT MY HEART, MY HEART, MY HEART

**\* #14A: Scene Change \***

**2-3: Sam's Room**

*The next morning. JACK visits, looking for DAISY. CHARLOTTE walks him to the cracked door of SAM's room.*

**CHARLOTTE:**

Aaaaaaaaand...here it is, Mr. Winston.

*(JACK removes his fedora and nods his head in an old fashioned sign of gratitude)*

**JACK:**

Great, thank you.

**CHARLOTTE:**

Sure thing. Have a good one!

**JACK:**

You too, ma'am.

*(knocks)*

Uh, hello?

*(slowly opens the door and peers his head around to glance in the room)*

Daisy?

*(after hearing a hearty cough from behind the door, he retreats back into the doorway, not wanting to intrude)*

**LARRY:**

She's not here.

**JACK:**

Oh, I'm sorry...I'll come back at a different time then. C-can you just tell her that her dad stopped by?

**LARRY:**

Sure. But you can come in, if you want. They should be back soon...her and Sam just, uh, went for a stroll.

**JACK:**

Thank you.

*(he enters and closes the door behind him; LARRY immediately recognizes him and turns positive and personable)*

**LARRY:**

PASTOR JACK?!?!

**JACK:**

Larry Donahue! Wow. It's been forever, my friend. Gimme a hug!

*(leans over the bed for a hearty man-hug; both men are delighted to run into one another)*

How *are* you?

**LARRY:**

I'm good, I'm good. Just living the dream here still, y'know?

**JACK:**

*(fake laughs as he responds)*

Oh I bet! So how many years has it been now, since Ingrid passed?

**LARRY:**

Comin' up on 5.

**JACK:**

*(shakes his head; his sympathy is genuine)*

Wow, that long already, huh? She sure was a wonderful woman. I *still* hear the Donahue name come up at church from time to time, ya know that?

**LARRY:**

*(smiles and exhales through his nose, even though he knows JACK is probably just trying to be nice)*

Hey, I was sorry to hear about your wife a couple years back too. Uh...how've you been holdin' up?

**JACK:**

I'm fine, thanks. It's been tougher on Daisy than me, actually.

**LARRY:**

So, Daisy's your daughter, huh?!

**JACK:**

One and only.

**LARRY:**

Well, you've clearly done well there, Pastor. She's a good kid. Damn good kid.

**JACK:**

Thank you, Larry. Listen, I gotta run but...will you tell her I stopped by? She's going through some stuff lately and I... I just wanna see her be happy, y'know?

**LARRY:**

Sure do. And just so you know, that Sam fella...he's a good man.

**JACK:**

*(taken off guard)*

Yeah?

**LARRY:**

He is. I would approve.

**JACK:**

*(slowly nods his head; it's unclear whether he supports them or not)*

Thanks for saying so. Maybe I'll meet him some day.

**LARRY:**

You should stop by tomorrow night. They're meeting in the commons after her shift ends, at 6.

**JACK:**

Well...we'll see about that. Nice seeing you again, Larry.

*(extends his hand; they shake)*

**LARRY:**

Drop by anytime.

**JACK:**

*(puts his hat back on as he walks towards the door, he speaks with a smile)*

Hey, I just might take you up on that. Gives me an excuse to see my girl, too!

**LARRY:**

*(palms in the air as if to gesture "what could beat that?")*

Two birds. Take care, Jack.

**JACK:**

Buh-bye.

**\* #14B: Scene Change Music \***

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**2-4: Custodial Office, Sam's Room, & Upstairs Hallway**

*Later that day, NANCY carries out her plan. After opening a manila folder, she lightens her voice and makes a phone call from the custodial office, while the audience can hear a faint male voice mumbling on the other end. DENISE and ALICE serve as the "lookout" team for each phase of this scene. In between, they high-five, giggle, and react victoriously.*

---

**NANCY:**

Hello, is this Dirk Belmont?

Hi, I am calling in regards to your wife, Daisy.

No, she's fine. It's just that the staff here at Franklin Mills is growing increasingly *concerned* about her...behavior with one of our clients.

Oh, so you know about him?

Sure, that makes sense...you "know" about him, but you don't *know* about him.

Mhmm. I understand. Of course, we've already had discussions with her about 'professionalism in the work place' and yadda yadda. But, she just keeps pursuing things. In fact, I overheard them today talking about meeting up at the end of her shift tomorrow at 6pm to "profess their true feelings" for one another. Now, I dunno what that means, but I know that if *I* were in your position, I'd wanna know what's going on. So I figured I'd give you the courtesy heads up.

You're welcome. Uh huh. Oh, I agree. Ok. Sounds goods. Alright, buh-bye now.

\* \* \*

*(hangs up the phone, grins and cocks her head, as if to say "one down, two to go." DENISE grabs her a wig and lab coat from the custodial office, which she had obviously stolen from one of the doctors. She looks around, visibly guilty, then grabs a clipboard and file folder and heads over to SAM's room, anxiously looking around the whole walk.)*

Knock, knock!

**SAM:**

Come in.

**NANCY:**

Hi, Sam?

**SAM:**

Yes.

**NANCY:**

*(offers her hand. Her demeanor and vocal tone are very prim, proper, and positive)*

Hi, I'm Cathleen Jennings. I'm one of the internal medicine doctors over at Verona West. Listen, Dr. Edwards is wrapping up a case over there for me, so she asked that I stop by on her behalf here.

**SAM:**

*(surprised, but not suspicious)*

Oh, ok.

**NANCY:**

Your lab results actually came back from Mayo a day early.

**SAM:**

*(starts to worry)*

I thought the test results were gonna be sent in the mail?

**NANCY:**

Well, uh...I believe they still will.

*(opening up the manila folder on her clipboard)*

Anyway, it appears that your prognosis has taken a turn for the worse. Apparently, you have a dangerous fluid in your bloodstream that is actually preventing blood from reaching various parts of your body. And so...

**SAM:**

*(like a kid who just figured something out, he's borderline excited, despite the content of his words)*

Maybe that's why I've been so dizzy lately.

**NANCY:**

*(has a very difficult time spitting out the bad news, but rolls with unexpected "assist" to her lie)*

Uh...yeah. In fact, that's...that's what...uh...the technicians said too. Sooooo...anyway....long story short, um...

**SAM:**

How much time?

**NANCY:**

*(pauses to acknowledge his recognition of her bad news)*

Umm...I would say a couple *days*, at best. I'm sorry.

**SAM:**

*(he nods with a clenched jaw, as his eyes well up and he eventually sniffles and slowly responds)*

Ok. Well. Thank you for coming by.

**NANCY:**

You bet. Hang in there. If you need *anything*, the...uh...nursing staff, I'm sure, would be more than happy to help.

\* \* \*

*(lights dim on SAM as NANCY nervously exits the room and peers out into the commons. She removes her wig and lab coat, briefly pats her hair back in place, gives the items to DENISE and ALICE, and then heads towards the stairs. On her way, she meets DAISY, who just finished her lunch break, humming a tune with an apple in her mouth, as she just turned in her time card; NANCY purposely bumps into her, and then drops some 'bread crumbs'.)*

Hi, Daisy.

**DAISY:**

*(turns her head, surprised to see NANCY)*

Oh, hi Nancy. How are you?

**NANCY:**

I'm good. Hey, I'm sorry to hear about Sam's ex.

**DAISY:**

*(this statement grabs her attention enough to turn with a clearly confused look)*

Sam's ex?

**NANCY:**

*(talking casually, with little interest in details)*

Yeah, didn't you hear? She just stopped by. Apparently had this big tearful apology for leaving him during his accident...blamed it on PTSD...and hormones...and yadda yadda. Good news is he bought it though.

**DAISY:**

What do you mean?

**NANCY:**

I guess he accepted her apology and now they're back together! Good for him though. Hope he enjoys the time he's got left.

*(DAISY's jaw is on the floor; her face reveals that she is a victim of both sadness and betrayal)*

Well, I better get a move on it. Have a good night there, kiddo!

*(gives her a harsh pat on the back that jolts her forward, as NANCY exits out the side; DAISY's hand cups her mouth as her focused eyes stare around; we watch her contemplate her next move and then eventually beeline towards SAM's room)*

**DAISY:**

*(heartbroken and desperate for answers, she barges in on the verge of crying)*

How could you?!

**SAM:**

*(still emotional, his eyes remain welled up; he clearly has no idea what she's talking about)*

What?

**DAISY:**

*(her hurt is speaking)*

Oh, I dunno. Maybe it's the fact that *Nancy*, of all people, had to tell me about your "big news" from tonight. Couldn't you at least be man enough to tell me yourself?

**SAM:**

Daisy, I...I'm sorry, but this all just happened. What was I supposed to do...track you down?

**DAISY:**

You know what? Forget it. I knew this was a mistake from the start. "Anything that is 'too good to be true' is just that."

*(she sobs as she exits, and stops in the commons to sit and cry with her head in her hands; for SAM, it's the dagger.)*

**#15: Different Again**

**SAM:**

NOBODY SAID THAT IT'S OVER  
BUT DEEP DOWN, I KNOW THAT IT IS  
AFTER ALL THAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH  
I JUST CAN'T SEE HOW IT IS

**SAM & DAISY:**

I HAVE TO LET YOU GO  
IT'S THE HARDEST THING I'VE EVER DONE

I WILL BE HERE AND YOU WILL BE THERE  
 AND THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT'S ALWAYS BEEN  
 THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT SHOULD BE  
 'CAUSE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT AGAIN  
 YOU WILL BE LOVED AGAIN;  
 I NEED TO LET YOU GO

**DAISY:**

THERE'S NO MORE HOPE IN MY HEART  
 I DON'T KNOW HOW THERE ONCE WAS  
 I GUESS I BELIEVED IN A DREAM  
 LOOKING BACK, HOW FOOLISH OF ME

**SAM & DAISY:**

I HAVE TO LET YOU GO  
 IT'S THE HARDEST THING I'VE EVER DONE

I WILL BE HERE AND YOU WILL BE THERE  
 AND THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT'S ALWAYS BEEN  
 THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT SHOULD BE  
 'CAUSE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT AGAIN  
 YOU WILL BE LOVED AGAIN;  
 I NEED TO LET YOU GO

WHY CAN'T I JUST SAY GOODBYE?  
 I MUST BE OUT OF MY MIND

I WILL BE HERE AND YOU WILL BE THERE  
 AND THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT'S ALWAYS BEEN  
 THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT SHOULD BE  
 'CAUSE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT AGAIN  
 YOU WILL BE LOVED AGAIN;  
 I NEED TO LET YOU GO

**2-5: Sam's Room & Daisy's Home**

*The next morning, SAM and LARRY are sitting while VIVIAN enters with eyebrows raised and a facial expression of both anticipation and nervousness, until she reveals the envelope hiding behind her back.*

**VIVIAN:**

Well...here they aaaaaaare!

**SAM:**

*(very confused, he crinkles his eyebrows and cocks his head in denial)*

Wuddyou mean?

**VIVIAN:**

*(shocked, she speaks in a slightly condescending tone)*

Your results. From Mayo. The tests that were being...

**SAM:**

*(both are confused with crinkled eyebrows)*

No, I know. It's just that...they sent a doctor yesterday to give me the results early.

**VIVIAN:**

Umm, that can't be. Mayo doctors would never travel that far just to deliver news. *Who* was here?

**SAM:**

*(his 'wheels' are visibly 'spinning' as he pauses for a couple seconds before the light bulb goes on)*

Oh my God.

**VIVIAN:**

What?

**SAM:**

It was...NANCY!

**VIVIAN:**

Nancy?

**SAM:**

She came in here, all dressed like a doctor. I thought it was odd too. But she knew details on my case. Said she was filling in for Dr. Edwards and that my prognosis took a turn for the worse.

**VIVIAN:**

*(not only floored, but livid; her response is choppy)*

Wow. Un-be-lievable. That is a new low. Even for her.

**SAM:**

I gotta find Daisy. Do you know where she is?

**VIVIAN:**

Uh, no.

*(looks at her watch)*

Her shift doesn't start for another hour, but she already called in sick.

**SAM:**

Can I use your phone real quick?

*(lights dim on the room and come up on DAISY's house, where JACK is sitting on her couch, until she enters)*

**JACK:**

Where have you been?! I've been worried sick about you!

**DAISY:**

*(starts carrying in groceries, she is unintentionally standoff-ish)*

Wuddya mean? I was running errands.

**JACK:**

I stopped by Franklin Mills and you weren't there. So I stop here, and you're not home. I'm worried sick about you!

**DAISY:**

Well, don't be. I'm fine.

**JACK:**

*(after a pause, he is informative)*

The phone rang while I was here.

**DAISY:**

*(wondering why he is bringing up unnecessary information)*

Okay...?

**JACK:**

I was worried, so I answered. It was Sam.

**DAISY:**

*(literally frozen with disbelief)*

Sam?

**JACK:**

Yes. He was quite worked up; couldn't wait to talk to you. He said Nancy lied about his test results and that he just got the actual envelope today.

**DAISY:**

Wait a minute.

*(‘wheels are spinning’ in her head now, talking almost under her breath as she brainstorms)*

Nancy is the one who told me about Elizabeth. I bet she lied about that too! He say anything else?

**JACK:**

Just that he loves you. And he hopes you’ll still join him tonight.

**DAISY:**

*(while hearing that takes her breath away, she hangs her head, mortified that her dad now knows everything)*

I’m so sorry, daddy. I never meant for any of it to happen, I promise.

**JACK:**

*(starts to get choked up, he dons his proud father smile)*

Can I tell you something? All my life, I have never wanted anything more than your happiness.

**DAISY:**

Really? You’re not mad? Or disappointed? I never wanna let you down, Daddy.

\*

**#16: You’re Not Alone**

**JACK:**

You couldn’t if you tried, dear. Daisy, I will *always* be beside you. Regardless of what path you choose.

**DAISY:**

*(that is exactly what she has longed to hear her entire life)*

You mean that?!

**JACK:**

I do.

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND; DAISY, I’M SORRY

I NEVER THOUGHT I’D LET YOU DOWN

BUT I TAKE ALL THE BLAME, YOU POOR THING,

I’M HERE TO NUMB THE PAIN

YOUR SMILE WRITES THE BOOK OF MY HEART

SO PLEASE, WILL YOU GRANT ME, A BRAND NEW START

YOU HAVE LOST, LOST, LOST,

LOST YOUR FAITH, IN MANY WAYS, ON MANY DAYS

‘CAUSE YOU WERE ON YOUR OWN

BUT YOU'VE FOUND, FOUND, FOUND,  
 FOUND YOUR WAY, YOU'LL BE OKAY, SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY  
 'CAUSE WITH HIM, YOU'RE NOT ALONE;  
 YOU'RE NOT ALONE

LOOK ALIVE, YOU'LL SURVIVE; DAISY, I LOVE YOU  
 JUST TAKE THE KEYS AND NOW GO DRIVE  
 YOU'VE GOT TIME; DAISY, HE NEEDS YOU  
 SINCE YOU LOVE HIM, YOU'LL BE FINE

YOUR SMILE WRITES THE BOOK OF MY HEART  
 SO PLEASE, WILL YOU GRANT ME, A BRAND NEW START

YOU HAVE LOST, LOST, LOST,  
 LOST YOUR FAITH, IN MANY WAYS, ON MANY DAYS  
 'CAUSE YOU WERE ON YOUR OWN  
 BUT YOU'VE FOUND, FOUND FOUND,  
 FOUND YOUR WAY, YOU'LL BE OKAY, SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY  
 'CAUSE WITH HIM, YOU'RE NOT ALONE  
 YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**DAISY:**

IS IT YOU OR ME? 'CAUSE I KNOW WE BOTH FEEL SORRY  
 FOR THE WAY OUR LIVES HAVE CHANGED

**JACK:**

LET'S FORGIVE AND FORGET, 'CAUSE OUR LOVE WILL ALWAYS STAY THE SAME  
 AND TODAY IS A BRAND NEW DAY, A BRAND NEW DAY

**JACK:**

YOU HAVE LOST, LOST, LOST,  
 LOST YOUR FAITH, IN MANY WAYS, ON MANY DAYS  
 'CAUSE YOU WERE ON YOUR OWN  
 BUT YOU'VE FOUND, FOUND FOUND,  
 FOUND YOUR WAY, YOU'LL BE OKAY,

**DAISY:**

I HAVE LOST, LOST, LOST,  
 LOST MY FAITH, IN MANY WAYS, ON MANY DAYS  
 'CAUSE I WAS ON MY OWN  
 BUT I'VE FOUND, FOUND, FOUND,  
 FOUND MY WAY, I'LL BE OKAY

SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY

SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY

‘CAUSE WITH HIM, YOU’RE NOT ALONE

‘CAUSE WITH YOU, I’M NOT ALONE

*(they hug and hold on tight until applause ends; DAISY sniffles and wipes her nose)*

**DAISY:**

I love you!

**JACK:**

I love you too. Oo, aaaaand...I have something to show you. This came in the mail at church today.

*(hands her an opened envelope; she removes a check from inside it; her jaw drops, eyes widen, and she looks up in shock)*

**DAISY:**

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!?! Fifty. Thousand. Dollars?!? Daddy!!

*(sees who wrote the check and frowns with raised eyebrows, as she gets choked up)*

Oh my gosh. Larry?!

**JACK:**

I know.

*(beaming with pride, he is emotional as he pulls out a tiny ripped sheet of looseleaf from his pocket)*

He left a little note with the check. Says, “the best love story is when you fall in love with the most unexpected person at the most unexpected time. Go get ‘em, Daisy.”

**DAISY:**

*(getting so choked up, she exhales an audible sigh, then whispers and confidently nods her head)*

Oh my gosh...

**JACK:**

You better get goin’, sweetheart.

**DAISY:**

You’re right. Wish me luck.

**JACK:**

You don’t need it, girl.

*(blackout as she departs)*

\*

**#16A: Scene Change Music**

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## 2-6: Franklin Mills Commons

*6pm. SAM has lit candles. He waits in his wheelchair, with a spotlight on him, on a dimly lit stage. He is holding a bouquet of daisies in one hand with his book in the other. Ice cream bowls are on the table. DAISY enters from stage right and briefly pauses, hanging her head for blaming him. DIRK stands in the back of the theatre, watching this entire scene.*

---

**DAISY:**

*(comes running up the stairs from the audience, slowing her stride to a halt, as she nears the top of them)*

I'm a fool. I'm so sorry.

**SAM:**

*(elated to see her)*

You're not a fool. C'mere, my love.

*(she hugs him; he hands her the flowers; she pulls up a chair next to him, leans on his shoulder, and holds his hand)*

**DAISY:**

I missed you so much!

**SAM:**

Gosh, I missed you too.

*(pauses to bask in the moment)*

So. I met your dad. On the phone, at least.

**DAISY:**

That's what I heard! Whadja think?

**SAM:**

He seemed great. I was the bumbling idiot who couldn't get a hold of myself!

**DAISY:**

Oh, stop. You're fine. He actually kinda gave me his blessing today. Told me he wants me to be happy.

**SAM:**

Wow, that's huge! Good for you.

**DAISY:**

Thanks. Yeah, I was quite surprised by it.

**SAM:**

*(takes his time between each sentence)*

So...as you know, this whole book of empty pages thing was...difficult for me, to say the least. Without family around, the idea of dedicating it to somebody seemed like a joke. And I didn't really wanna relive the tragedy of the accident. Truth is: had you not come along, these pages would have stayed empty. But instead, I...I filled them with our story.

*(DIRK very slowly starts to walk towards the stage, with his anger brewing; he is dimly lit with a follow spot)*

You can read the entire thing when you get time, but I'll read the dedication page here now.

“Dear Miss Carnation,

Water. No matter what surrounds it...no matter its past, present, or future...no matter who or what gets in its way...it always finds its own level. Although outside forces can do their best to prevent it, nature insists: it *will* happen. It has to.

Daisy, from the moment I met you, I have done everything in my power *not* to fall in love with you. You were a married woman who was assigned to be my caretaker. I was a broken man, who was assigned to die under your watch.

But as moments became memories, I soon realized that the idea of ‘you and I’ was impossible to ignore. We were like magnets, compelled to be together. I became convinced that no matter what troubles lay before us, nothing was going to stop the inevitable. We are *water*, destined to find our own level of happiness...which ended up being: each other.

Thank you for breathing life into my breathless life. I love you, Daisy Belmont.”

*(he looks up at her and says it himself, rather than reading it)*

I love you.

*(he shuts the book; she immediately grabs his cheeks and plants a big kiss on him; music begins; she speaks amidst tears)*

\*

### #17: Live & Live On

\*

**DAISY:**

I love you, I love you, I love you.

**SAM:**

*(pauses briefly while their noses touch together; he speaks in a subdued announcer voice while looking all around)*

And now, the moment we’ve all been waiting for...my lab results!

**DAISY:**

You goofball.

**SAM:**

Oh, you know what? I musta left ‘em the nurse’s office. Gimme a sec; I’ll be right back.

\* \* \*

*SAM rolls himself upstage, through a doorway, and out of visibility; we see DAISY get up to bring her flowers to SAM’s room, when DIRK appears from stage left, his silhouette revealing an extended arm with a pistol in its hand. POW! The music stops abruptly. DAISY’s limp body folds to the ground while flowers are strewn about all over the stage.*

\* \* \*

**DIRK:**

Oh!!

*(he immediately shrieks of fear and regret at what he has just done, drops the gun, and runs to her)*

No! No!! NO!!!

\* \* \*

*During his screams, JACK enters from stage left with a stunned look of horror. After standing there for a moment, crying, while DIRK approaches DAISY's lifeless body, his emotion quickly turns to rage and his breathing accelerates. JACK picks up the pistol and shoots DIRK in the back, killing him instantly. DIRK's body falls behind DAISY's.*

*JACK's face returns to shock and he drops to his knees, his shaking hands lowering the gun all the way to the ground.*

\* \* \*

**SAM:**

Ahhhh!!! Daisy!!!

\* \* \*

*SAM appears from the hallway, envelope in hand, shrieks in desperation, and throws the envelope into the air to go tend to DAISY. Blue papers fall out and weave through the air like falling leaves. **Music begins again.** SAM rolls himself over to her, bawling. He purposefully maneuvers himself out of the wheelchair to hold her. Other characters stumble out one by one, including NANCY, who feels awful. After rocking DAISY's body for a couple moments, SAM sings a cappella.*

\* \* \*

DAISY, I LOVE YOU. YOU HAVE HELPED ME DEFINE MY LIFE  
 OUR LOVE WILL LIVE FOREVER; IT WILL NOT DIE HERE TONIGHT  
 I HAVE LEARNED WHAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT  
 THAT PART OF LOVE IS PAIN AND LOSS

STORIES WILL BE TOLD ON EMPTY PAGES AS LONG AS YOU'RE GONE,  
 CUZ YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THAT I WANT TO LIVE & LIVE ON

LIFE IS DEMANDING, SO ENJOY EVERY PART  
 FOR IT WILL RESTORE YOUR FAITH AND YOUR HEART

I HAVE LEARNED WHAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT  
 THAT PART OF LOVE IS PAIN AND LOSS

STORIES WILL BE TOLD ON EMPTY PAGES AS LONG AS YOU'RE GONE,  
 CUZ YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THAT I WANT TO LIVE & LIVE ON

I TOOK IT ALL FOR GRANTED, MY TRUE SELF, I'VE ABANDONED  
 SO BREATHE YOUR LIFE INTO ME, AND BY YOUR LOVE, RENEW ME

**ALL:**

STORIES WILL BE TOLD IN EMPTY BOOKS AS LONG AS YOU'RE GONE,  
CUZ YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THAT I WANT TO LIVE & LIVE ON

**SAM:**

AND I LOVE YOU.

**END OF ACT TWO.**

*#18: Bows & Exit Music*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brandon M. Rockstroh is entering his 8<sup>th</sup> year as Director of Choral Music and Musical Director at Southwest High School, having previously taught middle school for two years in Mequon, WI. Under his direction, the number of students enrolled in choir has risen from 102 to 240, and the annual musical has become the largest activity in the school, complete with sellout crowds and critical acclaim. He has successfully supervised six student teachers, who have all gone on to assume music education positions around the state. In 2016, Brandon proudly led a \$250k renovation of the school's auditorium, alongside three music parents.

In 2008, Brandon graduated with honors from UW-Milwaukee with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Choral & General Music Education. Since then, he has served as Artistic Director of the Green Bay Boy Choir, and he as a guest conductor, clinician, speaker, and director of various productions and events around the state. The Green Bay Chamber of Commerce named him a "Teacher of Distinction" in 2012, a "Golden Apple Award Winner" in 2016, and he received the "Outstanding Young Choral Director Award" from the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association (WCDA) in 2017.

Brandon's choirs have performed with the legendary Kenny Rodgers, child prodigy Ethan Bortnick, and were selected to perform at the 2012 Wisconsin Music Educators Association (WMEA) State Music Conference and the 2014 Wisconsin Choral Directors Association (WCDA) State Convention. As a singer, Brandon has performed in honors choirs and numerous theatrical productions, including in the 2013 New York Musical Theatre Festival, with his wife.

Brandon is most proud to play the role of "daddy" to 6-year old Avaya and 1-year old Oscar. He is beyond humbled and honored to complete a life goal in writing and directing *The Book of Empty Pages!*

## THANK YOU

Simply put, the following individuals have made this musical possible. Each one of these wonderfully selfless humans has given to this show, without receiving anything material in return. I sincerely thank them for their ideas and inspiration.

First and foremost, **Joy Rockstroh**. You have seen this show from beginning to end, and you have had the single greatest impact on this show. Without you, this would never be possible. I will forever be thankful for your influence over it!

*Luke Aumann, Natasha Barrett, Olivia Barrett, Alicia Birder, Dylan Capelle, Shawn Connelly, Jon Cook, Brady Holden, Kelly Holden, Laura Josepher, Rhonda Knoespel, Terry Martin, Lyn Matzke, Carol Miller, Austin Rockstroh, Avaya Rockstroh, Mike Rockstroh, Molly Rockstroh, Oscar Rockstroh, Ryan Rockstroh, Michael Rosewall, Teresa Schmidt, Kyle Schmitz, Patrick Sova, Zach Spice, Brian Sutton, Jan Sutton, Tim VanEperen, Virginia VanLaanen, Matt Weller, Chris Wuelling, & all of my family members, friends, colleagues, mentors, directors, & students. I love you!*

Original story and music: Brandon M. Rockstroh

Orchestration: Emily Marshall

Artwork: Matthew J. Fleming

Musical Transcription: Zach Spice

Editors: Laura Josepher, Lyn Matzke, Joy Rockstroh, Molly Rockstroh, Zach Spice, Brian Sutton, Tim VanEperen, & Virginia VanLaanen

These eight editors, one transcriber, and one orchestrator have had an *immeasurable* impact on this show! With credits from Broadway, off-Broadway, regional theatre, college theatre, community theatre, high school theatre, and children's theatre, they have collective degrees (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral) in Educational Theatre, Music Education, English, Theatre, Music, and more! Among them are published writers and composers, college professors, choreographers, musical theatre experts, music teachers, avid readers, singers, dancers, actors, accompanists, and directors. Above all, they are theatre-goers and lifelong learners who believe in promoting artistic creativity!

Matthew Fleming is a graphic artist based out of California, and has created album, poster, website, logo, and promotional artwork for Dave Matthews Band, Ingrid Michaelson, David Gray, Ray Lamontagne, Amos Lee, Ben Harper, Five for Fighting, and Van Morrison. He also created the Southwest High School Music Logo. [matthewjayfleming.com](http://matthewjayfleming.com)

*The Book of Empty Pages* is based off the true story of Kelly Holden & Patrick Sova. My sincerest thanks goes out to them for inspiring this show! To everybody else, thank you for your open mind in bringing this important story to life.

### EVOLUTION OF HOW THIS SHOW CAME TO BE:

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I formed a rock band with three childhood best friends (Ryan Anderson, Shawn Connelly, and Chris Wuelling). Through countless band names, basement practice sessions, smoky old bar gigs, and even winning a Battle of the Bands that landed us a song on the radio, *Halfway There* served as my tour guide through teenage life. It also led me to explore performing, composing, and teaching music throughout high school and college. Later on, after performing in multiple theatrical productions, it became clear to me that a “bucket list” goal of mine was to one day compose a musical. I didn’t realize it at the time, but *Halfway There* was not only the perfect name for the band, but it characterized where I stood in achieving my own musical dreams.

In college, I met one of my lifelong best friends, Brady Holden, who is now enjoying an incredibly successful career in the film industry. Seriously, look him up ([bradyholden.com](http://bradyholden.com)). In 2007, he told me a story from a couple years earlier about how his sister was a caretaker for a victim of a drunk-driving accident (not his fault), and she ended up falling in love with him. I immediately told him that Kelly and Patrick’s unprecedented love story would make the perfect premise for my original musical. I later had the fortune of meeting them and I put together my own embellishment of their story in 2008.

I took a break for several years, while I began my teaching career, and then finished writing all of the songs in 2012. In 2015, I scratched many of the songs and overhauled the plot, adding and subtracting several characters along the way. Finally, in 2016, with my wife pregnant and my school being about 18 months away from its 50<sup>th</sup> musical (which offered a perfect opportunity for a premiere), I was determined to finish the show. I was pickier than ever this time and ended up cutting 6 of the 16 songs. I rewrote them from scratch and spent countless summer nights staying up till 2, 3, or 4am to finish my first rough draft of the show by the time the school year rolled around in the fall of 2016. The show has taken many steps in the last year, making its way through four extensive draft revisions (and countless mini-rewrites), complete with substantial song, character, scene, and premise cuts, edits, and additions.

I am proud to say that after the concept came to life in **2008**, the first round of music was written in **2012**, and the first draft of the entire show was completed in **2016**, *The Book of Empty Pages* will premiere on the Southwest High School stage in Green Bay, WI, on **December 1, 2017**. For those then have been a part of the process, thank you for sticking with this project. And for those that will be performing the production, my sincerest gratitude for tackling the premiere.

Dreams don’t always come true, but the art of dreaming is far more valuable than truth. Dream big, friends...it’s worth it.

-Brandon