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TO AVAYA & OSCAR,

MAY YOU EMBRACE THAT WHICH DEFINES YOU
AND KNOW THAT LOVE IS ALWAYS WORTH IT.

I LOVE YOU WITH ALL THAT I AM!

-DAD

BRIEF SYNOPSIS:

Before she goes out to play with the “friend” who bullied her last time, Pastor JACK pulls 12-year old YOUNG DAISY aside to remind her that mistakes don’t define people...there is often good under the bad. Meanwhile, DAISY’s older self appears, feeling equally belittled by her now husband, DIRK. Together, they vent about a shared sense of invisibility.

Meanwhile, singer-songwriter SAM has just finished his final song at a small bar gig in Newport, RI. The audience is begging for an encore, when 24-year old DAISY enters, frantically-looking for her bar-hopping AWOL husband, DIRK. To avoid being rude, she listens to SAM’s encore, where he performs an unfinished song about seeking a new beginning after a recent breakup. Temporarily inspired, DAISY then departs to continue her search. After quickly packing his things to help this stranger, SAM exits the bar and is immediately struck by an out-of-control drunk driver.

Back at home, DIRK ends up stumbling in later than expected, and when she questions him about his whereabouts, he mocks DAISY for not having a job ever since her mother passed away. She confides in her father, JACK, who tells her that, ‘although marriage is tough, commitment is *forever*.’ He suggests applying for a job opening he saw in the church bulletin: a caretaker position over at Franklin Mills, the local Veteran Health Care facility. She does.

When she gets the job, her first case is SAM, who is 8 days removed from the ICU. Upon arrival, SAM shows up with his self-proclaimed book of empty pages, a journal he has sworn by since his days as a foster kid. It becomes apparent that SAM’s rapidly-spreading infection calls for amputation of his arm. But to salvage his future in music, he chooses the riskier alternative: waiting to see if his labs qualify for a brand new antibiotic—one with an astronomical price tag.

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. It is revealed that DIRK was the drunk-driver who hit SAM. And after several twists and turns, some expected and some unexpected, the book is empty no more. It is now filled with the one-of-a-kind love story of SAM and DAISY, for the new beginning they each were seeking was right in front of them, the moment they decided that their scars didn’t define them. As SAM’s fateful lab qualification results come in, the plot to take them down comes to fruition. In the end, everybody learns the lesson:

Long after life’s gone, love lives on.

ACT I**1-1 A Local Bar, Daisy's Childhood Home & Daisy's Adult Home (p. 7)**

- #1 Overture (2:10).....Sam, Chorus, Jack p. 7
- #2 Invisibly Visible (1:52).....Young Daisy & Daisy p. 9
- #3 New Beginning (2:39).....Sam p. 12

1-2 Crash Scene/Hospital, Daisy's Bedroom, Dirk's Truck (p. 13)

- #4 Reality (4:06).....Sam, Daisy, Dirk p. 13

1-3 Belmont Home & Pastor Jack's Office (p. 16)

- #5A Only Answer (3:14).....Daisy p. 16
- #5B 'Only Answer' Playoff (1:00).....Daisy p. 19
- Scene Change 1.0 (:15).....Instrumental p. 19*

1-4 Nancy's Office & Franklin Mills Commons (p. 20)

- #6 One Stop Shop (3:11).....All p. 22
- #7 Nothing to Lose (3:43).....Sam, H, & Daisy p. 27
- Scene Change 2.0 (:10).....Instrumental p. 33*

1-5 Belmont Home (p. 33)**1-6 Nancy's Office (p. 35)**

- #8 Give Me What's Mine (1:46)..... Nancy, Denise, & Alice p. 37
- Scene Change 3.0 (:10).....Instrumental p. 39*

1-7 Sam's Room (p. 39)

- #9 One Small Step (3:30).....Daisy p. 41
- Scene Change 4.0 (:10).....Instrumental p. 46*

1-8 Pastor Jack's Office (p. 46)

- #10A Two-Faced (1:00).....Daisy & Dirk p. 46

1-9 Doctor's Office, Franklin Mills Commons, & Outside Nancy's Office (p. 48)

- #10B Peace (:30).....Instrumental p. 51
- #10C 'Give Me What's Mine' Reprise (:35).....Nancy, Denise, & Alice p. 54

1-10 TV Studio, Franklin Mills Commons, Belmont Home (p. 54)

- #11 Different & The Same (5:11)..... All p. 54

ACT 2

#12 Entr'acte (1:10).....	Instrumental p. 58
2-1 Franklin Mills Commons (p. 58)	
#13 Head Over Heels (3:16).....	H, Amy, & Chorus p. 60
2-2 Sam's Room (p. 64)	
#14 And If You Want (3:41).....	Sam & Daisy p. 67
2-3 Sam's Room: Next Morning (p. 68)	
2-4 Nancy's Office, Sam's Rom, & Hallway (p. 72)	
#15 Nothing But Perfect (4:01).....	Nancy, Denise, & Alice p. 72
#16 Different Again (3:38).....	Sam & Daisy p. 74
<i>Scene Change 5.0 (:10).....</i>	<i>Instrumental, p. 75</i>
2-5 Sam's Room & Belmont Home (p. 76)	
#17 You're Not Alone (3:43).....	Jack, Daisy, & Gretchen p. 77
<i>Scene Change 6.0 (:10).....</i>	<i>Instrumental p. 80</i>
2-6 Franklin Mills Commons (p. 80)	
#18A The Book (:38).....	Instrumental p. 81
#18B Dirk's Revenge (:49).....	Dirk p. 82
#18C Love Lives On (3:45).....	Sam, H, Amy, Jack, All p. 83
#19 Bows & Exit Music (3:27).....	Instrumental p. 85

APPROXIMATE RUN TIME- 1:52 PLUS INTERMISSION

CAST SIZE: 16 IS OPTIMAL; MINIMUM 10 * PIT ORCHESTRA SIZE: 7 IS OPTIMAL; MINIMUM 1

A FULL SET OF PROFESSIONALLY-PRODUCED PERFORMANCE TRACKS ARE AVAILABLE, IF PREFERRED

PLUS MINIMAL CHOREOGRAPHY, COSTUMES, & SETS...EASY TO PRODUCE!

ROLES: 7m (including Nancy), 9f

DAISY: 2 SOLOS*4 DUETS*3 TRIOS*1 CAMEO-- 189 lines 24-year old ingénue; pink hair; endearing & sweet. *think Claire Cleary from "Wedding Crashers"*

SAM: 1 SOLO*2 DUETS*3 TRIOS*2 CAMEOS-- 143 lines 23-year old musician; former foster kid; charismatic & charming. *think Ben from "Grey's Anatomy"*

NANCY: 3 TRIOS*1 CAMEOS-- 80 lines 45-year old new center supervisor; crabby chain-smoker; played by a male; antagonist. *think Frances McDormand*

DIRK: 1 SOLO*1 DUET*1 TRIO*1 CAMEO -- 41 lines 26-year old; Daisy's alcoholic husband; perfect exterior/ugly interior. *think Earl from "Waitress"*

JACK: 1 TRIO*3 CAMEOS-- 59 lines 55-year old; Daisy's father & Gretchen's former traditionalist pastor; dynamic. *think Mr. Simon from "That's What I Am"*

H: 2 TRIOS*2 CAMEOS-- 70 lines 35-year old pharmacist; very flamboyant and fervently optimistic; Nancy's nemesis. *think David Rose meets Kurt Hummel*

GRETCHEN: 1 TRIO*1 CAMEO -- 39 lines 73-year old cranky patient co-founder of FM; dynamic. *think an older Lucille Bluth from "Arrested Development"*

AMY: 1 DUET*2 CAMEOS-- 29 lines 22-year old outspoken patient; pretty, but dumb; filter-less; *think Erin from "The Office" or Nicky from "Orange is the New*

Black"

DENISE & ALICE: 3 TRIOS-- 19 & 17 lines 40-year old custodians; natural complainers and, therefore, gravitate towards Nancy; take pride in being her posse.

YOUNG DAISY: 1 DUET*1 CAMEO-- 7 lines 12-year old who stands up for herself and calls her dad out; *think Max from "Stranger Things"*

DOCTOR: 12 (longer) lines middle-aged; confident & intelligent; could be played by male or female—although I lean female; *think Abby Griffin from "The 100"*

FRANK, MARYJANE, SOPHIA, & WEMBLEY: 6 SONGS-- 12-20 lines patients→W: blind; MJ: druggie; F: incontinent yoooper; S: know-it-all

Optional cameo in song #13: HOT SHIRTLESS NEIGHBOR

Referenced, but never seen (may be 'heard' on the other end of the telephone): TOMMY, ELIZABETH, DAISY'S MOM, HELEN, SAM'S parents, FRANKLIN, & EARL

* THE BOOK OF EMPTY PAGES *

BRANDON M. ROCKSTROH

* #1: OVERTURE *

I-I: THREE POOLS OF LIGHT--A Local Bar, Young Daisy's Childhood Home, & Daisy's Adult Home

It's autumn in Newport, Rhode Island. The stage is black as we hear the bar PATRONS singing a melody that SAM, a visiting singer-songwriter, has just taught them. They are clapping along as well, as SAM interjects with positive affirmations. The bar's lights sync with the band, who re-enters with staccato chords on the downbeat of each measure, before going black again when the instruments are silent. This builds into SAM's triumphant guitar solo, where the entire stage lights up with moving colored lights. The song closes with the PATRONS joining back-in for the ending refrain, followed by a very resolute grandiose final chord. The audience erupts in cheers and chants for an encore, before freezing when the lighting switches to stage left, where 12-year old YOUNG DAISY enters with her pastor father, JACK.

PATRONS

OH-OH-OH-OH-OH! (2x)

SAM

(intermittently throughout the overture, as he coaches the audience when to sing along; his is confident but not cocky)

There you go. Keep it going now!

PATRONS

OH-OH-OH-OH-OH! (2x)

SAM

Damn, Newport...this one's for you!!

(instrumental break while the patrons bob their heads and wave their arms, adoring SAM's guitar solo)

Ok folks, last time...let's get it!

PATRONS

OH-OH-OH-OH-OH! (3x)

SAM

(simultaneously offbeat to PATRONS singing)

Ay! Ay!

OH-OH-OH-OH-OH-OH!

Thank you so much for coming out. Goodnight!

PATRONS

(cheers evolve into chant, which fades out as the PATRONS slowly freeze and the audience's attention turns to stage left)

Encore, encore, encore!!

YOUNG DAISY

Mom, Dad...I'm heading over to Tommy's. Be back in a bit!

JACK

Ooo sweetheart, wait up for a second.

(middle-aged and attractive, the Pastor-by-day crouches down to meet his daughter at her level)

Remember the last time you played with Tommy?

YOUNG DAISY

You mean the hide and seek thing at church?!

JACK

I've been meaning to talk to you about that.

YOUNG DAISY

What's there to talk about? *He's* the one who knocked that stupid candle over. And then he blamed me!

JACK

Look. Sometimes, people do and say not-nice things because *they* are going through something tough in their own lives. My point is: today could be a new beginning for you guys.

YOUNG DAISY

So...cuz I'm the pastor's daughter, him lying to me is partially *my* fault?

JACK

No. I just...

WISH YOU COULD SEE, THAT BOTH FRIENDS AND ENEMIES
WHEN THEY CHOOSE TO HIDE, THEY'RE STILL GOD'S MASTERPIECE
SO NEXT TIME HE LIES, JUST OPEN YOUR MIND,
THERE'S GOOD IN HIS EYES, EVEN IF IT'S BURIED INSIDE...WHYNTCHA GIVE IT A TRY

YOUNG DAISY

Ugh, there you go *again!*

JACK

What?!

YOUNG DAISY

(he's blindsided that she didn't receive his advice well; her preteen pain comes out in the form of sarcasm)

It's always the same with you. You want me to see the good in him; but you don't even *see* me.

JACK

Oh come on, Daisy; that's not what I s---

YOUNG DAISY

Can I just... *please* go play outside? He's waiting for me.

JACK

Uh, sh-sure...we'll talk about this later then. I love you.

(his voice trails off as YOUNG DAISY exits stage right, crossing paths with DAISY, who enters, followed by DIRK)

DAISY

Dirk, it's always the same with you. You want me to support you and your prestigious career. But somehow, supporting *me* is too much to ask?

DIRK

Oh come on, Daisy; that's not what I s--

DAISY

You want me to go to all of your events...be the doting trophy wife on your arm; yet never say a word when you're out drinking for hours again on a...Tuesday night?

DIRK

Yeah. That's exactly what I want! *I'm* the one who supports this 'family' anyway. What've you done lately?

DAISY

You're the one who told me *not* to get a job—that it “looks bad for the primetime newscaster” to have a working wife!

DIRK

Look. The whole reason we got married so young is because you and your dad wanted it. Gotta 'fit it in' before your mom dies. I woulda been perfectly fine waiting. *You* wanted this life, Daisy!

DAISY

Yeah? Well, I didn't realize being married meant being invisible. Where are you going anyway?

DIRK

I told Earl and the guys I'd meet 'em out for a drink.

DAISY

On our *anniversary*?!

DIRK

Oh, forgive me for not being in the mood to celebrate. Be back later.

DAISY

AM I THE ONLY ONE THAT THOUGHT ETERNAL LOVE
 MEANT HAPPILY EVER AFTER?
 DIDN'T THINK I'D LAND AT HOME, ALTHOUGH ALONE IS WHAT I'VE KNOWN
 GUESS */M* THE JOKE, IF THERE'S NO LAUGHTER

YOUNG DAISY

WHOEVER I BECOME, I HOPE TO BE SIGNIFICANT!

DAISY & YOUNG DAISY

JUST ONCE, CAN I BE ENOUGH?
 DO I NEED AN INTERVENTION TO EARN SOME DAMN ATTENTION?

OR AM I TOO TOUGH TO LOVE?
 TOO STRONG TO BE A ZERO, TOO WEAK TO BE A HERO
 INVISIBLY VISIBLE

YOUNG DAISY

AM I THE ONLY ONE, OR IS "KNOWN AROUND TOWN" MORE BURDEN THAN A BLESSING?
 YOU'D THINK BEING PASTOR'S KID WOULD MAKE ME SUPER HIP

Well, shocker...it didn't!

DAISY

WHO HAVE I BECOME, BUT INSIGNIFICANT?

DAISY & YOUNG DAISY

JUST ONCE, CAN I BE ENOUGH?
 DO I NEED AN INTERVENTION TO EARN SOME DAMN ATTENTION?

OR AM I TOO TOUGH TO LOVE?
 TOO STRONG TO BE A ZERO, TOO WEAK TO BE A HERO
 INVISIBLY VISIBLE

DAISY

(coaching herself out of self-pity and into mindfulness; she exhales mid-sentence, remembering her mom's advice

Alright, alright, *alright*, Daisy...just. "You usually have to wait for that which is worth waiting for." I will...go check on him. He's...my husband, for god's sakes. I love him.

(the tableau across the stage unfreezes as SAM giggles out of flattery, and gets everybody to sit back down)

SAM

Alright, alright, alright—you guys are way too kind!

(the sound of people taking their seats is interrupted by a door ding; out of the double-door pops our protagonist)

DAISY

Hi. I...didn't mean to interrupt. Don't mind me; I'm just...searching.

SAM

(comes across more as optimistic rather than cheesy; he is visibly taken by her)

You and me both, missy.

DAISY

(he's obviously metaphorical, while she's more literal)

I don't understand.

SAM

Oh nothing. These lovely folks just asked me to play an encore. 'ts...never happened before. What're you trying to find?

DAISY

My husband. He's...a regular here. Dirk Belmont?

SAM

Ugh, I'm not from around here. Anyone know Dirk?

PATRON

The news guy? Lucky lady!

DAISY

Yeah.

(her tone articulates the irony)

Well, thank you anyway. I'm sorry. You're clearly in the middle of—

SAM

N-no; it's fine. This is important. 'sides...the only other song I have isn't even finished, so...

PATRON

Play it anyway!!

(trying to be polite, she sits on the edge of the chair at one of the back tables, clearly waiting for her opportunity to exit)

SAM

Look, maybe we should help this nice young lady f—

DAISY

N-no; it's fine. This...is important too. Go on.

SAM

(pleasantly surprised by this woman; he uncharacteristically stumbles for a second, then nods to his pianist to start)

Um...okay then. Two, three, four...

* #3: NEW BEGINNING *

But consider yourselves warned. It's a breakup song. I was "inspired" for a bit and then just...never finished it. Anyway.

Don't judge me!

EVERY NEW BEGINNING STARTS WITH AN ENDING

IT'S LIKE WINNING BY LOSING, WITHOUT CONTENDING

I always liked the idea that: "bad experiences make for better people". So. I'd tell myself:

TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY AND OPPORTUNITY AWAITS,

LET'S BEGIN AGAIN!

BUT HOW DOES ANYONE REALLY GET PAST THE PAST

IF ALL YOU'VE EVER KNOWN IS 'TWO STEPS BACK?'

I'LL TAKE THE HIGH ROAD; FOR THE BIGGER MAN GETS THE LAST LAUGH

But if I'm being honest...deep down, I'm afraid I'll just copy and paste my mistakes the next time.

A SECOND CHANCE IS NOTHING, IF NOT FOR CHANGING

DIFFERENT THAN THE SAME THING, OR YOU'RE JUST REARRANGING

FORGIVENESS ISN'T VIRTUOUS IF EVER DISINGENUOUS,

Trust me--

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU WANT

UNLESS TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY, A FORWARD STEP I CHOOSE TO TAKE

IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON

BUT HOW DOES ANYONE REALLY GET PAST THE PAST

IF ALL YOU'VE EVER KNOWN IS 'TWO STEPS BACK?'

I'LL TAKE THE HIGH ROAD; FOR THE BIGGER MAN GETS THE LAST LAUGH

So it's at this point in the song where I haven't written any more lyrics, but...I've still got something to say. This is ideally where the moral of the story would come in...

(showing off his quirkier side, he uses a nerdy voice, as if what he's saying is cheesy)

...something old-fashioned like: new chapters don't have to erase old ones...but they *should* learn from them. Anyway.

The melody will go something like this:

DAH-DAHDAH, DAH-DAHDAH, DAH, DAHDAHDAHDAH

LAH-LAHLAH, LAH-LAHLAH, LAH, LAHLAHLAHLAH

C'mon, y'all!

DAH-DAHDAH, DAH-DAHDAH, DAH, DAHDAHDAHDAH

DAH-DAHDAH, DAH-DAHDAH, DAH, DAHDAHDAHDAH, YEAH!!

Y'guys have been awesome; thank you so much for comin' out tonight! Goodnight.

(cheers & applause overlap his spoken line. After clapping for a moment, DAISY quickly exits out the same front door she came through. The applause naturally transitions into post-concert mode: background music is piped in as people meander about. SAM keeps his eye on the front door, after seeing DAISY exit, he enters hurried-mode, thanking a couple stray patrons who tipped him, putting his guitar in its case, getting his jacket on; & heading for the exit.)

Wait up!

(Immediately upon exiting, passing headlights are followed by darkness, as we hear the sound of a car crashing into a person. This is followed by the sound of smoke, a nearing ambulance, and shocked onlookers; the car screeches away.)

1-2: THREE POOLS OF LIGHT--Crash Scene/Hospital, Daisy's Bedroom, & Dirk's Truck

Broken glass, random car parts, and spinning police lights create the aftermath of a car crash. Low stage lighting and fog add to the blurriness of the moment. SAM'S DOUBLE is lying on on a spinal board stretcher. First-responders are actively attending to SAM's DOUBLE while later, a DOCTOR appears at a different part of the stage, looking directly at the audience as if they were SAM. And DAISY appears from her kitchen table, as she is journaling.

*** #4: REALITY ***

SAM

(regretting being anxious to turn the page, when you don't know if the next chapter will be worse)

ONE MOMENT, I'M UP ON STAGE,
SHARING HOW I TRY TO TURN THE PAGE
IF ONLY PUZZLES COULD PIECE THEMSELVES,
PERHAPS MY BOOK WOULD...STILL BE ON THE SHELF

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,

FOR YESTERDAY SEIZED TOMORROW'S DREAMS, YET TODAY'S REALITY

DOCTOR

I'm afraid you have a very aggressive case of Osteomyelitis...a bone infection. Your body must be resisting our standard antibiotics, as it appears to be spreading. This puts you at risk for blood poisoning, which...could be fatal. Now, there's a brand-new bone infection antibiotic called Teixobactin. But it literally *just* finished trials, so I'll make some calls. But even if it is available, I'm sure it'll cost a fortune, as I see that you're currently uninsured, huh Sam?

(lights up on DAISY, ensuing dialogue overlaps)

SAM & DAISY

Then,

DAISY

...all of the sudden...

SAM

...out of *all* moments...

SAM & DAISY

...it dawned me:

SAM

That new beginning I was seeking...

DAISY

I keep wanting Dirk to be different...

SAM

...had nothing to do with my breakup.

DAISY

...but maybe it's *me* that needs to change.

SAM

Futures aren't about the past.

DAISY

Bad memories don't have to last.

SAM**DAISY**

It seems to me perhaps the key's easy indeed...

To be at peace and feel relieved, I really need to...

SAM & DAISY

...go back to being *me*.

WELCOME TO REALITY, WHERE EVERY LITTLE THING I SEE

REMINDS ME OF WHO I USED TO BE,
THOUGH YESTERDAY SEIZED TOMORROW'S DREAMS, FOR TODAY IS REALITY

SAM

IT'S TIME I PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH

DIRK

(still rocking a disheveled version of his work button-up, DIRK takes swigs from his flask while in his parked truck)

MAYBE FOR A CHANGE, SHE WON'T NAG ME

DAISY

OH MOMMY...JUST THIS ONCE, GIVE ME BRAVERY

SAM, DAISY, & DIRK

(each of them asks for divine intervention)

PLEASE, IF A RESTART BUTTON EXISTS MAY THIS BE THE BEGINNING, AND NOT THE END
GOD, I COME HERE TODAY TO ASK FOR A GIFT

SAM

A MIRACLE, MAYBE,

DIRK

HELL, THAT'S WHY...YOU EXIST.

Right?

DAISY

I NEED TO FORGIVE HIM

SAM

CAN I START OVER NEW?

DIRK

JUST...DON'T LET HER FIND OUT

SAM, DAISY, & DIRK

A SECOND CHANCE IS ALL I ASK OF...YOU.

(blackout on SAM and DIRK)

1-3: The Belmont Home (and Jack's Office, later)

In a continuous scene change, DAISY journals about seeking advice from her mother (who passed away the year before), when DIRK comes in the front door. Later, DIRK enters & JACK gives advice on the phone.

DAISY

Oh...thank God, you're alright.

DIRK

Can you *not* patronize me...just once?

DAISY

So me wanting my husband to come home safely is “patronizing??” What is the proper answer, Dirk?!

DIRK

Nothing. You handle your business; I'll handle mine.

DAISY

Fine. Do you need a ri---

(looks at her phone, as if she heard him hang up)

Dirk?

*

#5A: ONLY ANSWER

*

Ugh. Where's my journal? Deep breaths.

ALONE AGAIN WITH MY THOUGHTS, MAMA, I SURE DO MISS YOU
WHY ARE MISTAKES EASY TO MAKE, BUT YET SO HARD TO UNDO?

(DIRK enters the room, cracks a beer, and heads for his recliner, before talking down to her)

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

DIRK

Ts. Cut the crap and just spit it out, already: “you left me alone!”

DAISY

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? IT'S LIKE I GIVE AND GIVE;
YET YOU STILL DISAPPEAR. OH GREAT--HAVE ANOTHER BEER!
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

--THAT'S YOUR ONLY ANSWER!

Who *are* you lately, Dirk? This is not the man I married!

DIRK

Listen, woman...you get a job yet?!

Figures. Who are *you*, telling me not to go the bar?! I'll spend *my* money however I damn please.

DAISY

Dirk, it's not about the money.

DIRK

(sarcastic and condescending, like Sack Lodge from "Wedding Crashers;" he heads to bed, turning his lamp off to sleep)

Oh, I'm sure it's not. Why'ntcha quit cryin' about your mom every night, and get a job. Un-be-lievable...

DAISY

ANOTHER FRIDAY FIGHT NIGHT, WHAT ARE THE ODDS OR CHANCES?

REMEMBER, DAISY, YOU LOVE HIM; WHEN HE DRINKS, HE'S JUST MORE...*CANDID*

(coaching herself into believing it's just the beer talking again, the light bulb goes on to calm herself down)

HI HON, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT;

DIRK

Did hell just freeze over or something?

DAISY

'BOUT TIME I HONOR HER LIFE

(he turns over from his side of the bed with a disheveled drunken grin & slowly makes advances on her)

I'LL GO BACK TO WORK, EVEN THOUGH I DON'T FEEL CLOSE TO BEING READY,

I KNOW IT'S WHAT YOU WANT. MOM, I HOPE YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN,

EVEN PROUDER THAN YOU WERE BEFORE, 'CAUSE YOU SHOWED ME...

Get *off* a me!

...SHOWED ME HOW TO FIGHT, WHEN IT'S MY ONLY ANSWER

(DIRK rolls his eyes & turns over to sleep; DAISY suddenly furrows her brows as if she's made a bombshell discovery)

OR MAYBE IT'S *NOT* THE ANSWER!

MAYBE WAITING AROUND IS WHAT'S BEEN PULLING ME DOWN

LIKE A DOG AT THE POUND, I'LL RUN AWAY & BE FOUND

SO NO MORE LOSING SLEEP, NO MORE LIES OR DECEIT

MY DAD MUST HEAR MY PLEA, FOR HE BELIEVES IN ME

(DAISY optimistically dials a number on her cell & puts it to her ear, fighting tears. Across the stage, JACK answers)

DADDY, I'VE CALLED YOU THIS LATE TO ASK FOR A GIFT

A MIRACLE, MAYBE, BUT THAT'S WHY... WE EXIST,

Right?!

YOU'VE TOLD ME: "FORGIVE HIM." WELL I BELIEVE, NOW, THAT I CAN
BUT I ASK FOR YOUR BLESSING, SO I CAN LEAVE HIM TO SAVE WHO I AM

JACK

Oh sweetie. I'm so sorry you're going through this. You know I'd do anything for you. But honey, this is a commitment you made to *God*. If you leave during the storm, dear...you'll miss the rainbow. Remember, a grudge has no place for husbands or wives, but forgiveness belongs in..."

DAISY

"...but forgiveness belongs in all our lives." I know, I know. But what if it's...more than a grudge?

JACK

Well, what is it then?

DAISY

It's...alcohol. Communication. It's....*money*! He's not the same guy I married, dad.

JACK

(unintentionally misconstruing her entire complaint as if it was completely about money)

Ugh money. It's the root of all evil, I swear. Remember, mom's life insurance money is there, if you need it. Mom always said she wanted it to make a difference—

DAISY

No, I...couldn't.

JACK

Sounds to me like *money* is the problem; not him. Tell ya what, I saw a job posting the other day in the church bulletin...

(retrieves a ripped piece of paper from his desk and puts his readers on)

...looks like it's for a, uh, caretaker position down at Franklin Mills. How about I make som—

DAISY

No, no. That's okay.

JACK

Who knows? Might be worth a call.

DAISY

Ok, thanks.

JACK

Goodnight, dear.

DAISY

(hangs up, elbows on knees, shaking her head; she speaks under her breath, while Googling, then dialing Franklin Mills)

Goodnight. Some things never change.

* #5B ONLY ANSWER PLAYOFF *

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; she achieves peak awkwardness)

Uh, yeah, hi...my name is Daisy Belmont. I heard you have, umm...that there's a position open...for a caretaker. Yeah. So I just wanted to call and, uh...is that position still open? Oh, ok. Yeah, no...um...tomorrow? Sure. I-I'll be there at 8. Yes, I'll send it...just bring it? Ok, that works. Sounds good. Thank you. Buh-bye.

IF ONLY I HAD THE RIGHT WORDS TO SAY
IF ONLY TODAY WERE A BRAND NEW DAY...

* SCENE CHANGE 1.0 *

1-4: Nancy's Office & Franklin Mills Commons

The next day, DAISY enters Franklin Mills. Not knowing where to go, she stumbles upon NANCY vaping in her office.

DAISY

Hello?

NANCY

Sorry. What can I, uh...what can I do ya for?

DAISY

Oh. I'm just here for a job interview. For a caretaker posi-

NANCY

Ohhhh, yeah. Belmont, right?

DAISY

That's right. Daisy. Daisy Belmont.

NANCY

You related to the newscaster?

DAISY

Uh, actually, yes. He's my h--

NANCY

(interrupts her by knocking on the wall, as to summon H from the office next door, before returning to DAISY)

Hey H...new chickee's here. You can take a seat. Y'look awfully young to be a caretaker.

DAISY

Oh. Well, I'm...24.

H

Twenty four shades of *adorable*...oh my god, look at you! I'm H.

(behind the back of his palm)

Don't mind 'peanut butter and jealous' over here.

DAISY

Oh okay!

NANCY

Y'got a resume, kid?

DAISY

Mhmm.

H

(hands it over; H takes a seat on top of the desk, facing DAISY)

So, as you may or may not know, Franklin Mills was just voted *the* premiere health care facility in all of Rhode Island!

DAISY

That's amazing!

H

Got that right, babe. Besides, don't our veterans deserve the very best?!

DAISY

Of course, they do!

NANCY

So what makes you wanna work here?

DAISY

Well, I've—seen the commercials. I've always loved the “people are redeemable” slogan. And. I guess...I've...been through a lot. So. I think makes me more...understanding? More relatable. Yeah.

NANCY

You do know that a lot of these people are dying, right?

DAISY

Yeah. So, I guess, not necessarily *relatable*...I dunno. I just feel like I could help them. Sorry if my answer wasn't...

H

Honey, wanting to make a difference is the only answer we're looking for. You're doing great.

NANCY

(bored, NANCY is picking a hair out of her mouth during the next line; finally spitting it out mid-line)

I'm gonna be straight with ya, kid. The board has been on us like stink on shit, about filling this position, if you know what I mean. Huh, H?

(H confirms with a nod)

DAISY

So...you both oversee Franklin Mills then?

H

Sort of, yes. My role is Director of Rehabilitation, and as of this morning, Nancy is our new Director of Operations!

NANCY

Look. The way I see it is: y'looking for a job; we're looking for a caretaker. Resume is short; but, I think you'd do alright.

DAISY

Yeah?!

H

Believe it or not, Nancy is not always this...*positive*. So...take it as a compliment. When can you start?!

DAISY

Seriously?! Uh...today!

H

Oh you're such a doll! Why don't we show her around?

NANCY

I'm gonna tell you right now, kid: they don't call 'em *patients* for nothin'. These people can drive you up a wall.

H

Actually, it's just about 8:15.

DAISY

What's 8:15?

H

Hoo-hoo, Netflix and Pill time, baby!! C'mon down.

*

#6: ONE STOP SHOP

*

DAISY

Sounds great! And what were you saying about patience, Nancy?

NANCY

Y'gonna need it, kid. They're like caged animals. And H, here, likes to poke.

(as if she's hungover and H is being overly spunky/loud; PATIENTS loudly filter out from rooms & become louder)

Eh...HEY!! Sheezus. I got good news and bad news, people. As you probably heard, I'm officially your new Operations Director. Which means we're gonna run a much tighter ship around here, starting today. No more lolligaggin' to get here, huh? Yousguys wantcha pills? Then, be lined up properly, in *silence*, at 8:15 sharp. 'Zat understood?

AMY

And...the...good news?

H

The good news is... this, here, is our newest caretaker. Daisy.

(the PATIENTS welcome her with comments and light applause)

NANCY

Now, don't get smart with 'er, fellas...she's married.

DAISY

(slightly embarrassed, DAISY is surprised NANCY even heard her before, much less blabbered it to the entire facility)

Oh.

NANCY

Yeah, I saw that ring. Alright now, line up.

(stretching his exam glove all the way to his wrist, flamboyant pharmacist, H, nods; PATIENTS rush to be first in line)

Remember, now: one at a time. Animals, I swear!

DAISY

So what *is* this exactly?

AMY

Oh, pinky...this?! 'Ts the best part 'a waking up!

H

Pills are in your cup!

GRETCHEN

EVERY DAY, THE SAME OLD, SAME OLD....LONG ASS LINE

FRANK

OH CHEER UP, WILL YA, GRETCHEN?

AMY

(her genuine empathy comes across as condescending)

MUST BE HARD BEING LAST EVERY TIME

NANCY

FEEL FREE TO CALL 'EM WHAT THEY ARE:

Entitled Jews!

GRETCHEN

Ugh?!

NANCY

Not *you*.

H

IT'S THE ONE STOP, THE ONE STOP SHOP

AMY

Let's go!

PATIENTS

(group of PATIENTS wait till they get little white pill cups & down them together; WEMBLEY's goes over his shoulder)

OOOOO, SHOT! THE ONE STOP SHOP!!

SOPHIA

THE ONE THING WE AGREE TOGETHER,

AMY

Taking shots makes us feel better!

PATIENTS

WE SHOP AT THE ONE STOP SHOP

OOOOO SHOT, THE ONE STOP SHOP!!

DAISY

Pardon me for being confused...but, if everybody's suffering from pain and addiction, how is it so happy around here?

H

Damn, girl. You're quick. See, at Franklin Mills, people aren't *inventory*. They're *investments*.

MARYJANE

Yeah, I'm pretty sure it's the drugs.

GRETCHEN

DON'T KID YOURSELF; ALRIGHT, KID? THIS SHIT'S NOT ALL ROSES

NANCY

SOME FREE ADVICE: Y'WANNA LAST?

It's the *people* you take in doses!

H

AS A MATTER OF FACT, PEOPLE LONG TO BELONG,

AMY

That's why I keep saying we should all get along!

NANCY

Oh god.

PATIENTS

COME SHOP THE ONE STOP SHOP!!

H

SO IF DIFFERENT PEOPLE PUT AWAY THEIR DIFFERENCES,

We're...kinda the same!

NANCY

I'm gonna puke.

PATIENTS

COME SHOP THE ONE STOP SHOP!!

(H gets a text on his phone and abruptly leaves; AMY appears under-the-influence)

AMY

One more!

PATIENTS

COME SHOP THE ONE STOP *SHOP!!*

NANCY

(to DAISY, making sure she doesn't pander to the patients)

Look.

BLINDFOLDS WON'T HELP THEM SEE

WEMBLEY

Mmmhmm.

AMY

(bloated, like after Thanksgiving dinner, she references the pill cup)

I think I had one too many 'a these.

NANCY

UNICORNS, RAINBOWS, GLITTER, AND GLEE; IT'S ALL BULL. SHIT.

The less they dream, the more they accept what's meant to be.

DAISY

(H rolls in a new patient, with a head-full of bandages and scrapes)

WHO'S HE?

AMY

Is that Brendan Fraser in there or did the mummy just return? Hubba Hubba!

GRETCHEN

Heeeere we go.

AMY

Mm, come to mummyyyyy. Yow!

NANCY

Will ya shutcha pie-hole already! 'Sgusting. You must be...Sam.

SAM

Sam, I am.

NANCY

(she is cold and direct, in comparison to H's warmth)

Nancy. Operations Director.

H

I'm H, Director of Rehab. So what branch did you serve in?

NANCY

Oh, Sam's actually not a veteran. Apparently, they're full again over at Hopkins General.

GRETCHEN

Oh great, so we get their castoffs too?!

AMY

(unapologetically dumb)

I think his cast is still on, isn't it?

MARYJANE

Whatcha reading?

SAM

Oh, this? I call this my...book of empty pages.

FRANK

Yer what?!

NANCY

Hey, let the man have his diary, ok?

SAM

It's not necessarily a diary. I mean, I guess it is. I dunno. I keep one with me wherever I go...always have. Every foster home, every gig I play...

AMY

You play gigs?!

SAM

Uh yeah...I do.

H

A musician too, huh?! Impressive.

GRETCHEN

How do I join the fan club?

H

I suppose we should start introducing people. Sam, this is Gretchen--our longest-tenured patient.

GRETCHEN

Six years of bedded bliss.

FRANK

Admit it: you love it here, don'tcha Gretch?

GRETCHEN

I long for death.

NANCY

Why don't we just let Sam get settled here a minute, huh?

H

Anything for our most famous patient in years!

SAM

Famous?

FRANK

Oh yah. Been all over da news. Da five. Da nine...

SAM

Well other than the whole military thing, I don't really see myself as different than any of you.

WEMBLEY

(blind, with oversized sunglasses)

Yeah? Well I don't see myself, period.

DAISY

I have a question.

** #7: NOTHING TO LOSE **

How do you stay so positive?

SAM

Hmm. Years of being the square peg in the round hole, I suppose.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I MADE A POINT TO MASK MY PAIN...TO NOT SHOW WEAKNESS,
AS I UNDERSTOOD: BRUISES, THEY PASSED; IT'S SCARS THAT STAINED

I WOULD ALWAYS PRAY THAT ONE DAY, THEY'D ALL LOOK AWAY,
I'D BE OFF ON A TRAIN, GONE WITHOUT A TRACE
BUT I'M DIFFERENT TODAY, PERHAPS *YOU* FEEL THE SAME
WHEN THERE'S NO CHOICE TO MAKE, EMBRACE THE CHANGE

SURE, TOMORROW'S UNKNOWN...BUT TODAY, WE'RE NOT ALONE.

H

Hmm. Suffering *decreases* when the burden is shared.

GRETCHEN

Or. This is why you try to avoid head trauma.

H

I like that. *Hope* shouldn't rely on circumstance.

IT RELIES ON YOUR HEART

SAM

Amen, brotha.

SURE SOMETHING WILL CHANGE, BUT IT JUST MIGHT BE YOU

H

SO WHY NOT DREAM BIG, YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE

SAM & H

EXCEPT TIME...IT KEEPS GOING AND GOING AND IT'S ALWAYS GONNA GET HERE TOO SOON

DAISY

But, what if you don't have *enough* time?

SAM

Isn't it funny how time goes unnoticed, until it's too late? What if time weren't a sentence, but an opportunity?

DAISY

That's...quite the viewpoint. But...I can't help but wonder--

AND THIS ISN'T ME SAYING, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH
 'CAUSE I HAVEN'T A CLUE, I JUST KNOW THAT I STRUGGLE TO FACE MY OWN TRUTH
 SO HOW DO YOU JUST...PICK UP THE PIECES & ACCEPT THAT YOU'VE LOST,
 WHEN YOUR FUTURE JUST PAID THE ULTIMATE COST?

SAM

(his response is just as respectful; this is a discussion rather than an argument)

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, I DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY
 PEOPLE DWELL ON TOMORROW & YESTERDAY
 WHEN ALL THAT I WANT...IS TO NOT LOSE TODAY

H

Wow, I love that. In a way--

TODAY'S YOUR EMPTY PAGE.

SAM

Touche!

SURE, SOMETHING WILL CHANGE, BUT IT JUST MIGHT BE YOU

H

SO 'WHY NOT' DREAM BIG? YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE

SAM, H, & PATIENTS

EXCEPT TIME...IT KEEPS GOING AND GOING AND IT'S ALWAYS GONNA GET HERE TOO SOON

DAISY

Ok, I think I got it now.

SAM

Yeah?!

DAISY

WHEN THE DAY IS DONE, HISTORY WILL REPEAT ITSELF,
 EXCEPT WHEN YOU ACCEPT WHAT'S REAL AND STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF

SAM

Exactly!

(they zero-in their focus on one another)

SURE, SOMETHING COULD CHANGE, BUT IT JUST MIGHT BE *YOU*.

DAISY

SO WHY NOT DREAM BIG, *YOU'VE* GOT NOTHING TO LOSE

SAM & DAISY

BUT TIME...

SAM

IT KEEPS GOING AND GOING

DAISY

WITHOUT EVER SLOWING

SAM

AND I'M SURE IT'S GONNA BE HERE REAL SOON

DON'T LOOK NOW, FOLKS...(IT) MIGHT BE WAITING FOR YOU.

DAISY

Ugh, here I am, interrupting a song of yours again...I'm so sorry!

SAM

(SAM takes a beat to understand her reference; he is pleasantly surprised)

Wait, you *remember* me?

DAISY

You remember *me*?

SAM

Of course.

NANCY

(cluelessly interrupting their moment)

Wait. You two know each other?!

H

I have to say, Sam...you're quite the inspiration.

SAM

You kidding me?! That's...a first. But thank you. Guess I'm just—

TRYING TO GIVE MYSELF GRACE...

Things *are* different.

BUT...I'M THE SAME

SO COME WHAT MAY; CUZ EITHER WAY, IT'S TIME TO TURN THE PAGE

AMY

(staring at him, virtually drooling, without her eyes leaving him)

Dear Diary, I think I'm in love...

DAISY

That's...really profound, y'know that?

AMY

Y'ever wonder where the word 'profound' came from? Like, if you *support* being found, are you *against* being lost?

MARYJANE

Good to see the drugs have kicked in.

NANCY

Alright, folks—show's over. Back to yer rooms.

(residual commotion is heard as people disperse; H pulls DAISY aside)

H

Listen, Daisy. I think Sam should be your first patient.

DAISY

Yeah?

H

I do. You're young and not afraid to speak your mind...he'll relate to that. Nancy, tell her what's in the file.

NANCY

(opens the manila file, puts readers on and speaks directly to DAISY, clarifying big words to try to justify her intelligence)

Let's see here. Sam is a paraplegic...paralyzed from the waist down. Says he could have internal bleeding, bone infection, memory loss. Doctors are keeping a close eye...yadda yadda. Basically, who knows what his future holds.

DAISY

Ugh. That's terrible!

H

Daisy, this is *not* an easy job. Part of what we do is help people come to terms with the uncertainty of their own future.

NANCY

(doesn't have time for emotions)

Sure yer up f' this, kid?

(DAISY raises her eyebrows and nods, accepting the gravity of the role; NANCY lightly punches her shoulder)

Alright, then. Go, team. Hey, before I forget: here's your employee paperwork.

SAM

So, can I ask your name now?

NANCY

Oh. Nancy. Remember? Operat--

SAM

No, her.

H

Uh, this is...Daisy. She'll be your new caretaker.

SAM

It's nice to meet you, caretaker Daisy.

DAISY

It's nice to meet you too, Mister...Sam.

NANCY

Weeeeeelllll. now that we got that taken care of, yer room'll be over there. I'm gonna let yousguys...get to know each other a little bit. I'll be in my office. H, a word?

(DAISY rolls SAM over to his new room, which he shares with a sleeping GRETCHEN; NANCY speaks softly to H)

Keep an eye on those two. Not sure I can trust 'em.

H

Oh, I'm sure they'll be fine.

(NANCY and H depart upstage through a hallway; DAISY sighs as she takes a seat in the chair next to SAM)

SAM

Rough day?

DAISY

More like a rough *year*.

SAM

Yeah? I wanna hear about it. When you're ready, of course.

DAISY

Thanks.

SAM

And. I promise I have only one rule.

DAISY

You have a *rule*?

SAM

If I'm gonna be on the listening end, you're gonna have to keep calling me "Mister Sam." It's...standard procedure.

DAISY

Sounds like you need some sleep, Mister Sam!

SAM

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

DAISY

Daisy

SAM

Ah, Carnation. Matches your hair.

DAISY

Is that how you remembered me, by the way?

SAM

You thought I'd forget?

DAISY

Well. They *did* say you have some memory loss issues from the accident.

SAM

Guess some things are more memorable than others, huh?

DAISY

(feeling her cheeks heat up, she struggles to hide her flattered face, and instead tries to change the subject)

So. Tell me about yourself. I mean less...heavy stuff.

SAM

I'm...a Capricorn. Saw Meryl Streep at the airport once—was cool. And, lately, I've been learning to... *roll* with the flow.

DAISY

You cope with humor. I like that.

SAM

I cope with humor; you cope with beauty. Potato, potahto.

(they're interrupted by a pop-in from one of the custodial staff)

DENISE

Helloooooo. Room service! Kidding. Just makin' my rounds for the afternoon room cleanings. How ya guys doin'?

DAISY

Good. Actually, I should probably get going. Gotta get started on this employee paperwork.

DENISE

Right on. Gotta get your write-on. Get it?!

DAISY

Yeah, I'm gonna go.

** SCENE CHANGE 2.0 **

1-5: Belmont Home

DAISY departs. Meanwhile, DIRK has been waiting for DAISY, who comes in the door while he's on the phone.

DIRK

Jesus, Daisy. Where were you?

DAISY

Oh my god, Dirk—I'm so excited!

DIRK

What?

DAISY

Are you ok? What's the rush?

DIRK

It's just...my car needed some work done. I was gonna borrow yours, but I couldn't find you.

DAISY

Oh. Well, I was at my interv--

(the phone rings and DIRK extends his index finger to make DAISY wait; it's the car repairman)

DIRK

Yeah, Earl. You got a time frame yet for the car?

And do you have a loaner I can use in the meantime?

Yeah, lemme know.

DAISY

Is everything ok?

DIRK

You tell me, Daisy. I've got...corporate up my ass at work, my car needs this repair, you're nowhere to be found.

DAISY

Don't you wanna know if I got the job?

DIRK

Uh, yeah. Course I do.

DAISY

I did!

DIRK

You did?! That's great!

DAISY

(can hardly contain her excitement, she starts talking faster)

And it's so perfect too, Dirk. I always knew I wanted to work with people. I mean, not like customer service or anything. Just to be able to help people where they're at. And this job...it's everyth---

DIRK

Ooo, hang on,

(phone rings again and he immediately answers, holding one finger up to DAISY again)

Hey. One week?!? Jesus Christ, Earl. And you're all out of loaner cars? Just...forget it. I'll use Daisy's. Yeah, bye. Alright, I gotta go—tell me more later. Hey, congrats!

(he exits as she stands helplessly needing more from him; blackout)

1-6: Nancy's Office

In a continuous scene change, as NANCY commands the loudspeaker. DENISE is summoned to NANCY's office, where their trio friendship with fellow custodian, ALICE, is rekindled. Feet are up on the desk and cigarettes are in-hand.

NANCY

Attention all staff and patients: 12:00 to 1:00 is no longer 'music hour.' Instead, use the silence to quiet your minds before lunch. See you at thirteen-hundred.

(hangs up the loudspeaker and calls DENISE's cell from her desk phone, making a comment while it rings)

Ya ever get the feeling that nobody's listening when you talk?

ALICE

Oh, every time I'm in bed with my husband.

DENISE

What's crackin', cracka?!

NANCY

Y' gonna getcher ghetto ass up here, er what?

DENISE

Didn't know we were still on. Be right up!

NANCY

How many years we' been doing this now?! Same time every week!

ALICE

The three amigas!

(DENISE enters, so her and NANCY hang up their phones; smoker's coughs kick in)

DENISE

Y'better not get a big head now that yer a big wig and all.

ALICE

'at's not a wig! It's called *extensions*, you idiot.

NANCY

Ain't nothin' in this world worth ditchin' y' roots over. Amirite?

ALICE

Somebody shoulda told that to Bruce Jenner.

DENISE

Hey, y' guys get that email about this year's Christmas bonuses?

NANCY

Yeah. Pathetic. Another \$35 bucks I *should* be gettin' from child support.

DENISE

Frickin' Uncle Sam always takin' his lil cut.

NANCY

Eh, speaking of Sam...you guys meet the new patient yet?

ALICE

Dat hot piece 'a paralyzed ass, how could we miss 'em?!

DENISE

Hey, you the one that hired that new pink-haired chick?

NANCY

(pours herself some coffee while DENISE forcibly burps and wipes food from the corners of her mouth)

Yeah. Board was all over my ass to get someone in there. Daisy Dukes was the only applicant. Besides, some board members are still pissed I got the job in the first place.

ALICE

(stirs coffee with the toothpick that was already in her mouth, until it drops in the cup; she reaches for it)

Buuuuncha country club, popped-collar, motherfu—ahhh, that’s hot.

DENISE

What have *you* ever done wrong, anyways?

ALICE

You mean: what’s she been *caught* for!

NANCY

Sure, I said some things in the past. But who hasn’t? Apparently, my “words didn’t belong in the workplace.” But c’mon, people. It was years ago!

ALICE

Have ya’ gotten written-up since then?

NANCY

Yeah—always for petty little crap. Being late, smokin’, not being “presentable” to patients. Whole thing’s a crock-a-sh...

DENISE

(after pouring the coffee into her flask, to mix with the alcohol in there, she tries to drink it, but spits it in NANCY’s face)

...Sheezus Christ, that *is* hot!

NANCY

Dammit, Denise!!

ALICE

I dunno. Maybe it’s just me. But it seems like the board does whatever the hell they please, just cuz they’re in charge.

DENISE

Reminds me of my parole officer. And don’t even get me started on the patients these days.

NANCY

They act like they own the place!

ALICE

Hey. Now that *you’re* in charge, I say we do something about it.

NANCY

Yeah, right.

What's in it for you guys?

DENISE

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

ALICE

True! I wonder what we'd even do anyways.

NANCY

THIS IS OUR CHANCE, FINALLY OUR TIME
 WE CAN COMMIT A HARMLESS CRIME
 DECIDING THEIR TRUTH IS OUR LITTLE LIE
 HELL, WE ARE IN CHARGE—UNTIL THEY ALL DIE!

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

THIS IS THE TIME TO LET OUR LIGHT SHINE
 SO BRING ON CLOUD NINE AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE

NANCY

I'VE CLAWED MY WAY UP THE FOOD CHAIN
 IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY: NO PAIN, NO GAIN
 THEY GAVE ME NO CHOICE: TO PLAY THE GAME
 I CUT THE CORNERS, LEFT THEM IN MY WAKE

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

THIS IS THE TIME TO LET OUR LIGHT SHINE
 SO BRING ON CLOUD NINE AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE

(short dance break)

JUST GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE!

DENISE

I gotta go take a dump.

ALICE

That was fun!

NANCY

Yer disgusting, y'know that?

ALICE

I learn from the best!

NANCY

Get aaaatta here!!

*

SCENE CHANGE 3.0

*

1-7: Sam's Room

Blackout. The next day, DAISY enters & parts the curtains as SAM wakes, rubs his eyes, yawns, and starts coughing.

SAM

Well, good morning, mis...

DAISY

You don't *sound* too good, Mister Sam.

SAM

Just...didn't sleep too well.

DAISY

Get some rest then. I won't keep you.

(starts to exit, but he grabs her forearm)

SAM

No, stay. I need my daily fix of...“keeping up with the Carnations.”

DAISY

Cute. I'll stop back in a bit.

SAM

Hey, can I ask you something? Is part of the reason you won't tell me about yourself cuz you think I won't understand?

DAISY

No. It's just that...knowing about *my* unfinished business isn't gonna make *yours* any better.

SAM

I'm not asking about mine. Try me.

DAISY

Uh...okay.

(pauses to exhale deeply while deciding how much to share, before stumbling into a metaphor)

It's hard to explain. I guess the best analogy I can come up with is...you know how water always evens itself out?

Lately, I feel like my emotions are waiting for my mind to be calm and my heart to be at peace, so *they* can finally even out.

(runs those lines in her brain quickly one more time, before regretting them)

Wait, that didn't make sense. 'sides, *you're* the metaphor guy.

SAM

No, I gotchoo. What do think is keeping you from being at peace?

DAISY

Well, I lost my mom last year. Breast cancer.

SAM

Oh Daisy, I'm so sorry.

DAISY

Thanks. We were super close. She was the only one bold enough to say I was making a mistake by getting married so young. 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. Now, she's gone and my marriage is...let's just say: I should have listened more carefully.

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...is worth fighting for.

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

Tell me more about your mom.

DAISY

She'd been my dance teacher ever since I was 4. When she got diagnosed, our entire dance troupe died our hair pink. Three weeks ago was the one-year anniversary, which is why I dyed it again. I just want to keep her memory alive.

SAM

I think the world would be surprised to know that such a happy person carries so much burden...your mom, your husband. You disguise it well.

DAISY

It's...not something to be proud of. But thanks. I should get going. I've got a lot on my mind.

(retrieves her sweater and purse and goes to the door, arms folded 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 others, you just...might find clarity for yourself.

DAISY

You sure are a smooth-talker, aren't you?

SAM

Ah, I don't know about that.

DAISY

I'm gonna get some fresh air. I'll be back by the time the doctor's here. Don't go runnin' away now.

SAM

Oh, I won't. But I might be tempted to roll myself down to Mickey D's for a 59¢ vanilla cone, unless you bring me one!!

(once outside SAM's door, DAISY clearly needs to unleash some pent-up emotion)

*

#9: ONE SMALL STEP

*

SEARCH FOR AN ANSWER & YOU MIGHT FIND A FRIEND
FOR CHANCES LEAD TO ANSWERS IN THE END

WHO AM I? THINKING THAT I AM A NO ONE
WHEN I KNOW I AM A SOMEONE, IT'S HIM!
BEING INVISIBLE; IT'S NOT WHAT EVERY GIRL DREAMS OF
BUT ONLY COWARDS BRING THEIR NEEDS UP
NOT ME. BUT COULD IT BE? COULD I ACTUALLY LEAVE?

WITH ONE SMALL STEP INTO DARKNESS
ONE BIG LEAP, AND I SKYDIVE
I'M A DOORMAT NO MORE, IF I RUN FROM YOU
BUT HEROES, CAN THEY REALLY FLY?
ONE DAY, YOU'LL BE A MEMORY
ONE LITTLE PAGE FROM MY WHOLE LIFE
I KNOW I NO LONGER CAN WAIT FOR YOU
SEEMS ONLY THE LONELY SURVIVE

WHO IS HE? THINKING THAT HE CAN CONTROL ME AS IF THAT ASS HOLE OWNS ME
IN FACT. MAYBE I'M AT FAULT FOR GIVING SECOND CHANCES
AS IF THEY'VE EVER LANDED
NO I CAN SAY GOODBYE...OR AT LEAST I CAN TRY

WITH ONE SMALL STEP INTO DARKNESS
ONE BIG LEAP, AND I SKYDIVE
I'M A DOORMAT NO MORE, IF I RUN FROM YOU
BUT HEROES, CAN THEY REALLY FLY?

ONE DAY, YOU'LL BE A MEMORY
 ONE LITTLE PAGE FROM MY WHOLE LIFE
 I KNOW I NO LONGER CAN WAIT FOR YOU
 SEEMS ONLY THE LONELY SURVIVE

STEPPING STONES, PLEASE GUIDE ME WHERE TO GO
 TO A PLACE WHERE NO ONE THROWS STONES

WITH ONE SMALL STEP INTO DARKNESS
 ONE BIG LEAP, AND I SKYDIVE
 I'M A DOORMAT NO MORE, IF I RUN FROM YOU
 BUT HEROES, CAN THEY REALLY FLY?
 ONE DAY, YOU'LL BE A MEMORY
 ONE LITTLE PAGE FROM MY WHOLE LIFE
 I KNOW I NO LONGER CAN WAIT FOR YOU
 SEEMS ONLY THE LONELY SURVIVE
 NO, LOWLY BELOW ME SITS ONLY THE LONELY, WHILE I FLY!

(DAISY exits while the lights come up on SAM's room; H enters & starts adjusting his blanket as if it's just routine)

H

Morning, Samuel! So guess what? I think I figured out why everybody likes you so much around here.

SAM

Oh, H...I can always count on you to cheer me up!

H

All of these patients. They were *somebody* at some point...once on the front lines. They were heroes to their families and communities-- standing ovations, honorary national anthems, random people thanking them for their service in the grocery store. And now, they're just patients in a veterans health facility in Rhode Island. Nobody visits them. In their own eyes, they've become insignificant.

SAM

That's...horrible. How can I even hold a candle to what they've done?

H

See, that's the cool thing. It's not about what you've done. It's about *who you are*. Being the square peg in the round hole has made you not rely on other people for purpose or direction. You genuinely see each day as a blank page

SAM

Well, thank you, H. I don't at all feel worthy of those words. But I really appreciate them.

H

Don't tell anyone, but I'm gonna get books of empty pages for all of Franklin Mills—patients and staff!

SAM

That's amazing, H! You're such a generous person.

(a knock on the door interrupts him, the DOCTOR pops their head in)

DOCTOR

Is...now an okay time?

SAM

Uh, yeah...for sure.

DOCTOR

Alright then. Let's get these bandages off here.

(DOCTOR delicately removes them, revealing SAM's full face again)

There we go.

H

As good as new!

DOCTOR

Now, as for the prognosis. It looks like we've got good news and bad news still.

(after a knock, DAISY enters; she struggles to hide her pleasant surprise upon seeing his face once again)

DAISY

Sorry, I'm late. Hi. I'm Daisy. Woah. Hi.

DOCTOR

Dr. Marx. So as I was saying, the brain scan shows your internal bleeding has mostly stopped and your memory recollection is basically back to normal.

DAISY

That's...great!

DOCTOR

(delicately tempering expectations)

It is. On the other hand, this bone infection just...keeps spreading. Now, I made some calls. The good news is: that brand new antibiotic I was telling you about, Teixobactin, *is* available. We just need to hope your labs qualify. I've sent them over, so we'll wait and see. The bad news is: it costs \$20,000...paid *in full* before they'll send the medication.

SAM

Oh. Ok then. And without this Teixo--?

DOCTOR

Well, I'd hate to speculate. But it's going to be an awfully tough road without it. Now. You've got some things to think about, so I'll leave you to it. Keep that head high, Sam.

SAM

Will do.

H

(seeing how emotional she is, H pulls DAISY aside and speaks softly, before he and DOCTOR depart)

I love that you care. Seriously, you're a gem. But don't make this personal. Remember, *this* is what we do. You being emotional will only make *him* more emotional, y'understand? Now, I don't want to tell him this, but I'm going to see if the board will take Sam's case pro bono, give the circumstances. So don't lose hope. For now, go take his mind off all this. He needs you.

SAM

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

DAISY

I'm just....scared. And I wish I could take away some of your pain.

SAM

You *have*! C'mere.

(they hug for the first time)

DAISY

Thank you. Hey, can I ask you something?

SAM

Of course.

DAISY

I haven't brought it up because it...might be a sore subject. And now is certainly not the bes--

SAM

It's ok. Shoot.

DAISY

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

SAM

Wow.

DAISY

Uh oh. I didn't mea--

SAM

No, don't feel bad. I just...can't believe I haven't told you yet. What do you wanna know?

DAISY

Everything.

SAM

Well. I'm an only child. Bounced around between a few dozen foster homes. Each time I thought I had landed with a family, turns out the more they got to know me, the less they wanted me. It's all good though. As for my friends...ever since I've been on tour, I guess I just became okay with Instagram friendships, y'know?

DAISY

I'm sorry. At the bar, you mentioned...a breakup. Has she called?

SAM

Oh Elizabeth? Nah. She moved on and found somebody else. To be honest, though, I wasn't actually that surprised. We weren't as close as everyone thought we were.

DAISY

Sounds very familiar.

SAM

'Oh well'...right?

DAISY

I guess. Oo, I almost forgot. I got you something.

SAM

Yeah? What's that?

DAISY

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

(DAISY retrieves & hands him a pint of melting ice cream; he lets out a hearty surprised gasp/laugh; she speaks softly)

SAM

Sounds like *me!* I can't believe you remembered! You're amazing.

DAISY

It's not McDonalds. But I figured: if you have to put up with Gretchen 24/7, you at least deserve some cheap ice cream!

GRETCHEN

I heard that, ya hooligans!!

DAISY

(to SAM's amusement, she steals the pint & takes a big messy bite, as they both giggle with embarrassment; fade to black)

Give me some 'a that!

* SCENE CHANGE 4.0 *

1-8: Pastor Jack's Office

DAISY knocks on the door of her dad's study.

JACK

Well hey, sweetheart! To what do I owe the pleasure?

DAISY

I just...do you have a minute to talk?

JACK

Of course. But first, let me get this straight: your *very first patient* at Franklin Mills was the victim of that hit-and-run?!

DAISY

Yeah, can you believe it?

JACK

Crazy. How's he doin' anyway?

DAISY

(trying desperately to not reveal any romantic feelings)

Sam? Oh he's a really great guy, dad. Just...needs some help. That's actually part of what I wanted to talk to you about.

JACK

Yeah?

DAISY

I remember you said Mom wanted her life insurance to "kick-start somebody's future." Well, there's this potentially life-saving treatment available to him, but Sam doesn't have the funds to pay for it. And I figu--

JACK

You're so much like your mom, you know that?

DAISY

Aww, really?!

JACK

Are you kidding me? She always had a heart for people in need. I look at you and I see her.

DAISY

You've never told me that before.

JACK

Well, I mean it. Let's pull up the account here and see what's available.

(circles his brows)

Huh...

DAISY

What?

JACK

It says the account balance is at zero. Should just be you and me with account access, right?

DAISY

Yeah, I think so.

JACK

That's weird.

DAISY

Actually, when we got married, Dirk and I merged all of our accounts. Let me call him quick.

JACK

Hey, you better not mention your new patient. You know how Dirk gets about other guys.

DAISY

Ugh, you're right. Thank you, daddy.

(both ignore the unspoken history behind JACK's remark; he shouts as she quickly exits out the door to call DIRK)

JACK

I love you!

** #IOA: TWO-FACED **

DAISY

(although she's strong, there's a fear in her voice, as if she doesn't want to face the truth)

Dirk, where is my mom's money?!

DIRK

Oh, that. I knew I shoulda said something. We had some credit card debt from the wedding still. I figured we'd just pay that off first, rather than accumulate the interest. We can always pay it back.

DAISY

That is NOT your money!!

DIRK

(as anger increases, so does his sarcasm)

And what are *you* doing to pay off our credit card debt, huh?!

DAISY

You're unbelievable.

DIRK

Oh, what's there not to believe? That one of us is financially responsible?

DAISY

My dad logging-on to my mother's account and seeing it at zero. THAT's unbelievable!

DIRK

Oh, of course you got your dad involved. Classic.

DAISY

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 THROWING BLAME AROUND HERE,

AS IF I'M NOT ENOUGH, YOU NEED DADDY'S EAR

DAISY

SHOULD I JUST SIT & WATCH OUR FUTURE DISAPPEAR?!

DIRK

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

I'll tell you that right now!

1-9: Doctor's Office, Franklin Mills Commons, & Outside Nancy's Office

Blackout; DOCTOR answers a ringing phone. The attention shifts to DAISY & SAM. H watches adoringly, unnoticed.

DOCTOR

Okay, but isn't the purpose of charities—to be...charitable?! I—I don't understand how this case doesn't apply. He needs \$20,000 or he'll die. It's as simple as that.

(the faint sound of an apologetic response is heard on the other end, as he wraps up the conversation & hangs up)

I can't believe you people.

(DAISY is pushing SAM onto stage, as they return from a walk)

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

Hey, I've been meaning to tell you: I think I know what you should write your next book about.

SAM

Zat right? That's a shame cuz...I think I've already got that covered, actually.

DAISY

You do?!

SAM

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

DAISY

Impressive!

(awkward pause, as he nods but doesn't say anything)

Well...?

SAM

Oh, so you wanna know?

DAISY

Stop being a tease. Spit it out already!

SAM

What will I get in return?

DAISY

What do you mean?

SAM

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

DAISY

Well, what do you *want*?

SAM

A dance.

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

DAISY

Wait, what?!

SAM

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

DAISY

Uh...okay. One dance.

SAM

Good.

DAISY

So are you gonna tell me now or what?

SAM

When I think about what this accident has done to me, there are five words that clearly 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

Ohmygod, 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.

DENISE

(DENISE & ALICE exit NANCY's office, before freezing when they see SAM and DAISY, who don't notice them; After spotting H, DENISE gives him a judgy look for watching them & tells him to leave; DENISE & ALICE stay to watch)

Scram!

SAM

Seriously though, I *have* been writing in the book. What was your idea?

DAISY

Never mind. 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.

SAM

Good. Lemme see your phone.

DAISY

Sure, assuming I can trust you this time. You're lucky, you know that?

SAM

Oh. I know.

(scrolling options on her phone; meanwhile, he returns to flirting before settling on a song)

I'll have you know: even though I might need a little assistance nowadays, I can still bust a move with the best of 'em.

DAISY

We'll see about that, mister.

SAM

What about this one? 'Ts called "Peace." Sounds relaxing...

** #IOB PEACE **

DAISY

(verbalizing the irony)

Believe it or not, this was actually my parents' wedding song.

SAM

See. Told you you could trust me.

(They slow dance, with constant smiles & fervent eye contact. DAISY is slightly bent over, but they make the wheelchair work as he spins/dips her. The dance concludes with DAISY leaning back, ending up in SAM's lap. Their focus alternates between eyes & lips. As their faces converge, DAISY abruptly tilts her head away, in disappointment)

DAISY

Why?

SAM

I know. 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

I should go. I'm sorry.

(An emotional DAISY quickly exits, locking eyes with H on her way out, as he re-enters on his way to NANCY's office; Dejected, SAM chucks his book across the room, before rolling himself out)

NANCY

You're *late*.

H

Sorry, I—got delayed. Everything okay?

NANCY

No, it's not. We've got a problem.

H

Okay...

NANCY

Looks like Sam and Daisy have caught feelings for one another.

H

Yeah?

NANCY

You were supposed to keep an eye on them, weren't you?

H

Umm...I guess. But...

NANCY

But what, pretty boy?

H

I just...I dunno. Can't people just love who they wanna love?

NANCY

Oh, H. *You* know better than that. That's not how the world works. Nor *should* it! Y'know, if the board knew you were hiding an inappropriate relationship between a staff member and a patient, wuddya think they'd want me to do with you?

H

Uh, I—dunno.

NANCY

But you *do*. Listen. You oversee the caretakers; I oversee you. Either fire Daisy or I'll go to the board and let them handle both 'a yous. You have till the end of your shift tomorrow. Zat understood?

(H looks her in the eye, shakes his head in disgust, and turns to walk away)

Good. Now, beat it.

DENISE

Oh my God...you're a *genius*!!

ALICE

Djoo see his face when you called him out?! Ohhh!

DENISE

Say goodbye, little miss sunshine!

ALICE

There's a new sheriff in town!

(NANCY gets dicator-like, much to the delight of DENISE and ALICE; they follow her down the stairs to the commons)

NANCY

Oh and we're just gettin' started. Franklin Mills is *mine* now.

DENISE

(like loyal minions)

And if people are gonna show more respect to that cheatin' tramp...

ALICE

...the flaming pharmacist...

NANCY

...or that crippled know-it-all, they've got another thing comin'.

DENISE

Damn straight!

NANCY

Ooo and check this out.

(she picks up SAM's discarded book)

* #IOC 'GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE' REPRISE *

HIS LITTLE BOOK OF EMPTY PAGES
MIGHT JUST BECOME SOMEONE'S RAGE IF,
IN THE RIGHT HANDS, WE LET IT REVEAL

THE SECRETIVE FATE THAT BEGS TO KEEP SEALED

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

THIS IS THE TIME

TO LET OUR LIGHT SHINE

SO BRING ON CLOUD NINE

AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE

(blackout)

1-10: TV Studio, Franklin Mills Commons, Belmont Home

DIRK is live on-air. Soon, stage lights ease up on each character's addition to the song, from various parts of the stage.

** #IT DIFFERENT & THE SAME **

DIRK

New tonight, an update from last week's hit and run. Authorities are now saying that they're closely following a lead that they believe will bring them directly to the driver of the truck. For more, we send it to Connie O'Shea. Connie.

(the bright light on him goes out, as it's clear he's now off the air; his showy demeanor gives way to a stressed facade)

JACK, IT'S ME...I...REALLY NEED TO QUICK GET SOMETHING OFF MY CHEST, AND...

AIN'T IT TRUE YOU PREACHERS...CAN'T CONFESS, OR...

JUST...LET'S MAKE A DEAL, YOU AND ME.

(jolts his head, squints his eyes, and scrunches his face, like he just came to his senses—really, he just got another call)

Actually. Y'know what?

NEVERMIND, THIS WAS ALL A MISTAKE...

AS FOR ME AND YOUR DAUGHTER,

Jack...just--

HAVE SOME FAITH

(looks at his phone and sees another incoming call; he ditches JACK; there is a mumbled voice on the other end)

Oo--gotta go. Talk soon. Hey Earl, got it fixed up?

Damn deer is right. Hey, you mind keeping this between us? Daisy has yet to notice.

Happy wife indeed.

(hangs up the phone and pours himself a drink)

EVERY NEW BEGINNING IS LACED WITH SOME LYING
HERE'S TO WINNING BY LOSING, WITHOUT THE CRYING

H

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...THROW MY LIFE'S WORK DOWN THE TUBE,
OR KICK THEM WHILE THEY'RE DOWN; MUST I HAVE TO CHOOSE?

NANCY

(interrupting the patient-only meeting, over the loudspeaker)

Attention, staff and patients: it's come to my attention that some members of Franklin Mills are hiding an inappropriate relationship. So I've decided that: until the offenders come forward, you can kiss yer outside privileges goodbye!

H

That chick is a hypocrite with a capital H!

WEMBLEY

We've gone too long, following other people's orders.

AMY

The least we can do is love who we wanna love!

SOPHIA

Franklin Mills, *this* is why they need you!

DAISY

DADDY, I NEED YOU; I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE
I'M MARRIED TO A STRANGER; AND FALLING FOR A MAN I WAS HIRED TO CARE FOR

JACK

What?!

DAISY, YOU HAVE BEEN MY GREATEST PRIDE AND JOY IN LIFE
DON'T GIVE UP JUST YET; YOU ARE HIS WIFE

PATIENTS

WE SHALL RISE AS ONE AND STAKE OUR CLAIM
STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE, AS DIFFERENT AND THE SAME
NO MORE SILENCE, NO MORE SHAME; LET'S BE LOUD FOR LOVE TO QUIET THE HATE
GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT (YOU SHOULD GO FOR IT); FOLLOW YOUR HEART
GO, GO, GO, GO FOR IT (YOU SHOULD GO FOR IT); FOLLOW YOUR HEART

SAM

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 FOR A 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!
I DON'T EVEN WANNA THINK ABOUT TOMORROW
I JUST WANT YOU IN MY ARMS TONIGHT!

NANCY

I CAN'T STAND TO BE 'ROUND THIS, IT'S NOT FINE TO BE BLIND IN YOUR MIND!
FOR ME TO GET WHAT'S MINE, IT'S THAT TIME: I MUST LIE TO SURVIVE

DAISY

Guys, I'm so proud of all of you--*this* is what it looks like to stand up for what's right! My mom's tombstone reads:

By existing, we matter. By coexisting, we are seen. By resisting, we survive. And in persisting, we believe.

Let's do this, Franklin Mills!

(SAM gives a flattered smile; DAISY shouts; song changes keys, as each of the four groups below sings simultaneously)

PATIENTS & JACK

WE SHALL RISE AS ONE AND STAKE OUR CLAIM
STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE, AS DIFFERENT AND THE SAME
NO MORE SILENCE, NO MORE SHAME
LET'S BE LOUD FOR LOVE TO QUIET THE HATE
GO, GO, GO, (YOU SHOULD) GO FOR IT;
FOLLOW YOUR HEART

H, GRETCHEN, & DIRK

HERE I COME, LONELINESS
IT'S ME AGAIN, I'M BACK IN LINE
IF ONLY I COULD TURN BACK TIME
I GUESS IT'S *THIS* FOR A LIFETIME
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
THROW MY LIFE'S WORK DOWN THE TUBE
OR KICK 'EM WHILE THEY'RE DOWN; MUST I HAVE TO CHOOSE?

NANCY, DENISE, ALICE

I CAN'T STAND TO BE AROUND THIS,
IT'S NOT FINE TO BE BLIND IN YOUR MIND!
FOR ME TO GET WHAT'S MINE,
IT'S THAT TIME: I MUST LIE TO SURVIVE!
THIS LIFE FLIES BY,
WE'RE NOT GONNA LOSE THIS TIME!

SAM & DAISY

SAY GOODBYE TO LONELINESS
AND HELLO, LOVE, IT'S ABOUT TIME
IF ONLY I COULD BE WITH YOU
IT JUST MIGHT LAST FOR A LIFETIME
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO,
I CAN'T BREAK HIS/HER HEART IN TWO
YET I KNOW THE END IS COMING SOON

NANCY

YOU SHOULD WATCH YOUR BACK

DOCTOR

LET'S NOT TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED

DIRK

CAN'T AFFORD MORE MISTAKES

JACK

LIFE'S A GIFT YOU'VE BEEN HANDED

GRETCHEN

WHEN THE WORLD KNOCKS YOU DOWN

H

ALWAYS RISE FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

ALL

SO NO MATTER THE COST, WE WILL ALL FIGHT FOR LOVE...

SAM & DAISY

...TONIGHT.

END OF ACT ONE.

2-1: Franklin Mills Commons

The patients are sitting in a semi-circle, chatting and playing cards. AMY is trying to get off the wall phone with her mom.

AMY

Mom, I'm so tired of this! I *am* putting myself out there. I go to open mic every third Thursday of the month. I joined the singles bowling league over at Bob and Frankie's. What more do you want me to do?!

Oh, come on. Mom, do you even know what that is?

Wait. *You're* on Tinder?! Oh my GOD!!!

(forcefully hangs up the phone on the wall and shakes with the 'heebie jeebies'; meanwhile, H enters & slams the door)

Ilch!

MARYJANE

Rough day at the ole office there, chief?

SOPHIA

Can't be *that* bad. At least he doesn't need pills to *not* piss his pants, ah?

FRANK

Speak for yourself, there, sweetheart!

(he slightly pulls down bottoms revealing an adult diaper; both laugh; H massages his temples to alleviate a headache)

AMY

H, what's going on?

H

I just...people can be so hypocritical.

AMY

You get denied?

H

No, I didn't even get a chance to make my case!

(by now, side banter has slowed to a halt; everybody is listening to H)

AMY

Wuddya mean?

H

Well. As you know, Gretchen is still the board president. And she said all pro bono applications go through Nancy now. But then yesterday, she demanded I fire Daisy to keep my own job! It's bullsh--

WEMBLEY

"She" meaning...Nancy?

AMY

Wait. *Gretchen* is president of the board??

FRANK

Mmmhmm. Her husband was...Franklin Mills himself.

MARY JANE

I heard he was a jackass too.

SOPHIA

Oh, not at all. He was...delightful. Kind and generous. Actually, so was *she* before he died, now that I think about it.

WEMBLEY

Is it just me, or wasn't it much happier around here before Nancy got promoted?

FRANK

Yyyyup!

AMY

Hey, maybe we can just convince them not to like each other anymore...

(DAISY wheels SAM in, as they return from a walk; H approaches SAM to pull him aside)

H

Sam! What...auspicious timing. Can I talk to you for a second? Listen, I'm gonna be straight with you.

SAM

Doesn't seem like your style.

H

(laughs out loud and isn't offended whatsoever; instead, he extends the welcome for all the men to come over by SAM)

Haha see, I told you he's still got it! I think it's time us boys have a little chat. Shall we?

AMY

Oh yeah?! Well us girls "finna talk some sauce" over here! C'mon, Daisy.

(the girls respond with "ooo, you go Amy" and "yeah, we are," as they all congregate around DAISY)

MARY JANE

Let's...go ahead and never say that again, k?

AMY

Is that not the phrase?

SOPHIA

I'm sorry to burst your bubble, Daisy. Y'seem like a nice kid.

* #13 HEAD OVER HEELS *

But whatever you've got going with "Lieutenant Dan" over there, it's gotta stop.

DAISY

Oh no, I'm marr--

SOPHIA

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

FRANK

Sam, relationships are like diapers. If you're not #1, it's time for a change.

AMY

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!

MARY JANE

(very out of character, she imitates a valley girl)

Trust me, like--

SO. TRUE.

AMY

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

SOPHIA

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"

FRANK

As if we even know how!

WEMBLEY

BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT IT; SHE'S THE GIRL 'A YOUR DREAMS

H

Then again, maybe it's time to switch teams! Just sayin'.

AMY

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

SOPHIA

AND THE CAR KEYS TOO!

MARY JANE

BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT IT; JUST ROOFIE HIS CUP!

AMY

Or make *him* take a #2 with the toilet seat up!

DAISY

(innocent question; not condescending)

You don't just...put it down?

H

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

FRANK

JUST REMEMBER: GETTING READY TAKES AN HOUR OR TWO

H

(facial expression of, "should I feel guilty?")

It takes *me* that long too.

WEMBLEY

DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. I'D JUST "WATCH" MORE TV

FRANK

& PRAY THAT SHE DOESN'T DRIVE

SAM

Or you'll...end up like me?

FRANK

Yes!

AMY

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

SOPHIA

(trying to be polite)

Just know that intellectual conversations are not meant to be!

AMY

Fine by me!

MARY JANE

BUT DON'T STRESS ABOUT IT. USE MY BROWNIE COOKBOOK!

AMY

OOOOO, AND WHEN THAT HOT SHIRTLESS NEIGHBOR MOWS HIS LAWN,

(an oiled-up shirtless man enters with a toy mower & grass; hip-thrusting into a mowing motion, the ladies swoon)

GET A DAMN GOOD LOOK!

MEN

(H is biting his lips, while watching the man exit; song is still paused, when the guys backhand-slap H to say "our turn!")

H. H!

H

Sorry.

OH WHEN YOU LIKE A *GIRL*, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO

FRANK

BETTER HIDE YOUR WALLET, OR SHE'LL "LOSE" THAT TOO

AMY

That is, actually, hashtag-true!

WEMBLEY

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

FRANK

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

Sorry.

MARY JANE

TRUST ME, ALL GUYS, THEY WANT ONE THING FROM YOU...

AMY

Mmm, drugs.

MARY JANE

No! You think with your *head*. They think with their *bed*.

FRANK

Yeah, we do!

(the girls react like, "game on!")

SOPHIA

YOU'RE CHEAP!

WEMBLEY

YOU'RE NEEDY!

GRETCHEN

(waking up shortly before audibly building up to a loud sneeze)

Achoo!!

ALL

WHERE THE HELL WERE *YOU*?

OH WHEN YOU LIKE SOMEONE, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO

YOU CAN OVERWHELM THEM WITH YOUR LOVE TOO

H

But you do you, boo!

ALL

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

FRANK

And *so what* if they wear diapers. No big deals!

ALL

OH WHEN YOU LIKE SOMEONE, OR WHEN YOU THINK YOU DO

SAM & DAISY

(half-joking to each other from opposite sides of the room)

YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE IN, BECAUSE YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE

AMY & H

(SAM singing gets them going)

Hubba-hubba, daddy-doo!

ALL

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

FOR SOMEONE WHO REAL...

SOMEONE WHO REAL...

SOMEONE WHO REALLY LOVES YOU!

(applause breaks up the final pose, as people grab their things & disperse to their rooms; H heads towards GRETCHEN)

GRETCHEN

I'd rather have another colonoscopy than be woken up by that again! Sorry to burst your bubble, folks. But love...it stinks. But apparently, you're all too blind to see that.

WEMBLEY

Beats being senile.

2-2: Sam's Room

In a continuous scene change, PATIENTS disperse. GRETCHEN wheels herself, until H offers to help, stopping her.

H

Say, uh, Gretch.

GRETCHEN

Don't call me that.

H

(he is walking on eggshells to start and then slowly gets more confident in what he's saying)

I've...been wanting to hear more about...Franklin.

GRETCHEN

(to start, she is reluctant to engage in meaningful conversation; but that slowly erodes as they converse)

Yeah. What about 'em?

H

Oh, you know how word travels around here. I'm just wondering what's correct and what's legend.

GRETCHEN

Whadja hear?

H

I heard you moved here to be with him...a couple years ago?

GRETCHEN

Four.

H

Right. And he died of cancer shortly thereafter?

GRETCHEN

Three and a half months later.

H

What type of cancer?

GRETCHEN

Liver. Never stood a chance.

H

Why'd you stay then?

GRETCHEN

(suddenly not crabby, she even gets intentionally humorous, looking out into the distance, while reminiscing)

Franklin was...my home. We never had kids, so this place is the closest I got to be to him. And since I had chronic issues with my intestines and bladder, they let me stay.

H

Aw. That's honestly...adorable.

GRETCHEN

My bladder problems?

H

(smiles and exhales to hold for laughter; as conversation returns, he slowly works up to his main point)

What was Franklin like?

GRETCHEN

Always put others before himself. Loved to cook. He would make the most amazing pot roast you've ever tasted. In fact, I bet I have the recipe somewhere around here still, if you...

H

Sounds like he was a good husband.

GRETCHEN

The best.

H

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

GRETCHEN

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

H

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

GRETCHEN

Go ahead.

H

It's about Sam's treatment.

GRETCHEN

God dammit, y'hitting me up for money, aren'tcha? Figures. Save your breath. Coupla patients already talked to me.

(GRETCHEN turns her head the opposite way; H exhales and takes a beat before acting)

H

Thirty seconds is all I ask for. Let me get you back to your room.

(H rolls her to her room while pausing between each sentence; he hadn't prepared what to say in advance)

Gretchen, you see them every single day. Sam and Daisy...despite all the barriers, have that...glow about them. You know as well as anybody, that glow only happens as a result of that special, once-in-a-lifetime *love*. Now, I'm not a begger. Nor am I about to pretend like I know your financial situation—I don't. But I *am* a fighter. And I bet you are too. And if you're anything like me...I can't just stand by and not do anything. It's why I'm here with you. I'm fighting for something that has nothing to do with me.

GRETCHEN

(her tone comes across as defeated rather than defiant)

Yeah? Well, I'm not interested.

H

(wholeheartedly accepts her answer)

Okay. I won't bring it up again after today. But I encourage you to think about what Franklin would do. Cause I'd bet *he's* a fighter too. Thanks for talking to me. I think you've got a lot more to offer than people realize. Have a good night.

(he departs without a word from GRETCHEN; she rolls over when DAISY wheels SAM in, both giggling after going for a walk; NANCY comes out of her office and sees H leave; as she sticks around to 'connect the dots,' she hears their plan)

DAISY

Sam, I have to tell you: I can't remember being this happy—ever! I don't think I've stopped smiling since the moment I first walked into this place.

SAM

Really?! Me too! 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 we find out if you qualified?

SAM

Supposedly tomorrow. Wuddya say we make a night out of it?

DAISY

What do you mean?!

SAM

I've finally made use of that book. For real.

DAISY

Y'sure I can believe you this time?

SAM

I've written in every page. And I wanna share it with you. Tomorrow night. 6pm?

(we see NANCY have an 'a-ha' moment before retreating to her office; SAM continues on without stopping)

We can celebrate with ice cream. And candles. I'll even find a way to get you flowers! We can open my results *together*. And get this: Doctor Marx said they even use different colored forms for positive and negative results, so we'll know right away whether I've qualified. I guess blue is good news and red is...well, let's hope it's not red.

** #L4 AND IF YOU WANT **

DAISY

(flattered, then resolute)

Oh Sam, I'm so honored you asked! And just so you know, I'm not exactly sure *when* or *how* I'm gonna to talk to Dirk, but I *will* be filing for divorce.

SAM

You sure?!

DAISY

I am. "By seeking clarity with my loved ones, I just mind find clarity for myself."

SAM

You remembered?!

DAISY

Of course, I did. Sam, I really want tomorrow night to be special. Can we dance again?

SAM

Absolutely.

FOR MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE ALWAYS TRIED
TO BE KNOWN AS THE GUY WHO'D CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE
YET, I WAS THE ONE WHO NEEDED TO CHANGE
FOR ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS ON A PAGE

SAM & DAISY

CAUGHT IN A WEB OF WHO I THOUGHT I WAS
TIL YOU REVEALED THAT I'M ENOUGH

SO 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 *NEED* YOU

DAISY

This is so crazy! I know I should feel guilty and ashamed and...tons of other negative things, but I just *can't*.

FOR MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN
 KNOWN AS THE GIRL WHO SET FEELINGS ASIDE
 I'D BE THERE FOR OTHERS, WHO WEREN'T THERE FOR ME
 THEN AGAIN, LONELINESS FEEDS ON THE COMP'NY IT KEEPS

SAM & DAISY

CAUGHT IN A WEB OF WHO I THOUGHT I WAS
 TIL YOU REVEALED THAT I'M ENOUGH
 SO 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 finally happens: [their first kiss](#))

DAISY

I CAN GIVE YOU NOTHING...

SAM

ALL I HAVE IS NOTHING...

SAM & DAISY

BUT MY HEART, MY HEART, MY HEART, MY HEART, MY HEART

2-3: Sam's Room: The Next Morning

In a continuous scene change, JACK appears at NANCY's door, looking for DAISY. She is turned the other way, smoking a cigarette. He knocks on the door frame. Caught off guard, she quickly puts it out to greet him.

NANCY

Oh, excuse me. Hi, ugh, Father. What can I do ya for?

(JACK removes his fedora and nods his head in an old-fashioned sign of gratitude; he politely corrects her)

JACK

Uh, *Pastor*. But, hi. I'm just here to see my daughter. Daisy Belmont.

NANCY

Wait, *you're* Daisy's old man?!

JACK

One and only.

NANCY

Huh, that's just not what I would've...nevermind. Follow me.

(awkward pause as she starts to guide JACK to SAM's room; he continues to be a polite gentleman)

Say, yer kid's actually getting along quite well with her new patient, Sam.

JACK

So I've heard.

NANCY

(animosity-induced sarcasm, as he smiles to receive the 'compliment')

Everbody just loves her around here. Well. Here we are. Nice, meetin' ya, Father.

JACK

Pastor. But, thank you, ma'am.

(NANCY shakes her head like "I knew that," JACK knocks, about to peer head in when a hearty cough sounds)

Uh, hello? Daisy?

GRETCHEN

She's not here.

JACK

Oh, I'm sorry...I'll come back at a different time then.

GRETCHEN

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; GRETCHEN immediately recognizes him and turns positive and personable)

GRETCHEN

PASTOR JACK?!?!?

JACK

Gretchen Mills?! Wow. It's been forever, my friend. Gimme a hug!

(leans over the bed for a hearty hug; both are delighted to run into one another)

Boy, it's good to see you. You know, I *still* hear the Mills name come up at church from time to time?

GRETCHEN

Is that right?! Hey. I was...sorry to hear about your wife awhile back, too. How've you been holdin' up?

JACK

Thanks. I'm—I'm alright. 'Ts been tougher on Daisy than me, actually.

GRETCHEN

So Daisy's your daughter, huh?!

JACK

One and only.

GRETCHEN

You've clearly done well there, Pastor. She's a good kid. Damn good kid. Sam too, for that matter. I would approve.

JACK

(he did not expect that at all; he stumbles to respond)

Oh. Well. Thank you, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN

You should stop by tomorrow night. I hear they're meeting in the commons after her shift ends at 6.

JACK

Oh, I dunno about that. But thanks. Anyway. How have *you* been?

GRETCHEN

Eh, not that good, actually.

JACK

Ah, I'm sorry, Gretch.

GRETCHEN

Kidney is failing. Heart is only functioning at 35%. Worst part, though, is...the guilt I've been feeling lately.

JACK

Why is that?

GRETCHEN

I remember you saying that people who feel the clock ticking tend to want to unburden themselves. I just...feel like he would've done so much more with this place. He's the one who should've lived longer.

JACK

Gretchen, look around! You and Franklin single-handedly made this a reality for so many veterans. It's incredible!

(takes a beat in silence; GRETCHEN is too humble to accept a compliment; JACK eventually puts his hand on hers)

When Susan was sick, I used to have these bouts of uncontrollable weeping...the helplessness of it all was overwhelming. She'd put her hand on mine and calmly say, "sweetheart, loooooong after life's gone, love lives on." It was...everything I needed to hear.

(pauses to raise his eyebrows as he affirms the truth of her words)

Gretchen, the love that you shared with Franklin isn't gone just because he is. Your dreams together are alive as ever!

GRETCHEN

You always did have the right thing to say, didn'tcha?

JACK

(he audibly exhales and pats LARRY on the shoulder, as he grabs his fedora and buttons his jacket before leaving)

It's great seeing you, Gretch. Really is. Will you tell Daisy I stopped by?

GRETCHEN

I sure will. Take care, Pastor.

JACK

You too.

2-4: Nancy's Office, Sam's Room, & Hallway

In a continuous scene change, lights fade on GRETCHEN. NANCY busts out of her office, laughing with her sidekicks.

*** #15 NOTHING BUT PERFECT ***

ALICE

Ooooohhh—oh my God, that's terrible!

DENISE

It really is the perfect plan, idn't it?!

NANCY

Nothing but perfect; right ladies?!

(starts typing in a phone number on her cell phone; 8 chord progressions sound underneath the following lines)

Hello, is this Dirk Belmont?

(a faint male voice can be heard mumbling responses from the other end; NANCY clears her throat to sound more polite)

Hi, I am calling in regards to your wife, Daisy.

No, she's fine. It's just that the staff here at Franklin Mills are growing increasingly concerned about her...behavior with one of our patients.

I agree. And we've had plenty of discussions with her about 'professionalism in the work place' and yadda yadda. But, she just keeps pursuing things. I overheard them today talking about meeting up at the end of her shift tomorrow at 6pm to "profess their true feelings." Now, I dunno what that means, but if *I* was in your position, I'd wanna know. So I figured I'd give ya the courtesy 'heads up.'

(high-fives between the three girls before NANCY hangs up)

You bet. Take care.

DENISE

'BOUT TIME WE STAND UP FOR OURSELVES IN ALL THAT WE DO

ALICE

LET'S GET THEM PATIENTS TO KNOW THAT: WE'RE IN CHARGE OF (YOU)

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

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

BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA...THE DISRESPECT WE'RE UP AGAINST

YOU JUST WAIT, FOR KARMA COMES TO THOSE WHO...DON'T PAY THEIR DEBT

IT'S TIME WE GET RESPECT 'ROUND HERE:

(CUZ) WE'RE NOTHING...NOTHING BUT PERFECT, YEAH!

(DENISE hands NANCY a clipboard & file folder; she heads to SAM's room, anxiously looking around the whole walk)

NANCY

Hey, Sam. How are ya?

SAM

I'm hanging in there. The pai--

NANCY

Listen, I'm gonna cut to the chase. Your test results came in.

SAM

I thought they were gonna be sent in the mail.

NANCY

Oh, they...did. Dr. Marx had a surgery, so (he/she) gave them to me to pass along. Anyways. It appears that your prognosis has taken a turn for the worse. I guess you have a dangerous fluid in your bloodstream and yadda yadda.

SAM

Maybe that's why I've been so dizzy lately.

NANCY

Uh...yeah. That's what the, uh, technicians said too. Anywho....long story short...doesn't look good.

SAM

How much time?

NANCY

Prolly a couple *days*, at best. Sorry.

SAM

(he nods with a clenched jaw, as his eyes well up)

I understand. Thanks for coming by.

NANCY

Yup. Take care.

(lights dim on SAM as NANCY awkwardly exits and heads towards the stairs)

DENISE

‘BOUT TIME WE STAND UP FOR OURSELVES IN ALL THAT WE DO

ALICE

LET’S GET THEM PATIENTS TO KNOW THAT: WE’RE IN CHARGE OF (YOU)

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

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

BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA...THE DISRESPECT WE’RE UP AGAINST

YOU JUST WAIT, FOR KARMA COMES TO THOSE WHO...DON’T PAY THEIR DEBT

IT’S TIME WE GET RESPECT ‘ROUND HERE:

(CUZ) WE’RE NOTHING...NOTHING BUT PERFECT, YEAH!

(DAISY is turning in her time card by the break room; when NANCY purposely bumps into her, taking her by surprise)

Hi, Daisy.

DAISY

Oh, hi Nancy. How are you?

NANCY

I’m good. Hey, I’m sorry to hear about Sam’s ex.

DAISY

Sam’s *ex*?

NANCY

(talking flippantly, with little interest in details)

You didn’t hear? She just stopped by. Apparently had this big tearful apology about leaving him before his accident...blamed it on hormones and yadda yadda. Good news is: he bought it though.

DAISY

What do you mean?

NANCY

Guess he accepted her apology and now they're back together! Good for him though. Gotta enjoy the time he's got left. I better get a move on it. Have a good night there, kiddo!

(gives her a condescending shoulder punch that jolts her forward; DAISY's hand cups her mouth and runs to SAM's room, gathering emotions before entering; NANCY, DENISE, and ALICE celebrate their victory together)

DENISE

IF ONLY YOU HAD OPENED UP YOUR MIND TO SEE

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

THAT WE ARE NOTHING, NOTHING BUT PERFECT

ALICE

IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT; YOU LOST YOUR CHANCE TO SEE

NANCY, DENISE, & ALICE

THAT WE, WE ARE NOTHING, NOTHING BUT PERFECT, YEAH!

DAISY

How could you?!

SAM

What?!

DAISY

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?

*

#16 DIFFERENT AGAIN

*

DAISY

You know what? Forget it. "Only the lonely survive." I should've known. I'm so stupid!

(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.)

SAM

NOBODY SAID THAT IT'S OVER

BUT DEEP DOWN, I KNOW THAT IT IS

AFTER ALL THAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH,

I GUESS WE ARE TOO...GOOD TO BE TRUE

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
 THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT’S ALWAYS BEEN
 AND 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
 THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT’S ALWAYS BEEN
 AND 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
 THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT’S ALWAYS BEEN
 AND 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

(blackout)

2-5: Sam's Room & The Belmont Home

The next morning, SAM and GRETCHEN are sitting while the DOCTOR and H enter with nervous anticipation.

DOCTOR

Here they aaaaaaare!

SAM

(SAM is dejected and confused, forcing H and DOCTOR to crinkle their eyebrows)

What?

H

Your results. To see if you quali-

SAM

No, I know. It's just that...Nancy already delivered them yesterday.

DOCTOR

Umm, that can't be. The mailman just delivered them about...20 minutes ago.

H

(everybody's 'wheels' are visibly 'spinning' before the light bulb goes on for all of them simultaneously)

Oh my *God*.

H & DOCTOR

NANCY!

SAM

I gotta find Daisy. Do you know where she is?

H

Uh, no.

(looks at his watch)

Her shift doesn't start for another hour, but she already called in sick.

SAM

Can I use your phone quick?

(lights dim on the room and come up on DAISY's house, where JACK is sitting on her couch; she enters with groceries)

JACK

Where've you been?! I've been looking all over for you.

DAISY

What do you mean? I was running errands.

JACK

I stopped by Franklin Mills and you weren't there. So I came here, and you weren't home. I'm worried sick about you!

DAISY

Well, don't be. I'm fine.

JACK

The phone rang while I was here.

DAISY

Okay...?

JACK

I was worried, so I answered.

(he is direct; meanwhile, DAISY momentarily freezes in disbelief)

It was Sam.

DAISY

Sam?

JACK

Yes. He was quite worked up; couldn't wait to talk to you.

(brief pause before becoming more informative)

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.

(while hearing that takes her breath away, she's mortified; they both get choked up)

And he hopes you'll still join him tonight.

DAISY

I'm so sorry, daddy. I never meant for any of it to happen, I promise.

*

#17 YOU'RE NOT ALONE

JACK

Sweetheart, for far too long, I've put my faith above your feelings. That ends today.

I KNOW THAT HISTORY, IT TENDS TO REPEAT

BUT I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE; NO, I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE
EXCEPT HOME

DAISY

You're not mad? Or disappointed?

JACK

Of course not. I know I haven't done a great job of showing it, but your happiness...it's all I've ever wanted.

(there is a noticeable shift in the music to signify things moving along)

And just so you know, I'm pretty sure Dirk was the drunk driver that night. I've already talked to the police.

DAISY

(shocked at the gravity of the news, but not surprised, given who DIRK is)

Oh my God!

JACK

You were right the whole time, dear. It was *me* who wasn't listening.

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

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;

I'm so sorry, honey. I should never have doubted you.

DAISY

No, you *should* have. I've put myself in this position. And now, there's no way out.

JACK

LOOK ALIVE, YOU'LL SURVIVE; DAISY, I LOVE YOU

JUST TAKE THESE KEYS AND NOW GO DRIVE

YOU'VE GOT TIME; DAISY, HE NEEDS YOU
 LOVE IS EVERYTHING IN LIFE
 TIME FLIES BY, SO FOLLOW YOUR HEART

JACK & DAISY

PLEASE, WILL YOU GRANT ME, A BRAND NEW START?

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,
 SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY
 'CAUSE WITH HIM, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

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
 'CAUSE WITH HIM, I'M NOT ALONE

(big hug)

YOU'RE NOT ALONE!

I'M NOT ALONE!

JACK

So get this: when I went to visit you the other day, I ended up running into Gretchen Mills.

DAISY

Crabby Gretchen?!

JACK

She's actually delightful. She and Franklin were long-time members at church. Anyway, she asked that I give this to you.

(hands her an unsealed envelope; there is a letter inside; we see a video of a fading GRETCHEN delivering the message)

GRETCHEN

EVEN THOUGH I'M OLD AND GRAY

IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY

THAT I HEARD MY PASTOR SAY

“WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE IS A WAY, AND THAT:

LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON”

It was your *mom* who taught him that.

LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON

(the chorus takes over that melody in unison)

I once read that, “the best love story is when you fall in love with the most unexpected person at the most unexpected time.” My husband and I founded this place on the very idea that no matter what trouble lies before a person, love is greater than that struggle.

(DAISY's covers her mouth with her hand, as she sees unfolds the bottom third of the letter, revealing a check; as GRETCHEN retreats upstage, the light on her dims, symbolizing mortality; DAISY's voice starts overlapping hers)

DAISY & GRETCHEN

So take this check and use it well. I know you will. You deserve happiness, and I'm glad you've found it.

DAISY

Wish your dad well for me. It's time for me to go be with Franklin. And Daisy...

(CHORUS pauses before the word "on," DAISY finishes the letter, hugs JACK; followed by immediate blackout)

Your mom is proud of you.

* SCENE CHANGE 6.0 *

2-6: Franklin Mills Commons

6pm. SAM has lit candles. He waits in his wheelchair, wearing a tie, with a spotlight on him, on a dimly-lit stage, holding a bouquet of daisies and carnations in one hand and his book in the other. Ice cream bowls are on the table. DAISY enters and briefly pauses, hanging her head. DIRK stands in the back of the theatre, watching the entire scene.

DAISY

I'm a fool. I'm so sorry.

SAM

You're not a fool. Get over here!

(he's elated; she hugs him; he hands her flowers; she pulls up a chair next to him and holds his hand)

DAISY

I missed you.

SAM

Gosh, I missed you too.

So I met your dad!! On the phone, at least.

DAISY

I heard! Whadja think?

SAM

He seems...great.

DAISY

He actually kinda gave me his blessing today. Told me he wants me to be happy.

SAM

Wow, that's huge!

DAISY

Aaaaaand. That's not even the best news of the day...

SAM

Wuddya mean?

DAISY

Sam. *Gretchen*, of all people, has decided to pay for the antibiotic!!

SAM

WHAT?!

DAISY

I know, right?! Now, we just gotta hope your labs qualify.

SAM

Well, I brought the results. But first, this is for you.

(pulls out his book, but doesn't hand it to her yet)

DAISY

Yeah?!

SAM

Daisy, had you not come along, these pages would have stayed empty. Instead, 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 you the dedication.

"My Carnation,

#1&A THE BOOK

From the moment I met you, I've 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, a broken man, assigned to possibly die under your watch.

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. So no matter what color paper these lab results are, I am better because of you.

(he looks up at her and says it himself, rather than reading it; they are both teary)

I love you, Daisy Belmont.

DAISY

I love *you*!

SAM

(pauses briefly while their noses touch together before speaking)

Alright. Should we open these results?

DAISY

Let's do it.

SAM

(reaches for the side pocket of his wheelchair, but then looks around to no avail)

Ugh. You know what? I was in such a rush to get here in time, I musta left 'em in my room. Gimme a sec; be right back.

*

#13B DIRK'S REVENGE

*

DIRK

(SAM exits, meanwhile, stewing from the back of the theatre, DIRK's anger builds; he takes periodic swigs from his flask)

I USED TO THINK THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD CHANGE MY MIND IF
I WAS SOMEHOW WRONG AND YOU WERE RIGHT,
BUT I GUESS I'VE BEEN WRONG THIS WHOLE DAMN TIME

(spits and stumbles slowly as he walks towards the stage, very visibly unpredictable)

Seems like just--

YESTERDAY WHEN...NO MATTER WHAT MISTAKES WERE IN MY PAST
YOU TOOK ME BACK, NO QUESTIONS ASKED

Funny.

TABLES, THEY TURN, WHEN YOU TURN YOUR BACK
ONE THING YOU GOT WRONG, THOUGH, STABBING YOUR KNIFE

(slowly reaches for the pistol from the back of his tucked in shirt; he raises it towards DAISY)

WON'T KILL YOUR LITTLE LIE
SO I GUESS THIS IS GOODBYE.

(POW! 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 done; he pauses in shock, 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 still for a moment, while DIRK approaches DAISY's lifeless body, JACK's emotions quickly turn 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!!!

* #18C LOVE LIVES ON *

* * *

(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. 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 on the ground, SAM sings a cappella.)

* * *

SAM

DAISY, I LOVE YOU. YOU HAVE HELPED ME DEFINE MY LIFE
 OUR LOVE MUST LIVE FOREVER; IT CAN NOT DIE HERE TONIGHT
 I HAVE LEARNED WHAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT
 THAT PART OF LOVE IS PAIN AND LOSS

(overcome with emotion, he collapses onto her, almost trying to hug life back into her)

CHORUS

AND YOU HAVE TAUGHT US
 LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON.
 LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON.

H

LOVE IS INCONVENIENT, IT CAN SHATTER YOUR HEART

AMY

BUT PICK UP THE PIECES, THE PUZZLE'S THERE—YOUR WORK OF ART

CHORUS

WE HAVE LEARNED WHAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT: THAT PART OF LOVE IS PAIN & LOSS

YOUNG DAISY

(appearing in white light, as if she's from the past; JACK enters, mid-phrase, to bridge the past to the present)

YOU WERE RIGHT, MOM!

LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON.

JACK & YOUNG DAISY

LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON.

CHORUS

LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON.

LONG AFTER LIFE'S GONE, LOVE LIVES ON.

JACK

I TOOK IT ALL FOR GRANTED, MY TRUE SELF, I'VE ABANDONED

SAM

YOU'VE SAVED MY LIFE, THROUGH DAISY

CHORUS

AND YOU INSPIRED OUR COMMUNITY (UNITY)

(the entire scene fast forwards to DAISY's funeral. JACK and SAM are isolated from the chaos around them, as lights change, cast members switch positions in slow-motion; a new scene is revealed: DAISY's closed casket is center stage, JACK's supportive hand resides on SAM's shoulder, as he eulogizes her from his wheelchair.

Each cast member now holds a light-up candle in their hands; candles randomly go out one-by-one; SAM's is last)

SAM

(arm in arm, both men are choked up)

GOD, WE COME HERE TODAY

TO THANK YOU FOR A GIFT

JACK

A MIRACLE, MAYBE,

FOR LOVE'S WHY WE EXIST

SAM

AND BY EXISTING, WE MATTER

JACK

BY COEXISTING, WE ARE SEEN

SAM

BY RESISTING, WE SURVIVE

JACK

AND IN PERSISTING,

SAM & JACK

WE BELIEVE.

(SAM's candle is blown out)

END OF ACT TWO.

*

#19 Bows

*

(each person sets a daisy or carnation onto the closed casket, which is center stage, before bowing; SAM leaves the book)

“THE BOOK OF EMPTY PAGES CERTAINLY MAKES A STATEMENT.”

“BRANDON M. ROCKSTROH’S MUSIC SPANS MANY STYLES.”

“THE CHARACTER OF NANCY IS OUTSTANDING. SHE IS ‘OUT THERE’ AS A CHIP-ON-THE-SHOULDER PERSON IN THE 1ST PLACE, AND THEN TO BE PORTRAYED BY A GUY... WOW.”

“THE STORY IS COMPLEX. THE PIECE HAS A SHOCK CLIMAX.”

“AN EXTRAORDINARY PREMIERE.”