

CHANCE:  
A Musical Play About Love, Risk & Getting It Right

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## ACT 1

### PROLOGUE

*In the blackout, music begins. It is a recording of a waltz that sounds like it's being played from an old 78 RPM record on equipment that would've been available in the 1930s. The lights very slowly rise on THE LADY as if she were materializing from the darkness while the recorded music fades and a live band continues to play. The Lady is an unidentifiable Hollywood silver screen icon and wears a turban, perhaps long gloves or several rings and has the elegant, world-weary demeanor and glamor of a romantic star. She is an amalgamation of Marlena, Greta, Joan, Gloria, Tallulah, Bette and is also a man in drag, uncanny in the realness of the disguise. The lighting and music suggest that she is performing in an elaborate number from a big, movie musical from the 1930s with a European flair - a bit of German Expressionism perhaps. However, it's all suggested since she is the only person performing for the audience.*

THE LADY

(singing "The Way Of The World")

THE FLUTTER OF BUTTERFLY WINGS  
BRINGS A STORM TO THE DESERT TERRAINS  
WHICH EXPLAINS HOW THE DUST IN THE BREEZE  
CAUSED A SNEEZE  
AND A ELEPHANT STAMPEDE ON THE PLAINS

WHEN IT RAINS AND IT RAINS AND IT RAINS  
IN THAT PLACE THAT'S UNBEARABLY DRY  
IT COULD BE THE SPORES THAT HAD SPRUNG  
FROM THE ELEPHANT'S DUNG  
THAT WERE FLUNG TO THE WINDS IN THE SKY

SO THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD MY FRIENDS  
IT DEPENDS ON EACH MOVEMENT WE MAKE  
WHAT'S AT STAKE IN A SMALL CHANGE IN THE AIR  
IS ALL OF THE WHAT AND THE WHERE  
IN THE WAY OF THE WORLD

DID YOU COME HERE BY MERE CIRCUMSTANCE?  
WAS IT FATE? WAS IT CHOICE?, WAS IT CHANCE?  
YOU CAN TRACE BACK THE TRAIL  
BUT YOU'LL NEVER UNVEIL  
THE KEY TO THIS INTRICATE DANCE

SO STEP UP TO THE WHEEL FOR A SPIN  
PICK A NUMBER BEFORE YOU BEGIN  
THOUGH WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE  
CHANCES ARE YOU WILL LOSE  
BUT YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT TO WIN

SO THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD MY PET  
LET'S VET IT USING LOGIC AND MATH  
BECAUSE OF ONE STRAND  
OF YOUR HAIR DOWN THE DRAIN  
A HURRICANE CAN STRAY IN ITS PATH  
THROUGH THE WAY OF THE WORLD

SO WHEN YOU ARE NEARING THE END  
THAT ISN'T THE TIME TO PRETEND  
THOUGH YOU'RE LOOKING ALL BLEARY-EYED  
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE HEARING  
THIS THEORY I'D MUCH RECOMMEND

FOR THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD MY DEAR  
THOUGH IT VEERS  
FROM MOST POPULAR THOUGHT  
CAUGHT LIKE THE MAD HATTER  
WE BLAME THEN WE FLATTER  
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT MATTERS SO MUCH  
AND SUCH IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD

(At the end of the song, GREGORY looks around,  
confused, not knowing where he is. THE LADY  
crosses to the bed, puts on a white coat and picks up  
a stethoscope and clipboard.)

GREGORY

Where-- Who are you?

THE LADY

I'm your doctor.

GREGORY

I know you. Don't I? Are you really a doctor?

THE LADY

The only doctor you'll ever need. Anyway, you should recover your memory. We have met before.

GREGORY

We have?

THE LADY

You had an episode. A warning.

(GREGORY looks at her confused)

A transient ischemic attack. Haven't you recently had a short episode of confusion, dizziness, maybe some numbness on one side of your body, flashing lights, auditory hallucinations?

GREGORY

Hallucinations?

THE LADY

It's not unusual after several days or even weeks have passed for a heart attack to follow.

GREGORY

A heart attack! Where's my watch? Who called 911? He took my watch.

(GREGORY sits up and looks around for his watch and clothing.)

THE LADY

Going somewhere?

GREGORY

Yes. But, I don't know where to go.

THE LADY

I do.

GREGORY

You do? Where then?

THE LADY

Back to where you *need* to go. The night you were warned.

GREGORY

Oh?

THE LADY

I'll give you a hint. It was this past June and it was raining.

GREGORY

If you say so.

THE LADY

And you know it almost never rains here in June.

GREGORY

That's true!

THE LADY

And there was even lightning.

GREGORY

Yes. Lightning.

THE LADY

The rain was falling. Gently.

GREGORY

Foggy sky and the amber lights of the city.

(GREGORY gets up out of the bed and removes the gown revealing casual clothing underneath as the hospital bed moves off the stage and his living room appears around him. During the following dialogue GREGORY moves across the stage into his living room. THE LADY removes her stethoscope and white coat and moves to darkened area of the stage. The setting suggests a restored Victorian typically found in the city of San Francisco. The sound of rain slowly rises.)

GREGORY

I was enjoying the rhythm of the rain. So comforting. And I had no place to go so I opened a special bottle of wine I had been saving. It tasted smooth, spicy and I started feeling loose and warm--

(He sits at this desk and peers at his laptop computer.)

And maybe a little horny. But then I thought “no, not tonight.”

(Gregory closes the laptop.)

THE LADY

(now in place)

Good. And now. You’re about to meet me.

GREGORY

For the first time?

THE LADY

Scene one, take one.

SCENE 1

***There is no such thing as an omen. Destiny does not send us heralds. She is too wise or too cruel for that.*** - Oscar Wilde

*GREGORY gets up from his desk as he picks up his glass and moves toward the portrait of the THE LADY. He toasts the portrait.*

GREGORY

To you. To every glamorous gown and cold hearted insult. To every broken heart you left behind.

THE LADY

Cue thunder.

(Slow rumbling thunder. GREGORY loses his balance.)

THE LADY

Cue lightning.

(A light flashes as GREGORY shakes his head. He moves carefully back to the couch and sits down wondering what just happened to him. Another flash of light and an image of THE LADY appears. Gregory blinks and looks around the room.

Deciding that there is no one there, he reclines on the sofa closing his eyes and taking deep breaths to calm himself.)

THE LADY

(not in light)

It's very rude of you to turn your back on me you know.

GREGORY

(hearing but not seeing anything)

What? I don't know what's going on here. Everything's spinning.

THE LADY

(appearing in dim light. GREGORY doesn't see her yet.)

Do you know who I am?

GREGORY

Who is talking? Someone broke in. No that's not it. Let's see. A bit of undigested beef?

THE LADY

(in full light)

How disgusting.

GREGORY

(seeing her clearly)

Okay. Okay. Uh? A psychotic drag queen who forgot to take her meds? San Francisco has plenty of those.

THE LADY

Is that where we are? How provincial.

GREGORY

You can't be for real. How about a haunting? Maybe you're one of those angry ghosts seeking vengeance.

THE LADY

Do I seem angry to you?

GREGORY

No. But you're starting to seem like a nervous breakdown. How did you get in here?

THE LADY

You invited me in.

GREGORY

Oh? How?

THE LADY

Have look around you. I'm everywhere. On the walls, in the book shelves, on the mantle, even painted on the lamp shade. So?

GREGORY

Am I supposed to believe that you walked off of the lamp shade?

THE LADY

(exasperated)

Don't you see? You have built a shrine here. It's astounding and, most important, the goddess is impressed.

GREGORY

An encounter with the goddess. The goddess of --?

THE LADY

(imitating Bette Davis)

"Fasten your seat belts, it's going to be a bumpy night."

GREGORY

Is that who you are?

THE LADY

(imitating Katherine Hepburn)

"I'd hang you from the nipples, but you'd shock the children."

GREGORY

Children?

THE LADY

(imitating Mae West)

"Addition is when take one thing and add it to another, and two and two is four, and five will get you ten if you know how to work it." Good enough?

GREGORY

You know this is really quite interesting.

THE LADY

What is?



GREGORY

I'm having a conversation with a 'spirit guide.' Even Jung would be surprised by whatever you are. You're hardly a creature from ancient mythology. More like something from the gay culture curriculum.

THE LADY

You seem to know a lot about it.

GREGORY

I did an in-depth study of the Jung's personality types for my thesis in organizational psychology. Jung used to stroll around his garden conversing with his "spirit guide" -- an old man with wings who was "real" but somehow dead. How did that happen? Jung was one of the most brilliant psychologists that ever lived. Does this mean he was insane?

THE LADY

More important - what did the old man with the wings have to say?

GREGORY

Inside information. Great mysteries about the existence of the psyche and the mind. Do you have any?

THE LADY

Like what?

GREGORY

How about the way to happiness?

THE LADY

Not my area of expertise. Anyway, what you're up to there is much more interesting. In that little box.

(THE LADY gestures toward an upstage screen, flicks her arm causing a projection to appear on the screen of a website called "a-guy-named-chance.com." There is a picture of shirtless and beautiful young man posed in very seductive manner. He has an extraordinary physique. Under the picture is a link that says "click for some webcam fun.")

THE LADY

What fantasies you have at your fingertips.

(GREGORY walks over to his desk and opens the notebook, looks back at the screen, back at the notebook and then at THE LADY wondering how she accomplished the projection of the website.)

GREGORY

Now I'm embarrassed. Should I be?

THE LADY

Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

GREGORY

Then you do understand.

THE LADY

(scrutinizing the computer monitor screen  
image of CHANCE)

In my day, we couldn't find things like this so easily or quite so . . . anonymously. Is it abundant?

GREGORY

Yes. And it's taking up way too much of my time these days.

THE LADY

Too much of a good thing?

GREGORY

Just a distraction. Like you!

THE LADY

I'm no distraction. I'm your spirit guide. Right?

GREGORY

Are you? Okay. I like the idea. But you can't be real.

THE LADY

(pointing to the projection)

As real as that boy in your box there.

GREGORY

(not agreeing and proving it)

Oh? Do you know what a webcam is?

THE LADY

A kind of camera for a spider?

GREGORY

A camera built in here. I can see him on my screen. He's in his house while I'm in mine.  
We can type messages back and forth.

THE LADY

You'll have to show me.

GREGORY

I've never tried it before.

THE LADY

Why not?

GREGORY

Lots of reasons. I would never want to meet a person who would do what he does for a living. It could be dangerous. Anyway it's just an impossible fantasy.

THE LADY

So what if he's a gigolo?

GREGORY

Much worse than that. You wouldn't understand.

THE LADY

I understand. Just another fantasy.

GREGORY

This is a very strange night.

(Lightning flash and then THE LADY makes a gesture that changes the light as she moved forward.)

THE LADY

(singing "Days Going By")

SOMEWHERE IN TIME  
THERE'S A MAN IN A ROOM  
AND TO KNOW WHAT HE WANTS  
HE'S EVADED

AND ALTHOUGH HE'S NOT OLD  
HE PREFERS TO ASSUME  
THAT THE BLOOM OF HIS YOUTH  
HAS FADED

(THE LADY conjures up CHANCE who appears in another part of the stage ready for a date. He is the same man that appears in the picture on the screen. He's looking very clean and sexy, ready for a date. He sings.)

CHANCE

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE  
WHERE A CHILL FILLS THE AIR  
HE WILL STARE IN THE FACE  
OF HIS CANDOR

BUT THE TRUTH THAT HE'S TOLD  
SHE WILL HOLD SAFE INSIDE  
RIGHT ALONG WITH THE DREAMS  
HE WILL HAND HER

THE LADY AND CHANCE

IN THESE DAYS GOING BY  
CAN YOU OPEN YOUR HEART?  
WHILE WAITING FOR WHAT TO BELIEVE IN  
CAN YOU STAY WITH THE PART  
WHERE THE FEAR WILL START?  
AND DELIGHT IN THE ART OF THE GIVING?  
IN LIVING THE DAYS GOING BY

(GREGORY stands up and moves away from his desk leaving this office and stepping into the abstract space.)

GREGORY

SOMEWHERE IN HERE  
WITH THE YEARS FLYING BY  
HE WILL SHY FROM THE LIGHT  
OF HIS LONGING

BUT THESE COOL SUMMER WINDS  
WILL BEGIN HIS RETURN  
TO A WORLD THAT BELIEVES  
IN BELONGING

ALL

IN THESE DAYS GOING BY  
CAN YOU OPEN YOUR EYES?  
TO EVERYTHING LIVING AROUND YOU?  
CAN YOU GET THROUGH THE PART  
OF A BROKEN HEART  
AND INVITE IN THE LIGHT OF FORGIVING?  
IN LIVING THE DAYS GOING BY  
LIVING THE DAYS  
LIVING THE DAYS  
LIVING THE DAYS GOING BY  
DAYS GOING BY

(As the song ends, CHANCE turns and leaves the stage. THE LADY and GREGORY return to their previous areas back in the scene in Gregory's house.)

THE LADY

This is a strange night. And you're thinking too much. Get on with it!  
(GREGORY is lost in thought, not paying attention.)

Well if you're not going to show me what's in the spider cam or wherever you put him-

GREGORY

Alright. Alright. But can't you disappear or something?  
(he hesitates, looking at the screen.)

THE LADY

You 'vant' to be alone, darling?

GREGORY

Yes. I 'vant' to be alone. This is private.

THE LADY

Start and I'll go. Well?

GREGORY

He wants money. Twenty dollars.

THE LADY

How does that happen?

GREGORY

I just have to move the pointer here and click.

THE LADY

I see. You just click your pointer. Golly.

(GREGORY hesitates not wanting to go through with it).

THE LADY

So? Click him the twenty dollars and get on with it. Need a hand?

(GREGORY looks at the THE LADY then looks back at his screen. The Lady makes a gesture with her hand that causes Gregory to decisively click. A message appears on the screen "Give me a minute.")

THE LADY

Good.

(The screen moves away and lights rise slowly on CHANCE sitting facing downstage and concentrating on a laptop computer on a table in front of him. He's suspended in an abstract space and his legs are not visible under the table. He is a torso with a computer in front of him. He is wearing a robe that is partially open revealing his naked upper body. He speaks to laptop computer camera.)

CHANCE

Hi. What's up?

THE LADY

He spoke!

(GREGORY is surprised as well but then realizes it's perfectly logical. There is a built-in microphone. Gregory types a message back.)

CHANCE

Okay. Well, what's your name?

(GREGORY types a message back.)

Greg? So Greg, what are you into?

(GREGORY types a message back.)

Sorry. Gregory.

(GREGORY types a message back.)

That's my real name. Chance Wayne? No. That's not my name.

(GREGORY types a message back.)

Paul Newman? Don't know him. "Sweet Bird Of Youth?" Never heard of it. So like what are you looking for? How 'bout like turning on your webcam so I can see you too?

(GREGORY types a message back.)

Alright. Well. How about this?

(CHANCE stands up and starts to remove his robe letting it slowly slide down his arms while looking seductively at the webcam. He reads the message on his screen from GREGORY.)

CHANCE

No?

(CHANCE sits back down, slipping the robe back on his shoulders but leaving it open.)

CHANCE

It's your time. So like where do you live?

(CHANCE reads a message and starts to chuckle.)

THE LADY

What are you saying to him?

CHANCE

Have you ever seen me around before? I'm in the Castro a lot.

(GREGORY types a message back.)

I'm glad you like it. Thanks. I designed the entire website myself.

(GREGORY types a message back.)

So would you like to meet me? In person?

(THE LADY looks at GREGORY gesturing encouragement. Gregory types a message. CHANCE shrugs his shoulders at Gregory's negative response.)

CHANCE

Up to you. I am better in person. So Gregory, what do you look like?

(GREGORY types a message back.)

Hmm. I love men at 43.

(THE LADY, with a scolding look,)

Like old enough to be really experienced in bed and like young enough to still be sexy. So you want to see more?

(CHANCE drops the robe around his waist and leans back in the chair stretching his arms seductively. GREGORY types a message back.)

THE LADY

I want to see more.

GREGORY

(to the LADY)

I'm not going to continue if you don't leave.

THE LADY

Oh. Very well.

(GREGORY watches her as she starts to leave. Once he believes she's gone, he types another message. CHANCE leans forward to the webcam.)

CHANCE

You want to meet me and find out?

THE LADY

(Suddenly reappearing)

Absolutely.

(GREGORY gives her a stern look. She shrugs her shoulders. Gregory continues to glare at her.)

CHANCE

Well, I guess our time is almost up here so, Gregory, shall we just say goodbye?

(GREGORY types another message.)

I'll have to like go find that old movie. Thanks. You seem like a really great guy.

(GREGORY hesitates, looks over at THE LADY and back at his computer monitor pondering.)



CHANCE

Still there Gregory?

(GREGORY types another message. CHANCE smiles as he reads it.)

CHANCE

Two hundred dollars for an hour of my time. Sound okay?

(LIGHTS fade on GREGORY typing as THE LADY turns to the audience.)

THE LADY

SO THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD MY FRIENDS  
IT DEPENDS ON EACH MOVEMENT WE MAKE  
THE PATH YOU MAY PICK  
FROM JUST ONE LITTLE CLICK  
IS A PATH YOU THINK YOU'D NEVER TAKE  
THROUGH THE WAY OF THE WORLD

(When the song ends, the lights dim and the set pieces move off the stage along with the actors with the exception of GREGORY who circles around for the beginning of the next scene.)

SCENE 2

*Experience is one thing you can't get for nothing.* - Oscar Wilde

*Lights up on GREGORY standing in a pool of light with his cell phone to his ear. It's night and chilly outside. Gregory looks up at an unseen apartment building. He doesn't like the way it looks. He looks around him, apprehensive about the safety of the neighborhood. Gregory peers into the light coming from the cell phone wondering why no one is answering. He puts it back to his ear. CHANCE enters from behind him with his cell phone to his ear talking to Gregory. Even though it's cold out, his leather jacket is open and his shirt is unbuttoned almost down to his waist revealing his muscular torso.*

*Gregory turns around, somewhat startled as Chance moves in very close, too close for Gregory's comfort. Chance smiles and looks Gregory up and down as Gregory backs away.*

CHANCE

Hi there. You look hot.

GREGORY

(suspiciously)

Hi. You were here all the time?

CHANCE

I need to ask you-- are you a cop?

GREGORY

(Put off by the question.)

No. Are you?

(CHANCE laughs, moving closer toward GREGORY and reaching for his hands to examine them. GREGORY quickly gives in.)

CHANCE

I can tell a lot about a guy from his hands.

(CHANCE moves closer and puts GREGORY's hands on his chest then slowly leads them down his torso to his waistline. Gregory starts to give in.)

CHANCE

You have like beautiful hands.

(CHANCE slowly moves GREGORY's hands and arms around his body and leans towards Gregory as if to kiss him.)

GREGORY

Not here. Someone could be watching.

CHANCE

Let's go inside.

(GREGORY looks at CHANCE and smiles then looks up at the building apprehensively.)

CHANCE

It's all right.

(CHANCE takes GREGORY's hand and leads him as a couch slide onto the stage. The light becomes harsher, like office lighting. Gregory continues to look apprehensive as they enter the apartment. There are old 1990's rock posters suspended in the air, a made up bed on the floor and a couch that is quite old and shabby.)

CHANCE

Take off your coat. Sit down.

(GREGORY leaves his coat on but sits down on the couch. Dust flies into the light. Gregory looks around the room unhappy with the harsh lights and unkempt atmosphere of the apartment.)

CHANCE

I'm going to have a beer. Will you join me?

GREGORY

No thanks.

(CHANCE leaves the room and gets a beer for himself. Gregory looks around the unsavory apartment. Chance enters drinking from a can.)

GREGORY

I really liked your website and those pictures of you are fantastic.

CHANCE

Thanks. I took classes at Community College and it like really paid off.

GREGORY

Have you lived here long?

CHANCE

This is just temporary. I'm like waiting to get into my new place in the Castro. It's going to be really nice.

(GREGORY stares down at the floor while CHANCE scrutinizes him then puts down the beer.)

CHANCE

All right. I know this is not like what you had in mind and maybe you're a little disappointed but I'm here and I think you're a really attractive guy. Really attractive. I'd like to make you happy, daddy.

GREGORY

Actually, I would like that beer.

(CHANCE leaves the room to fetch another beer.  
THE LADY suddenly appears in an abstract space.)

THE LADY

(singing "The Way To Happiness")

THE WAY TO HAPPINESS  
I MUST CONFESS, I DO NOT KNOW  
IT'S NOT THE WAY I DRESS  
THIS IMAGE IS PART OF THE SHOW  
WORLD WEARY AND WISE  
I PUT ON THIS DISGUISE  
TO WEAR ON THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

CHANCE

(getting GREGORY's beer)

THE WAY TO HAPPINESS  
I'LL TAKE A GUESS THOUGH I'M NOT SURE  
A TOUCH THEN A CARESS  
A FANTASY THAT CAN ENDURE  
FROM DAY TO DAY  
IT'S BASED ON WHAT YOU PAY  
TO STAY ON THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

GREGORY

(rising from CHANCE's couch)

THE WAY TO HAPPINESS  
I COULDN'T SAY, IT'S SUCH A MESS  
IN SPITE OF WHAT I PLANNED  
I NEVER SEEM TO GET THE UPPER HAND  
WHAT DOES IT TAKE?  
TO GET PAST THE MISTAKES  
WE MAKE ON THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

THE LADY  
THEY SAY YOU'LL  
KNOW THE WAY  
THE DAY YOU  
WANT TO STAY

CHANCE  
NOTHING GAINED IS  
IS NOTHING  
LEFT TO LOSE  
IF TODAY WAS YOUR  
LAST DAY  
YOU WOULD CHOOSE

GREGORY  
EVERYTHING IS WAITING  
TODAY YOU CREATE  
ANOTHER CHANCE  
FOR HAPPINESS

ALL

WORLD WEARY AND YET  
YOU NEVER CAN FORGET

THE LADY

WHAT YOU LET ON THE WAY TO

CHANCE

HOW YOU SWEAT ON THE WAY TO

GREGORY

WHAT YOU REGRET ON THE WAY TO

ALL

HAPPINESS

(As the song ends, THE LADY fades into darkness. CHANCE enters and puts GREGORY's beer on a table then pulls Gregory to his feet and removes Gregory's coat. Chance starts unbuttoning his own shirt then takes Gregory's hands and places them on his naked torso. Chance urges Gregory toward him for a kiss.)

GREGORY  
(pushing CHANCE away.)

What are you wearing?

CHANCE

Briefs.

GREGORY

Hippie perfume. Patchouli!

CHANCE

Oh that. Yeah. I bought a little bottle in a place on Haight Street. But it's like in the bathroom. Sorry if it bothers you.

GREGORY

No. It just hit me in a way I didn't expect.

CHANCE

Are you okay?

GREGORY

Yes. Just that -- it's a well known secret that scent is a powerful memory trigger.

CHANCE

I didn't know that. And it's made you like really tense. You need to relax. Let me rub your neck. I give a great massage.

(CHANCE moves closer to him on the couch.)

Turn around.

(GREGORY obeys and CHANCE moves in closer putting his hands on Gregory's neck and pressing his body against Gregory's back. Gregory has trouble giving into the massage as Chance's hands move down to Gregory's shoulders. Gregory responds by moving his hands backwards onto Chance's thighs. Chance slowly maneuvers Gregory around as Chance gets to his knees between Gregory's legs. Gregory looks down at Chance. Chance looks up at Gregory.)

GREGORY

This isn't going to work.

(CHANCE stands up and start to put his hand in his pocket.)

CHANCE

You want some-

GREGORY

No. It's just. This isn't what I wanted.

CHANCE

I'm not what you want? I'm what everybody wants. You're like that guy that was here last week. You can't get over yourself.

GREGORY

What would some stupid hustler know about it.

CHANCE

Get out.

(GREGORY doesn't move from the couch.)

Right now. I'm not kidding.

GREGORY

Okay. But it's not really all your fault. Here let me pay you at least.

CHANCE

Keep your fuckin' money.

GREGORY

It's just that I don't buy this, and well, I'm not young. This just looks all wrong and I can't fool myself anymore.

CHANCE

I've never had any complaints. Ever.

GREGORY

I've got an idea.

CHANCE

Yeah?

GREGORY

How about half of the money we agreed to. I think that's fair. You put some time and effort into this and really, it's not your fault. Maybe it's just too much for me. You're too much for me. So?

CHANCE

Well maybe I am too much. But I want the full amount.

(GREGORY hands him the rest of the cash then gets his coat and puts it on.)

GREGORY

Are you proud of what you do?

CHANCE

Prouder than you are for buying what I do.

(GREGORY looks away.)

You know I can figure which guys like might be dangerous. And which guys to just stay away from. But I can never tell about the guys that are going freeze up. Those are the guys that like really bug the shit out me.

GREGORY

Why's that?

CHANCE

Well, those guys know what we're doing and they've already decided to go ahead. Then it's like they close down in the moment, like they can't stop watching themselves.

GREGORY

Like me?

CHANCE

Well. Yeah. You know romance always cost you something. So why not just be like fuckin' honest about it. Figure it out.

(GREGORY shrugs an "oh well" but gets the point.)

You know, I just realized, it's like. . . never mind.

GREGORY

What? Tell me.

CHANCE

Do you really want to know?

GREGORY

I really want to know.

CHANCE

I'm like really very good at what I do. No matter what you like think of it. What are you good at?

GREGORY

Making an ass of myself.



## SCENE 3

*Illusion is the first of all pleasures.* -Oscar Wilde

*Music and spotlight up on THE LADY posed as if she was performing in a nightclub for an unseen audience.*

## THE LADY

(singing "Somethin' Cooked Up In Your Mind")

YOU'D BETTER TAKE CARE  
WHEN IT'S GNAWING AT YOU,  
YOU'D BETTER TELL THEM ALL YOU'RE RESIGNED.  
YOU CAN'T PURGE THAT URGE.  
THINK A COQ AU VIN IF YOU MUST -  
LIKE LUST,  
SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND.

CREATE A CREPE SUZETTE.  
HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO.  
USE A FILLING RICH AND REFINED.  
A BIT OF GRAND MARNIER,  
POWDERED SUGAR TO DUST,  
LIKE LUST,  
SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND

YOU THINK IT'S ALL BEYOND YOU.  
YOU CAN'T CONTROL THE FLAME.  
YOU BAKE IT SLOW  
CUZ YOU DON'T KNOW  
ONLY YOU CAN TAKE THE BLAME.

YOU THINK IT'S YOUR WAY.  
BUT WHEN YOU OPEN THAT DOOR,  
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MAY FIND.  
SO SOFT ON THE INSIDE,  
BUT YOU CAN'T BITE THROUGH THE CRUST,  
LIKE LUST  
SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND.

(The unseen jazz band improvises through the verse in the traditional manner. THE LADY moves to the music. Lights up on GREGORY wearing his coat and hunching from the cold. Gregory enters the bar, gets a drink. CHANCE enters the bar, looks around, gets a drink and saunters over to another part of the bar looking to see if he's been noticed.)

THE LADY

YOU THINK IT'S ALL OUTSIDE YOU.  
 NO CHANCE TO SEE IT CHANGED.  
 YOU WALK AWAY  
 WHEN ITS NOT OKAY  
 FROM A SCENE YOU'VE CONCEIVED AND ARRANGED.

TAKE EVERYTHING LEFT,  
 PUT IT TOGETHER, LET IT STEW.  
 EAT SWEET DESSERTS AFTER YOU'VE DINED.  
 IT WILL BE SO DELICIOUS,  
 BUT DON'T FORGET THAT IT'S JUST  
 LIKE LUST -  
 SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND.

JUST LUST -  
 SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND.

(During the last phrase of the song, GREGORY looks up and sees CHANCE across the stage. Chance catches Gregory looking at him, starts to move toward Gregory who quickly turns away and then leaves the bar. Chance stays as the song ends. THE LADY slowly bows to her audience as the lights fade.)

SCENE 4

***Most people die of a sort of creeping common sense, and discover when it is too late that the only things one never regrets are one's mistakes. - Oscar Wilde***

*GREGORY enters his house wearing the same coat he wore in the previous scene. He turns on the light revealing THE LADY waiting for him. Gregory takes of his coat flops down into the chair, puts his head back to relax.*

THE LADY  
So. Was it as delightful as it looks?

GREGORY  
No. It was a flop. I flopped.

THE LADY  
Nerves?

GREGORY  
Basically.

THE LADY  
In my profession, this is the most difficult thing of all.

GREGORY  
In your *profession*?

THE LADY  
In spite of how glorious you may think our lives are, we're never sure we'll get it right every time we step out in front of the lights. It takes a lot of strength to survive it over and over again. And it never gets any easier, darling.

GREGORY  
But it's not like that for me. You see I thought I wanted it, but, well, it looks good in the window but when you go to try it on, it doesn't seem to fit very well.

THE LADY  
So. What did you really want then?

GREGORY  
I'm not sure. It reminded me of something though. My patchouli days.

THE LADY  
I can smell it now. What about that big wrist watch you used to wear?

GREGORY  
(Touching an unwanted memory)

That. Well--

(GREGORY wonders how she knows this but then changes the subject.)  
I will say, *he* was perfect. Straight from central casting. Well, not straight.

THE LADY

Maybe the art director got it all wrong, darling. It happens- wrong costume, wrong scenery, doesn't create the right ambience. Difficult to play, darling. I should know.

IF THE ANGLE OF THE LIGHT ISN'T RIGHT  
THEN GO BACK AND GET IT RIGHT OR YOU MIGHT  
HAVE TO RECREATE THE SCENE, AND I MEAN  
THAT'S A TRICKY THING TO DO

(GREGORY indicates that he doesn't agree).

THE LADY

It's true.

IF THE LIPSTICK AND THE WIG AREN'T THERE  
THAT IS WHERE YOU HAVE TO STOP AND TAKE CARE  
TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE CREW ISN'T THROUGH  
WITH THE MAKEUP AND THE HAIR

C'est la guerre.

AND SPEAKING PHILOSOPHICALLY  
CHECK YOUR SKIN MICROSCOPICALLY  
FOR THE CAMERA NEVER WILL LIE  
SO YOU MUST RELY  
ON THAT BLUSH THEY APPLY  
WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS THE MOOD THAT YOU SET

GREGORY

AND THE LEADING MAN THAT YOU GET  
HE MAY LOOK PERFECT  
BUT HE'S NOT READY YET

THE LADY

EXPECT HE'LL FORGET  
THE BLOCKING YOU'VE SET  
SO IF THE POSTERS ON HIS WALL  
AREN'T ALL WHAT YOU LIKE

GREGORY

AND THAT ONE BEHIND HIS DOOR I ABHOR  
HIS FLIMSY CURTAINS AND INSTEAD OF A BED  
THERE'S A MATTRESS ON THE FLOOR

THE LADY

And what's more-

THE FLUORESCENT LIGHT OVERHEAD  
MAKES YOU LOOK MORE DEAD THAN THE DEAD  
LIKE I SAID HE MAY NOT ACT THE PRINCE  
BUT HE CAN CONVINCED  
IN SPITE OF THE CHINTZ

GREGORY

True.

BUT IN A SCENE WHERE HE'S NOT LOOKING HIS BEST  
YOU CAN BET HE'LL NOT PASS THE TEST

THE LADY

Yes.

THEN A CASTING CALL WILL BE MADE  
BUT WHO COULD MAKE THE GRADE?  
WHEN THE SET IS HOMEMADE  
SO IF THE ANGLE OF THE LIGHT ISN'T RIGHT

GREGORY

THEN STAY THERE AND GET IT RIGHT OR YOU MIGHT  
NEVER RECREATE THE SCENE AND I MEAN

THE LADY

YOU MAY NEVER GET YOUR CHANCE

No. Not Chance. A chance. What I meant was-

(During the last lines of the song, the spotlight on  
THE LADY moves off her face. She motions to the  
unseen crew in the ceiling to move the light until it  
hits her face at the perfect angle and she is satisfied.)

GREGORY AND THE LADY

ROMANCE IS IN  
THE ANGLE

(GREGORY gestures to THE LADY inviting her to  
finish the song. She accepts.)

THE LADY

OF THE LIGHT

THE LADY

Alright?

GREGORY

Alright.

THE LADY

Good.

(After the final notes of the song, the lights dim.)

SCENE 5

***“The world was my oyster but I used the wrong fork.”*** - Oscar Wilde

*A balcony of a first class suite in one the most expensive though perhaps ostentatious hotels in San Francisco. It is night with bright stars above and low, thick fog hugging the horizon off in the distance. An amber glow from the city lights illuminate the fog. GREGORY, casually dressed, is sipping champagne looking out over the balcony with his back to CHANCE. Chance, nicely dressed and groomed holding his glass, looking at Gregory across the balcony. Chance leans over the balcony and spits as he watches it falls to the ground.*

CHANCE

It's getting cold out here. Don't you think? You want to go back inside?

GREGORY

Not just yet.

CHANCE

I've never seen the city from here. Up so high like this.  
(spits over the side, watches it fall)  
This hotel is a great place for kissing. Yeah?

(GREGORY turns and looks at CHANCE but  
doesn't move toward him, rejecting the offer.  
Chance gently takes Gregory's forearm.)

CHANCE

Your wrist watch. It's like something special?

GREGORY

(letting CHANCE look)

This? I've had it a long time but haven't worn it in years.

CHANCE

Yeah? I've seen one just like it before.

GREGORY

Oh?

CHANCE

Well a few years back, I had this totally awesome relationship with this older guy. It was almost worth getting caught the way we did.

GREGORY

(sarcastically)

Caught? What? Were you under age?

CHANCE

No. Nothing like that. I had joined the army see. I know, I know. Crazy. But it was like the only way out of that backwoods hell hole I was born into. So I figured I could live through just about anything until I got to boot camp.

GREGORY

(turning toward CHANCE, getting  
interested)

I can't imagine.

CHANCE

But you know, after the first month, I like noticed my body had become like rock hard and really muscular. One of the officers did too. Cuz of him, boot camp got a lot easier for me. But I messed it up.

GREGORY

That's where you got caught?

CHANCE

I couldn't get enough of him and broke some rules we had and-- it was in his office. So fucking stupid of me. But it was like the first time in my life that I ever felt wanted.

GREGORY

Really? You? What happened?

CHANCE

Dishonorable discharge. Both of us. Though much worse for him cuz he was an officer. But your watch. He had one just like it and I remember how he would like carefully remove it while we got naked or before like getting in the shower together.

(CHANCE takes GREGORY's hand)

It looks exactly the same. Can I see it?

(GREGORY removes the watch and gives it to CHANCE. Chance holds it up to the light and studies it.)

GREGORY

Careful. It's special.

(CHANCE tries to put the watch on his wrist.)

I'd rather you didn't.

(GREGORY quickly takes it back.)

So how did you get out here?

CHANCE

I'd already bought an old car and managed to save some money so I headed west. Saw the whole country. Felt like a big adventure. Never saw him again though. You ever been like in love?

GREGORY

Maybe.

CHANCE

I know what you mean. It's like hard to know what it's supposed to be like.



GREGORY

I don't really want to talk about it with you. Sorry. That came out all wrong.

CHANCE

(moving in, putting his arm around  
GREGORY's back)

It's all right.

GREGORY

(moving in a bit closer and lightly running  
his hand down CHANCE's torso)

When you get to be my age, you begin to realize that there are these very important moments when you make certain choices that completely change the course of your life. It's hard to spot them when they're happening. But you can see them looking back. It doesn't always look good. Not at all.

CHANCE

(putting his arms around GREGORY's  
neck)

Having one now?

GREGORY

Ask me again in a year.

(GREGORY turns out and away from the embrace,  
moves into an abstract space. CHANCE watches  
him.)

GREGORY

(singing "Begin")

SO ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT  
YOU TRIED TO GET IT RIGHT  
FROM SETTING A MOOD THAT'S SO URBANE  
TO ORDERING THE FOOD AND CHAMPAGNE

It's insane.

(CHANCE watches the sky watching the puffs of  
fog blow swiftly by.)

CHANCE

I LIKE HIS STYLE  
AND HE MAKES ME KINDA SMILE  
IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I'VE HAD THIS  
A FANCY ROOM, A MAN I WANNA KISS

GREGORY

I WONDER WHAT  
HE'S THINKING NOW  
PONDERING THE SKY

CHANCE

I DON'T KNOW WHY  
HE GETS SO SHY  
HE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE  
(CHANCE looks at GREGORY and  
smiles, moving closer.)

GREGORY  
HE HAS BEAUTIFUL EYES  
AN ANGEL DANCING ON A PIN

CHANCE  
I'LL SHOW HIM HOW  
TO LET IT GO

CHANCE AND GREGORY

BEGIN!

GREGORY

I think I need to go to the bathroom.

(GREGORY turns and walks a few paces away as if  
he has left the room and then studies himself in an  
unseen mirror. CHANCE polishes off a glass of  
champagne.)

CHANCE

WHAT'S HE DOING NOW?

GREGORY  
(checking himself in the mirror)

LIKE I DON'T KNOW HOW

CHANCE

HAS HE BEEN ALONE  
A LONG, LONG TIME?

GREGORY  
(giving up on his hair and turning away  
from the mirror and heading back to  
CHANCE.)

LOVE FOR SALE,  
IS IT SUCH A CRIME?

GREGORY  
(to CHANCE)

More drinks?

CHANCE

Good idea.

(CHANCE takes the cocktail shaker and pours apple martinis in the cocktail glasses then silently toasts GREGORY. Chance puts down the glass without drinking any and moves closer to Gregory to embrace him.)

CHANCE

I WONDER WHAT HE SAW IN ME  
DO I DISAPPOINT SOMEHOW?

GREGORY

DOES HE UNDERSTAND IT'S HARD TO BE  
IN THE HERE AND NOW

CHANCE  
 I AM STUMBLING  
 GO ON LIFT ME UP  
 TAKE ME AWAY  
 WAITING FOR HIM

GREGORY  
 I AM CRUMBLING  
 FEET OF CLAY  
 BEING WITH HIM  
 I HAVE TO GIVE IN

CHANCE AND GREGORY

BEGIN!

(Music ends as the lights on GREGORY and CHANCE fade leaving them silhouetted in an embrace.)

SCENE 6

*Deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance* - Oscar Wilde

*Next morning in the hotel suite with a table, two chairs. GREGORY, wearing a robe, sits on the chair reading a newspaper. CHANCE appears to be asleep on the bed partially uncovered and possibly naked. THE LADY, dressed as a male waiter and wearing a traditional Sikh turban, enters pushing a cart containing breakfast and coffee. Something about the character reveals that it is The Lady in disguise. Gregory looks up but magically cannot see the disguise.*

THE LADY

You'll forgive but I did not wish to disturb.

(THE LADY begins to set the table and placing the breakfast and coffee near GREGORY while making quick, appreciative glances toward CHANCE. Gregory notices and gestures his impatience. The Lady smiles and starts to pour the coffee.)

GREGORY

I can do that myself. Thank you.

THE LADY

(looking at the bed offstage)

They all look so innocent when they are asleep.

GREGORY

(He looks at her a moment. He recognizes something but changes his mind.)

Thank you.

(GREGORY gives THE LADY a tip and she bows slightly to Gregory who nods a farewell and a thank you. Gregory pours coffee as CHANCE stretches, gets out of bed wearing only his briefs moves toward Gregory. Chance leans forward and lightly kisses Gregory on the forehead as Gregory reaches around and awkwardly pats Chance on the back of his neck.)

GREGORY

After you put something on, there's coffee.

(CHANCE grabs the hotel provided robe from the chair. He joins GREGORY at the table striking a subtle but seductive pose.)

CHANCE

Anything interesting?

GREGORY

Nothing noteworthy. Not in the paper. Just checking the market.

CHANCE

So are you like a banker or something?

GREGORY

I have a masters in organizational psychology and an MBA.

CHANCE

Wow. What's that mean?

GREGORY

I analyze organizational cultural structures for large corporations and make recommendations to HR executives that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees.

CHANCE

I'm not sure I get it but you must like make lots of money.

(GREGORY shrugs it off as CHANCE looks around feeling that the conversation is going somewhere he can't keep up with. He stretches, letting the robe open and showing off his torso.)

Hungry?  
GREGORY

For?  
CHANCE

Breakfast.  
GREGORY

Aren't you going to have some?  
CHANCE

I ordered it for you.  
GREGORY

CHANCE  
I'm always hungry after a great night and that was like a particularly great night. Sure you won't like have any? No? You're a funny guy. You get like a little uptight sometimes but overall you're really awesome. You really know how to treat a guy like me.

GREGORY  
I picked this place for me. Not for you.

CHANCE  
I know. But like this was a special experience for me. As well as for you.

GREGORY  
Don't worry. I already planned to give you a tip.

CHANCE  
Do you want me to leave?

GREGORY  
(shakes his head and then picks up the coffee urn.)  
Have some coffee first.

(GREGORY pours CHANCE a cup as Chance leans forward and places his hand on Gregory's thigh letting his bathrobe fall open. Gregory hands him the cup and saucer forcing Chance to sit up and move away. Gregory pushes the coffee cup and saucer so that Chance spills the coffee on his robe. Chance puts the cup and saucer on the table instead of drinking the rest of it and attempts to wipe up the coffee stain on the robe with a napkin.)

CHANCE

I think I'd better just get dressed and go. I'd like to get to know you better but-forget it. And have a nice life.

GREGORY

(flustered)

I didn't mean for the coffee to spill on you. Really. I'm just a bit off balance today.

CHANCE

So are you married? I mean to another guy or maybe you have like a wife?

GREGORY

(triggering a memory)

No. I'm not married.

CHANCE

Anyone special in your life? A guy like you probably gets a lot of offers.

GREGORY

No. No one special. I'm too old for all that.

CHANCE

There's lots of guys over fifty out there. Maybe not as good looking as you. Definitely not as rich. I mean-- what do I mean?

GREGORY

I hope you don't take this the wrong way but, do you see a doctor regularly?

CHANCE

What?

GREGORY

Just wondering.

CHANCE

I go to a clinic when I need to if that's what you're asking? Can't afford to have my own doctor.

GREGORY

When did you last go?

CHANCE

I don't remember. Anyway, I'm an expert at being safe. Believe me, we were very safe.

GREGORY

I meant for yourself. Too make sure you stay healthy. With your lifestyle and all.

CHANCE

Maybe I should like ask you the same question?

GREGORY

Fair enough. You could say I'm sort of a closet hypochondriac. I avoid going to see doctors so I won't have to hear about all the terrible diseases I probably have.

CHANCE

A guy your age should probably get checked out more often. I like never, ever get sick.

GREGORY

(responding to another remark on his age)

Well, there's always a first time.

CHANCE

Yes there is always a first time. And a lot more is going on here than you like want to admit.

GREGORY

How does a young man like you end up being - whatever you are?

CHANCE

There's nothing wrong with what I am.

GREGORY

You're very attractive, obviously intelligent. You have so much going for you.

CHANCE

No more than what I am. Or what you want. All of that like doesn't amount to much in this world.



GREGORY

What I have doesn't amount to much either. And it all disappears eventually. Don't fool yourself.

CHANCE

You don't have like a fucking clue.

GREGORY

I think I do.

CHANCE

People who are rich always try to downplay their money. Like they feel guilty or something so they have to pretend to themselves that it doesn't matter. If you had any experience of what it's like to be really poor, I mean more than poor, and you've lost everything, you wouldn't say shit like that.

(GREGORY reaches for his pants, pulls out his wallet and hands CHANCE a fifty dollar bill.)

GREGORY

The tip.

(CHANCE looks puzzled. A tip is nice to get but it seems like an odd moment to get one.)

GREGORY

You probably deserve more.

CHANCE

Man, you are messed up.

(CHANCE takes the money, finds his clothes and quickly dresses being careful to turn his back and dress with the robe covering his nakedness as much as possible. Chance changes his mind and drops the robe while he puts on his shirt and pants making sure Gregory has a good view of his body like a reverse strip tease. When Chance is dressed, he goes over to Gregory. Chance puts his arms around Gregory's neck and gives him a long, deep sensual kiss on the mouth.)

CHANCE

On the house.

(CHANCE turns and leaves the scene. GREGORY  
watches him go.)

GREGORY

Damn!

(Lights fade.)

SCENE 7

*Life is never fair, and perhaps it is a good thing for most of us that it is not.* - Oscar  
Wilde

*Lights shift to CHANCE in an abstract place.  
He is wearing the same clothes he was wearing  
on the balcony in the previous scene. He looks up  
into the sky. He reaches into his pocket, takes  
out some money, counts it and puts it back in his  
pocket.*

CHANCE

(singing "What You Have")

WHAT YOU HAVE  
ALL YOUR BONDS AND YOUR STOCKS  
WHAT I HAVE  
I COULD FIT IN ONE BOX

SO I THOUGHT, 'WOW, YOU BROUGHT ME  
TO THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE?'  
WHILE YOU THOUGHT 'WHAT'S THE  
COST TO BE HERE IN THIS EMBRACE?'  
YOU'RE COUNTING ALL THE TIME  
WHAT CAN I SAY?

I'LL SAY HURRAY  
SHALL WE PRAY TO  
WHAT YOU HAVE  
YOU HAVE

WHAT I HAVE  
WASN'T HANDED TO ME  
WHAT YOU HAVE  
LANDED WITH YOUR MASTERS DEGREE

BUT I KNOW WHAT I'VE GOT  
THOUGH THERE'S A LOT I HAVEN'T FOUND  
AND WHEN MY HEAD  
IS IN A CLOUD SOMETIMES  
MY FEET WON'T REACH THE GROUND

FOLLOW ME AROUND  
WE'LL TOUCH THE SKY  
THEN YOU'LL KNOW WHY  
I'LL NEVER HAVE  
WHAT YOU HAVE  
YOU HAVE

WHEN I LOOKED INTO YOUR EYES  
SOMETHING CAUGHT ME BY SURPRISE  
SOMETHING HINTING THAT A CHANGE  
WILL COME IN ME

AND EVEN THOUGH YOU HESITATE  
I AM LEARNING HOW TO WAIT  
AND I AM SO MUCH MORE THAN  
WHO YOU WANT ME TO BE

DON'T YOU SEE?  
DON'T YOU SEE?  
THAT IS WHAT I HAVE  
I HAVE

WHAT YOU HAVE  
SOMETHING I CANNOT TAKE APART  
WHAT I HAVE  
SOMETHING BURIED IN YOUR HEART

SO YOU'RE CINCHING THE DEAL  
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO GIVE  
WHEN YOU FORGET HOW TO FEEL  
YOU'RE FORGETTING HOW TO LIVE  
BUT TO ME IT SEEMS LIKE SUCH A SHAME  
WE ARE THE SAME  
WE ARE IN LINE  
WE COULD COMBINE  
WE SHOULD ALIGN  
WHAT YOU HAVE  
AND I HAVE  
THEN WE'D HAVE  
WHAT WE HAVE

(Lights up on THE LADY and GREGORY back at Gregory's home. GREGORY is having a glass of wine while sitting in his living room.)

GREGORY

It wasn't until this morning that I started to wonder if it was all a big mistake.

THE LADY

Mistake? No mistake. Not for us.

GREGORY

Not for you maybe. For me- he suddenly got very interested in how much the whole *affair* cost.

THE LADY

You realize that he was thinking of that all the time? Of course he was. Perhaps he became more bold toward the end. Not surprising. Not very smart. They always give themselves away. But why worry about it?

GREGORY

Just seemed to kill the moment. I was trying to find something and I almost had it.

THE LADY

Something?

GREGORY

I went too far. Gave too much away about myself. You'd never do that. Would you?

THE LADY

Silly man. That's part of the big game we all play. There are the haves and the have-nots. When the have-nots surround you, then you must give them a bit of what they want. But you should know how to handle them by now. You've been watching me for years.

GREGORY

I don't how to handle anything any more.

THE LADY

And you never will if you keep hiding out in here.

GREGORY

You don't understand.

THE LADY

Try me.

GREGORY

I'm not sure I understand either. But-  
(singing "This Is Just The Place")

THERE'S A WORLD OUT THERE  
FOR WHICH I DO NOT CARE  
PEOPLE GRASPING AT ANY STRAW  
IN THEIR QUIET DESPERATION  
SPINNING YEAR AFTER YEAR  
ALL THEIR RAGGED NERVES RUBBED RAW  
LIKE IT WAS THE LAW  
BUT IT'S NOT MY LAW

NOW ON THIS STAGE I'VE SET  
ALL THAT I CAN FORGET  
AS LITTLE BY LITTLE IT GROWS  
WITH THESE OBJECTS THAT SURROUND ME  
LIKE A SAFETY NET  
AND EVERYTHING IS SOMETHING I CHOSE  
SO THAT IS HOW IT GOES  
AND HARDLY ANYONE KNOWS  
NO, NOBODY KNOWS

THIS IS JUST THE PLACE  
TO ENCASE ALL I OWN  
IN PAINTED ROOMS AND BOOKSHELVES AND BINS  
HIGH ATOP THIS HILL  
I CAN DO WHAT I WILL  
I DON'T HAVE TO LET ANYONE IN  
NO, I DON'T NEED TO LET ANYONE IN

THE LADY

Safety net? Where?

GREGORY

THE FAMOUS POSTER THERE  
THE STATUETTE, THE CHAIR  
THE SOUVENIRS, THE MAHOGANY CASE  
THE AUTOGRAPHS AND THE SCREENS  
MOVING IMAGES AND SCENES  
AND THAT MYSTERIOUS LIGHT ON YOUR FACE  
AND OVER THERE A PERFECT SPOT FOR AN  
EMBRACE  
JUST IN CASE

THE LADY

Really? What are you referring to?

GREGORY

Nobody.

THIS IS JUST THE PLACE  
FOR BEING ALL ALONE  
CHECK YOUR BROKEN HEART AT THE DOOR  
THERE'S A PLACE INSIDE  
WHERE NO ONE EVER CRIED  
AND WHERE I KNOW WHAT EVERYTHING'S FOR  
I DON'T NEED TO SAY ANYTHING MORE  
KNOWING WHAT'S IN STORE  
AND FILLING EVERY SPACE  
YES, THIS IS JUST THE PLACE

(CHANCE appears holding a cell phone from his pocket and scrolls through his phone book for GREGORY's number. Chance pushes a button then holds the phone to his ear.

Gregory's phone rings and he looks at it the cell phone screen to see who's calling. When he realizes it's Chance, Gregory hesitates and almost doesn't answer but then changes his mind and answers the phone.)

GREGORY

Hello?

CHANCE

Hi. Gregory? I like never, ever do this but I called to say hi. So, hi.

GREGORY

Okay. Hi. Who is this?

CHANCE

It's me. Chance. Remember me? You remember me.

GREGORY

How could I ever forget you?

CHANCE

So. Hi. So like what's going on?

GREGORY

Nothing. Everything.

CHANCE

You're probably like surprised to hear from me.

GREGORY

It's the last thing I expected.

CHANCE

So, I was just wondering if you'd ever like to maybe see me again.

GREGORY

I'm not as rich as you think I am.

CHANCE

How rich do you think I think you are?

GREGORY

I guess I wouldn't know but it's not what you think.

I didn't call you for that.

CHANCE

What did you call for?

GREGORY

I wanted you to know that I like really go for older guys. Older guys like you I mean.

CHANCE

Like me?

GREGORY

Yeah- you still look really great. Like for your age. But I mean I like your age. You know, an older guy like you is usually the best.

CHANCE

The best what?

GREGORY

You know. Someone who like knows what they're doing. Someone who can take care of someone like me. I mean give me advice and things like that. You probably know a lot of stuff.

CHANCE

Stuff?

GREGORY

Like living in the world and all.

CHANCE

I wish that were true.

GREGORY

Look at you. Come on. You've got it all.

CHANCE

Before you go on and on, I just want you to know. I can't afford to do that again. Twice was enough. Okay?

GREGORY

I wasn't asking for that.

CHANCE



GREGORY

What are you asking for then?

CHANCE

Well. Come out and like have a drink with me. That's all.

GREGORY

I don't know if that's a good idea.

CHANCE

It's on me. We can meet at the same place I saw you. You know, after that first night? I know you saw me there.

GREGORY

I know.

CHANCE

What's the harm? Come on.

GREGORY

Drinks are on you?

CHANCE

I pay this time. Just don't order any of that imported tequila or that yuppie vodka or anything like that. Well, you can if you want. It's cool.

GREGORY

This is irresistible. When?

CHANCE

Tomorrow night? At 10?

GREGORY

That's late for me. How about 7?

CHANCE

Promise you'll be there?

GREGORY

Promise.

CHANCE

Well then. Bye, Gregory. See you then. This is good. This is good. Okay. Bye.

(CHANCE ends the call quickly before GREGORY can say anything more. Lights down on Chance abruptly. THE LADY smirks at Gregory. Gregory shrugs his shoulders.)

GREGORY

He's buying.

(Lights fade on the scene as THE LADY moves forward into a spotlight and prepares to sing to her unseen fans.)

THE LADY

(singing a reprise of "Somethin' Cooked Up In Your Mind")

YOU'RE SURE THAT IT'S YOUR WAY  
BUT WHEN YOU OPEN THAT DOOR  
BE SURPRISED AT WHAT YOU WILL FIND  
SO IN SPITE OF THE PLANS YOU MADE  
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO ADJUST  
FOR LUST  
SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND

SO PLAY THE SCENE FOR THE LAUGHTER  
THAT'S A BREEZY, EASY WAY TO BE  
IT'S JUST FOR SHOW  
YOU CAN ALWAYS GO  
BUT NO, IT'S A TRAGICOMEDY

(Light slowly rise on GREGORY standing beside a tall table similar to the one used in the earlier bar scene. He looks around somewhat impatiently and wondering he's been stood up for the date.)

THE LADY  
(singing)

YOU CAN TURN AWAY FROM IT  
 PRETEND YOU'RE NOT AWARE  
 BUT IT MIGHT SNEAK UP FROM BEHIND  
 YOU THINK IT'S COMPLICATED  
 AND YOU'D NEVER PUT YOUR TRUST  
 IN LUST  
 SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND  
 IT'S JUST LUST  
 SOMETHIN' COOKED UP IN YOUR MIND

(Lights fade as GREGORY continues to look around and THE LADY leaves the stage. Just before the lights are completely out, Gregory spots the person he's been looking for and gestures making sure CHANCE sees him at the table in the bar where he's been waiting.)

## SCENE 8

*A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.*

- Oscar Wilde

*GREGORY and CHANCE standing on either side of a tall table similar to the one used in the earlier scene. They are each holding their drinks. Chance is drinking a beer and Gregory is sipping on a martini. Gregory is wearing the same coat from previous scenes. Chance also wears the same coat but it is opened and his shirt is unbuttoned.*

CHANCE

I'm glad you came. Sorry I was late. Are you glad you came?

GREGORY

I'm glad I came.

CHANCE

Are you really glad you came?

GREGORY

I'm really glad I came.

CHANCE

That's good 'cuz I'm really glad you came too.

GREGORY

I got that.

CHANCE

Do you think I'm stupid?

GREGORY

No. I think you're quite intelligent.

CHANCE

Oh?

GREGORY

You might not have a liberal arts education but you obviously have great natural insight into human nature.

CHANCE

Really?

GREGORY

Sure. You're paying a lot attention to me right now and picking up a lot of information from my gestures and expressions. That's how you're able to so successfully manipulate your-- what do you call them- your *clients* right?

CHANCE

I'm not manipulating anybody.

GREGORY

Sure you are. Come on. You certainly figured out how to press all my buttons. You are doing it now.

CHANCE

I am not. How?

GREGORY

Well, you look innocent but -- you've got your shirt unbuttoned down to Never-Never-Land and you keep leaning forward so I can see your body. You're watching me like a hawk ready to swoop down on your prey when the moment is ripe. You even convinced me to come here and meet you. And thanks for the drink by the way. I'll have another of these yuppie martinis please.

CHANCE  
(buttoning up his shirt)

I don't do that.

GREGORY  
Hey don't knock it. These are great skills to have. Something you can't learn at school.

CHANCE  
I asked you here 'cuz I'm trying to show you that I really like you. And I think you're like special.

GREGORY  
Why? I haven't done anything in particular. Other than taking you to the Mandarin Oriental for the night. That made an impression, no?  
(CHANCE gives him a petulant look.)

Have another drink.

CHANCE  
You know I've never done this before.

GREGORY  
So why am I special? Because you think I have lots of money and aren't too unappetizing? Is that how it works?

CHANCE  
This isn't going the way I wanted it to go.

GREGORY  
Don't worry. I'm going along with it.

CHANCE  
I'm really just trying to change my life. I know you don't believe me.

GREGORY  
Change your life?

CHANCE  
I want to get out of the business. You know I've been at this for like almost two years and I've been feeling like really tired lately. You said yourself that I'm smart so-

GREGORY  
Thinking of only having just one client? For now?

(CHANCE downs the rest of his drink in one gulp, puts the glass down and moves around so that he's standing behind GREGORY. Chance reaches his arms under Gregory's arms putting his hands on Gregory's chest. Chance pushes himself against Gregory and starts to gently kiss his neck.)

GREGORY

There's that smell again? Patchouli. You're wearing patchouli?

CHANCE

It's not me. Someone else.

GREGORY

Everything comes back in style if you give it chance.

CHANCE

Then give me a chance, will you?

GREGORY

(enjoying the caresses)

Give Chance a chance. I'll have a tee shirt made and wear it around town.

CHANCE

Let's go to my place.

GREGORY

I don't want to go there.

CHANCE

This is just between you and me. You know that.

GREGORY

(leaning back, enjoying it)

This is a good swoop you're doing here.

(hesitating, not sure he wants to say what he's about to say but, being a bit drunk, surrenders to the moment.)

This a helluva way to get out of buying me another. Let's go to my house.

(CHANCE moves away, takes GREGORY's hand and starts to lead him away. Gregory turns toward the table and picks up his martini glass.)

Gregory looks at the martini glass and then finishes it off in one gulp. He smiles at Chance as Chance leads him by the hand out of the bar and into the night.)

## SCENE 9

*There are only two tragedies in life: one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.* - Oscar Wilde

*GREGORY and CHANCE are walking on the street toward Gregory's house. The night is cool and there are pools of light from the street lamps. They arrive.*

GREGORY

This is it.

CHANCE

This is really nice.

GREGORY

(Hesitating. Not sure he wants to let CHANCE see his secret life.)

Shall we go in?

(They enter. CHANCE looks around the room overwhelmed by GREGORY's collection of memorabilia.)

CHANCE

You have lots of old movie stuff. You a collector?

GREGORY

Yes. I'm not crazy or anything but everything here is very special. Would you like a drink?

(GREGORY pours two glasses, hands one to CHANCE. They move closer as Gregory clinks his glass against Chance's. Music begins and Gregory puts down the glass and moves away from Chance. During the song Chance moves around the room checking out all the memorabilia partly in amusement and partly in amazement. Chance continues to hold his glass sipping from it occasionally.)

GREGORY

(singing "Out From Under Me")

I'M ON THE OUTSIDE  
LOOKING IN  
FOR WHERE TO BEGIN

NOT REALLY KNOWING  
WHERE TO START  
TO TAKE IT APART

I DON'T BELIEVE IN YESTERDAY  
OR WONDER WHAT WILL BE TAKEN AWAY  
OUT FROM UNDER ME  
SOMETHING I CAN'T SEE

IS IT A QUESTION  
OF WHAT'S RIGHT?  
OR WHO WINS THE FIGHT?

DO I SURRENDER?  
TO THE PLAN  
OR TAKE WHAT I CAN

FROM THE RANDOM WAY THAT THINGS COLLIDE  
LIKE A STORM OUT AT SEA THAT PULLS THE TIDE  
OUT FROM UNDER ME

WHY CAN'T I BE?  
JUST FOR THE MOMENT  
SOMEONE WHO  
SEEMS ALL SHINY AND NEW

STANDING HERE WATCHING  
WHAT YOU DO  
AWAITING MY CUE



YOU SHOW YOUR HAND AND I JUST SHRUG  
AND THEN YOU SMILE AND PULL THE RUG  
OUT FROM UNDER ME  
I FAIL TO SEE

THAT WE NEVER KNOW  
WHAT THIS WAY COMES  
AT BEST WE GUESS  
BY THE PRICKING OF OUR THUMBS  
AND THEN WE DO THE DUMBEST THINGS  
WITH WHAT LIFE BRINGS TO US

SO I WASN'T THINKING  
VERY CLEAR  
TO BE WITH YOU HERE  
ON A ROLLER COASTER  
ROUND AND ROUND  
AND GAINING NO GROUND

I'M HOLDING ON WITH FINGERS CURLED  
I DON'T EXPECT TO LOSE THE WORLD  
OUT FROM UNDER ME  
NOW I CAN SEE

I'M TOO NEAR THE EDGE  
STANDING ON THIS LEDGE  
AND I WONDER  
WILL I EVER BE OUT FROM UNDER ME  
OUT FROM UNDER ME

(Lights change. GREGORY moves toward CHANCE and takes Chance's glass, puts it down and returns to Chance then he puts his arms around Chance, face to face. Chance moves slowly in for a kiss. Suddenly, Gregory throws his head back, gasping for air. Gregory, on his back, looks at Chance unable to speak but pleading for help.)

CHANCE

What? What can I do?

(Gregory's mouth starts to open and close rapidly. Gregory clenches his teeth and hisses and his eyes become blank.

Chance moves Gregory to the couch and lays him down. Chance looks around the room and spots a blanket. Chance gets the blanket and tucks Gregory inside it. Chance takes out his cell phone and starts to dial 911 but changes his mind when he sees that Gregory has stopped moving. Chance pokes Gregory waiting for a response that doesn't come. He pokes him again. Still nothing.)

CHANCE

Can you hear me?

(Still no response. Chance puts his hands in Gregory's pockets pulling out all the cash that he can find. Chance removes the wrist watch from Gregory's hand and puts in his pocket. Chance moves away, looks around nervously and then heads for the doorway. THE LADY enters carrying the doctor's coat. She puts it on as she sings. The hospital bed appears.)

THE LADY

(singing "End of Act 1")

SOMEWHERE IN TIME  
THERE'S A MAN IN A ROOM

(Lights fade to black with the final chord of music.)

## ACT II

## SCENE 1

***“I sometimes think that God in creating man somewhat overestimated his ability.”***

- Oscar Wilde

*Music begins in the dark with a low resonate note followed by the sound of the of Tibetan singing bowls. THE LADY, dressed as a male Tibetan monk in saffron robes, enters and faces an unseen audience. She bows from the neck with palms together and sits on a throne-like chair that appears to be up on a pedestal. She has her full movie star makeup on and is more or less disguised as the monk. The other characters do not see this. Musical theme for the opening song blends into the traditional sounding Tibetan music and eventually takes over.*

## THE LADY

(as the Tibetan spiritual teacher)

Nothing exists separate, alone. Idea of independent existence is unhappy delusion.

Understand this, open door to happiness. Question how to open door?

(Lights rise on Gregory sitting cross legged on a meditation cushion on the floor and wearing a light, loose fitting, brightly colored outfit specifically created for meditation.)

## GREGORY

(singing “The Last Little Year”)

THE LAST LITTLE YEAR  
IT TOOK FOREVER  
I THOUGHT I’D NEVER MAKE IT HERE

BUT I’M HERE  
NOT EVER KNOWING  
IF I WAS GOING TO MAKE IT PAST  
THIS LAST LITTLE YEAR

THE LADY

Forgiveness? Vital! Destructive emotions, ah, reduced.

(Lights up on CHANCE. He looks pale with blotchy skin and dark circles under his eyes. His hair is greasy and disheveled and looks like he needs a shave and a shower.)

CHANCE

THE LAST LITTLE YEAR  
I LOST MY FOOTING  
AND THERE'S NO PUTTING IT IN GEAR

AND I FEAR  
MY HEALTH IS GOING  
AND I'VE BEEN GROWING OLD TOO FAST  
IN THIS LAST LITTLE YEAR

THE LADY

All humans want to be happy. All. Remember this. You see?

CHANCE & GREGORY

AT EVERY TURN  
YOU LEARN TO FACE  
THE THING YOU FEAR  
AND THOUGH YOU TRY  
YOU CAN'T DENY  
YOU'RE NEVER SURE  
YOU MUST ENDURE  
AND JUST GET PAST  
THE LAST DAY OF  
THIS LAST LITTLE YEAR

THE LADY

An exercise- giving and taking. Start with someone easy. Friend that is ill. Breathe in suffering and give back good feeling. Okay? Yes?

CHANCE

THE LAST LITTLE YEAR

GREGORY

A NEW DIRECTION?

CHANCE  
WITH NO PROTECTION FOR ME  
HERE

GREGORY  
THE LAST LITTLE YEAR

CHANCE

TIRED AND RED-EYED

GREGORY

WHOEVER SAID I'D VOLUNTEER?

CHANCE AND GREGORY

FOR THIS LAST LITTLE YEAR

THE LADY

Think of person terrible to you. See that person as suffering being. Give your happiness.  
Next, same for worst enemy. Good?

CHANCE AND GREGORY

YOU TRY TO CHOOSE  
THEN LOSE YOUR WAY  
FROM THERE TO HERE  
THERE'S NO CONTROL  
YOU HAVE TO ROLL

CHANCE  
FROM PUNCH TO PUNCH

GREGORY  
FROM HUNCH TO HUNCH

CHANCE  
WHICH WAY TO GO?

GREGORY  
YOU NEVER KNOW

CHANCE AND GREGORY

WILL YOU OUTLAST  
THE LAST DAY OF  
THIS LAST LITTLE YEAR

(THE LADY as Tibetan spiritual teacher looks at GREGORY and walks over toward him. Gregory closes his eyes pretending to be involved in the suggested exercise. The Lady stands next to him peering at him and smiling. Gregory opens one eye and looks toward her making sure she doesn't realize that he is "cheating." She does and she pokes him.)

THE LADY

I see you have small opening. Flicker of insight.

GREGORY

I have? About what?

THE LADY

How to open door.

(THE LADY gives a knowing look out to the audience and then turns and leaves. GREGORY smiles but then looks confused having no idea what she is referring to.)

GREGORY

THE LAST LITTLE YEAR  
AM I PRETENDING?

CHANCE

IS IT ENDING?

(Lights fade except for a tight spot on GREGORY from above as he closes his eyes and tries to meditate. He opens his eyes, sighs, relaxes his posture. He's getting bored and frustrated. He sits upright, closes his eyes and makes the effort to try again.)

SCENE 2

*"Always forgive your enemies - nothing annoys them so much."* -Oscar Wilde

*The scenery moves around GREGORY as he sits in a meditation pose . Lights up and he is back in his living room.*

*He opens his eyes, still feeling frustrated and then gets up from the floor and begins to move away when he is stopped by THE LADY speaking but not seen.*

THE LADY

Darling. Where have you been?

(GREGORY looks around as lights rise slowly on THE LADY smiling and amused.)

GREGORY

You!

THE LADY

Yes it's me. What have you been up to?

GREGORY

Where have you been? The last time I saw you was in a hallucination in the intensive care unit. You were in a musical that was going on at the foot of my bed. What a show!

THE LADY

Was I working on the stage again? I hate the stage. But what I want to know is, what are you wearing?

GREGORY

This? It's loose and comfortable. Perfect for meditation.

(THE LADY gestures disapproval of the bright color.)

It's supposed to be a happy color.

THE LADY

Meditation?

GREGORY

Sure. What do you think happens to most well-to-do, gay men over fifty in San Francisco after they've survived a heart attack?

THE LADY

I haven't the faintest.

GREGORY

They turn into Buddhists. Then there's also the jew-boos.

THE LADY

The jew-boos? Is that anything like the heebie jeebies?

GREGORY

Jewish Buddhists. Since I'm gay, I suppose that makes me a Ga-Jew-Boo.

THE LADY

Ga-zunt-heit.

GREGORY

They do say that meditation is supposed to have great health benefits and I think I'd like to live a bit longer. Well-- than I did before. With a better outlook. Didn't you ever watch Oprah?

THE LADY

Opera? I adore opera!

GREGORY

Alright, alright. I admit meditation is boring. I try.

THE LADY

I see.

GREGORY

Do you? I'm disfigured now. Scarred from here to here. Certainly unappealing and kind of gross. I try not to look. And then there was my brush with death.

THE LADY

I don't want to hear about it. Leave it for the Buddhists.

GREGORY

Don't you have something a little more profound to say?

THE LADY

Well- "life is a banquet, and most poor suckers are starving to death!"

GREGORY

Can't you do any better than that? Jung had Philemon and I get you.

THE LADY

Philemon?



GREGORY

That imaginary old man with the wings. Jung called him Philemon. I found out that Jung had wild, startling visions during a heart attack he suffered when he was 69 years old. Very similar to my story except you disappeared after my heart attack. I must admit, I'm glad you came back.

THE LADY

You do realize that you've known me a long while. And that you left me behind years ago. Along with a thousand other dreams.

GREGORY

That idea of being a professional set designer? I put that one away when I moved here.

THE LADY

I was there. You didn't notice.

GREGORY

Well then you must also know how I struggled away down in Los Angeles- movies and theater. I wanted so much to be a part of it. But I did give it up.

(THE LADY gestures her disagreement)

Okay. I didn't try very hard. See I thought I'd have an easier, simpler life up here. A cooler, foggier life. And I have had that. But sometimes I wonder about what must be missing.

THE LADY

Perhaps I am all you know about L-O-V-E.

GREGORY

What's that supposed to mean?

THE LADY

You think love is about the moon and the stars, silent stares and sharing cigarettes.

GREGORY

I know what love is.

THE LADY

Do you? I thought you gave that up as well?

GREGORY

Gave it up?

THE LADY

How many years have you lived alone?

GREGORY

I've had a few romances along the way.

THE LADY

That's not what I asked you.

GREGORY

Well, when I was very young and first moved here, I let a young man I'd gotten involved with move into my first, groovy pad. At the time, I was a poor, hippie type and I had rented a small flat above a used clothing store. That was before they called it "vintage" and everything smelled like patchouli. He used to wear patchouli oil instead of deodorant which in his mind had something to do with corporate greed, cancerous chemicals and ancient India. I didn't like it very much.

THE LADY

So you lived with this young man?

GREGORY

A year and then some. His name was . . . Tom.

THE LADY

Tom. A nice, everyday name.

GREGORY

Tom - with long side burns, soft, blondish, kind of floppy hair and an unexpected smile that could turn on all the lights in the house.

THE LADY

What happened to Tom?

GREGORY

He was an early victim of AIDS. We called it the gay cancer then because we didn't know what it was. He got very sick and went home to die. In those days, our families weren't told about our relationships and probably didn't want to know. I wanted him to stay with me and I'd try to take care of him but he thought that wasn't a good idea and I think he really wanted to go back home to his family and die there. We used to argue a lot.

THE LADY

About?

GREGORY

A lot dumb things that weren't important. He used to say that it doesn't matter what you do in life, just do it well and do it all the way. He always wanted to go on these little adventures and he fancied himself as an urban explorer. Money doesn't matter. That was his mantra. To me, he had no ambition and was way too easy on himself.

To him, I was an uptight guy who didn't know how to have fun. Fun, fun, fun, fun. Right. And look what happened.

THE LADY

He went away. What did you do?

GREGORY

I just let him go off alone. I never heard from him again. I don't even know when or how he died.

THE LADY

That's quite a story. Well, where's my violin?

GREGORY

You don't understand. Someone my age, someone who lived here at that time. We were too young for that. So many people to be dying all at once.

THE LADY

I don't understand. What people?

GREGORY

Neighbors, coworkers, friends, lovers. How can I explain it? Even to myself. So many hospital rooms, so many memorials, so much crying and- What do you do? You get angry. You shake your fists at the government, at Reverend Falwell, at the sky. You act up. But it doesn't help. The suffering and dying goes on and- then it stopped. And the rest of us just went on with our lives. So here I am. I don't know what's happened to me.

THE LADY

You haven't loved anyone since then.

GREGORY

I don't know if I was in love then either. I suppose I was now that I think of it. He just disappeared so quickly as if it never happened. All I had was a watch. Gone now. My own stupid fault.

THE LADY

Yes. That watch. For telling time?

GREGORY

I had it all these years. It was a special gift from Tom. He said I should always wear it so I'd never worry about not having enough of it. Enough time I mean.

THE LADY

And you've had plenty of it. Lived alone here since then, no?

GREGORY

That's true. I'm happy this way and I've avoided a lot of drama.

THE LADY

Yet you love drama. From a distance. And as for happy-

GREGORY

Spirit guide -- be gone!

(GREGORY falls to the floor and takes his meditation pose trying to rid himself of the "spirit guide." THE LADY starts to laugh at him.)

THE LADY

I don't think that's going to work.

GREGORY

You can laugh all you want. I have some more important work to do. An assignment, given to me by the teacher.

THE LADY

What is that?

GREGORY

To send loving kindness and forgiveness to someone who has harmed me. You?

THE LADY

Me? Try that gigolo that robbed you and left you for dead.

GREGORY

Are you crazy?

THE LADY

Well?

GREGORY

He's a criminal. He's not worthy of it.

THE LADY

Of what? It's not like you're actually going to see him ever again.

(GREGORY looks at her as a light bulb goes off in his head.)

What difference does it make? It only matters to you.

GREGORY  
(lost in thought)

Yes. See him again.

THE LADY  
(mistaking his agreement)

See him again?

GREGORY  
Maybe I *should* consider trying to actually see him again.

THE LADY  
Are you mad?

GREGORY  
I feel silly just picturing him in my head.

THE LADY  
You'll be making a big mistake.

GREGORY  
No. I just decided. I am going to get in touch with Chance. Tell him I forgive him.

THE LADY  
You ARE mad!

GREGORY  
No. This is the right thing to do. I have a gut feeling about this. I'm going to try to see him.

THE LADY  
A casual stroll into the lion's den?

GREGORY  
That's one way to put it. But. Yes. Where's my cell?

THE LADY  
That little phone thingy without the cord or the padded kind?

GREGORY  
A cell phone, a cell phone, my kingdom for a cell phone.

THE LADY  
That's dreadful.

(GREGORY finds the cell phone and starts to scroll through the screens looking for CHANCE's number. He finds it and presses the dial button.)

THE LADY

Don't you think you're being a bit overly enthusiastic, darling? Perhaps you should-

(Lights up on CHANCE, looking at his cell phone and not knowing who is calling him.)

CHANCE

Yeah?

GREGORY

Chance. It's me.

CHANCE

You? You? You! I erased you. I guess you're like alive.

GREGORY

I am. And you're not hanging up on me.

CHANCE

No.

GREGORY

Good.

CHANCE

So like why did you call me?

GREGORY

I have something I needed to tell you.

CHANCE

Is it good thing or a bad thing?

GREGORY

I think it's good.

CHANCE

I'm not looking that great these days. Lost some weight and, well- you might not like what you see and, uh, it might not work like it used to.

GREGORY

I want to know something. What were you thinking when you left me lying there?

I don't know.

CHANCE

It's important for me to understand.

GREGORY

I like got into a panic. I thought you were dead and I didn't think I could do anything and I didn't want to get like involved. You know? So I figured- you wouldn't be needing the stuff I took and who would ever know? Put yourself in my place.

CHANCE

Ah. The true colors.

GREGORY

Why did you call me?

CHANCE

Well. It's hard to explain but I've changed a lot. And-

GREGORY

What's the difference? I'll probably won't be here next year.

CHANCE

You won't? Why?

GREGORY

Forget it.

CHANCE

Will you meet me?

GREGORY

For what?

CHANCE

I don't want to do this on the phone.

GREGORY

Do what?

CHANCE

Just meet me okay? Our favorite bar? Tonight? Seven o'clock?

GREGORY

I might. I might not.

CHANCE

GREGORY

I'll just be there and hope you show up. Okay?

CHANCE

Have it your way. But I'm not making any promises.

(CHANCE hangs up the phone as the lights fade on him. THE LADY shakes her head at GREGORY.)

GREGORY

I was trying, I was trying. I don't know.

THE LADY

Trying? What?

GREGORY

Taking on the suffering. Giving back-- shit!

THE LADY

Or as we used to say, more politely- merde! Watch your step.

(Lights fade.)

## SCENE 3

***"A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.."*** -Oscar Wilde

*THE LADY is talking to GREGORY who is off stage dressing. During the scene, Gregory pokes his head out during the course of the conversation.)*

THE LADY

(to Gregory offstage)

Oh, stop fussing. What are you planning to say to him?

(imitating Bette Davis)

"I'd like to kiss you, but I just washed my hair."

GREGORY

That is not the right line for this situation.

THE LADY

How about "twas beauty killed the beast."



GREGORY

(entering and almost finished dressing and  
carrying his coat. He puts it on.)

Why am I worried about this? Wonder if you'll be here when I get back.

THE LADY

You can never tell. We spirit guides are a flaky bunch.

GREGORY

It's beyond me that you're here at all.

(GREGORY leaves as THE LADY watches.)

THE LADY

(singing "Beyond You")

YOU BELIEVE IT'S ALL BEYOND YOU  
AND THERE'S NOT A THING YOU CAN DO  
YOU'RE A VAGABOND WANDERING THROUGH  
A LAND YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?

THERE'S A MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN  
BUT YOU'RE CERTAIN THAT NOBODY'S THERE,  
PREPARE TO MEET, TO DEFEAT ALL THE DOUBTS  
THAT ARE FOLLOWING YOU, HOLDING ON FROM  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU

IN THIS TOWN THAT SURROUNDS YOU  
WHERE THE FOG IS ELUSIVE AND FEY  
YOU'RE THE FROG IN THE POND

NEVER KNOWING THE OCEAN  
IS JUST A FEW FEET AWAY  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU

THEN IT WHISPERS IN YOUR EAR  
LIKE A KISS INSIDE YOUR MIND  
SOMETHING HOVERS JUST ABOVE YOU  
IT'S THE LOVE YOU LEFT BEHIND  
AND BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU

(During the musical break, GREGORY returns to the stage, zipped up against the cold and making his way through the streets. Lights up on CHANCE seated on a high stool in front of small round table with a beverage. He is in the same bar as before waiting for Gregory. The light is dim and he is keeping his face in the shadow so that it can't be seen.)

#### THE LADY

THERE'S A PLACE JUST BEYOND YOU  
AND YOU'RE SO MUCH MORE THAN YOU KNOW  
WHILE YOU HESITATE  
THERE'S AN OPEN GATE  
THAT'S WAITING FOR YOU TO GO  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU  
BEYOND YOU

(Lights fade slowly on THE LADY as the song ends.)

#### SCENE 4

***"Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live."*** -Oscar Wilde

*CHANCE takes the stolen watch out of his pocket and holds in his hand looking at it as if it was a precious object.*

*GREGORY enters the bar and looks around but doesn't spot Chance as Chance's face is purposely hidden in the dark. Chance looks up and sees Gregory near the entrance of the bar. He quickly puts the watch away and then signals to Gregory. Gregory spots him and makes his way to the table. Gregory, smiling nervously, sits at the stool across from Chance.*

GREGORY

Hello. Fancy meeting you here.

CHANCE

It's good to see you. I'm like glad you made it. And -- that you're like -- alive. You look good.

GREGORY

I was lucky.

CHANCE

What happened?

GREGORY

You didn't close the door properly. Left it slightly opened. A neighbor just coming home noticed it. I woke up in the ICU. Don't know when or how.

CHANCE

That's good. You really look terrific.

GREGORY

No I don't. When I look at my own body, it's scary.

CHANCE

(leaning forward into the light)

You seem to be okay. You're still so sexy.

(GREGORY is taken aback by when he sees the change in CHANCE's face and body. After a moment, Gregory regains his composure and smiles at Chance.)

CHANCE

I haven't been well.

GREGORY

What's wrong?

CHANCE

Don't know yet. Something they don't understand so they have to do a lot of tests. They tell me it's a process of elimination but it's expensive so I have to wait. It's not cancer.

(GREGORY gives him a frightened look)

It's not the virus. Probably a rare disease. But they don't have time for me. It's not your problem.

GREGORY

But surely there must be-

CHANCE

I don't want to talk about it.

GREGORY

I wanted to see you because I wanted you to know that I forgive you for what happened.

CHANCE

(sarcastically)

Aw. Thanks. Now I can sleep again.

GREGORY

Because of you, I should be dead right now.

CHANCE

I didn't give you a heart attack, man.

GREGORY

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. I've been through a lot and I'm trying to come to terms with everything.

CHANCE

I'm sorry too. I shouldn't have left you there. It's just that- you wouldn't get it.

GREGORY

You've said that before.

CHANCE

(trying to explain himself)

Okay. See where I came from- the land of the bullies- every Sunday my father made me go shoot at deer with him while he got drunk in the woods and my mother watched this guy on TV who promised salvation on a 24 hour prayer line. Shit. I had to like get out of there. You know?

I came here because I saw that Harvey Milk documentary on TV when I was a kid and where he says like “come to San Francisco and we’ll be your family.” Something like that. So that’s why I came here. But it’s not like that here. No, it’s not. It’s just a lonely, big city like any other. But-

(CHANCE notices that GREGORY is consciously breathing and Gregory’s eyes flutter as he tries to find the right mental state.)

Like what’re you doing?

GREGORY

It’s an exercise I learned from a Buddhist teacher, an enlightened master from Tibet. Taking on the suffering-

CHANCE

Mine?

GREGORY

Well. Not exactly like that but-

CHANCE

How about taking me home instead? What do you think? Yeah?

GREGORY

Now you’re making fun of me.

CHANCE

No I mean it. It’s been awhile since I’ve had any and you’d be really like helping me out.

GREGORY

No. Absolutely not.

CHANCE

Why not?

GREGORY

I think I want to leave now.

CHANCE

Don’t go yet.

GREGORY

No. I did what I needed to do.

CHANCE

What about what I need you to do?

GREGORY

It's not going to happen. No, no-

CHANCE

I'm really desperate. I lie in my room at night, sweating and my head is spinning and I get nauseous sometime.

GREGORY

Here. I'll give you everything I've got on me. Here.

(GREGORY reaches into his pocket and takes out the cash he has but it doesn't add up to much. He hands CHANCE half of the bills he has.)

CHANCE

I don't want the money.

GREGORY

Take it. Go on. You need it.

(CHANCE gets up and attempts to put his arms around GREGORY's neck. Gregory quickly pulls away, disgusted.)

CHANCE

What? I'm not your fantasy anymore? Don't have what you want? You don't like this body anymore? Don't want a big, messy kiss? You liked it before.

(GREGORY puts the cash on the table and backs away to leave.)

CHANCE

Don't go. I can't take it take it anymore. I can't do it alone.

(GREGORY takes the cash and hands it to CHANCE.)

GREGORY

Just take the money.

(GREGORY starts to leave.)

CHANCE

Wait, wait. I have something I have to give you.

(CHANCE takes the watch out from his pocket.)

Take it.

GREGORY

You've kept it all this time? Well I don't want it anymore. I don't need it anymore. That's all behind me now. I'm at peace with myself.

CHANCE

You have to fucking take it back.

GREGORY

No I don't. Just sell it.

CHANCE

NO!

GREGORY

Throw it in the goddamned Pacific ocean. I don't care.

CHANCE

(lunging at GREGORY)

You have to care. YOU HAVE TO CARE!

(GREGORY defending himself, pushes back at CHANCE. Chance falls to the ground.)

CHANCE

You think you're so fucking spiritual for coming here to forgive me and giving me your nothing little bit of charity. You smug asshole. You've got everything. Had everything handed to you. So you've just used everyone around you while you like stayed outside of it all. I had to be strong. And you-- See, I've lived my life with courage while you locked yourself in a safe little cage with money scattered on the bottom to catch your shit. And you'll die that way- in that cage, a lonely, old bastard, unloved and unwanted except for your money.

(CHANCE stands up.)

You think I'm the loser but, fuck you -you're the loser.

(GREGORY reaches into his pocket, takes out his wallet and pulls out a card. He hands the card to CHANCE.)

## GREGORY

This is a good place. A spiritual center. They can help you there.

## CHANCE

(after reading the card)

You selfish bastard. You're so full of shit. When I'm about to die- and I'm going to die - it'll be raining. I know it. It'll be like raining and raining and, and- I'll just come to your house and puke my guts out right in front of your door and die right there. In the rain. Then you can step in my puke and I'll be laughing at you when I'm dead. Just laughing and laughing. I'll never stop laughing.

(GREGORY tries to think of something to say, can't find anything and then turns and quickly leaves CHANCE at the table with his drink, a pile of cash and the card. Chance looks at the watch in his hand, hunched over, dejected, unable to move having completely surrendered to his fate. Music begins. Throughout the song, lights change slowly, brightening from one direction as if the clouds had parted and the sun is rising. The light seems magical as if the ocean were just off the stage. Chance faces the direction of the light as if he can feel the sea air as it is mysteriously getting closer to him.)

## CHANCE

(singing "Lands End")

THERE ISN'T A THING TO SAY  
 NOTHING LEFT TO DEFEND  
 THERE'S NOBODY LEFT TO TURN TO  
 NO REASON TO PRETEND

SO RUN, JUST RUN  
 AND DON'T SLOW DOWN  
 IT'S JUST AROUND THE BEND  
 SOON YOU'LL REACH LANDS END



IT'S A LONG AND A LONELY HIGHWAY  
WESTERLY IT WENDS  
IT ENDS AT A GATE CALLED GOLDEN  
TO THE OCEAN, IT DESCENDS

SO DRIVE, JUST DRIVE  
AND DON'T LOOK BACK  
YOU'LL NEVER LACK FOR A FRIEND  
TO POINT YOU TO LANDS END

YOU STAND ALONE  
YOU'VE GROWN SO THIN  
THE WIND COULD PUSH YOU  
OFF OF THIS LEDGE

YOU'VE COME SO FAR  
BUT HERE YOU ARE AGAIN  
LOOKING DOWN THE END  
AND TRYING TO SUSPEND  
ON THIS RAZOR'S EDGE  
ON THIS RAZOR'S EDGE

THE TURBULENT, CHURNING OCEAN  
TAKES THE MESSAGE THAT YOU SEND  
AND ANSWERS YOU BACK IN SILENCE  
AND WITH WINGS, SO YOU ASCEND

TO BREATHE, TO BREATHE  
JUST BREATHE THE AIR  
IT'S THERE YOU CAN TRANSCEND  
FALLING OFF LANDS END  
FALLING OFF LANDS END  
FALLING OFF LANDS END

(CHANCE, bathed in the light coming from the side, looks back down to the table. He looks up at the light as if it beckons him. He looks back at the money on the table. He takes GREGORY's watch from his pocket. He looks at it. He holds it up in the air letting it dangle in the light. He makes a decision.

He turns away from the light grabbing the money and then putting the watch back in his pocket and runs off in the opposite direction as the visionary light fades. The sound of a door slamming is heard just as the lights rise in Gregory's house.)

## SCENE 5

*"Hatred is blind, as well as love."* -Oscar Wilde

*GREGORY is standing with his back to a door that has appeared during the scene transition. He has just entered from outside and the sound of the door heard previously was caused by Gregory slamming it behind just prior to this moment. THE LADY watches him as he catches his breath. He's obviously shaken. He doesn't remove his coat.*

THE LADY

Back so soon?

GREGORY

That was a mistake. It's okay now. I shouldn't have gone.

THE LADY

Need a drink? I could use one. Pour me a bourbon on the rocks.

GREGORY

No. I shouldn't be drinking. You need one? That doesn't make any sense. What for?

THE LADY

Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world-

GREGORY

Alright. I get it.

(GREGORY takes off his coat, heads to table designed to be a portable bar with the necessary bottles, ice bucket and glasses. He prepares the drink but puts it down on the table.)

GREGORY

No, no, no. Not going to have this.

(He puts the glass back on the cart.)

What does he want from me? I'm not responsible for him. He ran away leaving me to die. He doesn't care one tiny bit about me. I hardly know him. What was I thinking.

THE LADY

You're not responsible for anyone.

GREGORY

Just myself.

THE LADY

Just yourself.

GREGORY

(picking the drink up)

I set myself up.

THE LADY

You set yourself up.

GREGORY

I go there to forgive him. I end up giving him almost all the cash I had in my pocket. Just kept enough to get home. And-

THE LADY

Now you're home. So?

GREGORY

Damn it. Stop agreeing with me.

(GREGORY looks at the glass in his hand. Drinks from it. Then slams it down on the table. Music begins.)

THE LADY

You're the one who started this you know.

GREGORY

(singing)

NO IT WAS WITH YOU THIS ALL BEGAN

THE LADY

Face facts. Be a man.

GREGORY

WHAT YOU DIDN'T SAY IS WHAT I HEARD

THE LADY

That's absurd!

GREGORY

NO. YOU'VE BEEN TOYING WITH ME  
DESTROYING ALL MY-

THE LADY

(interrupting)

This isn't about me. It was *never* about me. You made your own mess.

GREGORY

OH I CAN GUESS WHAT NEXT YOU'LL SAY

THE LADY

You want to get rid of me

GREGORY

Yes!

(GREGORY moves menacingly toward THE  
LADY.)

THE LADY

Don't come any nearer

GREGORY

BUT YOU HAVE TO GO AWAY

THE LADY

Okay.

THEN LOOK IN THE MIRROR

GREGORY

What?

THE LADY

I CAN'T MAKE IT ANY CLEARER

(GREGORY turns away from her and looks at himself in the unseen mirror. He turns back towards her and she gestures back to the mirror. He looks back into the mirror.)

GREGORY

(singing "This Is Not The Way")

THIS IS NOT A PLACE I THOUGHT  
I'D EVER FIND MYSELF  
THIS IS NOT THE FACE OF THE CLEVER MAN  
WHO MADE HIMSELF

I WAS TRAINED TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD  
EXPLAINED ITS DISARRAY

(THE LADY laughs. GREGORY looks at her.)

AND NOW I MUST CONFESS  
THAT I HAVE MADE A MESS  
AND THIS IS NOT THE WAY  
THIS IS NOT THE WAY

THE LADY

Not the way to what?

GREGORY

NOT THE WAY TO OPEN DOORS  
BEFORE I CAN GO THROUGH

THE LADY

Well. If you want-

GREGORY

AND IT'S VERY NICE TO GET ADVICE AND ALL  
BUT I WILL DO WHAT I MUST DO  
SHOVED ACROSS THE FINISH LINE  
AND LOVED BY VERY FEW

Uh hmm. THE LADY

GREGORY

SO I TAKE IT BACK  
IT'S TRUE, I DON'T KNOW JACK  
BUT WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?  
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

Don't you know yet? THE LADY

GREGORY

HOW IS THAT YOU CAME TO BE?

You know. THE LADY

GREGORY

WHY DID YOU START TO QUESTION ME?

Someone had to. THE LADY

GREGORY

I KNOW YOU WELL AND WELL, WE DO AGREE

Can't you see? THE LADY

GREGORY

BUT DON'T PRETEND YOU ARE A PART OF ME

Pretending? THE LADY

GREGORY

AND YOU HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO SAY  
YOU'VE MADE YOUR PLAY  
IT'S TIME TO GO AWAY

You know-

THE LADY

GREGORY

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR  
"IT COULD BE WORSE"  
YOU'VE PLACED YOUR CURSE  
AND THIS IS NOT THE WAY

There is no other way.

THE LADY

GREGORY

THIS IS NOT THE WAY

I want it to be the way it was.

GREGORY  
(refusing to look in the mirror)

That's not going to happen.

THE LADY

I want to go back.

GREGORY

Even if you could-- Well, he knows where you live.

THE LADY

Oh my god, he's been here.

GREGORY

That's right. And?

THE LADY

GREGORY  
He said something about dying on my doorstep. What am I going to do?

THE LADY  
What are you going to do?

GREGORY  
It started raining.

THE LADY  
You're not making any sense.

GREGORY  
Oh my god, it's raining.

THE LADY  
So?

GREGORY  
It's really raining out there.

(CHANCE enters and knocks on the door.)

THE LADY  
Aren't you going to answer it?

(GREGORY gets a suitcase and opens it.)

GREGORY  
I don't know. I have to get out of here.

THE LADY  
You don't even know who it is.

GREGORY  
I know who it is.

CHANCE  
(muttering, incoherent, leaning against the door, clutching the watch.)  
It's raining. Open the door. I have to give it back to you.

(GREGORY backs away from the door, looks around the room, gets his coat and reaches into his pocket for his cell phone. He flips it open and starts to dial a number but then stops. He stares at the phone. He looks around again. He puts his coat on, still holding the cell phone.)



He looks around the room. He starts to punch in some numbers on his cell phone but then stops. He stares at his hands. He listens to the rain. Is it raining harder or is it letting up? He looks back at his phone. Perhaps he throws the cell phone away and closes the suitcase and then sits down on his suitcase, coat on, not ready or willing to leave.)

GREGORY

I don't want to be like -- this.

THE LADY

A lonely man who's going to die.

CHANCE

Help me.

(CHANCE, leaning against the door, slides to the ground with his back against the door.)

GREGORY

(to THE LADY)

Help me.

THE LADY

That suitcase. Doesn't it remind you of something?

GREGORY

Tom. The last time I saw him. On the front stoop, sitting on his suitcase waiting for the cab to arrive, looking pale and sad and resigned. I was running up and down the stairs, pretending I was making sure to catch the cab but the truth is I didn't have anything I wanted to say. And there wasn't anything I wanted to hear him say. Goodbye was a soft hand pushing the hair off my forehead and a cab disappearing down the street.

THE LADY

And then?

GREGORY

I went back inside. And -- I locked the door behind me.

(GREGORY has trouble breathing. He tries to control it. Another, final heart attack? Suddenly he hears music.)

The Tibetan singing bowls he heard before. Gregory listening to the music, calming himself, almost laughing then he quotes the Tibetan master from Act 2, scene 1. )

GREGORY

Idea of individual existence is unhappy delusion.

THE LADY

(prompting him to understand)

Really?

GREGORY

It was me all along.

THE LADY

Then where do I fit in?

GREGORY

(quietly)

You don't.

THE LADY

Good. Very good.

(THE LADY smiles and leaves. GREGORY goes to the door and opens it. CHANCE falls backwards halfway inside and lying on his back. He's practically unconscious. Gregory bends down and slowly puts his arms around Chance and brings him inside. Chance attempts to hand the watch back to Gregory but Gregory gestures that he doesn't want it back. Gregory gently gets Chance to his feet while Chance shivers. His shivers become more violent as Gregory tries to warm Chance by rubbing Chance's arms. Gregory maneuvers Chance over to the couch and lays him down. Chance lets the money fall from his hand as he relaxes. Gregory looks around and sees the same blanket from Act I draped on his couch. Gregory gets the blanket and brings it back to Chance lying on the couch. Gregory gently wraps the blanket around Chance, lifting Chance up as needed. Gregory kneels beside the couch.

Chance raises his head and looks at Gregory.  
Gregory takes the watch and lovingly fastens it on  
Chance's wrist and holds Chance's hand against his  
heart. Lights fade on Gregory and Chance. THE  
LADY enters.)

SCENE 6

***"Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."*** -Oscar Wilde

THE LADY

(singing "The Way Of The World")

SO THIS IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD MY FRIENDS  
IT DEPENDS ON EACH MOVEMENT WE MAKE  
YOU MAY OPEN A DOOR  
AND FALL FLAT ON THE FLOOR  
BUT BE GLAD THAT YOU MADE THE MISTAKE  
WIDE AWAKE IN THE WAY OF THE WORLD

(THE LADY has removed her makeup and we see  
the actor who played The Lady. Music begins as  
GREGORY and CHANCE enter.)

CHANCE

(singing "Somewhere In Time")

SOMEWHERE IN TIME  
THERE'S A MAN IN A ROOM  
SOMEWHERE IN TIME  
HE WILL RISE  
HE WILL RISE

THE LADY

SOMEWHERE IN TIME  
A LIFE WILL RESUME  
SOME PLACE IN TIME  
THAT NEVER DIES  
NEVER DIES

GREGORY

SOMEHOW HE KNOWS  
THAT IT GOES ON ITS OWN  
SO UNKNOWN AND YET SO CLEAR

CHANCE

A FACE IN THE CROWD  
THAT'S SHOUTING OUT LOUD

GREGORY

I AM HERE

CHANCE

I AM THERE

THE LADY

WE ARE EVERYWHERE

ALL

SOMEWHERE IN TIME

GREGORY

HE WILL RISE

CHANCE

NEVER DIES

THE LADY

SOMETHING SURVIVES

ALL

IN LIVING THE DAYS  
LIVING THE DAYS  
LIVING THE DAYS  
LIVING THE DAYS GOING BY  
SOMEWHERE IN TIME

THE END