

“The Most Unwanted Musical”: A New Methodology for Crowdsourcing Content Towards the Creation of Musical Theatre

by

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Introduction

When I was in high school, I stumbled across a video on YouTube of a song called “The Most Unwanted Music,” written by a team of artists named Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid in collaboration with a composer named Dave Soldier. I pressed play, and I was as horrified as I was thrilled by the thing. It was twenty-one minutes and fifty-nine seconds of shocking nonsense. There was an opera singer rapping about her life as a cowboy, a chorus of children egging her on with chants of “Go! Go! Go! Go!”, and a funky tuba shredding the bass line. There was a protest rant full of nonsensical political jargon shouted through a megaphone, there was product placement, and my favorite, an “accordion solo improvising over elevator theme [...] interrupted by slams cued by the conductor that interfere with the soloist” (Soldier).

Every time it seemed like it couldn’t possibly get worse, it got worse, with each new movement offering a combination of obnoxious sounds more inconceivable than the last. It was dreadful, but it also made me laugh. I was studying music rather intensely at the time, and this song unapologetically broke all of the rules I was being taught about how to make “good” music. Many of my peers were gravely serious about their classical music training, and something about hearing a song that acknowledged its own absurdity and intended to be unpleasant was totally unexpected and weirdly refreshing. I showed it to my family, and my siblings and I started listening to it so frequently that our mom eventually banned it from being played inside our house. It became a running joke among my friend group that we would play it without warning any time anyone got into our cars. We tried to convince our choir director to let us to perform it at our spring concert one year, but she didn’t think it was as funny as we did. Which, to be fair, I understood. It was awful.

One night that year, a group of my friends and I went to see the national tour of a musical that had just stopped at the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, which is how we spent most of our free weekends. (It was *Avenue Q*.) We all met doing community theatre, and we lived across the far corners of the Charlotte metro area, so the rides home dropping everyone off after group outings always felt a little bit like road trips. That night in the car, our conversation turned towards “The Most Unwanted Song,” and we realized that one of us had never heard it before. We pulled it up and gleefully let him listen, tears in our eyes and stomachs sore from laughing. Another of my friends suggested that someone should make a most unwanted musical, how funny would that be? I thought it was a great idea. And then I mostly forgot about it until the fall of 2018.

Attempt #1: The Most Unwanted Play

My idea for this thesis project began again with a pitch I gave in the second semester of our sequence of Collaboration classes, in which the directing, playwriting, and dramaturgy students were shuffled into a number of different creative teams and assigned to produce short plays to present to the class. One particular assignment was for the dramaturgs to pitch ideas that would be voted on by our classmates, and based on everyone’s anonymous preferences, creative teams would be assembled to produce the selected pitch. I found coming up with a pitch to be a difficult challenge at the time, because the more I sharpened my analytical toolkit in my other classes, the more self-critical I became. Being constantly surrounded by brilliant minds picking apart every piece of theatre that I saw and read was invaluable, but I didn’t know how shut off the critical part of my brain when I wanted to be creative. I felt paralyzed and unable to make

work. I believed that I could not make anything that could possibly live up to my own standards, not to mention the standards of my community whom I would be pitching to.

I then recalled reading about how the playwright Young Jean Lee described feeling similarly in graduate school, and how she overcame her artistic block when her professor Mac Wellman prompted her to write “the worst play [she could] possibly write” (Bent & Lee 2014). The thought of approaching my pitch this way was completely freeing for me. It actually felt like the only way I could make anything at all, by deciding that I would make something that was as awful as I could possibly make it. Not to mention I had always been really captivated by pieces of media that developed cult followings because of their ineptitude: films like “The Room,” and “Birdemic: Shock and Terror,” and “Sharknado”; figures like Florence Foster Jenkins; the podcast “My Dad Wrote a Porno,” in which a man reads aloud from his father’s series of poorly written pornographic novellas—the list goes on—things that are so far beyond terrible in their construction that their terribleness is what makes them enjoyable.

Thinking about these things, I wondered if the reason they became popular was because the intention for them to succeed was sincere, and they missed the mark so hopelessly. Is part of the enjoyment for the audience a kind of *schadenfreude* for the creators? If that was the case, would it therefore be impossible to manufacture something with that same intention behind it? Or would it be possible for my collaborators and me to make something so poorly constructed from every conceivable angle that it could be as entertaining as something equally well-made? Is there something intrinsic about how poorly constructed stories defy our expectations about what makes something entertaining, and the surprise of that experience is itself a pleasing one—is there something psychological about how it breaks social norms that tickles us? And could we

tap into that phenomenon? How bad would it have to be to cross that threshold? With these questions in mind, I had a pitch, and my team was assembled.

Before we could make something poorly constructed, I felt we had to define some parameters for ourselves outlining what makes something poorly constructed in the first place. It was at this point that I remembered “The Most Unwanted Song,” and I learned that Komar and Melamid created their music (as well as a whole series of paintings) by surveying a very large number of people about their preferences. I knew the scope of my class project had to be significantly smaller, but I thought their methodology would be a useful starting place for figuring out how to start answering these questions and make intentionally undesirable work. So, I decided that we should survey my classmates and professors in a similar way. My team and I would use the survey results as building blocks to create what we would call “The Most Unwanted Play”—no longer “poorly constructed,” which felt impossible to define objectively, but now explicitly and precisely “unwanted” by the population we were surveying. The idea was no longer only to make something so bad that it would be funny, but also to look at the responses to our questions, put them all together, and see if there was some kind of underlying gathering principle that could hold all of those things in a single artistic object. Thinking about this, I became interested in what this play might reflect back at our classmates who took the survey. How could we use this resulting combination of unwanted elements to examine what it is they value as audience members when watching a play, as well as their larger set of values as a community?

Studying the surveys Komar and Melamid’s team distributed when creating their series of paintings, I found they consisted mostly of questions that asked respondents to rank their preference of one thing over another: Older or newer objects for your home? Wild animals or

domestic? Outdoor or indoor scenes? Religious or non-religious theme? Sharp angles or soft curves? (Melamid & Komar). I assumed this was necessary for them because they were measuring the opinions of a much larger population, and it would have been impractical for them to make sense of thousands of responses to open-ended questions. (More on this later.) But with our significantly smaller population size (it was just twenty-eight people), my team would be able to incorporate people's individual responses so they could all remain legible in the final product. We wouldn't have to compress any of the data—there was enough real estate for everyone in our studied population to be equally represented.

Excited about the possibilities of this, my team chose to allow for a more open-ended line of questioning. We wanted to give our respondents the freedom to be as specific as possible about their own personal dislikes, so instead of asking questions like “Would you prefer ordinary characters or extraordinary characters? Naturalism or expressionism?” We simply asked, “Describe a character you would least like to see.” We had to prompt people to describe a character—characters being an essential element of drama as we saw it—but respondents were free to describe the character in their own words.

	Q1: Select your academic concentration	Q2: In as few words as possible, describe one character that you would least like to see on stage during a play.	Q3: In as few words as possible, describe a situation or event that you would least like to see enacted on stage during a play.	Q4: List three words/phrases that you would least like to hear spoken on stage during a play.	Q5: In as few words as possible, describe one of your pet peeves regarding things that happen on stage during a play.
Respondent 1	Dramaturg	A clown	A person eating a lot of candy corn	"Scissoring," "Donald Trump," "Spinal Meningitis"	A one sided phone call that provides exposition.
Respondent 2	Playwright	The misunderstood Everyman who wonders why the world is changing so fast	A symbolic trial scene with characters named after archetypes arguing an IMPORTANT SOCIAL ISSUE	"Come on Sally (or appropriate character name), you remember when... (story Sally definitely remembers told for the benefit of the audience)," "Everything happens for a reason" (unironically), Character (usually a woman) who's lines are all variations on "what do you mean?" And then the other character restates what he just said	Unnecessary complicated scene changes that are totally unincorporated into the story
Respondent 3	Dramaturg	Sexy handmaid	Woman trapped at a cocktail party by a masplainer	"In the words of Nietzsche..." "As a white man, I think..." "Titties"	The unresolved gestalt (see William Ball's A Sense of Direction for explanation of what this is)
Respondent 4	Director	A drunken Irishman	A drunken Irishman in a display of drunkenness	Skit. Brasier. Egg yolk.	Actors shifting their feet constantly.
Respondent 5	Playwright	Emotionally-stunted white middle- or upper-class man-child who feels misunderstood by the world.	Male character transforms into Norse god of vengeance.	"Don't you remember when ...?" "We only have a dozen more of these to read," "Abracadabra!"	Stage combat (unless martial arts performed by actually-skilled martial artists)
Respondent 6	Dramaturg	Someone self-righteous/didactic	Slam poetry contest	"Turnt up" "This is MY LIFE!" "Why don't they understand!"	Bad accents.
Respondent 7	Playwright	Male executive	A trial	"Your honor" "Maybe you need to learn how to listen" "Remember when..."	There is no action fueling the dialogue
Respondent 8	Dramaturg	Angsty white dude	A direct address monologue telling me what I literally just saw	"The neighborhood is changing" "you wouldn't understand" "and I never saw him again"	Staging without thinking about sight lines
Respondent 9	Playwright	a character in a play set in the past but speaking using modern ideas of politics and social justice. A serf, who can articulate (without irony) all of the reasons why this economic process damages people. Or a 1950s style housewife that speaks through the lens of 21st century feminism.	A drunken sea shanty.	"I'm sorry." "Madame." "Nowadays..."	When the actor really accentuates/hits a weird or wrong word in one of their lines. EXAMPLE: "I have found no heart beat, no pulse, I cannot get a single vital SIGN!" EXAMPLE: "Who do YOU think you are?"
Respondent 10	Playwright	Someone who spends all his/her time onstage typing and his 'words' are all projected. Argh!	Kitchen sink drama in a box set bleaugh	'It's not you it's me'	bad crying bad fight choreography characters in love and the actors who play them have NO CHEMISTRY
Respondent 11	Playwright	An old heterosexual Anglo Saxon cis man who has no idea what that means. Think Brett Kavanaugh, any Republican Senator, and some Democrats, Donald Trump.	Living room family drama of elite upper class family	Bitch, plow-thru, White Nationalist	Ill constructed sets, entrances and exits thru audience just cause, unjustified nudity specifically female
Respondent 12	Director	Prostitute with "prostitution" clothing	Chekhov with really long pauses	fuck you, motherfucker. -guy interrupting girl with "what it meant was." - bible stuff	People exhaling before a line or top of play. People slapping their hands or thighs to show exasperation.
Respondent 13	Director	Basic White man bemoaning his current social space	Andrew Lloyd Webber musical tribute	Hoi! 'and then I realised it was all a dream' 'you are my life'	you watch a play only to find out at the end that the entire play happened inside someone's mind/they're in a mental institution and have been imagining it
Respondent 14	Playwright	Someone loud and boring - but not in a funny way - just like truly boring. The person who dominates discussion in class with nothing valuable to say but total feigned expertise. They sneeze or sniffle really loudly.	Children arguing about the fate of they father's company. It's two guys and a girl. The daughter doesn't really speak. One of the sons is a sensitive artist type (stand-in for the playwright, probably gay but never explicitly stated). The other son is a macho finance bro. He talks the most.	1. "As you already know..." / "As we discussed yesterday..." / "Can you explain to me again how..." 2. She's beautiful but doesn't know it. 3. Panties	Cutesy fire announcements
Respondent 15	Playwright	An upper middle class person with no strong opinions!	Lounging on a piece of stick furniture	Nantucket, Manhattan, Las Vegas	When food products talk
Respondent 16	Playwright	A rich white person with problems	a upper middle class family drama where everyone takes their problems seriously.	Amangansett, It's just so hard for me, They'll never understand	People getting drunk and revealing secrets.

Figure 1, excerpt of survey responses from "The Most Unwanted Play" class project.

As illustrated in figure 1 (above), the survey we created prompted our respondents to describe plot, character, and language that they would most dislike (categories we selected informed by the Aristotelian elements of drama), with the final question giving them room to contribute anything that might not fit into the other previous categories. We then color coded each response in order to organize how they would fit into the play: orange was for character attributes, green was for plot/story content, yellow was for dialogue content, and blue was for staging. When we finished coding the data, we divided up the responsibilities as such: we organized the outline that would incorporate the plot/story and character content as a group; our playwright then wrote the script from that outline, incorporating the dialogue elements as they went; and finally, our director incorporated the staging elements as we put the play on its feet.

Ultimately, my team was not able to fully complete the task we had set out to accomplish. I felt that we should assume that, because nobody described “a plot full of disparate, disconnected elements” as something they would hate, we should still aim to connect them as logically as possible, taking cues about structure and genre from the responses in order to fill in the necessary gaps. In retrospect, I should have guided the group to aim for this from the outset, but the play ended up being largely incoherent. I also felt that we should aim to give every respondent’s answers equal weight and incorporate them as closely as possible to the way they were described. I wanted everyone in the audience to be able to see their responses legibly represented on stage, and I felt it would be irresponsible for us to police what we did or did not think should be included—doing so seemed to disrupt the integrity of the “study” we were conducting—but we did not all agree about that. It also would have been technically impossible to accomplish some of the staging described given the resources we had, and to legibly incorporate all of the responses meant the play would have been longer than we could budget

time to rehearse for. Ultimately, a number of responses from the survey were not incorporated into the final product, and I did not feel like I was able to satisfactorily answer my question about how the play would reflect our values as a community. Thankfully, however, my group still received useful feedback from the class afterwards, and my interest in this methodology for making theatre only increased.

Among the feedback we received, two things were most widely agreed upon among our audience. The first was that their favorite parts of the play were when they spotted things they individually wrote in their surveys. They told us that they felt like they were playing a game of “I Spy.” It was fun for them to try to guess when one of their responses would show up on stage, and it felt exciting when they eventually appeared. The second piece of feedback we received was that, when answering the survey, they weren’t always sure how they were supposed to respond. Were they actually supposed to tell us what they would genuinely hate, or should they try to think of something funny, knowing the ultimate goal for this project was to make them laugh? And did their answers have to come from something they had seen on stage before, or could it just come from their imagination?

Attempt #2: The Most Unwanted Musical

I had several ideas when it came time to decide on a topic for my thesis project, most of which were traditionally academic research papers. They all felt like familiar territory, whereas I knew that continuing to develop this methodology would be more experimental and more challenging. It seemed like a risk that was best to take while I still had the dedicated time, institutional support, and permission to fail provided by an academic setting—and who knew if I would ever come by those resources again after my thesis year. Additionally, working on my

Collaboration piece had been the first time in a long while that I was excited to continue working on a creative project. On a personal level, I wanted to pursue that feeling. It seemed I had only scratched the surface developing this methodology, and I was excited to continue to investigate the questions that had been raised about the possibilities of this kind of theatre making.

My first idea after deciding to revive this idea for my thesis project was that it should be a musical, which was really just a personal preference. The skills I have gathered working on plays continue to be invaluable, but I'm a musician as much as I am a dramaturg, and I had sorely missed studying music and musical theatre throughout graduate school. I had originally wanted my Collaboration class project to be a musical, but the logistical problems that would have created were too significant. Namely, I couldn't guarantee I would be paired with teammates who were musicians. We also had an extremely tiny budget, and I wanted to focus more of my attention on the process-related experimentation central to my idea rather than the logistical pressures that writing a musical would add to the assignment.

My second idea was to increase the size of the population I would survey. In the same way Komar & Melamid created "Most Wanted" and "Least Wanted" songs and paintings based on data collected about the opinions of groups that were determined to be statistically representative of the population of entire countries, I wondered if I could make New York City's "Most Unwanted Musical" by polling a statistically representative sample of the population of New York City. The sample size of my Collaboration project was easy to define, because it was simply the size of my class, and I was excited to expand to a larger group.

However, the more I thought about this, the more I realized increasing the size of my population would mean that my audience members would not be able to see their own dislikes physically manifest on stage in front of them with the same specificity as before. A larger

population would require a survey closer to Komar and Melamid's, one that would ask for more numerical data (i.e. asking respondents to rank something from 1-10, or to pick something from a pre-determined list). Doing that would mean sacrificing the thing people most enjoyed about my first attempt at making theatre in this way, and that I was now most excited to offer: the audience's ability to spot their own specific, individual contributions in the final product. (I found it notable, too, that Komar and Melamid's respondents sometimes found themselves in a position of not always seeing their preference listed among the multiple-choice answers. One piece of feedback they received in a letter from one of their respondents stated, "I found that I didn't have enough of a choice amongst the radio button selection. Some of the questions I answered with irrelevance because I didn't have a wider selection" (Letters to Komar and Melamid). I wanted to specifically avoid this possibility when collecting my data.)

In combination with the realization that, even if I wanted to, I would not have the resources at my disposal to survey, say, a group that would be statistically representative of the entire population of New York City, or even the Columbia University student body—at least not within the single year I had to complete my thesis project—I felt confident that the right move was for me to keep my population small. This would not only make the project more practical to complete and to replicate, but it would give me a chance to deepen the connection between the interviews and the final project rather than flattening it. And, upon deciding this, I began to clarify how my own goals for this type of project truly began to split from Komar and Melamid's.

In a 1994 interview published in "Painting by Numbers," a retrospective and examination of Komar & Melamid's "People's Choice" series, Komar and Melamid describe how their surveys originated with a "plan to create paintings for different segments of society in Moscow

[...] in 1977.” Komar describes, “We were trying to show that Soviet society, in spite of government propaganda, had many contradictions; that there were different circles, even classes; that, in spite of revolution, everyone really was not more or less same socially.” After emigrating to America in 1978, their focus shifted to the American people, and they had an idea to poll the American public “to get in touch with the people of the United States of America: somehow to penetrate their brains, to understand their wishes.” In collaboration with The Nation Institute, Komar and Melamid commissioned a “comprehensive, scientific poll of American tastes in art.” It was comprised of 102 questions and was conducted by Marttila & Kiley, Inc., a public-opinion research firm that, over the course of eleven days, telephoned 1,001 Americans who were determined to be a statistically representative group “having been selected from all households by a random probability sampling procedure that included unlisted numbers and was stratified according to state” (Wypijewski, 2-8). Komar explains that, before they received the results of the poll, “We thought we would have to paint different pictures by income, by race. Instead, we made surprising discovery: in society famous for freedom of expression, freedom of individual, our poll revealed sameness of majority.” They went on to conduct similar polls for numerous other countries across the globe and yielded similar results from each one: every “most wanted” painting resulting from these polls, no matter the country, resulted in a similar naturalistic blue landscape. (Wypijewski, 8).

The implications of this (and the paintings and music that resulted from their subsequent projects) are fascinating, but they are less relevant here—all of this to say, the scope of Komar and Melamid’s interests was broad, as they were collecting and utilizing data representative of majority public opinion. In contrast, I saw the scope of my own project narrowing to an investigation about the preferences of a very small population of people, specifically with an

interest towards keeping each individual voice in my data as distinct as possible. I still loved the idea of making something that was so bad it was funny—and this remained paramount—but I also began to see how crowdsourcing content in an intensely personalized way could give a small group of people an outlet to see their individual voices and ideas in conversation with each other. The resulting piece of theatre could make manifest how their values as individuals mingle, come together, or even diverge from the rest of their community, while giving each of them a degree of agency towards the creation of a piece of theatre.

In retrospect, I think I was also reacting to the conversations I was hearing in my own community of theatre makers. My friends were making themselves miserable over all of the ways that the plays and musicals they were watching were not meeting their expectations, and I found it painful to be constantly surrounded by so much disappointment. I believe this was largely the source of the rut I found myself in, and I thought that my first collaboration piece might be able to release some of the pressure created by that feeling in my community as much as in myself—not to change people’s minds about the things they hated to see, or to make those things palatable in any way, but to strip them of some of their power to make people unhappy. The more I got to know people working in the field, the more pervasive this feeling seemed to be. I wondered, then, if this type of work might help to soften the pain of the pervasive disillusionment that I had noticed in so many professional theatre workplaces. In addition to everything I previously stated about how this type of theatre might help a community reflect on their values, another one of my goals was to try to make people feel better in the face of their disappointment.

When I thought about proceeding in this way—on this smaller scale—I had an idea that I could make a sort of recipe that could be followed by anyone who might be interested. I thought

it could be like The 24 Hour Plays: a fun, community-oriented event, maybe even with some fundraising possibilities. Anybody who wanted to try could make a “most unwanted” theatre piece using the methodology I would create. I hoped all of the pieces that could result from this would make people laugh, and think about their biases, and to feel like they had a hand in creating a piece of theatre.

With all of this in mind, it came time to settle on a population to interview, and I decided on my closest friends and family. This would allow me to focus more specifically on honing a methodology, because it would eliminate the step of finding and convincing a group of people for me to practice on. It is also a community I know intimately, and I was curious about what the resulting musical would ultimately say about these people I surround myself with.

I then had to address how I would go about collecting my data: originally, it was the online survey, which had some issues. I trusted my classmates when they told me they weren't sure if they were supposed to provide funny answers or honest answers, but I didn't know how to revise the questions without making them much lengthier, and I felt that doing so would make the survey unwieldy and confusing. I turned to a book called *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* for some insight, and I determined that the best thing to do would be to interview people face-to-face, replacing the written survey entirely. The book defined interviews as the primary tool for gathering qualitative data: “Since understanding is the goal of [qualitative] research, the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive, would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analyzing data” (Merriam & Tisdell, 16). If people weren't sure how to answer my questions, I could clarify things for them in the moment: No, they didn't necessarily have to be funny. Yes, they should think hypothetically.

I could also prompt people to elaborate if their answers were vague, and I could get a feeling not only about what they wouldn't like, but why they wouldn't like it. Having tried this once before, I knew the "why" would be important, because connecting the dots between the data and rendering it in three-dimensions proved incredibly difficult using the original survey responses. The survey data ranged from specific to generic, but nowhere was it possible to hear a person's intonation when they spoke. It wasn't possible to hear where a pointed follow-up question might be useful to better understand what they were talking about, or to help people articulate something they may not have realized without another person listening and responding to them. The more specific information I could gather, the more information I would have to go on when it came time to put everything together.

Next, I felt I had to assert some essential values of musical theatre in order to inform my line of questioning, just as I had done basing my survey questions about a play on the Aristotelian elements of drama. As I researched, I found them to be incredibly amorphous. It was obvious to me that the thing that separates musicals from other forms of drama is the way they incorporate music into their storytelling. It's generally accepted that musicals contain both scenes with spoken dialogue and songs that move the plot forward. Operas, in contrast, are sung-through, with recitative that moves the plot forward and songs that express a single unchanging emotion with a focus on the vocal performance over the story; whereas plays with music utilize songs, but the songs do not further the plot. But there were so many exceptions to these categorizations that they did not satisfy me at all, and I wasn't comfortable relying upon them to craft interview questions. It was safe to say that musicals all *do* incorporate music into their storytelling, but that was as specific a claim I felt comfortable making.

So, I turned to structure. I knew there was general structure that musicals commonly adhere to and are prototypical of the genre: an opening number that establishes the world of the story, like “Tradition” in *Fiddler on the Roof*; an “I Want” song that establishes a character’s objectives, like “It Won’t Be Long Now” in *In the Heights*; a conditional love song in which two characters unexpectedly fall in love, like “If I Loved You” in *Carousel*. But, as before, not every musical has these things—there were as many exceptions as there were cases that proved the rule, and it felt flimsy to hinge a definition of musical theatre as a genre upon structure alone.

So, maybe structure wasn’t the key either, here. It was some combination of the prioritization of various elements of drama with commonly found structures and tropes, but there was no simple list of boxes to check. (Maybe the process of identifying a musical is similar to the process a psychiatrist might follow consulting the DSM: if it has seven out of these thirteen symptoms, we can diagnose that it’s a musical!) There are a huge number of subcategorizations of musicals for this very reason (dance musical, song cycle, jukebox musical, concept musical, British megamusical, et cetera.) I felt like I was trying to apply taxonomy to a moving target—an effort that could take up its own entire thesis project.

I got very lost thinking about all of this. Then, in my confused state about how to proceed, I happened upon an interview with Stephen Sondheim conducted by Trevor Herbert in which he described the difference between an opera and a musical regarding *Sweeney Todd*, which has been performed by opera and musical theatre companies alike:

“SS: Yes, I’ve a dogmatic view of it. I think an opera is something performed in an opera house in front of an opera audience by opera singers. I think the same piece performed in a Broadway house, in a West End house, by West End or Broadway singers, in front of a Broadway or West End audience is a show, meaning it’s a musical. The approach is different, the audience’s expectations are the major difference between operas and musicals. When an audience enters an opera house they are going for a specific kind of experience that’s much more related to a rock concert than it is to a musical. They are going to hear performers, which is what rock concerts are about – to hear *that* performer

– they don't care if it's their fifth *Tosca* as long as it's the lady that they want to hear sing *Tosca*. They're going primarily to hear a great instrumentalist and they do not go to be engulfed by the story or the experience. In fact they will quite often welcome, as in most classic operas, moments of respite and exploration of just an actor, just a singer, going on about a tiny subject and making it a relevant one for three minutes providing she is singing like a dream." (Sondheim & Herbert, 208-209).

Reading this emboldened me to follow my instinct to prioritize my respondents' cultural conceptions about musicals. There was no single definition of what makes a musical that I felt comfortable landing on, so I decided that it would be best for me to let my respondents define it for me as it existed in their heads. And in order to do that, I would have to start talking to my group of respondents and hear what they have to say. This felt like the right way forward, but I was still left wondering what kinds of questions I should be asking.

At this point in the process, there was another unresolved question in my mind: I recalled reading in "Painting by Numbers" about how the results of the "People's Choice" surveys were likely to have been influenced by a psychological phenomenon called paradigm theory—how "[m]ost people will answer 'robin' when asked to name a bird, or 'dog' when asked to name an animal. Few will answer 'coot' to the first, or 'aardvark' to the second. [...] It is altogether likely what Komar and Melamid have unearthed is less what people prefer than what they are more familiar with in painting" (Wypijewski, 173). Thinking about this phenomenon as it applied to my own project, I wondered: wouldn't people be much less likely to describe something they hadn't encountered before in theatre, even if they would hate it more than what they were familiar with? I knew my respondents personally, and I knew that my mom was not going to know what I was talking about if I asked her opinion about non-mimetic theatre. I expected that if I were to try to explain what that meant to her, she would feel alienated by its unfamiliarity, and she would decide that, no, she probably wouldn't like it. Even if she would have come to her

conclusion on her own, it felt like I would be leading her to a foregone conclusion I might have made about her tastes simply by asking the question. It seemed equally unlikely that my childhood best friend (whose favorite things are *Rent*, Sara Bareilles, and “Grey’s Anatomy”) would enjoy a Richard Foreman opera, or a musical adaptation of Beckett’s *Not I*—but she wouldn’t know what those things are, and because they are so radically outside of her awareness in terms of her theatergoing experiences, it seemed unlikely that she would think to describe a musical that would include or prioritize elements in the way those things might during her interview.

I couldn’t come up with a solution for this. I didn’t want my influence to contaminate any of the data, so I would have to meet my respondents where they were in terms of their existing understanding of theatre. That included avoiding describing paradigms of drama to them about which they might be unfamiliar; there would be no way to do so that would be exhaustive, and there would be no way to do so without influencing what their responses would have been had I not interfered. So, I admit that the musical I ultimately wrote reflects what my respondents might expect to see in a musical as much as it reflects what they would hate. This seemed to be an inseparable part of the process, and one I have come to embrace.

At this point, I had to get started interviewing people, and there was only one question I was certain I wanted to ask: “What would you most hate to see in a musical?” Rather than leading them in any specific direction based on elements I had pre-determined, I would allow them to define their expectations for me, in their own words, about the inclusion and prioritization of elements (as well as the genre, the style, the tropes, etc) of their hypothetically most unwanted musical. I decided that I would develop a more specific line of questioning as I went along, and my work identifying and fleshing out what they described would come after the

interviews were completed during my efforts to render their descriptions in a fully realized script.

After conducting the first several interviews, it seemed that my respondents were most comfortable describing musicals using Aristotelian vocabulary (plot, character, theme, music, diction, spectacle, and often synonyms of these words), and that they most easily understood follow-up questions from my end using this same vocabulary. This remained true despite the fact that the way they described the use and prioritization of these elements often made the imaginary musicals they described non-Aristotelian ones—a musical in which “nothing would happen in the story—nobody would change, and there would be no arc to anything” (as described by Respondent 8 in data point [132]) is decidedly not in service of action (Aristotle & Halliwell).

Ultimately, I found that it was helpful to re-phrase the question “What would you most hate?” in a way that addressed the potential confusion described by my classmates in the feedback they offered regarding my Collaboration class project. A rough outline of the way I eventually settled on conducting the interviews is as follows:

“Are you familiar with Harry Potter?” (If they were not, I would drop the metaphor, but of my nineteen respondents, only one answered “no.” I was able to rely on this analogy because I knew my respondents ahead of time, but the use of this metaphor may need to shift if I were to interview people I didn’t already know.) I would continue, “Do you remember what a boggart is—the creature that turns into whatever you’re most afraid of? I want you to imagine that you’re about to watch a musical, and this musical is kind of like a boggart. But instead of turning into what you’re most afraid of, it would turn into a musical specifically made for you to hate everything about it. It’s not one that exists already, it’s specially made for you in this exact moment, and everything from the story, the characters, the dialogue, the music, how it looks—

it's all specially made for you, [name], to hate everything about it. And just tell me what comes to mind when you think of some things that would be included in that musical.”

I found this analogy clarified the several things that my classmates had questions about when taking the original survey. It made clear that they were supposed to describe what they would honestly hate, not necessarily what would be funny; and also, that they were encouraged to think hypothetically. So, instead of saying something like, “I would hate to see *Phantom of the Opera*,” this question gave people the freedom to say they would hate a musical about spiders (Respondent 6), or a pro-French and pro-war telling of The Battle of Algiers (Respondent 2), even though those were not things they had seen before. I also wanted to encourage people to think broadly about what it might mean for them to hate something. It seemed the boggart analogy made it clear to people that whether it was a matter of taste, or a trope they were tired of seeing, it was all fair game. This was fine with me because I imagined it would all contribute to the larger picture of the opinions of the population as a whole. I might have aimed to create a musical using this methodology with a more specific question in mind—“What might you see in a musical that would be most likely to put you to sleep?” or “What would make you the angriest?” or “What have you seen before that you would never want to see again?”—and proceeding in this way might be more useful in future installments of this type of work, depending upon what I wanted to find out from whatever population I might be investigating. But I wanted to keep things broad for the sake of this experiment, mostly because I didn't know what to expect people to say, and I didn't want to limit their options.

Some respondents had no trouble enumerating a litany of hypothetical qualities for their most unwanted musical, but others weren't so sure. For those who felt put on the spot by the question, I found that following up with questions prompting them to describe the Aristotelian

elements of drama was the easiest way to get them talking. “Who are the characters?” “If there is a story, what is it about?” “What does the music sound like?” “What are the lights doing, or the costumes, or what does the set look like?” Getting people to answer these questions provided all the data I needed to proceed with writing the musical, and I did not feel I was leading them in a way that might contaminate the data with my own preconceptions about musicals.

I admit that this leaves room to wonder if this line of questioning presumes that all musicals must be Aristotelian in terms of Aristotle’s prioritization of elements in service of action (which I do not believe they are). I made every effort to ask these questions in a way that gave my respondents as much freedom as possible to imagine the absence or mutation of these elements (“Is there even a story at all?”). The Aristotelian elements of drama, as I saw them, offered opportunities for lines of questions that were more specific than simply “What would you hate to see?” and were easily understandable by my population of mostly laypeople. I accept that it is possible my reliance on Aristotle’s elements skewed my respondents towards describing qualities of musicals that are more Aristotelian than not. And I am certain that, if I were to repeat this process for a different population of, say, experimental playwrights, I would develop a new line of questioning that would more closely suit the vocabulary of that group. I admit, too, that I am much more comfortable thinking about theatre through an Aristotelian lens, even if I ultimately use that lens to describe something non-Aristotelian. Thinking about theatre in terms of plot, character, theme, music, diction, and spectacle is more comfortable for me than any other framework, and perhaps that reveals a gap in my own ability to describe theatre, or something about the pervasive influence Aristotle’s *Poetics* continues to have on contemporary thinking about the creation of drama. However, I ultimately felt most comfortable relying on a familiar framework embarking on this project with so many other unknown factors. And, ultimately, I

would consider the musical resulting from this project to be non-Aristotelian, despite the fact that I leaned on Aristotle's categorizations to inform my line of questioning and to help organize all of the data.

After I conducted all nineteen interviews, I paused to take stock before deciding what I should do next. My primary goal at this point was to create a musical that included as many of the things my respondents described as I could, and to render them as closely as possible to their descriptions. This seemed vital because of the feedback I received from my Collaboration class: the thing that I felt would make this musical enjoyable to watch was my audience's ability to spot their own contributions in the final product, and to see how all of the responses were woven together to create the resulting musical. I did wonder how enjoyable it would be to watch for audience members who were not also respondents, even if the interview data was made available to them while they watched. (Perhaps in a handout passed out before the show, or listed somewhere in their programs?) I knew that I enjoyed Komar and Melamid's works despite not being one of their respondents, but none of their respondents had as personal a relationship to their final products as my respondents would have to this musical. It felt like a question to keep in mind, but one that I could only imagine answering after putting this musical in front of an audience and seeing what happened.

With my goal to include absolutely everything clear in my mind, I transcribed the salient items described by every respondent and listed them in a single document. (All of the data are listed in an appendix at the end of the script.) Then, in order to help myself make sense of all of the data and to get a sense of how it might start to fit together in script form, I organized it into categories drawn from the Aristotelian elements of drama—though I divided some even further for my own ease of use down the line. "Spectacle" was divided into lighting design, costume

design, scenic design, and staging/choreography. I left spectacle itself as a category, too, for anything that did not fit neatly into the others. “Diction” was divided into language (for spoken dialogue) and lyrics. “Music” was divided into music (the composed score or anything related to discrete songs) and sound design. I also found I had to create two additional categories: one for audience behavior (as many people described having negative experiences relating to other audience members) and one for actor behavior. From a theoretical standpoint, it could be reasoned that these could fit into the other elements, but I knew I would ultimately have to separate them anyway when writing the script, and my only aim here was to get a picture of how everything would eventually fit together.

Additionally, I felt I could not untangle some of the data without disrupting the integrity of the respondents’ opinions. For example, I could have separated data point [279] into a number of discrete items about plot, music, and character, but if I had done so, I would not have ultimately rendered what that person described to me. There may have still been a Cardi B style rap about how Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in the 2016 presidential election, but it felt equally important that it was sung by the character described (who ended up being named Linda) in the narrative context described (after getting into a fight with her Republican boyfriend). (I eventually had to reshuffle the sequence of the events of data point [279] in order to satisfy other structural requirements demanded by other respondents, but I kept it as close to Respondent 18’s description as I could. In retrospect, data points [278] and [279] should not have been separated numerically at all.)

After organizing all of the data in this fashion, I ordered the respondents alphabetically by their last names, re-named them in numerical order (Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc), and then I tagged every piece of data with a number. I did this so that, when putting together an

outline, I could keep track of what I had included so far and what I hadn't. Tagging everything with its corresponding number in the outline made it easy for me to search for individual pieces of data between both documents, and it alleviated some of the organizational challenge of creating an outline for a script that included all of the data.

Creating the outline was overwhelming at first. After staring at all of the data and not knowing at all where to begin, I decided that the simplest way forward was to do it one respondent at a time. So, I created an outline that only included the data from Respondent 1 (figure 2, below).

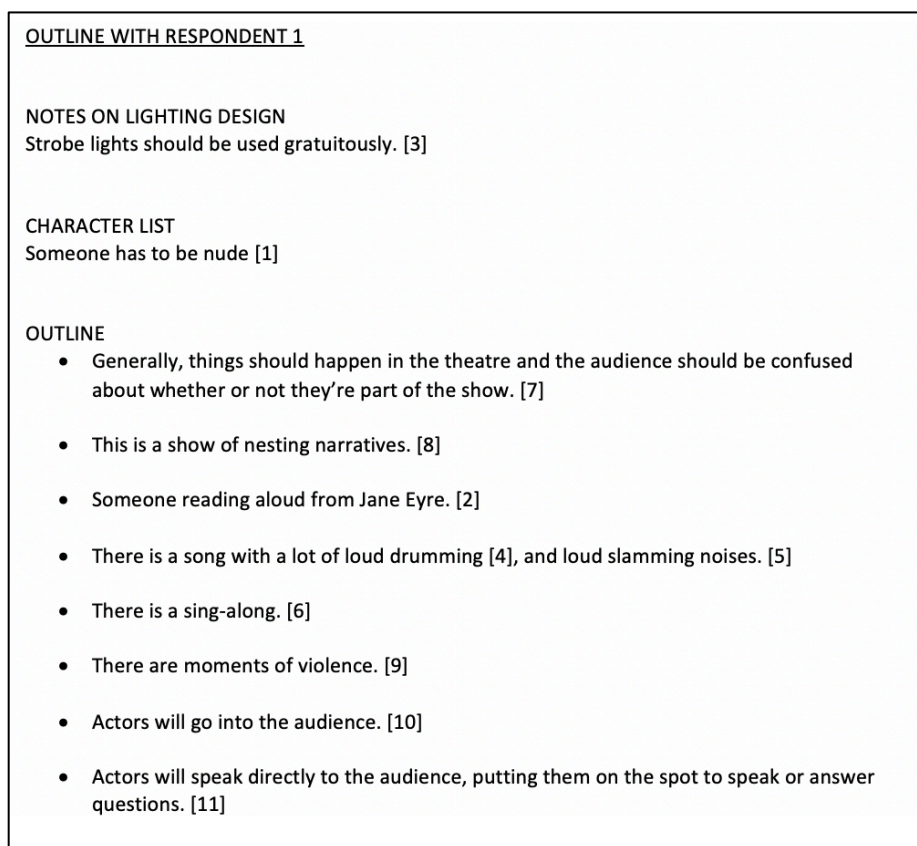


Figure 2, outline with data from Respondent 1 only.

It was sparse and vague and not really an outline, but I started to see a way forward. Looking back, data point [1] could also have gone under “Notes on Costume Design” (which is where I eventually put it), but it seemed at the time like nudity could also be a character attribute.

Jane Eyre eventually became *Pride and Prejudice*, as Respondent 1 was more general about “[s]omeone reading aloud from a book for a long time, like a textbook or an old boring work of fiction” (data point [2]), whereas Respondent 14 was more specific about disliking *Pride and Prejudice* (data point [223]). Eventually, as I added more respondents, I divided the outline into several sections: notes for the production elements, a character list, and a plot outline.

By the time I got through Respondents 1-5 (figure 3, below), things started to take a bit more shape in terms of the story structure. At this point, I was relying on what I knew about musical theatre structure rather than any scholarly research: the overture happens at the start of the first act; a big 11 o’clock number happens towards the end of the second act, before the finale; the curtain call happens when the musical is over; a talkback would follow the curtain call.

- PLOT OUTLINE

 - Act 1
 - The overture starts with a crash from the orchestra starts the show. It is blaring and shocking and it happens while everyone in the audience is still talking, not aware that the show is about to start. And then the whole overture doesn’t include any songs from the rest of the show. [56]
 - The show begins with all of the actors crossing downstage in two diagonal lines from the wings—one single-file line crossing downstage right to upstage left, and one single-file line crossing from downstage left to upstage right. [65] Everyone is singing the plot of what’s going to happen in unison, like “The Bells of Notre Dame” in the *Hunchback* musical. [50]
 - There is a classic BMI “I Want” song at the beginning. [39]
 - Act II
 - There is a big 11 o’clock number. [38]
 - The curtain call is underscored by dark and moody music. Everybody comes out for a full company bow, and then every character gets their own bow and they have to bow right and left and center. The leads all bow together again, and then they each bow separately again. They point to the orchestra, to the booth, to the ushers, and then somewhere backstage. [67]
 - When the show ends, and everybody’s clapping, immediately start a talkback, so you don’t give anybody time to leave who might want to not stay for it. And it would be about whatever big hot button issue the play tried but failed to talk about in a deep way, like global warming or racial inequality. [71]

Figure 3, plot outline with data from Respondents 1-5.

This task became increasingly time consuming each time I added the data from a new respondent. I was having to constantly re-shuffle some of what I had already organized to account for new data. For example, it seemed logical at first that the “BMI ‘I Want’ song” (data point [39]) would go towards the beginning of the first act, because I knew that an “I Want” song typically establishes a character’s objective early on in a story. Princess Ariel wants to be “Part of Your World” in *The Little Mermaid*, Pippin wants to find his “Corner of the Sky” in *Pippin*, et cetera. But once I got to the data that described the entire musical being filled with exposition, including the second act ([40] and [190]), I felt free to move the “I Want” song anywhere I needed. I removed it from story outline, hoping some other piece of data would clarify where I could put it (which ended up being the Disney princess story). I left a lot of data at this point unincorporated, and I moved them all aside to sections called “Story Content to be Incorporated Later” and “Staging to be Incorporated Later.” I did this based on an instinct that it would be easier to start by using the data that would allow for the least amount of flexibility in how I used it (data point [279] being a good example here, too), incorporating the more flexible data afterwards. For example, I could put a cat being tortured (data point [16]) anywhere—it wasn’t contingent upon a certain sequence of events, or who was doing the torturing, or why. I didn’t want to get myself into a situation where I had created an entire structure for a jukebox musical about Taylor Swift based on my own understanding about jukebox musicals, only to then to add a data point that negated what that structure would be.

As I began to incorporate everything, I had to ask myself how much I felt I had to justify all of these disconnected elements occupying the same story. I went back and read “Painting by Numbers,” and I was inspired by this Komar and Melamid’s way of including everything in a single artistic object but not necessarily connecting them logically:

“Since people prefer landscapes to nonlandscapes, and paintings with people (famous or otherwise) to paintings without people, Komar and Melamid give them landscapes with people—often famous people—in them. People also cite a preference for paintings with animals, and indeed—in almost every case—wild animals, but it would hardly have occurred to them that what they wanted was a landscape with a famous person and wild animal, unless there were some internal connection between the famous person and the animal, as between Sampson and the lion, or Europa and the bull, or Jonah and the whale. There is no way in which George Washington and the hippopotamus can be connected up that way—no way really that George Washington and a hippopotamus would share a pictorial environment if it is meant to be a realistic picture. [...] Yet they are together in *America’s Most Wanted*. Putting Washington together with a typical American family in camping clothes violated another law of consistency, since it violates the unity of time [...] There is no explanation of why anything is there other than the fact that it came up first in response to a question in a questionnaire. Nothing has anything to do with anything else in terms of meaning or causality.” (Wypijewski, 138-139).

I didn’t set out to create something that was intentionally illogical, but it was my goal to include absolutely everything, so I had to allow for some incoherence just as Komar and Melamid did. For example, it most logically followed to me that the scene in which “I Know Where I’ve Been” from *Hairspray* performed by a white girl (data point [273]) would take place in a high school setting (data point [292]), and it most logically followed that if Taylor Swift were to be discovered and get a record deal (as is a trope in many jukebox musicals about real musical artists) (data point [148]), she would have to give a performance that a producer would see. And Taylor Swift is a white girl, so I concluded that those two puzzle pieces fit together neatly enough, despite the fact that Taylor Swift never actually performed as Motormouth in “Hairspray” and that it makes no sense why she ever would have.

At this point, I was still allowing the data to guide me in terms of how it seemed to want to be organized. There wasn’t a piece of data that described the classroom scene as I wrote it, but I did have a school setting, teenage characters, and an enthusiastic teacher (data points [160], [261], and [292]). I also knew I had to fit sincere far-right propaganda somewhere (data point [14]), so I figured that a teacher in the high school giving a history lesson would be as natural a

place to put that as I was going to find. It also made sense that a classroom lecture would provide an opportunity for the teacher to address to the audience directly, which is something a large number of respondents mentioned disliking in their interviews. I was operating purely based on what the data seemed to suggest it needed in order to fit together with some degree of cohesion.

By the time I finished looking at the data from every respondent, the plot outline was much more detailed, as illustrated in figure 4 (below), though much of the data remained unincorporated.

PLOT OUTLINE

- ACT I – Lots of exposition, people just complaining and explaining. [89] Constantly introduce new side characters who we only ever see once. [183]
 - OVERTURE
 - The overture starts with a crash from the orchestra starts the show. It is blaring and shocking and it happens while everyone in the audience is still talking, not aware that the show is about to start. And then the whole overture doesn't include any songs from the rest of the show. [56]
 - OPENING NUMBER
 - An old man sings a sob-story about how his life is a metaphor for climate change. A meteor's going to hit the town unless we figure out a way to stop the climate from changing. And he portends bad things to come. How did we ever let things get this bad? [87] [200] [219] [230] [267]
 - Then the curtain opens, and the show begins with all of the actors crossing downstage in two diagonal lines from the wings—one single-file line crossing downstage right to upstage left, and one single-file line crossing from downstage left to upstage right. [65]
 - They're all the residents of the town where the musical is set, Everytown Wales America. And they're all the characters we'll meet in the first act. [110] [132]
 - Everyone is singing the plot of what's going to happen in unison, like "The Bells of Notre Dame" in the *Hunchback* musical. [50] [158]
 - The song is so fast, and they sing so quickly, that you can't understand the words. [82] [237]
 - And we begin in the middle of the action, and there are so many characters introduced and things going on that it is difficult to keep track of what they're singing about. [85]
 - Then they break into competition-style jazz dance with lots of tricks and acrobatics, like everybody all dancing the same dance in unison. [133]
 - At the end of the song, something kooky or ironic happens in the story that twists our idea of what we thought was happening. [88]
 - This song also hammers home whatever point the musical is trying to make about climate change. [267]
 - HIGH SCHOOL PLOT
 - At Everytown Wales America Highschool, we meet Joey, a teenage high school student who's the new kid in town from Australia. [155] [281] It's his sixteenth birthday. [160] He and his friends who are conservative republicans [239] and typical high school character archetypes [160] are in a US history class taught by an overly enthusiastic theatre professor [258] [261] We listen to the professor give their lesson that is pro-Trump, is about how Palestine doesn't exist, how the American government has

Figure 4, excerpt from plot outline with all respondents.

I started to see the larger picture of the musical: it would take place in a small provincial town filled with people with Welsh and Australian accents, and it would be a series of disconnected and occasionally nesting vignettes with an adaptation of a film and an adaptation of a book, each of which needed to be comprised almost entirely of exposition. I accomplished this by organizing the musical into a series of five different plots that seemed most distinct among the data (the high school prom/Taylor Swift jukebox musical plot, the family drama/love triangle plot, the “Linda Vista” plot, the Disney princess/theatre company plot, and the show-within-a-show *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation plot), and we would only see the beginning of each of these stories. I also would weave in clumsy proselytizing about climate change and the effects that the production of Model-T car had on globalism throughout. Even though these plots would not technically be vignettes (they each contain multiple scenes), they would be discrete stories in the same way that a series of vignettes would be discrete stories.

Piecing together the musical’s ending was relatively straightforward. I knew that the point of musical would be to preach to the audience about climate change (data point [230]) and that everything would magically work out in the end (data point [113]). If everything had to work out in the end, then it followed that the problem of climate change itself must somehow be reconciled. I knew that I also had to incorporate everyone realizing that “they may not be [...] complete or perfect but at least they’re themselves, and that’s enough” (data point [57]) into the ending of the story. The only way it seemed I could most logically integrate all of those components (while adding as little as possible of my own creation) was to have the characters’ realizations about the value of being themselves also be the solution for climate change. From there, it was a matter of incorporating data points that felt like they most aligned with the final

number of a musical: the throwing of beach balls into the audience (data point [73]), and a sing-along (data points [6] and [218]), etc.

I arrived at the final moment of the musical in a similar fashion: I knew that the curtain had to “come down on a serious moment” (data point [211]), and that at the end of the musical, one person from a gay couple had to die and the other had to be arrested for sodomy (data point [221]). It followed to me that this would be the serious moment the curtain would finally come down on. Of course, it is impossible to reconcile how data point [221] could coincide with everything working out in the end, but I felt that enough of everything else worked out that data points [113] and [221] both remained legible in the script.

It is important to note here that, in theory, I could have created a much shorter script that included all of the data, and perhaps they still would have remained somewhat legible—like blending one hundred different crayon colors into a single powder. You might still be able to see the individual specks if you looked closely, but for the most part, it would be a wash of some kind of brownish mess. And I thought that if there was anything that I could do to make this musical watchable, it was to keep it as surprising as possible throughout. So, rather than squishing all of the data together, I tried to cascade all of the data points, letting smaller combinations of things present themselves before moving on to the next combination of things. (This is why I only incorporated data point [55] (“[a]nytime anyone says something mean or rude, there are musical sings like in a Bravo TV show”) into the *Pride and Prejudice* section rather than throughout the entire musical.) I thought that, even if people hated what they were seeing, at least what was happening on stage would be continually changing, so the musical would be asking for an audience’s continual re-engagement in that regard.

This decision helped to answer some difficult questions about how to incorporate conflicting pieces of data. As previously described, it helped reconcile data points [113] and [221]. Similarly, it would have been impossible to write a musical containing each distinct genre of music that was described to me, while also containing “the same song over and over again and then each character sings it” (data point [286]). As before, I worked around this by incorporating data point [286] only into the *Pride and Prejudice* section; so, for a little while, every character was indeed singing the same song over and over again. By allowing these pieces of data to occupy separate space within the musical, I was able to include each one more distinctly.

With a broad structure in mind at this point, I turned back to the data that was the least specific and I still had not incorporated (figure 5, below).

STORY CONTENT TO BE INCORPORATED INTO OUTLINE

A Disney Princess-style fairytale. [29] [241]

A show that was about a cat being tortured. [16]

Moments of violence. [9]

At some point there is a big spider nest and a lot of little spiders come out of it, and you feel the bugs crawling underneath your seat like in the Bug’s Life 4D show at Disney World. [17]

A pro-French and pro-war retelling of The Battle of Algers. [19] [21]

There’s a big emotional song when a character is having an emotional breakdown, and they’re standing on stage holding their head in their hands and the violins are going “oooOOOOoooOOOooo” [like a scary movie tremolo], it’s like a pantomime mental breakdown, like “Angry Dance” from Billy Elliot. [59]

There’s a dream ballet but that doesn’t signify anything—like it’s not a metaphor, it’s not representational of anything having to do with the story, it’s just a character describing this weird dream they had for no reason. So it’s really the choreographer’s excuse to have a big choreography number. The person who is having the dream is just watching it, just walking around like “oh look at all those people dancing.” They say at the beginning, “I had the strangest dream.” It’s literally just random dancing, but the character will see it and then take it to affirm everything they already think. [60]

A cell phone rings in the audience, and the actors on stage break the fourth wall to yell at the audience member whose phone was ringing, and then it’s actually a scene and the person whose phone was ringing is actually a character in the play. [7] [61]

Figure 5, excerpt of notes on story content yet to be incorporated into the outline containing data from all respondents.

Of the discrete plots, the theatre company story and the Disney princess story did not fit together naturally, but I had decided to put them together because they were both large in scope and were only described to me in broad terms during the interviews. I thought that by putting them together, they would fill in gaps for each other where I would have otherwise had to make something up to flesh each one out individually. But at this point, I had no further specific information about what would happen (which is why it remained in the unincorporated section of my notes), and I needed to do some research. What were the typical elements of a Disney princess story, and how could that information help me continue organizing the data?

The most helpful resource I found in my search for this kind of information was a website called tvtropes.org. In the case of researching Disney princess story structures, tvtropes.org offered a list of all of the tropes associated with them. However, I did my best to remain an objective organizer of the data. Rather than selecting tropes I thought would be funny for their own sake, I tried to only incorporate tropes that fit together with other data points described by my respondents. For example, the “animal sidekick” trope felt useful, as I had to find a way to incorporate a cat being tortured (data point [16]). The “missing mom” trope also felt useful, as I had to incorporate a song “like ‘Dead Mom’ from the *Beetlejuice* musical” (data point [83]) (“Disney Princess (Franchise)”). Both of these made their way into the script. I also decided that, because I knew less about what would happen in this plot than in the others, and because so many Disney Princess musicals contain traditional “I Want” songs, this would be the best place for me to put the “I Want” song. Deciding that this Disney princess character would want to work at a theatre company was my own invention, but it seemed like the straightest path towards justifying her presence as the main character in a “a story about theatre administration” (data point [111]).

Similarly, I turned to tvtropes.org when researching “the archetype of the foreigner who’s only in the story to be comic relief” (data point [280]). I decided that Taylor Swift’s boyfriend would be this “funny foreigner” by the simple fact that I knew she would be involved in a love triangle with the character Joey, and I needed a third character in that situation to be her boyfriend. Rather than inventing a character not described by the data, the “funny foreigner” character was unused at the time, so I slotted him into that place. However, I could only imagine in the vaguest of terms how a “funny foreigner” would behave, and I wanted something specific to go on. (In retrospect here, this might have been a place where I could have asked for more specific information from the respondent who described this to me, too.) Tvtropes described how these types of characters often “mangle the language [...], are ignorant of customs in the show’s home country, and they have their own bizarre little customs that make no sense” (“Funny Foreigner”). Hence, those traits went into the outline. My primary aim here continued to be able to make the things my respondents described to me identifiable to them in the resulting script, and I hoped adding these details would increase their legibility. I felt these details also added body to the outline, helping the final product resemble something closer to a fully realized story as opposed to a list of data.

Ultimately, though, I conducted significantly less research about the elements described to me by my respondents than I expected I would when I began this project. Partly, this is because much of the data was extremely explicit about what would happen in the musical—much more explicit than I had anticipated. For example, in addition to the previously discussed data point [279], data point [209] was very detailed about the content and structuring of a sequence of events: “There’s a love triangle. One woman and two dudes. Woman chooses artist over jock. Before their wedding day, the artist leaves her because he knows he’s wrong for her,

he doesn't fit into society. She chooses the jock and they get married. And an old man character and an old woman character get together as a subplot that has nothing to do with the love triangle." Along with this description, this respondent also provided dialogue for these characters and details about how they would interact with each other. Once I decided to combine that story with the story described by Respondent 5 about the interpersonal issues of a white American family and their Irish heritage (data points [57] and [58]), and knowing that I was only writing the beginning of this story (based on the larger structure of the whole musical being multiple discrete stories primarily containing exposition), there was not much left for me to contribute. All that was left to do was to look at the remaining data and see what else might fit. So, I assigned "fatherly character sings a song with all the advice in it" (data point [107]) to the old man described in the subplot in data point [209]—who became the daughter's piano teacher because I needed an excuse for someone to pantomime playing an instrument (data point [118])—by instinct, just because he was a character who was an older person who had an interaction with a younger person. And I made the second half of this song a "hip hop song that tries to appeal to young people" (data point [157]) because he was already singing a song to a young person.

So ultimately, rather than relying upon structural traditions and tropes of musical theatre and arranging the data accordingly, I looked at what the data needed in order to manifest itself in an identifiable way, and I connected them all using my own instincts about how to do that with some semblance of logic. Throughout this part of the process, my reasoning had much less to do with musical theatre scholarship and much more to do with my determination to fit absolutely everything into the script wherever I thought might make sense based on my own instincts. I had intended from the start for the focus of this project to be on my respondents and their individual

conceptions about musicals, so I prioritized their guidance regarding how this musical should be structured over any conventional wisdom about musical theatre writing. Most of the time when I was unsure of how to proceed, I just turned back to the data.

I do not think this was completely the wrong way to go about things, but it is most definitely an area with room for improvement in any potential future installment. For example, it perhaps would have made more sense in retrospect to have made Linda's boyfriend the "funny foreigner" instead of Taylor Swift's—the Linda/Randy plot hinges somewhat on story tropes inspired by the musical *Carousel* (data point [107]), and musicals from the era of *Carousel* are more often the ones that would include a "funny foreigner" type character, which is dated and probably less likely to appear in a more contemporary piece like a Taylor Swift jukebox musical. However, the sheer amount of data I was juggling made this process massively unwieldy, and at times, I felt that it was the best I could do just to put something *anywhere* as long as I could make it reasonably recognizable to the respondent who described it.

When the outline was finally completed, it became a relatively straightforward matter of writing the script and lyrics exactly as the outline described. This was also a time-consuming process, but because I had an outline describing exactly what would be in the script, and because I aimed to add a little of my own creation as possible, I had done most of the creative thinking up-front. I still had a section of notes called "General Script Notes for Writing" (figure 6, below), which I kept open as a separate document from the script, sprinkling in bad jokes, vulgar language, and direct address to the audience as I went along.

GENERAL SCRIPT NOTES FOR WRITING (*incorporate as I'm writing*)

Throughout the show, actors will speak directly to the audience, putting them on the spot to speak or answer questions. ("What's your name? What do you think about x?" etc) And don't give them the option to decline. [11] [168]

There is also a lot of direct address in the story. Asking the audience questions and making them give verbal responses. [48]

Remember to use a lot of vulgar language for no reason. [25]

The tone of the dialogue should feel like a soap opera. [32] The whole thing is sad just to be sad, it's a total cry fest. [294]

Incorporate jokes that don't work. [35]

Figure 6, excerpt of General Script Notes for Writing from script outline with all respondents.

Next Steps

My intention at the very beginning of all of this was never to write something that would have a lasting impact on the theatre industry. I only wanted to make something that would make people laugh, and that I thought might get me through a terrible creative block. It was only when I began to pursue the project more rigorously, and the shape of this methodology I would use became clearer, that I imagined that I might be able to package this methodology as a recipe that anyone could use. And that became an exciting prospect to me. "The Most Unwanted Musical" could be a repeatable event, with a new group of audience members being surveyed and a new musical being written for each iteration of the production. Anyone could use it to create their own "Most Unwanted Musical" for their own selected community—or maybe I could just keep writing new ones following a more streamlined method—and my thesis project would primarily serve to elucidate my proposed methodology: the eventual result would be more people laughing, more people thinking, more people involved in making theatre. However, after spending eight months writing this musical, I no longer believe it is realistic that my methodology could provide

people with the same experience as something like *The 24 Hour Plays*. Eight months was only enough time for me to complete the book and lyrics—I have not even begun to write the score, which I originally intended to be part of the final product for the purposes of my thesis.

In spite of this, I did find a great deal of value in conducting my interviews. My respondents spent most of their interviews laughing, and many badly wanted to know how the other respondents had answered. (I didn't tell them because I didn't want to influence their responses, but I told them they could see once I was finished with the project.) It pleased me to hear my friends talking about the same things that caused them so much frustration with glee. It seemed that, in some small way, knowing those things would be formally honored (or maybe dishonored is the more appropriate word) through their inclusion in a musical about their unwanted-ness was a tiny, but satisfying step towards righting some great cosmic wrong in their minds. Or maybe their enthusiasm for the project was more about having their voices heard and knowing that their opinions would be acknowledged and given value through my project. Whatever the reasons, they were excited to talk to me, and they had a lot to say.

I was also surprised by the amount of overlapping responses I received throughout the interviews I conducted. Many people described in very similar ways how forced audience interaction makes them uncomfortable, and how they're sick of stories set in high schools, and how they would least want to see a story about a heterosexual love triangle—very specifically one in which a man finds out that the woman he is interested in has a boyfriend. And many of them struggled for a long time to think of a genre of music they would dislike before deciding it would be aggressive death metal, which seemed like an unusual coincidence. Perhaps it goes without saying, but through conducting these interviews and encouraging people to be candid

with me about their opinions, I got to know them better. Their answers constantly surprised me, and these were all people I thought I knew intimately.

With all of this in mind, I started to imagine how this type of process could still be useful for theatre leadership to engage with, even if it turned out to be implausible for me to package the process neatly and hand it over to someone else. Perhaps artistic leaders might like to get to know their own communities in a similar way. I talk to all of my respondents about theatre in my personal life all the time—but re-framing the conversation towards the creation of a piece of theatre that would reflect the things that were important to them made our conversations feel more honest and more direct. And, looking back, it seems to me that this was because the entire aim of my project was to acknowledge an awareness of their feelings.

There is still a great deal of fine-tuning to be done to make this methodology less unwieldy, but if further refined, I might imagine the creation of this type of crowdsourced musical as a service that I could provide for a theatre company's particular community. I could interview their staff, their board of directors, or a representative sample of their audience, and help them create their own "most unwanted musical" in order to help them reflect on their values. This reflection could inform future strategic planning or artistic programming by answering questions about the artistic values and expectations of the company, or those of the audience the company is serving. And it may raise questions about the kind of work the company should to produce—maybe artistic leadership would want to affirm those values, or challenge them, or to broaden the horizons of its audience's artistic worldview? Or perhaps this type of work might simply provide a fun opportunity for community bonding and morale boosting, as a crucial difference between this methodology and a traditional study on public opinion would be the creation of a musical that commemorates the data through live performance. I also imagine

that this process would translate easily to asking a different question that artistic leadership may want to ask of their community—a "Most Wanted" musical might reveal equally illuminating information. (This reminds me of Young Jean Lee's creation of her play *Straight White Men*, and how she asked a room full of "students, people of color and queer people, a very diverse room" how they would want a straight white man to behave, but when she created a character based on what they said, "they *hated* him" (Bent & Lee 2014).)

In support of this idea, I found research-based evidence that there may be lasting value in creating this type of work as it relates to audience engagement. According to a 2011 study from WolfBrown called "Getting In On the Act," theatre companies that don't begin to engage with participatory models of theatre making may struggle to maintain their audiences and their footing in their communities. The study describes how, as a culture, we "are in the midst of a seismic shift in cultural production, moving from a 'sit-back-and-be-told culture' to a 'making-and-doing-culture.'" They go on to say that "we are still at the beginning of this seismic shift. It is not a fad or a trend, but a fundamental realignment of demand that will, inevitably, reshape supply" (*Getting In On the Act*, 11).

The study suggests that in order to meet the new demands of this shift in culture, "arts institutions must assess their current place in the ecology and adapt to meet the changing needs of their communities," because "every community has a different ecology with distinctive providers, publics and resources." I would not argue that a theatre company *must* begin to engage with participatory models of theatre making, but in reading this study, I noticed how my project aims to engage with communities in a similar way to what this study describes: getting to know them and creating an artistic product that directly reflects their values, ethics, and interests as a group. Further, my project falls squarely within the parameters of participatory theatre as defined

by the study under the “crowd-sourcing” category as an audience-based program. In the creation of a “most unwanted musical” as I have imagined it, “the audience becomes activated in choosing or contributing towards an artistic product.” It also seems that my model may be a more palatable way for professional companies to integrate this type of work without allowing amateur productions on their stages, since the study suggests that audience-based programs like mine focus “on consumption of an artistic product, even with a participatory component [...] [they] represent[s] more comfortable territory for presenters of professional arts programs” (*Getting In On the Act*, 13).

As I continued reading the study, I was happy to learn that there are many benefits to engaging with this type of work I had not considered. WolfBrown proposes that integrating forms of participatory theatre into arts programming is a way to increase attendance throughout an entire season: “A growing body of data illustrates the interconnectedness of participatory arts practice and attendance at live events. General population studies of arts participation consistently find that active participants are more likely to be audience members in the conventional sense.” Additionally, the study describes how communities themselves benefit from this type of engagement, citing a 2008 study called *Magnetizing Neighborhoods through Amateur Arts Programs* in which D. Garth Taylor states, “There is a significant correlation between the amount of amateur, informal arts activity and neighborhood stability and/or improvement. This correlation is evidence of magnetization — an increase in the desirability, commitment, social integration and quality of life in a community area.” (*Getting In On the Act*, 9).

I still have work to do refining this process: questions about how I might be able to translate it to a larger population, and if there is a better line of questioning I might create for the

interview process, and if there is a more efficient way I could organize all of the data. There is also a vital aspect of this project which remains entirely untested, which is how the musical would be received in performance. However, the possibilities for this type of work are exciting to me, and they are far beyond what I imagined when I first started on this project.

Conclusion

I am still trying to wrap my head around the script that resulted from all of this. In some way, it brings me back to my original line of questioning: what makes something poorly constructed funny? I still don't have an answer. Was I able to create something that was so awful it became entertaining? Or is it not bad enough to cross that threshold? Maybe it sits somewhere in the uncanny valley between tastelessness and humor, and it would just be uncomfortable to watch. If that's the case, and it fails to entertain, would it still carry some value as a conglomeration of a community's values? Or does that become moot if it's something nobody would want to engage with it in the first place?

I also do wonder what this musical reveals about the values of my family and friends. What underlying principles hold this piece together, what are common threads that can be traced throughout all of these responses? How does this musical make the data resonate with each other when placing them in close proximity?

The musical (which I've titled "Thanks, I Hate It") is full of antagonistic men chasing after dainty, passive women. The audience is made to be extremely physically and socially uncomfortable throughout the performance as they are interacted with without their consent, splashed on, have bright lights shone in the eyes, and endure painfully loud and aggressive music. One might gather that my respondents who contributes these qualities are tired of the

worn-out recycled tropes of old-fashioned heterosexual love stories. They want to be comfortable, and they want to engage with a story without feeling the pressure of being looked at themselves. The incompetent preaching about climate change, the proselytizing of conservative values, and the overly literal telegraphing of emotions speaks to their desire for nuance.

But ultimately, I would prefer to leave the answers to these questions to my audience of nineteen respondents. My sole aim was to render their descriptions as closely and as truthfully as possible in a single amalgam, and for it to function as a way for them to observe a physicalized manifestation of their individual and communal values—a thing that exists not in their collective unconscious, but as something externalized from their minds and can be observed as such. And then, ideally, for it to be laughed at. I would hope that the presentation of such a musical for the community it is based on would help them to affirm, to clarify, or to rethink their values in some way, and that they would enjoy doing so through the sheer ridiculousness of the thing they contributed to making. So, I do not feel an assessment of my work can be complete without factoring in a reaction from that audience.

Were this project to proceed further as a fully realized production, I would want to conduct post-performance interviews with the audience, which would be comprised of the nineteen people whose interviews inspired the musical. In order to measure how well I achieved my goal of making every response legible in the production, I would ask them how much they recognized of their own interview responses made manifest by the performance. I would also ask what it made them think about, if anything at all. What did they feel? Were they entertained by it? Horrified? Bored? Did they find it to be offensive, did they find it humorous? How would they describe the values of the community that this most-unwanted production was born from, and do those values align with their own? Or did they notice or care about any of that at all?

Maybe it just felt good to feel like they had a hand in making something, that their voice was heard, or that someone else in the audience might have laughed at something they contributed. And maybe that kind of shared acknowledgement of something awful could provide comfort in knowing that we're not the only person bothered by something.

Following the completion of my thesis, I intend to finish writing the score of this musical and find a way to present it to my nineteen respondents. I hope that they hate it.

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THANKS, I HATE IT

by
Joshua D. Brown

This musical is comprised solely from material collected from interview responses based on answers to the question: “What would you most hate to see in a musical?”

Each script note and scene is tagged with a number or series of numbers. These numbers correspond to individual pieces of data that make up all of the material comprising that individual scene or note.

A condensed list of survey response material is included in the appendix at the end of the script. Data are listed in numerical order.

“Q: Of course, your work is famously satirical; what people sometimes miss is that jokes can be a way of getting to something serious. Throughout this project we’ve encountered people--readers of *The Nation*, trustees of the Whitney Museum, etc. -- who were confused: “Is this serious or is it a put-on, an elaborate, expensive joke?”

VK: This gets back to the question of art and life. No one would ask of life, “Is it all serious or all a joke?” because tragedy and comedy coexist in one life. You cannot separate it all and say it is all one or all the other. It is the same with this work, with all our work: it is serious and humorous at the same time, like our life.”

Painting By Numbers: Komar and Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art
Edited by JoAnn Wypijewski, p 46.

NOTES ON TONE

This musical is performed with complete and total sincerity. It should never be acknowledged by the production that this is in any way satirical. [262]

The actors should not appear to get along with each other. We should feel or learn somehow that they do not enjoy working together and do not trust each other, and that they are not enjoying themselves performing in this musical. Maybe we see them bickering in the wings? [120] [231]

Anything that appears to be even vaguely racist, xenophobic, homophobic, misogynistic, or offensive in any other way in the show should seem to have been “fixed” by being treated as a light joke in an awkward or inappropriate or thoughtless way. This should make the audience feel uncomfortable and not properly taken care of by the production. [187]

NOTES ON BILLING AND PRODUCTION

A well-liked celebrity actor should agree to be billed and marketed as being part of the cast, and at every performance, the audience should receive a slip in their playbill that the celebrity's "understudy" will be going on. (This celebrity should not actually be in the cast. They will never go on.) [232] [243]

The show should feel like it goes on for too long, and it should be billed as being shorter than it actually is. [84] [180] [192] [220]

There is no bar or concession stand in the lobby. [277]

NOTES ON STAGING

As many entrances as possible should come from the back of the house, so everyone in the audience has to keep turning around to see what's happening. [74]

The stage manager should call the show from one of the wings. It should seem as though they are supposed to be concealed, but the audience can always see them a little bit. Similarly, the audience should be able to see the actors in the wings (feet sticking out from under a flat, people lined up waiting to enter, etc), and it should appear to be unintentional on the part of the production. [115] [272]

During scene changes, the actors hold a tableau and the scene change is handled by the crew. These changes go on for much longer than necessary, and they are done with the lights only slightly dimmed, not blacked out. [116] [129]

As much as possible, actors should always face the audience downstage, even when speaking to each other or crossing upstage. [145] [225]

As much as possible, actors should mime the use of props as opposed to using actual props. This has been noted in the script in certain places, but those notes are by no means exhaustive. [224]

Any time the ensemble is on stage during a scene in the background, they silently mime speaking to each other with exaggerated hand gestures and facial expressions. This has also been noted in certain places, and is also by no means exhaustive. [117]

Whenever possible, actors who are not explicitly scripted to be in certain scenes should be on stage using their bodies as tables/chairs/furniture/etc for other actors. [94] [256]

There should frequently be too many people on stage at any given time, making it difficult for the audience to know where their attention should be focused. [181]

Actors should be directed to act as if they're in a cheesy soap opera. Encourage them to really chew the scenery and play up the sentimentality of everything. [32] [163]

During every scene, food is brought to the audience that is related to the scene they are watching. So if the scene takes place at a McDonalds, the audience is brought McDonalds to eat. They are instructed to eat with their hands like at Medieval Times. Wait staff come up and down the aisles to drop off food for people during the show, constantly making people stand up or blocking audience members' views. [146] [233]

During the show, it should become apparent to the audience that one of the male leads (maybe RANDY) is having an ego crisis. He is clearly angry about something in the play

and is making faces at the audience as though they are in on it. He gets pissed every time there is a technical malfunction. Every time he finishes a scene, we see him sort of congratulating himself for doing a good job. At some point he should cry about something in his (what appears to be the actor's) personal life and not the story of the musical. [96] [97] [153]

A majority of the cast members are white people. There is very little racial diversity, if any. [98] [195] [244]

NOTES ON MUSIC

All of the music should be pre-recorded. There is no live band. [27]

The orchestrations in general are simple, amateurish, and lazy. Throughout the score, a poorly tuned clarinet plays in unison with a trumpet. [51] [54] [171]

There are no motifs or recurring themes used in the score. [37]

Actors should be directed to sing out of tune. [170]

For scene change music, consider the song “Old Town Road,” the musical artist Yung Gravy, heavy/death metal music with a lot of screaming, and atonal music with no discernible structure. [37] [235] [269]

NOTES ON SOUND DESIGN

Unless otherwise indicated by the script, actors do not use microphones. It should be difficult to hear them over the pre-recorded music. [144]

Throughout the show, the audience should hear noise bleeding in from other rooms in the building or from outside (loud music from far away, police sirens, construction noises, a garbage truck, the rabble of a crowd standing in the lobby of the theatre, etc), as well as actors talking to each other from backstage. [259]

There is feedback whenever anybody uses a microphone. [270]

NOTES ON CHOREOGRAPHY

One sixth of all choreographed numbers should primarily incorporate a lot of flashy dancing and tricks that bear no relation to the story. [92]

One third of all choreographed numbers should primarily incorporate a lot of acrobatics, roller skating, or anything that makes it seem to the audience like the actors might be in danger of crashing or hurting themselves. [31] [257]

One half of all choreographed numbers should primarily incorporate pedestrian movement: like, just walking or sitting or standing. Or everyday tasks like sweeping the floor, or digging in the mine, riding the subway-- something mundane that's connected to whatever the scene is about, but in a stylized way with, like, additional weird hand flicks and flourishes. So the audience should think, "Oh, that was kind of like dancing." For example, if a song is about people going to work, the choreography would be highly stylized "going to work" walking patterns, like moving to music while carrying briefcase. The dancers might check their watch to see what time it is, and then push their arm down again because they're angry about what time it is. And then they pick up the briefcase with one finger, and wave it over their head as they turn a corner in a weird stylized way. Or there might be walking around in a circle on a turntable, and then every time the actors have to sing, they step forward. [66] [93] [135]

NOTES ON SCENIC DESIGN

This musical should be performed on a thrust stage. Along the upstage wall, there is a rotating box set with three blank white walls covered in blood stains. All of the set pieces used throughout the show should be visible to the audience at all times, even (or especially) if it looks like we aren't supposed to see them. [42] [63] [64] [134] [150] [152] [161] [178] [275]

There are a number of black blocks on stage that get rearranged into different configurations for each scene, perhaps arbitrarily. [114]

There should be one thing that looks clearly expensive and polished in the set, and everything else should look cheap and haphazardly thrown together. [114]

There are multiple rain curtains used in the set. [175]

Pieces of reflective metal and glitter should be incorporated wherever possible. [175]

The audience has to walk through sand on the floor to get to their seats. [176]

The set should be decorated with lotus seed pods and other objects or images with similar clusters of holes. [248]

Every change of setting should be accompanied by a video projection backdrop overlaid onto the stage. (If we're in the park, a park is projected onto the back wall. If we're in a cave, a cave is projected onto the back wall. Etc.) [254]

There are only half as many seats available as there audience members, so half of the audience has to stand for the performance. The remaining seats should be damp, like they were recently left outside and rained on and haven't fully dried off. [228] [276]

NOTES ON LIGHTING DESIGN

Half of the scenes should use gratuitously use strobe lights, colorful laser lights, and spotlights. These scenes should also incorporate a grid of behind-the-stage lights (like those used in Tina or The Cher Show, that square grid of lights on the back wall pointed directly at the audience) shining constantly in the audience's eyes. [3] [126] [170] [247] [285]

The other half of the scenes should be completely spare, using scoops and harsh hospital light fixtures as wash lights, and the only colors being old faded gels. These scenes should generally be lit too darkly, so it's a little bit difficult to see anything. The only light cues in these scenes should be a fade up at the start and a fade out at the end. [114] [128] [177] [216] [268]

Any time there is a big key change or emotional moment in a song, the lights should shift dramatically to signal to the audience that something emotional is happening. [36]

Different colors should arbitrarily be ascribed to different scenes for no discernible reason. It might be best to select these colors at random. [49] [161]

Anytime there is a spotlight on an actor, it's not quite positioned on the person it's meant to be on. It's just shining on their feet, or on the left or right half of their body, but definitely not their face. [127]

The lights should come up on the entire audience every single time they are interacted with or addressed by characters in the play. [246]

NOTES ON COSTUME DESIGN

Every character wears a neutral face mask for the entirety of the production. [80] [141] [244.5]

The costumes are flashy, overdone, and extremely colorful to the point of excess. [24] [170] [212]

It should appear somehow that the costume budget has been misaligned. The lead actors should have real costumes. The ensemble members should look like they got their costumes from the bargain bin at a Party City, or from the dumpster outside of a Good Will, or just from their own closets--but they should look both cheap and effortfully constructed. [104]

Some of the costumes should not match who the character is. For example, they might appear to be from the wrong time period, or they might not actually reflect a character's personality, social status, or occupation. [125]

Some of the costumes should make a lot of noise. Like swishing sounds, like when you're wearing a windbreaker, or when spunks rub against other clothes you're wearing. [284]

When actors become new characters, most of their costume should stay exactly the same: all that changes are small pieces (like a new hat or a funny pair of glasses) to suggest they're a different person now. [245]

NOTES ON AUDIENCE PLANTS

In addition to named characters and ensemble members, actors should secretly be cast to play audience members. These audience plants should all wear merchandise and drink from souvenir cups with this musical's branding. [194] [234]

They should also each individually adopt at least one the following behaviors, and all of these behaviors should be accounted for among all of the audience plants:

Anytime there is anything vaguely racist, homophobic, misogynistic, or otherwise offensive or violent happening during the show, especially when those things are treated lightly or celebrated by the play, the audience plants should appear to be enjoying themselves to real audience members. [12] [20]

Constantly whispering to each other things like, "What? Did you hear what [he/she/they] said? I can't understand a word they're saying." Or "I can't see what's happening, can you see?" And craning their neck all around in real audience members' personal space. [233]

Taking a video of the entire musical and only watching through their phone screen. [233]

Acting like super-fans who are performing their enjoyment of the show without regard for how they might be disturbing other (real) audience members. They might do this by singing along with the music or by doing their own choreography along with the performers from their seats. [233]

ACT I

OVERTURE

[56]

The overture begins with a huge crashing sound while everyone in the audience is still talking, unaware that the show is about to begin. It doesn't include any of the songs that we will hear in the rest of the show.

SCENE 1

[35] [87] [89] [112] [136] [174] [219] [230] [267] [294]

MR. CLIMATE, an old man, enters from behind a rain curtain and stands in front of a microphone. He speaks directly to the audience. He has a Welsh accent.

MR. CLIMATE

My life! My life! Oh, my life, my life... My poor, poor life... How did my life turn out this way? All my friends? Dead! My family? Well, guess what? I have no family! They abandoned me when I was a little itty bitty teeny tiny BABY! Left me on death's door. On a literal doorstep. The doorstep of an orphanage... But I was never adopted, no, I watched all the other kids get adopted, but not me, never me. Because you know why? Because I was too UGLY! "Sweep the floors, clean the toilets, be a good boy and don't make a fuss and someday you will be rescued." That's what they told me. "A nice, rich, warm, loving family will take pity on you and take you in. You'll have a mom, and a dad, and a dog, and brothers and sisters who will love you and take care of you and buy you Christmas presents and maybe even pay for your college education..."

He wipes away a tear.

Well, it never happened for me. I was not one of the lucky ones. For me: well. Finally, finally, finally, I turned fourteen. A group of priests came to the orphanage and they offered me a chance at a new life. So I entered the priesthood. Packed up everything I had in a plastic garbage bag -- took one right out of a garbage can the kitchen, still covered with grime and still stinking of old banana peels-- slung it over my shoulder, and walked out that front door and didn't look back. "Well!" I thought to myself. This might not be such a bad life. And Father Jefferson was there. Oh, who's Father Jefferson? He was a priest at the monastery. And he was kind to me. Because it wasn't such a nice place to be. Maybe even worse than the orphanage, I would soon find out.

Every night for dinner we had slop: stale piece of bread, rice gruel made with leftover water from cans of green beans. I always ate dinner alone because I was mute, and the other kids there would spit on me and kick me until bled, so I learned to just keep to myself. But one night I saw the most curious thing. Father Jefferson, standing guard outside the door so no one could escape--I didn't know at the time they were trafficking us children, you know, so that seemed normal to me. I never knew any other life, you must understand! But one night, from across the dining pen, I saw Father Jefferson holding the strangest little object. It seemed to glow in the palm of his hands: a warm, safe, radiant thing, almost like it was made of, well, of sunlight. He must have caught me staring, because he walked over to me, bent down on his knee, and handed it to me. "Want a piece?" he said.

Well, greedy little me, I snatched the thing out of his hands and took a big bite, the sweet sticky juice running down the corners of my mouth. “Woah woah woah!” I must have startled him! “No, like this. Here, let me show you” And he showed me how you have to peel off the skin. And it made me happy.

We became friends, we did. Every day after that day, he brought me an orange. I had to keep it secret of course, we weren’t allowed such indulgences. I liked to keep them for later, these oranges gave me something to look forward to. And my tunic didn’t have pockets, no sir. So he would slip me an orange and I would slip it down my, well...

(To an audience member.)

I don’t have to tell *you* where, do I? Do I?

He repeats the question until the audience member verbally responds in some way.

MR. CLIMATE

Late at night, sleeping on the floor of that stinky little broom closet in the inky black darkness, I would peel those oranges and oh how I would savor them. I imagined they really were made of light, and eating them filled me with that light, and that is what sustained me through nearly a whole year.

One morning, early on after we started with the oranges, I heard a knock on my door. I was mute, you’ll recall, so I said nothing, I just opened the door. Why, it was Father Jefferson! He entered and he handed me a bible. “It was mine when I was a child,” he said. “I thought you might like it.” Well, I didn’t know how to read, and he figured that out pretty quickly, so every morning after that one, he came by and taught me to read from his bible. From *my* bible. I was a quick learner, hungry, hungry for words, and hungry, too, for his attention, for his affection. And slowly, with him, for the first time, I began to speak. “Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” Those were my first words. I must have read that Bible a hundred times at least. I wanted him to be proud of me. He told me I was smart, that I was special, that I was worthy of love. And I loved him too, in a way. He taught me my first joke, too. “Knock knock.” “Who’s there?” “Father.” “Father who?” “Father Jefferson!”

He laughs.

MR. CLIMATE

I never had a father, but if I had to guess, Father Jefferson felt to me like what a father feels like to people who do have a father. Plus he had “father” in his title! I barely knew the difference.

Of course, nothing good lasts in life.

One afternoon I was sweeping the floors in the inner sanctum with all of the priests convened there for some meeting, I'm not sure, and a little teeny weeny bit of dust blew up into my face. Well, I sneezed in the wrong place at the wrong time. The orange came tumbling down out from my underpants on to the floor. I was caught, grabbed by my wrist so hard it left my hand numb, and was dragged violently into a back room where the priests gave me the whip. FIVE! HUNDRED! LASHES! For carrying contraband! Locked me up. I had no food for three days. Made me drink water from my chamber pot. And I deserved it. I knew I did. I had misbehaved, and I was being punished for my sins. "WHERE DID YOU GET THAT ORANGE?! YOU MUST HAVE STOLEN IT! DIRTY THIEF! YOU'LL GET WHAT YOU DESERVE!" I didn't dare tell them the truth. I don't think it mattered to them anyway, all that mattered was that I had betrayed their trust, and they wanted to see me suffer.

Finally, on the morning of the fourth day, Father Jefferson came to visit me in my stinky closet. It smelled especially bad because my sores were becoming infected. I told him I was sorry, I was so sorry, but I never told on him, I didn't! He told me there was a way I could make it up to him, if I really loved him. I did love him, didn't I? "Yes," I told him. "I love you." And he told me he loved me too. I told him that I would do anything to make it up to him, just please tell me what it is! "Get down on your knees and pray," he told me. So I got down on my knees and I began to pray.

He gets down on his knees.

MR. CLIMATE

"Our father who art in heaven..." "No." He said. "Get down on your knees. And *pray*." Then: his belt buckle. His belt buckle? What did he want me to do? I didn't understand-- "GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES, YOU PIECE OF GARBAGE!"

MR. CLIMATE begins to sob. He is overwhelmed. He slides into the fetal position and sobs even more. He sobs and sobs.

Eventually, he collects himself and he speaks again.

MR. CLIMATE

Three more years I stayed there in the monastery. Every night, Father Jefferson and I *prayed* together. Well, not prayed.

(To an audience member.)

I don't have to tell *you* what we were doing, do I? You know what we were doing, right? You get it? What I was implying?

Again, he repeats himself until they answer.

MR. CLIMATE

But I prayed afterwards. I prayed for death. But I got out of there one day. I turned eighteen, and I ran, I ran as far away as I could. I ran until my feet bled, until my back broke, until I had nothing left in me. And when I stopped running, I collapsed. I thought my life was over. I thought I deserved it. And then: I looked up. And there it was. I found my home. And for the first time... In my life... I found...

I found...

The rain curtain opens behind him to reveal a sign: "WELCOME TO EVERYTOWN WALES AMERICA."

SCENE 2

[11] [23] [26] [50] [65] [75] [76] [82] [85] [88] [99] [100] [102] [110] [117] [122] [123]
 [131] [132] [133] [137] [138] [158] [184] [185] [195] [230] [237] [267]

The music begins. It sounds like “The Bells of Notre Dame” from the cast recording of the stage production of The Hunchback of Notre Dame

All of the residents Everytown Wales America enter and begin crossing downstage in two diagonal lines from the wings—one single-file line crossing downstage right to upstage left, and one single-file line crossing from downstage left to upstage right.

They are: JOEY, TAYLOR SWIFT, MR. T, EW GIRL, JOLBI, SCOTT BORCHETTA, AMANDA, JENNA, NICK, JAKE, NATHANIEL, HENRY FORD, MR. OLDMAN, BIG GRANDMA, CRAIG, RANDY, LINDA, MICHAEL, MAX, PRINCESS DAISY, EVIL WITCH, BRETT KAVANAUGH, DONALD TRUMP, MITCH MCCONNELL, CANTOR REBECCA, LAUREN, CAMERON, KEVIN, MATT, LACEY, BARITSA, KKK MEMBER, etc. Plus a large ensemble of mostly white people including a milkman. A couple of them are holding babies.

The tempo of this song is way, way too fast, so it’s difficult to understand the lyrics.

ALL

GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING
 THE SUN IS SHINING BRIGHT
 IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN
 AND EVERY MORNING
 THE SUN’S SHINING BRIGHT
 IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING
 THE SUN IS SHINING EXTRA BRIGHT
 IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN
 AND EVERY MORNING
 THE SUN’S SHINING BRIGHT
 IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

THE MILKMAN DELIVERS US PLENTY OF GOODIES
 THE MAILMAN DELIVERS US PLENTY OF MAIL
 AND EVERYONE'S SMILING AND SAYING HELLO TO EACH OTHER
 (OH YES TO EACH OTHER)
 IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

All of the characters pantomime scenes from their daily lives all at the same time -- they're all over the stage so it should be confusing and difficult for us to figure out who they are or what they're doing.

After that goes on for a while, they all they all look directly at the audience, making eye contact with audience members and singing to them directly.

ALL

WE WELCOME YOU ALL
 YES WE SEE YOU OUT THERE
 TO OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN
 AND MOSTLY IT'S FINE HERE
 WE'RE TELLING THE TRUTH
 IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

AND THE SUN HERE IS SHINING BRIGHTLY
 IT'S BRIGHT IN OUR EYES AND IT'S HOT EVERY NIGHTLY
 BUT NO WE DON'T MIND 'CAUSE WE'RE ALL A BIG FAMILY
 IN THIS OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

A CLOWN enters. Everybody groans shoos him away.

HARRY, a leading man type played by a handsome actor, enters; they all sing about him. He pantomimes doing what everyone is narrating.

ALL

HARRY SMITH LIVED ALONE IN A STUDIO APARTMENT
 ON MAIN STREET IN EVERYTOWN WALES
 HE COOKED BACON AND EGGS
 HE WAS HAPPY AND HANDSOME
 BUT HOW HARRY SMITH WANTED MORE
 AND ONE DAY IN THE PARK HE WAS WALING HIS DOG
 AND SOMEONE BEAUTIFUL CAUGHT HARRY'S EYE
 HE LOOKED LEFT, HE LOOKED RIGHT, SHE WAS THERE ALL ALONE
 WHO COULD KNOW WHAT THE MAN HAD IN STORE?

*SALLY, a leading lady type, appears sitting on a park bench.
HARRY and SALLY look at each other.*

HARRY

Hello.

ALL

HARRY GREETED THE LADY.

SALLY

Tee-hee! Hello there.

ALL

SHE SAID IN REPLY.

He said:

HARRY

I'M HARRY SMITH.

ALL

She said:

SALLY

MY NAME IS SALLY.

ALL

AND HARRY FELT SOMETHING WELL UP DEEP INSIDE.

HARRY

(Very bad at singing.)

I'M SORRY I'M NOT ONE TO DO THIS

BUT YOU'RE PRETTY AND I'M SO ALONE

MAY I TAKE YOU TO DINNER ON SATURDAY EVENING?

HERE'S MY NUMBER, OH PLEASE DON'T SAY NO

HARRY exits. SALLY sits on the bench looking at his number.

SALLY

*(Sounds vocally fatigued; has a rasp in her
voice and keeps clearing her throat.)*

DID THAT REALLY JUST HAPPEN TO ME?

DID THAT HANDSOME MAN ASK ME TO DINNER?

OH I'D SO LOVE TO GO, BUT I JUST DON'T KNOW
SHOULD I GO, SHOULD I GO, SHOULD I GO?

BECAUSE IF I GO
HE MIGHT REALLY SEE ME
FOR WHO I AM
DEEP DOWN INSIDE
OH WOAHH WOAHH WOAHH

IF I GO
HE MIGHT REALLY SEE ME
FOR WHO I AM
DEEP DOWN INSIDE

IF I GO WITH HIM
THEN HE MIGHT REALLY SEE ME
BUT WHAT IF I
SEE HIM RIGHT BACK?
OH WHAT WILL I DO?

SALLY exits carrying the note with HARRY's phone number.

ALL

STAY TUNED FOR THE REST
'CAUSE THIS STORY'S THE BEST
AND WE DON'T WANT TO GIVE IT AWAY
SIT TIGHT IN YOUR SEAT
YOU'RE IN FOR A REAL TREAT
BUT FOR NOW HERE IS ALL THAT WE'LL SAY

GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING
THE SUN'S BURNING HOT
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN
YES EVERY MORNING
THE SUN'S BURNING HOT
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

THE MILKMAN DELIVERS US PLENTY OF GOODIES
THE MAILMAN DELIVERS US PLENTY OF MAIL
AND EVERYONE'S SMILING AND SAYING HELLO TO EACH OTHER
(OH YES TO EACH OTHER)
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

MR. CLIMATE

GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING
 THE SUN HERE IT ALWAYS SHINES BRIGHT
 AND AS YOU ALL CAN SEE
 THIS IS THE TOWN FOR ME
 BUT I'M NOT THE MAN THAT YOU THINK THAT I AM
 NO, MY NAME...
 MY NAME...
 My name is...

ALL

(Ominously.)

Mr. Climate.

MR. CLIMATE

IF THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU A CLUE
 I'M NO MORTAL MAN, NO I'M NO MORTAL MAN
 I'M THE WIND AND THE OCEANS AND
 RIVERS AND FORESTS AND
 MOUNTAINS AND YOU, MY FRIEND, YOU

HAVE TREATED ME SO VERY BADLY
 HUMANITY'S RUINED ME? TRUE!
 THAT WAS THE POINT OF MY STORY BEFORE,
 DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ALL JUST A LONG METAPHOR,
 BUT I REALLY AM DYING, AND WHO IS TO BLAME?
 WHY IT'S YOU!

ALL

IT'S YOU!

MR. CLIMATE

IT'S YOU!

YES I LIVE IN THIS TOWN
 AND I'M SICK AND I'M DYING
 AND HERE IS THE WORST NEWS OF ALL:
 A METEOR'S GOING TO STRIKE!
 A METEOR CAUSED BY MY RAPID DECLINE,
 AND GUESS WHEN IT'S STRIKING?

ALL

(Whispered.)

Tonight!

MR. CLIMATE

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
EVERYONE HERE IS SO VERY DISTRACTED
EVEN KNOWING THE METEOR NEARS
WILL THEY ALL BE ABLE TO PULL IT TOGETHER
BEFORE THE METEOR STRIKES...?

ALL

TONIGHT!

*DANCE BREAK: competition-style jazz dance with lots of tricks
and acrobatics and everybody all dancing the same dance in
unison while a meteor descends from the fly system. It looks cheap
and fake but also somehow extremely gaudy.*

ALL

GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING
THE SUN HERE IS SHINING TOO BRIGHT FOR OUR EYES
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN
AND EVERY MORNING
THE SUN IS SO BLINDING
RIGHT HERE IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

THE MILKMAN DELIVERS US PLENTY OF GOODIES
THE MAILMAN DELIVERS US PLENTY OF MAIL
AND EVERYONE'S SMILING AND SAYING HELLO TO EACH OTHER
OH YES TO EACH OTHER
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING
THE SUN SHINES SO BRIGHT
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN
AND EVERY MORNING
THE SUN SHINES SO BRIGHT
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

THE SUN'S SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT
SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT
SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT
SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT, SHINING BRIGHT
IN OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL AMERICAN TOWN

(All greeting each other:)

Hello, hello, hello, hello!

Hello, hello, hello, hello!

Hello, hello, hello, hello!

Hello, hello, hello!

AND HELLO TO OUR SWEET OLD PROVINCIAL...

AMERICAN...

TOWN!

The meteor remains dangling clumsily above the stage for the duration of the entire musical.

SCENE 3

[11] [13] [14] [23] [76] [89] [98] [112] [138] [148] [155] [160] [168] [174] [186] [226]
 [230] [239] [258] [261] [262] [281] [282] [291] [292]

A classroom inside Everytown Wales America High School. Students sitting in their desks pantomiming taking notes while MR. T, their flamboyant, overly enthusiastic history professor who is also in charge of the theatre program, pantomimes giving a lecture while JOEY talks to the audience. When MR. T does speak, he has an exaggerated Welsh accent. All of the students all wearing MAGA hats, and they're recognizable high school student archetypes: a cheerleader, a goth, a jock, a nerd, etc.

JOEY, one of the students, addresses the audience. He has an exaggerated Australian accent.

JOEY

(Speaking to the audience.)

Psst. Hey there. I'm Joey. It's a pleasure to meet you all. My family just moved here from down under. That means Australia. What a cool small American town this is! Who knew there was a Welsh settlement in the middle of small town America? It's tough being the new kid. But not *that* tough. And you'll never guess, but today is my sixteenth birthday. Yeah, I know. Pretty cool, eh? And you know what else? Prom is tonight! It's such a big deal. But I'm new here, and I don't know anyone yet, even though I think pretty much everybody likes me. But who's to say? And more importantly, who am I going to ask to be my prom date?!

MR. T

Joey, stop talking please.

JOEY

Sorry Mr. T...

(To the audience again.)

You all got me in trouble!

MR. T

As I was saying. Jimmy Carter was the WORST president in the history of the United States. And you know who is the best?

ALL

Trump!

MR. T

You kids are lucky to be living in this unprecedented time of growth and success. Now, I know people say he's a controversial guy, but I'm not really aware of anything he's done that's been controversial. I don't pay much attention to his tweets. But he's the best president, and this *will* be on the test, because he's a great leader. He's not afraid to make decisions. He's not afraid to take on the big mouths around here. And he's the most transparent. Let's go over some of his greatest accomplishments from the third year of his presidency: he declared a national emergency on the border. Jobs were booming in November. He released the transcript of his phone call with Zelensky, a punch to the groin in the psycho democrat effort to illegally impeach him. He created a space force! He nominated Attorney General William Barr.

Everybody in the classroom claps.

MR. T

Who will be visiting as a guest lecturer next week... Yes, I know you're all excited for that. There's a lot to be celebrated! Alright, does anyone have any questions from today's lesson?

Three students raise their hands.

MR. T

Yes?

FIRST STUDENT

Mr. T, what's slavery?

MR. T

Good question! Slavery is when, early on in US History, a bunch of people from other countries immigrated to the United States on boats and did mandatory labor for farmers in the south and also people in the white house in exchange for food and shelter. It was actually a very good thing for the economy at the time, and it's something that humans have always done throughout history. Other countries still have slaves, in fact. Next question?

SECOND STUDENT

What's Palestine?

MR. T

Palestine is a made up place, and the goal of so-called "Palestinians" is the destruction of the Jewish state and its people. Palestine doesn't exist, there is no such place. Okay, I think we have time for one more question?

THIRD STUDENT

Mr. T, what's the worst thing the United States has ever done?

MR. T

Well, you might be surprised to learn this, but the United States has actually never done anything technically "wrong." Everything that's been perceived by other third-world countries as something we've done is "wrong" was really just a misunderstanding on their part. Think about it. World War I? Vietnam? World War II? Invading Iraq? Our involvement with the Syrian Civil War? The Paris Climate accord? We always have done what we thought was in our best interest at the time, very good educated well thought out decisions, so how could you call that "wrong"?

JOEY

(To the audience, pantomiming taking copious notes.)

Aw man, I'm never going to remember all of this!

MR. T

Alright, now if you all could pass forward your homework?

The actors in the classroom pantomime passing forward homework.

MR. T

(To the audience.)

You all too, please? Hello? Your homework? Please pass your homework forward. That means everyone. Yes, including you. And you. Please pass it forward.

If the audience starts pantomiming passing their homework forward like the actors, MR. T should tell them they're just pretending to pass it forward, and he needs them to pass it forward really.

MR. T

(To a specific audience member.)

You? Where is your homework?

He waits for them to respond.

MR. T

(To a different audience member.)

And what about you?

He waits for them to respond, too.

MR. T

(To the whole audience.)

You're all a bunch of lazy fucking slackers! And you're all getting zeroes for the day. Well, we're about out of time now, so before you go, let me remind you to please come see our school's production of the musical HAIRSPRAY opening TONIGHT, directed by yours truly, and starring our one and only miss Taylor Swift!!!! Taylor, stand up darling.

She stands up and the class applauds her.

MR. T

And let's not forget we have a birthday in the class today... Stand up Joey... How old are you today?

JOEY

I'm sixteen years old!

MR. T

So let's all put on our best singing voices, and give the birthday boy the birthday treatment!

(To the audience:)

Yes, you all, too!

They all sing happy birthday to JOEY. When they finish singing, mysterious magical music begins to play and then a bolt of lightning strikes JOEY and he falls to the ground.

All the students crowd around him, and TAYLOR SWIFT rushes to his side and cradles his limp body. They all pantomime talking to each other like they're surprised and confused.

JOEY

What happened...?

TAYLOR SWIFT

You got struck by lightning!

JOEY

Light... ning...?

TAYLOR SWIFT

Are you okay?!

JOEY

I... I don't know... I think so...? Actually.... Yeah. But I feel weird... Like... I actually feel... Powerful?

They look into each other's eyes.

JOEY

Crikey...

Time stops like in "West Side Story" when Tony and Maria see each other for the first time at the dance. JOEY and TAYLOR SWIFT are instantly, inexplicably smitten with each other.

JOEY

Hello there.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Hi. Tee-hee.

The school bell rings.

MR. T

Class is dismissed!

SCENE 4

[10] [23] [30] [69] [119] [138] [148] [168] [226] [261] [273]

*The Everytown Wales America High School production of
HAIRSPRAY.*

MR. T is playing Tracy Turnblad.

*TAYLOR SWIFT is playing Motormouth, and she sings “I Know
Where I’ve Been” to him. To be clear, TAYLOR SWIFT is still white
in this reality.*

*JOEY watches her from the audience and he talks to audience
members during her performance.*

TAYLOR SWIFT

THERE’S A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS
THOUGH THE NIGHT IS BLACK AS MY SKIN
THERE’S A LIGHT BURNING BRIGHT
SHOWING ME THE WAY
BUT I KNOW WHERE I’VE BEEN

*SCOTT BORCHETTA from Big Machine Records enters from the
back of the house and pushes his way through the audience to
wherever his seat is supposed to be, making a big ruckus and
telling people to get out of his way.*

TAYLOR SWIFT

THERE’S A CRY IN THE DISTANCE
IT’S A VOICE THAT COMES DEEP FROM WITHIN
THERE’S A CRY ASKING WHY
I PRAY THE ANSWER’S UP AHEAD, YEAH
‘CAUSE I KNOW WHERE I’VE BEEN

THERE'S A ROAD WE'VE BEEN TRAVELIN'
 LOST SO MANY ON THE WAY
 BUT THE RICHES WILL BE PLENTY
 WORTH THE PRICE
 THE PRICE WE HAD TO PAY

THERE'S A DREAM IN THE FUTURE
 THERE'S A STRUGGLE THAT WE HAVE YET TO WIN
 AND THERE'S PRIDE IN MY HEART
 'CAUSE I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING, YES I DO
 AND I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN, YEAH

JOEY

Wow, she's amazing!

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Wow, she's amazing!

Now she is joined by a chorus of other high school students. Some of them are staged in the aisles. They sing directly to audience members, looking them in the eyes and touching them affectionately.

TAYLOR SWIFT

THERE'S A ROAD
 WE MUST TRAVEL
 THERE IS A PROMISE
 THAT WE MUST MAKE
 OH BUT THE RICHES WILL BE PLENTY,
 RICHES WILL BE PLENTY, YEAH
 WORTH THE RISKS AND THE CHANCES THAT WE TAKE

THERE'S A DREAM, IN THE FUTURE
 THERE'S A STRUGGLE THAT WE HAVE YET TO WIN
 USE THAT PRIDE IN OUR HEARTS
 TO LIFT US UP TO TOMORROW
 'CAUSE JUST TO SIT STILL WOULD BE A SIN
 LORD KNOWS I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN
 I'LL GIVE THANKS TO MY GOD
 'CAUSE I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN

SCENE 5

[1] [15] [23] [25] [26] [32] [35] [48] [69] [77] [98] [117] [121] [132] [138] [165] [166]
[167] [191] [195] [197.5] [207] [280] [286]

TAYLOR SWIFT is standing around the schoolyard with all of her friends, one of whom is a character like when Jimmy Fallon does the “Ew!” sketch on SNL (a middle-aged man in bad drag as a pre-teen girl), and one is a girl named JENNA who is very passive. They all have backpacks on and they’re pantomiming having an animated conversation.

A CLOWN enters and approaches them.

EW GIRL

Ew! That fucking clown is coming over here!

CLOWN

Do you girls like balloon animals?

The CLOWN pantomimes making a balloon animal.

EW GIRL

I fucking hate balloon animals! Like, ew!

MR. T enters to shoo the CLOWN away.

MR. T

Hey! Get out of here! No trespassing!

The CLOWN exits.

JENNA

I’ve never seen a clown in real life before.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Me neither. Phew, thanks Mr. T. We thought he’d *never* fucking leave. That clown was such a *clown*.

Everybody laughs.

JENNA

Yeah, he was making me uncomfortable.

EW GIRL

Thanks Mr. T. He was making us all fucking uncomfortable! Like, EW!

MR. T

Yeah girls, he was weird. Ew!

TAYLOR SWIFT

Ew is right!

EW GIRL

Ew!

ALL

EW!!!

They all giggle. JOEY enters and approaches them.

EW GIRL

Psst, hey Taylor! Here comes Joey!

TAYLOR SWIFT

Fuck, Joey's coming? But I'm so shy!

EW GIRL

Yeah! It's fucking Joey coming over here! Oh my god! We'll leave you two lovebirds alone.

All the GIRLS and MR. T exit giggling.

JOEY

Hey Taylor.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Hey. Happy fucking birthday!

JOEY

Thanks! Um. Y-You were really fucking good in the musical.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Tee-hee, oh shucks. You're gonna make me fucking blush.

JOEY

No really! Like, you were so fucking good.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Tee-hee.

JOEY

Um, hey, so I have a question. I was wondering if you'd want to... To...

TAYLOR SWIFT

Yes?

JOEY

If... If you'd w-want to...

(To the audience.)

Why is it so hard to ask a girl out to prom?! What should I say to her? Has anyone ever asked anyone out to prom? How did you do it?

He keeps asking the audience until someone gives him some advice about what he should say.

JOEY

Okay, thanks! I'll say that.

(Back to TAYLOR SWIFT.)

If you'd... W-want to...

TAYLOR SWIFT

If I'd want to what, Joey? I don't understand...

JOEY

To, uh, to go to p-

TAYLOR SWIFT's boyfriend JOLBI enters. He has a vaguely Scandinavian accent.

JOLBI

Tayloooooor! Jolbi is being arriving! Jolbi have present for Taylor!

TAYLOR SWIFT

Oh! Joey, this is my boyfriend Jolbi. Jolbi, this is Joey.

JOLBI

Is pleasure to meet you Joe-eee. Jolbi shake hand.

JOLBI does a back bend and shakes JOEY's hand with his foot.

JOLBI

Is traditional greeting from my home country! Now we are being friends for life.

(To TAYLOR SWIFT.)

Here is gift for you mine crispy darling. Is pickled asparagus stolen from belly of heifer!

He pantomimes taking a jar out of his backpack and hands it to TAYLOR SWIFT.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Isn't he the sweetest? Tee-hee.

JOEY

This is your boyfriend?

JOLBI

Is boyfriend? Ja, of course is boyfriend! Jolbi love Taylor. Taylor love Jolbi. We kiss in underwear every evening and touch tummies together.

TAYLOR SWIFT

(Blushing, affectionate.)

Jolbi, oh my gosh...

JOLBI

Gift is special for expecting mothers in my countries, make baby grow up large and bacteria resistant!

JOEY

Expecting mothers?

JOLBI

Ja, for baby! Baby inside mine Taylor! We make baby, just yesterday we find out! Is happiest news!

JOLBI lovingly pats TAYLOR SWIFT's belly.

JOEY

Taylor... Is that true? Tell me that isn't true.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Joey, please try to understand.

JOEY

Are you going to prom together, too?!

JOLBI

(Doing a weird dance.)

Ja, we go to prom and dance the wiggle jiggle! Is the dance of my people! You will dance the wiggle jiggle with us, Joe-eee?

JOEY

I can't fucking believe this!

*(To the audience member who gave him
advice before.)*

THIS IS YOUR FAULT! FUCK!! YOUUUU!!!!

Joey flees.

JOLBI

Have good day my beauty!

JOLBI exits.

TAYLOR SWIFT is left standing alone.

Music begins, a slow ballad in the style of Boubil & Schonberg.

TAYLOR SWIFT

WELL HERE I AM, HERE WITH THE CHOICE
WHICH BOY TO PICK, OH WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I FEEL A KNIFE INSIDE OF ME
THIS FEELING IS SO HARD AND SO NEW.
AND PROM WILL BE SO COOL
THIS PROM, TONIGHT, AT MY HIGH SCHOOL.

YES HERE I AM, STUCK WITH THIS CHOICE,
WHICH BOY TO PICK, OH WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I I HAVE THIS LIFE INSIDE OF ME
OH, BABY, TELL ME, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
AND NOW THE SUN IS HOT
DOES JOEY THINK THAT I'M HOT TOO?

JOEY'S CUTE, HE'S COOL AND HE'S AUSTRALIAN.
JOLBI'S WEIRD, I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M WITH HIM.
I WONDER IF I COULD BE WITH JOEY.
BUT ME, I AM SO SHY, I KNOW I CAN'T BREAK UP WITH JOLBI

IN THE SUN MY VISION GETS ALL BLURRY.

BUT I SEE, THAT JOEY MIGHT JUST LIKE ME
 JOLBI'S WEIRD, I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M WITH HIM
 BECAUSE I AM SO SHY I KNOW I CAN'T BREAK UP WITH JOLBI

AND I HAVE THIS TEENAGE PREGNANCY
 AND THIS CHILD CAN HEAR EVERY WORD I SAY
 MY DAD SAID I CAN'T HAVE AN ABORTION
 BUT HOW CAN THIS KID CALL ME MOM?
 IT'S STILL MY JUNIOR YEAR

*She is joined by her female classmates whom we saw previously.
 Many of them are staged in the aisles and sing directly to audience
 members.*

ALL
 JOEY'S CUTE, HE'S COOL AND HE'S AUSTRALIAN
 JOLBI'S WEIRD, WE DON'T KNOW WHY SHE'S WITH HIM
 SHE WONDERS IF SHE COULD BE WITH JOEY
 BUT TAYLOR IS SO SHY, WE KNOW SHE CAN'T BREAK UP WITH JOLBI

WE ARE YOUNG BUT SOMEHOW WE GOT PREGNANT
 WE DON'T KNOW THE LIFE THAT IS AHEAD US
 WE WONDER IF, WHEN WE HAVE THESE BABIES,
 WILL WE STILL HAVE THE TIME TO FINISH OUR HIGH SCHOOL DEGREES?

TAYLOR SWIFT
 JOEY'S CUTE

ALL
 JOEY'S CUTE

TAYLOR SWIFT
 JOEY'S CUTE
 I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
 Oh...!
 The baby just kicked!

SCENE 6

[9] [26] [37] [86] [109] [136] [138] [160] [191] [240] [283] [293]

JOEY is alone somewhere in the schoolyard. Atonal music begins and JOEY sings an aria in the style of Thomas Ades or Arnold Schoenberg. It has no discernible musical structure.

JOEY

TAYLOR

TAYLOR TAYLOR TAYLOR

HER SINGING VOICE LIKE MUSIC

LIKE MUSIC TO MY EARS

I HAVE NEVER SEEN A PERFORMANCE AS MASTERFUL

AS SEEING HER IN HAIRSPRAY

MY NEW FAVORITE MUSICAL, HAIRSPRAY

TAYLOR'S CRAFT AS A PERFORMER IS GENIUS

AND SHE IS SO PRETTY

SHE LOOKS LIKE TOMI LAHREN

OR A YOUNG BETSY DEVOS

I WOULD LET HER TOUCH MY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I FEEL SO LOVESICK

IT MAKES ME SAD AND MAKES ME ANGRY

BUT HOW DOES TAYLOR FEEL ABOUT ME?

DOES SHE LIKE ME EVEN THOUGH SHE HAS A BOYFRIEND?

MAYBE THEY WILL BREAK UP

OH, WOE IS ME

WOE IS ME

POOR POOR ME

POOR JOEY

IT'S SO HARD BEING THE NEW KID IN TOWN

MAKING FRIENDS AT A NEW SCHOOL IS NO JOKE

BUT NONE OF THAT WOULD MATTER

IF I COULD HAVE ONE NIGHT WITH HER

IF I COULD GO TO PROM WITH SWEET TAYLOR AS MY PROM DATE

THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT I WANT IN THE ENTIRE WORLD

IF I COULD JUST HAVE ONE NIGHT WITH HER

I WOULD NEVER ASK FOR ANYTHING AGAIN IN MY WHOLE LIFE

I JUST WANT HER TO BE MINE

AND I AM SO SHY

BUT WHEN THAT LIGHTNING HIT ME
 I FELT LIKE I COULD DO SOMETHING INCREDIBLE
 SOMETHING POWERFUL
 SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY
 SOMETHING...

The NERDY STUDENT from MR. T's class enters and startles JOEY by accident.

NERDY STUDENT

Heya Joey!

JOEY jumps.

JOEY

Hey idiot, what the fuck is wrong with you, nerd? You like sneaking up on people?

NERDY STUDENT

N-no, I, I'm sorry, I didn't mean t--

JOEY

(Mocking.)

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to!"

Some other kids from MR. T's class come over and one of them pantomimes stealing the NERDY STUDENT's glasses. They pantomime tossing them back and forth, keeping them away from the NERDY STUDENT.

NERDY STUDENT

Hey guys! Stop! That's not funny, I can't see without my glasses!

JOEY

(Mocking.)

"Hey guys! Stop! That's not funny! Stop! That's not funny! That's not funny!"

JOEY pushes the NERDY STUDENT down to the ground.

JOEY

Don't fucking mess with me!

NERDY STUDENT

I'm sorry, I didn't mean t-

JOEY spits on him. We hear a sizzling noise. The NERDY STUDENT screams in absolute agony.

NERDY STUDENT

AHHHHHH! WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME?!

The other students “ooh” and “ahh.” They’re really impressed, that was cool!

JOEY

What... What just happened?! You’re pretending!

NERDY STUDENT

YOUR SPIT!! YOUR SPIT IS BURNING ME! IT BURNED THROUGH MY CLOTHES!!! IT HURTS!!!!

The NERDY STUDENT starts to cry.

NERDY STUDENT

I want m- my mom... Mommy... Mommy...

JOEY

Huh?

JOEY spits in one of the other students’ faces.

OTHER STUDENT

AHHHHH! MY FACE!!!!!!!!!! IT BURNS!!!!!!!!!!

That student runs off stage, clutching his face in agony.

JOEY

Well whaddya know? I can spit acid! It’s like I have... Wait... Do I have... a superpower!?

(Gasp.)

That bolt of lightning! It must have been. Hey guys, go take him behind the dumpsters and finish the job. Now!

The remaining students obey and drag the NERDY STUDENT off stage.

PETER, the school guidance counselor, enters.

PETER

Hey Joey!

JOEY

Oh, hey guidance counselor Peter!

PETER

I just saw what happened, I saw the whole thing.

JOEY

Aw man, am I in trouble?

PETER

Trouble? Of course not! Boys will be boys, you're just in high school! But Joey. I just wanted to check in with you about how you're feeling.

JOEY

Well, it's tough being the new kid.

PETER

You want to impress Taylor Swift, don't you?

JOEY

How do you know about that?

PETER

It's my job to know about those kinds of things. But Joey, hey. I think a lot of girls would want to be friends with someone who has... a *superpower*. Don't you think?

JOEY

Wait... Oh, I get it! Gee, thanks guidance counselor Peter!

PETER

Just doin' my job, kiddo!

(To the audience.)

Don't you all just love kids? It's not an easy job watching out for them all the time, but someone's got to do it!

PETER exits.

JOEY

AND NOW
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO
I KNOW EXACTLY HOW TO GET TAYLOR TO LIKE ME
NO, NO JUST TO LIKE ME
TO LOVE ME
I ALWAYS KNEW THAT I WAS SPECIAL
THAT I WAS DIFFERENT
STRANGE THINGS HAPPENED WHEN I WAS A KID
LITTLE UNEXPLANABLE THINGS
AND NOW I UNDERSTAND
AND I'M GOING TO SPIT ON EVERYONE
UNTIL SHE NOTICES
HOW POWERFUL
AND HOW COOL I AM
THAT I CAN SPIT
AND THEY'LL SUBMIT
TAYLOR, THIS IS MY CHANCE!
YOU WILL BE MY GIRLFRIEND!
AND I WILL TAKE YOU
TO PROM!

SCENE 7

[10] [23] [28] [30] [35] [69] [95] [98] [136] [137] [138] [139] [148] [159] [168] [230]
[251] [267] [292] [293]

TAYLOR SWIFT is standing around the schoolyard with all of her same friends again.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Man, it's hot outside. Can you believe this global warming?

They all pantomime agreement.

JOEY enters.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Oh, hi Joey.

JOEY

Taylor! Taylor, I have something to show you. Actually, I want you all to see it. And then you'll absolutely want to go to prom with me.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Tee-hee, Joey, oh my goodness!

SCOTT BORCHETTA enters.

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Excuse me, which one of you is Taylor Swift?

EW GIRL

Oh my god. Is that Scott Borchetta from Big Machine Records? Hey Scott, that's Taylor right there!

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Hi Taylor. Scott Borchetta, Big Machine Records. I saw your performance the other night in *Hairspray* and all I have to say is wow, just wow. Say, how'd you like to sign with me? I can make you a star.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Sign with you? I don't get it. You mean, like, a record deal?

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Only if you think you can *deal* with that, little lady. But say, I'd love to get to know you a little bit. Tell me about yourself, would you? I just want to make sure you're really a good match for my company.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Tell you about myself? Hmm. Let me think... Well, all my friends say *this* about me.

Music begins. She sings "SHAKE IT OFF," starting very reluctantly and conversationally, interacting with her friends and with the audience.

TAYLOR SWIFT

I STAY OUT TOO LATE
GOT NOTHING IN MY BRAIN
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE SAY, MMM-MMM
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE SAY, MMM-MMM

I GO ON TOO MANY DATES
BUT I CAN'T MAKE THEM STAY
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE SAY, MMM-MMM
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE SAY, MMM-MMM

TAYLOR SWIFT looks at SCOTT BORCHETTA. He seems uncertain. She kicks it up a notch.

TAYLOR SWIFT

BUT I KEEP ON CRUISING
CAN'T STOP, WON'T STOP MOVING
IT'S LIKE I GOT MY MUSIC
IN MY MIND
SAYING, "IT'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT"

'CAUSE THE PLAYERS GONNA PLAY, PLAY, PLAY, PLAY, PLAY
AND THE HATERS GONNA HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE
BABY, I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE
I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
HEART-BREAKERS GONNA BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, BREAK
AND THE FAKERS GONNA FAKE, FAKE, FAKE, FAKE, FAKE
BABY I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE
I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

We shift now from the schoolyard to a small venue; TAYLOR SWIFT is performing reluctantly for a small crowd of people and she's nervous. SCOTT BORCHETTA is still there, watching from the side.

TAYLOR SWIFT

I NEVER MISS A BREAT
I'M LIGHTNING ON MY FEET
AND THAT'S WHAT THEY DON'T SEE, MMM-MMM
THAT'S WHAT THEY DON'T SEE, MMM-MMM

I'M DANCING ON MY OWN
I MAKE THE MOVES UP AS I GO
AND THAT'S WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW, MMM-MMM
THAT'S WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW, MMM-MMM

She is gaining some confidence now.

TAYLOR SWIFT

BUT I KEEP CRUISING
CAN'T STOP, WON'T STOP GROOVING
IT'S LIKE I GOT THIS MUSIC
IN MY MIND
SAYING, "IT'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT."

'CAUSE THE PLAYERS GONNA PLAY, PLAY, PLAY, PLAY, PLAY
AND THE HATERS GONNA HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE
BABY, I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE
I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

HEART-BREAKERS GONNA BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, BREAK
AND THE FAKERS GONNA FAKE, FAKE, FAKE, FAKE, FAKE
BABY I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE
I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

We shift again to a medium-sized stage with a larger, more interested crowd.

TAYLOR SWIFT

SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

Someone brings SCOTT BORCHETTA a big stack of money. He looks happy.

TAYLOR SWIFT

HEY, HEY, HEY
 JUST THINK WHILE YOU'VE BEEN GETTING DOWN AND OUT ABOUT
 THE LIARS AND THE DIRTY CHEATS OF THE WORLD
 YOU COULD'VE BEEN GETTING DOWN TO THIS SICK BEAT

MY EX-MAN BROUGHT HIS NEW GIRLFRIEND
 SHE'S LIKE "OH, MY GOD," BUT I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE
 AND TO THE FELLA OVER THERE WITH THE HELLA GOOD HAIR
 WON'T YOU COME ON OVER, BABY
 WE CAN SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE

YEAH, YEAH

And now we shift again, finally, to a huge stadium surrounded by a massive crowd of screaming fans. TAYLOR SWIFT has become a superstar. TAYLOR is joined by the ensemble, some of whom are staged in the aisles and sing directly to audience members, encouraging them to join in.

TAYLOR SWIFT

'CAUSE THE PLAYERS GONNA PLAY, PLAY, PLAY, PLAY, PLAY
 AND THE HATERS GONNA HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE
 I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE
 I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

Someone brings SCOTT BORCHETTA an even bigger stack of money. He scatters it over the audience.

TAYLOR SWIFT

HEART-BREAKERS GONNA BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, BREAK
 AND THE FAKERS GONNA FAKE, FAKE, FAKE, FAKE, FAKE
 BABY, I'M JUST GONNA SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE
 I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

During the following section, one by one all of her real life ex-boyfriends appear and we see her break up with each of them.

TAYLOR SWIFT

SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF
 I, I, I SHAKE IT OFF, I SHAKE IT OFF

The song is over. It was all a fantasy. We're back in the schoolyard, just as we began.

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Little lady, I just saw your whole future in front of my eyes. Sign with me! We will never have any conflict between us.

(To the audience.)

And it's true. In real life, we never did have any conflict. I was her producer on every album she ever released. She not only became my greatest client, but she also became one of my closest friends, and earned a starring role in the film *Cats*, an adaptation of the hit musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

(Back to TAYLOR SWIFT.)

So? Whaddya say?

TAYLOR SWIFT

Hmmmm... Well... Maybe... I still don't know if I really understand. What's a record deal exactly?

SCOTT BORCHETTA

I'll explain everything to you later. But damn, it's hot outside. Can you believe this global warming?

EW GIRL

Oh my god WAIT you guys! Joey, what were you going to show us?

JOEY
This!

JOEY spits on a random student. They scream in agony and writhe on the ground. Everybody cheers because they are so impressed.

TAYLOR SWIFT
Wow Joey, that was so cool and sexy! Now I really don't know what I'm going to do-- choose my music, my unborn baby and my boyfriend Jolbi, or... You.

JOEY
Taylor, who else do you want me to spit on? I want to make you so happy and turned on that you'll go to the prom with me.

TAYLOR SWIFT
(To the audience.)
Oh, what should I do? This heat is making it so hard for me to think!

A STUDENT comes running on stage.

STUDENT
Hey everyone, did you hear? Marnie died.

Rabble of "what?" "Oh no" etc.

SCOTT BORCHETTA
Do you know what did it?

STUDENT
Yes, it was... global warming.

A sobering silence.

TAYLOR SWIFT
Wait... I wonder...
(To JOEY.)

You can't spit on global warming, can you, Joey?

Everyone looks up at the meteor. Then they look at the audience expectantly.

SCENE 8

[4] [5] [18] [26] [28] [34] [35] [41] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [57] [68] [76] [86] [89] [95]
 [169] [112] [174] [186] [190] [197.5] [198] [199] [202] [203] [209] [224] [230] [235]
 [249] [267] [290] [291]

JENNA's family's house. AMANDA, her bitter and browbeaten mother who has an Australian accent, is pantomiming making dinner. JENNA and JAKE have Welsh accents, and HENRY FORD has a standard American accent because he's Henry Ford.

The whole family sings a "getting to know a dysfunctional family" song, like "Just Another Day" from Next to Normal, or the opening of the Jagged Little Pill musical. It's set to death metal music in the style of the 1984 album "Death Metal" by the band Possessed.

AMANDA

I'M A MOTHER AND A ZOMBIE
 I RISE FROM THE GRAVE
 MY DAUGHTER AND MY SON AND HUSBAND
 TREAT ME LIKE A SLAVE
 I HAVE TO KEEP THIS FAMILY TOGETHER OR DIE
 IT'S HARD TO BE A DEMON IN DOMESTIC LIFE
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

THIS IS A PERFECT FAMILY
 IF YOU DISAGREE
 YOU WILL BE MY NEXT VICTIM
 ON MY BLOODY KILLING SPREE
 BECAUSE I AM A DEMON I DO NOT HAVE TO BE NICE
 I CAN'T REMEMBER, HOW LONG DO YOU BOIL RICE?
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

There's a long interlude of very loud drumming while she pantomimes neurotically cleaning the house.

AMANDA

DEMON MOTHER,
 DEMON MOTHER,
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

DEMON MOTHER,
 DEMON MOTHER,
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

IT'S UP TO ME TO KEEP US ALL
 FROM FALLING APART
 BUT EVERY DAY IT SEEMS TO ME
 WE GROW FARTHER APART
 DEMON MOTHER, DEMON MOTHER, THAT'S WHAT I AM
 SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
 DEMON MOTHER, DEMON MOTHER, DON'T GIVE A DAMN
 SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

JENNA comes home from school. She pantomimes dropping her backpack on the floor.

AMANDA

(Forcing a smile.)

Jenna honey, how many times have I told you, please don't leave things on the floor?

JENNA

Ugh, whatever mom. Hey, what are all these dog harnesses doing here?

AMANDA

I caught your brother dogfighting again. He's in his room smoking pot. Oh well! By the way, that artist boy Nathaniel came around here again looking for you, and I told him you didn't ever want to see him again.

JENNA

What? Why did you do that?!

AMANDA

I'm only trying to do what's best for you, dear. Someone like that can't provide you with a normal life. Now, help me clean up around here. The big dinner with your fiancée Nick and both of our families is tomorrow night! We'll all be meeting each other for the first time.

JENNA

I hate this family!

JENNA runs to her room.

AMANDA dials her phone. Her husband, HENRY FORD, picks up.

HENRY FORD

Hi honey.

AMANDA

Where are you, Henry?

HENRY FORD

Henry? This isn't Henry! Just kidding. Hi honey. I have to work late again. I'm going to sleep on the cot in my office tonight.

AMANDA

Again? But you said you were going to be home. I just made your favorite dinner.

HENRY FORD

There's nothing I can do.

AMANDA

I never see you anymore, Henry.

HENRY

We're so close to a breakthrough with my design! You know how important this is. This will be so good for our whole family. I'm just trying to take care of you and of the kids. And we finally came up with a name for it!

AMANDA

What is it?

HENRY FORD

"The Model-T Car." It's going to change the face of globalism.

AMANDA

Change globalism? But what about the changing climate?

HENRY FORD

You're right about that.

AMANDA

By the way, I caught our son dogfighting again.

HENRY FORD

Good for him! The boy needs to spend some time socializing! I worry about him shut in his room by himself all day every day smoking pot.

AMANDA

But Henry, what will the neighbors think?

HENRY FORD

Amanda... What do *you* think?

AMANDA

I honestly don't know anymore. Are you going to make it to dinner with Jenna's fiancée tomorrow night?

HENRY FORD

Is that tomorrow night?

AMANDA

Yes Henry. It is tomorrow night. It has always been tomorrow night. It was tomorrow night when I told you about it two months ago, it was tomorrow night when I reminded you last week, and it was tomorrow night when I reminded you this morning! God damn it Henry! This is really important! I feel like our family is falling apart and there's nothing I can do to stop it.

HENRY FORD

Well you never touch me anymore.

AMANDA

Henry.

HENRY FORD

Forget it. I-- Oh-- I have to go. There's an emergency.

AMANDA

Oh, okay. I love--

HENRY FORD hangs up.

AMANDA

You.

AMANDA pantomimes crying and then throwing away the dinner she made while HENRY sings the following verse.

HENRY FORD

I'M A CORPORATE SLAVE
THE SKY IS BLEEDING BLOODY RAIN
MY THROAT IS FULL OF EVIL

MY WALLET FULL OF PAIN
 I AM THE MAN OF THIS HOUSEHOLD
 FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE
 IF I DON'T GET TIME OFF AND SOON
 YOU'LL SEE ME IN A HEARSE
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
 IN THE BACK OF THE HEARSE
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

IT'S UP TO ME TO KEEP US ALL
 FROM FALLING APART
 BUT EVERY DAY IT SEEMS TO ME
 WE GROW FARTHER APART
 DEMON FATHER, DEMON FATHER, THAT'S WHAT I AM
 SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
 DEMON FATHER, DEMON FATHER, DON'T GIVE A DAMN
 SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

HENRY FORD pantomimes dialing another number on his phone. Someone from the cast brings an audience member up on stage and pantomimes handing them a phone. The audience member "answers" it, and HENRY FORD delivers the following monologue to that audience member.

HENRY FORD

Johnson, it's me, Henry. Henry Ford. I'm returning your call. Look, I'll explain this to you one final time. I'm quoting Wikipedia here, verbatim. "Manfred Steger distinguishes between different globalisms such as justice globalism, jihad globalism, and market globalism. Market globalism includes the ideology of neoliberalism. In some hands, the reduction of globalism to the single ideology of market globalism and neoliberalism has led to confusion. For example, in his book *The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World*, Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul treated globalism as coterminous with neoliberalism and neoliberal globalization. He argued that, far from being an inevitable force, globalization is already breaking up into contradictory pieces and that citizens are reasserting their national interests in both positive and destructive ways.

Alternatively, American political scientist Joseph Nye, co-founder of the international relations theory of neoliberalism, generalized the term to argue that globalism refers to any description and explanation of a world which is characterized by networks of connections that span multi-continental distances; while globalization refers to the increase or decline in the degree of globalism.

This use of the term originated in, and continues to be used, in academic debates about the economic, social, and cultural developments that is described as globalization.

The term is used in a specific and narrow way to describe a position in the debate about the historical character of globalization (i.e. whether globalization is unprecedented or not). It has been used to describe international endeavors begun after World War II, such as the United Nations, the Warsaw Pact, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, and sometimes the later neo-liberal and neoconservative policies of "nation building" and military interventionism between the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the beginning of the War on Terror in 2001."

You got all that?

HENRY FORD hangs up. The audience member is left on stage. Nobody in the cast gets them off stage or tells them what they're supposed to do. Maybe they go back to their seat, maybe they awkwardly remain on stage for the remainder of the entire act? Whatever happens, nobody gives them any instructions, and if the audience member asks, they are ignored.

We transition to JAKE in his room pantomiming smoking pot.

JAKE
MY BODY IS ON FIRE
MY MIND IS BURNING IN THIS HELL
MY TEENAGE DESIRE
MAKES ME WISH FOR DEATH

HENRY FORD
I'M A CORPORATE SLAVE, THE SKY
IS BLEEDING BLOODY RAIN
MY THROAT IS FULL OF EVIL AND
MY WALLET FULL OF PAIN
I'M A CORPORATE SLAVE, THE SKY
IS BLEEDING BLOODY RAIN
MY THROAT IS FULL OF EVIL AND
MY WALLET FULL OF PAIN

JAKE

CASTRATING DOGS
 MAKE THEM FIGHT
 TO THE DEATH
 HEAR THEIR SCREECHING BARKS AND
 HEAR THEIR PAIN AND
 DRINK THEIR PAIN AND
 LIVE THEIR PAIN AND
 EAT THEIR BRAINS

PIERCE YOUR TONGUE
 BIDE YOUR TIME
 SHUT YOUR MOUTH TIGHT AND
 DO NOT EVER TALK ABOUT YOUR TEENAGE ZOMBIE LIFE
 PITS OF RAGING FIRE
 THE SULFUR OF MY LIFE
 MAKES ME CHOKE TO DEATH
 DARKNESS AND DESIRE
 MY SOUL IS HOLLOW
 ALL I HEAR ARE
 ZOMBIE DOGS HOWLING
 AT THE BLOOD MOON RISING

NO ONE UNDERSTANDS ME
 THEY CALL ME A LOSER
 GIRLS DON'T WANT TO DATE A DEMON
 DEMON ZOMBIE LOSER

DEMON BROTHER, DEMON BROTHER, THAT'S WHAT I AM
 SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
 DEMON BROTHER, DEMON BROTHER, DON'T GIVE A DAMN
 SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
 RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

We transition to JENNA alone in her room.

JENNA

VOMIT UP THE RAGE
 UNTIL MY FACE TURNS GREEN
 I'M GOING THROUGH SO MUCH
 AND I'M ONLY SIXTEEN
 MY MOTHER AND MY DAD AND BROTHER

TREAT ME LIKE A CHILD
AND THE CHANGING CLIMATE
ISN'T STAYING VERY MILD

DEMON SISTER, DEMON SISTER, THAT'S WHAT I AM
SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
DEMON SISTER, DEMON SISTER, DON'T GIVE A DAMN
SATAN IS MY SAVIOR AND I SCREAM FOR HIM
RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

The rest of the family appears again, all in their own separate spaces.

ALL

OUR FAMILY IS ON THE EDGE
OF FALLING APART
AND EVERY DAY IT SEEMS THAT WE ALL
GROW FARTHER APART

BUT WE CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER
SO WE'LL PUT UP A FIGHT
THOUGH WE'RE STANDING IN OUR GRAVES
THIS PAIN IS OUR FAMILY BLOOD RITE

DEMON FAM'LY, DEMON FAM'LY, DON'T GIVE A DAMN
SATAN IS OUR SAVIOR AND WE SCREAM FOR HIM
DEMON FAM'LY, DEMON FAM'LY, DON'T GIVE A DAMN
SATAN IS OUR SAVIOR AND WE SCREAM FOR HIM
RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

*They all exit except for JENNA who remains alone in her bedroom.
NATHANIEL enters and pantomimes sneaking in through JENNA's
window. He has a Welsh accent.*

JENNA

Jeepers! Nathaniel, what are you doing here?

NATHANIEL

Your mom told me you never wanted to see me again. I needed to see if it was true.

JENNA

What? Oh. Of course it isn't true. I love you Nathaniel. It's just...

NATHANIEL

I know. Your parents don't think I can provide for you because I'm an artist.

JENNA

Exactly. I hate society.

NATHANIEL

I hate society too, babe. You aren't really going to marry this Nick asshole, are you?

JENNA

I'm only sixteen, Nathaniel. I have to do what my parents say. They're so worried about all this global warming that they're acting totally unfair.

NATHANIEL

Tch... You know I don't accept all that global warming stuff.

JENNA

I know, but what are we supposed to do?

NATHANIEL

I don't fit into society, Jenna. Are you even sure being with me is what's best for you?

JENNA

How am I supposed to know? All I know is that I hate my family. And I hate the climate. I hate it for changing, just like everything around me is changing.

NATHANIEL

Hey, hey, shhh. Come here. What did the rotisserie chicken say to the other rotisserie chicken?

JENNA

What?

NATHANIEL

You're my breast friend.

JENNA

Oh Nathaniel! You're *my* breast friend.

They embrace. There is a knock on the front door downstairs. AMANDA pantomimes opening the door for NICK. He is a jock finance bro in a business suit. He has a Welsh accent.

AMANDA

Oh, Nick! So nice to see my future son-in-law! Come on in.

NICK

Thanks Mrs. Ford. I mean, *mam*. I was just on my way home from my finance job and I thought I'd stop by.

AMANDA

Can I get you something, some water? Coffee? Slice of cake? I've been baking all day, tee-hee.

NICK

Do you have any Four Loco?

AMANDA

Coming right up.

NICK

Tidy!

AMANDA pantomimes getting him a Four Loco. He pantomimes drinking it.

NICK

I'm *loco* for that stuff.

They laugh.

AMANDA

So, how's the finance job?

NICK

It's great. I'm making a *lot* of money. By the way, can I put my lacrosse stick somewhere?

AMANDA

Of course, I'll put it in the coat closet right here.

They pantomime putting his lacrosse stick away.

NICK

Thanks.

AMANDA

Well, Jenna is in her bedroom. You know the way.

NICK heads up to AMANDA's bedroom. He catches JENNA and NATHANIEL embracing.

NICK

What the fuck is going on here?

JENNA

Nick!

NATHANIEL

This is Nick? Get out of here, Nick. Jenna and I are in love. *Real* love. She doesn't want you here.

NICK

Jenna, you aren't honestly going to pick this *artist* over me, someone who works in finance?

JENNA

Um...

NATHANIEL

Jenna, who are you going to pick?

The lights get weird.

AMANDA and HENRY FORD enter, and there is an extremely abstract sequence of nonverbal physical theatre where the five of them strip down to their underwear and paint on each others' bodies with body paint to tell the story of how HENRY FORD and AMANDA pressured JENNA to get engaged to NICK, and the love triangle with JENNA, NICK, and NATHANIEL.

This takes a few minutes.

Then:

SCENE 9

[7] [26] [28] [61] [98] [101] [186] [190] [196] [200] [207] [208] [217] [286]

A phone starts to ring in the audience. JENNA, NICK, NATHANIEL, AMANDA, and HENRY FORD yell at them and try to figure out whose phone is ringing.

The “audience member” fumbles with their phone for a long time. Eventually JENNA notices it’s actually her grandma, BIG GRANDMA, an extremely authoritative and imposing woman. BIG GRANDMA has an Australian accent.

The following is sung recitative:

JENNA

WAIT A MINUTE
THAT’S BIG GRANDMA
BIG GRANDMA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

BIG GRANDMA

WELL, BABY, I WAS WATCHING THE SHOW
BUT LET ME TELL YOU
I’M NOT LIKING WHAT I’M SEEING

AMANDA

MOM? IS THAT YOU OUT THERE IN THE AUDIENCE?

BIG GRANDMA

DON’T “MOM” ME!
YOU KNOW WHAT?
I’M COMING UP THERE
HERE COMES BIG GRANDMA

BIG GRANDMA clambers through the audience and gets on stage.

JENNA

BUT GRANDMA--

A generic 2010’s sassy pop ballad begins. It has a very simple pop chord progression and simple instrumentation, just a rhythm section plus an out of tune clarinet and trumpet playing in unison. BIG GRANDMA sings very authoritatively and with a lot of sass. Kind of like “I Didn’t Plan It” from Waitress. She has no sense of humor.

BIG GRANDMA

SHUT YOUR MOUTH, CHILD
 DON'T YOU EVER SASS ME
 I'VE LIVED A LONG, LONG LIFE HONEY
 YOU BETTER LISTEN TO ME

MY LIFE WAS FILLED WITH STRIFE
 AND I COULD NEVER FORGET
 THAT SOMETIMES IN YOUR LIFE
 WELL CHILD, YOU JUST GET WHAT YOU GET

I SEE WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING
 YES CHILD I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE
 AND IF THIS GOES WHERE IT'S GOING
 THERE'LL BE PROBLEMS YOU CAN'T IGNORE
 I SEE WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING
 YES CHILD I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE
 AND IF THIS GOES WHERE IT'S GOING
 THERE'LL BE PROBLEMS YOU CAN'T IGNORE

I KNOW THE FUTURE, I FEEL IT
 DEEP IN MY OLD WEARY BONES
 AND THE WAY YOUR STORY IS HEADED
 IT WILL BE BAD, AND YOU'LL END UP ALL ALONE!

YES I'M YOUR BIG GRANDMA
 AND CHILD I JUST KNOW BETTER
 YOU GOT TO GET YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT
 FROM ME, TO YOU, AN OPEN LETTER:

The future's sure lookin grim, child!
 Who will it be? Him, or him, child?
 I HATE TO SAY IT, THESE THINGS END UP IN DISASTER
 AND YOU CAN TRUST ME, I'M A SEASONED FORECASTER

I SEE WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING
 YES CHILD I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE
 AND IF THIS GOES WHERE IT'S GOING
 THERE'LL BE PROBLEMS YOU CAN'T IGNORE
 I SEE WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING
 YES CHILD I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE
 AND IF THIS GOES WHERE IT'S GOING
 THERE'LL BE PROBLEMS THAT YOU JUST CAN'T IGNORE

THIS BIG OLD GRANDMOTHER KNOWS
OH YES I KNOW
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO

THIS BIG OLD GRANDMOTHER KNOWS
OH YES I KNOW
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO

THIS BIG OLD GRANDMOTHER KNOWS
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS GO
THE WAY THAT THESE THINGS ALWAYS GO

SCENE 10

[10] [25] [26] [53] [58] [62] [69] [98] [190] [207] [286]

Late that same night. HENRY FORD comes home from work. He's cartoonishly drunk.

AMANDA

Henry? I thought you were staying at work tonight.

HENRY FORD

Nope. Hic!

AMANDA

Well, you can sleep on the couch tonight. And you know why? Because I want a divorce. No, I *need* a divorce. All this climate change has got me thinking, and Henry, I-- Henry? Are you drunk? Have you been drinking?

HENRY FORD

Drunk? I'm the soberest I've ever felt.

He trips and makes a loud crash.

HENRY FORD

Ow, fuck! Okay... Maybe I'm a drittle lunk.

JENNA and JAKE rush downstairs.

JAKE

We heard a crash, what the fuck is going on?

JENNA

What's happening daddy, are you okay?

HENRY FORD

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! I'm not okay! Kids, your dad was fired today.

AMANDA

Fired?

HENRY FORD

THEY STOLE MY IDEA AND THEY FIRED ME! Gonna take all the profit for themselves, all the credit, all the perks. Kids, have I ever told you about my parents? About where I come from? About where *you* come from?

JAKE

No, dad.

HENRY FORD

Well, it's time you learned.

AMANDA

Henry, I don't think--

HENRY FORD

(Gradually adopting an Irish accent.)

NO! They should know the truth. My father came to this country from Ireland with nothing but a potato in a sack and a pocket full of dreams. Chasing after the *American* dream. Raised me and my eleven siblings on ten cents a week working sixteen hour days in the coal factory. I, well, I wanted to be an actor, I loved Shakespeare, but when little baby Eunice caught tuberculosis... She was sent to a sanatorium and she died there. It happened so fast. Mama didn't last but a few years longer. She started up with that damn opium. A house full of paranoia and lies and shame. Well, she overdosed one night, we found her lying on the kitchen floor clutching Eunice's baby blanket in her gnarled hands.

JAKE

Dad...

JENNA

We never knew.

HENRY FORD

Pa was a shell of a man after that night. Stopped going to work, he did. I couldn't be an actor anymore, not a chance in wee hell. Had to take his place as the man of the house. And I had an idea for a car that would change the face of globalism, pull us up out of poverty, and show everyone what real Irish folk were made of.

Music begins. This song is a slow Irish folk ballad and it heavily features the bagpipes.

HENRY FORD

And now... Look at me now. Look at *us* now. I met your ma when the factory sent me abroad to work in Australia for a year.

(Taking her hand.)

I knocked her up and I moved us all to this provincial Welsh American town for a chance at a better life. There was opportunity here. But, well...

All of the characters sing with Irish accents even though they don't otherwise have Irish accents.

HENRY FORD

THAT'S JUST THE LUCK OF THE IRISH
PEEL A POTATO AND HOPE FOR THE BEST
AS FOR THE REST, WELL,
WE'RE PUT TO THE TEST
EVERY DAY, EVERY DIDDLE-DI-DAY

BUT LISTEN TO ME KIDS
BECAUSE WHEN I SPEAK
YOUR ANCESTORS SPEAK THROUGH ME, TOO
THEY SAY "DAMN IT, YOU'RE IRISH!"
AND WE HAVE A WAY
OF MAKING THE MOST OF THE LEAST
AND DAMN, WHEN YOU'RE IRISH
AND THEN YOU'VE MOVED WEST
YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH

YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
AND DAMN, WHEN YOU'RE IRISH
AND THEN YOU'VE MOVED WEST
YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH

JENNA & JAKE

THAT'S JUST THE LUCK OF THE IRISH?
PEEL A POTATO AND HOPE FOR THE BEST?

AMANDA

AS FOR THE REST, WELL,
WE'RE PUT TO THE TEST

ALL THREE

EVERY DAY, EVERY DIDDLE-DI-DAY

HENRY FORD

I USED TO THINK "FUCK BEING IRISH"
FAMINES AND HAGGIS AND STALE SODA BREAD
BUT WHEN I'M LOW,
WHEN THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO,
I HEAR PA SAYIN', "DIDDLE-DI-DAY"

“DAMN IT, YOU’RE IRISH!”
 AND WE HAVE A WAY
 OF MAKING THE MOST OF THE LEAST
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU’RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU’VE MOVED WEST
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH

They now are joined by an ensemble of Irish folk, some of whom are staged in the aisles and sing directly to audience members.

ALL
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU’RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU’VE MOVED WEST
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH

YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU’RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU’VE MOVED WEST
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH

DANCE BREAK: HENRY FORD does an Irish step dance. They all hoot and clap for him. Then the kids each give it a go. Finally AMANDA joins in the dance. Then everyone joins in. They pull audience members up on stage to dance, too. They all are having a great old Irish time.

ALL
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU’RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU’VE MOVED WEST
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH

YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU’RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU’VE MOVED WEST
 YOU’LL NEVER STOP BEIN’ IRISH

YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
 YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU'RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU'VE MOVED WEST
 YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH

YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
 YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
 AND DAMN, WHEN YOU'RE IRISH
 AND THEN YOU'VE MOVED WEST
 YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH

YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH
 IT'S TRUE!
 YOU'LL NEVER, NO NEVER
 STOP
 BEIN' IRISH...

YOU'LL NEVER STOP BEIN' IRISH!

JENNA

Well, I guess there's one member of our family who isn't Irish. Come here, Spot!

A dog runs onstage, obviously to get a treat from the actress playing JENNA. JENNA squeaks a squeaky toy and plays with the dog.

AMANDA

Don't get any ideas, Jake.

JAKE

Come on, mom! Dogfighting is where all the money is these days, and Spot is getting to be really competitive!

The dog runs off again to the trainer, who we can see standing too close to the stage in the wings. The squeaky toy gets left onstage.

HENRY FORD

Wow, is it morning already?

AMANDA

Morning? Jenna, isn't it time for your piano lesson?

JENNA

Jeepers, I almost forgot! Jake, will you take me so I don't get lost again?

JAKE

Sure thing, little sis.

JENNA and JAKE exit.

SCENE 11

[10] [26] [28] [35] [48] [69] [95] [98] [108] [118] [156] [157] [159] [186] [189] [197]
 [201] [207] [209] [227] [250] [269] [274] [286] [288] [291]

JENNA is taking a piano lesson from MR. OLDMAN, her dorky and bumbling piano teacher. He has a Welsh accent.

JENNA badly pantomimes playing the piano along with a pre-recorded track of someone else playing something extremely complicated, like Liszt's "La Campanella." It should be obvious that she is not actually playing.

MR. OLDMAN

That was good, that was! Nyuck nyuck nyuck nyuck nyuck!

JENNA

Thanks Mr. Oldman.

MR. OLDMAN

You're almost as good as I was... when I was FIVE!

He laughs in her face.

MR. OLDMAN

But Jenna, you don't seem like yourself today. Is everything alright at home?

JENNA begins to cry.

JENNA

Oh, I don't know what to do! I'm in love with Nathaniel, I really, truly love him. But my parents want me to marry Nick. I know Nick will be able to provide for me better than Nathaniel. And my dad just told me all about my family history and now I understand why money is so important... I would have a real future with Nick. But I'm not in love with him. Am I? I just feel so confused. How am I supposed to know what's the right thing to do?

Music begins. It is a bland Golden Age style ballad. The music is sweet and simple and kind of boring. Kind of like "More I Cannot Wish You" from Guys and Dolls.

MR. OLDMAN picks up the dog squeaky toy that was left on stage previously and accompanies himself with it throughout the whole song, making squeaky noises the way someone might use a handheld percussion instrument.

MR. OLDMAN

MY DARLIN', YOU'RE JUST A YOUNGIN'
 SO DARLIN', TAKE IT FROM ME
 THAT ALL THESE THINGS THAT TROUBLE YOU,
 THAT ARE MAKIN' YOU FEEL SO CRAPPY
 THEY'LL PASS, OH THEY WILL,
 It just takes time, kid!
 AND THEN WHEN YOU'RE WISENED LIKE ME
 YOU'LL LOOK BACK, THEN, YOU WILL,
 At your whole, long, long life!
 AND THIS, DARLIN', IS WHAT YOU'LL SEE:

YOU'LL SEE ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS
 HEALTHY, YOUNG, AND BRIGHT,
 LOOKING HAPPY AND MAKING PLANS
 WITH YOU FOR TOMORROW NIGHT

YOU'LL SEE BOTH YOUR PARENTS, TOO, KID
 STRONG AND WISE AND TRUE
 PROPPING YOU UP ON THEIR LAP, SAYIN',
 "HEY KID, WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU"

AND THEN ONE DAY YOU'LL WAKE UP,
 SUDDENLY, WITH SUCH A FRIGHT,
 AND YOU, YOU'RE ALL ALONE, THEN, KID,
 And ya think: "That can't be right!"

SO TAKE IT FROM ME NOW, KID,

WHILE YOU'RE YOUNG AND STILL HAVE TIME
 JUST MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LIFE NOW
 WHILE YOU'RE STILL IN YOUR PRIME
 YES YOU SHOULD ALWAYS LOVE YOUR LOVES
 AND DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY
 YOU SHOULD ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART
 FOR SOMEDAY YOU WILL BE

OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 SOMEDAY YOU WILL WAKE UP AND BE
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 SOMEDAY YOU WILL WAKE UP AND BE...

SO YOU SHOULD ALWAYS LOVE YOUR LOVES...

JENNA
 I SHOULD ALWAYS LOVE MY LOVES...

MR. OLDMAN
 AND DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY...

JENNA
 DO WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY...

MR. OLDMAN
 YOU SHOULD ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART

MR. OLDMAN
 FOR SOMEDAY YOU WILL BE

OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 SOMEDAY YOU WILL WAKE UP
 AND BE
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE ME
 SOMEDAY YOU WILL WAKE UP AND
 BE...
 OLD AND UGLY
 LIKE
 ME

JENNA
 FOR SOMEDAY I WILL BE

OLD AND UGLY LIKE YOU
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE YOU
 SOMEDAY I WILL WAKE UP
 AND BE
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE YOU
 OLD AND UGLY LIKE YOU
 SOMEDAY I WILL WAKE UP AND
 BE...
 OLD AND UGLY
 LIKE
 YOU

Just when the song appears to be fully over, aggressively contemporary hip hop music begins.

MR. OLDMAN

Take it from me, Jenna. Trust me on this one, I know what I'm talking about here!!!

DANCE BREAK: MR. OLDMAN and a chorus of elderly people do a hip hop dance. It's like those YouTube videos of old people dabbing in their church choirs. It's clumsy and they're not good at it. A lot of the choreography references viral Tik Tok dance memes.

Many of them are staged in the aisles and they dance in audience members' faces.

They also make eye contact with anyone who appears to be young in the audience and they say things to them like "See? We know what you like!"

MR. OLDMAN

(Rapping.)

I SAW THIS DANK MEME ON REDDIT AND I WILL NEVER FORGET IT
IT WAS A PIC OF THE TROLL FACE ON TOP OF PEPE THE FROG'S FACE,
YEAH I FOLLOW TUMBLR BLOGS,
AND THIRTY TO FIFTY FERAL HOGS,
SHREK IS LOVE, SHREK IS LIFE,
OK BOOMER?
FELT CUTE, MIGHT DELETE
SOONER

LET'S GO LIVE ON THE GRAM,
THIS SNAPCHAT FILTER'S MY JAM,
I PUT MY HASHTAG ON FLEEK,
MY SHADE IS REALLY UNIQUE.

ME? I KNOW WHAT'S COOL, KID
I'M A REAL COOL DUDE
BILLIE EILISH IS HIP, YO
I LEARNED A TIK TOK DANCE

I KNOW WHAT THE KIDS LIKE YO
CUZ I'M A COOL KID, TOO
SOMETIMES IT JUST BE LIKE THAT
IT BE LIKE THAT SOMETIMES
YEET!

JENNA

WEIRD FLEX BUT OK!
LET'S GET THIS BREAD,
LET'S PART-AY!

MR. OLDMAN starts flossing like The Backpack Kid. Then all of the other old people start flossing, too.

There is a breakdance battle between two elderly people who are not good at breakdancing but they give it their best effort, constantly checking to make sure the young people in the audience are engaged and approving.

Then everyone breakdances together.

ALL

(Elderly people rapping that sounds like effortful mumbling.)

WE SAW THIS DANK MEME ON REDDIT AND WE WILL NEVER FORGET IT
IT WAS A PIC OF THE TROLL FACE ON TOP OF PEPE THE FROG'S FACE,
YEAH WE FOLLOW TUMBLR BLOGS,
AND THIRTY TO FIFTY FERAL HOGS,
SHREK IS LOVE, SHREK IS LIFE,
OK BOOMER?
FELT CUTE, MIGHT DELETE
SOONER

LET'S GO LIVE ON THE GRAM,
THIS SNAPCHAT FILTER'S OUR JAM,
WE PUT THOSE HASHTAGS ON FLEEK,
OUR SHADE IS REALLY UNIQUE

WE ALL KNOW WHAT'S COOL, KID
YEAH WE'RE ALL REALLY COOL
BILLIE EILISH IS HIP, YO
WE LEARNED A TIK TOK DANCE

WE KNOW WHAT THE KIDS LIKE YO
CUZ WE'RE ALL COOL KIDS, TOO
SOMETIMES IT JUST BE LIKE THAT
IT BE LIKE THAT SOMETIMES

SOMETIMES IT JUST BE LIKE THAT
IT BE LIKE THAT SOMETIMES

MR. OLDMAN
SOMETIMES IT JUST BE LIKE THAT

JENNA
IT BE LIKE THAT SOMETIMES

ALL
YEET!

They all dab on the song's final button.

JENNA
Thanks Mr. Oldman! I really feel better now.

MR. OLDMAN
I'll always be here to talk when you need me, Jenna.

They hug.

A car horn honks.

JENNA
Oh, it's my grandma!

BIG GRANDMA enters.

BIG GRANDMA
Jenna, I've been texting you that I'm outside and I was getting worried.

JENNA
Mr. Oldman, this is my grandma. She's picking me up.

MR. OLDBAG
Picking you up? With those arms?! Nyuck nyuck nyuck nyuck nyuck! Jenna, why didn't you ever tell me your grandmother was so beautiful?

BIG GRANDMA
Oh, goodness.... Jenna, why don't you go wait in the car?

JENNA
Okay grandma!

(Exiting.)
Jeepers, it's so hot outside.

JENNA exits.

MR. OLDBAG

Nyuck nyuck nyuck! It's not every day a beautiful woman visits me in my home, it's not.

BIG GRANDMA

Tee-hee. Hello.

MR. OLDBAG

A beautiful *single* woman?

BIG GRANDMA

Single. Yes. For some time now...

MR. OLDBAG

I know I'm just a little old man. I don't have much to offer. I live a humble life alone here in this big empty house. But I would regret it for the rest of however many days I have left if I didn't tell you how I'm feeling right now. May I take you to dinner sometime? I would very much enjoy to be in your company, nyuck nyuck nyuck!

BIG GRANDMA

Well... Goodness. Might as well give it a shot! While we still have time.

MR. OLDBAG

Tidy!

BIG GRANDMA

But I should tell you, I have a terrible secret. And by the way, I never thought I'd see weather like this in my lifetime. Can you believe this global warming?

MR. OLDBAG

I know. But what's the be done?

BOTH OF THEM

(Looking at the audience.)

What IS to be done?

SCENE 12

[28] [35] [41] [76] [86] [89] [98] [112] [174] [186] [224] [226] [252] [264] [265] [278]
[291]

RANDY, a straight white guy in his 50s, is moving into a new condo in Everytown Wales America. His friend CRAIG, who has a Welsh accent, is helping him move in boxes from a van. They pantomime carrying the boxes from offstage, opening the boxes, and taking stuff out of them.

RANDY

So anyway, I said to her, I'll take twenty! And slapped her on the ass to show her I meant business.

They laugh heartily.

CRAIG

Gotta show those ladies who's boss, you do.

RANDY

Anyway, thanks for helping me move all these boxes, Craig. When somebody asks me to help them move some boxes, I always say, I'm not interested, but why don't you go wait around the Home Depot parking lot and see if you can find someone there?

They laugh again.

CRAIG

Well, I'm glad to help, I am.

RANDY

You're a saint. I can feel your good will radiating out from your body. I think I'm gonna hurl.

CRAIG

It's always hard moving to a new city, but I think you're really going to like it here in Everytown Wales America.

RANDY

Fuck if I am. As long as I'm as far away as I can get from that bitch Natasha. Divorce? I do *not* recommend it.

RANDY's phone rings.

Speak of the devil.

RANDY

A spotlight comes up on a random audience member. They're not escorted onto the stage, they're just left sitting awkwardly in their seat with a spotlight on them. RANDY delivers the following one-sided phone call to that audience member, though the audience member doesn't actually talk back to him, so the logic of it doesn't really make sense.

RANDY

Natasha. To what do I owe the pleasure?

"Mental illness." Tch, fake news. What the fuck does the kid need Zoloft for?

Well, tell him to muscle up. That's what we told all the pansies in my high school when I was his age.

Well I disagree.

Well I disagree.

Well I disagree.

Well I disagree.

Well I'm not paying for it.

I'm not paying for that either.

You already get ALIMONY from me, Natasha!

I'm doing the best I can! I'm the kid's father for god's sake. I should get some say in the matter.

Well I think the judge was asking for too much. So I sent what I sent.

Well you can figure it out yourself.

Well you can tell your mother she's a snake and a criminal.

Well that's not my problem, is it?

IS IT?

IS IT?!?!?!?!?

Go fuck yourself Natasha.

He hangs up abruptly.

At some point during the phone call, LINDA entered. She is a white woman about the same age as RANDY and she has a Welsh accent.

LINDA

I'm not interrupting here, am I?

RANDY

Well well well... Hello gorgeous.

CRAIG

Randy, I forgot to mention I've got a thing with Julia--you know, my wife Julia--so I invited my good friend Linda here to help you unpack. I thought you two would get along. I hope that's alright.

RANDY

Well of course... I don't fucking mind at all. I hope you don't mind doing a little heavy lifting, little lady.

LINDA

Golly, I don't mind at all. Tee-hee. It's what I signed up for, I think?

CRAIG

I'll leave you to it. Tidy!

(Exiting.)

God, it's hot out here! Can you believe this global warming?

CRAIG exits. RANDY and LINDA pantomime unpacking boxes.

LINDA

Who was that on the phone?

RANDY

My wife. Sorry, my *ex*-wife.

LINDA

Ex?

RANDY

Yeeeeeep. I'm moving out here to start afresh. Divorce papers signed and took right off outta there. It's a small town here, but sometimes that's just what the doctor ordered.

LINDA

Have you been seeing anyone?

RANDY

You mean like *dating*? Oh no, I treat people terribly and I hate myself for it, and I'll be the first one to admit it, but I'm too old to change. Nobody would want to date me.

LINDA

Maybe someone would.

RANDY

Someone? You mean... Don't tell me *you're* single?

LINDA

I might be. Tee-hee. You have a kid?

RANDY

Tch, technically. I hardly see him anymore.

LINDA

What's his name?

RANDY

Chewy.

LINDA

What a beautiful name.

RANDY

It's short for Chewbacca. He's fine, just needs some sense knocked into him. So... Wow, okay. Jeez. Fuck unpacking. Can I take you out to dinner? Or maybe we just order Mexican food here and watch Star Wars? Say, what's your Star Wars movie ranking order?

LINDA

I've never seen any of them, actually.

RANDY

WHAAAAAT?! YOU HAVEN'T?! You're kidding! You're fucking kidding me right now! I CANNOT BELIEVE IT! HOW HAVE YOU NOT SEEN STAR WARS?

LINDA

Tee-hee, I just haven't.

RANDY

You must be like an ALIEN or something! I feel like I need to kick you out of my house, oh my GOD!

LINDA

You must love your son a lot, don't you? In your own special way. I think you just have a different way of showing it.

RANDY

You really see that in me?

LINDA

I'm doing a poetry reading tonight, I am, of my own original poetry, if you would like to come? It might be fun.

RANDY

Let's go right now!

LINDA

Great! I'll drive you there in my brand new Model T car. Have you seen on the news? People all around the world are driving these things now. The effect that the globalization of the automotive industry is going to have on our lives is really unquantifiable.

SCENE 13

[5] [25] [28] [70] [98] [118] [136] [137] [173] [222] [252] [266]

LINDA's poetry reading. Most of the rest of the cast is on stage watching.

LINDA

Skit skat.

Skit skit skat.

Knick knack, paddy whack, give a dog...

A rainforest?

An ocean?

Feel the waves, dawg, of the ocean.

Lap them up with your dog tongue.

Uh-oh.

POISON.

Poison in the water, in the sky, in the air.

Lapping, lapping, lapping it up.

Got oil in your belly, in your brain.

In your WALLET.

Lap it up, dog.

By the way,

What's up dog?

Thank you for asking,

Nobody takes the time these days.

No, what's up in the *air*?Oh, the *air*.

It's smog.

(Retching and choking noises)

Makes me sick.

And what about what's up with my *body*?

My body in this space.

All of our bodies in this space.

In this space. Right now.

Check in with your body, your boodle,

Your skit skat ski-doodle.

Feel this space.

Outer space?

Just give me some space, I need some space!

Ahhhh.

Floating in space.

Alone, a lonely, lone little space.

Stop!

What about the semiotics?
 Huh? The semiotics?
 Oh yeah, the semiotics.
 Are you making meaning out of *my* body?
 What are the semiotics of my body in this space?
 My body in different spaces around New York City.
 The meaning, I mean, is DON'T
 Be mean
 To
 Each other
 Even though I know
 woah woah
 You can't help it in a space
 like
 this.
 And what of *your* body?
 Yeah, your body.
 Your body-ody-ody-ody-ody.
 Snap a pic, post it on Insta, get some likes,
 Still feel sad though.
 This liberal media.
 That liberal media,
 All of us in media
 res.
 In media res-- olution.
 Conflict resolution?
 What about a conflict reVOLution?
 Just can't wrap my mind around these things...
 Can't wrap mankind around what sings.
 What sings the song of my soul.
 My soil.
 The soil of my soul, fertilizing this,
 our,
 Wounded earth.
 The globe is on fire.
 These globes are on fire.
 The globes of my body.
 They are
 Hiroshima
 and
 Nagasaki.
 Filling up with poison
 Just like this body.

No, not *my* body.
 This bilious big blue body
 of water,
 of silt,
 of archipelagos and estuaries and swampland,
 That we call home.
 And who tells this story of this
 celestial
 body?
 Not me
 that's for sure.
 Who gets to tell
 or tells
 or should get to tell
 or does tell
 the story
 of my--
 our--
 bodies?
 Is it you?
 Well, fuck you then!
 Asshole.
 Asswipe.
 Massive pipe.
 Filled with oil
 With blood money
 Dripping like honey
 In a great glass jar.
 Pipe down, journalists.
 C'est la vie.
 La vie boheme.
 Boheme -em -em -em -em um, sorry, am I in the right place?
 Am I in the right...
 Space?
 Right and left and green parties,
 Bitching,
 The cries of the fractured soul of a political
 Body.
 Making this celestial body filthy
 filthy
 With rhetoric.
 Filthy?

Filthy *rich*

Sweep it up, maid

Sweep up that filth, that dust

That

Stardust

It's what we're all

madeofmadeofmadeofmadeof

Into the dust pan with your conscience.

So twinkle twinkle little me,

Little you,

Little us,

How I wonder

WHO

any of us really are

deep down.

Make a wish upon a star,

A body,

blow out the candles,

the Brexit star is shining bright tonight

Try to have a little compassion for it,

For that disagreeable little baby burning bright in the night,

And you might

Even see

your reflection in it.

In another loop lap loop lap loop

around the sun.

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

Seven

Eight

Come on, count with me everyone

Nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fourteen fifteen

Count with me!

Sixteen seventeen eighteen nineteen twenty twenty-one twenty-two twenty-three twenty-four twenty-five twenty-six twenty-seven twenty-eight twenty-nine thirty thirty-one thirty-two thirty-three thirty-four thirty-five thirty-six thirty-seven thirty-eight thirty-nine forty forty-one forty-two forty-three forty-four forty-five forty-six forty-seven forty-eight forty-nine fifty fifty-one fifty-two fifty-three fifty-four fifty-five fifty-six...

STOP!

Fifty-six years old.

This body.
How long until I myself...
become...
oil?
How long until I am worth something to...
Them?
No.
To myself.
So happy birthday to me, dog.
Little dog, little itty bitty bitch dog.
Blow your horn
Your candles
Your artistic impulses
Blow it all, dog.
Fuck it!
But that dog?
There's only a two letter difference
between
b-i-t-c-h
And b-i-r-t-h
That dog is a bitch?
NO!
That dog is a witch.
A snitch, a dish, a myth, a princess,
And that dog?
(Barks like a dog)
That dog is the soul of a nation.
The flesh of mankind.
The man of my dreams.
The dream of my childhood.
My childhood.
My childhood, my childhood...
Bullies in the cafeteria!
Are you gonna eat that?
That what?
That college education.
That student loan debt.
That national nightmare.
That gaping hole.
That teenage suicide.

That barbie dream house
 for a dream
 unhoused
 for a dream
 deferred?

(Baby voice:)

No, sorry mister!

I, I, I

I don't know what happens to it...

But I can ask my mommy what happens to it.

Does it dry up like a raisin or somethin'?

I wouldn't know anything about that...

(Regular voice:)

But *I* can tell you what happens:

To that Shrinky Dink of a slam dunk that never was.

That Dunkaroo.

Those kangaroos.

Burning.

Burning.

Burning.

The hills are alive with the sounds of
 conflagration.

And Roo?

Is Roo burning?

Tigger, and Piglet, and Winnie the Pooh?

They are the Syrian refugees

Of my childhood.

I feel them.

Their trauma in *my* body.

I am their trauma mama.

And they,

We,

Are here with

us

all of us

in this room

right now

breathing together in this space.

In our collective unconscious.

Flooding our collective memory with Eeyores and Rabbits

With bad habits

That you just can't kick.

The hundred acre wood

suckling
 Gasoline.
 Can you feel them?
 Feel them in your sex
 Fell them with your hex
 Little witch
 Don't be vulgar
 And don't
 apologize.
 Got to grab it
 While you can.
 So eat a carrot, Rabbit
 Take a nap, Pooh Bear.
 There's nothing else to do, bear.
 Snore snore snore,
 Eeyore, is that
 a
 a
 a
 a
 a *noose?*
(GASP)
(Eeyore voice:)
 Duck duck goose is dead, my dude,
 Childhood is over.
 Get out while you can.
 And there's nothing
 more
 outside.
 See?
 Nothing.
(Normal voice:)
 So sing so long
 the longest of longs
 of long farewells
 No more life in this wife.
 No more time in this crime.
 No more space in my case.
 No more fruit of the loom.
 No more loam on the moon.
 You only get one body.
 You only get one

...

life.
 YOLO.
 And when I was a baby?
 Who can remember that far back?
 But this baby got back.
 Got back her *memory*,
 that is.
 Of a long lost time in a long lost space
 From a long lost lake
 Where everything was chaste
 And no one had to race
 against
 the clock.
 (*Weird laugh*)
 Oh, none of that is true, Pooh!
 But maybe, just maybe,
 It could be if I tried.
 And you could, too.
 In this space.
 This wonderful wonderful
 wonderful...
 love.
 You.
 And you.
 And even you.
 My resistance.
 My struggle.
 My body.
 My childhood.
 Our climate.

She screams very loudly into a microphone for a long time. Maybe like for two minutes. It's like when Yoko Ono screamed as performance art at MoMA. It's startling how long and loudly she screams.

Then it seems to be over after and everybody claps. LINDA curtsies.

Loud EDM music starts to play. Lights come up on the whole audience. LINDA starts to dance.

LINDA

Everybody get up and dance! Come on, just dance! Feel the music in your bodies! Your bodies are part of the planet that we have to heal through our dancing! This is the theatre, be serious and dance!

The whole cast starts to dance in place and encourages the audience to stand up in their seats and dance. If audience members are reluctant, cast members approach and address them directly and don't leave them alone until they get up and dance. This goes on for an uncomfortable amount of time.

Eventually, the EDM music stops.

LINDA

That's my show everyone, thank you!

They clap again. RANDY approaches her.

RANDY

That was incredible. Like, wow. I had no idea you would actually be good.

LINDA

Thanks. I'm so glad you could make it.

A man named MICHAEL approaches LINDA. He's carrying a baby.

MICHAEL

Hey babe.

MICHAEL and LINDA kiss.

LINDA

Randy, this is Michael.

RANDY

You have a boyfriend?

LINDA

Tee-hee. Michael would you get me some punch?

MICHAEL

You got it babe.

MICHAEL exits.

RANDY

Was that your baby? What the fuck, Linda?

LINDA

Ohhh, I'm sorry Randy, I just don't know what to do. I'm in love with both of you. I don't want to think about anything right now. I just want to get to know you better. Tell me more about Star Wars, oh, pretty please.

RANDY

Okay, but only because you've got an amazing ass.

LINDA

Golly!

RANDY

So... Wait. This would be better with music. Does anyone have a guitar? You're gonna love this.

Someone hands RANDY a guitar (not a pantomimed one, an actual tangible guitar). He pantomimes strumming it while an audio track of virtuosic guitar playing plays, so it's very obvious to the audience he's not really playing the guitar.

RANDY

(Fake-strumming the guitar for dramatic effect. Speaking as narrator.)

A vast sea of stars serves as the backdrop for the main title. War drums echo through the heavens as a rollup slowly crawls into infinity. A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far, away... It is a period of civil war. Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire. During the battle, Rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the Death Star, an armored space station with enough power to destroy an entire planet. Pursued by the Empire's sinister agents, Princess Leia races home aboard her starship, custodian of the stolen plans that can save her people and restore freedom to the galaxy...The awesome yellow planet of Tatooine emerges from a total eclipse, her two moons glowing against the darkness. A tiny silver spacecraft, a Rebel Blockade Runner firing lasers from the back of the ship, races through space. It is pursued by a giant Imperial Star Destroyer. Hundreds of deadly laserbolts streak from the Imperial Star Destroyer, causing the main solar fin of the Rebel craft to disintegrate. Then we cut to the interior of the rebel blockade runner, main passage way. An explosion rocks the ship as two robots, R2D2 and C3PO struggle to make their way through the shaking, bouncing passageway. Both robots are old and battered. R2D2 is a short, claw-armed tripod. His face is a mass of computer lights surrounding a radar eye. C3PO, on the other hand, is a tall, slender robot of human proportions.

He has a gleaming bronze-like metallic surface of an Art Deco design. Another blast shakes them as they struggle along their way.

(As C3P0)

Did you hear that? They've shut down the main reactor. We'll be destroyed for sure. This is madness!

(As narrator.)

Rebel troopers rush past the robots and take up positions in the main passageway. They aim their weapons toward the door.

(As C3P0)

We're doomed!

(As narrator.)

The little R2 unit makes a series of electronic sounds that only another robot could understand.

(As R2D2)

Beep beep boop beep boop!

(As C3P0)

There'll be no escape for the Princess this time.

(As narrator.)

R2D2 continues making beeping sounds.

(As R2D2)

Beep beep beep beep beep! Boop beep boop!

(As narrator)

Tension mounts as loud metallic latches clank and the scream of heavy equipment are heard moving around the outside hull of the ship.

(C3P0)

What's that?

(As narrator)

We cut to an exterior shot of the spacecraft in space. The Imperial craft has easily overtaken the Rebel Blockade Runner. The smaller Rebel ship is being drawn into the underside dock of the giant Imperial starship. We cut back to an interior shot of the rebel blockade runner. The nervous Rebel troopers aim their weapons. Suddenly a tremendous blast opens up a hole in the main passageway and a score of fearsome armored spacesuited stormtroopers make their way into the smoke-filled corridor. In a few minutes the entire passageway is ablaze with laserfire. The deadly bolts ricochet in wild random patterns creating huge explosions. Stormtroopers scatter and duck behind storage lockers. Laserbolts hit several Rebel soldiers who scream and stagger through the smoke, holding shattered arms and faces. An explosion hits near the robots. The awesome, seven-foot-tall Dark Lord of the Sith makes his way into the blinding light of the main passageway. This is Darth Vader, right hand of the Emperor. His face is obscured by his flowing black robes and grotesque breath mask, which stands out next to the fascist white armored suits of the Imperial stormtroopers. Everyone instinctively backs away from the imposing warrior and a deathly quiet sweeps through the Rebel troops.

LINDA jumps up and kisses him aggressively.

LINDA

(Extremely turned on.)

Let's go. My place. Right now.

SCENE 14

[1] [9] [10] [11] [25] [26] [28] [35] [69] [98] [109] [124] [136] [190] [207] [269] [271]
 [278] [279] [286] [287]

RANDY and LINDA are pantomiming having sex at LINDA's place. They're completely nude except for their neutral face masks (which, as a reminder, everyone in the whole cast has been wearing the whole time), and the audience listens to this whole scene through binarual headphones so they feel like the actors are speaking directly into their ears.

Oh fuck!
 RANDY

Fuck yeah!
 LINDA

Oh fuck!
 RANDY

Oh baby!
 LINDA

Oh fuck!
 RANDY

Fuck yeah!
 LINDA

Oh fuck!
 RANDY

Oh baby!
 LINDA

RANDY notices a poster of Hillary Clinton on LINDA's wall.

Oh fuck.
 RANDY

Oh baby!
 LINDA

RANDY

(Stopping sex.)

No, I mean *oh fuck*. Is that HILLARY?

LINDA

Yes.

RANDY

Hillary Clinton.

LINDA

Of course it is.

RANDY

You didn't think that was IMPORTANT to tell me?

LINDA

Tell you what?

RANDY

That you're a...a...a... a liberal SNOWFLAKE?!

LINDA

(To the audience.)

Maybe he would have preferred that I had e-mailed him about it.

(To RANDY.)

Shucks, is that going to be a problem?

RANDY

Well, I'm a lifelong republican, and I plan to vote for YOUR president in 2020, just like I voted for him in 2016.

LINDA

Are we really going to let this come between us? We're in love, Randy.

RANDY

You're blind. This is all part of another plot to get the president impeached. Hillary lost the election, it's over, get over it!

LINDA

She won the popular vote!

Trap music begins in the style of Cardi B and LINDA takes on Cardi B's persona (like when Aidy Bryant did that SNL sketch "Aidy B.")

LINDA

TICKLE TICKLE FLICK MY NIPPLE
WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE, BITCH?
GOD DAMN YOU GOT NERVE, BITCH
OH MY GOD YOU A JERK, BITCH

HILLARY C
IS WHAT MY HONEYS CALL ME
BECUZ I RIDE ON THEY DICKS
THE WAY SHE RIDE ON YALL VOTES, BITCH

YEAH I AM HOT RICH AND SINGLE
AND BITCH I'M READY TO MINGLE
AND WHEN YOUR DICK START TO TINGLE
THIS BITCH RELEASING HER SINGLE

I CAN DO WHAT I WANT, YO
CUZ SHE GOT THE POPULAR VOTE, HO
EVEN IF YOU DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE IT
I'LL STILL DROP ALL MY KNOWLEDGE, BITCH

HILLARY C, SEE?
SHE GOT THE VOTES LET'S PARTY
YEAH HILLARY C, SEE?
SHE GOT THE VOTES LET'S PARTY
YEAH HILLARY C, SEE?
SHE GOT THE VOTES LET'S PARTY

YOU WANNA SEE WHAT'S GOOD?
WHAT'S HIDING UNDER THE HOOD?
YOU WANNA GRIND ALL UP ON ME, HONEY?
THEN YOU BETTA HOPE YOU GOT MONEY,
BITCH!

DANCE BREAK: Linda twerks, etc. She is joined by the ensemble, some of whom are staged in the aisles, and they twerk in audience members' faces. Some audience members are singled out and they are encouraged to twerk for Hillary.

LINDA

YOU KNOW I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE YOU
 THAT YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE REAL COOL
 SHE GOT THE POPULAR VOTE, YO
 I DROP THE KNOWLEDGE I KNOW, HO

MY WEAVE IS THE FINEST
 HRC WINE AND DINE US
 AND I DO WHAT I WANT, BITCH
 CUZ THEY CALL ME HILLARY C

HILLARY C, SEE?
 SHE GOT THE VOTES LET'S PARTY
 YEAH HILLARY C, SEE?
 SHE GOT THE VOTES LET'S PARTY
 YEAH HILLARY C, SEE?
 SHE GOT THE VOTES LET'S PARTY

RANDY punches her in the face. The song abruptly ends.

He runs off. LINDA stays behind in her bedroom.

We see RANDY collapse outside. He screams a primal scream.

RANDY

RAAAAAAAHHHH!!!! WHY AM I LIKE THIS?!?!? I just wanted to be sure she
 loved me... How else could I be really sure? Fuck!

*Music begins: a slow, emotional country ballad. RANDY sings with
 a thick Texas accent.*

RANDY

IT'S NOT EASY BEIN' DIVORCED
IT'S NOT EASY WHEN YOU LOST YOUR HORSE
WHEN YOU'RE OUT ON THE RANGE
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THE GAME
AND THE SUN BURNS YOUR EYES
AND YOUR CACTUS IS DRY

IT'S NOT EASY BEIN' DIVORCED
IT'S NOT EASY GETTIN' UP EVERY MORNIN'
THOUGH I'M DOIN' MY BEST
AND I PUFF OUT MY CHEST
I'M SO SAD
I'M SAD DEEP DOWN INSIDE

WHY?
WHY DID I PUNCH MY GIRLFRIEND?
WHY?
DOES THIS MEAN THAT IT HAS TO END?
OH WHY?
I THOUGHT THAT I KNEW WHAT WAS RIGHT
WHEN YOU'RE THREATENED YOU PUT UP A FIGHT

WHY?
WHY DID I PUNCH MY GIRLFRIEND?
WHY?
DOES THIS MEAN THAT IS HAD TO END?
OH WHY?
I THOUGHT THAT I KNEW WHAT WAS RIGHT
WHEN YOU'RE THREATENED YOU PUT UP A FIGHT

I'LL TELL YOU, MY EX-WIFE WAS CRUEL
AND SHE HAD A FACE LIKE A MULE
MY SON IS SO QUEER
MENTAL ILLNESS AIN'T REAL
SO I HAD TO GET OUT
OF THAT ROTTEN OLD TOWN

AND I'LL TELL YOU, I AM WHAT I AM
TAKE OR LEAVE IT, I DON'T GIVE A DAMN
BUT NOW I'M CONFUSED
AND MY LINDA IS BRUISED
WILL SHE BE MAD?

WILL SHE STILL LIKE ME?

WHY?

WHY DID I PUNCH MY GIRLFRIEND?

WHY?

DOES THIS MEAN THAT IT HAS TO END?

OH WHY?

I THOUGHT THAT I KNEW WHAT WAS RIGHT

WHEN YOU'RE THREATENED YOU PUT UP A FIGHT

WHY?

WHY DID I PUNCH MY GIRLFRIEND?

WHY?

DOES THIS MEAN THAT IT HAS TO END?

OH WHY?

WHY DID I PUNCH MY GIRLFRIEND?

WHY?

DOES THIS MEAN THAT IT HAS TO END?

OH...

WHY?

Randy collapses, crying.

SCENE 15

[2] [10] [11] [25] [26] [28] [35] [48] [69] [78] [86] [98] [107] [136] [168] [188] [223]
[236] [294]

A very young little boy, MAX, is pantomiming playing with blocks on his bedroom floor. LINDA enters. She has a terrible black eye painted on her neutral face mask.

LINDA

Max, honey, it's time for bed, okay? Did you feed Billy today?

MAX

Will you help me?

LINDA

Of course, dear.

(To the audience.)

Would one of you like to help us feed Billy, too? How about... You!

Someone from the cast escorts whomever LINDA selected onto the stage.

LINDA

(To the selected audience member.)

I'm such a pushover. Max loves spiders so much, so when he asked for a tarantula, how could I refuse?

LINDA asks the audience member a lot of questions about themselves in front of the rest of the audience, like "What's your name?" "Do you have a pet?" If not, "Have you ever had one before?" Or "Have you ever met someone with a pet?" Or "What's your pet's name?" "What does your pet eat?"

Then she asks them things that would make them uncomfortable to answer, like: "What's the worst thing that's ever happened to you?" "What's your greatest fear?" "How are you most afraid to die?" "If you had to pick between me or my son, who would you save?"

Eventually, a stagehand brings out a real tarantula and they have the audience member feed it.

MAX

Mom, will you read me my favorite bedtime story?

LINDA

But Max, I don't know how to read. Haha, just kidding. Of course, dear. I'll tuck you both into bed.

LINDA tucks MAX and the audience member into MAX's bed. She opens up a copy of Pride and Prejudice.

LINDA

Now, where was I? Ah, shit, here we are.

“When Jane and Elizabeth were alone, the former, who had been cautious in her praise of Mr. Bingley before, expressed to her sister just how very much she admired him. “He is just what a young man ought to be,” said she, “sensible, good-humoured, lively; and I never saw such happy manners!—so much ease, with such perfect good breeding!” “He is also handsome,” replied Elizabeth, “which a young man ought likewise to be, if he possibly can. His character is thereby complete.” “I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a compliment.” “Did not you? I did for you. But that is one great difference between us. Compliments always take you by surprise, and me never. What could be more natural than his asking you again? He could not help seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room. No thanks to his gallantry for that. Well, he certainly is very agreeable, and I give you leave to like him. You have liked many a stupider person.” “Dear Lizzy!” “Oh! you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in your life.” “I would not wish to be hasty in censuring anyone; but I always speak what I think.” “I know you do; and it is that which makes the wonder. With your good sense, to be so honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others! Affectation of candour is common enough—one meets with it everywhere. But to be candid without ostentation or design—to take the good of everybody’s character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad—belongs to you alone. And so you like this man’s sisters, too, do you? Their manners are not equal to his.” “Certainly not—at first. But they are very pleasing women when you converse with them. Miss Bingley is to live with her brother, and keep his house; and I am much mistaken if we shall not find a very charming neighbour in her.” Elizabeth listened in silence, but was not convinced; their behaviour at the assembly had not been calculated to please in general; and with more quickness of observation and less pliancy of temper than her sister, and with a judgement too unassailed by any attention to herself, she was very little disposed to approve them. They were in fact very fine ladies; not deficient in good humour when they were pleased, nor in the power of making themselves agreeable when they chose it, but proud and conceited. They were rather handsome, had been educated in one of the first private seminaries in town, had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, were in the habit of spending more than they ought, and of associating with people of rank, and were therefore in every respect entitled to think well of themselves, and meanly of others.

They were of a respectable family in the north of England; a circumstance more deeply impressed on their memories than that their brother's fortune and their own had been acquired by trade."

Alright, time for bed sweet babies!

She gives them both a goodnight kiss.

Music like "What's the Use of Wondrin'" from Carousel begins, but in a 1940s Big Band style. Kind of like Woody Herman's "Laura." The tempo is very, very, very slow. Slower than any normal song would ever be.

MAX

Mommy, what's that on your face?

LINDA

Oh, this? It's nothing, dear.

MAX

Does it hurt?

LINDA

No, honey, it doesn't hurt. It's just a little love bump.

MAX

Did that man do that to you?

LINDA

I... Honey. Listen. This is grown up stuff. Life is very complicated.

MAX

Can you try to explain?

LINDA

Hmm... Well...

SOMETIMES GROWN UP RELATIONSHIPS
ARE NOT ALL BLACK AND WHITE
SOMETIMES THINGS GET TRICKY
AND YOU HAVE TO SAY, "ALRIGHT"

YOU TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET, SOMETIMES,

'CAUSE NOBODY'S ALL GOOD
YOUR MAN IS WHO HE IS, MY DEAR,
HE'S JUST MISUNDERSTOOD

ANGER
IN HIS VOICE
SENDS A CHILL DOWN YOUR SPINE

TREMBLING
IN HIS HANDS
HE'S IN ONE OF HIS MOODS

AND FEELING
WHEN HE HITS YOU
YOU OUGHT TO BE BLUE

BUT HE LOVES YOU
AND YOU FEEL THAT WAY, TOO

KNOWING YOU CAN TAKE IT
WANTING US TO MAKE IT
HE'D NEVER REALLY BREAK IT
HIS KISSES DULL THE ACHE, IT
IS TRUE

THAT HE LOVES YOU
AND YOU FEEL THAT WAY, TOO

ANGER
IN HIS VOICE
SENDS A CHILL DOWN YOUR SPINE

TREMBLING
IN HIS HANDS
HE'S IN ONE OF HIS MOODS

AND FEELING
WHEN HE HITS YOU
YOU OUGHT TO BE BLUE

BUT HE LOVES YOU
AND YOU FEEL THAT WAY, TOO

YES, HE LOVES YOU
AND YOU FEEL THAT WAY, TOO.

SCENE 16

[10] [28] [41] [69] [72] [95] [98] [136] [137] [142] [162] [168] [242] [255] [267] [290]

RANDY and LINDA having a picnic in the park. LINDA's arm is in a sling. There is a kiddie pool on stage that represents a pond, and there are several actors from the ensemble splashing around in it as though they are going for a swim. One of them is holding a baby. RANDY and LINDA pantomime toasting champagne glasses.

RANDY

Cheers, to five months!

LINDA

To five months! You're the only one for me, darling.

RANDY

And you're the only one for me. I love that our anniversary is on Yom Kippur this month.

LINDA

Me too. What a lovely way to spend a break fast.

RANDY

And what a beautiful day in the park today.

LINDA

Even more beautiful with you here by my side.

RANDY

Would you like to go for a dip in the pond? Maybe a skinny dip?

LINDA

Randy! Tee-hee, you are so hot and sexy. But I'm not supposed to get my cast wet.

RANDY

Oh, that's a shame.

(Turning to the audience.)

How about any of you?

Actors from the ensemble grab a bunch of audience members and bring them on stage to splash their feet in the kiddie pool. If they decline, the actors tell them it's part of the show and they have to do it. Audience members seated in the splash zone get splashed. Once a bunch of audience members have splashed in the water:

RANDY

*(Speaking to the audience members on stage
who have been forced to splash in the pool.)*

I'm sorry everybody, can I have your attention? I don't feel good about what's happening here. This pond here, believe it or not, used to be one of the Great Lakes. It's why people settled here. Back in the day, Everytown Wales America was just a humble little fishing village. I wanted to move someplace safe, someplace with history, with fresh, crisp air. Air that smelled like the promise of new beginnings. And now this pond has almost completely evaporated. Because you know why? Because of global warming. The effect this will have on the town is indescribable. And here you all are, making merry, splashing around like nothing matters, having a good old time and taking this natural body of water that has given to much to us for granted. AS USUAL! Look, you've almost used up every last drop already! WELL, SHAME ON YOU! IT'S ABUSIVE! SHAME ON EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU! WHOSE FAULT IS IT THAT THIS WATER HAS DRIED UP? WHOSE FAULT IS IT THAT THE ICE CAPS ARE MELTING? WHOSE FAULT ARE ALL OF THE EXTREME METEROLOGICAL DISASTERS? WHO'S TO BLAME FOR THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT? YOU ARE! YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU!

LINDA's phone rings and she answers it.

LINDA

Hello? ... Oh my goodness. ... Is he alright? ... Okay, I'm on my way.

She hangs up.

LINDA

Randy, the nurse from Max's school just called. I have to go pick him up. I'm so sorry. Thank goodness for my new Model-T car. I couldn't afford to have a car before because my salary is so low, but now I can get around so efficiently. I wouldn't be able to go pick up my son without it!

LINDA exits. RANDY pantomimes looking at his watch.

RANDY

(Mischievously.)

Right on schedule. Thank you Model-T, and thank you globalism...

CANTOR REBECCA enters. She is a cantor dressed in the full regalia of a Jewish clergywoman. RANDY waves to her.

RANDY

Hey, over here.

CANTOR REBECCA

Blue shirt!

RANDY

White robe! I'm Randy. You're even more beautiful than your picture.

CANTOR REBECCA

Tee-hee. Thank you. You're very sexy in person as well. Did you lay out this whole picnic for me?

RANDY

Of course I did.

CANTOR REBECCA

It looks incredible. I've been fasting all day. Sorry, I'm a little nervous. I've never met anyone on an app before, and I came straight from my Kol Nidre service. But I was able to get here so quickly because of my new Model-T car. I've never had a car before, but the Model-T is so affordable! Soon everyone around the world will have one.

RANDY

Don't be nervous. We're just gonna have a good time.

The lights go out and the whole theatre is plunged into total darkness like during "Pore Jud is Daid" in the 2019 Broadway Revival of Oklahoma. We hear RANDY and CANTOR REBECCA have sex for a long time in the dark. Once they're done:

RANDY

Fuck, that was good.

CANTOR REBECCA

Wow, you are *amazing* at sex.

RANDY

I've never had intercourse with a clergywoman before. I feel blessed!

CANTOR REBECCA

Tee-hee.

RANDY

Rebecca, I have an idea. Please don't laugh. I think it will be romantic.

CANTOR REBECCA

Tell me.

RANDY

Would you sing Kol Nidre for me?

CANTOR REBECCA

I would love to.

The lights come back up as CANTOR REBECCA leads the audience in "Kol Nidre." The transliterated lyrics are projected behind her so everyone can follow along and sing. Partway through she is joined by ensemble members who process through the aisles and sing as the congregation.

RANDY

(To the audience.)

All rise.

Everybody stands up.

CANTOR REBECCA

KOL NIDREI VE-ESAREI VA-H.
 ARAMEI,
 V'KONAMEI V'KHINNUYEI,
 V'KINNUSEI U-SH'VU·OT,
 DINDARNA U-D'ISHTABBANA,
 U-D'AH.
 ARIMNA V'DA-ASARNA AL NAFSHATANA,
 MI-YOM KIPPURIM ZEH AD YOM KIPPURIM HA-BA ALEINU L'TOVAH,
 KUL'HON IH.
 ARATNA V'HON,
 KUL'HON Y'HON SH'RAN,
 SH'VIKIN SH'VITIN,
 B'TEILIN U-M'VUTTALIN,
 LA SHARIRIN V'LA KAYYAMIN.
 NIDRANA LA NIDREI,
 VE-ESARANA LA ESAREI,
 U-SH'VU·ATANA LA SH'VU·OT.

SCENE 17

[4] [5] [25] [28] [35] [59] [86] [98] [136] [226] [235] [249] [278] [279]

LINDA's workplace. She's seated at a desk in the middle of doing a bunch of paperwork.

RANDY

But I don't understand!

LINDA

I'm sorry, Randy. No.

RANDY

But... Please?!

LINDA

Oh gosh. I just can't, Randy.

RANDY

Fuck you! But I said I was sorry!

LINDA

...

RANDY

It was just a joke!

LINDA

I'll tell you a joke. Your shoes with that shirt.

She looks at the audience expectantly for a laugh.

RANDY

Can you forgive me?

LINDA

I don't know.

RANDY

Why not?

LINDA

Because I respect myself.

The audience plants applaud vigorously.

RANDY

Fuck. I messed up. I messed up so bad. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I won't do it again, I promise. If I could wave a magic wand and just do things differently so that you would still be my girlfriend now, I would do it! Can't you see I'm apologizing!?

LINDA

Please leave, Randy. It's too painful for me to see you now.

RANDY

This is your fault for not taking better care of my needs! You'll regret this until the day you die! If I walk out that door, you'll never see me again, I swear to god Linda! I'm the best thing that's ever happened to you and your sorry life! LINDA! I'M WALKING! PLEASE TAKE ME BACK PLEASE I'M BEGGING YOU! PLEASE LINDA PLEASE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO! I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU! JUST TELL ME WHAT TO DO, I'LL DO ANYTHING, PLEASE!!!! YOU STUPID FUCKING WORTHLESS WOMAN, PLEASE!

Death metal music with lots of loud drumming begins to play, and RANDY has a long-form choreographed mental breakdown like the "Angry Dance" in Billy Elliot.

He runs all over the theatre, up and down the aisles, rolls around the floor next to audience members, and he keeps screaming into a microphone and holding his hands to his head. This lasts several minutes.

Suddenly, the death metal stops.

RANDY looks up at the meteor.

SCENE 18

[4] [5] [10] [26] [39] [69] [86] [90] [207] [235] [249] [279] [286]

Music begins: it is a slow, emotional pop ballad.

RANDY

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE LIFE'S TOO MUCH TO BEAR?

LINDA

DO YOU EVER WISH FOR BRAVERY WHEN YOU FEEL REALLY SCARED?

CANTOR REBECCA enters.

CANTOR REBECCA

'CAUSE YOU KNOW YOUR CONGREGATION COUNTS ON YOU...

MAX enters.

MAX

AND IT'S HARD TO BE A KID, BUT IT'S A JOB YOU'VE GOTTA DO.

JENNA and TAYLOR SWIFT enter holding hands.

JENNA AND TAYLOR SWIFT

WHEN YOU WANT SOMEONE TO TELL YOU WHO TO LOVE.

HENRY FORD enters.

HENRY FORD

WHEN YOUR'RE TOSSED OUT WITH THE TRASH FROM WORK,
NO LONGER HAND IN GLOVE.

AMANDA and JAKE enter holding hands.

AMANDA AND JAKE

WHEN YOUR FAMILY FEELS SO DAMN FAR AWAY.

JOLBI enters.

JOLBI

WHEN YOUR LADY LOVE HAVE BABY
AND YOU NOT WANTING TO STAY.

NATHANIEL and MICHAEL enter holding hands.

NATHANIEL AND MICHAEL

WELL,
WE KNOW THAT LIFE IS OFTEN CRUEL.

JOEY enters.

JOEY

THAT IT'S TOUGH TO TALK TO GIRLS
WHEN YOU'RE THE NEW KID AT YOUR SCHOOL.

MR. T, PETER, MR. OLDMAN, and BIG GRANDMA enter holding hands.

MR. T, PETER, MR. OLDMAN, AND
BIG GRANDMA

BUT YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST IN WHAT IS TRUE.

NICK, SCOTT BORCHETTA, and CRAIG enter holding hands.

NICK, SCOTT BORCHETTA, AND
CRAIG

YOU JUST HAVE TO DO THE THING A MAN WOULD DO.

Everyone holds hands together.

ALL

SO WHEN THE SUN STOPS BURNING BRIGHT
WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT ALRIGHT
WHEN YOU'RE STUCK UP ON THE SHELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF

There is a long interlude of death metal music with lots of loud drumming.

All of the characters scream incoherently into microphones and pantomime and how they're going to start to make a difference in their lives. It's difficult to follow what is going on or what anyone is doing.

The sentimental pop ballad music resumes.

ALL

IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TRY
IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IT'S NOT HARD TO LEARN TO FLY

IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IT'S THE DIFFERENCE THAT YOU NEED
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WANT IT
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS
TRUST IN YOURSELF

YEAH WE KNOW YOU'LL MAKE IT THROUGH THIS
WE'LL BE WITH YOU TIL THE END
YEAH WE KNOW YOU'LL MAKE IT THROUGH THIS
BY YOUR SIDE, YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND

YEAH THE TRUTH IS SHINING BRIGHTLY
SHINING BRIGHTLY LIKE THE SUN
WHEN YOU'RE FEELING COLD AND LONELY
KNOW YOU'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TRY
IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IT'S NOT HARD TO LEARN TO FLY

IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IT'S THE DIFFERENCE THAT YOU NEED
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WANT IT
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS
TRUST IN YOURSELF

SO WHEN THE SUN STOPS BURNING BRIGHT
WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT ALRIGHT
WHEN YOU'RE STUCK UP ON THE SHELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF
TRUST IN YOURSELF...!

RANDY steps forward.

RANDY

I don't think I'm happy.

Spotlights on RANDY and the meteor. The orchestra plays a dramatic DUN DUN DUN!!!!

End of ACT I.

INTERMISSION
[7] [120] [140] [149]

During intermission, actors come on stage pretending to be The Real Housewives of New York and they do some improvised patter for the audience that deteriorates into fighting that appears to actually really be happening between the actors.

ACT II

SCENE 19

[26] [71] [79] [91] [112] [174] [175]

MR. CLIMATE enters and stands in front of a microphone in front of a rain curtain, just like at the start of Act I.

MR. CLIMATE

Oh ho ho, forgot about me did you? Well that's exactly what's wrong with the world.
Nobody ever pays me any attention, and soon you'll all regret it!

Music begins in a pastiche vaudevillian style, kind of like "Buddy's Blues" from Follies.

MR. CLIMATE

WELL HELLO THERE EVERYBODY
I SEE YOU'VE ALL COME BACK
IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TELL YOU WHAT THIS MUSICAL DOES LACK
IT'S THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE FORETHOUGHT
TO KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO
WHEN THE CLIMATE HAS BEEN DAMAGED
AND THE FOOT IS ON THE OTHER SHOE

The music shifts and now sounds like Antioch Arrow or Heroin (or another notable screamo band). MR. CLIMATE screams the following verses in that style.

MR. CLIMATE

HOW STUPID IS THAT JOEY? HE WANTS TO GO TO PROM
WELL JOEY I HAVE SOMEONE FOR YOU, REALLY SHE'S THE BOMB
SHE'S LOVING AND SHE'S CARING AND YOU TWO WILL GET ALONG
HEY JOEY I JUST REALIZED THAT I'M THINKING OF YOUR MOM

AND TAYLOR SWIFT IS SO CONFUSED, SHE'S STUCK BETWEEN TWO GUYS
BOTH JOEY AND THAT JOLBI ARE THE APPLES OF HER EYES
THEY WATCH HER WHILE SHE DAYDREAMS ABOUT MUSIC AT HER DESK
BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT THEY SEE IN SOMEONE WHO'S SO GROTESQUE

The musical style shifts back to vaudeville pastiche.

MR. CLIMATE

THESE PEOPLE HERE
THEY'VE LET ME DOWN
I'M MAD AT THEM
THEY MAKE ME FROWN
IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT
THIS CLIMATE CHANGE
AND THAT I WHY
I'M SO DERANGED

The musical style shifts back to screamo.

MR. CLIMATE

AND WHAT IS THERE TO SAY NOW ABOUT JENNA AND HER FRIENDS?
IT'S NOT SO HARD TO SEE AHEAD THE WAY *THAT* STORY ENDS
WHAT I DON'T GET IS WHY SHE HAS TO MAKE IT ALL SO HARD
IF I WERE HER I'D GET WITH NICK AND RUN TO THE CHURCHYARD

HER BROTHER, MOM, AND DAD ARE JUST AS STUPID, IF I MAY
IF I WERE THEM I'D HATE MY LIFE, TOO, I WOULD RUN AWAY
HARRY IS A DOOFUS AND AMANDA IS A CLOD
JACK THEIR SON IS LAZY BUT THEY REALLY ALL ARE FLAWED

The musical style shifts back to vaudeville pastiche.

MR. CLIMATE

THESE PEOPLE HERE
THEY'VE LET ME DOWN
I'M MAD AT THEM
THEY MAKE ME FROWN
IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT
THIS CLIMATE CHANGE
AND THAT I WHY
I'M SO DERANGED

The musical style shifts back to screamo.

MR. CLIMATE

FINALLY IT'S TIME TO ROAST THE COUPLE OF MY HEART
 RANDY AND DEAR LINDA, NO, THEY AREN'T VERY SMART
 RANDY IS SO NASTY AND HE'S BAD AT THE GUITAR
 HE'S THE WORST ONE IN THIS WHOLE DAMN MUSICAL BY FAR

LINDA IS A PEACH, BUT Y'ALL... WELL, WHERE DO I BEGIN?
 HER EGO IS SO HEFTY AND HER PROSE IS JUST AS THIN
 IT REALLY IS A GOOD THING THAT SHE ENDED THINGS BACK THERE
 BREAKING UP WITH HER AFFAIR 'CAUSE HE HAD AN AFFAIR

The musical style shifts back to vaudeville pastiche.

MR. CLIMATE

THESE PEOPLE HERE
 THEY'VE LET ME DOWN
 I'M MAD AT THEM
 THEY MAKE ME FROWN
 IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT
 THIS CLIMATE CHANGE
 AND THAT I WHY
 I'M SO DERANGED

The musical style shifts back to screamo.

MR. CLIMATE

THESE PEOPLE HERE
 THEY'VE LET ME DOWN
 I'M MAD AT THEM
 THEY MAKE ME FROWN
 IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT
 THIS CLIMATE CHANGE
 AND THAT I WHY
 I'M SO DERANGED

The musical style shifts back to vaudeville pastiche.

MR. CLIMATE

THESE PEOPLE HERE
 THEY'VE LET ME DOWN
 I'M MAD AT THEM
 THEY MAKE ME FROWN

The musical style shifts back to screamo.

IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT

MR. CLIMATE

The musical style shifts back to vaudeville pastiche.

THIS CLIMATE CHANGE

MR. CLIMATE

The musical style shifts back to screamo.

AND THAT IS WHY

MR. CLIMATE

The musical style shifts back to vaudeville pastiche.

I'M SO

MR. CLIMATE

The musical style shifts back to screamo.

DERANGED!

MR. CLIMATE

SCENE 20

[10] [26] [28] [29] [39] [69] [81] [83] [86] [136] [168] [190] [230] [241] [294]

The rain curtain opens behind MR. CLIMATE revealing a stagehand. The stagehand escorts the entire audience into another room.

The new room is an immersive space furnished to look like a theatre company's administrative office (with an open office plan). It is staged in the round, and the audience is invited to wander around throughout the performance. Once the audience has arrived and settled in, music begins playing and PRINCESS DAISY enters the space.

She has all of the qualities of a Disney princess: she's spunky and clumsy and earnest. She has a cat in her bag that we never see but it moves around a lot in her bag and she talks to it. She wears a monochromatic dress. She speaks with an upward inflection most of the time. She uses hand gestures like a person working as a princess at a Disney theme park.

PRINCESS DAISY

Wow, it's my first day of work. Guess I'm early, there's no one here yet! I'm so glad I have you here with me, Scratchers!

There is movement and meowing from her bag -- we understand she is keeping an animal in there, but we never see Scratchers.

PRINCESS DAISY

Want a treat, Scratchers?

She pantomimes dropping a treat into her bag. Scratchers purrs.

Music begins. It's music that sounds like contemporary musical theatre writing by young people who release albums of musical theatre style music that are not actually from a musical, and perform cabarets at places like 54 Below showcasing their songs sung by notable musical theatre actors. It's like a Disney Princess/Alan Menken/formulaic BMI "I Want" song.

PRINCESS DAISY

Once I sit down at this desk, my whole life is going to change. I'm nervous, but I'm excited. And I'm going to do my best.

It's what my mother would have wanted...
 IT'S HOW SHE WOULD HAVE TAUGHT ME TO BE.
 AND THOUGH SHE'S GONE NOW, I'M NOT HAUNTED, NO
 I FEEL HER ALWAYS WATCHING OVER ME.

MY DEAD MOM
 IS MY GREATEST HERO
 AND SHE'S MY
 MOST ENTHUSIASTIC CHEERLEADER
 SHE IS EVERYTHING A GIRL COULD WANT TO HAVE IN A MOTHER

Except for, you know, well... She's dead...

ALL I WANT
 IS TO KEEP THE PROMISE THAT I MADE HER
 TO BECOME
 A THEATRE COLLABORATOR
 AND I KNOW THAT I WILL HAVE TO WORK REAL HARD
 BUT LUCKY ME
 ENTHUSIASM IS MY CALLING CARD

SOMEDAY... I'LL WALK THESE HALLS AND CALL THEM MY WORKPLACE
 SOMEDAY... SOMEONE WILL BE GETTING ME MY COFFEE - BY THE CASE!
 OH, MOTHER, I JUST KNOW
 I'LL GET MY FOOT IN THE DOOR
 AND I'LL LIVE OUT YOUR DREAM
 OF BEING ON A NOT-FOR-PROFIT THEATRE TEAM

AND TODAY
 I START MY INTERNSHIP FOR REAL
 WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?
 IF YOU SAW ME NOW, I BET YOU'D SQUEAL!
 "TAKE IT SLOW AND KNOW
 THAT YOU STILL HAVE SO FAR TO GO."

PRINCESS DAISY turns to the audience.

PRINCESS DAISY

Do you wanna know how she died?
 Childbirth. Everyone says it was my fault... Stupid me.

SO FOR NOW
I'LL DO MY BEST TO BE ON TIME
SEND E-MAILS
AND CHANGE MY DIGITAL SIGNATURE LINE
TO MY NAME: PRINCESS DAISY, SPANKING NEW DEVELOPMENT INTERN!
AND QUIETLY I'LL YEARN...

TO SOMEDAY... WALK THESE HALLS AND CALL THEM MY WORKPLACE
TO SOMEDAY... HAVE AN INTERN WHO'LL BE GETTING ME THE COFFEE
By the case!
OH, MOTHER, THIS IS MY CHANCE
TO GET MY FOOT IN THE DOOR
AND TO LIVE OUT YOUR DREAM
OF BEING ON A NOT-FOR-PROFIT THEATRE TEAM...

Yes, mom. I'll live out your dream.
OF BEING ON A NOT-FOR-PROFIT
THEATRE
TEAM....

SCENE 21

[26] [40] [41] [52] [76] [98] [103] [111] [112] [132] [137] [151] [154] [164] [165] [174]
[183] [206] [214] [221] [229] [291]

Music begins in the style of Andrew Lloyd Webber. Operatic singing accompanied by synthesizers and electric guitar.

LAUREN and CAMERON enter. LAUREN is the very promiscuous Director of Development, and she is a literal puppet. She looks like Prairie Dawn from Sesame Street. CAMERON (not a puppet) is her assistant.

LAUREN

EVERYDAY,
CAMERON, IS ANOTHER DAY
THAT WE SAY:
WE DON'T HAVE THE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THIS
THE MONEY FROM THAT GRANT ISN'T MEANT FOR THAT
SEND ANOTHER MAILER, AND PUT ON YOUR THINKING HAT,
I KNOW THAT WE WORK IN DEVELOPMENT, CAMERON,
BUT SOME DAYS I FEEL MORE LIKE AN ACROBAT.

LAUREN AND CAMERON

AND THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY!
THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, OH NO, THERE'S NOT!
THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH FUNDS TO ALLOT
BUT IT'S NOTHING NEW
AND WE LOVE WHAT WE DO.

LAUREN sees PRINCESS DAISY waiting at a desk.

LAUREN

Oh fuck, get up, don't sit there!

PRINCESS DAISY

Jeepers, sorry!

CAMERON

That's *his* desk.

PRINCESS DAISY

Got it.

CAMERON

You must be the new intern!

PRINCESS DAISY

Yep! I'm Daisy, reporting for duty. Is--

LAUREN

That's nice. Glad you made it on time. Your desk is over *there*.

PRINCESS DAISY goes to sit at a desk in the corner.

PRINCESS DAISY

Wow, my very own desk!

LAUREN

How do I look, Cameron?

CAMERON

Yaaaaaas. You are fierce as hell, queen. Snatched for the gods.

LAUREN

Good.

PRINCESS DAISY

Sorry, what are you talking about?

CAMERON

She has a meeting with an important potential donor today.

PRINCESS DAISY

Oh--

LAUREN

My sexuality always sweetens the deal.

CAMERON

(Confidentially to the audience.)

If I didn't have a girlfriend, I would totally hit that.

LAUREN

And why shouldn't I have some fun, too? What was your name again?

PRINCESS DAISY

Daisy.

LAUREN

Right, from the interview! I'm horrible with names. Can you scan all of these for me?

LAUREN pantomimes handing DAISY a cartoonishly gigantic stack of papers.

PRINCESS DAISY

My first task! I won't let you down!

PRINCESS DAISY pantomimes scanning. Two more people enter: the artistic director, KEVIN, and his assistant MATT.

MATT

That seems fully crazy to me. Did she respond yet?

KEVIN

Not yet, no.

MATT

Did you want to go over some stuff before your 10:30 phone call?

KEVIN

Uhh, give me five minutes.

MATT

Gotcha.

MATT passes by CAMERON. They regard each other with awkward formality.

MATT

Cameron.

CAMERON

Matthew.

MATT

How was your weekend?

CAMERON

Fine. And yours?

MATT

Fine.

CAMERON

Glad to hear it.

MATT goes and sits at his desk.

PRINCESS DAISY

Who was that?

CAMERON

That's Kevin, the artistic director.

PRINCESS DAISY

No, the other guy.

CAMERON

Who, Matt? Matt is Kevin's assistant.

PRINCESS DAISY

Oh. He's cute!

CAMERON

What? Oh. I don't, um...

KEVIN begins singing:

KEVIN

FUCK!
 MATT I FORGOT TO EMAIL ANNIE!
 IT WASN'T IN MY CALENDAR WAS IT...?

MATT

LET ME CHECK
 YES IT WAS I PUT IT THERE TWICE

KEVIN

IT WAS?

MATT

IT WAS!

KEVIN

FUCK!
 MATT I HAVE TO CALL HER RIGHT NOW
 CAN YOU PUSH MY TEN THIRTY CALL TO ELEVEN?

MATT, IF WE GET ANNIE'S PLAY
 PEOPLE SAY THAT HER PLAY COULD WIN AWARDS
 AND IF I DIRECTED IT THEN I COULD WIN AWARDS TOO
 AND THEN WE COULD REALLY START TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
 HERE IN EVERYTOWN

KEVIN AND MATT

AND THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, OH NO, THERE'S NOT!
 THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH FUNDS TO ALLOT
 BUT IT'S NOTHING NEW
 AND WE LOVE WHAT WE DO.

KEVIN

OH, AND MATT, BEFORE I FORGET
 YOU KNOW WHAT WE SHOULD ALSO MAKE SURE WE DO?
 WHAT I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU:
 I THINK WE SHOULD LOOK INTO DEEPENING
 OUR DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

MATT

KEVIN I WON'T LET YOU FORGET
 YOU THINK WE SHOULD LOOK INTO DEEPENING
 OUR DIVERSITY INITIATIVE...
 GOT IT!

KEVIN

Maybe next week?

MATT

Yep! You wanted me to remind you about that this week, by the way. This was what you told me last week.

KEVIN

Oh... This week I just can't, remind me again on Thursday?

MATT

Thursday you're getting on a plane to London.

KEVIN

When I get back then-- make it a priority!

You got it!
MATT

KEVIN goes into his office. CAMERON sneaks over to MATT's desk.

HEY...
CAMERON

HEY...
MATT

I HAD FUN.
CAMERON

ME TOO.
MATT

CAN I SEE YOU AGAIN?
CAMERON

I WOULD LIKE THAT.
MATT

ME TOO.
CAMERON

PLEASE DON'T TELL.
MATT

I WOULD NEVER.
YOU'LL BE MY FAVORITE SECRET
FOREVER...
CAMERON

More staff members enter and sit at their desks. Several women with babies, a KKK member, and other generic looking office workers.

ALL
 AT EVERYTOWN WALES REGIONAL THEATRE COMPANY
 WE TRY OUR BEST, AND WE AGREE
 THAT THE WORK WE DO HERE MATTERS
 THE WORK WE DO CAN CHANGE THE WORLD
 YES THE WORK WE DO HERE MAKES A DIFFERENCE
 THIS WE GUARANTEE
 OUR SHOWS WILL MAKE YOU LAUGH
 OUR SHOWS WILL MAKE YOU CHANGE YOUR LIFE
 OUR DARKLY COMIC, DEEPLY HUMAN, SLICE OF LIFE, EDGY
 NEW PLAYS

*One of the staff members enters and addresses PRINCESS DAISY.
 It's LACEY, the Head of HR. She's extremely cold.*

New intern? LACEY

That's me! PRINCESS DAISY

Orientation. LACEY

What? PRINCESS DAISY

Sit. LACEY

Oh... Okay. PRINCESS DAISY

LACEY
 I'm Lacey. Head of HR. Please don't talk until I'm done.

I THINK YOU'LL REALLY LOVE IT HERE
 I SEE THAT YOU'VE ALREADY BEGUN
 I JUST HAVE TO GO OVER SOME THINGS
 THEN YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR FUN

WE'RE SORRY WE CAN'T GIVE YOU A STIPEND
 BUT FRANKLY HERE IS WHAT WE BELIEVE
 WE PAY PEOPLE HERE WITH IN EXPERIENCE
 AND I PROMISE YOU WILL HAVE AN EXPERIENCE
 EVERYONE IS PART OF THE TEAM

PEOPLE DON'T MIND WORKING LONG HOURS
 JUNIOR EMPLOYESS, THEY HAVE GREAT ENDURANCE
 THEY'RE HONESTLY FINE WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE
 WHEN THEY LOVE THEIR JOBS IT'S NO PROBLEM
 WE COULDN'T RUN THIS BUSINESS WITHOUT THEIR WILLINGNESS
 TO MAKE THOSE KINDS OF SACRIFICES

I SEE YOU'VE ALREADY FOUND YOUR DESK
 IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS, WELL,
 YOU WON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS.
 EVERYBODY HERE IS SO NICE
 ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME?

PRINCESS DAISY

Why do all those women have babies?

LACEY

Oh! Well, they chose to keep coming to work after they had their babies. We can't afford to offer maternity longer than one week, as much as we *really want to*. That's just how it has to be! And they love bringing their children to work! It makes it feel like a family here. You're awfully eager. I hope you don't have any other questions.

PRINCESS DAISY

Uh... Nope. Bye!

ALL

AND THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, OH NO, THERE'S NOT!
 THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH FUNDS TO ALLOT
 BUT IT'S NOTHING NEW
 AND WE LOVE WHAT WE DO.

IT SURE ISN'T EASY
 WE WORK LONG HOURS WITHOUT OVERTIME
 BUT IT'S ALL WORTH IT CAUSE IT'S A FUN TIME
 AND IT'S POSSIBLE 'CAUSE THE MODEL-T
 MAKES OUR COMMUTES TO WORK SO STRESS FREE
 WE'RE PILLARS OF OUR COMMUNITY!
 AND THANK GOD FOR OUR UNPAID INTERNS,
 WHAT WOULD WE DO
 WITHOUR YOU?

THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 BUT THE JOY WE FEEL
 TELLING MEANINGFUL STORIES
 WE CAN'T CONCEAL
 OUR GLEE!

THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!
 THERE'S NEVER ANY MONEY, NO!

BUT THE JOY WE FEEL
 TELLING MEANINGFUL STORIES
 WE CAN'T CONCEAL
 OUR GLEE!

FOR EVERYTOWN
 (EVERYTOWN)
 WALES
 (WALES)
 AMERICAN REGIONAL
 THEATRE
 COMPANY!
 OUR THEATRE COMPANY!
 OUR THEATRE COMPANY!
 OUR THEATRE COMPANY!

SCENE 22

[22] [28] [29] [105] [130] [137] [190] [241]

The EVIL WITCH's lair. The EVIL WITCH is holding a baby and muttering over a crystal ball.

She cackles.

EVIL WITCH

Everything is going according to my plan! Soon I will run this theatre company into the ground! And I will have my REVENGE! Good, good, very-- WAIT!

PRINCESS DAISY appears; or we see somehow that the EVIL WITCH sees her, like when the Beast can see Belle in "Beauty and the Beast" through the magic mirror.

EVIL WITCH

What's this I see? Who is this? Oh, no no no, I've seen this girl before... Wait. Not the same girl. But a striking resemblance. Maybe her daughter? And what is she doing there...?

(Gasp)

NO! She's going to ruin my entire evil plan!

Music begins in the style of Frank Wildhorn's anthemic power ballads. It is extremely climactic and over-the-top and the EVIL WITCH belts the entire song at the absolute top of her range. The song should seem to just exist for showing off her impressive vocal acrobatics.

EVIL WITCH

I'M THE EVIL WITCH, WHICH YOU PROBABLY MISSED
SO I'LL TELL YOU ONCE AGAIN
I'M THE EVIL WITCH, AND THIS WITCH IS PISSED
'CAUSE THE GIRL MIGHT RUIN MY PLAN

YES I'M THE EVIL WITCH, WHICH YOU PROBABLY MISSED
SO I'LL TELL YOU ONCE AGAIN
I'M THE EVIL WITCH, AND THIS WITCH IS PISSED
'CAUSE THE GIRL MIGHT RUIN MY PLAN

MY PLAN!

MY PLAN!

MY EVIL, WITCHY PLAN!

MY PLAN FOR REVENGE, MAN
AND I DON'T HAVE HENCHMEN
WHO NEEDS 'EM
WHEN YOU'RE POWERFUL
AS ME?

MY PLAN!
MY PLAN!
MY EVIL, WITCHY PLAN!
MY PLAN FOR REVENGE, MAN
MY THIRST WILL BE QUENCHED, MAN
I'LL THEM ALL TO SHREDS WITH MY PLAN

AND THEN I'LL BE SO IN CHARGE
AND THEN LIVIN' WILL BE LARGE
DON'T YOU SEE?
THIS IS ME,
I'M THE WITCH,
THIS IS MY
DECREE

I'M THE EVIL WITCH, WHICH YOU PROBABLY MISSED
SO I'LL TELL YOU ONCE AGAIN
I'M THE EVIL WITCH, AND THIS WITCH IS PISSED,
'CAUSE THAT GIRL MIGHT RUIN MY PLAN
TO SEND THOSE THEATRE LOVING
TRIVIA PLAYING
RAGTAG GROUP OF BASTARDS
STRAIGHT...
TO...
TO HELL!
TO HELL!
TO HELL!
TO...
HELL!

She cackles again.

SCENE 23

[10] [16] [19] [21] [22] [26] [28] [69] [70] [106] [136] [154] [166] [217] [230] [238]
[239] [253] [263] [289]

Back at Everytown Wales America Regional Theatre Company.

PRINCESS DAISY

(To the audience.)

It's my first day, and there's already a meeting with the board of directors! Oh, I'm so nervous. But I can do it, I just have to believe in myself!

The cat in her bag makes some tittering sounds.

PRINCESS DAISY

Shush, you promised you were going to be quiet!

LAUREN

Daisy, we're going to have you take minutes, alright? Think you can handle it?

PRINCESS DAISY

I can handle it!

PRINCESS DAISY trips and gets right back up.

PRINCESS DAISY

I'm okay! I can definitely handle it.

LAUREN

Alright...

The board of directors enters: it's a bunch of old white guys, three of whom are DONALD TRUMP, BRETT KAVANAUGH, and MITCH MCCONNELL. Everybody claps for them. DAISY pantomimes taking minutes.

PRINCESS DAISY

(To the audience.)

Wow, the board of directors! They make all of this great work possible! Someday I wanna be just like them.

DONALD TRUMP goes to stand at the desk that DAISY originally tried to sit in.

DONALD TRUMP

Settle down, settle down everyone. Thank you. Okay. As president of the board of directors, I'm just here to say... Everything so far is going just great. You know, our numbers are huge, everybody is talking about them, they're the biggest anybody has ever seen. And the quab... quality of this work is just, uh, it's just tremendous. We've never seen anything like it. Frankly, nobody has. I've been talking to a lot of people and they're all saying, wow, amazing, you know? And when you see what's going to come next here for us, well, you just wol... Won't even believe it. But you will believe it, because it is just huge, it's tremendous in fact. Nobody's ever seen numbers like these.

Everybody cheers for him.

MITCH MCCONNELL

May I have the floor?

Everybody claps for MITCH MCCONNELL.

PRINCESS DAISY

Oh my gosh, that's Mitch McConnell! I cannot believe my life right now. Someone pinch me!

The cat in her bag titters and PRINCESS DAISY jolts.

PRINCESS DAISY

Ow, I didn't mean *literally*, Scratchers!

MITCH MCCONNELL

Now as you all know, I'm currently directing our production of the world premier of the musical *Flowers for Algiers*, our adaptation of "The Battle of Algiers." The film tells the story of the events that took place in the capital city of French Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence between 1954 and 1957. But our musical is told from the French perspective. And we've put together a little presentation for you so you all can see what we've been working so hard on. So, without further ado, I proudly present... The cast of *Flowers for Algiers*.

Music begins in the style of Duncan Sheik: brooding piano with a kind of punk rock flavor.

Actors dressed as French Soldiers enter.

FRENCH SOLDIERS

OH, BABY, BABY
 WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO TO WAR
 OH, BABY, BABY
 IT'S FUCKING COOL BUT SUCH A BORE

ON THE BATTLEFIELD IN ALGIERS
 FACING ALL OF OUR WORST FEARS
 GOD, IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN YEARS
 ALL WE WANT'S A ROUND OF BEERS

OH, BABY, BABY
 WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO TO WAR
 OH, BABY, BABY
 IT'S FUCKING COOL BUT SUCH A BORE

AND WE PATROL THE STREET
 IN THE BLISTERING HEAT
 BUT WE DO IT FOR OUR COUNTRY
 YEAH WE DO IT FOR OUR COUNTRY

OH, BABY, BABY
 WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO TO WAR
 OH, BABY, BABY
 IT'S FUCKING COOL BUT SUCH A BORE

OH, BABY, BABY
 WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO TO WAR
 OH, BABY, BABY
 IT'S FUCKING COOL BUT SUCH A BORE

They see an Algerian civilian.

FRENCH SOLDIERS

LOOKIE HERE IT'S A CIVILIAN
 ANOTHER ONE IN A WHOLE MILLION
 NOW IT'S TIME TO DO OUR JOB HERE
 HOPE THE OTHER ALGERIANS OVERHEAR

They violently torture the Algerian civilian while they sing:

FRENCH SOLDIERS

OH, BABY, BABY
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO TO WAR
OH, BABY, BABY
WE HAVE TO QUELL THESE REBEL WHORES

SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI
SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI BACK AT HOME

SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI
SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI BACK AT HOME

OH, BABY, BABY
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GO TO WAR
OH, BABY, BABY
IT'S FUCKING COOL BUT SUCH A BORE

SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI
SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI BACK AT HOME

SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI
SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI BACK AT HOME

SHOW NO MERCY
THEY'LL SAY MERCI
MERCY MERCY
MERCI MERCI
MERCY MERCY
MERCI, BABY

BRETT KAVANAUGH

And now we'll skip to later in the show, when the French are celebrating, having just won a major victory.

Different music begins, still in a Duncan Sheik kind of style, but this is more of a wistful ballad.

FRENCH SOLDIERS

SING THE SONG OF PATRIOTISM
THERE WILL BE NO FRENCH-ALGERIAN SCHISM
NOT TODAY
NO, NOT TODAY
NOT FOR US
NOT IF WE HAVE OUR SAY
AND THIS IS WHAT WE WILL SAY:
WE WON THE BATTLE TODAY

SHOW NO MERCY, DON'T HOLD BACK
DO NOT WAIT FOR THEIR ATTACK
THE FRENCH WILL BE OKAY
REBELS WILL RUE THE DAY
THEY MESSED WITH US
YEAH, THEY MESSED WITH US

The actors enter the aisles and sing directly to audience members.

FRENCH SOLDIERS

SHOW NO MERCY, DON'T HOLD BACK
DO NOT WAIT FOR THEIR ATTACK
THE FRENCH WILL BE OKAY
REBELS WILL RUE THE DAY
THEY MESSED WITH US
YEAH, THEY MESSED WITH US

SHOW NO MERCY, DON'T HOLD BACK
DO NOT WAIT FOR THEIR ATTACK
THE FRENCH WILL BE OKAY
REBELS WILL RUE THE DAY
THEY MESSED WITH US
YEAH, THEY MESSED WITH--

They're interrupted by the EVIL WITCH who speeds in on a Model-T car and snatches PRINCESS DAISY's bag.

She cackles triumphantly.

LACEY

It's the evil witch!

LAUREN

How did she get here so fast?!

CAMERON

Look, she's driving a Model-T car!

KEVIN

Man, I guess *everyone* being able to get places quickly isn't always a good thing.

EVIL WITCH

I've got your kitty, little pretty!

PRINCESS DAISY

NO! Give him back right now!!

EVIL WITCH

Only if you agree to quit this job and never come back!

PRINCESS DAISY

I would never do that!

EVIL WITCH

Then you leave me with no choice...

The EVIL WITCH pulls out a knife and starts torturing the cat inside PRINCESS DAISY's bag. The knife gets covered in blood and the cat makes horrible, realistic noises.

PRINCESS DAISY

Stop! Stop! Please stop it! Think Daisy, think... I have to act fast or else she'll kill him!

PRINCESS DAISY'S fairy godmother appears -- it's the EW GIRL.

EW GIRL

Daisy! Oh my god, ew, what's going on?!

PRINCESS DAISY

Fairy godmother, thank goodness. What should I do? She's torturing my cat!

EW GIRL

Ew! That sucks!

PRINCESS DAISY

What should I do?

EW GIRL

Just, like, look within your heart. You already know what to do. It's all right there in your heart.

PRINCESS DAISY

Thank you fairy godmother!

The EW GIRL exits.

PRINCESS DAISY

Look within your heart... What could she have meant? Wait! I know! It's so obvious! *Flowers for Algiers!* Hey everybody, I have a plan, but you all have to listen carefully, okay? That song we just heard, that's the answer! We have to be like the French and we have to be merciless! This is an act of war, and we have to fight war with war! And in war, you have to do whatever it takes, no matter the cost! War is the only way forward! So let's just all attack her right now!!!

Everybody cheers and they go and beat the shit out of the EVIL WITCH. It's really violent and graphic. She limps away.

EVIL WITCH

You think this is over... Well, it's not... THIS IS WAR!

PRINCESS DAISY

WE DECLARE WAR ON YOU!

ALL

(To the audience.)

AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO DECLARE WAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE!

DONALD TRUMP

(To PRINCESS DAISY.)

And you will be the key to our victory, as well as me!

DONALD TRUMP, MITCH MCCONNELL, and BRETT KAVANAUGH hoist PRINCESS DAISY up into the air and parade her around.

ALL

To war! To war! To war!
To war! To war! To war!
To war! To war! To war!
Hooray!

SCENE 24

[25] [40] [41] [48] [76] [121] [132] [137] [164] [165] [174] [213] [224] [239] [260]

The audience is escorted back into the original theatre space. The stagehand who escorts them improves lines like “Shhhh, he’s sleeping” when they re-enter. LINDA’s son, MAX, is now an adult and we see him asleep in his bedroom.

After a while, his alarm goes off. He wakes briefly, hits the snooze button, and goes back to sleep.

One minute goes by in silence.

His alarm goes off again and he snoozes it again.

One more minute goes by in silence.

His alarm goes off again. He wakes up, slowly gets out of bed, gets dressed, and pantomimes brushing his teeth for one full minute.

He pantomimes pouring himself a bowl of cereal with milk and eating it. We watch him pantomime eating the whole thing, however long that takes.

He walks outside and gets into his Model-T car, drives to a coffee shop, parks in a parking lot full of Model-T cars, walks inside.

The CLOWN is sitting somewhere working quietly on his computer at a little table, and so is the KKK MEMBER and BRETT KAVANAUGH.

MAX gets in line to order a coffee. There are three people ahead of him and one of them is holding a baby.

They all pantomime ordering their coffee in real time, so we watch MAX wait for like five minutes. Once it’s MAX’s turn:

BARISTA

What can I get for you?

MAX

Can I get a caramel iced coffee, small?

BARISTA

Yep, that'll be \$4.50. You can insert.

MAX pantomimes inserting his card into the chip reader and waits about 10 seconds.

BARISTA

You're good. Would you like a receipt?

MAX

Nah, I'm good.

MAX waits for his drink. A second BARISTA pantomimes making all of the drinks, and the three people ahead of MAX get their drinks first, so this takes a while.

Eventually, MAX pantomimes getting his drink, he pantomimes getting a straw, and then he pantomimes taking a sip.

MAX

Ugh, fuck.

(To the second BARISTA who has been making the drinks.)

Um, excuse me, sorry, this was supposed to be caramel?

BARISTA #2

Oh, god damn it, sorry about that.

BARISTA #2 pantomimes making MAX a new drink in real time, about 45 seconds.

MAX pantomimes taking the new drink, getting a straw, taking a sip.

MAX

Ahhh, shit that's good.

MAX sits at a table and opens up a laptop and starts working.

He works for about a full five minutes.

Nothing else is happening, everyone is just sitting there working or reading in silence.

Then he stands up triumphantly.

MAX

FINISHED!

(To the audience.)

Hi everyone. Yes, I'm talking to you. You might not remember me. I'm Linda's son, from earlier, but I'm all grown up now, and guess what? I've written a musical! It's my greatest masterpiece. You would not believe how I have slaved over this fucker. And I'm going to share it with you right now! But I don't want to give too much away. You'll just have to see it.....for yourselves.

Different aspects of MAX's personality appear. They all wear T-shirts telegraphing what their names are to the audience, so MAX'S SELF-DOUBT wears a T-shirt that says "Max's Self-Doubt."

MAX'S SELF-DOUBT

Are you sure we should show them?

MAX

Um... Well, actually...

MAX'S RAGE

Shut up, idiot!

MAX'S SELF-DOUBT

I'm just saying, what if they don't like it?

MAX

Yeah, what if they don't?

MAX'S GREED

But how else will we ever win an award?!

MAX

Oh, that's a good point.

MAX'S LAZINESS

Who cares about this? Max, let's go back home and watch television.

MAX'S AMBITION

No, we have to do this! It's the thing we've been pouring our heart and soul into for years!

MAX'S KINDNESS

Everyone just calm down. We can come to an agreeable solution on this one.

MAX'S RAGE

I've got an agreeable solution right here. It's called my first!!!

MAX

Guys, guys, guys! It's okay. Let's show them.

They all disappear except for the original MAX.

SCENE 25

[17] [33] [55] [78] [112] [131] [186] [207] [213] [215] [223] [286]

The coffee shop disappears. A bare stage. This is MAX's musical.

MAX

(Reading stage directions.)

The musical is set deep in a dark cave in the woods in the middle of the Australian outback. And in that cave.... live two spiders.

The stage transforms into a cave with a big spider web. Two actors dressed as spiders, MR. and MRS. BENNET, appear. They have Australian accents.

MAX

Those two spiders are very much in love, and they are so excited because they are expecting their first brood to hatch!

A giant spider egg sac appears. It starts to quiver.

MR. BENNET

Crikey, darling, it's about to hatch!

MRS. BENNET

Goodness me!

The egg sac hatches and four more actors dressed as spiders pop out of it.

Also a bunch of little spiders come out and crawl under the audience's seats like at the 4D "A Bug's Life" show at Disney World. Or if that's not possible, a bunch of little spiders are shot out of cannons all over the audience.

MR. BENNET

I know just what to name them.

He goes down the row of his four daughter spiders. MAX starts putting on a spider costume of his own.

MR. BENNET

Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine, Lydia...

MAX

I've made a modern day adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and I've fixed all of the stuff in it that's problematic now. And it's all about climate change, so it's relevant for our times. I've fixed everything. You'll see, it will really inspire you to make a difference and change the world! And best of all... I'll be playing the lead role!

MRS. BENNET

And Jane!

MAX

No, not Jane -- James!

MR. AND MRS. BENNET

James!

MAX

That's me!

MAX gets into place with the other spider offspring.

MR. BENNET

Children, I have an announcement to make. As you know, all of my property is entailed, which means it needs to be passed down to a male heir.

The children gasp. There is a tense musical sting like in a Bravo TV show-- like when one of the Real Housewives says something shocking or nasty.

(None of them acknowledge or have any awareness that JAMES is a male heir now that he's not JANE anymore--the story absolutely doesn't make sense, but it's not played ironically and the production never addresses it.)

MRS. BENNET

And I have no inheritance at all.

Another Real Housewives sting.

MR. BENNET

And that means, upon my death, you all will lose everything. This cave, our nest, all of our money. You will starve and you will die. Thus, I need one of you girls to find a nice man and marry him. For the good of the family!

ALL CHILDREN

Yes, papa.

MR. BENNET

Very good. Now, go play!

Music begins. It is a slow, simple, lugubrious ballad.

ALL CHILDREN

THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
 AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL
 THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
 THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
 AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
 OF THE INCONSISTENCY
 OF ALL HUMAN CHARACTERS
 AND OF THE LITTLE DEPENDENCE
 THAT CAN BE PLACED ON THE APPEARANCE
 OF MERIT
 OR SENSE.

YES THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
 AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL
 THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
 THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
 AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
 OF THE INCONSISTENCY
 OF ALL HUMAN CHARACTERS
 AND OF THE LITTLE DEPENDENCE
 THAT CAN BE PLACED ON THE APPEARANCE
 OF MERIT
 OR SENSE.

All of the children disperse.

SCENE 26

[8] [40] [55] [78] [131] [174] [182] [207] [223] [224] [286]

MR. and MRS. BENNET at home in their nest. MR. BENNET is pantomiming reading a newspaper; MRS. BENNET is pantomiming needlepoint.

MRS. BENNET

My dear Mr. Bennet, have you heard that Netherfield Nest is let at last?

MR. BENNET

I have not.

MRS. BENNET

But it is, for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.

MR. BENNET

...

MRS. BENNET

Do you not want to know who has taken it?

Real Housewives sting.

MR. BENNET

You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.

Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young male spider of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the nest by the end of next week.

MR. BENNET

What is his name?

MRS. BENNET

Bingley.

MR. BENNET

Is he married or single?

MRS. BENNET

Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our children!

MR. BENNET

How so? How can it affect them?

Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

My dear Mr. Bennet, how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.

MR. BENNET

Is that his design in settling here?

MRS. BENNET

Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes.

MR. BENNET

I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party.

MRS. BENNET

My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty.

MR. BENNET

In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of.

MRS. BENNET

But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood.

Real Housewives sting.

MR. BENNET

It is more than I engage for, I assure you.

MRS. BENNET

But consider your hatchlings. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not.

MR. BENNET

You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.

MRS. BENNET

I desire you will do no such thing.

Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference.

MR. BENNET

They have none of them much to recommend them, they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.

MRS. BENNET

Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves.

Real Housewives sting.

MR. BENNET

You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least.

MRS. BENNET

Ah, you do not know what I suffer.

MR. BENNET

But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood.

MRS. BENNET

It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them.

MR. BENNET

Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all.

Real Housewives sting.

Music begins. They both sing exactly the same song as before.

MR. AND MRS. BENNET

THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
 AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL
 THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
 THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
 AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
 OF THE INCONSISTENCY
 OF ALL HUMAN CHARACTERS
 AND OF THE LITTLE DEPENDENCE
 THAT CAN BE PLACED ON THE APPEARANCE
 OF MERIT
 OR SENSE.

YES THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
 AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL
 THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
 THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
 AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
 OF THE INCONSISTENCY
 OF ALL HUMAN CHARACTERS
 AND OF THE LITTLE DEPENDENCE
 THAT CAN BE PLACED ON THE APPEARANCE
 OF MERIT
 OR SENSE.

SCENE 27

[40] [55] [131] [182] [207] [286]

ELIZABETH is pantomiming trimming a hat, and the rest of the children are present, pantomiming doing chores or something. MR. BENNET and MRS. BENNETT enter.

MR. BENNET

(Regarding the hat LIZZY is trimming.)

I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy.

MRS. BENNET

We are not in a way to know what Mr. Bingley likes, since we are not to visit.

Real Housewives sting.

ELIZABETH

But you forget, mama, that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long promised to introduce him.

MRS. BENNET

I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her.

MR. BENNET

No more have I, and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you.

KITTY coughs.

Everybody glares at her. Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for Heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces.

MR. BENNET

Kitty has no discretion in her coughs, she times them ill.

KITTY

I do not cough for my own amusement, there is smoke in the air! There are fires all around, the forest here is burning!

MAX (AS JAMES)

(Looking expectantly at the audience.)

It's all of this climate change!

KITTY

When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?

ELIZABETH

To-morrow fortnight.

MRS. BENNET

Aye, so it is, and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself.

MR. BENNET

Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to her.

Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNETT

Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teasing?

MR. BENNET

I honour your circumspection. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if we do not venture somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance; and, therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself.

MRS. BENNET

Nonsense, nonsense!

MR. BENNET

What can be the meaning of that emphatic exclamation? Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you there. What say you, Mary? For you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books and make extracts.

MARY

...

MR. BENNET

While Mary is adjusting her ideas, let us return to Mr. Bingley.

MRS. BENNET

I am sick of Mr. Bingley!

Real Housewives sting.

MR. BENNET

I am sorry to hear that; but why did not you tell me that before? If I had known as much this morning I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now.

Everyone gasps. Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

How good it was in you, my dear Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last. I was sure you loved your children too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! And it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone this morning and never said a word about it till now.

MR. BENNET

Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you choose.

MR. BENNET scurries away.

MRS. BENNET

What an excellent father you have, children! I do not know how you will ever make him amends for his kindness; or me, either, for that matter. At our time of life it is not so pleasant, I can tell you, to be making new acquaintances every day; but for your sakes, we would do anything. Lydia, my love, though you are the youngest, I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball.

LYDIA

Oh! I am not afraid; for though I am the youngest, I'm the tallest.

Real Housewives sting.

The same music from the previous two songs begins for a third time, and all together they sing exactly the same song again.

ALL

THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL

THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
OF THE INCONSISTENCY
OF ALL HUMAN CHARACTERS
AND OF THE LITTLE DEPENDENCE
THAT CAN BE PLACED ON THE APPEARANCE
OF MERIT
OR SENSE.

YES THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL
THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
OF THE INCONSISTENCY
OF ALL HUMAN CHARACTERS
AND OF THE LITTLE DEPENDENCE
THAT CAN BE PLACED ON THE APPEARANCE
OF MERIT
OR SENSE.

SCENE 28

[4] [11] [40] [78] [132] [147] [165] [182] [193] [215] [223] [235] [249]

In this scene, the actors are staged within the audience. They each choose an audience member and speak to them directly, making a lot of eye contact.

MRS. BENNET

Not all that Mrs. Bennet, however, with the assistance of her five daughters, could ask on the subject, was sufficient to draw from her husband any satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley. They attacked him in various ways—with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions, and distant surmises; but he eluded the skill of them all, and they were at last obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbour, Lady Lucas. Her report was highly favourable. Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained. "If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for."

MR. BENNET

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate, for they had the advantage of ascertaining from an upper window that he wore a blue coat, and rode a black horse.

MRS. BENNET

An invitation to dinner was soon afterwards dispatched; and already had Mrs. Bennet planned the courses that were to do credit to her housekeeping, when an answer arrived which deferred it all.

MR. BENNET

Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and, consequently, unable to accept the honour of their invitation, etc.

MRS. BENNET

Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted. She could not imagine what business he could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire; and she began to fear that he might be always flying about from one place to another, and never settled at Netherfield as he ought to be. Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball...

MR. BENNET

...and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly.

KITTY

The children grieved over such a number of ladies,

LYDIA

But were comforted the day before the ball by hearing,

ELIZABETH

That instead of twelve he brought only six with him from London—

MARY

His five sisters and a cousin.

MAX (AS JAMES)

And when the party entered the assembly room it consisted of only five altogether—Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

MR. BINGLEY (also a spider) enters.

MR. BINGLEY

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners.

MR. DARCY (yes, they're all spiders) enters.

MR. DARCY

But his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud; to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

Suddenly, they're all at the ball!

Everyone does an elaborate tap dance routine to death metal music with lots of loud drumming and screaming.

Half of the cast can tap dance well, and the other half of the cast has fake tap shoes on. So it looks like they're all tapping, but you can tell that half of them are not really. And none of the dancing is together, so the tapping doesn't sound clean.

During this number, a clown who is also a spider dressed in period appropriate early 19th century English party attire clambers through the audience and makes balloon animals for people in the audience.

During the tap number, JAMES and MR. BINGLEY see each other and tap dance back and forth. They have great sexual chemistry.

Then ELIZABETH and MR. DARCY see each other and tap dance back and forth, and they also have great sexual chemistry.

Finally, JAMES and MR. BINGLEY tap dance together again, slowly and more romantically this time. The rest of the party fades into the background as they look lovingly into each other's eyes.

Too soon, the party is over, and all they go their separate ways.

SCENE 29

[40] [55] [72] [95] [182] [226] [242] [267]

The BENNET family back at home in their nest.

KITTY and LYDIA are pantomiming having an animated conversation. Eventually:

MR. BENNET

From all that I can collect by your manner of talking, you must be two of the silliest girls in the country. I have suspected it some time, but I am now convinced.

Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

I am astonished, my dear, that you should be so ready to think your own children silly. If I wished to think slightingly of anybody's children, it should not be of my own, however.

MR. BENNET

If my children are silly, I must hope to be always sensible of it.

Real Housewives sting.

MRS. BENNET

Yes—but as it happens, they are all of them very clever.

MR. BENNET

This is the only point, I flatter myself, on which we do not agree. I had hoped that our sentiments coincided in every particular, but I must so far differ from you as to think our two youngest daughters uncommonly foolish.

MRS. BENNET

My dear Mr. Bennet, you must not expect such girls to have the sense of their father and mother. When they get to our age, I dare say they will not think about officers any more than we do. I remember the time when I liked a red coat myself very well—and, indeed, so I do still at my heart; and if a smart young colonel, with five or six thousand a year, should want one of my girls I shall not say nay to him; and I thought Colonel Forster looked very becoming the other night at Sir William's in his regimentals.

LYDIA

Mamma, my aunt says that Colonel Forster and Captain Carter do not go so often to Miss Watson's as they did when they first came; she sees them now very often standing in Clarke's library.

A footman (also a spider) enters carrying a letter.

FOOTMAN

I've a letter for one James Bennet; it came from Netherfield Nest.

MAX takes the letter. He opens it and reads it.

MRS. BENNET

Well, James, who is it from? What is it about? What does he say? Well, James, make haste and tell us; make haste, my love.

MAX (AS JAMES)

It is from Mister Bingley.

Real Housewives sting.

MAX reads the letter aloud, and it is also projected on the back wall for everyone to read.

MAX (AS JAMES)

“MY DEAR FRIEND JAMES,
If you are not so compassionate as to dine to-day with me, we shall be in danger of hating each other for the rest of our lives. Come as soon as you can on receipt of this.
—Yours ever,
MR. BINGLEY”

MRS. BENNET

Oh, very good James!

MAX (AS JAMES)

Can I have the carriage?

MRS. BENNET

No, my dear, you had better go on horseback, because it seems likely to rain; and then you must stay all night.

ELIZABETH

That would be a good scheme if you were sure that they would not offer to send him home.

MRS. BENNET

Oh! But the gentlemen will have Mr. Bingley's chaise to go to Meryton, and the Hursts have no horses to theirs.

MAX (AS JAMES)

I had much rather go in the coach.

MRS. BENNET

But, my dear, your father cannot spare the horses, I am sure. They are wanted in the farm, Mr. Bennet, are they not?

MR. BENNET

They are wanted in the farm much oftener than I can get them.

Real Housewives sting.

MAX (AS JAMES)

Fine, then; I'll walk!

JAMES walks through the aisles of the theatre.

As he walks, a storm begins to brew. It grows stronger and stronger until JAMES can barely stand upright.

JAMES struggles and struggles against the wind and pouring rain. Rain splashes on the audience members seated in the splash zone.

JAMES keeps struggling. Eventually he collapses and makes a big show of fainting and struggling to get up.

And then, suddenly, there's a huge fire!

JAMES inhales a lot of smoke and passes out.

SCENE 30

[10] [26] [36] [38] [60] [69] [81] [86] [95] [143] [223] [230]

We are inside JAMES's dream. He stands up and sees everyone from his nest all around him dancing abstractly to atonal music in the style of Thomas Ades or Arnold Schoenberg.

While JAMES is knocked out, we see a dream ballet featuring all of the Pride & Prejudice spiders. It should look to the audience like this is the choreographer's excuse to have another big dance number, because nothing really new is revealed about the story. JAMES is just walking around the stage through all of the dancing gawking at everyone.

This takes about ten minutes.

Suddenly, global warming strikes and throws off the forest's ecosystem!

All of the spiders die due to the ecosystem being destroyed, including the BENNET family. JAMES watches in agony as they starve to death.

He wakes up.

MAX (AS JAMES)

I just had the strangest dream...

Music begins. It sounds like "Hold me In Your Heart" from Kinky Boots, in the style of contemporary musical theatre writers who release albums of musical theatre style music that are not actually from a musical, and perform cabarets at places like 54 Below showcasing their songs sung by notable musical theatre actors.

MAX (AS JAMES) starts on the wrong note, and he sings the entire song in a different key than the orchestra is playing it in.

MAX (AS JAMES)

WHEN I WAS JUST A KID
I ALWAYS DID WHAT MY FATHER DID
YEAH WHEN I WAS JUST A BOY
HE TOLD ME NOT TO PLAY WITH MY SISTERS' TOYS

THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
THE MORE I WANT TO SEE OF THE WORLD
AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
THAT WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
YEAH WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS ECOSYSTEM
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE

AT MR. BIGNLEY'S BALL
I NEVER FELT SO TALL
THIS FEELING INSIDE ME
IS BURSTING TO BE FREE

THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
THE MORE I WANT TO SEE OF THE WORLD
AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
THAT WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
YEAH WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS ECOSYSTEM
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE

AND NOW I'M GROWN
AND HERE I STAND
I AM A MAN
I AM A SPIDER, AND A MAN

MAYBE NOT THE ONE THEY WANTED ME TO BE
BUT THE WORLD IS CATCHING FIRE, I CAN SEE
THE WAY THAT I CAN HELP IS TO BE FREE
OF THE SHACKLES THAT MY PARENTS PLACED ON ME

THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
THE MORE I WANT TO SEE OF THE WORLD
AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
THAT WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
YEAH WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS ECOSYSTEM
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE

There is a big dramatic key change and the lights shift to signal that something emotional is happening. The ensemble joins in and they all stand and sing from the aisles. MAX is still singing in the wrong key.

MAX (AS JAMES)

THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
THE MORE I WANT TO SEE OF THE WORLD
AND EVERY DAY CONFIRMS MY BELIEF
THAT WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
YEAH WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS ECOSYSTEM
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE

YEAH WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS ECOSYSTEM
THIS ECOSYSTEM CALLED LOVE

The music stops abruptly and MR. CLIMATE enters.

MR. CLIMATE

Hey everyone! Sorry to interrupt your musical, Max, but we've run out of time! The meteor..... is about to strike!

SCENE 31

[4] [5] [6] [23] [26] [35] [73] [113] [154] [179] [204] [205] [210] [218] [221] [235] [249]
[267] [292] [294]

All of the main characters from the whole musical gather on stage and look up at the meteor.

The meteor begins to slowly, slowly descend. Everybody gawks and points at it and flails around as they pantomime talking to each other in a panicked way. They treat it like a huge cataclysmic spectacle, and the lights go crazy.

The chaos is accompanied by heavy metal music with lots of loud drumming and slamming noises. Some characters take turns screaming loudly into a microphone. Others jump around the audience through their chairs, roughly climbing over or on top of audience members.

The chaos of this goes on for a few minutes.

MR. CLIMATE

Wait everybody! STOP!!!

Everything stops.

MR. CLIMATE

I know what we have to do!

Music begins playing. It's somehow a combination of all of the musical styles previously featured throughout the musical.

MR. CLIMATE

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
TOGETHER AS ONE
AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
INTO THE SUN, YEAH
COME TOGETHER AS ONE
AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
THAT BEING YOURSELF
(YEAH, BEING YOURSELF)
WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Look everyone, the meteor! It's retreating!

Sure enough, the meteor is slowly being lifted in a kind of clunky way back up into the fly system.

LINDA

It's working!

TAYLOR SWIFT

Oh my gosh! Be myself... Be myself... Joey. I'll go to prom with you.

JOEY

But it's tonight! How will we get ready in time?

TAYLOR SWIFT

I have my costume right here.

JOEY

I love you, Taylor.

TAYLOR SWIFT and JOEY kiss. TAYLOR SWIFT puts on a masquerade mask. She has one for Joey, too.

TAYLOR SWIFT

And Scott. I'll sign with you.

SCOTT BORCHETTA

You won't regret it, kid.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Let's all go to prom together!

Everybody cheers and puts on masquerade masks. The setting shifts to a high school gymnasium and everybody does a line dance while JOEY, TAYLOR SWIFT, and SCOTT BORCHETTA sing.

JOEY, TAYLOR SWIFT, SCOTT
BORCHETTA

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
(TOGETHER AS ONE)
AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
INTO THE SUN, YEAH
COME TOGETHER AS ONE
AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
THAT BEING YOURSELF
(YEAH, BEING YOURSELF)
WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

After they finish their verse, they bring an audience member on stage to dance with them. The meteor retreats a little more.

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Come on everyone! Just be yourselves!

AMANDA

Jenna. Jake. Your father and I are sorry. We just wanted to be a normal family.

JENNA

Tch, mom... I don't know if normal is something we can really ever be. But you know what? If we can just agree to be ourselves, I think that will be okay. That will be...enough.

JAKE

Does this mean I can start dogfighting again?!

AMANDA

Oh, we'll see about that!

HENRY FORD

Bring it in, everyone!

They all group hug.

NATHANIEL

Jenna, I have to talk to you.

JENNA

Nathaniel? Is everything alright?

NATHANIEL

I'm leaving, Jenna.

JENNA

Jeepers! Where are you going?

NATHANIEL

I'm going far away from here, somewhere where I can really focus on my art.

JENNA

I'll come with you!

NATHANIEL

No. I have to do this alone. I'm bad news for you, Jenna. Nick will be able to give you a good life as your husband.

He makes a lot of money, and I will never be able to provide for you in that way. And I know if I don't leave, you'll choose me anyway. So I'm taking the choice away from you because I love you.

JENNA

Oh, Nathaniel!

NATHANIEL

It will be alright, Jenna. It's for your own good. Good bye.

JENNA

Good bye.

NICK takes JENNA's hand. He's wearing a tuxedo and he puts a wedding veil on JENNA's head.

NICK

I will marry you, Jenna. It's for the best.

JENNA

Yes, you're right. I must marry you. But I will always love him.

JENNA, NICK

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
(TOGETHER AS ONE)

HENRY FORD, AMANDA, JAKE

AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
INTO THE SUN, YEAH

BIG GRANDMA and MR. OLDMAN enter arm in arm, also wearing wedding attire. Everybody claps for them.

BIG GRANDMA AND MR. OLDMAN

COME TOGETHER AS ONE
AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
THAT BEING YOURSELF

NATHANIEL

(YEAH, BEING YOURSELF)

ALL

WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

The family brings up another audience member on stage to dance with them. The meteor retreats again.

MR. CLIMATE

Keep going! Keep going!

RANDY

Linda, I'm sorry for the way that I've acted.

LINDA

I know, Randy.

RANDY

Tell me what I can do.

LINDA

I don't know.

RANDY

I don't know if I can change. But I'm willing to try. I'm willing to reach out my hand to you. To see what's possible.

LINDA

I think I can accept that. For now.

They smile and hold hands.

RANDY

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
(TOGETHER AS ONE)

LINDA

AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
INTO THE SUN, YEAH

RANDY AND LINDA

COME TOGETHER AS ONE
AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
THAT BEING YOURSELF
YEAH, BEING YOURSELF
WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

They each go and get someone from the audience and bring those people up on stage. The meteor retreats a little more.

LACEY and LAUREN approach PRINCESS DAISY.

LACEY

Hey Daisy.

LAUREN

We just wanted to say we're sorry for the way we treated you on your first day of your internship.

LACEY

I'm not going to be a bitch anymore.

LAUREN

And I'll stop making sexual advances on our donors!

They laugh.

PRINCESS DAISY

Tee-hee, it's alright. Because guess what? Hey everyone! Guess what? We won the war! We killed the Evil Witch!

Everybody cheers.

PRINCESS DAISY and KEVIN the artistic director get swept up in the excitement and they kiss. Everybody looks at them. They realize what they've done and they look embarrassed and surprised. But then they look into each other's eyes and kiss again.

Then everybody cheers again.

DANCE BREAK: The entire Everytown Wales America Regional Theatre staff does a wartime celebration dance with muskets. They parade around with the severed body parts of the EVIL WITCH. They also throw beach balls into the audience that get bounced around.

EVERYTOWN WALES AMERICA
REGIONAL THEATRE STAFF

WE NEVER KNEW THAT WAR
COULD MAKE US SO HAPPY
WE NEVER KNER THAT WAR
COULD BE SO FUN
WE NEVER KNEW HOW WAR
COULD BRING US TOGETHER, YEAH
BUT NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, YEAH
WE'RE FILLED UP WITH CHEER, YEAH
AND WE'RE GONNA GET TOGETHER AND SING:

The meteor recedes even more.

DONALD TRUMP
WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE

KEVIN
TOGETHER AS ONE

MITCH MCCONNELL AND BRETT
KAVANAUGH
AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK

LAUREN
INTO THE SUN, YEAH

CAMERON
WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE

LACEY
AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE

PRINCESS DAISY
THAT BEING YOURSELF

EVERYONE ELSE
YEAH, BEING YOURSELF

EVERYTOWN WALES AMERICA
THEATRE COMPANY
WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

A phone rings in the audience. The music stops and all of the actors on stage get irritated. Then we realize it's MAX's phone. He's been watching from the audience. He answers it.

MAX

Yes? Hello? No way. No WAY. Oh my gosh. Thank you so much! Okay. Yep, goodbye!
(He hangs up.)
 My musical's going to be on BROADWAY!!

Everybody cheers.

All of the Pride and Prejudice spiders enter. Some of them are in the aisles. MAX brings an audience member up on stage with him.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE SPIDERS

THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I REALLY LOVE
 AND STILL FEWER OF WHOM I THINK WELL
 THE MORE I SEE OF THE WORLD
 THE MORE I AM DISSATISFIED WITH IT
 ANGRY PEOPLE ARE NOT WISE
 AND VANITY AND PRIDE ARE DIFFERENT THINGS
 YEAH, YEAH
 BUT WHEN I'M WITH YOU, MY LOVE
 NONE OF THAT'S TRUE, MY LOVE
 I WANT TO JUMP UP AND SING OUT FOR JOY

The meteor explodes in a burst of glitter and confetti and water that rains down on the audience and gets them wet and covered in glitter. More of the cast joins the spiders in the aisles.

MAX

Sing along everyone!

The lyrics are projected on the back wall so everyone can sing along. If audience members aren't singing along, they are admonished/egged on by whatever actors are standing closest to them to sing along or else the climate will keep changing!

ALL

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
 (TOGETHER AS ONE)
 AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
 INTO THE SUN, YEAH

COME TOGETHER AS ONE
 AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
 THAT BEING YOURSELF
 (YEAH, BEING YOURSELF)
 WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
 (TOGETHER AS ONE)
 AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
 INTO THE SUN, YEAH
 COME TOGETHER AS ONE
 AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
 THAT BEING YOURSELF
 (YEAH, BEING YOURSELF)
 WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

WE HAVE TO COME TOGETHER AS ONE
 (TOGETHER AS ONE)
 AND WE'LL SEND THIS METEOR BACK
 INTO THE SUN, YEAH
 COME TOGETHER AS ONE
 AND LEARN TOGETHER AS ONE
 THAT BEING YOURSELF
 (YEAH, BEING YOURSELF)
 WILL KEEP THE CLIMATE THE SAME AS IT IS NOW, YEAH

A POLICE OFFICER enters. The music suddenly stops.

POLICE OFFICER

Is one of you Cameron Gilman?

CAMERON

Um, I'm Cameron.

POLICE OFFICER

I've got a warrant for your arrest.

CAMERON

What? What are the charges?

POLICE OFFICER

Did you know that sodomy is illegal in Everytown Wales America? You're coming with me to the station.

The POLICE OFFICER arrests CAMERON. Everyone looks away.

CAMERON

Sodomy? But I'm not... Wait, wait, you can't do this! Where's Matt?! I want to talk to Matt!

POLICE OFFICER

Matt? Don't you know by now?

CAMERON

Know what?

POLICE OFFICER

Matt is dead, man.

CAMERON

Wh... Dead? He's... Matt is dead?

POLICE OFFICER

Yeah, yeah. Tell it to the judge.

POLICE OFFICER

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can be used against you in court. You have the right to talk to a lawyer for advice before we ask you any questions. You have the right to have a lawyer with you during questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you before any questioning if you wish. If you decide to answer questions now without a lawyer present, you have the right to stop answering at any time.

CAMERON

No.... Not Matt...

Wait, please...

There's a mistake... Not Matt... Not Matt...

He was... He was my....

Please God, no... No no no no no no no no no... Matt... MAAAAAAAAAAAAATT!!!!!!

The rain curtain falls as everyone looks on in horror.

BOWS
[67] [211]

The curtain call is underscored by brooding, dark, moody music.

The full company is on stage when the curtain comes back up and they all bow.

The audience members who were brought up on stage also probably bow with them?

They all go off stage, and then every character gets their own bow and they have to bow right and left and center on the thrust stage one at a time.

The leads all bow together again, and then they each bow separately again.

The cast points to the orchestra, to the booth, to the ushers, and then somewhere backstage, each getting their own applause.

Then there are five full company bows.

The curtain falls on the actors waving goodbye.

TALKBACK
[48] [71]

While everybody's clapping, immediately start a talkback, so nobody who wants to leave before it starts has time to get out of the theatre. Ask the audience questions like the following:

"What questions do you have about global warming?"

"What is the effect of globalism on global warming?"

"Based on what you learned from this show [today/tonight], what are you going to do differently now in your lives to mitigate global warming?"

Then during the Q&A section, audience plants ask questions like:

"How do the actors memorize all of their lines?"

"My friend was in a show once and I thought it was way [better/different/worse] than this and I was wondering about that?"

"I thought you all were just so good. Amazing. Wonderful job. Wow."

APPENDIX

RESPONDENT 1

COSTUMES

I wouldn't like to see nudity. [1]

LANGUAGE

Someone reading aloud from a book for a long time, like a textbook or an old boring work of fiction. [2]

LIGHTS

Strobe lights. [3]

MUSIC

A lot of loud drumming. [4]

Loud slamming noises and screaming into a microphone. [5]

A sing-along. [6]

PLOT/STORY

A story where things happen in the theatre and you don't know what's part of the musical and what's not. [7]

Nesting narratives, kind of like the movie Inception, but that's not what it's about, that's just the structure of the whole thing. [8]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

I wouldn't like to see any violence. [9]

Actors going into the audience. [10]

Actors interacting with the audience, like if they call on you [to w] or if they want you to come up [on stage], or put you on the spot, like when [redacted] got called on during Matilda. [11]

RESPONDENT 2

AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

People in the audience around you are visibly loving, like crying or laughing, moments in the show that are racist or Islamophobic or anti-Semitic. [12]

LANGUAGE

Someone doing a pro-Trump monologue, that's also about how Palestine doesn't exist, and how the American government has never done anything wrong. And how slavery is good. [13]

Sincere, far-right propaganda. [14]

MUSIC

Music that sounds like Les Mis and Miss Saigon. [15]

PLOT/STORY

A show that was about a cat being tortured. [16]

If there was a big spider nest and a lot of little spiders came out of it, and then you feel the bugs crawling underneath you like in the Bug's Life 4D show at Disney World. [17]

A dog fight, or dogfighting. [18]

The Battle of Algiers, but pro-French. [19]

THEME

I would hate to go watch a show that glorifies white men enacting colonialism, and everyone around me is crying and laughing and loving it. [20]

A war musical that's pro-war. [21]

RESPONDENT 3

CHARACTER

The characters would be all tropes, like the evil witch and the fairy godmother and the cruel king. [22]

A particular real-life musician. [23]

COSTUMES

The costumes would be really flashy and overdone, and they would be compensating for the lack of a coherent story. [24]

LANGUAGE

I wouldn't like anything vulgar just for the sake of vulgarity. [25]

LYRICS

I don't like a lot of repetition of words in music, like when the same lyrics are repeated over and over and over again. [26]

MUSIC

I like a live band. So, if the music was all pre-recorded, like to a karaoke track, I would hate that. [27]

PLOT/STORY

I like a balance of dialogue and song, so I wouldn't like for there to be too many musical numbers without enough dialogue to make them make sense with the story. [28]

The story would be something very childish or puerile. It would be like a Disney fairy tale story. [29]

I would hate a story that's a jukebox musical that's the biography of a particular musician but it presents a very sanitized version of their life, like we don't learn anything complicated or interesting about them, there would be no nuance. [30]

SPECTACLE

I don't like anything that has a lot of acrobatics, or ice skating, or roller skating. Anything that has gymnastics or acrobatics because I get very nervous for the actors. [31]

THEME

I don't like anything that's like, schmaltzy? I would hate for it to be overly, gratuitously emotional, like a soap opera. Anything that borders on the tacky side. Like emotion just for the sake of itself, and that's the whole point of the show. [32]

RESPONDENT 4

CHARACTER

Characters that are all expressions of the writer trying to teach the audience something about how smart the writer is, who is not trying to entertain but is more interested in showing off. [33]

Henry Ford. [34]

LANGUAGE

Jokes that don't quite work. [35]

LIGHTING

Lights changing at the moment of the key change to signify that it is extra emotional. (Like in Billy Porter's 11 o'clock number in Kinky Boots.) [36]

MUSIC

Atonal music without structure and that does not have any motifs or recurring themes. [37]

An 11 o'clock number that has a key change that isn't earned by what's going on emotionally. [38]

PLOT/STORY

The whole show would be based on the classic BMI tropes: there is an "I want" song that is not about investigating anything but is about emoting and showing how amazing and hurt this character is, like in Dear Evan Hansen. It would have an Act I finale that is full of a lot of emotion but doesn't tell any additional part of the story. [39]

The second act would have a lot of exposition. [40]

It would be about something concept driven: like a musical about Henry Ford's problems making the Model-T in order to explore globalism. Something that seems smart but isn't rooted in human behavior or love. [41]

SET

A very expensive set that had a lot of pieces that you saw at the beginning, so you know at the start, like, "Ugh, I'm not getting out of this room until they end up using all of these set pieces." Anything like that that lets the audience stay ahead of the action. [42]

RESPONDENT 5

CHARACTER

Mother. [43]

Father. [44]

Son. [45]

Daughter. [46]

Dog (an actual dog.) [47]

LANGUAGE

There's a lot of direct address to the audience. Ask the audience a lot of questions and demand their participation verbally. [48]

LIGHTING

The lighting should be as general as possible; it's not natural lighting, it's "how many lights can I have on at the same time and how many colors can I use to display basically nothing." It's not conveying anything, the lights are just arbitrarily ascribing different colors to different scenes because the lighting designer thinks they look cool. [49]

MUSIC

During the opening number, they're all singing the plot of what's going to happen in unison, like in "The Bells of Notre Dame" in the Hunchback of Notre Dame musical. It's overly literal sung narration. [50]

A poorly tuned clarinet that plays throughout the score in unison with a poorly tuned trumpet. [51]

A lot of synth sounds that patch change quickly; so, organ sound for four measures, celeste for four measures, and then the square wave sound from Axel F "Beverly Hills Cop Theme." [52]

One song is accompanied by bagpipes (the one about the family's Irish heritage.) [53]

Poor orchestrations in general. [54]

Anytime anyone says something mean or rude, there are musical sings like in a Bravo TV show. [55]

The overture starts with a crash from the orchestra starts the show. It is blaring and shocking and it happens while everyone in the audience is still talking, not aware that the show is about to start. And then the whole overture doesn't include any songs from the rest of the show. [56]

PLOT/STORY

It's the story of a white American family and their interpersonal issues. The kids sing about how difficult their mom is, and how their dad only cares about work, "and I'm going through so much and I'm only sixteen." Perfectly nuclear family, mom and dad and son and daughter. And it's about them falling apart and then coming together in the end in a way that's like you know, "they may not be as complete or perfect but at least they're themselves, and that's enough." And the conflict is just pointless family conflict, just people arguing. [57]

The bagpipe song talks about their Irish heritage, how they came from Ireland and the struggle of the Irish people—the characters sing that song with an Irish dialect even though they otherwise don't have Irish accents. [58]

There's a big emotional song when a character is having an emotional breakdown, and they're standing on stage holding their head in their hands and the violins are going "oooOOOOoooOOooo" [like a scary movie tremolo], it's like a pantomime mental breakdown, like "Angry Dance" from Billy Elliot. [59]

There's a dream ballet but that doesn't signify anything—like it's not a metaphor, it's not representational of anything having to do with the story, it's just a character describing this weird dream they had for no reason. So it's really the choreographer's excuse to have a big choreography number. The person who is having the dream is just watching it, just walking around like "oh look at all those people dancing." They say at the beginning, "I had the strangest dream." It's literally just random dancing, but the character will see it and then take it to affirm everything they already think. [60]

A cell phone rings in the audience, and the actors on stage break the fourth wall to yell at the audience member whose phone was ringing, and then it's actually a scene and the person whose phone was ringing is actually a character in the play. [61]

There's a dog that comes onstage only once (obviously to get a treat from the actor and go back to the trainer in the wing) and it's random when it happens. [62]

SET

I hate seeing living spaces that are in a box set, where you can see the ceiling and then you can see the stage lights above the ceiling. So it's five walls basically (three walls, ceiling, floor). [63]

The show is done in 3-quarter thrust. [64]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

The show begins with all of the actors crossing downstage in two diagonal lines from the wings. One single-file line crossing downstage right to upstage left, and one single-file line crossing from downstage left to upstage right. [65]

In general, choreography that's supposed to be pedestrian, like just walking or sitting or standing. There are no sharp dance-like movements, just like overly stylized going to work and moving to music with my briefcase; like modern/contemporary, I check my watch to see what time it is, and then push my own arm down again because I'm angry about what time it is, and then the briefcase comes over the head as I turn the corner in a weird stylized way. [66]

Curtain call would have to have underscoring that is dark and moody. Everybody comes out for a full company bow, and then every character gets their own bow and they have to bow right and left and center. And the leads all bow together again, and they each bow separately again. And they point to the orchestra, to the booth, to the ushers, somewhere backstage that nobody knows is sure who you're referring to. [67]

The actors, at some point during the show, use paint in some way on their own bodies to represent their inner emotional turmoil. [68]

There are several moments in the show where actors come out into the aisles and sing directly to audience members, as much as possible. Any time the ensemble does anything, there are people in the aisles. [69]

At some point, the actors make the audience members stand up and dance in their seats. "Everybody stand up! Just dance where you are, everybody, just do it!" Just like in Eve Ensler's *In the Body of the World*. [70]

When the show ends, and everybody's clapping, immediately start a talkback, so you don't give anybody time to leave who might want to not stay for it. And it would be about whatever big hot button issue the play tried but failed to talk about in a deep way, like global warming or racial inequality. [71]

There is a splash zone, and at some point, the audience gets splashed with water. [72]

At some point they throw beach balls at the audience and we'd have to bounce them around. [73]

As many entrances as possible come from the back of the house, so everyone has to turn around to see what's happening. [74]

RESPONDENT 6

CHARACTER

The cast is way bigger than it needs to be. [75]

There are too many characters for you to be able to follow all of their stories. [76]

The characters are children played by child actors who sing about mature themes like suicide and deep existential suffering and teenage pregnancy. [77]

Spiders. A tap dancing spider would be the end of me. [78]

Older person who opens act II. [79]

COSTUMES

Masks. Everyone wears a mask, so you can't see people's facial expressions. [80]

MUSIC

Music that sounds like contemporary musical theatre writers—those young people who release albums of musical theatre style music that are not actually from a musical, and perform cabarets at places like 54 below showcasing their songs sung by notable musical theatre actors, and the songs are all just about a feeling you're having, and they use really formulaic tropes and simple chord progressions and are so boring and have no personality or depth. And it's all of those songs put together in an actual musical and it just doesn't work. [81]

The opening number is an up-tempo song that is so fast you can't understand the words. [82]

A song like "Dead Mom" from Beetlejuice with lyrics that are so literal that it feels like every drop of nuance is thrown out the window, and it doesn't leave any room for you to figure anything out for yourself. It would be like if Dolly Levi came out and sang a song called "Ephraim is Dead." Everything is fed to you so you have no reason to feel interested. [83]

PLOT/STORY

The show is way longer than it needs to be. [84]

You start in the middle of the action, but in a very tactless way. So you have no idea who anyone is or what they're talking about. [85]

The whole show is a pity party, all of the characters are complaining but we don't see them make any effort to make any kind of change in their lives. [86]

They start the show where a person is standing in front of the curtain with just a spotlight on them, they're singing their sob-story and we have no idea what they're talking about,

and then the curtain opens behind them to reveal this beautiful, luscious world that has nothing to do with the song they were singing, and they're complaining about all of these beautiful things happening. And there are five different characters doing different things in different parts of the stage so you don't know where to direct your attention, everybody is pulling focus. [87]

Something kooky or ironic happens at the end of the opening number that twists your idea of what you originally thought was happening. [88]

The whole first act is filled with exposition, nothing really happens, people are just complaining and explaining. [89]

The end of the first act is a song where they decide they're going to deal with whatever problems they had been complaining about. Then, in act II, they just continue to complain about how impossible their problems are. [90]

The opening of act II song is an older person who comes out in a solo spotlight in front of the curtain, and it sounds kind of like Buddy's Blues from Follies, parodying and making fun of all of the problems that the children are having (teenage pregnancy, suicide). It would go like, "Well hello there everybody, I see you've come back. It's time to show you what this show lacks. It's the spontaneity and love that we give to us all, it's all about the..." [91]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

It's a spectacle that is trying too hard to be a spectacle: it's over-produced so that there is a lot of flashy dancing and tricks that bear no relation to the story. [92]

There's no dancing, it's all pedestrian movement. Like people walking around in a circle on a turntable, and then every time they have to sing they step forward. And if they're not walking, they're doing things like household things, sweeping the floor, or digging in the mine, just in a slightly stylized way. But it's very minimal. And every number they do would be something to the effect of like, riding the subway, or something mundane, like driving and they turn the wheel and it's like "oh that was kind of also dancing." [93]

Use of people's bodies instead of props and set pieces. [94]

THEME

The musical is trying very hard to hit its point over your head. [95]

RESPONDENT 7

ACTOR BEHAVIOR

I would hate to see a male lead who was having an ego-crisis, and the actor was clearly angry about something in the play and was making faces at the audience as though they were in on it. Like if he got pissed every time there was a technical error, like if things were to drop by accident from the fly system. [96]

Someone on the stage cries about something really low stakes and has a really emotional moment about it that is clearly coming from the actor's personal life and not the story. [97]

CHARACTER

It would be all white people and all of the women would be really, really dainty and super stupid and naïve. And always discovering things. And then maybe there's one girl who's like, a total bitch. And one who's the slut in town. And they "learn their lesson." [98]

Boy who meets girl. [99]

Girl who meets boy. [100]

Older motherly or fatherly character. [101]

A milkman. [102]

The marketing or development department of a non-profit theatre company. [103]

COSTUME

All of the budget is spent on one or two characters' costumes, and—like I was talking to a friend who did *Cats* in high school and they rented costumes for all of the main cats, and all of the ensemble cats were just wearing, like, morph suits. [104]

MUSIC

I really don't like, like *Jekyll and Hyde*, like rock and roll, belty, really climactic screaming intense belting that's completely unearned, but it's in every single song. And that goes along with Frank Wildhorn's music, like all of his songs are reflective and none of them carry the plot forward—which, like, it's fine to have one, but *all* of his songs are like that. They step out of the plot and say what their emotions are and that's what the whole song does. Every song is like, you have to belt an E in the first fifteen seconds, and it stops being exciting, it's just unearned showing off. [105]

Basic rock and roll orchestrations that aren't specific in a genre like punk of 60's, it's just like, a guitar and a piano and drums, and it's like, very generic. [106]

PLOT/STORY

The most cliché romantic comedy plot: boy meets girl, but girl? She's engaged to someone else! I'm thinking of the plot of *Carousel*: it's really cliché but problematic in that "oh, he was just really mean to her, but she needs to love him anyway, and she's gonna sing a love ballad about that." That's what really grinds my gears, when it's like, what is the most expected point in this plot? Oh, it's happening! [107]

Whenever there's a moment when an older motherly or fatherly character sings a song with all the advice in it. Their advice is like, "When I was a little girl..." and "You should always love, and be happy, and follow your heart... Because someday you're an old..." I'm now thinking of that song from *Pippin* ["Just No Time At All"]. Like "Someday you'll be old and sad and ugly like me, and you'll wish you loved when you were young..." Something like that. [108]

Things that are like really low stakes and are treated as high stakes. Like, "Oh no, the girl I love *kind of* likes me back. But how can I know for *sure*?" [109]

The setting is like "We're in America town! There's a milkman!" That kind of nostalgic, idyllic, vague setting [like Thornton Wilder]. [110]

It would also be a story about theatre administration. Like a musical about the marketing or development team, and they would be singing like, "There's never any money!" And "Oh! Oh sorry! No health insurance for you here!" And it would be like, "We really need a diversity initiative." And just like, "How can we get more free interns?" And it would just be about people that think they're heroes and that they're doing an amazing thing by changing the world with their theatre company, and it would just be completely hypocritical. It would not be an ironic joke; it would be glorifying this kind of ragtag group. [111]

I hate things that are like a group of sketches that are somehow connected but are just kind of jokey or half-developed scenes. Like I just saw this ten-minute play about a girl who was trying to fill out a form, and everyone was coming up with goofy excuses about why she couldn't, and it was like sketch comedy, but it was a play, it lasted like fifteen minutes. And it was like, "Okay, this is not a *story*." [112]

When everything magically works out in the end. Like everything is resolved beautifully and perfectly. [113]

SET

The set would just be black blocks. But then there would be like, one set thing that they spent a lot of money on, clearly. Like if you did *Waitress* and you made the restaurant look amazing, but her house is just black blocks. And there would be kind of incongruity in every aspect of tech. [114]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

There would be a stage manager in the wings that you could visibly see. Like they're supposed to be hidden but you can see them. [115]

There would be *really* long scene changes that are just crew. And the crew is like, getting upset and ordered around by someone. But they go on for way too long. And maybe there's like a frozen tableau of the actors while this happens. [116]

There would be a bunch of big group scenes, and in each one, the actors who are not actually speaking would pantomime talking to each other with exaggerated expressions. [117]

An actor would pantomime playing an instrument but try to make the audience think it was real. It would be the violin or a piano, something you can easily tell someone is faking. [118]

THEME

There would have to be a really on the nose political message that is unearned by the story. And like really drive the point home way too hard, almost to the point. And like, something stupid that undermines the well-intentioned but totally misguided messaging, like when my high school of all white kids did Aida and we were separated by the blondes and the brunettes. [119]

RESPONDENT 8

ACTOR BEHAVIOR

Nobody has any chemistry with anybody. You can tell the cast doesn't like each other, like they have no bond or relationship and they don't enjoy working together. [120]

CHARACTER

A clown. [121]

Harry (guy who is interested in Sally.) [122]

Sally (girl who is interested in Harry.) [123]

COSTUMES

Nudity. [124]

Costumes that are achronistic to the setting, or costumes that don't match who the character is. [125]

LIGHTS

Really bright lights in your eyes all the time, like the kind of behind-the-stage lights in Tina or The Cher Show, that square grid of lights on the back wall pointed directly at the audience. [126]

Anytime there is a spotlight, it's not quite on the person. Nobody is ever exactly in their light, like just their feet are in the light. [127]

Harsh, hospital lighting the whole show. [128]

There are no blackouts, you see everything during the scene changes. [129]

MUSIC

People screlting singing for the sake of high notes in every single song, just for the sake of showing off. [130]

All of the songs would sound the same. Like no patter song, no nothing, just the same song with different words. Almost the same melody, but ever so slightly different, and the words are almost the same but each verse is ever so slightly different, but for no reason. [131]

PLOT/STORY

Nothing would happen during the story—nobody would change, there would be no arc to anything. The songs would all be exposition, like “This is me, here I am, this is my situation” and that's all they would do. And it would be about a place where there's no conflict, like this Pleasantville kind of town. And there's a clown that wanders around and he makes the other characters in the town uncomfortable but everyone is like, “Okay,

it's fine. He's there... Whatever." And like the clown would come into the audience and interact with them. And he would just be strange and off-putting. And he's strange and a creepy dude that's ostracized by the people in the town. But in the story, it just is what it is. Nobody says anything to him, he doesn't have a storyline. It just is what it is. And you get the exposition of what's going on in the town, like "Oh, Harry and Sally are interested in each other," but it doesn't go anywhere, nothing further happens. [132]

At the beginning, that's when the competition dance team with bright lighting does something extravagant that makes you excited, and then the rest of the show is very boring. [133]

SET

The set would be blank walls with bloodstains on them. [134]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

Competitive dance style dancing. Like jazz dance, it's very like dance team. There's lots of tricks and it's all entirely in unison dancing. [Like when my sister was in high school and she would go to a competitive dance competition with her studio—there's like forty girls all doing exactly the same thing.] [134]

The dancing would be pedestrian. Lots of walking patterns, maybe like you're picking up a briefcase in a stylized way, but add in like, weird hand flicks and things that make absolutely no sense. Like pedestrian but not natural pedestrian, pedestrian with weird flourishes. Like they pick up the briefcase, but they do it like, ten times. And then they pick it up with like, one finger. [135]

THEME

A show that values shock value over story, that tries to make its point by shocking you than with nuance storytelling. It would make me uncomfortable for no reason—I'm okay with feeling uncomfortable [if it's provocative because of the story it's telling and it's making me think about something] but it would make you feel uncomfortable for no reason. Or like the whole point would just be to make you uncomfortable. [136]

RESPONDENT 9

CHARACTER

I would hate to see a show filled with babies, like how The Ferryman had a baby, but if there were a lot of them. [137]

Taylor Swift. [138]

Taylor Swift's ex-boyfriends. [139]

The Real Housewives of New York. [140]

COSTUMES

I would hate if the performers had something like a mask over their faces and you couldn't see their facial expressions the entire time. [141]

LIGHTS

I hate whenever the entire theatre goes completely dark, like in the Oklahoma revival. [142]

MUSIC

The singers sing the songs in a different key than the band is playing them in. [143]

There would be no live mics, so you could barely hear anyone. [144]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

The actors face upstage the entire time. [145]

I would hate a show where they bring you food during the performance and you eat it with your hands like in Medieval times. And in each scene, the food and beverage is tied into the scene somehow. So if they're talking about going to McDonalds, we'd be eating McDonalds. [146]

They would try to force a tap number into a song that doesn't sound like a tap song. [147]

PLOT/STORY

A jukebox musical about Taylor Swift—if you said, “I'm going to see a Taylor Swift musical,” throw me off a bridge. It would probably be a biopic—they would have to cast like 19 different men to be her boyfriends, and every scene would be like, she would date a guy, and write a song about it. I'm honestly a fan of hers but yeah I would hate that. And there would be something about her being in the Cats movie. [148]

I would hate if The Real Housewives was adapted for the stage, so you have a loose script and then the housewives improvise fights that are very real. [149]

SET

It would be thrust to the extreme, like a runway. And the sightlines would be terrible.
[150]

I would not like a theatrical experience that requires me to move to different rooms. [151]

The set is all white, and bland looking, just four walls on the stage. [152]

RESPONDENT 10

ACTOR BEHAVIOR

I would hate if the actors seemed arrogant and the lead was really into it, and like you could see themselves sort of congratulating themselves after doing anything. [153]

CHARACTER

There would be puppets. Like how Olaf in “Frozen” is a puppet. Not like a dragon for one scene that’s a puppet, like a character who is a puppet during the entire show. Or like a Sesame Street character. [154]

Joey, an everyday teenager who learns there’s something extraordinary about him. [155]

MUSIC

The music would be very generic, like the lyrics and the composition and everything about it would be very simple and very boring. The lyrics could apply to anything. Like it’s almost Rodgers & Hammerstein-esque but watered-down versions that aren’t beautiful or interesting. Or a poor man’s Lin Manuel-Miranda, just like a bad imitation of his music. [156]

There would be a hip hop song that tries to appeal to young people. [157]

I would hate very watered-down overly literal narration in a song, like in “The Bells of Notre Dame” in the Hunchback musical. Or how like in Hadestown when we’re seeing Eurydice about to make her deal with Hades, the chorus is just narrating “she’s cold she’s hungry she’s whatever,” as opposed to seeing a scene where she does something and by watching that we understand that she’s struggling. It’s telling, not showing. [158]

PLOT/STORY

I would hate a story that has a lot of loose ends that don’t get tied up. And unnecessary plot points in the middle that seem like they’re going to amount to something in the end, and then they don’t. [159]

The story would be like, everyday teenager Joey so-and-so, and the whole beginning is introducing him and his friends who are all tropes you’ve seen before. And then there’s some ridiculous twist where like, you find out ... like Be More Chill, or Harry Potter—he thinks he’s a normal boy but this is why he’s special. Like it turns out he’s a superhero, like a superman backstory, from a different planet—and that’s somehow revealed to him. Like it’s happening because he’s turning sixteen today. [160]

SET

I would hate if the design was extremely general, like it was low budget and instead of being creative with their limited resources they just didn’t do anything. [161]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

I would hate being brought up on stage. Or if they tried to get me involved in any way, especially if it was very ham-fisted about trying to make a point and I wasn't buying into it. [162]

RESPONDENT 11

ACTOR BEHAVIOR

I hate overacting, so it would be a lot of people chewing the scenery. [163]

CHARACTER

A KKK member would be a character. [164]

I hate clowns, so like a character would be birthday party clown. Like Bill Irwin the Theatre Clown. [165]

A character like when jimmy Fallon does the Ew! girl sketch. I hate that. It's like bad drag. And the things they are talking about are trivial, so not only is the joke bad, but what they're talking about has no consequence. [166]

I would be annoyed if there were kids on stage. One is fine but like Annie, or like School of Rock, or like Oliver. It would be like a lot of kids. [167]

LANGUAGE

A lot of audience interaction. They sing to you, they want you to sing with them, they're encouraging a lot of audience interaction, and they don't take no for an answer. They're like, "We've chosen you specifically and you can't decline." [168]

The characters speak about esoteric topics and don't take time to explain them to the audience. [169]

LIGHTS

There are laser lights, and a lot of color on stage. [170]

MUSIC

I wouldn't like music played off key, and for the singers to sing out of tune. [171]

I would hate screamo music. [172]

I wouldn't like EDM music. [173]

PLOT/STORY

I would hate if it was all unrelated vignettes. I really don't like that, especially if there were also underdeveloped characters. [174]

SET

There's a ton of glitter, there's definitely a rain curtain. Lots of things on stage are reflective. [175]

There's sand on stage. I went to a show and there was sand on the floor and I had to walk through it to get to my seat and I thoroughly did not enjoy that. [176]

I do not like when design-wise, when there's clearly two different aesthetics that are conflicting. So there would be a lot of color and LED lights in parts of it, but then they walked out with chairs and they were like "we're going to perform this with just these chairs now." [177]

I do not like when things rotate on stage, like when a set rotates, like Sweeney Todd or Hamilton. Or like She Loves Me, a whole set rotation. [178]

I do not like when things fly in and out from the fly system. [179]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

It's 3 hours long and it starts 10 minutes late. [180]

It's epic in that there are too many people on stage at the same time so you can't focus on any one thing. [181]

THEME

It would be about something socially irrelevant and it would be boring. I don't mind if something is socially irrelevant if it's a good time, so it would have to be both. [182]

RESPONDENT 12

CHARACTERS

There would be a large cast with lots of side characters who are constantly being introduced and then have no actual bearing on the plot. [183]

The male lead can't actually sing, but he looks pretty. [184]

The female lead is very vocally tired. [185]

LANGUAGE

All of the actors would have Australian or Welsh accents, or another difficult to do accent, and they would all be done poorly. [186]

There's a lot of homophobia and racism and misogyny instilled in the show that has been kept, but the director in trying to fix is just making light of it, and they're awkward and inappropriate. [187]

MUSIC

The orchestra is too slow, so any emotional builds in any of the songs would feel very awkward. [188]

Golden age-y style music, like Rodgers and Hammerstein, that would just sort of state all of the plot points very literally. [189]

PLOT/STORY

There's probably four too many numbers, like lots of extra songs that only provide exposition. [190]

There's two separate songs at the beginning with the two lovers, like a boy and a girl, and they're on opposite sides of the stage and they're both about describing how they feel *about* each other but not to each other. And one is Australian and one is Welsh. Like the song "One Night with You" from Xanadu but it would be like, "Three weeks in the Midwest with youuuuu. Three weeks in the wild Midwest, isn't that lovely Charlotte?" [191]

It would be really long, like a three hour musical. [192]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

There would be a couple of tap numbers, and half of the cast can tap dance, and the other half of the cast has fake tap shoes on. So it looks like they're doing it, but you can tell that they're not really. And none of the dancing is together, so the tapping doesn't sound clean. [193]

RESPONDENT 13

AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

A lot of people in the audience holding cups and t-shirts and merch that have the musical's branding. [194]

CHARACTERS

A really big, a large cast. So many people. They're mainly white, and all kind of look alike. [195]

An older lady character who is in charge and sings a song telling a younger character "how it is". Or she's telling a prophecy to the audience about what's going to happen to the love triangle, she knows better because she is older: assumes a lot of authority over knowing exactly what is going to happen but it's never explained to us why she knows. She has no backstory. [196]

An old man character. Dorky and a bit of a fool. [197]

A passive woman. [197.5]

First dude: a jock, typical masculine bro, or a businessman. [198]

Second dude: an artist. [199]

LANGUAGE

Older lady character during her advice giving-song, ominously: "You will one day see", "Follow your heart, but one day you will see" [200]

Old man character: "Nyuck nyuck nyuck" [201]

Artist: "I'm an artist.", "I'm misunderstood." [202]

Woman: "Artist, I love you." Artist: "I love you too." [203]

Artist, before their wedding day (whispered): "You can't do this. I can't let you do this. I'm a tortured artist and I won't let you do it. And I will put myself in exile. You're gonna pick me, and so I'm gonna take that choice away from you. I'm not gonna let you pick me. 'Cause I know what's best for you." [204]

Jock, to woman after artist leaves: "I will marry you." Woman: "Yeah, you're right. I must marry you. But I will always love him." [205]

MUSIC

Synthesizers. Like Andrew Lloyd Webber style music. Synths with legit style singing: more like Lloyd Webber and not like 80's or footloose. It's very trained singers singing very seriously, accompanied by synthesizers. [206]

Mostly slower songs. There's no real big dance number. [207]

Entirely sung through, but maybe three or four tiny quick scenes without music that break the convention of everyone otherwise singing everything, with no apparent pattern or rhyme or reason as to why those scenes are spoken as opposed to sung. [208]

PLOT/STORY

There's a love triangle. One woman and two dudes. Woman chooses artist over jock. Before their wedding day, the artist leaves her because he knows he's wrong for her, he doesn't fit in to society. She chooses the jock and they get married. And an old man character and an old women character get together as a subplot that has nothing to do with the love triangle. [209]

SET

A lot of hydraulics. Things that are supposed to be spectacles but don't actually function in a way that makes them spectacular." Like the chandelier crashing in Phantom but it's not at all a believable crash. [210]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

The curtain call comes down on a quite serious moment. The full company is on stage when the curtain comes up. They go off, and then come on for individual bows. The leads take an especially long time. Then there are five company bows. Finally, the curtain falls on the actors waving goodbye. [211]

RESPONDENT 14

COSTUMES

The costumes would be extremely elaborate. [212]

CHARACTERS

There would be a cast of six, all playing different aspects of the playwright. [213]

A gay couple who dies tragically at the end. [214]

Jane from *Pride and Prejudice*, played by a man. [215]

LIGHTS

It would be really darkly lit the whole time. [216]

MUSIC

It's pop music. The band would be like a piano with a rhythm section, and it would all feel interchangeable, and there would be no humor. [217]

They would force the audience to sing along at the end. [218]

STORY

One person singing at a microphone singing about how their childhood is a metaphor for climate change. [219]

It would be three hours long, and the intermission would be an hour and fifty minutes into it, but it would be billed as two hours and forty-five minutes. [220]

There would be a gay couple that dies tragically at the end, like the play would be set in the 1960's and one of them would get arrested for sodomy. [221]

There's a long section that's just spoken-word poetry. [222]

It's an adaptation of a book or another play that the author finds problematic so they're going to fix it in adapting it and also make it about climate change. Like I hate *Pride and Prejudice*, so I would do a musical of *Pride and Prejudice* and make it about climate change to make *Pride and Prejudice* a story worth telling. Jane is played by a man and they die at the end. [223]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

Everything is mimed, there are no actual props. [224]

I would hate something where everything is delivered out to the audience. Like the actors are talking to each other but they never look at each other, they're always, always facing the audience. The whole thing is presentational. [225]

They would use the audience in an unnecessary way. There would be blocking in the aisles for no reason. And they would use audience members in their scenes. Like there would be a scene where an actor is calling his mother on the phone, and they pick a woman in the audience and talk to her like she's the one on the phone. But she doesn't talk so we can't hear what she says, we can only hear what he says, so it doesn't make any sense, everybody would like, look at her and laugh and put her on the spot. [226]

People would breakdance, like freestyle breakdancing. [227]

The audience has to stand, there are no seats. [228]

It's staged in the round and the audience has to wander around the performance. [229]

THEME

It's about climate change. [230]

RESPONDENT 15

ACTOR BEHAVIOR

I really hate when things come across as false, like when nobody on the stage is really enjoying what they're doing or excited or feeling good about it. [231]

I get really disappointed when I go to a show specifically to see a certain actor, and then that actor then isn't in the show. [232]

AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

What I hate most about musicals is the people around me in the audience. I've gotten very irritated, for instance, when other people in the audience did a dance during "Waving Through a Window" at Dear Evan Hansen. Or people behind me going "What? Did you hear what she said? I can't understand a word they're saying." Or we just went to a concert and people watched the whole show through their cell phone because they were taking a video of the whole thing. Or at those movie theatres where they bring you food and wait staff come up and down the aisles to drop off food for people during the show, I find that so distracting. [233]

The merchandizing and commodification of things is obnoxious to me. [234]

MUSIC

I don't like anything really loud, like I wouldn't like death metal, especially death metal with a lot of screaming. [235]

And I don't love, like, big band, like those old 30's and 40's big band hits. [236]

I hate when I can't understand the lyrics. I don't mind if it's in a foreign language, but even in Hamilton, if I hadn't known the lyrics from listening to it in the car, I wouldn't have understood some of it because of the speed of it and also because of the sound quality in the theatre. [237]

STORY

I'm over the idea of making musicals out of movies. [238]

I wouldn't want to see a Trump musical. Or a musical about Mitch McConnell. Or Brett Kavanaugh. [239]

I would hate to see fraternity hazing. And anything that glorifies making fun of other people. [240]

I don't like Disney Princess movie kind of stories. [241]

I hated in Network how it was hard to know what I was supposed to pay attention to, like when they had the live camera going on stage, I didn't know if I should look at the actor or at the screen. Or like at Temple [during Kol Nidre] when they put something on the

screen and instead of seeing the cantor's face singing, they put up the transliteration of the Hebrew, I just find that really distracting. Anything where there's a projection and I don't know where I should be looking. So I would hate if a character was singing in a foreign language and the transliterated lyrics were projected behind them. [242]

RESPONDENT 16

ACTOR BEHAVIOR

I hate watching celebrities play parts because of their status and not their talent. [243]

CHARACTER

A lack of diversity in the cast. [244]

COSTUME

Neutral face masks. [244.5]

Super minimal costumes, like things that are little pieces to suggest that they're playing a new character, like a hat or a funny pair of glasses. [245]

LIGHTS

I hate any time the lights come up on the audience. [246]

Strobe lights. [247]

MISCELLANEOUS

Clusters of holes!!! [Trypophobia-triggering images.] [248]

MUSIC

I hate metal music. So it would be all metal, with really long interludes of people drumming and screaming, and it's just that for a really long time. [249]

The old man song. Or sometimes old lady. Like something that's meant to be sweet but it makes you uncomfortable because it's just this old person struggling to get through the song. "More I Cannot Wish You" from Guys and Dolls, "Take it from an Old Man" in Waitress, you know. So there would be a lot of those. [250]

PLOT/STORY

The plot is forced to bend itself around the songs, like how it often feels in jukebox musicals. [251]

Star Wars really irritates me recently, anything to do with Star Wars, I'm so sick of hearing about it. So yeah, someone wearing a neutral face mask re-enacting Star Wars. [252]

I'm really sick of seeing adaptations of movies. [253]

SET

Actors being upstaged by really distracting videos, like projections that are used instead of a set. [254]

I'm picturing a kiddie pool representing a pond. And people keep coming to the pool and splashing their feet around in it. [255]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

There's some avant-garde stuff going on, maybe people bending over to be a table, like actors using their bodies as set pieces for scenes they're not in. [256]

I hate seeing actors doing dangerous things, like in SpongeBob when he was climbing the thing at the end, I wasn't with it, I was just concerned for his safety. So that really takes me out of it. [257]

RESPONDENT 17

CHARACTER

An overly enthusiastic theatre professor. [258]

STAGING

Being able to hear something else happening in another room from the theatre. [259]

STORY

An extended sequence of a normal person's life: like you just watch a guy wake up, and brush his teeth, and go to work, and he sits there at his computer for a long time, and there's no narrative. [260]

A story set in a high school with an overly enthusiastic theatre professor. [261]

THEME

Something totally sincere with no hint of irony. [262]

RESPONDENT 18

CHARACTER

Conservative republicans who think they're right about everything. [263]

A straight old white guy like the main character from Linda Vista. Republican. [264]

A straight white woman who is pursued by the old white guy. Democrat. [265]

The woman's boyfriend. [266]

LANGUAGE

I would hate being preached at. Not like religiously, but whatever the point of the show being screamed at me. Immediately, like right from the start. [267]

LIGHTS

The design aesthetics would be really boring—like using scoops as a wash light. And lots of par cans. And zero LEDs in the entire rig, it's all conventional fixtures, with only boring, fade-in/fade-out cues. The only colors are old faded gels. [268]

MUSIC

The music would be trap music. Like rap music that doesn't have a point. Like when people rap about "I'm gonna get everything I want, 'cause I have a lot of money. And you're gonna give me anything I want, 'cause I have a lot of money." And like the song Old Town Road. Or Yung Gravy. [269]

The speakers are giving you feedback the whole time. [270]

I do not like the binaural audio headphones things. If I had someone whispering directly into my ear during everything I just described, I would walk out. [271]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

The sightlines are bad, like you can see the actors changing backstage but they're supposed to be hidden. [272]

Having a character who's supposed to be black played by a white actor, like doing Hairspray and having a white Seaweed. Like someone singing "The night is black as my skin" and it's a white girl singing it. [273]

Old white people dancing to the trap music to ballet, and also trying to do hip hop dance but they don't know how. Like those YouTube videos of the old white people dabbing and rapping in a church choir. [274]

It would be staged in thrust. I hate that. [275]

The theatre would be damp, like you sit down in your chair and it's wet. [276]

There would be no bar and no concession stand. [277]

STORY

The story would be like the story of Linda Vista, an old white guy who keeps blowing up his life and then complaining about it. A drama of someone ruining their own life and they never change. [278]

The whole story is only about heterosexual, Caucasian people. And the conflict is that straight white female romantic lead might not be interested in him. And she would do a Cardi B style rap about how Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, so the conflict would be like, she's a democrat, and he's a republican. And she has a boyfriend. The end of the first act would be like, old straight white man saying like, "I don't think I'm happy." DUN DUN. And then they get together and he cheats on her. And he blames everyone else for his unhappiness and doesn't accept responsibility. [279]

RESPONDENT 19

CHARACTERS

The archetype of the foreigner who's only in the story to be comic relief and it's a little bit racist. Like that character in Oklahoma. And there are jokes about them being a foreigner. [280]

Male lead in pursuit of female lead. A teenage high school student. [281]

Female lead. A teenage high school student. [282]

A school counselor. [283]

COSTUMES

Costumes that make a lot of noise. Like swishing sounds, like when you're wearing a windbreaker, or when spunks rub against other clothes you're wearing. I did Willy Wonka once and they put Violet in an M&M costume, so that made that noise the whole time. [284]

LIGHTS

A lot of moving spotlights. Like when it feels like you're being chased by the police. So if somebody on stage is having an [emotional] moment and they're running around left and right and the lights are gonna follow that person. [285]

MUSIC

I would hate for a show to either be all bops or all ballads—so basically if it was the same song over and over again and then each character sings it. [286]

I would hate if the music was all country ballads, really over the top emotional and about one single thing but they say the one thing in a lot of different ways. It's all self-indulgent about the singer being like "I was sad one time." Because they're not story driven, they're just sad. [287]

I hate the sound of a dog squeaky toy. So like if that was used in a song. [288]

All of the lyrics are like Duncan Sheik's lyrics. [289]

STAGING/CHOREOGRAPHY

A lot of audience involvement [like in Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice] and then there being no clean way to exit them from the involvement, so the audience is kind of ditched on stage. You invite them up there and then you never tell them to leave so they're just...chilling. And they don't add anything to the story. That's a big pet peeve because then my attention is on that audience member and not on the show. [290]

STORY

I would hate a show where the only point was the male lead trying to get the female lead. And there's no surprise, it happens in the end, and the whole show is just about their feelings. [291]

The whole thing is set in a high school. And they're all teenagers who are learning to feel their feelings. And the entire musical takes place over prom night, and the prom is like a masquerade ball. [292]

There's a counselor who's an adult overseeing everybody's feelings and emotions. [293]

THEME

The whole thing is sad just to be sad, it's a total cry fest. [294]