

GUMBO

A full-length musical

For New Orleans

"I wonder if Katrina is becoming like one of those fairytales for Americans. It's something we can't get our imaginations around. It's too large for that, and so instead it seems to be fragmenting into a thousand parables, some of them right, some of them very wrong, and most of them defying categorization all together."

—Rivka Galchen, *The New Yorker*

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SETTING

- Above, around and inside the bowl of a Crescent City—the City is a mythic representation of the great city of New Orleans.
- The Gumbo Pot, an underwater speakeasy of today

Note: There should be virtually no set—the people/ The City should embody the ever-shifting worlds.

TIME

In and around a timeless August 29 to late September 2005

NOTES ON ACCENT/DIALOGUE

"Mrs. Reilly called it that accent that occurs south of New Jersey only in New Orleans, that Hoboken near the Gulf of Mexico."

—John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces*

- Not your “traditional” Southern accent. No *Streetcar*, please. It’s about attitude more than accent: an easiness on the words that reflects the City’s approach toward life.
- Slashes (/) and dashes (--) indicate when a line is cut off and the next person begins speaking.

CAST BREAKDOWN (9M, 5W)

DR. HOWARD HART: mid thirties, Caucasian, textbook Midwesterner, stoic, works E.R.; loves two things: his work and his wife, Martha (*unexpected, Billy Bigelow voice, not necessarily look; Gorgeous, lush Baritone with an Earthy soul to it. Bb2-A4*)

MARTHA LEDOUX (Hart): mid-thirties, African-American of Creole descent; full of life & love with the voice of an angel. She'll stop you in your tracks. Also, an elementary school teacher married to Howard. (*Soprano with a facile range. Can sing classical, jazz, and pop seamlessly*)

BOSS: timeless (may ideally appear fifties), a person of color,; ultimate charmer, devilish ring leader of the Gumbo Pot, center of any room. (*Big, Beefy Baritone. Should shake the earth with his voice with a lot of Cab Calloway; able to sing big jazz and funk easily – Gb2-B4 opt. low Eb2 - High C5*)

BEARD (M): fifties, forties, thirties, African-American, slight, scraggly, looks like he's really lived, ring leader of the trio (*Big Blues man. Able to sing tight harmony a la Blind Boys of Alabama; Dark, lowest baritone; Gb2-Gb4. opt. low Eb2*)

SCARF (M): fifties, forties, thirties, African-American, brawny Teddy bear, the diplomat of the trio (*Baritone - Able to sing tight harmony a la Blind Boys of Alabama*)

PONYTAIL (M): twenties to thirties, Caucasian, Latino, or Asian-American, overeager, the “kid brother” of the trio (*Tenor - Able to sing tight harmony a la Blind Boys of Alabama; Sings Funk/Jazz Bb2-D5*)

GAIL FORCE/MAN (M): timeless, Latino/a, fierce and fit drag queen, in love with Boss (*Tenor A2-A4*)

OLIVER FLOOD/WOMAN (F): timeless, any race, dapper vaudeville drag king, short and stocky with a bawdy sense of humor (*Alto F3-D5*),

ENSEMBLE ROLES (Multi-Ethnic Necessary)

**Each ensemble member represents a neighborhood of the greater New Orleans area.*

MS. FELICE WARD [Seventh Ward]: forties, fifties, African-American, a mother hen (*Coloratura with a lot of soul – Gb3-C6; soprano at church*)

HOLLY [Hollygrove]: twenties to thirties, African-American or biracial, buoyant and youthful (*Sassy Mezzo-Soprano – Big voice*)

ESTHER [The East] / MERYL [Marigny]: thirties, forties, Vietnamese-American (Rich, Facile Gospel and Blues Singer, Rangey, *Gb3-Bb5*)

SLY [Slidell] / TREY [Treme]: twenties to thirties, should be a person of color; troublemaker, too handsome for his own good (*Tenor á la Kermit Ruffins C3-C5*)

CHARLIE [Uptown] / OFFICER WESTIN DULAC [Lakeview]: thirties, Caucasian (*Baritone C3-G4 opt. low Eb2*)

NINE [Lower 9] (Male): twenties, thirties, forties, nicknamed for his luck (*Bass Eb2-E4*)

ACT ONE

1. THE WEDDING SONG (City, Howard, Martha) [AUDIO TRACK #1]
- 1a. FEAR NOT, DARLING – WEDDING
2. ENTER BOSS (Boss & Martha)
3. THE HONEYMOON (Howard & Martha)
- 3a. WITH YOU - HONEYMOON
4. CATEGORY THREE (The City) [AUDIO TRACK #2]
5. THE STORM (Musical Interlude)
- 5a. SIREN SONG (Martha & Boss)
6. HERE (Howard & The City) [AUDIO TRACK #3]
7. CROCK 'A SHIT (Beard, Scarf & Ponytail) [AUDIO TRACK #4]
8. JAZZ FUNERAL (Beard, Ponytail, Scarf, & The City)
9. THE PLUNGE (Howard) [AUDIO TRACK #5]
10. DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL (Oliver Flood, Gail Force, & The Club)
11. THE GUMBO POT (Boss, Oliver Flood, Gail Force, The Club)
12. SLIDE AWAY (Martha) [AUDIO TRACK #6]
13. ANARCHY: THE LOOTING SONG (Beard, Scarf, Ponytail, The City)
14. TWO-BY-TWO (Oliver Flood)
15. JEALOUSY (Gail & Boss) [AUDIO TRACK #7]
- 15a. HONEYMOON REPRISE (Martha & Howard)
16. THE GOSPEL OF BOSS [AUDIO TRACK #8]
(Boss, Martha, Howard, Gail, Oliver, & The Club)

ACT TWO

17. ROLL THE PARADE (Boss, Oliver, Martha, and The Club)
[AUDIO TRACK #9]
18. OVER (Howard & The City)
19. SOUND GOOD (Gail Force & Howard) [AUDIO TRACK #10]
20. WHAT IT MEANS (Boss & Martha)
21. GONE TOO FAR (Boss) [AUDIO TRACK #11]
22. GOING SOLO (Oliver Flood) [AUDIO TRACK #12]
23. WITH YOU (Howard & Martha) [AUDIO TRACK #13]
24. SHOWDOWN (Boss, Howard, Martha, The Club/City)
25. CATEGORY THREE REPRISE (Howard & The City)
26. AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE (Howard & The City) [AUDIO TRACK #14]

SCENE ONE: THE WEDDING

The backyard of Martha and Howard's house on a humid, later summer Saturday night in the City.

It's the reception of Martha and Howard's wedding. The City is gathered and spirits are high. Martha and Howard are so in love.

Boss emerges in a pristine three-piece suit, dead flower in his pocket, cigar stub in hand. He circulates the crowd, like he belongs there.

Ms. Felice dings a glass and speaks to the bride and groom. The crowd is very vocal.

MS. FELICE

Now, we've got these two lovebirds here on they weddin' night. Martha, Howard, get on up here! HOWARD! For Pete sakes, loosen up! Come here! *Come here.* (They do) That's right. Wasn't so hard now, was it? They look so good, don't they?

VARIOUS

Mmhmm / Sure do. / Yes m'am.

MS. FELICE

Seems like just yesterday I spotted 'em on this porch neckin' like a couple 'a kids! Wait now—that *was* yesterday!

Laughs and cheers from the crowd.

MS. FELICE CONT'D

A big ol congrats, Dr. and Mrs. Hart! Ain't no storm stoppin' this love! No sir! And it sounds like it's gonna be one helluva storm, so this must be one hellllllluva loooove—

SLY

The good news is now we got ourselves a wedding party *and* a hurricane party! Let's show Howard how it's done down here in the best city on Earth.

(To the Band)

HIT IT!

#1: THE WEDDING SONG [AUDIO TRACK #1]

MS. FELICE

STANDIN' RIGHT BESIDE ME
DOWN AT THE PARADE,
THE BEST LOOKIN' MAN
THAT I'D SEEN IN A DECADE!
SNAGGED A BOATLOAD OF BEADS,
AND HE HANDED ME SOME,
THEN HE LOOKED STRAIGHT AT ME—
I KNEW MY PRINCE HAD COME.

THE CITY

A ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR,
HOLD THE ONE YA' FELL FOR!
FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT,
HOLD 'EM 'TIL IT'S GOOD 'N LATE!

MS. FELICE

WALKIN' RIGHT BESIDE ME,
'LONG BAYOU ST. JOHN,
HE LEANED INTO ME,
AND HE KISSED ME GOOD N' LONG!
HE HELD ME SO TIGHT,
MY HEAD START TO WHIRL.
I CAN'T TELL YOU THE REST—
I'M A GOOD BAPTIST GIRL!

THE CITY

A ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR,
NEVER FELT LIKE THIS BEFORE!
FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT,
YOU DON'T REALLY WANNA WAIT!

SLY

LYIN' RIGHT BESIDE ME,
TIL LATE IN THE NIGHT.
WE ROCK AND WE ROLL—
OUTSIDE IT'S ALMOST LIGHT!
SHE FEELS SO GOOD,
I FEEL SO ALIVE!
MMM...I THINK TO MYSELF,
MY FRIEND, YOU HAVE ARRIVED!

THE CITY

POP THE CHAMPAGNE,

POUR THE WINE,
'HAVE OURSELVES ONE HELLUVA TIME!

SAID OUR VOWS,
THE KNOT IS TIED,
LET'S GET LOUD,

MARTHA
IT'S OUR WEDDING NIGHT!

Marha and Howard kiss fiercely. Wild cheers.
The band kicks it up a notch.

THE CITY
A ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR,
FROM THE BED TO THE FLOOR!
FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT,
MAKIN' LOVE GOOD 'N LATE!

SLY
SITTIN' RIGHT BESIDE ME,
ON LAKE PONCHARTRAIN.
THE WAVES ROLLIN' IN,
MY HEART DOES THE SAME!
WHOA! DOWN ON ONE KNEE,
AND YOU KNOW THE REST.
I SAY, MARRY ME GIRL,
YOU'RE THE ONE I LOVE THE BEST!

THE CITY
A ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR,
GOT A WHOLE LIFE IN STORE!
FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT,
TELL ME, DO YA THINK IT'S FATE?

SLY
DANCIN' RIGHT BESIDE ME,

MS. FELICE
ON OUR WEDDING DAY!

SLY
I SPIN HER AROUND,

MS. FELICE
AND MY LIFE IS MADE!

SLY & MS. FELICE
WE'LL HAVE US FOUR KIDS,
TWO GIRLS AND TWO BOYS!

SLY
OH, IF YOU LOVE YOUR BOO,

SLY & MS. FELICE
GO 'HEAD, MAKE SOME NOISE!

THE CITY
A ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR,
CAN YOU FEEL YOUR HEART SOAR?
FIVE-SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT,
FIN'LLY FOUND YOUR SOUL MATE!

Uproarious cheering.

CHARLIE
Y'all sure know how to throw a party.

MS. FELICE
Y'all sure know how to hire a band.

MARTHA
That's right. Only the best!

SLY
Yes, ma'am.

MS. FELICE
Martha, you gonna sing us a little somethin'?

VARIOUS/ALL
Yeah!

ESTHER
Ooh, yes!

BOSS
Come on, Martha!

NINE
Sing us somethin'!

MARTHA

Only if Howard sings with me!

HOWARD

No, Martha...

MARTHA

Y'all oughta hear this man sing!

ESTHER

Really?

HOWARD

(Shakes his head)

I'd rather not.

HOLLY

(To Howard)

Martha keeps talkin' up this mystery voice of yours, but ain't one of us heard it...

HOWARD

And you won't be hearing it today, either.

SLY

Aw, come on, How. Ain't they known for they soul in Iowa?

HOWARD

I'm from Nebraska, actually—and mostly we're known for corn.

NINE

I think that was a joke. Was that a joke?

ESTHER

No. I don't/ think so—

MARTHA

He just gets a little shy, but I'll be happy to sing y'all somethin'!

NINE

Sounds good to me. Who needs Howard? Martha's the one with the healing voice anyhow!

HOLLY

Aint't that the truth. I can hardly believe
you're not famous by now.

CHARLIE

True dat. You're ten times any of them so-
called singers on the radio these days.

MARTHA

Y'all are too sweet.

(To the piano player)

Do you know, "Fear Not Darling"?

(After a response)

Thank you!

MS. FELICE

Mm. I love this one.

CHARLIE

Me too.

#1a: FEAR NOT, DARLING - WEDDING

MARTHA

FEAR NOT DARLING, FOR YOU ARE SO LOVED,
AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU.

CALL UPON ME WHEN THE WORLD IS COLD,
AND LOVE WILL WARM YOUR HEART ANEW.

A mysterious gentleman, Boss, approaches Martha. He
snaps his fingers. Everything and everyone else freezes in
time.

#2: ENTER BOSS (Update 07.15.15)

BOSS

HAVE I HEARD YAH ON THE RADIO?
OR, DO YOU SING DOWNTOWN?

MARTHA

ONLY FOR THE CHURCH,
AND WHEN MY FRIENDS COME AROUND.

BOSS
WELL, YOU MUST BE A SINGER,
WITH A VOICE SO SWEET YOU CAN TASTE!

MARTHA
I AM A TEACHER.
I LET GO OF THAT DREAM A LONG TIME AGO.

BOSS
YOU EVER WANNA PUT THAT TALENT TO USE, LET ME KNOW,
I GOT CONNECTIONS FOR YUH, BAY, I DO.

WHAT A SHAME,
TO LET THAT MAGIC VOICE GO TO WASTE...

Boss snaps his fingers, the world returns to life and he is gone. Howard approaches Martha, now alone.

HOWARD
You okay?

MARTHA
I'm fine, babe... Probably just a little too much
champagne!

Martha kisses Howard on the cheek and heads inside.

SLY
I heard that! Ms. Felice's couch is callin' my
name. You two have fun tonight!

Sly jabs Howard playfully as he exits. Howard doesn't
respond.

MS. FELICE
Howard, I love you, bay, but why on Earth are
you so damn serious all the time?

HOWARD
It's part of my charm.

MS. FELICE
I'm just sayin, this is your wedding, not your
funeral.

HOWARD
(May crack a smile)
Thanks for everything, Ms. Felice.

NINE
You are the luckiest man in this City to be married to Ms. Martha LeDoux. Don't you forget it.

HOWARD
I won't.

NINE
Good. Don't.

ESTHER
Don't mind him!
(Whispers)
He's just jealous.
(Back to her normal voice)
Congratulations, Howard. Maybe we'll finally get to hear you sing someday.

HOWARD
Maybe. Good night, Esther.

CHARLIE
Night, y'all. Night, Howard.

HOWARD
Night, Charlie.

The City dissipates, the night washes over Howard.

SCENE TWO: THE HONEYMOON

Like a light switch, we arrive at the next morning, Sunday. Howard sits on the porch, enjoying his coffee. Martha joins him.

MARTHA
Good morning, Dr. Hart.

HOWARD
Good morning, *Mrs. Hart*.

He goes to her, kisses her with all the joy of their wedding night.

MARTHA

Mrs. *LeDoux-Hart*, thank you very much.

HOWARD

I thought you Southern women were traditional?

MARTHA

I thought you Midwestern men were quiet?

HOWARD

You didn't seem to mind last night...

MARTHA

All of a sudden my mind is a blur...

HOWARD

I've been told I have that effect on women.

MARTHA

Oh, have you now?

HOWARD

Only one, really...

She kisses him. Yes! This is the life.

MARTHA

Good.

(A beat; as they sit together)

Mm. Sitting here with you makes me feel like everything's right in the world.

HOWARD

I always feel like that when you're around.

#3: THE HONEYMOON (Update 11.30.15)

MARTHA

(Smiles wide)

How blessed are we, Howard?

MARTHA CONT'D
FROM THE CREAK OF OUR SCREEN DOOR,
HOW THE SUN HITS THE PORCH FLOOR.
I COULD STARE FOR HOURS AT
MS. FELICE'S OVERGROWN FLOWERS,
NINE AND HIS BEAT UP OLD CHEVY,
WANDRIN' DOWN THE GREEN OF THE LEVEE,
ALL THESE BEAUTIFUL SIDEWAYS SIDEWALKS, HOUSES, AND YARDS.

HOWARD
(Laughs)
Beautiful—ehhh, that's one word for it.

MARTHA
OR, HOW BOUT,
THE CROWD AT OUR WEDDIN!
ALL THE LOVE FOLKS WERE SPREADIN'
SLY AND HIS BIG OL' SMILE,
HOLLY WORKIN THAT FREESTYLE.
OUR CITY'S MY FAVORITE SONG.
YES, HERE'S WHERE WE BELONG—
ALONG THESE BEAUTIFUL SIDEWAYS, SIDEWALKS,
HOUSES, AND YARDS.

Folks search their whole lives for a place
to call home. Lucky for us!

HOWARD
You're right....

MARTHA
(To Howard)
Why do I get the feeling you've got more to say?

Holly approaches the porch.

HOLLY
Hey, girl. Happy honeymoon! Look, I'm sorry to
bug you, but I was wond'ring, do you think you
could help Clayton with his fractions? It's just
the start of the year and he is havin' one hell of a
time already. Ms. Felice was tellin' me about the
miracles you worked with Charlie's little girl.

HOWARD
Hi, Holly.

HOLLY

Oh, hi, Howard.

MARTHA

Of course, Holly. You know I'd be more than happy to help Clay out.

HOLLY

You are everything! Thank you so much! You know I'll get you back, girl.

MARTHA

Don't even worry about it.

HOLLY

Thank you!

Holly gives her a huge hug and exits.

HOWARD

Do you really have time for that?

MARTHA

I'll make time.

HOWARD

I thought you were going to guard your time this Fall. For your singing.

MARTHA

I will.

HOWARD

OK.

MARTHA

Don't look at me like that.

HOWARD

Like what?

MARTHA

Like you're up to something.

HOWARD

Let's think hypothetically for a minute. Don't you ever imagine yourself anywhere else? Where the neighbors don't "stop by" asking favors whenever they feel like it?

MARTHA

Oh, stop.

HOWARD

We could have a bigger house, an acre—acres—of land—

MARTHA

No one needs all that room—

HOWARD

Raise our kids on a safe neighborhood street.

MARTHA

This is a safe neighborhood street.

HOWARD

I didn't mean/ that *this* street isn't safe—

MARTHA

I told you early on that I'm not going anywhere.

HOWARD

It's just a thought.

MARTHA

I know, but this is my home.

HOWARD

It's *your* home, not mine, babe.

MARTHA

Now that is nonsense.

HOWARD

I was *told* I don't belong here—it's not all in my head.

MARTHA

By some hateful man down on his luck. So what?!
I'm telling you, you do belong here! And what about our whole neighborhood, our community? They were celebrating you as much as me last night!

HOWARD

Maybe so, but you haven't given anywhere else a chance.

MARTHA

You really want to tell me that Rochester, Minnesota is the place to be?

HOWARD

Rochester, Minnesota is a *great* place to be. Do you know what it would be like to work at the Mayo Clinic?

MARTHA

And what about me? My church? My students?

Howard's cell phone rings/buzzes.

HOWARD

(Kisses her forehead as he picks up the phone)

Hold on. We're not done here.

(On the phone)

This is Dr. Hart.

BOSS AS HEAD OF HOSPITAL (V.O.)

Dr. Hart, I need you to get down to the hospital as soon as you can. We're hunkering down for the storm. Plan on being here at least a couple of days. Can I count on you?

A beat. Howard looks to Martha.

HOWARD

(On the phone)

Of course. Yeah. I'll be there.

MARTHA

What's going on?

HOWARD

They need me downtown.

MARTHA

Then you've got to go.

HOWARD

What about you?

MARTHA

This too shall pass.

HOWARD

I don't think we should take this thing lightly.

MARTHA

I'll be fine. I'll get up to the attic if I need to.

HOWARD

I'd feel better if you drove north. We can find you a hotel room outside of Alexandria or Shreveport.

MARTHA

I've never evacuated before—why would I now?

HOWARD

Because I'll feel better knowing your on high ground. Safe.

MARTHA

That's very sweet, How, but it's gonna be fine. We've had a lot of hurricane warnings just like this that turned out to be nothing at all.

HOWARD

What if something goes wrong and I can't get back to you?

#3a. WITH YOU – HONEYMOON

MARTHA

WHEN MY MOMMA PASSED AWAY,
YOU STAYED RIGHT BY MY SIDE—
YOU HELPED ME FIND MYSELF AGAIN.

You were my rock during all that.
YOU'RE ALWAYS A HERO TO ME.

HOWARD

WHEN I FIRST MOVED DOWN TO THIS TOWN,
IT FELT LIKE A MISTAKE—
UNTIL WE MET AT THAT PARADE.

I'm so glad Charlie dragged me there.
YOU HAD ME LAUGHING ALL NIGHT.

And I thought:
THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE
THAN WITH YOU.

THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE
THAN WITH YOU.

MARTHA
WITH YOU.

FEAR NOT DARLING, FOR YOU ARE SO LOVED,

MARTHA & HOWARD
AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU...

HOWARD
SO BEAUTIFUL,

MARTHA
AND SO SELF-ASSURED

HOWARD
THE SAME AS WHEN I MET YOU...

HOWARD & MARTHA
WITH YOUR SEXY, STUBBORN, PERFECT SMILE.

Howard goes to collect his things. He turns back, kisses her again. It's so good. They're so good.

HOWARD
How about I book a room *just in case?*

MARTHA
Get out of here!

HOWARD
Stay safe, Mrs. Ledoux- Hart. I love you.

MARTHA
You're so dramatic. (Beat) I love you, too.

Martha smiles, playfully pushes him aside. She watches him go.

A shift.

SCENE THREE: THE CITY PREPARES

On Martha and Howard's neighborhood street, the City prepares for the impending storm: they board windows, load cars, move items indoors.

#4: CATEGORY THREE [AUDIO TRACK #2] (08.11.15)

NINE

THE WAVES ARE COMIN'
THE WIND IS COMIN'
HEAR A BIG 'OL ROARIN' FROM THE SEA
OOH EEH OOH EEH

SOME FOLKS ARE LEAVIN'
SOME FOLKS ARE STAYIN'
WHAT CATEGORY WILL IT BE?
OOH EEH OOH EEH

ESTHER

GOT A WHOLE LOTTA CAN' FOOD
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA PLYWOOD
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA HEART
IN THIS CITY 'A MINE

MS. FELICE

WE'LL GET TO OUR ATTICS
WE WON'T LEAVE OUR CITY
WE'LL RIDE OUT THIS STORM

CHARLIE

AND WE'LL ALL BE OKAY

MS. FELICE.

WE'LL ALL BE OKAY

THE CITY/ALL

WE'LL STAY
WE'LL STAY
WE'LL STAY, WE'LL STAY
WE'LL STAY, WE'LL STAY
WE'LL STAY
'CUZ

SLY

THE WAVES ARE COMIN'
THE WIND IS COMIN'
HERE COMES A BIG 'OL ROARIN' FROM THE SEA
OOH EEH OOH EEH

HOLLY

SOME FOLKS ARE LEAVIN'
SOME FOLKS ARE STAYIN'
WHAT CATEGORY WILL IT BE?

THE CITY/ALL

OOH EEH OOH EEH

WOMAN (OLIVER)

GOT A WHOLE LOTTA CAN' FOOD
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA PLYWOOD
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA HEART
IN THIS CITY 'A MINE

NINE & ESTHER

AND
WE'LL WAIT, WAIT, WAIT

+ CHARLIE

AND WE'LL HOPE HOPE HOPE

+ SLY

BECAUSE
TIME TIME TIME

BARITONES & BASSES

BECAUSE
TIME'LL TELL IT ALL
'CUZ

+ ALTOS & TENORS

TIME'LL TELL IT ALL
'CUZ

+ SOPRANOS

TIME'LL TELL IT ALL
'CUZ

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL

THE WAVES ARE COMIN'

HOO! MS. FELICE, HOLLY, & SLY

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL
THE WIND IS COMIN'

HOO! MS. FELICE, HOLLY, & SLY

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL
AT LEAST A CATEGORY THREE

HOO. HOLLY, SLY, & NINE

EVERYONE ELSE
OOH EEH OOH EEH
SOME FOLKS ARE LEAVIN'

WHO? MS. FELICE, HOLLY, & SLY

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL
SOME FOLKS ARE STAYIN'

WHO? MS. FELICE, HOLLY, & SLY

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL
WHAT CATEGORY WILL IT BE?

HOO! MS. FELICE, HOLLY, & SLY

OOH EEH OOH EEH
THE CITY/ALL

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL
YEAH YEAH YEAH

THE CITY/ALL
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA CAN' FOOD
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA PLYWOOD
GOT A WHOLE LOTTA HEART
IN THIS CITY 'A MINE!

SOPRANOS, TENORS, & BARITONES
THE WATER'S GONNA SINK US

ALTOS & BASSES
(INTO THE OCEAN)

SOPRANOS, TENORS, & BARITONES
THE STORM IS GONNA POUND US

ALTOS & BASSES
(INTO THE SHORE)

SOPRANOS, TENORS, BARITONES
THE LEVEE'S GONNA FAIL US

ALL/THE CITY
(CRUMBLE TO THE GROUND)

CHARLIE
THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING LEFT
SO SAY GOODBYE, THIS WON'T BE PRETTY—

THE CITY/ALL
WE'RE ANOTHER LOST CITY.

MS. FELICE
WE'RE ANOTHER LOST CITY! HOO!

THE CITY/ALL
THE RAIN IS COMIN'
THE WIND IS COMIN'
THE WAVES ARE COMIN'
THE STORM IS COMIN'

WHAT CATEGORY WILL IT BE?
OOH EEH OOH EEH

The City scatters in a frenzy and braces itself for the STORM, like holding its breath. Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting...

At last, there is quiet. An eerie quiet. The City wanders, uncertain, relieved. They celebrate!

But then—Boss enters. He blows one mighty breath, like the Big Bad Wolf, onto the CITY and they freeze.

#5: THE LEVEES BREAK, THE FLOOD BEGINS

Then, all at once, the City, as Waves, descend, flood and fill the space, sweeping away the houses, the neighborhood, and building, building, building to *chaos*.

Suddenly, Martha sings a beautiful, striking, and heartbreaking string of notes.

#5a: SIREN SONG

With a puff of smoke, Boss reaches for her hand.

BOSS

This is what you want.

MARTHA

This is what I want.

The two take a monumental dive out of sight.
The world trembles and goes dark.

Shift.

SCENE FOUR: IN THE DOME

A ragged Howard and Ms. Felice enter the Superdome: the massive downtown stadium where the City's lost have gathered post storm.

Among the crowd, panic and paparazzi ensue. The City various push photos of missing loved ones into unseen reporters' faces and cameras.

#6: HERE [AUDIO TRACK #3] (Update 08.16.15)

SCARF

They said, they said they were bringing everybody--

SCARF & CHARLIE

—HERE, to the Dome.

CHARLIE

The whole city's—

PONYTAIL

—a mess! I thought she'd be—

MS. FELICE

—Okay! He's smart, you know. Knows how to—

NINE

Take care of herself?!

BEARD

If she got through Camille—

MAN (GAIL)

He can get—

MAN (GAIL) & ESTHER

Through anything!

ESTHER

—My baby girl is—

VARIOUS

Mac! / Celeste! / Buddy! / Courtney! / Robert! / Maw-Maw! / D!

HOWARD

MARTHA!

HOWARD

GOD, PLEASE LET MARTHA BE—

ALL/THE CITY

HERE—

HE MUST BE

HERE—

SHE'S GOT TO BE

HERE—

THIS IS HIS PICTURE,

THIS IS HER FACE

SLY

THIS BEAUTIFUL GIRL I CALL MY CHILD—

HOLLY
HE IS MY BROTHER!

NINE
MY MOTHER!

WOMAN (OLIVER)
MY BABY!

HOWARD
MY WIFE.

ALL/THE CITY
HERE—

HE MUST BE
HERE—
SHE'S GOT TO BE
HERE—
LOOK AT THIS PICTURE,
LOOK AT THIS FACE!

HERE—
HE MUST BE
HERE—
SHE'S GOT TO BE
HERE—

THIS IS HIS PICTURE,
THIS IS HER FACE!

BEARD
THE FUCK-IN' FEDS, ALL OF 'EM—

WOMAN (OLIVER)
COULD THEY CARE ANY LESS?

SLY & HOWARD
SHE'S ALL I HAVE—

HOLLY
IN THE WHOLE DAMN WORLD. WHAT IF—

CHARLIE
SHE'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE---

ALONE! ALL ALONE— HOWARD

SHOW— WOMAN (OLIVER)

COMPASSION, PLEASE, SLY

SOMEBODY HELP! HOLLY

HELP! SLY, HOLLY, & WOMAN (OLIVER)

HERE— ALL/THE CITY
HE SHOULD BE
HERE—
PLEASE, TELL ME SHE'S
HERE—
THIS IS HIS PICTURE,
THIS IS HER FACE!

HOLLY
THIS BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO RULES MY WORLD.

MY ONLY BROTHER! SCARF

MY ANGEL! ESTHER

MY SWEETIE! CHARLIE

MY LIFE. MS. FELICE & HOWARD

DON'T TRY 'N USE THE TER-'LETS— NINE

THEY BEEN BACKED UP FAH DAYS! HOLLY

MAN (GAIL)
THE MAYOR HE FAILS,

SCARF
AND IT'S US WHO PAYS!

PONYTAIL
THEY'S NOTH-IN' TO EAT—

BEARD
(Spoken)
Fuck this M.R.E. SHIT!

NINE
THEY'S NO GUARANTEES—

+ HOLLY
BEGGIN' ON OUR KNEES!

+ WOMAN (OLIVER) & SLY
SOMEBODY

+ MS. FELICE & CHARLIE
SOMEWHERE

+ ESTHER & MAN (GAIL)
PLEASE GIVE US THE

ALTOS
HELP

BARTIONES/BASSES
THAT

SPORANOS & TENORS
WE

ALL
NEED!
HERE.

HOWARD
I CLOCKED OUT, I RACED STRAIGHT BACK HOME;
REALIZED YOU WEREN'T THERE!

I CALLED TO YOU,

SCREAMED FOR YOU,
SCOURED THOSE TWO FLOORS!
MS. FELICE SHOUTED OUT FRONT IN DESPAIR:
MARTHA, WHERE ARE YOU?
NO ONE KNOWS, MY LOVE, WHERE YOU ARE...

THE WATER RUSHING, RISING;
YOU'RE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.
WE HAD NO OTHER OPTION—
WE HAD TO GET TO THE DOME.

YOU ARE HOME.

ALL/THE CITY

HERE—
HE SHOULD BE
HERE—
PLEASE, TELL ME SHE'S
HERE—
THIS IS HIS PICTURE,
THIS IS HER FACE!

The following pieces of the song should overlap wildly;
it's chaos.

NINE

WHERE IS MY MOMMA?

CHARLIE

MY BROTHER!

MS. FELICE

MY BABY!
PLEASE SOMEBODY FIND HER!
SHE COULD BE DEAD!

MAN (GAIL) & SLY

WHERE ARE MY COUSINS?
FIND THEM!

ESTHER, WOMAN (OLIVER), & HOLLY

I LOVE YOU!
WHERE ARE YOU?!

SCARF

MY PAW-PAW!

CHARLIE & SCARF
HE MIGHT BE DEAD!

WOMAN (OLIVER)
MY MAW-MAW!
PLEASE SOMEBODY FIND HER!

PONYTAIL
WHERE COULD THEY BE?

NINE
WHAT IF THEY CAN'T FIND HER?
WHY WON'T THEY FIND HER?

BEARD
WHY WON'T YOU PLEASE HELP ME!
THEY COULD BE LOST FOREVER!

HOWARD
I WILL NOT STOP MY SEARCHING—
I'LL TEAR THROUGH THIS TOWN
I WON'T LET YOU DOWN!

ALL
HERE! HERE! HERE! HERE!
HERE! HERE! HERE! HERE!
HERE! HERE! HERE! HERE!

SLY
She looks so damn alive in this picture—

HOLLY
It's like he could just jump right outta the photo—

NINE
Look at her, look at her! See—

CHARLIE
That smile—he's a real good guy!

ALL
HERE!

The crowd disperses and we return to Ms. Felice and Howard. Howard dresses a wound on her arm.

MS. FELICE

Oh, Dr. Howard, you must be my angel.
I still can't believe you made it back all that way.

HOWARD

I looked everywhere...Where could she have gone?

MS. FELICE

Martha's smart. I know she figured somethin' out.

HOWARD

I need you to change this bandage every day.
Keep it dry and elevated.

MS. FELICE

I'll be just fine. (Beat) Go on. Find her.

Ms. Felice hugs him tightly. He overhears Scarf, Beard, and Ponytail having a time nearby.

SCARF

(Laughs)

No wonder folks disappearin' these days...

Howard leaves Ms. Felice and approaches the Boys.

HOWARD

You wouldn't happen to— I'm looking for someone.

BEARD

Who you lost, son?

HOWARD

My wife. This is her picture. Have you seen her?

PONYTAIL

Damn. She's fine.

SCARF

She married *you*? Guess there's hope for you too, Pony!

PONYTAIL

Fuck you!

BEARD

(Grabs the photo; looks into Howard)
I might just have a story that interests yah, after all...

HOWARD

I'm listening.

BEARD

And what can we expect in return?

HOWARD

What do you want?

BEARD

We're all hurtin' awful bad here.

SCARF

Maybe you could hook us up, doc.

PONYTAIL

Get what we sayin'?

HOWARD

(Gesturing to his ID tag)
This is for the hospital—I'm not assigned here.

SCARF

You still a doctor, ain'tcha?

BEARD

Go on, Scarf. Tell him your woes.

#7: CROCK 'A SHIT [AUDIO TRACK #4] (Update 08.11.15)

SCARF

(Waves his nub of a toe in the air)
YOU'RE GONNA KNOW HOW IT WAS THAT I DONE LOST MY TOE!

SO I WAS UP THERE MINDIN' MY BUS'NESS,
IN AN ATTIC OFF CANAL.
I PEEK OUT THE WINDOW,
I SPY THIS GIANT GAL.!

THEN SHE TURNS CRAZY AS ALL GET OUT!
JUMPIN' 'ROUND, FOAMIN' AT THE MOUTH,
AND SHE'S TEARIN' DOWN THE ROOF.

I SWEAR ON THE DEEP SOUTH!

SHE CRASHES MY WINDOW STRAIGHT THROUGH,
PICKS ME UP BY MY TOE,
AND THEN FLINGS ME AWAY.
IT WAS ONE HELL OF A THROW!

THEN JUST WHEN I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT BE DONE,
SHE SPROUTS SOME WINGS AND I WATCH HER FLY,
STRAIGHT ON OVER THE HIGHWAY—
DISSOLVIN' RIGHT INTO THE SKY!

I BEEN LIVIN' IN THIS CITY
MY WHOLE DAMN LIFE!
WHEN A GIANT CORNER'S YOU,
PRAY YOU MAKE IT THROUGH!
COME ON NOW,
WOULD YA BELIEVE IT?
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!

HOWARD

(To Scarf)

Look, I'm sorry for your...loss, but I don't think there's anything
I can do/ for you.

BEARD

Tell him 'bout her smile, Pony.

PONYTAIL

Y'all see this cut 'cross my arm?

YOU GONNA WEEP WHEN YOU FIND OUT HOW IT GOT SO DEEP!

IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE IN THE DOME,
WAS THIRSTY, WAND'RIN' ROUND,
AS I WALK PAST THE BAT'ROOM
I HEAR THIS AWFUL SOUND!

WALK RIGHT IN, RIGHT NEAR THE DOOR,
AND THERE BENT DOWN WITH HER ASS LIKE SO,
IS A FINE-LOOKIN' LADY—
SO I WALK OVER REAL SLOW...

SHE GRABS ME AND KISSES ME HARD!
HER HANDS WORK THEIR CHARM,
MY EYES CLOSE, I'M ALL HERS!

TIL I GET STABBED IN THE ARM.

SO SUDDENLY I PUSH HER OFF 'A ME,
I'M GUSHIN' BLOOD WHEN SHE TURNS TO HAIR!
JUST ONE BIG PILE OF HOLLY,
SHE DISAPPEARED INTO THE AIR!

I BEEN LIVIN' IN THIS CITY
MY WHOLE DAMN LIFE!
IF SHE OFFERS YOU A SLICE,
YOUR ARM MIGHT PAY THE PRICE!
I TELL YA',
WOULD YA BELIEVE IT?
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!

HOWARD

Look. It's a great story—both of them— but/ what do they
have anything—

BEARD

This wife of yours. She a singer?

HOWARD

How do you know that?

PONYTAIL

Suddenly interested in what we got to say—

SCARF

But this part of the story ain't free.

HOWARD

What do you want? I have some money! I have the clothes on my
back. You can have everything. Please, I'm begging you— if you
really know where she is, you've got to help me!

BEARD

(Snatches Howard's wallet)

Real alligator. *The man has taste.*

THERE WAS BARELY ANY LIGHT OUT;
I'M IN MY BOAT ALONE,
AND WHAT THE HELL'S THAT I SMELL?
A FREAKIN' WHIFF OF COLOGNE.

SUDDENLY A ROOFTOP LIGHTS RIGHT UP,

AT THE EDGE IS A GUY IN A FANCY TUX,
AND YOUR MARTHA BY HIS SIDE!
THEY LOOK LIKE A MILLION BUCKS.

SHE SINGS UP ONE HELL OF A SONG.
THE FLOOD OPENS WIDE,
REVEALIN' A DARKNESS,
AND THEN THEY TAKE ONE BIG DIVE.

LIKE IT WAS OVER!

PONYTAIL & SCARF
NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!

HOWARD
Oh my God.

BEARD
I SAW THEM HIT THE WATER FEET FIRST!
WATER CLOSED TIGHT, NOT A BUBBLE IN SIGHT,
LIKE NOTHIN' EVER CAME.
TELL ME THAT AIN'T CRAZY, RIGHT?

I BEEN LIVIN' IN THIS CITY
MY WHOLE DAMN LIFE!
IF YOU SING OUT LIKE A LARK,
HE'LL TAKE YOU TO THE DARK.
I TELL YA'
WOULD YA BELIEVE IT?
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A...

BEARD, SCARF & PONYTAIL
SHIT, SHIT, SHIT, SHIT....

HOWARD
He took her *underwater*? Where?

SCARF
I hear it's an endless field with flames for grass!

HOWARD
How do I get/ there?

SCARF
(Cutting him off)
BOW BAH BAH DAH BAH
BOW BAH DOOT DOOT DAH DAH

HOWARD
(Spoken)
HOW DO I GET THERE?

PONYTAIL
They say there's only two ways: say farewell to this life or have a voice to part the waves.

HOWARD
What do you mean a voice/ to part the waves?

PONYTAIL
(Cutting him off)
WAH WAH WAH WAH
WAH WAH WAH WAH WAH WAH
DOOT DOOT DAH DAH

HOWARD
...Who are you?

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL
I BEEN LIVIN' IN THIS CITY
MY WHOLE DAMN LIFE!
WE GONNA DE-LI-VER,
TAKE YUH UP THAT RIVER!
I TELL YA',

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL CONT'D
WOULD YA BELIEVE IT?

BEARD, SCARF, & PONYTAIL CONT'D
YES SIR!
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK 'A...

BEARD
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!

PONYTAIL
SHIT!
SHIT!
SHIT!
SHIT!

SCARF
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK 'A—
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK 'A—
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK 'A—
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK 'A—

BEARD, SCARF & PONYTAIL
YA' WANNA SEE YOUR BOO,
YA' BETTER GET A CLUE!
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!

The City/Waves descend and sweep the scene.

Shift.

SCENE FIVE: TO THE SPOT

The Boys (Beard, Scarf, and Ponytail) and Howard are all crammed into a small powerboat in the middle of an expanse of floodwater. The men bob back and forth. Some of The City are the motor, the boat, the water—all of it.

A colorful array of dunked houses lines either side of them. The rooftops peek above the water line.

A long silence as they trek in the boat. Finally, Beard points into the distance.

HOWARD
Oh my God. The house—it's—

SCARF
Sunk.

PONYTAIL
Shit. That sucks.

BEARD
That's where they jumped. He grabbed her hand right there and *plop*.

HOWARD
Who is *this* guy?

BEARD

He ain't just a man, like you and me.

PONYTAIL

No, sir.

SCARF

A legend, more like—

#8: JAZZ FUNERAL (PROCESSION) (Update 08.11.15)

BEARD

YOU'D KNOW HIM IF YOU SAW HIM,
YOU'D FEEL IT IN YOUR BONES,
YOUR NECK IS STIFF, YOUR BODY SHAKES,
THE GOOSEBUMPS ARE INSANE.
HE'S A LOUD LAMENTATION,
A SOLEMN CELEBRATION,
HE'S LIKE A JAZZ FUNERAL.

A haunting figure, MERYL, steps onto one of the rooftops and joins the lamentation. She moans. WOMEN from The City join MERYL. They have seen him and know him.

BEARD CONT'D

YOU'D KNOW HIM IF YOU HEARD HIM,

MALE ENSEMBLE

DOOT DO DAH

BEARD

YOU'D ACHE ALL IN YOUR HEART.

MALE ENSEMBLE

DOOT DO

BEARD

HE'LL HIT YOU LIKE A PIERCING SOUND,
A BURST IN YOUR EARDRUM.

ALL

OOO DAH

BEARD

YOU BELIEVE HE'S SALVATION,
BUT HE'LL TAKE YA' TO DAMNATION,

HE'S LIKE A JAZZ FUNERAL.

The ensemble keens and moans.

MERYL

HE CAME WHEN WE WEREN'T LOOKIN',
HE SLIPPED INTO THE CRACK.
HE MADE US REMEMBER HIM,
LIKE A MONSTROUS HEART ATTACK.

YOU KNOW, HE BROKE THAT LEVEE,
HE CAUSED THIS FLOOD,
HE BROUGHT ME PAIN AND HEARTACHE, TOO.
AND SPILLED MY BABY'S BLOOD.
HE'LL SING AT YOUR WEDDING,
HE'LL DANCE ON YOUR GRAVE.

ALL

BAH DOO DOO DAH

BEARD

HE'LL ALWAYS BE COMIN',
HE'S DESTINY'S PARADE.

BEARD

YOU'D KNOW HIM IF YOU MET HIM,
YOU'D FALL DOWN ON THE FLOOR.
HE'LL STAB YOUR EYE AND TURN HIS BACK,
YOU LOSE YOUR SENSE 'A PLACE.

SCARF

HE'S ALWAYS ON LOCATION,
WITH A CRISP PRESENTATION.

BEARD

HE'S THE BEAST OF CREATION,
WITH A DEADLY VOCATION.

PONYTAIL

THE CENTER OF TEMPTATION:

PONYTAIL, BEARD, & SCARF

HE

ALL

LIES AT THE FOUNDATION.

MERYL dives to her death. It's piercing.
Howard rises unsteadily in the boat. He moves to dive
after MERYL.

BEARD
HE'S LIKE A JAZZ FUNERAL

BARITONES & BASSES
DOOT DOOT
DAH DAH

HOWARD
Oh my God!

BARITONES & BASSES
BAH DOOT DOOT
DAH DAH
BAH DAH DAH
DOOT DOOT DAH
OOH-EEH OOH-EEH

BEARD
Where you think you're going?

HOWARD
We should go after her!

BEARD & SCARF & PONYTAIL
She's gone.

Howard looks around nervously.

HOWARD
You're not going to kill me—are you?

BEARD
If we were going to kill you, we woulda done it straightaway!

SCARF
No need to go through all this trouble and waste all that gas.

The motor quiets.

HOWARD
How do I know you're not making all this up—

BEARD

You're just going to have to trust us.

PONYTAIL

Now. Where's our pay?

HOWARD

You're kidding me.

SCARF

Thought you'd give everything but the skin off your back.

PONYTAIL

That sure is a nice watch.

HOWARD

Take it! I don't have anything else!

Ponytail snatches Howard's hospital ID tag, puts it on.

PONYTAIL

This hospital I.D. has turned out awful useful getting us where we need to go. What you think, Scarf? I look like a doctor to you?

SCARF

Absolutely, Dr. Hart.

PONYTAIL

(Mimicking Howard)

Yes, Nurse. I can't let these gentlemen out of my sight.

BEARD

(To Howard)

Been a pleasure doing business with you, Doctor. Good luck.

HOWARD

Wait. You're going to leave me here?

PONYTAIL

You're quick.

SCARF

Must be all that education you got.

BEARD

What you waiting for? Better walk on water or get your ass up on that roof.

The Boys laugh. Beard starts the boat's engine. Howard climbs onto a roof. The boat sputters away, leaving Howard alone.

Howard looks to the water. After a few moments, he clears his throat, and sings to Martha, as if she were there.

#9: THE PLUNGE [AUDIO TRACK #5]

HOWARD

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER
THE WAY YOU DANCED ON OUR WEDDING DAY;
THE WAY YOUR HIPS SWAYED,
THE WAY THAT YOU TOOK MY HAND.

YOU'VE GOT ME,
YOU CAUGHT ME,
I'M YOURS.

YOU ARE THE SWEET SONG
WHO WILL ALWAYS HAVE ME HUMMING;
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOWED ME ALL OF LIFE'S JOY THAT I NEVER SAW
BEFORE.

I KNEW AND I KNOW
THAT YOU'RE THE MOST WONDERFUL WOMAN
THAT I EVER COULD HAVE FALLEN FOR—
AND YOU CHOSE ME.
I'M BRINGING YOU HOME!

MAYBE I'M DIVING TO MY DEATH,
THIS COULD BE HOPELESS,
I COULD SINK TO THE DEPTHS.
WHAT IF I NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN?
THIS COULD, IN FACT, BE THE END.

BUT, MARTHA LEDOUX,
I CAN'T GIVE UP ON YOU.
YOU GAVE ME ALL YOUR HEART,
YOU SAVED ME WITH YOUR SMILE,
YOU HAD ME AT THE START.

OH, GOD, PLEASE LET ME FIND YOU!

A whirlpool begins to bubble and swirl; the Waves building, building, building. Now when Howard sings, it's the most beautiful thing you've ever heard.

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER EACH LITTLE THING
THAT MAKES YOU HOME TO ME.
THE WAY THE ROOM GLOWS EACH TIME YOU SING,
THE CURVE OF YOUR WAIST, THE ARC OF YOUR SPINE,
THAT SINGLE LOOK THAT TELLS ME YOU'RE MINE.
I HAVE TO RETRACE IT, EVERY DETAIL,
IF I CAN'T REACH YOU, THEN I FAIL.

I'M TAKING THIS CHANCE,
THIS LEAP,
THIS PLUNGE.

I'LL DIVE, I'LL SEARCH, I WILL PURSUE!
I'LL DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO DO!
I WON'T LET YOU GO!

I'M BRINGING YOU HOME!
I'M BRINGING YOU HOME!
I'M BRINGING YOU HOME!

Howard dives hard into the Waves. The Waves swallow and carry him down, down, down.

Shift.

SCENE SIX: DOWN IN THE GUMBO POT

Underwater. The Gumbo Pot: a gilded cage, a shipwreck meets a classy, happenin' speakeasy. It's packed with the dead. Everyone is a puppet, a cardboard cutout of a pristine audience member.

Oliver Flood, a dapper drag king, stands illuminated on a small stage.

OLIVER FLOOD

Hello, my beautiful, lovely, good-looking friends.
And even if we're not friends yet, I get the feelin' we're gonna be
by the time the night's out. If you don't feel that way yet, get

yourself another drink! I'm Oliver Flood and it is my honor and privilege to introduce my co-host: the beautiful, the lovely, the talented, and lots of other juicy adjectives—*GAIL FORCE!*

Gail emerges. She steps close to the microphone.

GAIL FORCE

Hello.

OLIVER FLOOD

Do you believe in the hereafter?

GAIL FORCE

I certainly do.

OLIVER FLOOD

Then you know what I'm here after!

GAIL FORCE

Good music, good times, and this band—

OLIVER FLOOD

They're instrumental.

#10: DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL (Update 07.20.15)

BAND

ROLL, ROLL, ROLL
ROLL, ROLL, ROLL

GAIL FORCE

Ah-one-two-three-four!

BAND

(Underscore throughout)

ROLL, ROLL, ROLL, ROLL
ROLL, ROLL, ROLL...

GAIL FORCE

Who wants to be on earth anyway?

OLIVER FLOOD

Life sucks, but death swallows! Really. Think about it, folks.

(Quick beat)

Gail, how would you define a will?

GAIL FORCE

It's a dead giveaway.

OLIVER FLOOD

Time to cash in.

GAIL FORCE

YOU'RE A DROP IN THE OCEAN,
YOU'RE A FISH IN THE SEA,

OLIVER FLOOD

BUT IT TAKES A VILLAGE—
SO YOU BETTER TAKE IT FROM ME!

GAIL FORCE

YOUR WIFE, SHE HAS LEFT YOU,
YOUR SON WAS JUST PLAIN DUMB,

OLIVE FLOOD

YOUR FRIENDS WERE ALL BACKSTABBERS AND
YOUR BRO-THER'S A SON OF A GUN.

GAIL FORCE & OLIVER FLOOD

SO STEP IN-TO YOUR FU-TURE:
WE'RE HERE TO LIGHT YOUR WAY...

THE AFTER-LIFE IS CALLIN'
Y'ALL LISTEN WHAT WE SAY!

OLIVER FLOOD

YOU GOTTA DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL!
I TELL YA', DRIP, DROP, TUM-BLE, AND ROLL!

GAIL FORCE

TAKE A BREAK FROM ALL YOUR WOR-RY,
GIVE ON UP YOUR SOUL!

OLIVER FLOOD

YOU GOTTA DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL!
I TELL YA', DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL!

GAIL FORCE

BAM, WOW, TAKE IT FROM ME!

A laundry shoot contraption somersaults an all-wet MERYL into the club. As she rises and sits in the house, an intense smile is pasted onto her face.

OLIVER FLOOD

HERE'S WHERE YOU'RE MEANT TO BE!

Patron after patron rolls into the club.

BAND

(Underscore throughout)

ROLL, ROLL, ROLL

ROLL, ROLL, ROLL

OLIVER FLOOD

(Re: new patron)

I'd like to tackle that box...

GAIL FORCE

(Re: new patron)

Look out, he's a card shark!

OLIVER FLOOD

(Re: new patron)

That's a hull of a boat you have there.

GAIL FORCE

Look at 'em all!

OLIVER FLOOD & GAIL FORCE

We are makin' waves.

GAIL FORCE

Except I can't tell which are fans and which are just groupers.

OLIVER FLOOD & GAIL FORCE

YOU GOTTA DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL!

I TELL YA', DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL!

TAKE A BREAK FROM ALL YOUR WOR-RY,

GIVE ON UP YOUR SOUL!

OLIVER FLOOD

YOU GOTTA DRIP,

OLIVER FLOOD

GAIL FORCE

DRIP

DRIP DROP

DRIP

DRIP DROP

DRIP DROP

OLIVER FLOOD & GAIL FORCE
DRIP, DROP, TUMBLE, AND ROLL!

OLIVER FLOOD
BAM, WOW, TAKE IT FROM ME!

Howard rolls in. He bangs his head on the stage.

OLIVER FLOOD
(To the audience)
This guy's really gettin' a bang for his buck? Am I right?

GAIL FORCE
You're right.

OLIVER FLOOD & GAIL FORCE
HERE'S WHERE YOU'RE MEANT TO BE!

Howard rises near Oliver. When he coughs, Oliver pulls out a fish skeleton from behind Howard's head and hands it to Gail.

HOWARD
|—

GAIL FORCE
Who said you're buying dinner?

OLIVER FLOOD
This guy!

Oliver and Gail push a disoriented Howard into the front row.

GAIL FORCE
And now, ladies and gentleman. Here he is.

OLIVER FLOOD
The eye of the storm,

GAIL FORCE

The master of disaster,

OLIVER FLOOD

The sultan of your souls—

OLIVER FLOOD & GAIL FORCE

BOSS.

Boss emerges from the shadows looking sharper than ever. He turns the crowd on like a light switch, with a flick of his hand.

#11: GUMBO POT (UPDATE 08.11.15)

BOSS

YOU'RE FEELIN' KINDA FUNNY.
YA'VE HAD QUITE A TRIP.
SOON YOU'LL KNOW EXACTLY,
THE LUXURIES OF DEATH'S GRIP.

SO, CHER, COME TAKE A LOAD OFF,
JUST FORGET YOUR TIME UPSTAIRS.
'CAUSE IT WAS BORING, DISAPPOINTING,
NOW GET READY FOR THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE...

Boss waves his hand, the tables are full of drinks. He waves his hand again, the lights brighten.

WELCOME DOWN TO THE GUMBO POT,
NAME ONE THING THAT WE HAVEN'T GOT.

WE GOT A SPICE,
WE GOT A ROUX,
WE GOT A FILÉ TOO!

WE GOT IT ALL,
WE GOT IT ALL,
YEAH, WE DO!

WAY DOWN DEEP IN THE GUMBO POT,
HERE DECADENCE IS 'A WHAT WE GOT.

YOU WANT 'A DRINK?
YOU WANT 'A SHOW?

LET'S LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL.

WE GOT IT ALL,
WE GOT IT ALL,
YEAH, WE DO!

WAY, WAY BACK, MADE THIS HOLE INTO A HOME;
PLACE FOR ONE AND ALL TO ROAM.

YOU CAN GRAB A MIC,
SINNERS AND SAINTS ALIKE,
YOU'LL FIND YOUR THRILL HERE!
TRUST ME 'BAY, BEEN ROUND ALL WHERE YOU CAN GO,
I WILL TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW,

BOSS CONT'D
AIN'T NO PLACE THIS GOOD.

I'M THE KING OF THE GUMBO POT.
SHARE MY KINGDOM, THIS WHOLE LOT!

I WANT YA' FULL,
I WANT YA' GLAD,
CHEERS TO THE BEST YOU HAD!

GAIL FORCE
WE GOT IT ALL,

OLIVER FLOOD & GAIL FORCE
WE GOT IT ALL,

ALL
YEAH WE DO!

OLIVER FLOOD
JUST LIKE YOU, FOLKS HAD LEFT ME OUT TO ROT,
I GOT SAVED WHEN I WAS SQUAT.

IF YOU JUST SIT TIGHT,
HE'S GONNA TREAT YOU RIGHT,
HE'LL BE YOUR BEST FRIEND.

'BETTER NOT TRY AND PLAY A CROOKED GAME.
IF YOU THINK HE'S MIGHTY TAME,

WELL, YOU GOT IT WRONG.

GAIL FORCE

HE'S SOMETHIN' OH-SO POWERFUL, TOO.
I FELT HIS FORCE SWEEP ME AWAY THAT DAY,
AS WE GALLOPED ALONG THE WAVES.
AND HE BROUGHT ME HOME, HERE TO ALL OF YOU.

BAND/ALL

JIVIN' HERE IN THE GUMBO POT.
LOOKIN' GOOD AND 'A FEELIN' HOT!

BOSS

(To Audience)

I GOT YOUR LIFE,
I GOT YOUR SOUL—

BOSS, OLIVER FLOOD, & GAIL FORCE

LET'S GET OUTTA CONTROL!

BOSS & ALL

WE GOT IT ALL,
WE GOT IT ALL,
AHHHH

BOSS

JUST ONE RULE IN THE GUMBO POT,
I'M THE BOSS AND YOU ARE NOT,
I CALL THE SHOTS,
I GIVE THE GO,
YEAH, I RUN THE—

BOSS

SHOW
WE GOT IT ALL
WE GOT IT ALL
YEAH WE DO
YEAH WE DO
YEAH WE DO
Facts are facts
No goin' back
This club is where it's at!

ALL/BAND

SHOW
ALL
ALL
DO
DO
DO
DO

Boss sends the crowd into uproarious applause.
He exits. The lights shift.

OLIVER FLOOD

And now! Here she is, folks.

GAIL FORCE

(To the crowd)

The one you'll screw your club for—

OLIVER FLOOD

CHANGE YOUR PANTS FOR!

GAIL FORCE

The only...

GAIL FORCE

Martha LeDoux.

OLIVER FLOOD

MARTHA LEDOUX!

Oliver and Gail bicker as they exit (i.e. OLIVER: What the hell was that?, etc.) The Band gears up, the lights close in on Martha as she cozies up to the mic. She's in a trance, and incredibly alluring.

The crowd goes CRAZY. Howard lifts himself as best he can, but his limbs are useless.

#12: SLIDE AWAY [AUDIO TRACK #6]

MARTHA

(To Howard)

This one's for you.

HERE'S A SONG THAT'LL SOOTHE YA',
SOMETHIN' TO MOVE YA'.

IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU LOST, BOY,
FORGET IT.

JUST LET IT SLIDE,
JUST LET IT SLIDE,
SLIDE AWAY...

THERE'S A LOT ON YOUR MIND.
SIT BACK AND UNWIND.
IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU CRAVE, BOY,
FORGET IT.

JUST LET IT SLIDE,
JUST LET IT SLIDE,
SLIDE AWAY...

YOU'RE LONELY, YOU'RE SAD,
YOU'RE HOPELESS, YOU'RE MAD.
YOU'RE ALL ALONE,

LOOKS LIKE YOUR LUCK IS BLOWN,
THE LOWEST LOW YOU'VE KNOWN,
GOODBYE HOPE.

NOPE.

(HUMMING)
FORGET IT.
JUST LET IT SLIDE,
JUST LET IT SLIDE,
SLIDE AWAY...

JUST LET IT SLIDE,
SLIDE,
SLIDE,
SLIDE,
SLIDE,
AWAY...

Wild cheers. Martha exits. Howard tries to follow her,
but can't. Boss returns to the mic.

BOSS

(Looks to Howard)

If y'all thought *that* was good—well, we have just begun.
But before we go on with our usual set, let's everybody put our
hands together for a very special patron indeed, Dr. Howard
Hart.

Back in the house: Howard tries to rise from his chair;
he falls. The crowd laughs.

BOSS CONT'D

Lemme give you a hand.

Boss waves his hand and Howard catapults to the
stage.

BOSS CONT'D

What'd you think of my Martha? She's somethin', right?

Howard tries to speak, but sounds like the Boys'
gibberish at the end of "Crock a' Shit." He struggles to
reclaim himself, but Boss has him posed and he can't
break the spell.

HOWARD
BAH WAH WAH WAH—

BOSS
Aw. Boss got your tongue?

HOWARD
BAH WAH DA—

Boss laughs, snaps his fingers. Howard gets cut off.

CROWD
OOOOOO!

Boss waves his hand. A rag lands on Howard's head. The crowd descends into uproarious laughter.

BOSS
Ladies and gents, say hello to your new bus boy.
Hear he cleans up real nice.

ALL/PATRONS
Ahhh. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!

BOSS
Now to attend to things upstairs. Anybody looking for a plasma TV? I hear they real nice...

At the wave of Boss's hand, the crowd cheers.

BOSS CONT'D
Y'all go on, get yourselves another drink. I'll be right back.

Boss snaps.

Shift.

SCENE SEVEN: THE SURFACE

A few days post flood. Outside of a superstore, Looters (The City various) fill industrial-sized garbage cans with clothing, food, goods of all sorts, and float them down the street on bits of plywood and insulation.

#13: ANARCHY: THE LOOTING SONG (UPDATE 08.25.15)

BEARD

MY MOMMA TOLD ME,
MY LIFE WOULD TURN AROUND,
IF I STAYED OUTTA TROUBLE,
AND DID UNTO OTHERS AS THEY DID UNTO ME.
WELL, THE STORM TOOK THE HOUSE AND CAR,
SO I GUESS I OUGHTA START TAKIN', TOO.

SCARF

MY PAW-PAW TOLD ME,
YOU SHOULD PRAY AND HAVE FAITH,
AND THEN LIFE WOULD DO YOU RIGHT.
WELL, THEN ALL THAT PRAYIN' GOT ME LESS THAN NOTHIN'.
GOT ME THREE DEAD BROTHERS, ALRIGHT?
I THINK THAT THERE IS JUST ONE WAY TO WIN.

ALL/THE CITY

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.
I WON'T BE CRUEL.
I GOTTA GET BY,
BUT I AIN'T NO FOOL.

WHAT'S THE GOLDEN RULE?
IT'S ANARCHY.

IT'S ALL FOR THE TAKIN',
SO WHY NOT TAKE IT?

BEARD

Looks like this is everybody's store now.

PONYTAIL

Just means we gotta be prepared.

Ponytail displays a large kitchen knife.

SCARF

(re: knife)

What the hell is that?

PONYTAIL

Whattaya think it is?

SCARF

We ain't gator huntin'. You got a gun?

PONYTAIL

This's better than a gun.

SCARF

Somebody blows your head off, you tell me it's as good as a gun.

BEARD

Will you two cut it out?

OFFICER DULAC

MY BUDDY WARNED ME,
SAID THINGS WOULD GET UGLY,
SAID WE MIGHT HAVE TO USE FORCE,
BUT HOW CAN YOU TELL WHAT'S RIGHT OR WRONG IN CHAOS?
'CAUSE WHEN THE RULES ARE GONE,
TELL ME, WHAT'S TOO FAR? WHAT'S THE LINE TO CROSS?

NINE

MY TEACHER TOL' ME,
THERE WAS MORE THAN THIS LIFE;
SHE KNEW I COULD DO BIG THINGS,
COULD BE ANYTHING I EVER WANTED TO BE.
BUT I AM AN HONEST MAN,
SO TELL ME, WHY'THE WORLD LOOKS DOWN ON ME?

MS. FELICE

OH MY GOD,
IS THIS A TEST?
A TRIAL FOR YOUR PEOPLE?
I KNOW THAT YOU SPARED ME;
I AM BLESSED.
I GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY,
I LIVE A DECENT LIFE IN MY WAY.
I AM THANKFUL, OH SO THANKFUL,
FOR MY FAMILY AND THE LIFE I LIVE.
I AM DEVOTED TO YOU,
BUT WHAT MORE CAN I GIVE?

ALL/THE CITY

WHAT'S RIGHT, WHAT'S WRONG
WHEN YOU'VE GOTTA SURVIVE?
WE GOTTA GET BY,
WE GOTTA END UP ALIVE.

SLY

MY DADDY TOLD ME,
THAT LIFE RIGHT NOW WAS HARD,
AND IT WOULDN'T GET EASIER.
"YOU HAFTA WORK YOUR ASS OFF EVERY SINGLE DAY,"
BUT PA' I WORKED AND TARVED,
SO TELL ME NOW, WHERE THE FUCK'S MY PAY?

PONYTAIL

YEAH, NO ONE TOLD ME
WHEN A FIGHT BREAKS OUT
I SHOULD LEARN TO WALK AWAY.
I HAD NOBODY SINCE I WAS A BOY,
AND I LEARNED QUICK YOU GOTTA FIGHT,
'CAUSE SOMETIMES THERE ARE FOLKS THAT GOTTA PAY.

ALL/THE CITY

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN,
I WON'T BE CRUEL.
I GOTTA GET BY,
BUT WON'T BE NO FOOL.

A tussle breaks out between Pony and SLY,

PONYTAIL

I saw the T.V. first, godamnit!

SLY

That's a damn lie.

PONYTAIL

What the hell you talkin' about?

SLY

What you think I'm talkin' 'bout, son!

BEARD

Pony, that TV ain't worth—

SLY

This your daddy come to help you out?

PONYTAIL

You can have it—it's a heavy piece of shit, anyway!

Ponytail drops the TV on SLY's foot.

SLY
FUCK YOU.

OFFICER DULAC
Stop or I'll shoot!

A shot fires. Ponytail thinks he's hit, but SLY falls to the ground.

ALL/THE CITY
WHAT'S THE GOLDEN RULE?
IT'S ANARCHY...
IT'S ALL FOR THE TAKIN',
SO WHY NOT TAKE IT?

IT'S ANARCHY,
IT'S ANARCHY...

SCARF
We gotta get out of here.

PONYTAIL
What do you mean? We can't just leave him!

Ponytail looks on as NINE and HOLLY take the TV.

HOLLY
Hey! Help me carry this thing!

NINE
Looks like our birthdays came early this year!

HOLLY
Yes, indeed!

BEARD
(To the Boys)
We gotta go. Now!

SCARF
WHAT'S THE GOLDEN RULE?
IT'S ANARCHY.
IT'S ALL FOR THE TAKIN',
SO WHY NOT TAKE IT?

ALL/THE CITY

TAKE IT,
TAKE IT,
TAKE IT,
TAKE IT.

WHAT'S THE GOLDEN RULE?
IT'S ANARCHY.
IT'S ALL FOR THE TAKIN',
SO WHY NOT

TAKE IT...

BOSS AS NATIONAL GUARD (V.O.)

This is the National Guard. Drop all goods and vacate the premises. If necessary, we will use force.

PONYTAIL

But—are you sure?

SCARF

Yes! Let's go!

BEARD

Come on!

ALL/THE CITY

AND THEY DO
AND THEY DO
AND THEY DO
AND THEY DO
AND THEY DO
AND THEY DO

The three run off. The scene scatters and separates. SLY lies dead, alone, in the parking lot.

Shift.

SCENE EIGHT: BACK IN THE GUMBO POT

Oliver enters with cane and flat-topped hat. Howard begins to make progress, struggling to lift himself out of his chair in the front of house.

The laundry shoot rolls SLY into the Gumbo Pot. He joins the audience with an artificial grin plastered to his face.

#14: TWO-BY-TWO (08.11.15)

OLIVER FLOOD

WHEN NOAH BUILT HIS MIGHTY ARK

AND GATHERED ALL THE ANIMALS,
THE BIG GUY TOLD HIM TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE.
AND I KNOW YOU'LL AGREE WITH ME,
WHERE'S THE FUN IF THERE'S JUST ONE?
ONE CANNOT COMPARE TO A PAIR!
HEY!
TWO-BY-TWO BY
TWO-BY-TWO

(Calling backstage/everywhere)

GAIL! Where the fuck are you?!

WHAT GOOD'S A LEEVE WITH NO ARMY CORPS?
LIKE BOURBON STREET WITHOUT THE...

Gail misses her line; Oliver shouts to cover.

—*DRUNKEN WHORES!*
TWO-BY-TWO BY
TWO-BY-TWO!
I'M GLAD TO KNOW THAT
YOU HAVE GOT MY BACK!

Oliver overcompensates with a tiresome tap dance.
At last, he cues the music to cut—it's all too abrupt.

Meanwhile, in Boss's office.

GAIL FORCE

You didn't come 'round last night.

BOSS

We been busy, girl. Martha's done us real good.

GAIL FORCE

Ain't that the way it goes—you make all this rot shine by the
wave of your hand.

BOSS

And don't it look nice?

GAIL FORCE

She's never gonna love you, you know.

Boss laughs his hearty laugh.

BOSS

Look, it's cute that your jealous, 'bay—but it's bad for business.

#15: JEALOUSY [AUDIO TRACK #7] (Update 08.17.15)

GAIL FORCE

JEALOUSY
AIN'T IT FOR ME!

BOSS

Oh yeah?

GAIL FORCE

Yeah!

YOU WANNA TALK STRAIGHT?
THEN BY ALL MEANS!
YOU WANNA BE WITH ME?
WELL, GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER!

'REMEMBER WHAT MY OLD LIFE LOOKED LIKE,
AND I STILL WANNA GO—
'CAUSE THERE AIN'T NO LIGHT HERE!
THIS CLUB IS THE END OF THE LINE,
AND I'VE LEARNED THAT I'M BETTER THAN THIS.
AND I'LL BE JUST FINE WITHOUT YOUR ASS!

YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
SHE WON'T SAVE YOUR CLUB!
YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THAT YOU CAN BE WRONG!
YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THIS WILL ONLY LAST SO LONG!
AND WHEN THE FLOODWATER GOES,
GO 'HEAD WATCH HOW YOUR BUS'NESS SLOWS.

(Spoken)

You know that we're *real* good together.
You really wanna lose that?

BOSS

Ain't that good.

JEALOUSY
DON'T WORK FOR ME—
YOU WANNA TALK STRAIGHT?
THEN BY ALL MEANS!
YOU WANNA KEEP YOUR PLACE?
WELL, WATCH YOUR TONGUE AND COOL IT!

REMEMBER WHAT YOUR OLD LIFE LOOKED LIKE?
WHY WOULD YOU WANNA GO—
'CAUSE IT AIN'T NO DIF'RENT!
SO GO ON AHEAD AND YOU WHINE,
BUT YOU AIN'T ONE LICK BETTER THAN THIS.
YEAH, YOU WERE A FINE WHORE ON THE STREETS.

YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
YOU DON'T OWN THIS CLUB!
YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THAT YOU AIN'T MY LOVE.
YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THERE'S NO CHANCE FOR MORE ABOVE!
'CAUSE, GUESS WHAT? YOU AIN'T DIVINE!
GET ON OUTTA HERE, WE'LL BE JUST—

 BOSS GAIL FORCE
FINE. 'SAID

 GAIL FORCE
YOU NEED ME,
THAT I FELT SO GOOD.
'SAID I BELONG HERE,
THAT THE WORLD'S BEEN CRUEL.
'SAID I WAS RAVISHING:
'SAID A LOTTA THINGS WITHOUT A LOTTA FOLLOW THROUGH,
AND I BELIEVED YOU ALL ALONG, 'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT LOVERS DO.

 BOSS
What can I say? I'm charming.

 GAIL FORCE
You're a liar—and as soon as Martha realizes,
she'll be gone, too.

 BOSS
That's where you're wrong.
Sorry you ain't got what she got, but—

JEALOUSY
WE'LL LET IT BE—

 GAIL FORCE
YOU WANNA TALK STRAIGHT?
THEN BY ALL MEANS!

BOSS

YOU WANNA KEEP YOUR SOUL?
WELL, WHAT A SHAME 'CUZ YOU LOST IT!

DO YOU RECALL THAT OLD DEAL THAT WE MADE?
YEAH, YOU'RE HERE LOCK 'N KEY,
AND THERE AIN'T NO RICHES!
THE GUMBO POT IS GOOD AS IT GETS,
YOU AIN'T BETTER THAN THIS!
HELL, YOU MIGHT BEG ME TO KEEP YOUR ASS!

GAIL

YOU OUGHTA KNOW,

THAT I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
YOU OUGHTA KNOW,

THAT THIS AIN'T MY SCENE.
YOU OUGHTA KNOW,

I'M DONE WITH STATUS QUO!

YEAH, I'M THROUGH TOE'IN' THE LINE.
I'LL MOVE ON. WATCH. I'LL BE FINE!

SHE AIN'T GONNA
YOU AIN'T GONNA

GAIL FORCE

NO ONE'S GONNA KEEP ME FROM THE FREEDOM I DESERVE—
I'M HEADED INTO THE UNKNOWN!

BOSS

You're just another freak upstairs.
You ain't no woman, ain't nothin without me.

YOU WANNA KNOW
WHAT A FOOL LOOKS LIKE?
YOU WANNA KNOW
WHAT YOUR FEAR TASTES LIKE?
YOU WANNA KNOW
WHAT THE END FEELS LIKE?
THEN GO 'HEAD, PUSH ME SOME MORE.
YOU REALLY DON'T WANT THIS WAR.

GO ON TEST ME

BOSS

YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THAT I WILL GET ROUGH.

YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THAT YOU AIN'T NO QUEEN.

YOU OUGHTA KNOW,
THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT TO GO!

BOSS CONT'D

GO ON TRY ME

GO ON PUSH MY BUTTONS AND SEE
WHAT MAKES ME GO BOOM!

(Spoken; hard)
Ain't you supposed to be on stage?

MEANWHILE, ON STAGE:

MARTHA

Hey, y'all. This next number is one of my favorites and I think y'all are gonna love it...

Howard rises and approaches Martha.

The room quiets, Martha lowers the mic and watches him, curiously. Uncertain.

#15A: HONEYMOON REPRISE

HOWARD

WAH WAH WAH
WAH WAH WAH
WAH WAH WAH—
MUH-MUH-MAR-THA.

MARTHA

(To Howard)
I know you, don't I?

HOWARD

SO BEAUTIFUL...

Oliver races onto the stage and steps between Martha and Howard. He is in the middle of eating a po'boy and might have a napkin in his collar and splayed across his chest.

OLIVER FLOOD

(Looks around nervously)
No, no, no, no! Listen buddy—no patrons on stage. SORRY.
(To Audience)
Please excuse the brief interruption, folks! We'll be right back.

(To Gail)
GAAAAAAIL.

Oliver attempts to scooch Martha and Howard off stage—to no avail.

HOWARD
SO BEAUTIFUL,
AND SO SELF-ASSURED,
THE SAME AS WHEN I MET YOU

GAIL FORCE
Can you imagine someone loving you that much?

OLIVER FLOOD
Holy smokes. He really made it to the club alive.

A hub-bub builds in the club. The crowd begins to snap out of its trance. They even begin to notice each other.

PATRON #1
...What's going on?

PATRON #2
Where am I?

PATRON #3
Do I know you?

OLIVER FLOOD
Uh.....uh...NOPE! That's not right! You're imagining things!

Howard's voice begins to snap Martha out of her own trance.

HOWARD & MARTHA
WITH YOUR SEXY, STUBBORN, PERFECT—

Boss steps out of the shadows laughing.
Oliver drops his sandwich.

OLIVER FLOOD
Uh oh...

#16: GOSPEL OF BOSS [AUDIO TRACK #8] (08.25.15)

BOSS

YOU WANNA FEEL SOMETHING UNHOLY?
THEN GO AHEAD, LET ANOTHER NOTE

BOSS & MEN

ESCAPE FROM YOUR LIPS.

BOSS

YOU MAY HAVE A BACKBONE NOW, BUT WATCH ME SPLIT IT.
YOU GOT A THROAT, SO WATCH ME SLIT IT.
I'LL WHIPLASH YOU BACK TO A SIGH OF SALTWATER,
LEAVE YOU WATERLOGGED, PLUMB-LINE AND HEART-THROBBED.

BELIEVERS MAY HUM THEIR HYMNS,
AND PRAY HARD TO THEIR GODS,
BUT MESS WITH ME, YOU GONNA BE AT A LOSS.
LET ME TELL YOU THE GOSPEL OF BOSS.

ALL ALONG I BEEN 'A GRINDING, CHURNIN', OOO, ACCELERATIN',
'CAUSIN' DISASTER ALL ALONG THE WAY,
LIKE THE FALL OF ROME, THE BIG BURN, HIROSHIMA, THE GREAT DEPRESSION,
GOT ME A LOTTA SOULS, BUT IT JUST WASN'T ENOUGH.

SO I GO OUT SEARCHIN', HUNTIN', OO-OBLITERATIN',
LOOKIN' TO FIND MY ONE AND ONLY QUEEN,
TO GIVE MY CLUB ALL THE FIRE AND THE VERVE THAT WE NEED.
THE MOST SIZZLIN' SOPRANO THAT YOU'VE EVER SEEN:

OH, THE OH-SO SWEET AND SEXY, MISS MARTHA LEDOUX—
GO ON SING AGAIN, BUT SHE DON'T WANT YOU!

BELIEVERS MAY HUM THEIR HYMNS,
AND PRAY HARD TO THEIR GOD,
BUT MESS WITH ME, YOU GONNA BE AT A LOSS,
LET ME TELL YOU THE GOSPEL OF BOSS.

HOWARD

(To Martha)

YOU ARE THE SWEET SONG
WHO WILL ALWAYS HAVE ME HUMMING.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOWED ME ALL
OF LIFE'S JOY THAT I NEVER SAW BEFORE.

MARTHA

FEAR NOT DARLING FOR YOU
ARE LOVED, AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU.

BOSS

SO, YOU THINK YOU A BIG MAN,
YOU ARE ONE SMALL FISH; YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I'M THE SHARK!
SO, YOU THINK THAT MARTHA'S YOURS?
WELL, *THINK AGAIN, MY FRIEND,*
I'MA SEND YOU TO THE DARK!

With his last verse, Boss reigns Martha back to his side.

GAIL FORCE

(To Oliver)

DO YOU THINK THAT BOSS NEEDS YOU?
WELL, LOOK AROUND, MY DEAR, YOU ARE NOTHIN' TO THAT *BRUTE*.

OLIVER FLOOD

(To Gail)

SO NOW *SUDDENLY YOU CARE?*
YOU CAN GO ON AND LEAVE—WE ARE GIVIN' YOU THE BOOT!

BOSS & OLIVER

IF YOU A FEEL A SONG COME ON,

+ THE CLUB

SHUSH!

BOSS & OLIVER

IF YOU WANT ANY OUNCE OF LIFE,

+ THE CLUB

HUSH!

BOSS & OLIVER

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GET ON YOUR WAY!

BOSS

I WANNA KNOW THAT YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON GOOD—
YOU SANG YOUR LAST NOTE, NOW I CUT YOUR THROAT.

A quiet descends. Boss laughs.

BOSS CONT'D

Y'all know I'm playin'.

ALL/THE CLUB

BELIEVERS MAY HUM THEIR HYMNS,
AND PRAY HARD TO THEIR GODS.
BUT MESS WITH HIM, YOU GONNA BE AT A LOSS.

BOSS
LET ME TELL YOU THE GOSPEL OF—

ALL/THE CLUB
BELIEVERS MAY HUM THEIR HYMNS,

LADIES
ALLELUIA!

ALL/THE CLUB
AND PRAY HARD TO THEIR GOD.

LADIES
AIN'T GONNA DO NO GOOD!

ALL/THE CLUB
BUT MESS WITH HIM, YOU GONNA BE AT A LOSS.

LADIES
YEAH! YEAH!

BOSS
LET ME TELL YOU,
GO ON TAKE YOUR CUE,
YOU OUGHTA STICK TO,
WHAT YOU KNOW IS TRUE,
YOUR TIME IS THROUGH!
BETTER LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL OF—

ALL/THE CLUB
BOSS

BOSS
THE GOSPEL OF—

ALL/THE CLUB
BOSS

BARITONES & BASSES
(Background; repeated)
THE GOSPEL OF, THE GOSPEL OF BOSS—HE'S COMIN'
THE GOSPEL OF, THE GOSPEL OF BOSS—HE'S COMIN'

ALL/THE CLUB
THE GOSPEL OF BOSS

Yah done. BOSS

AH-AH-MEN!
ALL/THE CLUB

Boss's song leaves Howard lifeless and stupefied.

Gail doesn't fight as the band members take her. She looks at Boss, cold and unrelenting—more beautiful than ever.

With a crash, the Club throws Howard and Gail upward, into the sea. The Waves hoist them in one fell swoop out of the Gumbo Pot.

Shift.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: BACK TO THE GUMBO POT

Boss reels off of his recent victory over Howard.
The champagne's flowing!

#17: ROLL THE PARADE [AUDIO TRACK #9] (UPDATE 08.25.15)

BOSS

I'M IN A RED CARPET KIND OF MOOD.
HERE IS MY OSCAR SPEECH!

MARTHA

COULDN'T BE HERE WITHOUT ME.
NOTHIN'S OUT OF OUR REACH!

OLIVER FLOOD

SHOVE MY TROUBLES IN THE BACK DRAWER,
I AIN'T GOT A PROBLEM, ANYMORE!

BOSS

FEELIN' DANDY—
NOW WE'VE RUN THAT NO GOOD SUCKER
OUTTA HERE FOR GOOD!

BOSS, OLIVER FLOOD, & MARTHA

KNEW THAT WE WOULD!

ALL/BAND

LET THE PARADE ROLL,
ROLL THE PARADE!
I AM CATCHIN' EVERY SINGLE BEAD AND GOLD DUBLOON!

THE GOLDEN AGE IS HERE TO STAY.
LET THE PARADE ROLL,
ROLL, ROLL, ROLL, ROLL,

BOSS, OLIVER FLOOD, & MARTHA

ROLL THE PARADE!

MARTHA

(Aside to Oliver)

I'm going to my dressing room.

OLIVER FLOOD

What?

MARTHA

I'm feeling sick.

Martha exits.

OLIVER FLOOD

(Calls after her)

But you can't—! We're in the middle of a number—

BOSS

OH, YEAH, DON'T IT FEEL A LOT LIKE SPRING!
WE'RE A GARDEN IN BLOOM.
YEAH, IF WE WERE EXPLOSIVES,
TICK, TICK, HERE IS OUR BOOM!

Boss realizes Martha is gone.

BOSS

Finish out the number.

OLIVER FLOOD

Wha-I-sure...

Boss exits; Oliver struggles to cover. He's drunk and we're just beginning to realize it...

OLIVER FLOOD CONT'D

AIN'T A WORRY SPOILIN' TONIGHT!
NOT AN ISSUE ANYWHERE IN SIGHT
THINGS ARE *PEACHY!*
NOW WE'VE LET GO ALL OUR TROUBLES,
LET'S LET DOWN OUR GUARD,
LET'S PARTY HARD!

ALL/BAND

LET THE PARADE ROLL,
ROLL THE PARADE!
I AM CATCHIN' EVERY SINGLE BEAD AND GOLD DUBLOON!
THE GOLDEN AGE IS HERE TO STAY.
LET THE PARADE ROLL, LET THE PARADE ROLL,
let the parade roll, ROLL THE PARADE!

Shift.

SCENE TWO: THE LAKEFRONT

Howard wanders along the desolate lakefront. Post-flood, post-looting. A week and a half post storm. The City is barren, and its people are exhausted.

#18: OVER (UPDATE 08.16.15)

CHARLIE

THIS TOWN'S BEEN FULL OF A LOTTA THINGS,
BUT NONE OF THEM WAS LUCK.
THE WATER MADE A DESERT, AND
THE PARTY HAD TO STOP.

ESTHER

THE DEVIL'S GONE AND DONE US IN,
WE'RE EMPTY AS A DRUM.
HE STOLE THE SUN, HE JACKED THE MOON AND STARS--
HE TOOK OUR BON TEMPS [PRONOUNCED BAHN TOMPS], OUR BARS, OUR RUM.

THE CITY/ALL

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN' HOME.

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN' HOME.

HOLLY

WE COULD MOVE TO GEORGIA—
WE GOT SOME FAMILY THERE.

MS. FELICE

WHY NOT GO TO KANSAS?
WHERE THERE'S LAND TO SPARE!

NINE

I BEEN DREAMIN' OF CALIFORNIA
I HEAR THE SUNSHINE IS UNREAL.

HOLLY

AIN'T GOT NO JOB, BUT MY COUSIN'S GOT A ROOM.

CHARLIE & NINE
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, HOUSTON'S LOOKIN' PRETTY GOOD.

THE CITY/ALL

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN' HOME.

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN' HOME.

FEELS LIKE EVERYONE HAS FORGOTTEN US,
NO ONE REMEMBERS THAT WE'RE ALIVE,
WE SPEND EVERYDAY IN THE STRUGGLE,
JUST TRYING TO SURVIVE.
SINCE WE YESTERDAY'S NEWS.
NOW WE'RE A FADIN' MEMORY,
DULL FROM THE PAIN OF TRYIN' TO EXIST.
LIVIN' OUT OUR DAYS HERE WORN OUT AND DISMSSED,
AND SO WE'RE LEAVING,
ITS OVER,
ITS DONE.
WE'RE GOIN', GOIN', GONE...

GOIN', GOIN', GONE
GOIN', GOIN'...

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN' HOME...

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN' HOME...

HOWARD

I'M TRYING TO PIECE IT ALL TOGETHER,
FIGURE OUT WHERE I'VE BEEN.
THE UNDERWORLD? THE DEVIL? A CLUB FULL OF SOULS?
NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE WHAT'S HAPPENED—LEAST OF ALL ME.

MEDICINE, SCIENCE ALWAYS MADE THE MOST SENSE TO ME.
BUT THEY CAN'T EXPLAIN SO MANY THINGS I WANT EXPLAINED TO ME.
LIKE MARTHA ALWAYS TOLD ME, THERE'S MAGIC ALL AROUND,
NO MATTER WHAT WE MASTER, THERE'S SO MUCH WE'LL NEVER KNOW.

HOWARD

OH, MARTY...
THERE'S PILES OF DEBRIS—
AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE...
HOW DID WE GET HERE?
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO
GET BACK TO OUR LIVES.

THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO
GET YOU HOME TO ME.

OH, MARTY...
THERE'S QUIET OUT HERE—
LIKE NOTHING THE CITY'S EVER SEEN.
HOW DID WE GET HERE?
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?
IF THERE'S SOMEONE
OUT THERE, UP THERE, DOWN THERE:
GIVE ME A SIGN!
HELP ME GET BACK!
IT CAN'T BE OVER!
WHAT DO I DO?

THE CITY/ALL CONT'D

IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER:
NOBODY'S SAVIN' ME,
NOBODY'S COMIN'...

HOME.

THE CITY/ALL

IT'S OVER,
IT'S OVER
NOBODY'S SAVIN ME,
NOBODY'S COMING HOME

IT'S OVER,
IT'S OVER
NOBODY'S SAVIN ME,
NOBODY'S COMING HOME

HELP US, HELP US.
HELP US, HELP US.
HELP US, HELP US.
AHHH

With a mighty splash, Gail Force emerges from the lake.

GAIL FORCE

There you are. I heard that voice of yours and grabbed hold, but
wasn't sure I'd find you.

HOWARD

I thought I'd seen everything...

GAIL FORCE

We don't have a lot of time.

HOWARD

Time for what?

GAIL FORCE

Time before Boss realizes we're here and I'm helping you.

HOWARD

You are?

GAIL FORCE

You and that wife of yours may be the best way to get this City back on its feet...and me my freedom.

HOWARD

What do you mean?

GAIL FORCE

You came to the Gumbo Pot with a beating heart! Martha recognized you. Nothing like that's ever happened before! If anyone can do it, you can.

HOWARD

I failed her, Gail. What makes you think this time will be different?

GAIL FORCE

This time, you have the key.

You need two things. One, the sacrifice of a soul to get back into the club. I nominate myself for the position. You're welcome. And second: you sing. You both sing your damn hearts out. *Together, you are his weakness.*

#19: SOUND GOOD [AUDIO TRACK #10] (UPDATE 08.11.15)

GAIL FORCE

YOU HAVE IT IN YOU
SO LET'S HEAR IT!
WHEN YOU BELT IT OUT,
HE WILL FEAR IT!
YOU KNOW YOU SOUND GOOD?
YOU SOUND GOOD!

SO TRUST THAT VOICE!
SING A NOTE,
SING A SONG LIKE THE GREATEST LOVE YOU'VE EVER KNOWN,
THE BEST MEAL YOU EVER TASTED,
THE LUCKIEST DAY YOU EVER HAD,
THE BLUEST SKY YOU EVER WITNESSED—
YOU CAN'T BE BAD!

SING IT OUT!
YOU CAN SHOUT!
YOU GOTTA SING WITHOUT A DOUBT!
SING TO FIGHT!
NOTHIN' SLIGHT!
YOU GOTTA SOUND GOOD!

YOU'VE GOT THE VOICE,
TIME TO USE IT.
WHEN YOU SING OUT,
HE WILL LOSE IT.
YOU KNOW YOU SOUND GOOD?
YOU SOUND GOOD!

SO, CLEAR YOUR THROAT.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

NOW, HERE'S A NOTE,
CAN YOU HIT IT?

She hits a painfully high note. She looks to him.

OPEN WIDE!
I'M YOUR GUIDE!
YOU GOTTA SING TO SAVE YOUR BRIDE!
SING YOUR ALL,
NOTHIN' SMALL,
YOU GOTTA SOUND GOOD!

HOWARD

WHAT IF IT ALL GOES WRONG?
WHAT IF I CAN'T SING A NOTE LET ALONE A WHOLE WEIGHTY SONG?
WHAT IF I'M LIFELESS AND SPEECHLESS AGAIN?
HOW CAN I EVEN BEGIN?

GAIL FORCE

YOU ARE HIS WEAKNESS,
HE CAN'T STAND IT.
WHEN YOU SERENADE,
THE CLUB WILL SPLIT!
YOU KNOW YOU SOUND GOOD?
YOU SOUND GOOD!

HOWARD

I SOUND GOOD!

GAIL FORCE

SING IT LOUD.

HOWARD

SING IT LOUD.

GAIL FORCE

SING IT PROUD!

HOWARD

SING IT PROUD!

GAIL FORCE

SING LIKE THE RAIN POURS FROM A STORM CLOUD!

HOWARD

SING LIKE THE RAIN POURS FROM A STORM CLOUD!

GAIL FORCE

SING IT LOW.

HOWARD

SING IT LOW.

GAIL FORCE

LET IT GO!

HOWARD

YEAH!

HOWARD & GAIL FORCE

SING LIKE LAVA FLOWS FROM A VOLCANO!

GAIL FORCE

YOU GOT FORCE!

HOWARD
I'VE GOT FORCE!

GAIL FORCE
UNDERSTOOD?

HOWARD
YES, MA'AM! I'M GONNA SOUND GOOD!

GAIL FORCE & HOWARD
SING AHEAD!
WAKE THE DEAD!
YOU/I GOTTA SING LIKE IT'S THE END!

HOWARD
I'LL SING LOUD!

GAIL FORCE
YOU'LL SING LOUD!

HOWARD
I'LL SING PROUD!

GAIL FORCE
YOU'LL SING PROUD!

HOWARD
SING LIKE THE BLAZE THAT SMOKES THE CROWD!

GAIL FORCE
SING LIKE THE BLAZE THAT SMOKES THE CROWD!

HOWARD & GAIL FORCE
I/YOU WILL TEAR HIM DOWN!

HOWARD
IT'S TIME TO SOUND GOOD!

GAIL FORCE
YOU'RE GONNA SOUND GOOD!

A beat.

HOWARD

Gail, why are helping me?

GAIL FORCE

I'd like to think I did one good thing in my life. I made a very selfish choice a long time ago, and that was hell—literally. I think I oughta give this a go, see what's on the other side. Maybe I can finally move on.

HOWARD

I'm gonna get her back.

GAIL FORCE

I know you are. (Beat) You ready?

HOWARD

I think so.

GAIL FORCE

Let's go!

Gail takes Howard's hand and surrenders gloriously into the Waves. They pull her upward.

Then, the Waves lift Howard down, down back to the Gumbo Pot.

Shift.

SCENE THREE: MARTHA'S DRESSING ROOM

Martha's dressing room. Boss bursts in.

BOSS

What's going on, Martha? We got a show and you're the star.

MARTHA

I'm sorry...I've been feeling funny.

BOSS

Well, you better get well soon!

He snaps; she smiles brightly, but her trance doesn't last.

BOSS CONT'D

(Softens)

We can't afford not to have you out there, bay.

MARTHA

B, who is that man you kicked outta here?

BOSS

Nobody.

MARTHA

He seemed different from the others.

BOSS

He's *not*.

MARTHA

It's just... lately I've been feeling like I'm supposed to be somewhere else—like I was—

BOSS

There is nowhere else.

MARTHA

But I can feel it. Like, I must have been small sometime.

BOSS

You were never small. You were the biggest thing to hit that Earth.

MARTHA

So I was there once! On Earth? I remember. I remember dancing. There were lots of lights, and people, and I was smiling—

BOSS

You're happy *here*, Martha. The way you bring folks in—you and me—we got a whole empire. For eternity. Nobody will know anybody but Boss, Martha and their Gumbo Pot! We'll control every soul in the universe!

MARTHA

Yes, Boss.

BOSS

Now you're talking!

MARTHA

But I see—

#20: WHAT IT MEANS (Update 08.11.15)

MARTHA

IT'S A SIMPLE PICTURE, THOUGH IT'S ALL UNCLEAR,
I WISH I COULD REMEMBER THAT WORLD I MAY HOLD DEAR.

IT'S FUNNY TO KNOW A WORD WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT MEANS
BEADS, BAYOU, LAKE PONCHARTRAIN...

BOSS

YOU WANT WORDS?
I'LL GIVE YOU WORDS!
A WHOLE DICTIONARY FULL OF WORDS!

MARTHA

WHY DON'T THE PATRONS TALK LIKE US?

BOSS

BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT LIKE US!

MARTHA

WHY WOULD WE BE ANY DIFF'RENT?

BOSS

WE'RE SIMPLY BETTER, STONGER, MORE SUPREME.

MARTHA

IT'S A SIMPLE PICTURE, THOUGH IT'S HARD TO SEE.
I THINK THAT I SEE SOMEONE STANDING NEXT TO ME.
IT'S FUNNY TO KNOW A WORD WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT MEANS:
GROOM, WEDDING, FOUND YOUR SOUL MATE...

BOSS

YOU WANT FACTS!
I'LL GIVE YOU FACTS!
A WHOLE BIG BUCKETLOAD FULL OF FACTS!

WHAT IS IT YOU WANNA KNOW ABOUT?

MARTHA

THE ANSWERS TO MY DOUBT.

BOSS
DON'T ASK FOOLISH QUESTIONS.

MARTHA
TELL ME, WHAT GOES ON BEYOND HERE?

BOSS
It's all one ugly world that's full of fear.

MARTHA
You say that because you're free to see it whenever you'd like.

BOSS
I'll take you, then. We'll conquer it all—it's only a matter of time.

MARTHA
I want to go. On my own.

BOSS
Like hell you are.

MARTHA
Why not?

BOSS
In the Gumbo Pot, you will always be worshipped and adored like you should be. You're a star, Martha.

MARTHA
I just want to see what's out there for myself.

BOSS
Hasn't Boss given you everything you ever wanted and more *right here?! THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.*

He snaps his finger and she falls to the ground.

BOSS CONT'D
You asked enough questions for one day. Go on and get ready for your next number. (She hesitates.) NOW.

Boss slams the door to her dressing room, leaving Martha alone, shaken. He remains against the door.

MARTHA

I CAN ALMOST SEE ITS SIGHTS,
I CAN ALMOST HEAR ITS SOUNDS.
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I BELONG TO A PLACE I DON'T KNOW?
WHY DO I FEEL SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE I DON'T KNOW?

THE WAY THAT HE SANG TO ME—
THOSE PIERCING EYES THAT I AM PINING FOR.
I WISH HE WERE HERE WITH ME!

IT'S A SIMPLE PICTURE, I CAN ALMOST SEE—

MARTHA

I WISH I UNDERSTOOD THIS EFFECT HE HAS ON ME...

BOSS

I WISH I UNDERSTOOD THIS EFFECT SHE HAS ON ME...

BOSS & MARTHA

IT'S FUNNY TO KNOW A WORD WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT MEANS:

BOSS

LOVE.

MARTHA

DOCTOR.

BOSS

MARTHA LEDOUX.

MARTHA

HOME!

Alone in the dark outside Martha's dressing room, Boss loosens his tie, wipes sweat from his brow. He's having a panic attack. His heavy breaths are like the churning of a train engine.

#21: GONE TOO FAR [AUDIO TRACK #11]

BOSS & WATER (MEN)

OOO-WHEE OOO-WHEE
OOO-WHEE OOO-WHEE

BOSS

DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD,

DON'T FORGET WHO YOU ARE!
IT'S GONE TOO FAR,
IT'S GONE TOO FAR.

SHE'S A GIRL, A WOMAN,
SHE'S ONLY MORTAL.
DON'T LET HER BREAK YOU,
SO WHAT SHE SNUBBED YOU,
SHE CAN'T UPSET YOU!
NO, NO, NO, NO
NO, NO, NO, NO, NOOOOO!

STAY IN CONTROL,
YOU STILL HAUNT EV'RY SOUL!
IT'S GONE TOO FAR,
IT'S GONE TOO FAR.

YOU'RE THE BOSS, A GIANT,
YOU ARE IMMORTAL.
NONE CAN AFFECT YOU,
NONE CAN DESTROY YOU,
WHO DARES CONFRONT YOU?
YOU CAN WRECK THE WORTHLESS HUMAN RACE!

LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR,
YOU AIN'T NO KINDA CHUMP!
YOU WENT AND WASTED' THAT CITY,
TURNED IT INTO A DUMP!
YOU WERE THE SNAKE BACK IN EDEN,
YOU GET UP OFF THIS SLUMP!
YOU QUAKE THE UNIVERSE,
THERE AIN'T NOBODY WORSE!

SO WHY WHY WHY
WHY, TELL ME WHY...
SHE'S SO GODDAMN BEAUTIFUL.

BOSS & WATER (MEN)

OOO-WHEE OOO-WHEE
OOO-WHEE OOO-WHEE

BOSS

YOU ARE IN CHARGE!
YOU'RE COMMANDER-AT-LARGE!
IT'S GONE TOO FAR,
IT'S GONE TOO FAR.

YOU'RE THE KING, A TYRANT!
GET IT TOGETHER!
DON'T LET YOUR CLUB SINK!
SHE CANNOT END YOU!

PUT HER IN HER PLACE!

BOSS & WATER (MEN)
OOO-WHEE OOO-WHEE
OOO-WHEE OOO-WHEE

Shift.

SCENE FOUR: THE ATTIC

The surface. Boss skulks around the darkness of Martha and Howard's abandoned house.

PONYTAIL

Two damn weeks. How much longer you think all this gonna last?

They both look to Beard.

BEARD

It'll last 'til it lasts--'til there ain't a drop 'a liquor left and we all move in on each other!

SCARF

Do y'all feel funny? I feel kinda funny. Like chills.

BEARD

Move out the way, Scarf's gonna blow!

SCARF

Naw, man. Like somethin' eerie's going down.

PONYTAIL

Maybe it's got to do with all those National Guard all over the place. You seen those tanks ridin' round? I'd like to ride on one of those. Bet it'd feel good.

BEARD

Yeah, I'm sure it'd feel real good to shoot innocent people down like you know somethin'.

PONYTAIL

It's not all like that. They're tryin' to get things back up and running again.

BEARD

What the hell you know, huh?

PONYTAIL

Why you act so smart?

SCARF

Come on, y'all. Reelax. We gotta think of all this like country livin' in the city. Breathe it in!

PONYTAIL

What are you talkin' about?

BEARD

All I smell's sewage water and rot.

SCARF

Look on the bright side, man. In the country, you go to sleep with the sun and wake up with it.

BEARD

And question what your next meal'll be come dawn and dusk.

PONYTAIL

You know, I think I could stand the smell if there were some ladies around.

SCARF

It *has* been too long.

PONYTAIL

Hell, I might just get with the first but-her face I see.

SCARF

Butter-face?

PONYTAIL

Everything about her is smokin' hot— but her face!

SCARF

Oh/ shit!

BEARD

What makes you think some good lookin' girl'd wanna get with you?

PONYTAIL

Who wouldn't want this?

"Girl, I know you lost everything in the storm, let me take care of you."

"Ohhh, Pony, you take care of me soooooo good. Oooh. Oooh! Oooh!"

Know what I'm sayin'?

SCARF

I know what you're say/in'!

BEARD

They're more trouble than they're worth.

SCARF

Ah, come on, man. You're missin' it just as bad as we are.

BEARD

You can have 'em. All I want when all's said and done is a big ol' juicy steak. None 'a this canned shit anymore. I had enough beans to last me a fuckin' lifetime. (Beat) Hand me a beer, will ya?

PONYTAIL

Nah, this one's mine.

BEARD

Age before beauty, my friend. Or in your case, age and beauty before you.

PONYTAIL

No way. You had way more than the rest of us.

BEARD

What—you keepin' count or somethin'?

SCARF

Just give it to him, Pony.

BEARD

(Pops open the beer)

There's enough stupid out there, let's keep it outta here, okay?

PONYTAIL

I'm sick 'a all y'all callin' me stupid—I'm not a fuckin' idiot.

BEARD

You're right! The smartest guys I know go around wavin' knives all over the place!

SCARF

He's right, man. That was kinda stupid.

BEARD

Awwww. Poor baby. Does wittle Pony-wony need a beer?

Scarf laughs his ass off. Beard laughs in turn.

PONYTAIL

Will you shut up.

BEARD

Hey, come to think of it: you even old enough for a beer?

PONYTAIL

You think you're some kinda bigshot? Yeah, you're practically an old man who hasn't done shit with his life.

SCARF

Whoa, whoa, whoa—Calm down/, man.

PONYTAIL

I don't wanna calm down! Why the fuck do you listen to everything he says, anyway?

Ponytail pushes Scarf to the ground. He points his knife to Scarf and Beard.

SCARF

What's wrong with you?

PONYTAIL

I'm done with you treating me like some kinda kid.

BEARD

I treat you like a kid because you are one. So. Goddamn. Stupid. What are you trying to prove with that thing, huh?

Ponytail stabs Beard violently.

PONYTAIL

You're the idiot!
You're the stupid-
You hear me?
You fucking stupid pieceofshit!

Scarf pulls Ponytail off of Beard, but it's too late.

SCARF

Holy—holy shit! Get off of him!

Beard laughs through choking blood. Scarf goes to him.

BEARD

Now here's a tale.

SCARF

Don't worry, man. You're gonna be all right. Folks'll be telling
your tale 'cross cities for generations.

Beard smiles. He's gone.

THE CITY

OOH-EEH OOH-EEH

PONYTAIL

I didn't... I-I didn't...

SCARF

Yeah. You did. You fuckin' did.

Scarf attacks Ponytail; takes his throat between his
hands. Ponytail struggles.

SCARF CONT'D

How could you?! He took you under his wing!

At last, Ponytail's body is lifeless. Scarf is spooked by
himself.

He finally lights a match, sets the place up in flames and
scurries away.

Boss awaits in the shadows. He puffs his cigar.

Shift.

SCENE FIVE: BACK IN THE GUMBO POT

By this point, Oliver is ugly drunk. It's no secret.
He stumbles center, the microphone squeals.

OLIVER FLOOD

Some of you are probably thinking, "where's Gail?" Well, off she went! Buh-bye! (He waves) And that's the reality, isn't it, folks? People leave! They do stupid-fucked-up-shit and leave you down and out. And nobody gives any credit to the ones who stick around and work THEIR ASSES OFF, no matter what the price may be...

Listen folks. Listen up. I'm gonna tell you a li-ttle story about a girl named Camille who wasn't quite cute enough to be the ingénue, so she became Oliver. And SUDDENLY. Everyone thought she was the best thing since sex. Suddenly you're a man and people think you're hilarious!

Lucky for you! Here I am! Forever! And I've put this little something together just for you...

Would it kill you to clap or something? COME ON! This shit doesn't invent itself. (To the unresponsive band) Hit it!

The band may have left. Oliver may uncover a ukulele.
All of Oliver's moves painfully obviously play off of the *double entendre*. He's lost it.

#22: GOING SOLO [AUDIO TRACK #12]

OLIVER FLOOD CONT'D

THERE ARE PLENTY OF GREAT GROUP NUMBERS,
BUT WHEN THERE'S NO ONE TO HOLD YOUR HAND.
YOU CAN ALWAYS COMMUNE WITH NATURE,
PLAY A SONG WITH YOUR ONE-MAN ROCK BAND!

OOOH, OOOOH, OOOH!
DON'T YA' KNOW? DON'T YA' KNOW? DON'T YA KNOW?
OOOH, OOOOH, OOOH!
THAAAAAAAT!
SOMETIMES GOING SOLO
IS THE WAY TO GO!

IT'S TIME FOR THE FIVE-KNUCKLE SHUFFLE!

YOU CAN PLUCK A TUNE ON YOUR GUITAR.
GO ON, PLAY THE ONE-STRINGED MELODY.
TIME TO HIT IT HARD AND RAISE THE BAR!

OOOH, OOOOH, OOOH!
DON'T YA' KNOW? DON'T YA' KNOW? DON'T YA KNOW?
OOOH, OOOOH, OOOH!
THAAAAAAAT!
SOMETIMES GOING SOLO
IS THE WAY TO GO!

LET'S FACE IT, NO ONE ELSE WILL!
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, PAL!
NOBODY CARES
IT'S JUST ME, MYSELF AND NUMERO UNO!

OOOH, OOOOH, OOOH!
DON'T YA' KNOW? DON'T YA' KNOW? DON'T YA KNOW?

OOOH, OOOOH, OOOH!
THAAAAAAAT!
SOMETIMES GOING SOLO
IS THE WAY TO GO!

GO! GO! GO! GOOOO....

Oliver mock "rubs one out." He falls over himself.

On Boss's cue, the Band takes over quickly and Boss pulls Oliver aside.

BOSS

What was that?

OLIVER FLOOD

They loved it. Standing ovations! (Hiccup) Okay—so it'll take some time to, to *evolve*.

BOSS

I'm pullin' it.

OLIVER FLOOD

Sounds like a good time to me! Wait, what are you saying?

BOSS

My show is tight.

OLIVER FLOOD

Well, things get loose! The club's emptying (Hiccups) emptying up. Maybe Gail was right...

Boss raises a hand and throws Oliver across the room.

BOSS

You think Boss lost his touch? Only thing I lost is people working for me who know how to do their jobs.

The laundry shoot ejects Beard and Ponytail into the club. Boss snaps his finger; Beard and Ponytail spring to life.

BOSS CONT'D

Welcome, friends. I'm in need of a couple henchmen.

BEARD

(Cracks his knuckles)

I been ready my whole life.

PONYTAIL

WE are BACK, baby!

Beard gives Ponytail a look of disdain.

OLIVER FLOOD

But Boss! Come on! After everything! All the shows, all the lau/ghs—

With a wave of his hand, Boss throws an apron/dishrag, or something like it, to Oliver.

BOSS

(To Oliver)

Why don't you be a peach and get us a drink?

(To Beard and Ponytail)

We got a lotta catchin' up to do.

Boss laughs and sits Beard and Ponytail at a center table. Oliver walks off sadly.

Shift.

Backstage. Howard falls from the sky into a pile of trash. He stumbles, as if his legs are new. His vision is blurred. The sights and sounds of the club are like a funhouse—intense and disorienting.

Howard knocks on the door of the dressing room marked “MARTHA.” He looks around, expecting Boss at any moment.

He steps inside, shuts the door quickly, and stands against it. He's sopping wet.

MARTHA

You came back.

HOWARD

I'm here.

MARTHA

I should probably tell Boss.

HOWARD

No!

MARTHA

He's not very happy with me... I have to be on stage soon.

HOWARD

We're going home, Martha.

MARTHA

Home?

HOWARD

Yes.

MARTHA

But I hardly know you...I feel like I do, but...

HOWARD

MARTHA! You do! You know me better than anyone in the world. You just have to remember. I wish you could see what we're like together. Then you wouldn't have a question. People see us and--we're the reason people want to fall in love.

MARTHA

If you wait here, I'll come right after my next number.

HOWARD

I can't let you go. Not again.

MARTHA

But I—

#23: WITH YOU [AUDIO TRACK #13] (UPDATE 08.19.15)

HOWARD

IT WAS YOUR ANNUAL CRAWFISH BOIL
I KNEW YOU WERE THE ONE—
THE MOMENT THAT YOU SANG THROUGH THE YARD.

It was “You Can’t Hurry Love”—I’ll never forget.
YOU POURED YOUR HEART INTO THAT SONG.

And I thought:
THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE
THAN WITH YOU.
THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE
THAN WITH YOU.

LAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH
DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DAH-DA

WHEN I LOST THAT LITTLE BOY,
THAT NIGHT IN THE E. R.—
YOU SOOTHED ME WITH YOUR LULLABY.

MARTHA
OOH MMMMM

You got me through that night—and so many others.
YOU MADE ME THE DOCTOR I AM.

AND
THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE,
THAN WITH YOU.
THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE,
THAN WITH YOU.

MARTHA CONT'D
WITH ME.

HOWARD
FEAR NOT DARLING, FOR YOU ARE SO LOVED,

MARTHA & HOWARD
AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU...

HOWARD

I LOVE OUR TIGER GAMES ON WEEKENDS,
AND OUR SUMMERS FULL OF SNO-BALLS.
ALL THOSE LATE SHOWS AT PRYTANIA [PRONOUNCED 'PRIH-TAN-YUH']

THEY'RE NO GOOD, THEY'RE WORTHLESS,
WITHOUT YOU.

SO, WHAT'S KREWE DU VIEUX? [PRONOUNCED 'CREW DEH VEW']
WHAT GOOD IS JAZZ FEST WITHOUT YOU THERE?

IT'S ALL NOTHING,
THEY'RE EMPTY,
THEY'RE MEANINGLESS,
WITHOUT YOU.

*SO BEAUTIFUL,
AND SO SELF-ASSURED
THE SAME AS WHEN I MET YOU...*

HOWARD & MARTHA

WITH YOUR SEXY, STUBBORN, PERFECT SMILE.

MARTHA

WHEN WE STOOD UP ON OUR BACK PORCH,
WE GAVE OUR WEDDING VOWS,
OUR NEIGHBORS CHEERING US LOVINGLY—

HOWARD

It was the best day of my life—and just the beginning.
WE DANCED CLOSE BESIDE OUR OAK TREE.

MARTHA

IT'S FIN'LLY CLEAR FOR ME TO SEE,

HOWARD

NO SPELL CAN KEEP YOU 'WAY FROM ME.

MARTHA

MY HEART IS READY TO BE FREE.

HOWARD

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE FOR ME,

MARTHA & HOWARD

YES, THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE

THAN WITH YOU.

AHHHHHHHHHHH
MARTHA

AHHHHHHHHHHH
MARTHA & HOWARD

MARTHA
Howard...

HOWARD
Yes! Come with me! Let's get out of here once and for all!

MARTHA
But what about Boss?

HOWARD
We sing. Together! Then Boss can't touch us. Gail told me! The club will crumble and we'll get back to the surface. And it's not just us, Martha. There's a whole city of souls under Boss's thumb. We can help them move forward!
(She looks uncertain)
You took a chance on me once, will you do it again?

The dressing room door slams open. It's Boss.

When Howard and Martha sing, it opens up the walls of the club (we see light pouring in) and they physically hurt Boss. When Boss sings, it closes the club and physically pushes Martha and Howard down. It's like a magic boxing match.

#24: SHOWDOWN (UPDATE 08.21.15)

BOSS
BACK AGAIN, I SEE. DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD IT IN YOU.

HOWARD
Well, get ready.

MARTHA
Howard and I—

BOSS
NOW, WHAT DID YOU SAY?

MARTHA
HOWARD. I REMEMBERED.
WE'RE LEAVING AND WE ARE FREEING ALL THE SOULS YOU'VE
TRAPPED IN THIS CLUB!

BOSS
OH, BAY, WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE HAS HE BEEN FILLING YOUR
HEAD WITH?

MARTHA
Him? It's you, Boss, You're the one who has been filling my
head with lies.

BOSS
I WAS ONLY GIVING YOU THAT WHICH YOU TRULY DESIRED.

MARTHA
No. This ends now!

BOSS
That's where you're wrong. This ends when I say it ends, and
frankly, we are just gettin' started.

I WAS WATCHIN' YOU, WATCHIN' AND WAITIN',
WHILE YOU WENT THROUGH YOUR LIFE,
GAVE UP ON YOUR DREAM OF FAME, GOOD DAUGHTER THEN A WIFE,
CAME TO YOU, AND ASKED YOU STRAIGHT UP ON YOUR WEDDING DAY,
YOU SPOKE YOUR WISH ALOUD TO ME, AND THUS YOU PAVED THE WAY.

MARTHA
I NEVER SAID I WANTED THIS, I NEVER SAID I'D COME,
MAYBE IT WAS MY DREAM LONG AGO, BUT THAT'S NOT WHO I AM.
I WANT MY LIFE WITH HOWARD BACK, I WANT TO GO BACK HOME,
MY CITY IS WORTH MORE TO ME THAN ANY WISH THAT YOU CAN GRANT!

BOSS
I SAW HOWARD TOO, HATIN YOUR CITY,
THAT'S RIGHT YOUR SO-CALLED MAN,
YOU REALLY THINK HE CARES ONE BIT,
LEAVIN' THE CRESCENT CITY SOON AS HE CAN,
I TELL YOU WHAT, HE DON'T GIVE A GOOD GODDAMN ABOUT THAT PLACE—
HE LOVES YOU TRUE, BUT THINKS YOUR TOWN IS JUST A LAME OL'
WASTE OF SPACE.

HOWARD

That's not true—

BEARD

Well, hello there, Dr. Hart!

HOWARD

Wait, how did you get here?

PONY

We missed ya—couldn't stay away!

BOSS

They work for me now.

BEARD

And the Boss is right, Martha. Your man sure as hell was ready to jump ship when we was in the Dome.

PONY

Mmmhmm. He wanted outta there fast.

HOWARD

Martha, I was trying to find you--

BOSS

That the whole story? We all know you hate that town—might as well give it up.

HOWARD

PLEASE HEAR ME OUT, ALL RIGHT,
YES, I ADMIT IT'S TRUE—
BEFORE , I DIDN'T GET IT—

HOWARD CONT'D

I DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE,
BUT SINCE THE STORM I'VE SEEN A PLACE
ALIVE WITH SO MUCH HEART,
ALTHOUGH IT'S BATTERED, ALMOST BROKEN,
IT WILL NOT BE TORN APART,
I NEED YOU, BUT THE CITY DOES TOO,
IT NEEDS ALL OF THE GOOD YOU CAN DO.

BOSS

Ain't that precious?
Beard, Pony—let's get this "moment" over with.

Ponytail grabs hold of Martha.

BEARD & PONYTAIL

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?
THIS AIN'T NO CROCK A SHIT!

Beard grabs hold of Howard. Boss laughs.

HOWARD

YOU BETTER LET HER GO!
GET YOUR HANDS OFF OF HER!
YOU HURT HER, AND I SWEAR,
IF YOU TOUCH EVEN ONE HAIR!

PONYTAIL

(When Martha resists)
Oooh. What can I say? She likes it rough, Doc!

HOWARD

Let her go!

The Patrons/Souls start waking up.

OLIVER

First, the living keep gettin' in and now the dead are waking
up. What next?

BOSS

(Flinging Patrons/Souls left and right)

I DON'T KNOW, WHAT KIND OF SPELL YOU ARE PLAYING AT,
THINKIN' THAT YOU ARE ALL THAT!

YOUR LIL' MAGIC MIGHT,
GIVE LESSER MEN A FRIGHT,
YOU'RE FEELIN' STRONG NOW.
TRUST ME BOY, I'M IMMORTAL YOU SHOULD KNOW,
I CAN HANDLE WHAT YOU THROW
NOTHIN' CAN DEFEAT ME!

ALL THESE SOULS' UNDER MY CONTROL
I CAN CHEW EM UP, OR SWALLOW 'EM WHOLE!
YOU'RE IN MY REALM, IN MY DOMAIN,

I'M GONNA CAUSE YOU SUCH PAIN.
CROSSING ME, AIN'T JUST STUPID, IT'S CRAY-AY-AY-ZY.

THIS WHOLE CLUB'S WAITIN' PATIENTLY.
ALL IT TAKES IS ONE WORD FROM ME,
THEN THEY'LL ATTACK, THEY'RE SEEIN' RED—
YOU GONNA WISH YOU WERE DEAD!

HOWARD

I'M BACK, AND DEEP WITHIN, YOU KNOW THAT'S STRANGE
AND YOU CAN FEEL IT.
GOT SOMETHIN' SPECIAL IN MY VOICE,
MY HEART AND IN MY SPIRIT—
I SHOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT AT ALL..
NOW, GAIL TOLD ME A SECRET 'FORE SHE MADE HER SACRIFICE:
YOU CHOSE MY MARTHA, AND I WOULD SAVE HER AT ANY PRICE.
I'LL ALWAYS FOLLOW HER CALL.
NOW, SHE AND I TOGETHER WE'LL END YOU WITH OUR SONG
RETURN THESE LOST SOULS TO THE PLACE THEY ACTU'LLY BELONG
OUR LOVE IS SO MUCH STRONGER, THAN YOU WILL EVER BE
MARTHA, ON MY COUNT, SING YOUR SONG, 1 ,2—

BEARD

(Covers Howard's mouth)
Man, you talk too much.

OLIVER FLOOD

Speak for yourself, I'm convinced.
(To Pony)
Yo, longhair, will you let her go of her already?

Oliver wrestles with Pony.

PONYTAIL

Get off of me, yah fuckin' weirdo.

OLIVER FLOOD

(Let's go of Ponytail; who falls over himself)
Happy to!

Howard escapes from Beard and runs to Martha.

OLIVER FLOOD CONT'D

(To Martha and Howard)
You two really are the real deal, aren'tcha?

HOWARD

OK—3!

MARTHA

FEAR NOT, DARLING, FOR YOU ARE SO LOVED,
AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU.

HOWARD

I KNEW AND I KNOW
THAT YOU'RE THE MOST WONDERFUL
WOMAN THAT I EVER COULD HAVE
FALLEN FOR AND YOU CHOSE ME.
I'M BRINGING YOU HOME!

As they sing together, the Gumbo Pot starts to shimmer
wildly, then shake madly.

BOSS

No, indeed! Get 'em!

Boss gestures at the Patrons/Souls who begin to move in
on Howard and Martha.

HOWARD

(Moves in front of Martha)

GET BACK! Stay away from her!

MARTHA

FEAR NOT, MY FRIENDS, YOUR SOULS ARE YOUR OWN,
IT'S TIME TO PASS BEYOND WHAT'S KNOWN.
HOLD ONTO THE LIGHT, LET DARKNESS BE GONE!

One of the Patron nearly snags her, but as Howard sings,
falls away.

HOWARD

AND NOW YOU MUST MOVE ON!

MARTHA & HOWARD

REMEMBER THAT YOUR LIFE WAS MEANINGFUL.
YOU DESERVE FREEDOM TO MOVE ON FROM THIS HELL!
LIFT YOUR VOICE WITH POWER DEEP IN YOU,
YOU'LL CARRY US TO SAFETY RIGHT AS YOU DO!
WE'LL BREAK HIS SPELL WITH THE FORCE OF OUR LOVE!
KNOW THE SPIRIT OF OUR CITY LIVES IN EACH AND EV'RY ONE OF—

SOULS

YOU—

The Patrons/Souls are broken from their trance; they begin to recognize each other.

MARTHA & HOWARD CONT'D
FEAR NOT, DARLING,
FOR YOU ARE SO LOVED,
AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU.
CALL UPON ME
WHEN THE WORLD IS COLD,
AND LOVE WILL WARM
YOUR HEART ANEW.

PATRON #1
Nicole!

PATRON #2
Paw-Paw! Is that you?

PATRON #3
T Paul!

BOSS
(Falls to the ground; as if hit by a sharp pain)
Oh...

BEARD
Boss, what's goin' on?

Boss disappears. The Patrons/Souls begin to rise out of the Club. Moving beyond. They are free.

PONYTAIL
Hey! Where did he go?

OLIVER FLOOD
I dunno! But looks like I'm outta here, too, and the Gumbo Pot is closed for business! So long, boys!

MARTHA, HOWARD, OLIVER, & PATRONS
HEART ANEW...

The Waves/Water take all the souls. They tunnel, upward together toward the surface.

Shift.

SCENE SEVEN: THE SURFACE AGAIN

The Lakefront. The Club Patrons who became the WAVES are now the CITY; they rise from the water—wide-eyed and shaken—and begin the pilgrimage beyond. Martha and Howard are among them.

#26: CATEGORY THREE REPRISE - PART ONE (UPDATE 08.23.15)

THE CITY/ALL

THE WAVES' ARE DROPPIN',
THE WIND IS FADIN',
HEAR A BIG 'OL YAWN FROM THE SEA.
OOH EEH OOH EEH...

SOME FOLKS RETURNIN',
SOME FOLKS ARE STAYIN',
WHAT CRESCENT CITY WILL WE SEE?
OOH EEH OOH EEH...

TREY

GOT A WHOLE LOTTA BLUE TARPS,

ESTHER

GOT A WHOLE LOTTA BLACK MOLD,

MS. FELICE

GOT A WHOLE LOTTA WRECK
IN THIS CITY 'A MINE.

NINE

WE'LL FIX UP OUR HOUSES,

CHARLIE

WE'LL LIVE IN THESE TRAILERS,

HOLLY

FOR ONE YEAR OR MORE.

HOLLY, ESTHER, SLY, & CHARLIE

WHAT FOR?
WHAT FOR?

+ MS. FELICE

WHAT FOR?

WHAT FOR?

AND WE'LL

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT.
AND WE'LL

HOPE, HOPE, HOPE,
BECAUSE

TIME, TIME, TIME—
BECAUSE
TIME'LL TELL IT,
TIME'LL TELL IT,
TIME'LL TELL IT,
ALL
'CUZ...

THE CITY/ALL

ESTHER & NINE

+ CHARLIE

ALL/THE CITY

MARTHA

I can't believe it. All this ruin for one man's greed...

HOWARD

But we made it, Martha! We're here, you're here!

He kisses Martha fiercely.

Suddenly, Boss hobbles in slowly, across the wreckage.
Beard and Ponytail are by his side.

BOSS

Aw. Ain't that the sweetest?

BEARD

Mhmm.

BOSS

Funny thing is, you're no longer one of the living, my dear Martha.

HOWARD

What the hell are you talking about?

BOSS

She took my hand and dove to her death. *All on her own.*

BEARD

Damn, right!

BEARD

Joke's on you, son!

PONYTAIL

Martha's gotta go.

He and Beard laugh hard. Suddenly, Martha's spirit rises.

MARTHA

I'm not going with you, Boss.
My spirit's free now, and I choose to ascend.

HOWARD

What's going on? Martha!

MARTHA

(To Boss)

Your hold on me and my city is done.

BOSS

Oh yeah! Well, I got news for you! This ain't the end of me—
'cause there IS NO END OF ME. *I'm everywhere in this Godforsaken place!*
Everywhere in the world.

Beard, Pony, let's get out of this dump. I got bigger towns to crush!

BEARD & PONYTAIL

Yessir!

A crash of thunder and lightning. Boss and Beard vanish.
Martha looks to Howard.

MARTHA

We freed all those souls. Now they can move on—I can move on.
This is where I have to leave you—

HOWARD

There has to be some other way.

MARTHA

Rebuild, Howard.

HOWARD

Martha. No! Please...

MARTHA

Every time you walk through my city, you are with me.
I love you. I always will.

HOWARD

Martha!

A torrid musical interlude follows as the Waves take her-up, up and away, away, away--swooping and swerving until she's out of sight.

Shift.

Howard journeys, alone, toward his old neighborhood. The floodwaters have receded and the City emerges. This is the pilgrimage home.

EPILOGUE: THE CITY RISES

#26: CATEGORY THREE REPRISE - PART TWO (Update 08.23.15)

MS. FELICE

A CHANGE IS COMIN',
RENEWAL'S COMIN',
WHAT CRESCENT CITY WILL IT BE?
OOH EEH OOH EEH....

NOW YOU'RE RETURNIN'
YOUR HEART IS BURNIN'
WHAT KINDA LIFE IS'IT GONNA BE?

ALL/THE CITY

OOH EEH OOH EEH

Martha and Howard's neighborhood.

Ms. Felice approaches Howard. He stands in his yard looking at the burnt remains of his house. He looks a mess.

MS. FELICE

Welcome home, bay.

HOWARD

Hi, Ms. Felice.

MS. FELICE

Human beings sure know how to survive, don't we?

(Beat)

Now where's that sweet wife of yours?

(Howard clenches his jaw.)

Oh, no, baby... I can't believe—I'm so sorry.

Martha LeDoux was a light.

HOWARD

She's still here...

MS. FELICE

You right, baby. Her spirit remains. You absolutely right.
Come here.

Ms. Felice holds Howard in a lengthy embrace as a full
on second-line picks up.

#27: AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE [AUDIO TRACK #14] (UPDATE 08.23.15)

THE CITY/ALL

FLOODWATER'S GONE, FLOODWATER'S GONE
NOW WE CAN GET TO MOVIN' ON!

NINE

RODE THE STORM OUT IN THAT HOUSE ,
FLEUR DE LIS [PRONOUNCED FLUR DE LEE] STAMPED ON MY SOUL.
GOTTA GUT MY PLACE,
WON'T LET IT BEAT ME DOWN!
I BELONG HERE,
I WILL NOT LEAVE MY TOWN!

THE CITY/ALL

CALL IT HOME,
AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!

ESTHER

WENT UP NORTH, BUT NOW WE'RE BACK,
BATON ROUGE AIN'T WHERE IT'S AT!
WELL, OUR ROOF CAVED IN,
IT'S JUST A PILE 'A STICKS!
LET'S GET GOIN',
I'VE GOT A HOME TO FIX!

THE CITY/ALL

WELCOME, BACK!
AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE,

NINE

AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!

CHARLIE

THEY SAID TO MOVE
SHUT DOWN, NEVER COME BACK!
THEY SAID WE'RE FOOLS!
THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND AND I DON'T WANT THEIR ADVICE!

TREY

THEY SURE DON'T KNOW
HOW THIS CITY HOLDS YOU!
THEY SURE DON'T GET,

TREY & CHARLIE

IT'S MORE THAN MONDAY NIGHT RED BEANS AND RICE!

MS. FELICE

BORN AND RAISED RIGHT ON THIS BLOCK,
THEN GREW UP AND BOUGHT MY HOUSE.
WELL, THE FLOOD CAME IN,
AND ALL GOT TORN APART.
BUT I CAME BACK;
STORM COULDN'T TAKE MY HEART.

THE CITY/ALL

CALL IT HOME—
AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!
AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!

*FEAR NOT DARLING, FOR YOU ARE SO LOVED
AN ANGEL WATCHES OVER YOU...*

HOWARD

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER,
THE WAY YOU SANG ME THAT LULLABY.
I FIND EVERYTHING
IS FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH YOU.

THE CITY/ALL

OOO OOO
OOO OOO

HOWARD

THIS WOMAN HAS YOUR SMILE,
THAT MAN HAS YOUR LAUGH,
THAT STRANGER SAYS, "HEY, BAY!"
ANOTHER ASKS, "HOW'S YOUR DAY?"
MS. FELICE HUGGED ME FOR TWO WHOLE MINUTES

I FIN'LLY KNOW JUST WHAT IT IS
IN THIS PLACE YOU LOVED SO MUCH
IT HAS YOUR HEART
I CAN FEEL YOU ALL AROUND
NOW, IT'S MY PLACE, TOO.
I'LL HELP THIS TOWN REBOUND!

CALL IT HOME,
AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!

THE CITY/ALL

AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!

THEY SAID LET GO,
FORGET, COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS!
THEY SAID WE'RE NUTS,
THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY EVEN ONE OF US STAYS.
THEY SURE DON'T KNOW,
HOW THIS CITY CLAIMS YOU.
THEY SURE DON'T SEE,
IT'S MORE THAN CARNIVAL AND FRESH BEIGNETS!

HOWARD & THE CITY/ALL

INCH-BY-INCH AND STEP-BY-STEP,
SHOW 'EM ALL WHAT WE'RE MADE OF!
TARP ON THE ROOF

HOWARD & THE CITY/ALL

AND TRAILER IN THE YARD!

RECOV'RY STARTS HERE,
ORLEANS [AS IN, THE PARISH: PRONOUNCED OR-LEENS] TO ST. BERNARD—

WELCOME HOME, SOPRANOS

AIN'T NOWHERE— BARITONES & BASSES

TELL YOU, BAY, TENORS

AIN'T NOWHERE— ALTOS

BEST BELIEVE, HOWARD

AIN'T NOWHERE— HOLLY & ESTHER

IT'S FOR TRUE, MS. FELICE

AIN'T NOWHERE! ALTOS & BARITONES/BASSES

GOT DAT RIGHT!
AIN'T NOWHERE ELSE!
AHHH HOWARD & THE CITY

END OF PLAY.