

OUTLAW WEDDING

A Play in Two Acts

by

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by Isaac Byrne

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Characters

Russell Tulane—A cis man in his mid 30s/40s. Texas born and bred. A bit haunted.

Joan Mason— a cis woman in her mid 30s/40s. Tall, broad shouldered, and heavy set. Masculine haircut. Usually wearing an auto mechanic jumpsuit.

The Old Man—A cis man in his 60s, looks like an West Texas rancher from the 1970s. Imposing. Russell's father.

Gunner Laughton/"Bella Scoria"—A non binary drag queen 20s. They move gracefully sometimes with a masculine and sometimes a feminine air. Dresses like a cross between a pirate and an elf. As "Bella Scoria" ze is an impressive avant garde style queen similar to "Hungry."

Gary—A cis man mid 30s/40s. Short bespectacled accountant. Wears sneakers with slacks. Joan's husband.

Jimmy Belfast/"Claire Buoyant"—A cis male drag queen 60s. As Jimmy, he has the occasional feminine flair, but has a rough overall masculine presence. Pearl snap shirts with cowboy boots and a rhinestone belt buckle, 50's style haircut. Ex-military. As "Claire Buoyant" she looks like the old lady from the Far Side comic strip. An old school drag queen of the seedy vaudeville variety.

Desiree—A big, heavy set, Black bearded drag queen. Usually dressed comfortably but always in full make up complete with big fake eyelashes. Very feminine.

Leigh Peters—A cis woman in her 50s/60s. Painfully sincere and good natured. Boyish and cherubic.

Nachetska (Illya Dean Tulane)—A cis woman in her mid 60s. Dresses like a community theatre costume designer's idea of a rich heiress. Walks with a rhinestone bejeweled cane. Speaks with an indeterminate European accent. As Illya Dean, soft spoken, Texas accent. Russell's Mother

Jaspal Dhawan—An Indian man in his 20s/30s. Serious and plain spoken. Ayesha's husband.

Ayesha Dhawan—An Indian Woman in her 20s/30s. Serious but kind. Jaspal's wife.

Sheriff Austin Knotts—A man. A bit overwhelmed by the world and his role in it.

Woody Head Jr.—A man. A church deacon determined to protect his community. The worst.

Danny/Skype Voices—Males in their 20s. Military. (Can be doubled by actor playing Woody)

Place

An empty rundown former department store in an abandoned strip mall outside of Weatherford Texas.

Time

September 10, 2011

Notes on Casting:

The Old Man should be play by a White actor.

Russell and Nachetska should probably be played by white presenting actors. It's not entirely necessary, but there's a lot of inherent privilege in these characters and that should be reckoned with before casting a non-white actor in these roles. Be careful.

Gunner must be played by a trans or non binary actor.

Jaspal and Ayesha must be played by South Asian actors.

Desiree must be played by a non-white actor. Preferably a Black actor but any non white actor may suffice.

Also....

Desiree identifies as “ a Queen”, has a prominent beard, and does not make any real effort to pass as a woman. She lives “in drag.” She uses feminine pronouns but does not identify as transgender. This unique identity may present some interesting casting opportunities: use your best judgement.

All other roles can and *should* be played by any ethnicity.

To be clear, there is no acceptable production of this play where the only non-white actors are Jaspal, Ayesha, and Desiree.

Notes on scenery and necessary stagecraft

The scenery does not need to be naturalistic or even very realistic. This play is in many ways about the memories of places and people that we carry in our minds. An evocative suggestion of the dressing room and department store is fine so long as it can be physically interacted with in the appropriate ways laid out in the script. Other necessary bits of stage craft like the rain or the “glitter cannon” can be handled in clever ways that are theatrically transparent to the audience so long as it does not distract or emotionally remove the audience from the scene.

Notes on Music:

Specific songs and lyrics are used in this script. They've been chosen carefully and specifically for tone and symbolism, but every production must of course get the rights to use those specific songs. If those rights cannot be attained, then other appropriate songs and lyrics that the production is able to get the rights to can be substituted. Do your best, use good judgment, and don't use artists' work without compensation.

Pronunciation

The name Illya Dean should be pronounced EYE LAH DEEN

Content Warning

There is racist, homophobic, misogynistic, and oppressive language used in this play. There is violence and imagery in this play that may be triggering for some people, particularly people of color, women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

ACT 1

Lights up on a old rusty folding chair.

Russ Tulane is sitting in the chair. There's a gym bag next to him. He is humming something under his breath. He stops and closes his eyes. Big breath.

He looks up and out at us.

RUSS

There are four deaths. Not three. There is the body's death. When you stop breathing and you turn cold. Then there's the death of the last person who knew you. The point in time where no one living remembers you. The third death is when all trace of you is forgotten and not even a stranger says your name out loud anymore. *(Beat)* But there is an earlier death.

Russ stands up and takes off his pants. He opens the gym bag and looks inside.

RUSS

A more personal death.

Russ takes an old straight razor out of the bag. He holds the razor to his arm, but he is almost frozen and nearly shaking from fear.

RUSS

(Humming) "Mmm num ba de. Dum bum ba be" *(To himself)* No more fucking around.

He starts shaving his forearms. It kinda hurts. He pulls out shaving cream from the bag and lathers up his arms and continues shaving them as he continues.

RUSS

(To us) When you, or someone you love, changes so much that you don't know them anymore. They're gone. Who you were with them is gone. You have three options at that point: 1) keep on doing the same old shit like nothing's wrong and watch it die and probably lose everything else in your life too, you big fucking dummy. 2) Walk away, and pretend to forget, and then spend the rest of your life trying to figure out what you did wrong. 3)....Or Change. Radically change. Do the big thing you're scared of, that thing you never did, that that's either gonna blow it all up or bring it all back.

Russ puts shaving cream on his legs. A moment of nearly overwhelming terror. He starts shaving his legs.

RUSS

Feels like a kinda homicide/suicide. They're dead to you, you're dead to them, and now you gotta kill yourself to fix it.

Lights expand slowly to reveal Russ is in a small decrepit storage room in an abandoned strip mall store.

It's pretty depressing.

RUSS

I don't know if that's a lie or the truth, or just fucking crazy, but I just don't know any other goddam way forward.

Russ examines his work. He's not good at this.

A moment of panic again.

Joan Mason opens the door and we hear the sound of an electric saw outside.

She stares at Russ. He stops and looks at her. She enters, dragging a small folding table with a large bedazzled tackle box, a hammer, duck tape, a tarp, and a box of nails on top of it. We can hear sawing and someone cussing outside.

MASON

Russ.

RUSS

Mase.

MASON

Never let it be said you didn't do everything all out. You better hurry this up. Gary's trying to cut out those holes in the banquet tables for you. The, uh, "rolling showgirl" holes? It's not going well.

RUSS

Well why don't you help him?

MASON

Oh no. Bless his little nerdy heart, he's trying to get me all hot and bothered with his "man skills" by failing to properly use a circ saw.

RUSS

When you gonna finally let that poor boy marry you? He proposes every 5 minutes he's around you. He's gonna cut a finger off trying to win your approval.

MASON

Absolutely not. People talk enough as it is. Big ole troll Joan Mason and soft little hobbit Gary Beasley walking down the aisle—no thanks. I don't even let him kiss me in public.

RUSS

But in the dark...

MASON

In the dark is none of your damn business. We can't all be beloved local high school sports legends like you, Russell "Fast Lane" Tulane. "EAT'EM UP CATS!" Oh Dammit. He's right. It does get me kinda hot watching him flail around helplessly with power tools. Mmmhm.

Mason hammers two nails into the wall while Russ continues to shave. She takes his suit jacket and dress shirt off of the floor and hangs them on the nails.

RUSS

You keep putting nails in that wall and we're gonna lose the deposit.

MASON

Yeah I'm really destroying the beauty and majesty of this palatial venue.

Mason continues to hammer nails in the wall.

RUSS

Jaspal said no alterations.

MASON

Jaspal can suck my fucking clit. This place looks like a deleted scene from *Saw*. If he thinks a couple nails in this rotten drywall is a real problem then I'll just nail his fucking prayer rug to the ceiling.

RUSS

Mason.

MASON

Russ. Yeah, yeah, I'm sorry, not sorry. I'm really happy to be decorating an old toilet for an illegal gay wedding.

From somewhere, there is a sound of an old man's disapproving grunt. Russ flinches.

MASON

On the tenth anniversary, of 9/11,

Another grunt from somewhere.

MASON

In a death trap owned by a money hungry Muslim asshole...

A dim light flickers up on the Old Man.

There is something confined about him right now. As if he were a fixture or a machine.

The Old Man is focused intensely on Russ.

OLD MAN

(A guttural growl) GRRRRRRRRRR...GODDAM ABOMINATION.

Russ takes a shaky breath.

Russ is very aware of the Old Man although he does not look at him. Mason does not hear or see the Old Man.

Mason continues putting nails in the wall, drapes the tarp over the folding table, and arranges things in the room.

MASON

Still not sure why exactly you're doing this. Is this a wedding or a fucking talent show contest?

OLD MAN

Why?

Russ flinches.

RUSS

I guess it's both.

MASON

Look, you wanna do drag at your momma's wedding that's your business. I fix cars, not mommy issues.

RUSS

It's gift okay? Sort of.

OLD MAN

WHY?

Russ flinches.

RUSS

I gotta make it right. This will make it right.

OLD MAN

WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY?!.....I ain't gonna let her ruin you.

Mason looks at Russ and realizes the he's in distress.

MASON

Sure thing Russ. Whatever you need to do.

A beat while Russ calms himself.

RUSS

Thanks.

MASON

So you're not gay

RUSS

No.

MASON

That's definitely not why Lynn's divorcing you

RUSS

No.

MASON

you're not a secret closet cross dresser,

RUSS

No.

MASON

Is THIS is why your restaurant went under? You lost the local Christian conservative market?

RUSS

Fuck off

MASON

Or you're just really convinced your momma wants to surprise see you in a dress on her illegal gay wedding day. I gotcha ya brother. It's not weird at all. Relax. *(Genuinely)* Whatever you need. I wish we could have gotten any other place—even the damn community center—but I'm here for you

RUSS

Thank you. Let's....let's do this right Mase. Be a little better than we came from. P's and Q's Okay? *(Pointing at the bedazzled toolbox)* What's that?

MASON

Make up.

RUSS

You own make up?

MASON

Nope. No, it's not my make up. Hers!

RUSS

Whose?!

Russ looks at the make up case very apprehensively.

MASON

(with considerable delight) His. Gunner's. Bella's. Hers? Fuck dude, I don't know. It's 'her' right? Like you're supposed to use the feminine pronoun for them right? Or is that just when they have their "face" on? What happens when they're wearing make up just like around the house? I DON'T KNOW THE RULES RUSS BUT IT'S EXCITING!

Mason looks around at her work

Ugh. I wish we had a proper dressing room!

RUSS

We are in a dressing room.

MASON

This is not a dressing room. This is where Hannibal Lector hid the bodies. Can't even lock the door. I would have figured you might want some extra privacy for whole tuck and tape thing.

RUSS

Tuck and?

MASON

Oh ho ho ho!! You have no fucking idea what you're getting into do you? Wait. Did you shave your arms?

RUSS

....yeah...

MASON

(Laughing) Oh wow! Did you shave downstairs too?

RUSS

Yes. I shaved that this morning. And also, you know you can go gently fuck yourself

MASON

That's what Gary's for darling.

Gunner Laughton enters.

GUNNER

This place feels like cancer. Hello Russell, your mother's lucky I love her.

OLD MAN

QUEER.

Russ flinches.

GUNNER

Sorry do you prefer Russ?

Russ can't speak, so he nods

Russ. Promise me this place won't look like this tomorrow? It feels like a snuff film not a wedding reception.

MASON

We're gonna decorate. Lots of butterflies. It's gonna be super gay, super lezzie, and super fabulous!

GUNNER

(Deciding to move past all this) Sure. So long as we can move past the whole glory hole aesthetic here, not really my scene.

Gunner opens their make up case and start pulling out candles, incense, and rainbow decorations—they start placing them around the room.

Okay, we need to work fast on this Russ, because Nachetska is on her way here, and this is still all a big surprise, right?

RUSS

Wait she is? Is Leigh with her?

GUNNER

I have no idea honey, and look I want to help you, but this is a lot of work and we need to dive in fast. Okay?

Closing their eyes and making ritualistic movements with their hands on and around Russ, while they begin a kind of humming chant prayer song

***Today is a sunrise from all the strife
And all the dreary ashes of your life
New life remade completely free
Into exactly what you want to be.***

Exactly, what you're meant to be.

***I will protect you, rising phoenix flame,
And I know, that you will fight for me the same***

Today, today, you become my family.

Today you are reborn, Ms...

They stop and open their eyes.

Do you have a persona yet? A name? A drag name?

RUSS

Uh...do I have to?

GUNNER

Uh...I mean this whole process is about stepping into a persona. Embracing a new and different beautiful side of you! You don't have a name?

MASON

You need a good name Russ! Like "Eileen Dover!" Or "Peter Pulling Mary!" *(To Gunner)* What does your drag name mean? Is it Spanish?

GUNNER

Bella Scoria? It means "beautiful slag." Jimmy's name is "Claire Buoyant" which mean's "cheap joke" and Desiree's name is just...Desiree. Cuz she's always Desiree.

RUSS

I was just gonna do the, uh, thing. Is all this necessary?

GUNNER

Uh okay. Why are you doing this?

RUSS

It's a....gift.

GUNNER

...for...Nachetska?...Okay. That's new....I mean...I guess we can skip the whole transformation/birth/rebirth/phoenix ritual I like to do when I doula someone's new drag life.

Starts putting decorations back into the case.

You're just doing this to do it huh? Alright, fine. So. You shaved your arms. Are you gonna shave your eyebrows off?

RUSS

Eyebrows?

Gunner pulls out nail polish and holds it up to Russ's hands.

OLD MAN

THIS.

Russ starts to panic.

RUSS

Uh...

GUNNER

(Putting away the nail polish) We should probably concentrate on creating/finding your face.

MASON

We don't have much to work with. Might need several coats here.

Mason and Gunner are now examining Russ like a broken down car engine that needs a lot of work. Russ is terrified. Each time the Old Man speaks, it gets worse.

OLD MAN

Ain't right.

RUSS

You know, I...

GUNNER

Okay, ARE you gonna shave your eyebrows off?

MASON

You should definitely shave them off

RUSS

I'm not...

GUNNER

I mean you shaved your arms. I'm just trying to gauge how hard you wanna go here?

OLD MAN

What you did.

Russ flinches and shakes his head

GUNNER

No? Okay we'll cover.

MASON

Cover?

GUNNER

You cover them up, glue them down and powder, and then we're gonna draw them in a different location.

MASON

Permabond? Rubber Cement?

GUNNER

Elmers glue stick. Then we powder with a base that matches his skin tone.

MASON

Wait, his? Or HERS? I mean SORRY, I'm not clear on when we switch the pronouns here.

GUNNER

Well he's not a she yet. Gotta earn that.

MASON

You gotta earn that Russ.

OLD MAN

Against Nature.

RUSS

Hey...um...

GUNNER

Not yet. Okay, then we draw the eyebrows in a different location. Uh...Joan?

MASON

You can call me Mason, or Mase.

GUNNER

Okay, Mase, am I doing you too?

MASON

Me? Uhhh....I'm...already a...woman....

GUNNER

I'm aware. Women can do drag, as men, like a Drag King, or they can do feminine drag. They're called Hyper Queens. Drag is really a conversation about gender norms and gender performance so it's open to anyone.

MASON

Oh. Okay, cool. I'm good though. QUESTION. You're wearing make up. Do I call you a he or a she? I'm confused.

GUNNER

You can call me Gunner. When I'm in my "face" I'm *Bella Scoria*. And for pronouns I prefer they. Or ze. I'm not really either.

MASON

Wow...Okay...Like you're a THING? Or a group of people? I'm not used to so many names and things, man I'm probably gonna fuck that up. Seems hard to remember. Can I just say "hey you?"

GUNNER

(With a look and a stare at MASON. Decides not to get into it.) Uh huh. Sure. Call me whatever is easiest for you, whatever YOU decide, Joan "Mase" Mason.

Long awkward moment. Mason knows she crossed a line but doesn't know how to make amends. Gunner dives into the makeup case. They pull out several shades of lipstick and foundation. They hold different combinations up to Russ' face.

OLD MAN

CORRUPTION AND POLLUTION.

Russell is visibly panicking now and flinching when the make up gets close to his face

GUNNER

You okay, honey? You look scared. You wanna do the phoenix rebirth ritual?

MASON

Russ? You alright?

RUSS

I can do this. I can do this. I CAN DO THIS!

Russ grabs some make up and quickly jabs some on his face.

GUNNER

Oh. No we should do this right.

RUSS
I got it!/

RUSS
/LET'S JUST DO THE FUCKER!/

MASON
/What are you doing?/

OLD MAN
(Violently) CUNT. CUNT. CUNT.

Russ stops and looks at his face. Everyone looks at it. It's a mess.

OLD MAN
YOU QUEER?!

Russ starts to panic.

RUSS
Ahhhhh.....

MASON
What the fuck Russ. Are you having a stroke?!

RUSS
(Hyperventilating) I..uh..uh...

GUNNER
Let's do this right and take our TIME/

GUNNER
/You're making a mess/

RUSS
I AM DOING THE THING

OLD MAN
POISON FAGGOT PAINT.

OLD MAN
Don't you try to hide from me. I see you.

GUNNER
(Grabbing makeup wipes and trying to clean up Russ' face) Why don't you let the expert here do the make up? I'm here to help you, not to clean up after your messes, okay?

Gunner starts to try and reapply the make up

OLD MAN
I ain't gonna let you go queer on me.

Russ flinches away. Gunner realizes that the makeup is freaking Russ out.

GUNNER
You know what? Let's do the body first. Make up later. So. Boobs. We going with a stuffed bra? Mason what do you think?

MASON

Uh....*(realizing what Gunner is doing to calm Russ)* oh...uh, Is there another option?

GUNNER

Well once we put him in the corset we can tape and redistribute...

They grab Russ's side skin and skin around his back

this and this. Painful but there's enough here to work with.

MASON

Plenty of building material. What about the kibbles and bits situation. What's game plan there?

GUNNER

You're definitely going to have to tuck.

MASON

Oh definitely

GUNNER

Undies off sweetie.

RUSS

Wait. What?! Now?

GUNNER

Honey I have to do you and me on the night. And me takes a lot of time. You wanna do this right? I gotta know how to do you, and how to do you quick. Because you have no idea what you're doing and you don't seem interested in learning and you just seem to want me to do it for you. That's fine, but this is my favor and we're doing it my way.

MASON

Panties off.

RUSS

You gonna step outside?

MASON

Oh fuck you Russ. You ain't got anything I've haven't seen a half a hundred times.

RUSS

This ain't skinny dipping Mase. I love you but do ya mind? You're a little too into this.

Mason hesitates for a moment.

MASON

Okay full disclosure, I promised Gary I'd fill him in on the whole process. He's got a weird thing for all this drag stuff since this whole production of a wedding started. I tell him about it and he can't keep his hands off me. And....oooof.....that boy...wow...

GUNNER

Lot's of straight men get turned on by it.

RUSS

This is weird.

MASON

You wanna get into what's weird about this whole thing?

RUSS

It's fucking weird.

MASON

I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you over the shaving cream on your arms.

RUSS

I don't wanna be a part of your weird secretive sex life.

MASON

You ain't a part of it and I'm not taking relationship advice from you. Not a great track record there, Russ. Look. As far as this drag fetish thing goes, I plan on taking this particular ticket to sexual Disneyland tonight and for as long as it's valid. Panties off.

RUSS

Jesus.

RUSS stands up and takes off his underwear.

GUNNER

You already shaved down there.

MASON

Yeah, smooth like a baby. Good job, Russ. What about the twins?

GUNNER

Back into the cavity.

MASON

Ah.

RUSS

Cavity?

GUNNER

Yeah sweetie, you have to push them back up into the abdominal cavity

MASON

Of course

RUSS

Wait WHAT!?

GUNNER

You have to push them back up.

RUSS

Do they come back!?

GUNNER

Yes they come back. It doesn't hurt.

MASON

Seems like it's gonna hurt.

GUNNER

Not really.

RUSS

There's now way of getting around uh... putting the...twins...back up there?

GUNNER

Well if you told me beforehand this was a thing I could have brought a big hoop skirt

MASON

No we definitely want to go the stretch pants tights route

RUSS

We..?

GUNNER

Just breathe Russ. Here, I like to say a little mantra to get my mind right: “Time to be butterfly”

RUSS

Time to uh....be... a...

GUNNER

Okay. So we push the twins up like this.

Gunner kneels down and pushes them up.

RUSS

OH OKAY OH!

OLD MAN

WHY? WHY? WHY? GODDAM ABOMINATION!

Russ is now focused again on the Old Man. This seems to activate the Old Man again.

MASON

Holy shit. Yeah. I see. They just go right back in.

RUSS

OW OW OW OW

GUNNER

Honey it doesn't really hurt that much. It's just takes some getting used to.

OLD MAN

THIS! THIS! THIS! CUNT.

RUSS

I DIDN'T OH WOW SHIT FUCK

GUNNER

Then we pull the elephant back to the watering hole.

OLD MAN

YOU QUEER?

RUSS

Wait um

GUNNER

Better if we just do this sweetheart.

MASON

Russ? You look like you're having a heart attack. You alright?

OLD MAN

You know I gotta do this.

RUSS

(Russ is trying to stop focusing on the Old Man) No. Yes. Mmm num ba de Dum bum ba be! Yes yes!

MASON

Alright. Let's git her done.

GUNNER

This part does hurt. Time be a butterfly.

OLD MAN

I AIN'T GONNA LET YOU GO QUEER ON ME!

RUSS

WAIT PLEASE

Gunner does the Tuck.

RUSS

FUCK! HOLY FUCK HOLY FUCK HOLY FUCK

MASON

Okay. Yeah.

GUNNER

Can you hand me the duct tape?

MASON

Of course.

OLD MAN
AGAINST NATURE.

RUSS

MMM NUM BA DE! DUM BUM BA DE!

GUNNER

Just breathe. And then we tape across the body to keep the testicles up. Spread your legs a little more.

RUSS
AH! OH UH!!

OLD MAN
I'M ABOUT TO ERASE YOU!

GUNNER

Honey you do not need to have a full blown panic attack! I know it hurts but it's just part of the deal okay? Are you okay? Do we need to stop?

RUSS
(Trying to regain control) I..uh...uh...

Russ takes a breath and nods.

OLD MAN

You still thinking about hitting me?

RUSS
NO. I AM A FUCKING BUTTERFLY.

GUNNER

Okay, butterfly. I need you to breathe. Don't pass out on me. Take his hand so he doesn't keel over.

Mason goes to take Russ's hand. He won't take it.

MASON

Is this how you're gonna raise money to save the restaurant? Doing drag?

RUSS
The restaurant's already sold and gone.

GUNNER

(Taking control again) Okay. We tape this way and tape that way so they won't fall out. And then you take one piece of tape and then cover the whole the thing. Butterfly.

RUSS
Butterfly.

Gunner tapes Russ.

GUNNER

Hmmmm...there's a lot of sweating.

MASON

So much.

RUSS

Please god.

GUNNER

It looks like we might need to make a compression thong in case the tape gets too moist. We don't want everything falling out in the middle of your number.

OLD MAN

I know she made you do it.

RUSS

FUCKING HELL! Is there more happening or what do I, do we?

GUNNER

Just breathe. Take a minute and get used to it. Keep your hands here while I make the thong.

Gunner goes to their toolkit and starts to make a thong while Mason examines the "tuck."

Russ accidentally locks eyes with the Old Man. He closes his eyes quickly but it's too late. The Old Man is physically activated now and advances slowly on Russ.

OLD MAN

(With great violence) GRRRRRRRRRRRRR..Why? Why? WHY? WHY WHY WHY??
GODDAM ABOMINATION!! ...You know I gotta do this...this...this...THIS!

RUSS

NO!

Russ opens his eyes to see the Old Man directly in front of him. Russ is almost shaking/about to explode. Stand off. Russ turns away from the Old Man and hits or kicks something. Hard. It's a violent, surprising explosion.

GUNNER

Whoa!

MASON

What the fuck Russ?

OLD MAN

(Laughing)

So....you still wanna dance? Ah?

The Old Man suddenly seems freer. He moves around the space with ease now and takes in more than just Russ.

MASON

You really, really look like you're gonna pass out Russ. Here, hold my hand you big baby.

Russ tries to ignore the Old Man and takes her hand. Gunner holds the thong as Russ steps into it.

The door opens and Gary enters covered in sawdust.

GARY

Hey honey, there's something wrong with your saw—OH WOW.

MASON

Gary! You should knock first

GARY

WOW.

GUNNER

Always, always knock.

GARY

(Gary has not taken his eyes off of Russ) WOW.

RUSS

(In a kind of weird not there voice) Hi Gary.

GARY

HI RUSS.

GUNNER

I think we need some privacy. Russ is looking a little pale. Breathe Russ. Don't fucking pass out on me.

MASON

Yeah. Honestly I'm feeling a little queasy myself. Honey, let us finish up here okay?

GARY

Okay....jesus they're totally gone...

OLD MAN

Probably forever.

RUSS

Oh man

GUNNER

That's the idea.

GARY

(To Mason) PLEASE MARRY ME!!

GUNNER

Whoa!

MASON

NO. STOP IT. OUT. (*Whispering in Gary's ear*) I'll take a break in a bit and meet you in the car okay?

GARY

Oooohhh Ok. Yeah.

Gary turns to leave but Jimmy Belfast enters before he can leave. He is carrying a fishing tackle box labeled in permanent marker "JIMMY'S. NOT YOURS!" and several garment bags. He walks around brusquely rearranging things and setting up the "dressing room" to his satisfaction.

During this whole next section, Russ is having a slow motion panic attack and quietly starting to hyperventilate

JIMMY

Hooah! What's all the smoking and joking in here about? You practicing the tuck, Russ? Got the boom stick nut to butt already, huh? Gonna be sore for the show. Alright, I just tested my wif hotspot; we're good to go for my tribute to the troops number! I got the Christmas lights and the folding tables from the church, where's Leigh at? I wanted to see if she wants to be a part of the tribute, oh SHIT, I don't know if Desiree brought the glue sticks,

Jimmy walks back to the door as he's talking and opens it

OLD MAN

(*Moving closer to Russ*) This one...

JIMMY

DEZZZZZZ!

OLD MAN

(*Closer*) He knows what you did.

Russ start to hyperventilate more. Jimmy turns and walks back to look at Russ

JIMMY

Russ, I'm worried about Pastor Dave, he seems real skittish about all this. Oh Honey. No. Duct Tape? No. Who did this to you?

OLD MAN

(*Closer*) Can't even breathe now, can ya?

MASON

What do you prefer?

GARY

Looks like it's already sweating off

JIMMY

DEZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

GUNNER

I always use duct tape.

OLD MAN

(Closer) I mean, he's gotta know the whole story, doesn't he?

JIMMY

Not good with sweat really. I've got sport's tape, though you should really shave your legs Russ, you wear a bunch of tights and you're just gonna sweat through them like a whore in church on Easter Sunday. Gonna get really squishy downstairs and get a bad case of swamp ass, cuz I can tell from here you didn't moisturize.

OLD MAN

(Slowly getting closer) I wonder what he really thinks about you doing this?

GARY

I read that coconut oil

GUNNER

I have plenty of aloe

JIMMY

No, we'll use some of my own special salve: Witch hazel and cold pressed argon oil. Should probably add some Neosporin to the mix. I'd say this place looks like a bombed out war zone, but I've been in one and it looked better than this dump.

OLD MAN

(Very close now) They're thick as thieves. There's no goddam way she didn't tell him. What you did.

GUNNER

Aloe always works just fine for me.
But I don't break out.

OLD MAN

Or what you didn't do.

JIMMY

Well goody for you.

OLD MAN

He's probably never forgiven you.

Desiree, a large black drag queen enters.

DESIREE

Heaven and all the saints above why the party in here?—Oh, hi Russell—I got the glue Jimmy. I know you don't think I forgot them. Russell you wanna wipe your face and pop your weenie back out of the bikini? Your mother's here.

MASON

Great. Just what we need, another diva in the building

OLD MAN

(Snorts) Speaking of people incapable of forgiveness.

The Old Man pokes Russ in some way.

RUSS

Jesus Christ! I told her to stay away from here!

GUNNER

It's her reception. Why shouldn't she be here? I'd wanna be here.

MASON

I'd wanna burn this dump to the ground and start over. Gary, DON'T let Ilya...sorry....Nachetska in here.

DESIREE

Jimmy, do you think Pastor Dave's gonna bail on us? Because I could get internet ordained in a pinch for back up.

OLD MAN

(Indicating Desiree) Think the bearded circus monkey here knows about it too?

RUSS

Aaaaahhhh! Is Leigh with her? I told Nachetska I'd handle everything here.

GUNNER

(To Russ) Well it's her party. *(To Desiree and Jimmy)* Why can't they stand up and say that they're committed to each other in front of all of us? Who cares if there's a minister? A wedding's just two people making a commitment in front of their friends and family.

DESIREE

It's a promise to God as well.

JIMMY

Aaand it's fucking important that we show this country, this state, this government that we matter, our marriages matter and that they can't ignore us or shut us out anymore. Law or no law!

RUSS

WHY is she HERE??? I told her I'd take care of the venue.

JIMMY

Well I hope you do. This venue looks like the inside of an ill used asshole Russell and I've seen a few. *(To Gunner)* Excuse me, sir. Ma'am. Whatever you prefer/

GUNNER

JIMMY

/You can call me Gunner.

I know your name. You're in my spot, Gunner.

OLD MAN

Ohhhh boy!! Bout to be a cat fight with you in the middle!!

RUSS

Is Leigh with her??!!

DESIREE

Leigh went the grocery store. Nachetska's arguing with that tall dark glass of water, uh, Jasper?

GARY

Jaspal.

RUSS

(Having a full blown panic attack) I told her not to ever talk to him again.

MASON

(Listening at the door) Doesn't sound good out there...

OLD MAN

(Laughing) She finds you dressed like this, she'll probably tell everyone straight away...What you did!

The Old Man pushes Russ in some way

OLD MAN

C'MON NOW!

RUSS

(Suddenly furious) GODDAMMIT WHAT IS SHE TRYING TO DO?! WHY?!

Russ quickly starts trying to put on his pants.

GUNNER

Wait your tape's coming off!

Russ stumbles behind the tarp, suddenly screams, and falls over. Everyone stares at Russ lying face down and moaning in agony.

DESIREE
(Closely examining Russ) Oh Lord.

JIMMY
That's why sports tape.

MASON
Well shit. Gary, go get the first aid kit from the truck. And DON'T let *Nachetska* in here! He ain't ready for her yet.

Gary opens the door and Leigh is standing there in a white navy dress uniform complete with a sword.

The lights begin to shift.

Gary doesn't see or acknowledge Leigh as he runs past her. She doesn't see him. They exist in a different time and place.

Leigh looks at Russ lying on the floor.

LEIGH
Um. Mister Tulane? Sir?

OLD MAN
(Slipping back into a more confined mode again. Almost like he's replaying something).....you know I gotta do this.

LEIGH
uh.....Russell Tulane?

Sounds of heavy rain. The lights are shifting to an unrealistic feeling of time and space.

OLD MAN
Why? Why? Why? Why? WHY? WHY?

The Old Man repeats this getting angrier and angrier until he is agitated and breathing hard. Then it's like he stops. Like the record skips forward.

Leigh is standing very tense and awkwardly during all this with one hand behind her back trying to get Russ's attention whispering variations of his name, "Russell? Mr. Tulane? Russ? Russell Tulane?"

OLD MAN
Ain't right what you did. Against nature. Corruption and pollution...(Skip) Letting that "woman" put that poison (Skip)...paint on you. I won't have it.

The lights have shifted now to where all we see is Russ, the Old Man, and Leigh.

Everyone else has exited and the dressing room seems to be gone now. Russ has made it up to his knees and is staring at the Old Man as he tries to stand up. Russ has not seen or acknowledged Leigh yet. She keeps awkwardly trying to get his attention.

OLD MAN

(Still agitated and breathing heavy)
You wanna dance with ME? *(Skip)*...
Don't you try to hide from me. I see you.
I ain't gonna let you go queer on me.
We're leaving and we ain't coming back.
C'mon. NOW.

What'd she say to you?

OLD MAN

How'd she get you to go along with it?

She just asked.

Leigh has gone to one knee and and swung her hand out from behind her back with a wedding ring box, but her sword scabbard has caught on the ground awkwardly. Leigh pulls the sword off the belt and has it pointed at Russ right as he turns around and almost runs into it—and falls backwards.

Lights also shift us into a new space and time as this happens. During the following Russ tries to ignore the Old Man and speak only to Leigh. He is also taking off the make up and changing back into his regular clothes. The Old Man slows down almost like a wind up toy slowly losing energy.

LEIGH
AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!

LEIGH
RUSSELLTULANEWILLYOUPLEASEBEMYSTEPSON!

LEIGH
OH NO I'M SORRY!!

LEIGH
I WANNA BE YOUR MOM!

LEIGH

Sir?
Russell?

Mr. Russell Sir
Mr. Tulane?

Mr. Russell Tulane?

If I could just have your attention for a moment?

RUSS

RUSS
AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!

RUSS
OW OH OW

RUSS

WHO ARE YOU?!!!

LEIGH
SORRYsorrysorry!

RUSS
WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK?!

LEIGH
SORRY.

RUSS
Who are you?!

LEIGH
(Talking so fast) I'm your mom! I mean your new mom. I mean I wanna be. Aw man I messed it all up, SHIT! Shitshitshit! DAMMIT LEIGH! I got so nervous, my palms are sweating so hard I'm scared I'm gonna lose this damn ring it was my momma's I'm Leigh I'm WITH your momma, mom, mother, Nachetska. Sorry.

RUSS
Is that a sword?!

OLD MAN
Why?

LEIGH
What? YES. Ceremonial use only!
Uh. Excuse the fancy duds.

(Skip) THIS.

Me and the local vets doing an all night vigil at the VA in our dress for Memorial Day tonight.

(Skip) Something wrong with her.

Tradition.
Hell I grew up doing vigils, we were a SUPER 'VIGIL'ANT FAMILY! Ha ha! Ha.

(Skips) /You still thinking about hitting me?

(Skip) You wanna dance?

LEIGH
Um...Some kinda old family military tradition with us I guess. You always stand watch over the grave that first night. I stood watch over my Dad and my mom when they passed. Stood for my brother, my cousin, my friend Earl, Earl's wife Dorothy, Earl's dog, I'm always standing! We stand watch on Memorial Day Eve for all the vets/

OLD MAN
/You wanna dance?

RUSS
um. Ok. I'm sorry. Who are you and what is happening and WHO are you??

LEIGH

SORRY. I didn't come here to talk about death and the military with you, uh, um, well, I...RUSSEL TULANE I LOVE YOUR MOTHER.

OLD MAN

(Skip) Goddam Abomination.

RUSS
Okay....

LEIGH

You know...I uh... I had to be very, uh, "private," haha, in the service, about...So I DIDN'T, uh DATE a lot? BUT. When I met your mother...the first time I saw her, she was dancing in the street with a bunch of complete strangers! I looked at her and I knew three things spontaneously, simultaneously, and instantaneously: 1) I was gonna ask her to dance with me. 2) If she said yes than I was gonna spend the rest of my life with her. 3) I couldn't live a lie anymore. WE DANCED ALL NIGHT! Retired the very next month. Gave it all up for her. A little late in life to finally fall in love, I guess.

OLD MAN

(Winding down) There's something wrong with her. *(Skip)* I ain't gonna let her ruin you. You... and...me...are...

The Old Man stops for a second. Almost like he's snapping out of something, his whole demeanor changes.

You paying attention to me?

RUSS

(Trying to ignore the old man) No. Yeah.

OLD MAN

(Taking in the scene with Leigh and Russ) Hrrmmph.

LEIGH

Anyways, I uh....Wanted to ask you...

Leigh gets down on one knee and holds out the wedding ring box again.

LEIGH

RUSSELL TULANE. Will you please be my stepson and bless the union of your mother and me? I? Me? Me. Your mother and me. I'm Leigh.

RUSS

Oh. Okay....

LEIGH

Sorry! That was confusing! I'm just so damn excited. Russell. I know y'all haven't spoke much in recent years. But. You're the only family she's got left, and, well, I'm old fashioned and some ideas die hard I guess and...I uh...I don't really know how to do these kinda family things, mine's all gone but God and Country, but I just want THIS LOVE that has HEALED ME to, uh, HEAL y'all's RELATIONSHIP, and I know that all sounds corny as hell, but....I LOVE your mother and I'll be REAL good to her, I PROMISE.

RUSS

...Yes.

LEIGH

Yeah?! Okay! Phew! I mean I woulda married her even if you didn't want me to, no offense, but I just wanted to try and...uh bring you in...you know? I didn't really know exactly where you stood on uh...this...

RUSS

Does she know you're talking to me?

LEIGH

UhhhhhhhNO. She might be a little mad about this actually....

RUSS

I'll bless it on one condition.

LEIGH

Okay?

RUSS

Let me pay for it. All of it. Let me do the reception for it. I'll handle it.

LEIGH

Wait. REALLY???! Wow! Thank you!! Man, I don't know why I got so nervous about asking you! I guess with all the family drama...uh....I mean...Wow! WELL. Nerves are done, *son*. I'll be nervous asking your mom tonight, but spending the rest of my life with her? That will be easy. *(A brief smiling pause.)* Thanks. Son.

Leigh exits.

Russ is almost changed back into his clothes now.

The Old Man comes back to life a little bit.

OLD MAN

You still haven't told me why you are doing this. Why?

RUSS

Because I'm going to kill you.

OLD MAN

Son. In case you hadn't figured it out yet, I am already dead.

Lights shift and Nachetska walks into an isolated pool of light.

The Old man and Russ watch.

NACHETSKA

I am not finished! You will ABSOLUTELY give us a set of keys and let us work overnight! This is ridiculous! Look at this disgusting mess of a place. We HAVE TO CLEAN THIS UP!! This is an outrage!

Jaspal, carrying a kufki prayer cap and prayer rug enters into an isolated light and Ayesha, also carrying a prayer rug enters next to him.

Ayesha is holding a picture in her hands tightly. She shoots Jaspal a look.

JASPAL

We cannot wait any longer. It is raining outside. We must do this here.

Ayesha tucks the picture into her dress and sets up her prayer rug and prepares to pray. She does all this quite smoothly and with practiced grace.

NACHETSKA

We need to paint and that takes time!

JASPAL

No paint.

AYESHA

Jaspal.

NACHETSKA

I DEMAND THAT YOU AGREE TO GIVE ME A SET OF KEYS RIGHT NOW.

Jaspal puts on his kufki prayer cap and sets up his prayer rug. There is something awkward about the way he does all this. He pulls out a set of note cards and checks his set up against his notes.

JASPAL

Absolutely not. That would require an additional deposit. \$200 for keys.

Nachetska looks in her purse for \$200. She doesn't have it.

AYESHA

Jaspal.

JASPAL

Yes.

AYESHA

You promised.

JASPAL

I am praying now. This conversation is over.

NACHETSKA

YOU ARE NICKEL AND DIMING US TO DEATH.

NACHETSKA

It is NOT over. I will speak out on this. People will know how you treated us. This is terrible business.

JASPAL

Do you want to renegotiate? More privileges will cost more money—that is how it works. I am more than...

Ayesha who has been preparing to pray clears her throat while staring at Jaspal.

JASPAL

I...uh...I...have to....pray now. Please respect this. Please.

Jaspal closes his eyes. He opens them and checks the note cards again quickly.

OLD MAN

Ain't this supposed be YOUR little show?

NACHETSKA

I am going file a complaint with the better business bureau

JASPAL

You have somewhere better to go? GO.

OLD MAN

You best get in there before the lesbian starts a war with the infidels!

*Russ enters the space Nachetska, Jaspal, and Ayesha occupy.
Lights come up to reveal the whole stage.*

We are in the main part of the abandoned department store. It was built in the 80s and the walls, ceilings, and floors are cracked, yellowed, and covered in dirt, spiderwebs, and a surprisingly varied array of colored stains. Some faded graffiti in a few places. In one corner a pile of bags and boxes have recently been hastily

stacked next to a step ladder. There's a round banquet table with a large hole cut out of the center leaning against the wall.

RUSS

Enough.

JASPAL

(To Nachetska while he checks the notes) I am asking you to respect this. Do not disturb me now.

NACHETSKA

You're scamming us! I won't allow it.

RUSS

Enough.

*Jaspal and Ayesha begin to whisper the Maghreb evening prayer.
Jaspal is checking the note cards consistently to help him get through the prayer.
Ayesha however is deeply focused in her prayers.*

This continues VERY softly underneath the other characters dialogue.

JASPAL

(Allah-hoo Akbar)

AYESHA

(God is Great)

JASPAL

(Subhaan-Allaah wal-hamdu Lillaah
wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa Allaah-hoo
akbar wa laa hawla wa la quwwata illa
Billaah)

RUSS

Mother? Mom?

AYESHA

Glory be to God, praise be to God,
there is no god except God,
God is Most great and there is no power
and no strength except with God.)

NACHETSKA

Mothers and moms get visits and
phone calls and cards on Mother's Day.

JASPAL

(Allah-hoo Akbar)

Illya

RUSS

NACHETSKA
Wrong Again.

AYESHA

OLD MAN

You gonna let her talk to you like that?

(God is Great)

JASPAL
(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)
(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)
(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)

RUSS
What's going on, mom?

NACHETSKA
My NAME is NACHETSKA. And this is an
absolute crime!

RUSS
Can we just go somewhere and

NACHETSKA
You have got to stand up to him!

AYESHA
(Glory be to my Lord
who is the very greatest)
(Glory be to my Lord
who is the very greatest)
(Glory be to my Lord
who is the very greatest)

RUSS
Please don't be crazy today.

NACHETSKA
Russell do not speak to me that way!
We have to do this somewhere ELSE.

JASPAL
(Sami Allaah-hoo-liman hamidah)

OLD MAN
Ugh. This is getting embarrassing.

AYESHA
(God hears the one who praises Him)

RUSS
ENOUGH.

JASPAL
(Rabbanaa wa lak al-hamd)

Russ and Nachetska stare at each other.

AYESHA
(Our Lord, to you be all Praise)

NACHETSKA
This is unacceptable.

JASPAL
(Allah-hoo Akbar)

RUSS
We are doing this here.

AYESHA
(God is Great),

JASPAL
(Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala)

NACHETSKA
Are you just gonna stand for this? I won't stand for it. It's not right.

RUSS
Mother, please just

AYESHA

NACHETSKA

(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High
How perfect is my Lord, the Most High
How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)

JASPAL
(Allahu Akbar)

AYESHA
(God is Great)

JASPAL
(Rabb ighfir lee)

AYESHA
(O my Lord, forgive me)

JASPAL
(Allah-hoo Akbar)

AYESHA
(God is Great)

JASPAL
(Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala)

AYESHA
(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)
(How perfect in my Lord, the Most High)
(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)

It's unacceptable Russell. You never stand up to anyone. Well I will. We have respected celebrities in the community performing tomorrow night.

OLD MAN
She think she's some kinda famous now?

NACHETSKA
I won't have them performing in this toilet. This is awful Russ. What are you gonna do about it?

RUSS
We're gonna clean it.

NACHETSKA
With what? A firehose of bleach and penicillin? I wouldn't bury a dog in here.

RUSS
We'll make it work, Mom.

NACHETSKA
We should go to a park and just rent a big white tent instead. We could decorate the trees or

RUSS
It's too late for that and we couldn't get a permit in time.

NACHETSKA
THEN WHY DIDN'T WE GET THE PERMIT A MONTH AGO?? Why did you choose THIS????

JASPAL
(Breaking, but not looking at them) No refunds. (Allah-hoo Akbar)

Ayesha flinches at this but does not break from praying.

AYESHA
(God is Great)

RUSS
It's gonna rain straight through the weekend.

JASPAL
(Subhaan-Allaah wal-hamdu
Lillaah wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa
Lillaah wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa
Allaah-hoo akbar wa laa hawla wa
la quwwata illa Billaah)

NACHETSKA
And how did you KNOW THAT when you booked
THIS abomination? What about the community
center? It's right downtown We could do it THERE
Maybe?

OLD MAN
Look out!! She gonna bust it all up!

JASPAL
Allah-hoo Akbar)

RUSS
NO! I already paid for this space.

AYESHA
(God is great)

NACHETSKA
Can we paint the walls at least?

JASPAL
(Again without breaking from his prayer) No Paint.

JASPAL
(Subhaan-Allaah wal-hamdu
Lillaah wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa
Lillaah wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa
Allaah-hoo akbar wa laa hawla wa
la quwwata illa Billaah)

RUSS
We will just have to cover up and hide what we can
and make do, mom.

NACHETSKA
HIDE? How do you hide THIS?

AYESHA
(Greatly disturbed by Jaspal's interjections)
(Glory be to God, praise be to God,
there is no god except God,
Allaah is Most great and there is no
power and no strength except with God)

RUSS
I'll make it as pretty as I can. I'm sorry it's here but

NACHETSKA
If we could paint the walls a nice bright color like

We have a contract. No paint.

JASPAL

JASPAL
(Allah-hoo Akbar)

NACHETSKA
He won't even give us keys; he should at least
let us paint. This is embarrassing Russell.

AYESHA
(God is Great)

RUSS
I'm doing the best I can for you, mom.

JASPAL

Two hundred for keys.

NACHETSKA

One hundred for keys.

RUSS

Stop it mom. I'll do the 200.

JASPAL

No paint.

Okay

JASPAL

(Allah-hoo Akbar)

NACHETSKA

This is probably why the restaurant went under. You want to be in charge but you never stand up to anyone.

AYESHA

(Allah is Great)

OLD MAN

Oh she's just trying to humiliate you now...

JASPAL

(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)
(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)
(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)

Mason, Gary, and Desiree enter.

MASON

Hey I'm a little worried about how much power we're gonna be pulling with all these lights and...holy shit...

AYESHA

("Glory be to my Lord
who is the very greatest")

GARY

Yeah Russ I read online that...

JASPAL

(Sami Allaah-hoo-liman hamidah)

DESIREE

Oh! They're praying! Shhhhh!

AYESHA

(God hears the one who praises Him)
How perfect is my Lord, the Most High"

NACHETSKA

I just don't understand why I can't have my wedding reception the way I want it. Joan, don't you think we should paint?

JASPAL

(Rabbanaa wa lak al-hamd)

MASON

I think arson might be more appropriate.

AYESHA

(Our Lord, to you be all Praise)

NACHETSKA

I wanted to rent the Cedars in Boy's town. Let me call them. I bet they could squeeze us in.

RUSS

Mom that's not...

JASPAL

(Allah-hoo Akbar)

OLD MAN

Boy, she's gonna fuck up your whole dumb life if you let her.

AYESHA
(God is Great)

JASPAL

CONTRACT.

JASPAL
(Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
(Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
(Subhana rubbiyal a'ala

RUSS

Mom, we can't that's not gonna work. I tried Cedars. They were booked straight through December. WE ARE DOING THIS HERE.

JASPAL

No refunds.

Jimmy and Gunner enter. Desiree tries unsuccessfully to shush them.

AYESHA
(How perfect is my Lord,
the Most High")
("How perfect is my Lord,
The Most High")
(How perfect is my Lord,
the Most High")

JIMMY

Hey Russ, we need you to settle a little confusion about the closing number/

GUNNER

I thought that, uh, ahem, "I" was closing the *DRAG* show and I need to know because apparently there's gonna be a lot of *GLITTER* clean up after Jimmy's number.

JIMMY
Not true

JASPAL
Allah-hoo Akbar

But if we could just nix the messy ass *GLITTER* then

I'm not
nixing anything

AYESHA
("God is Great")

RUSS

(To Gunner and Jimmy) Wait a sec.

JASPAL

No refunds.

RUSS

JASPAL
"Rabb ighfir lee"

(To Jaspal) Yes. I know. *(To Nachetska)*
Mom, I already paid for this venue. I'm not made of money okay?

AYESHA
("O my Lord, forgive me")

NACHETSKA

JASPAL
"Allah-hoo Akbar"

AYESHA
(God is Great)

JASPAL
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala"
"Subhana rubbiyal a'ala"
"Subhana rubbiyal a'ala"

AYESHA
How perfect is my Lord, the Most High"
How perfect is my Lord, the Most High"
How perfect is my Lord, the Most High"

JASPAL
Allah-hoo Akbar"

AYESHA
(God is Great)

JASPAL
Allah-hoo Akbar"

AYESHA
(God is Great)

GODDAMMIT NOW!

The Old Man pushes Russ towards Nachetska

What about going to the community center? We could just go there! They're never booked! Desiree, Don't you think that we should at least try the community center? I don't think they are booked usually

DESIREE
Maybe we should talk about this somewhere else?

OLD MAN
You're losing control!

NACHETSKA
We could do the ceremony OUTSIDE there by the courthouse if it stops raining! It could be so big and beautiful...

JIMMY
Oh the Community Center would be great!

OLD MAN
Better do something!

GUNNER
It can't be any worse!

DESIREE
Ooooooh! C'mon!

GARY
We could make it a double ceremony!

JIMMY
I vote yes.

GUNNER
Let's do it!

NACHETSKA
We even could do a little PARADE around the town square afterwards with the queens- under umbrellas even if it IS raining

MASON
No.

OLD MAN
Now! NownownownownNOW!

NACHETSKA
I'm just going to call them and see what's possible

OLD MAN

RUSS

(Clenching his fist and becoming aggressive and Speaking at an INCREDIBLY loud volume)
STOP IT! JESUS FUCKING CHRIST YOU STUBBORN FUCKING CUNT STOP IT! STOP
IT STOP IT!! WE AREN'T GOING TO DO THIS FUCKING GAY PRIDE PARADE
WEDDING DOWNTOWN AT THE FUCKING COMMUNITY CENTER— WE ARE DOING
IT HERE!!! WHY? WHY? WHY?

Russ' hand shoots out like he's going to grab her by the throat. He stops just short.

RUSS

CUNT CUNT CUNT!

Everyone freezes for a second. Even Jaspal and Ayesha. Nachetska is deeply shaken.

DESIREE

Oh. My. God.

Beat

Russ looks over and sees that the Old Man has his hand out exactly out like him.

Russ drops his hand.

RUSS

We rented THIS place. There's not enough money to rent another venue. That's it.

Nachetska just stares at him

RUSS

This is the only option.

Beat

Jaspal checks his notes.

JASPAL

"Allah-hoo Akbar"

AYESHA

(God is Great)

Leigh enters, dressed in plain clothes carrying a bunch of grocery bags.

JASPAL
(Subhaan-Allaah wal-hamdu
Lillaah wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah
wa Allaah-hoo akbar wa laa
hawla wa la quwwata illa Billaah)

AYESHA
(Glory be to God, praise be to God,
there is no god except God,
God is Most great and there is no power
and no strength except with God)

JASPAL
“Allah-hoo Akbar”

AYESHA
(God is Great)

JASPAL
(Subhana rab-bi yal adheem
Subhana rab-bi yal adheem
Subhana rab-bi yal adheem)

AYEHSA
(Glory be to my Lord who is the very greatest
Glory be to my Lord who is the very greatest
Glory be to my Lord who is the very greatest)

JASPAL
Sami Allaah-hoo-liman hamidah,

AYESHA
(God hears the one who praises him)

JASPAL
Rabbanaa wa lak al-hamd

AYESHA
(Our Lord, to be all praise)

JASPAL
Allah-hoo Akbar

LEIGH
I got the beef stock but they didn't have the...
She stops and tries to asses the situation.

LEIGH
Nachetska?
*Nachetska's hand is around her throat as if she had
been bruised there. She is having trouble breathing.*

LEIGH
Russell? What happened?
*Leigh puts a comforting arm around Nachetska. She
stares at Russell.*

Answer me.

Nachetska gently kisses Leighs hand.

NACHETSKA
Leigh, go ahead and put the groceries in the
fridge. I'll be in the car.

She turns to leave. She stops.

NACHETSKA
At least cover up the graffiti, Russell.
However you want to do it.

*Nachetska walks grandly but is a little wobbly and
and stumbles a bit. Lots of trouble breathing.*

*Leigh follows and tries to help her.
Nachetska brushes her off and exits.*

LEIGH
Russell?

OLD MAN
You ain't gotta 'splain yourself.

AYESHA
(God is Great)

RUSS
Thank you for getting the beef stock.

*They look at each other for a moment.
Leigh takes the bag she brought offstage.*

(Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala)

JASPAL

AYESHA
(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)
(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)
(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)

Leigh re-enters. She looks at Russ for a moment and then quickly exits the store.

Everyone is looking at Russ. Russ is not looking at anyone.

JASPAL
(Allahu Akbar)

AYESHA
(God is Great)

MASON
(Slowly turning to JASPAL) How. Much. Longer. IS. THIS. PRAYER??

RUSS
(Without looking at her) Mason.

JASPAL
(Rabb ighfir lee)

AYESHA
(O my Lord, forgive me)

JASPAL
Allah-hoo Akbar

AYESHA

God is Great

MASON

Gary. Let's go get the rest of the decorations.

JASPAL

GARY

Subhana rubbiyal a'ala

Okay. Russ? You alright?

Subhana rubbiyal a'ala

RUSS

Subhana rubbiyal a'ala

Yes.

AYESHA

(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)

(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)

(How perfect is my Lord, the Most High)

OLD MAN

Corrupted and polluted.

JASPAL

Allah-hoo Akbar

During the following, Gary and Mason start to leave. Russ stops them. Whispers something to Mason. She takes out her wallet and pulls out \$200 and hands it to Russ.

AYESHA

(God is Great)

Russ walks over to Jaspal. He set the money on the floor near him. Jaspal, without looking at Russ or breaking in his prayer movements, pulls out a set of keys and drops them on the floor. Russ picks them up.

JASPAL

(Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah)

AYESHA

(Peace and mercy of God be on you)

The prayer is done.

Jaspal rolls up his rug and removes his prayer cap.

He goes over and to Ayesha and whispers something. He motions that she should get up but she does not. She is holding the picture she brought out with her. She angrily whispers something to Jaspal.

JASPAL

(In a fierce whisper) Prayers will not help us, money will!

Ayesha begins praying again silently, defiantly, and it seems much more personal and emotional this time.

Jaspal hesitates for a moment, and then exits.

Desiree who has been watching them closely since she entered notes this.

RUSS

(To Jimmy) Okay. Something about Glitter and who's "closing" the show? You're singing? So it's not like a drag number then?

GUNNER

You're just gonna stand there and pretend like all that didn't just happen?

JIMMY

It is IN DRAG Russell, that's the POINT. I'm just singing it, not lip syncing. I know Miss Gay America here doesn't like actual singing in her contests but

RUSS

Okay I'm confused

GUNNER

So WE'RE ALL gonna pretend like none of that happened and our fearless leader didn't just scare the living fuck out of the bride to be.

RUSS

I'm sorry I yelled.

GUNNER

Yes you're very sorry. I can see that.

JIMMY

Can we just stay on mission?

GUNNER

It's ALL drag. I'm not arguing about the rules of a charity drag contest at a *wedding*. I'm just concerned about practicalities, you know, with glitter, the herpes of the art world that you're obviously just using so YOU get to close the show and not ME.

JIMMY

Well slap my ass and call me daddy, you don't care about the rules?! Color me shocked and scandalized! Miss "I transcend rules! Miss Avant-guard" doesn't want to deal with glitter. At a *drag show*.

GUNNER

It's not environmentally sound, it's dangerous, it's *old fashioned*, and I don't want to deal with your mess. I'll be reprising the number that won me my 5th title, soooooooo who should be closing this show?

DESIREE

Can we TRY and respect/

JIMMY

I don't care what you think of me, Gunner. (To Russ) I've performed this song on this day for the last 9 years. IN DRAG. My son and his whole squad is going to video call in from Afghanistan to hear it on a VERY specific schedule. Which means I go last.

RUSS

That's fine.

JIMMY

And I am not going to skip the tenth anniversary, even for *my* best friend, your beloved mother's wedding.

RUSS

I understand.

JIMMY

I am singing.

GUNNER

FANTASTIC.

JIMMY

It's my son's one request every year

OLD MAN

(Laughing and poking Russ) I'm sure it is!

GUNNER

We got it! You think your little patriot act on SKYPE for 9/11 is the most important part of two people binding themselves together. Are you gonna do the same little hokey jokey bad drag number that you always do at the fucking "Tin Room" where the glitter just sticks to cum stains on the floor?

DESIREE

shhhhhhh.....still praying y'all...God....!!!

GUNNER

Desiree, you have known me long enough to know I do not care about any Bronze Age mythology or the rituals therein.

JIMMY

Just because I don't do the same pretentious avant crap you do that the judges love so much. You lip sync because you can't sing on key.

GUNNER

You fucking hag.

The Old Man puts his hand on Russ's shoulder

OLD MAN

Woo! These queens could go swimming in a bucket of pussy and still come out with a dick in their mouth!

Russ snorts.

JIMMY

Something funny Russ? Something you wanna share with us? Something you wanna tell us about?

OLD MAN

(Switching suddenly to angry panic gripping Russ's shoulder) THEY KNOW!!

RUSS

I JUST WANT EVERYONE TO GET ALONG OKAY!! No more fucking fighting! Please just do whatever makes sense with the glitter thing and the singing. I don't really understand any of this stupid fucking BULLSHIT!

DESIREE

SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

GUNNER

Well, thank god you somehow put yourself in charge of something you don't really understand and are yelling at us now.

JIMMY

(To Russ) I spent 10 years defending this country and the god given right of every American to kick someone's ass for speaking to me that way. Lower your tone.

OLD MAN

Don't apologize

RUSS

You two figure this out then! I don't have time for this fucking bullshit!

Russ walks away and starts slamming boxes around a little violently, muttering to himself. Jimmy watches him carefully.

OLD MAN

(Quietly to Russ) That's it my boy...keep dancing...

Russ slams things around more violently.

GUNNER

(To Jimmy, and not unkindly) Okay. FINE. I'll help make sure we run the wedding reception on time, so you can sing a song on Skype to your son.

JIMMY

Thank you.

GUNNER

I don't have to understand it to give you space for it. It's the USO show I always dreamed of, BUT I'm gonna close.

JIMMY

Roger that.

*Russ stops slamming things around and takes a deep breath.
Ayesha stands up and starts to leave. Ayesha stops and turns.*

AYESHA

Peace and mercy of God be upon you. All. "Y'all."

*She smiles at them all. Jaspal and Ayesha exit. Gunner starts to help open boxes.
Russ opens a box up and starts pulling out a very tangled, never ending string of
Christmas lights. He is very frustrated by this. He looks like he might explode
again.*

GUNNER

(To Jimmy and Desiree) Like a ticking time bomb...

Jimmy looks at Russ and makes a decision. He pulls out a compact and checks his hair.

JIMMY/GRACE

(To Russ, and with a little extra "drag queen" flair) Ooohhh gawd my scar is flaring up! You got me all worked up Russ. Saints above! Two tours in Nam, and not a scratch. Two weeks in New York in 1967 and a Christopher street beat Cop gave me this. Left me on the sidewalk outside of Eve's bleeding out of my head like a beaned hog at the slaughter farm. *(Pause)* Edie Jay Johnson found me. She picked me up, carried me home, and sewed it up herself. God I loved her. Him. Her. She'd get beat up, arrested for wearing women's clothing, released the next morning looking like a battered stray alley cat in some old shirt and pants they made her wear home. She'd head straight from the jail to the secondhand store, buy a dress on credit, yes, and leave the store wearing it. Couldn't live anyway but being her, I guess. I got drafted in early 68' and I left her. Should have stayed. Guess I was too scared to live that way then. Truthfully I mean. Missed Stonewall and all that. I guess fighting a war felt easier than fighting everyone else all day. But I missed out on a lot of love I think.

RUSS

Why are you telling me this?

JIMMY

Because you remind me of me. Too scared to do anything but run away and fight. I'm gonna go call Pastor Dave and try and calm his nerves.

Jimmy exits.

DESIREE

OOooff! Enough with all the HEAVY and the ARRRGGHH! Weddings are stressful enough as it is. Lotta money for a party with this much drama!

Desiree pulls out her phone.

DESIREE

But...at least..there...will..be...dancing! 5, 6, 7, 8!!

Desiree plays music and invites Gunner into a silly dance off. They both dance and sing along with the music and try to get Russ to join in.

DESIREE

C'MON RUSS! I WANNA SEE THE NEW BABY ANGEL QUEEN DANCE!!

GUNNER

GIVE HER A LITTLE TEASE OF
THE SHOW RUSS!

RUSS

I don't really...

DESIREE

C'MON WHITE BOY DANCE SOME FUNKY MUSIC FOR US!

GUNNER

YOU PROMISED ME YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING....

RUSS

Alright fine.

Russ starts doing a very choreographed sequence that doesn't really fit this music. He's stiff and not enjoying it.

DESIREE

YOU CAN GIVE ME MORE SOUL THAN THAT! BREATHE! YOU CAN'T HOLD YOUR BREATH AND DANCE!!

GUNNER

C'MON BUTTERFLY! WE! ARE! FAMILY!

DESIREE

YOU GOTTA LET THE SPIRIT MOVE YOU RUSS! LET THOSE WALLS FALL LIKE JERICHO! OH LORD OH LORD YES HONEY!!

The door opens, thunder and lightning from outside, and then Sheriff Knotts enters. He watches them holding a set of papers in his hands.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Uh...hey Russell.....? RUSSELL???

Gunner sees the Sheriff and stops immediately. They are very not okay. Desiree notices this and stops, sees the Sheriff and comes towards them.

Russ is still dancing.

DESIREE

WHY HELLO OFFICER HOW CAN WE

*Desiree realizes the music is still going and turns it off.
Russ stops and sees the Sheriff and stops in absolute mortification*

Desiree tries to shake the Sheriff's hand. He looks terrified at the prospect.

DESIREE

Hi! How can we help you sir?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Step back please. Uh...Hey Russ!...uh...Go bobcats!...What are you...?

RUSS

Uh, hey, Austin...uh...Eat'em up cats! Uh...what, uh, can I do you for?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Oh. Uhhhh.....Russell Tulane, I've been charged with serving you this divorce petition, uh, from, uh, Lynn...Lynn Tulane. ..uh dang it uh...LYNN TALLYBOCKER? Sorry. You don't have to sign. Just take them.

Beat.

*Russ grabs a pen out from the Sheriff's shirt pocket, and starts angrily signing the papers without taking them out of the Sheriff's hands or reading them.
His cell phone starts ringing. He ignores it.*

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Aw heck Russell you don't have to sign them now just take them. *(Pause)* You gonna answer that?

Russ pulls the phone out of his pocket and throws it, with surprising violence, away from himself. He finishes signing the papers and hands the pen to back to him.

RUSS

Here. Give her this too. *(He pulls a cashier check out of his pocket and hands it to her)* Cashiers check so the money's all there. *(Sheriff doesn't take it)* Here. Here. Just fucking give it to her.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Uh...gee...uh...I've been instructed not take any money from you. Lynn, uh. Ms. Tallybocker doesn't want anything but for you to sign the papers.

The Sheriff starts to say something else but instead....

Eat'em up bobcats.

Sheriff exits

GUNNER

"Eat them up?" Some kinda sports thing?

They see the check.

Oh Holy shit that is...! Okay, look, real talk. Do you wanna maybe try to rent another venue? One that doesn't need quite as much...work? Something a little less stressful?

RUSS

NO! I just want to get this done. There's nowhere else at this point anyways.

Beat.

Desiree carefully starts to decorate and set up the stage.

Gunner stares at Russ for a second then pulls out their phone and exits.

Russ stares at the door where the Sheriff left. He sits. He looks at the check.

RUSS

Why?

His cell phone rings again.

With the ringing of the cell phone a light flutters on to reveal Nachetska in an isolated pool of light. She is somewhere else. She is wet and cold from the rain. Her hand keeps going to her throat. Russ doesn't look at her directly but he seems aware of her.

The cell phone stops ringing.

Desiree keeps decorating and working in the background, but the lights dim on her.

NACHETSKA

I, I...I don't think I want you at the ceremony, Russell. I'm sorry. I just, I just don't think I'm ready for that. You can't just waltz back in here after all this time and then speak to me that way, it's too...its...and I...I...(Something is very wrong with her for a moment. She recovers.) I just need this to be done right. Leigh. Leigh is very special...I...I...(She pauses. When she speaks again her voice is ever so slightly slurred) I need this to be beautiful Russ. I know.....(slurring)I knooowww....

Something is definitely wrong with Nachetska. She closes her eyes. The cell phone is ringing again. A light flutters up on just Leigh's face. She's talking on a cell phone. She too is somewhere else. Russ doesn't look at her but does seem aware of her.

LEIGH

SHE SAID YES! IT'S OFFICIAL!! Gonna be official. Well Not official I guess. I told her that I wanted to wait until it was legal here in Texas. That's the Navy talking. BY THE BOOK! But your mother said "Leigh, we can't wait around to be disappointed by old white men. I don't want to live another day without my heart officially bound to yours." WE ARE GONNA BE A FAMILY!

Cell phone ring and light flutter on Nachetska as she shakes a little and has trouble opening her eyes.

NACHETSKA

(The fake accent is gone and a Texas drawl is in its place) I...I...I can't...I can't... BREATHE....

She closes her eyes. She takes a slow ragged breath. She opens her eyes and suddenly grabs her throat and gasps for air as if she is being choked.

....NO!.....DON'T DON'T DON'T...DON'T HURT HIM RORY!!...He didn't...I can't.....wait wait Rory (gasp) (gasp) (gasp) (gasp) (gasp) (gasp) ...nooo.....helphelp me.... Russell ...Russell ...where are you...please...he's...

OLD MAN

CUNT.

Thunder. Russ flinches. Nachetska gasps.

LEIGH

I never thought of myself as a big wedding kind of person you know? But I wanna do that for her? IT'S EXCITING YOU KNOW? Love. LOVE! Boy we are gonna have us a TIME together!

Cell phone ring. Light flutter on Nachetska.

NACHETSKA

(In a rushed whisper, Texas accent still) Russell? Is that you? Are you okay? Is he...? I miss you so so much...I just wanna see you please I love you....It's okay if you want to live with him. I just...Russell?*(pause)* Russell you were too young to remember this but...The first time he hit you was when he found you playing with my lipstick. You were four. Just a sweet little boy. The second time, he caught you playing with a neighbor girl's doll she left in the yard. I thought he was going to kill you. Just cause he thought maybe...Russell. You're not supposed to be like him...I know I wasn't...Russell? Are you still there? Are you?.....are you still mad at me? I'M SO SORRY. Please say something! *(Big gasp for air)*...I....I...I....*(slurring and stumbling)* Ruuuusssshhhelllll... plllllleeeassssshhhh... ruuuusssshhheell

OLD MAN

CUNT.

Russ flinches. Big thunder that echos into the sound of a phone off the hook. Nachetska gasps. Nachetska grabs her throat and convulses.

LEIGH

I mean I guess rituals ARE important. The dressing up, the "costumes," the name changes, the promise too! Makes it real for you and for the *family*, you know? Makes it realer when you say it in front of everyone. Let's everyone know where you stand. Where WE stand!

OLD MAN
CUNT CUNT CUNT.

NACHETSKA
(gasp) (gasp) (gasp)

Cell phone rings. Light flutters again. Nachetska stops convulsing. She stands up very straight with great poise.

NACHETSKA

Don't call me that. Don't call me Ilya. That is not who I am now.

Thunder.

NACHETSKA

(Nachetska's accent is back now. She pulls out a compact and puts on make up during this) My name is Nachetska. I don't know what you want from me. I am not that sad little woman you left 20 years ago. After you left, it felt like I might never breathe right again. Then. After you refused

to speak to me, I fell and I woke up in the hospital. And I could still feel your father's hands around my throat. It felt like they had always been there and always would be, and I was done with it. SO. I decided I was done dying and that Illya Dean was dead. I decided to be something new. Something beautiful. My name is Nachetska. I don't want you to visit. You left, you made your choice, you chose your father, and I had to live with that. I have my own family now. Your mother, Illya Dean, is dead. My name is Nachetska.

Thunder. Cell phone ringing. Lights flutter on Leigh.

LEIGH

Oh Man! I told her I had asked your permission and...whooh boy! She wasn't happy! Haha!...But, uh, I know that she wants you to be here though. Deep down. Deep DEEP down....I'll talk to her. I'm sorry this message is so long. Call me back okay? I wanna get to know my soon to be step-son okay? Call us back.

Leigh hangs up the phone. Nachetska closes her eyes and opens them again. She is very lost.

NACHETSKA

Leigh. I don't want him there. Not at the ceremony. I...I can't...I can't.....I can't breathe....Leigh...?

Nachetska collapses. Thunder and heavy rain sounds. The light on Leigh opens up to reveal her whole body. She's wet and looking around frantically.

LEIGH

Nachetska??!

Lights come back up on the rest of the department store as Desiree plays "Freedom" by George Michael on a sound system she just put together. Desiree has built a makeshift stage complete with shitty lights, a sound system, and a microphone. She does a little victory dance.

NACHETSKA

...Leigh..?

LEIGH

Nachetska??!

DESIREE

Why yes, Desiree! It does look great! Thank you!

Russ doesn't respond.

Whatever.

Desiree and plugs in headphones to the sound system and we no longer hear the song. Desiree practices lip syncing to the song and marks through her dance routine. She dances with gusto, grace, and great freedom.

DESIREE

Mmmm...C'mon George! *(Singing)* **Because I would really really love to stick around oh yeah!**

OLD MAN

(Charging forward) Why?! GODDAMN ABOMINATION! You know I gotta do this. THIS THIS THIS CUNT. Ain't right what you did. Against nature. Corruption and pollution. CUNT CUNT CUNT.

Leigh sees Nachetska huddled on the ground.

LEIGH

Oh!

Lights out on Leigh and Nachetska.

DESIREE

(Singing) **Heaven knows I was just a young boy Didn't know what I wanted to beeee.....**

The Old Man walks up and speaks directly to Russ. Russ looks at him but remains seated.

OLD MAN

WHAT?! You wanna DANCE with ME? I didn't think so. YOU QUEER? Don't you try to hide from me. I see you. I ain't gonna let you go queer on me. We're leaving and we ain't coming back. C'mon. NOW. *(Beat)* What'd she say to you? How'd she get you to go along with it? *(Beat)* Listen here boy. LISTEN. You still thinking about hitting me? Anytime you wanna DANCE, boy. Anytime. Because I'm about THIS CLOSE to ERASING you. Goddam Abomination. FAGGOT. Letting that woman put that poison faggot paint on your face. Your mama's not right. There's something wrong with her. I ain't gonna let her ruin you. You and me are leaving and we ain't gonna come back. I ain't gonna let her make a faggot out of my only son. Stop it. Stop crying.

Cell phone ringing. The Old Man walks over and puts a hand on Russ. Russ closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Big forceful exhale. The Old Man coughs a little when he does this.

OLD MAN

(Speaking to Russ now) This is gonna be hard. Alright, I'll let you cry about this tonight. I know, I know a boy's gotta cry about losing his momma. She's lost son. You gotta fly right, let her go.

Russ looking scared and somehow younger nods.

OLD MAN

(Kneeling and speaking with sudden great tenderness) You're my boy Russell. I'm gonna take care of you. Whatever you need, son, I'm gonna be here for you. No more crazy. Gonna keep your nose clean and fly right. Just you and me. You're *my boy*.

RUSS

(Nodding) Yes dad.

Thunder. Cell phone ringing stops. Desiree dances behind them.

DESIREE

(Singing) **And I guess it was enough for meeee!**

Russ closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Big forceful shaky exhale.

The Old Man starts coughing again. Russ watches him. He doubles over. Russ stands up helps him with great concern. There is something older about the Old Man and something younger about Russ.

Russ helps him sit down.

OLD MAN

Just got a bit of dust in me. Been dreaming about that fancy chef school, huh? This what you need?

Cell phone ringing.

OLD MAN

Gotta be a good investment. Your mama. That kinda crazy's like a fire. Get close and all of a sudden you're aflame. Steer clear. *(More coughing)* Gonna need a new car to get to that school too, I think? I got you. You're *my boy*.

RUSS

(Nodding) Yes Dad.

Thunder. Desiree dances behind them.

DESIREE

(Singing) I think there's something you should know, I think it's time I told you so...

Cell phone ringing.

Russ closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Big forceful exhale.

The Old Man coughs and Russ rubs his back tenderly.

Gunner re-enters with their phone in hand and stares at Russ.

Russ tries to move away slightly from the Old Man, but the Old Man keeps him close with a death grip on his arm.

GUNNER

Russ. I called the community center. Russ?

Russ keeps his eyes locked on the Old Man.

OLD MAN

(Older now) No no no NO. That ain't no way to get married Russ. Getting married to a fancy lady like that? Got expectations on you now. I'll help you. Help you get a good house too. But no Illya. She'll just embarrass you.

GUNNER

Okay. I told them we had like a mold/graffiti emergency here and could they help? They said they can give us the keys tonight. We can make it nice. We'd just have to pay the \$300 cleaning fee. I have tell them yes or no in the next 30 mins. Russ? They're about to close for the weekend.

OLD MAN

We got this.

RUSS

No.

GUNNER

I'll pay the fee, Russ. If you don't wanna use that money for some reason...um...they also said that...they never...

RUSS

NO.

Gunner starts to say something and then exits instead.

OLD MAN

You're my boy.

RUSS

(Nodding) Yes Dad.

Thunder. Desiree dances behind them.

DESIREE

(Singing) **All we have to do now is take these lies and make them true somehow....**

Russ closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Big forceful exhale.

Cell phone ringing.

The Old Man has a terrible coughing fit. Russ helps him lie down.

Thunder.

The Old Man pulls him closer.

OLD MAN

You got big shoes to fill.

Desiree is still practicing her routine in the background. The cell phone starts ringing again.

DESIREE

(Singing) **Well it looks like the road to heaven but it feels like the road to hell**

(Speaking to Russ and indicating the cell phone)

YOU GONNA ANSWER THAT??

(singing again)

And some mistakes were built to last...

Russ ignores her and stays focused on the Old Man. Desiree continues dancing.

Thunder.

OLD MAN

(Coughing and trying to get comfortable with Russ' help. He's dying.) Couldn't quite make it work on your own, huh?*(cough)* Don't get soft on me. *(Cough)* Got terms of course. *(Cough)* I got you. You're my boy.

RUSS

.....Yes Dad.

Cell phone ringing.

DESIREE

(Singing) ***I just hope you understand Sometimes the clothes do not make the man***

OLD MAN

(Big final cough) This is gonna be hard.

The Old Man goes to sleep. Russell tenderly adjusts the Old Man's body. He steps back from the body.

Lights out on Old Man.

DESIREE

(Singing) ***You got to give what, to give what, give what you take!***

Russ goes back to decorating. Cell phone stops ringing.

Russ gets a strange look on his face. He walks over and looks up at a specific section of the ceiling.

Lights up on Joan Mason. She is on a cell phone.

MASON

RussellGoddammitWhyDoYouEvenOwnACellphone!?! Your mother's in the hospital. Had some kind of heart attack or something. Maybe another stroke. Hell I don't know. Nobody knows. Leigh found her half a mile down on the goddam feeder road collapsed in the rain talking to herself. We're at the ICU at Parker City Medical Center. *(A small terrible pause)* Russ. You need to get here quick.

Russ suddenly sprints offstage.

Lights out on Mason.

DESIREE

(Singing) ***FREEEEEDOOOOMMMM! FREEEEEDOOOOOOM!!***

Russ sprints back onstage with a trash can to underneath the ceiling section he was looking at. The ceiling section suddenly breaks and a bunch of grayish brown water dumps on him and the trash can. It is immediately followed by rain which is now coming in through the hole in the ceiling.

Desiree does a big dance finish to her number. She looks over at Russ.

DESIREE

Oh. Son of a bitch.

The lights flicker, there is the sound of an electrical pop, and the lights go out.

End of Act 1

Act 2

A single light flickers on to reveal Ayesha kneeling on her prayer rug. She is mid prayer. She prays with great control and precision.

AYESHA

Rabb ighfir lee
Allah-hoo Akbar
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Subhana rubbiyal a'ala
Allah u Akbar
Allah u Akbar
Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatul

Ayesha finishes her prayer. She looks up. She holds her arms out again in the Muslim prayer position. This prayer is emotional, unsteady, and difficult.

AYESHA

Ameen,
my dearest, dearest uncle.
My protector. Our savior. We have not forgotten you.
Jaspal is working hard and is so very good at finding all kinds of ways to make extra money. We will bring you here and you will be safe and we will be a family again. Please, please be patient and be safe. I know you hate hiding. I know Kashmir was our home, will always be our home, but this, this can be home too. Texas may be a strange place, but it can be a good home for our family. I miss you so much. You must stay safe. You must please, please stay safe. God is good and merciful. We will not have to hide here. Peace and mercy of God be upon you.

Ayesha stands up, rolls up her prayer rug, and exits.

Lights come up slowly on the Old Man.

Lights come up a little more and we see Russ near him. They are up in the ceiling above the hole. Russ is working mostly in the dark, we can't see him very well. We can, however, see quite well the Old Man—who watches Russ intently.

Flashlights snap on below the hole in the in the ceiling. There is a ladder underneath it. Joan Mason, Gary, Jimmy, Desiree, Gunner, Leigh, and Jaspal are all onstage. Jaspal and Joan are looking up at the hole in the ceiling. Everyone looks upset.

Fast and overlapping—

MASON

YEAH. That's not the point, Russ!

JIMMY

Why don't we just do this at my place?
It'd be cramped but if it stops raining
we could put some plywood down

GUNNER

I think she's determined to do it

JIMMY

I mean if it stops raining

MASON

She's pretty fucking determined it's happening

LEIGH

We are not going to postpone this.

GARY

Maybe we should get married instead!

JASPAL

/I do not think you should be doing this.

GARY

I mean, are we sure this is still really happening?

LEIGH

We are doing it.

JASPAL

Do you know what you are doing?

DESIREE

Should we stop her?

JASPAL

I do not think you know what you are doing.

MASON

NO.

JIMMY

I don't think anyone can stop her. I just hope she doesn't die trying.

GUNNER

If she wants to do it.

MASON

Jesus, Jimmy.

DESIREE

But should we let her?

LEIGH

WE want to do it.

JASPAL

If you do not know what you are doing, please stop now.

MASON

Can we all please just take a goddam second

GARY

This blog here says you need to secure the
ground

JIMMY

I'm just trying to be realistic here. I mean

DESIREE

I don't want this to turn into a funeral

MASON
GARY. Russ knows to check the ground!

GARY
I love you.

JIMMY
What ARE our options at this point?

MASON
NO! Russ, check the ground again.

GUNNER
If y'all want to do it then

LEIGH
It's important to her, but

JASPAL
Stop please!

JIMMY
Look it's up to y'all

RUSS
(From the hole inside the ceiling) I know what I'm doing!

JASPAL
I do not think so!

MASON
Don't distract him!

LEIGH
But we have decided

JASPAL
I do not think he knows what he is doing.

RUSS
I DO!

MASON
You're the one who should be fixing this.
This is your shithole excuse for a/

JASPAL
If he does not know what he is doing then he will
make it worse or ruin something

JIMMY
This is awful.

LEIGH
I have to tell you

MASON
You can't ruin anything in this place
anymore than/

JASPAL
The walls are already ruined, woman!

MASON
Oh Jesus Mary Vishnu Joseph Allah Buddha Motherfucking Yahweh, MAN!

DESIREE

Oh my god.

RUSS

Everything is under

JASPAL

You put nails in everywhere! They look like Swiss cheese now.
The deposit must be/

Sounds of electric arcing and flashing lights from the hole. Everyone stops for a half second.

DESIREE

Oh sweet Baby Jesus with the fat legs, No!

MASON

RUSS!?

GUNNER

Oh shit.

LEIGH

Russ?

JIMMY

Oh my god

DESIREE

Sonofa

RUSS

(Obviously not fine) I'm fine.

MASON

Russ?!

GARY

(Reading from his phone) Did you make sure the ground is secure?

RUSS

I...shit!

Russ's foot punches down through another part of the ceiling.

JASPAL

Another hole?!!! This will

MASON

Shut your goddam mouth before I fucking shut it
permanently you goddam

RUSS

MASE! *(Beat)* I'm fine.

MASON

Cheapskate fucking...

JIMMY

Jesus.

LEIGH

Please come down Russ

GUNNER

Okaaaay!! This is fucking nuts. I'm just trying to breathe here!

DESIREE

Gurl, you aint lying.

MASON

Please stop before you

JASPAL

You must stop breaking

RUSS

EVERYTHING IS FINE PLEASE STOP TALKING NOW SO I DON'T KILL MYSELF.

Please stop for one minute.

Everyone stops. Russ's foot goes back up out of the ceiling. A section of the lights flicker on. Russ sticks his head out of the hole.

RUSS

Did they come on?

GARY

Partially.

Russ's head disappears back into the hole. More lights begin to flicker on.

JIMMY

Please come down now before you electrocute yourself or fall through the ceiling or

The lights flicker on near the door to reveal Nachetska has entered and is slowly making her way toward them as the rest of the lights flicker on. She is walking with her bejeweled cane and is hooked up to an oxygen tank she is pulling behind her.

JASPAL

Yes please stop before you break anymore

MASON

Oh fuck it. JUST FALL ON JASPAL
WHEN YOU DO FALL SO HE CAN
WHINE AND CRY AND SUE US ALL
FOR ANOTHER FUCKING DOLLAR
INSTEAD OF APOLOGIZING FOR RENTING
OUT A FUCKING BOOBYTRAPPED DEATH
PALACE.

JASPAL

I am not being
Unreasonable
about this.

LIKE A GREEDY GODDAM INHUMAN

Do not

GUNNER
I think that's enough.

LEIGH
Russel we need to talk about

Nachetska has now reached the crowd. She is out of breath.

LEIGH
...Honey?

DESIREE
Oh!

JIMMY
Nachetska!

GUNNER
Oh wow. Oh honey.

DESIREE
Is she...?

GUNNER
Honey are you?

JIMMY
I didn't even know you were here.

LEIGH
Dear heart, I thought you were staying in the car.

GARY
You look good for...

NACHETSKA
Where is he?

MASON
(To herself) Here we go.

Beat

NACHETSKA
Where is Russell?

Beat

LEIGH
I don't think you should

NACHETSKA
(Deadly serious) Where is he?

Beat

DESIREE
Ohhh...uuhhh...

NACHETSKA

I want this over.

LEIGH

You don't have to do this I will

NACHETSKA

I'm fine. I will do this.

MASON

(Still to herself) Fuck me. What fresh hell...

Leigh points up to the hole.

NACHETSKA

Russell, please come down here. We have to talk.

Beat.

NACHETSKA

Now.

Russell looks at the Old Man. The Old Man smiles at him. Russell pokes his head out from the hole. He is covered in dirt and looks generally awful. He looks down at Nachetska.

MASON

You smell like burning hair.

RUSS

(To Nachetska) You probably should be sitting down.

NACHETSKA

I'm fine thank you. I don't want you here.

RUSS

Okay.

LEIGH

Honey

NACHETSKA

I'm fine. Russell. I don't want you here. You are not welcome anymore. I want you gone.

MASON
What the?

RUSS
Okay.

NACHETSKA
I do not feel safe with you here. You are not wanted here. I am disinviting you from my wedding.
Do you understand?

RUSS
I'm sorry, but what? I'm literally trying to/

NACHETSKA
“Sorry BUT” doesn't mean anything.
I appreciate everything you've tried to do
but you make me feel very unsafe
and this venue is unacceptable.

RUSS
I don't know
But

NACHETSKA
It's quite clear that you are trying to sabotage this and I will not let you.

RUSS
I'm not

LEIGH
I don't think

NACHETSKA
When you offered to take care of the reception I didn't want to let you. But Leigh convinced me
to let you help. And we don't have any money. But you have embarrassed me, on purpose, by
choosing this disgusting trash heap and....and I do not feel safe.

RUSS
I'm sorry but I didn't mean to

NACHETSKA
NO. I do not accept your “but” apology. You nearly killed me. I had to fight off half the doctors
and nurses in the county to get out of that hospital just so they would let me ATTEND MY OWN
WEDDING AND I WILL NOT...

*Nachetska is suddenly struggling to breathe. Leigh tries to help her. She gently
pulls away from Leigh. She turns up her oxygen. She grabs Leigh's hand and
kisses it. She turns back to Russ.*

NACHETSKA
We will find some other venue for the reception. This place is just unacceptable and/

MASON

GOD FUCKING DAMMIT ILLYA!

GUNNER

Whoa!

RUSS

Mason

LEIGH

Do not speak to her that

MASON

NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE!

NACHETSKA

Joan, that is not my name and I will not be spoken to that way by you or anyone else.

MASON

OKAY. I'm fucking done with all this pretend nice now, okay?!

RUSS

Please

NACHETSKA

You do not have the right

MASON

Oh I think I do Illya Dean Nachetska Princess Queen Bee Majesty!

GUNNER

Oh hell no

LEIGH

We're leaving now

JIMMY

This is not appropriate.

NACHETSKA

I don't have to listen to this.

MASON

Do you think Russ chose THIS out of some wide variety of options? A reception he is spending every LAST DOLLAR he has on?? So he can cook and spend every waking hour cleaning and making stupid goddam butterflies and stringing a million Christmas lights up just to try and make it look nice, and build a stage so you could have a drag show at your reception, because you HAD to have a drag show at your reception because YOUR reception has to be so exceptional, so fabulous so?"

DESIREE

Actually I put the stage together

NACHETSKA

I gave him a list of acceptable venues. In Boys' Town there are plenty of wonderful

MASON

THOSE PLACES ARE FUCKING EXPENSIVE NACHETSKA!

RUSS

Mase

MASON

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I shouldn't yell. But someone has got to tell her the truth, okay?

NACHETSKA

What do you mean?

MASON

He doesn't have any money.

NACHETSKA

(To Russ) You said you had money from the sale of the restaurant.

MASON

He had to pay off a lot debts when the restaurant closed. He had to pay Lynn her divorce settlement. He had to sell everything he had except for the banquet tables which he then cut holes in the middle of so you could have drag queen show girl rolling hors d'erve table servers like you saw on some stupid Bravo tv show

NACHETSKA

I didn't

MASON

Do you know what those venues on that list you gave him wanted? huh?! They wanted FIVE TIMES what he had. Those places are for rich people, Nachetska. They may be gay friendly but they are RICH gay friendly, which you are not.

NACHETSKA

That still doesn't explain why we had to do it here in this embarrassing

JASPAL

This is not

MASON

Shut up Jas! NO ONE ELSE WOULD TAKE US. Do you understand?

LEIGH

What do you mean?

GARY

Oh.

JIMMY

Yep.

DESIREE

Shit.

NACHETSKA

Why would...

MASON

They didn't want to rent to a gay wedding reception okay? They didn't want a drag show in their place.

(Beat)

We tried. We really did. We tried so hard. We went everywhere. We tried lying. We tried just not saying. We had 4 venues tear up the contract on us because they found out who it was for after we signed. No one would take us. Sometimes they did and then they lied and said there was a scheduling mistake. Sometimes they just told us to our faces "No fags." Word got out and then no one would rent to us. This was it. THIS FUCKING RECTUM OF DESPAIR IS THE ONLY AFFORDABLE PLACE THAT WOULD TAKE YOUR PRECIOUS PARTY

NACHETSKA

What about the community center?!! They are always open! I just KNOW we could go there.

MASON

NOPE. That's not true! Russ, Tell her! You called them in June and

GUNNER

I CALLED. Yesterday. They said no one ever called them about a wedding rental.

MASON

No. Russ called and...

RUSS

I...

GUNNER

Russ just fucking tell her. Tell your fucking friend at least.

MASON

What are you...?

GUNNER

He doesn't want to do it there. It's too public.

NACHETSKA

I KNEW IT!

MASON

Russ?

GUNNER

I called the center this afternoon and they offered to give it to us for a \$300 cleaning fee. But we would have had to tell them yes right then.

NACHETSKA

Why didn't' you??!!

MASON

uhhhhhWELL...uhhhh....Probably because Russ doesn't have ANY money NaCHETSKA!! He had to borrow the \$200 from me to just to get the keys to this shit heap! Russ! You coulda just asked! We coulda...

GUNNER

He has money now.

MASON

What?

GUNNER

His ex-wife didn't want the divorce settlement. He has a cashier check in his pocket for her half. Also I told him I would pay the fee for the community center. He said no.

MASON

Russell James Tulane. What the absolute fuck man? Why?

JIMMY

Can we do it there now?

GUNNER

It's Sunday. They're closed now. Banks are closed now too. I was just gonna book it myself but with you in the hospital—I just forgot. We are stuck.

DESIREE

Oh oh oh! I'm about to lose my religion Russ. Why on earth did you lock us into this HELLSCAPE WEDDING RECEPTION NIGHTMARE!! Oh bless your heart I'mma bout to send your ass to Jesus early! Ohhhhh Mama is MAD!

NACHETSKA

Tell them Russ. Tell me. Why?

LEIGH

I don't think

MASON

Russell Tulane I am about to beat your ass if you don't start explaining why

The entrance door slams.

Everyone stops except Mason. Sheriff Knotts and Woody Head Jr have entered.

Woody is holding a small stack of papers.

MASON

Oh what the fuck is this shit?

NACHETSKA

Austin?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Uh..hey uh..ahem...LISTEN UP PEOPLE

LEIGH

Can we help you?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Have to shut you down Illya.

GUNNER

Her name is Nachetska.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

I, uh, okay Nachetska I have.. uh..

WOODY

(Holding up the stack of papers) I have here a cease and desist order from the city council shutting down this illegal event under the following county statutes and zoning ordinances: 1) No businesses, private clubs, or events promoting sexual intercourse or lewd and indecent behavior may be within 1000 feet of church or school property, this property is less than 500 feet from church and school property 2) No alcohol may be served or held within 1000 feet of school property 3) No event space or cabaret can hold events or gatherings of more than 20 people and —NO BUSINESS, private CLUB, or CABARET ESTABLISHMENT may perform REAL or SIMULATED SODOMY or other HOMOSEXUAL SEX ACTS within the county lines—NO DRAG.

LEIGH

Can I see those papers please?

Woody doesn't hand them over.

DESIREE

What are you talking about?

GARY

It's not a business. It's private party. You can't

WOODY

You're already in violation and anyone participating in this illegal event after the service of this cease and desist order will be arrested.

He turns and looks at the Sheriff.

SHERIFF

(After a slight hesitation and a guilty look at Nachetska) That is correct.

Russ slowly pulls his head back into the hole in the ceiling

GARY

There's no school property near here.

GUNNER

Simulated sodomy?

LEIGH

Can I see the order please?

WOODY

I heard about your little dance rehearsal party.

GUNNER

What the?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Sorry.

DESIREE

Son of a...

WOODY

Harvest Time Baptist Church Academy purchased the lot out back yesterday.

DESIREE

The drag show is to raise money for charity!

GARY

You bought the lot yesterday??

WOODY

We took a vote on Monday, made an offer on Tuesday, and closed the paperwork yesterday.

DESIREE

Mary Mother Peter and the Saints! CHARITY.

LEIGH
Please let me see the papers.

JASPAL
You bought the lot?

WOODY
Yes.

JASPAL
No one can drink, or have a party with more than 20 people here?

JIMMY
Or apparently dance with any amount of suggestive hip thrusting apparently.

JASPAL
No hip thrusting when dancing?

GUNNER
Between men at least, apparently.
WOODY
That is the law.

LEIGH
I need to see this order please.

JASPAL
What are you trying to do to me?

WOODY
This is not about you.

JASPAL
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO RENT A PARTY VENUE TO PEOPLE IF THEY CANNOT
DRINK OR DANCE WITH THEIR HIPS OR INVITE MORE THAN 20 PEOPLE??!!

MASON
Mister Woody Head Fucking Junior.

WOODY
That's DEACON Woody Head Jr, to you, not that you've been at service lately.

GARY
You can't do this. We'll get an injunction or, or, or a dismissal. This won't stand

SHERIFF KNOTTS

You're welcome to try. But it's already after 5pm. The courthouse won't be open again until Monday morning. So until then, this order stands.

NACHETSKA

This is an outrage.

JASPAL

THIS IS.....NOT ACCEPTABLE! THIS IS NOT AMERICAN!!

WOODY

This event is not welcome here in our community. *(He looks directly at Jaspal)* This is a Christian community.*(Back to Nachetska)* You'll have to have your party somewhere else.

NACHETSKA

Austin!

SHERIFF KNOTTS

You can can me Sir, or you can call me Officer or Sheriff, Illya. Please step back.

GUNNER

IT'S NACHETSKA.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Step back please! You'll need to vacate these premises immediately. I'm locking the doors. OUT!

JIMMY

All of our stuff is in here!

NACHETSKA

I've lived here my whole life!

OLD MAN

If you just hide up here long enough, the whole thing will just go away.

Russ comes down the ladder.

RUSS

Really Austin?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

STEP BACK! OH! Sorry Russ. I didn't know you were here, I didn't see you

RUSS

Hold.

Russ takes the papers from Woody. He glances at them quickly.

RUSS

You can't lock the doors.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

I have tools and supplies here,

Well I

as well as food,

WOODY

you can/

That doesn't matter

Shut down the venue or limit the party

but you have no legal standing to

confiscate our property.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Look I do

WOODY

THAT DOESN'T MATTER

Russ hands the papers back to Woody brusquely without looking at him.

RUSS

AND YOU CAN LEAVE AND WE WILL TAKE OUR STUFF AND DO THIS SOMEWHERE ELSE. But you're not locking up my private property because you know you have no legal standing to do so.

A long stand off. The Sheriff looks at Russ. He looks at Woody. He looks back at Russ.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

No reception?

RUSS

No reception. *(in a more personal tone)* Look. It's my momma Austin. I'll talk to her.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

(Just to Russell) I understand. It's hard when it's family. *(To everyone again)* Okay. Good enough for me.

WOODY

I don't like this!

RUSS

(Smiling at him) Oh. Hi Woody. Didn't even notice you were here.

Woody thinks briefly about attacking Russ. He thinks better of it and storms out.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Sorry about the confusion. We'll let you pack your stuff up, Russ. Nachetska.

Sheriff Knotts exits. Nachetska half collapses into Leigh's arms.

LEIGH

Are you okay?

NACHETSKA

I just need to sit down for a second.

Jimmy and Gunner go to her and help Leigh bring her and her oxygen tank over to the stage where she sits trying to catch her breath.

MASON

I should have punched that short fucking asshole in the mouth.

JASPAL

Yes.

Russ goes over and kneels in front of Nachetska.

RUSS

Listen. Yesterday I was tired and frustrated and I snapped when, I almost, fuck me, I know. I know that's what Dad was, but, but I'm not like that. I'm not. Yesterday I was scared you were gonna die, Mom and I...they wouldn't even let me in to see you...

NACHETSKA

I told them not to.

Beat

RUSS

Okay....but...I know I don't have a lotta standing right now...but...shouldn't we try to take a...uh...stand here?

MASON

Dude.

JIMMY

He's not wrong. You went to that stupid church for 20 years. Hell you sewed Austin's mom's wedding dress. You sewed his wife's wedding dress. You're a pillar of this community.

GUNNER

You're the best damn designer in the DFW area and you're already married in my eyes. You're family Nachetska. You too Leigh. Fuck this.

DESIREE

Here you're trying to do right. Make a pact in front of God and live like they say they do.

JASPAL

This is wrong. They are wrong. This is judgmental spiritual pride. And Anti-constitution.

RUSS

Mom....I really thought this would be better than the community center...I was worried that people would....try to

NACHETSKA

Russell Stop.

LEIGH

Well. Sounds like Russ needs to get to work guys.

NACHETSKA

Leigh.

JIMMY

You mean we just do the party here anyway?

GUNNER

Wait. No.

LEIGH

Yep.

NACHETSKA

What is the point if it's sad and ugly? This is so humiliating! And for no reason.

RUSS

No! Let's do it! I'm gonna cook and I'm gonna decorate and just...just please let me do this okay. I'll make it look good. I promise.

GUNNER

You gonna fuck with the police?!

MASON

Why should we fucking trust you?

GARY

This is so cray.

JIMMY

Do we have another option? ANY other options?

JASPAL

I do not know why you chose me over the community center. They are cleaner and they have central A/C. But. If you still want to do this here....We will paint. They cannot do this to you. To....us.

MASON

Goddammit it's almost worth it just to piss off those two fucking assholes.

JASPAL

Yes. If the short asshole returns and you want to punch him, I will help you.

MASON

Deal.

Jaspal walks off towards the dressing room with great purpose.

GUNNER

Does anyone here realize what's gonna happen if they come back and

JIMMY

YES. And I don't see any other fucking options, do you? It's almost midnight and we are supposed to do this fucking wedding TOMORROW.

GUNNER

Goddammit...

DESIREE

Fuck it. I didn't drive all the way over from Beaumont for nothing.

RUSS

Mom. Please.

LEIGH

Cheska?

RUSS

Please. Let me make all this up to you. I will. I promise.

Nachetska stands up.

NACHETSKA

Okay. But. I don't want you at the ceremony. I don't want you to be there.

RUSS

Oh. Okay.

NACHETSKA

(To Leigh) I think I need to lie down.

LEIGH

Okay. Let's go home. Big day tomorrow, dear heart.

Nachetska and Leigh exit with the oxygen tank in tow. Everyone just watches them leave. Then they all turn and look at Russ.

RUSS

Okay. *(Beat.)* Okay.

*Russ starts decorating.
Jimmy gets a call on his cell phone.*

JIMMY

Hello? David? What's going on?

GUNNER

I hate cops.

JIMMY

(To the phone) Well I'm NOT afraid of a pissant scarecrow with a badge! *(He hangs up)* They called Pastor Dave and threatened legal action for performing "illegitimate ceremonies."

GUNNER

I really, really hate cops.

JIMMY

Well. Have fun decorating Russ. This clusterfuck better look spic and span in the AM. I'm gonna go get some fucking R&R. Gotta rest my cords.

GUNNER

I am gonna go meditate. On forgiveness.

Gary starts to help Russ but stops and looks at Mason.

MASON

Why exactly should I fucking help you?

RUSS

I don't know. You don't have to.

MASON

God you love the fucking victim card don't you?

She starts to help Russ.

RUSS

Thank you.

MASON

Nuh uh. I ain't doing this for you. She's a ripe fucking bitch, but goddammit Nachetska deserved better than this Russ. We all did. Hand me those fucking lights Gary.

GARY

Will you please marry

MASON

NO.

STOP ASKING.

DESIREE

Y'all are crazy. I gotta go pray.

Desiree walks off towards the dressing room. Lights shift to the dressing room revealing Jaspal and Ayesha arguing. Desiree sees this as she is about to enter the dressing room and stops outside to avoid interrupting.

JASPAL

I do not know. Maybe. Yes. It is unclear.

AYESHA

This will set us back a great deal! I told you these people would bring trouble on us! "If two men among you are guilty of lewdness, punish them both."

JASPAL

No. These people are being persecuted by those that would persecute us. We must stand with them, I think. "Allah loves those who do good." I have to go and get paint.

AYESHA

“Allah loves those who do good.” You have actually been reading the scripture now? Is this good? Only a fool seeks trouble that is not his own.

JASPAL

I am a fool, but I am lucky to have you.

Jaspal exits the dressing room and sees Desiree. He stops.

JASPAL

Hello. My name is Jaspal. I like your eyeliner. It is very flattering. It matches your beard well. I will ask my wife to apply the surma to me tomorrow..

DESIREE

Well...I hope that she does...that. Thank you.

JASPAL

I have to go and get paint.

Jaspal leaves. Desiree enters the dressing room. Ayesha is about to breakdown but instead she suddenly throws herself into praying

AYESHA

Ameen. Do not worry do not worry do not worry,
we will find a way, God is good and OH Sorry!!
I am sorry! Do you need this room to prepare?

DESIREE

Oh! Sorry!

DESIREE

I just needed to get away from all the drama. Are you okay?

AYESHA

Yes. I am fine. No. Yes. I am sorry. We are fine.

DESIREE

You don't have to apologize. *(Slight pause)* This cease and desist order is gonna hurt y'all, isn't it?

AYESHA

Yes.

DESIREE

This whole production has got me SWEATING. Let's pray. Let's lift it up to God together. We all need some prayers right now. C'mon. Can I pray with you?

AYESHA

uh....Yes?

Desiree and Ayesha get on their knees. Desiree offers her hand to Ayesha.

AYESHA

I cannot take the hand of a man I am not married to.

DESIREE

(laughing deeply) Oh my sweet angel. I am not a man. I'm a QUEEN.

After a moments hesitation, Ayesha takes her hand.

DESIREE

Heavenly Father,
you are the shepherd watching over us...

AYESHA

Allah is good and will protect us from
those who wish us harm...

Lights shift to show Nachetska and Leigh standing holding hands under an umbrella. Leigh is in her Navy dress uniform and Nachetska is in a beautiful homemade wedding dress, oxygen tank bedazzled and still in tow—but they look distressed. Sounds of rain and thunder.

DESIREE

Help these good people
find the path to abundance, good lord

AYESHA

Help us find the money to bring my
uncle here, Allah.

There's a HUGE crack of thunder and intense sounds of rain. Gunner/"Bella Scoria" in full drag, Jimmy/"Claire Buoyant" also in full drag, run on and add their umbrellas to protect them, as well as to protect themselves from the thundering rainstorm. They are a yelling, huddled awkward mass of bodies, costumes, and umbrellas trying to escape the rain.

DESIREE

Good lord,
help them bring their family together here

AYESHA

Protect Ameen and keep him safe until
we can remove him from danger

*Nachetska et al in the huddled group slowly makes its way to the reception area.
Gary in a suit and tie and...a little daring eyeliner and eye shadow...runs past
them into the reception hall. He flips on the fluorescent lights.*

*The place actually looks impressive. There are Christmas lights strung
everywhere. Colored paper butterflies hanging from the ceiling. Tables set with
chairs. The graffiti on the walls has been painted over and a giant mass of paper
butterflies is covering the hole in the ceiling. A make shift stage and DJ station
have been set up with some clip lights, a disco ball, a microphone, and a strange
contraption with the words "GLITTER CANNON" painted on it. Near the
dressing room there is a big round table with hors d'oeuvres on it.*

Gary runs to the DJ station and tries to get the stereo working. It won't turn on.

GARY

RUSS!? JOAN?! HELLO?!?!?

*Mason pokes her head out of the dressing room door. Her hair is done up and
she's wearing lots of (borrowed) make up.*

MASON

They here?

GARY

(Not looking at her yet still focused on the stereo)

Almost! It's just the five of them.

The roads are all flooded out.

No one was able to come!

They didn't even get to do a ceremony!

How do you get this damn thing

Wait

Gary turns and looks at her.

GARY

ARE YOU WEARING MAKEUP?!

YES? OK.

MASON

Yeah, I know!

Well...

Fucking showgirls didn't show up so I

Oh my god!

Wait

MASON

ARE YOU WEARING MAKEUP?!

YES? OK.

GARY

Looks good.

MASON

You too, actually.

For a moment they regard each other hungrily, and then kiss.

Jaspal enters the space where Desiree and Ayesha are. He is wearing Punjabi attire and carries similar attire for Ayesha. He applies eyeliner (surma) to Ayesha as she prays.

DESIREE

Good shepherd bring all your sheep
to safety, to the flock, dear lord

AYESHA

Allah, I know you will protect him as you
protect us

Once Jaspal is done applying the surma to Ayesha, Desiree and Jaspal help her change into the Punjabi attire.

RUSS

(Yelling from the dressing room) YOU HAVE TO USE THE BREAKER SWITCHES IN THE FUSE BOX TO TURN THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND THE STEREO ON AND THE FLUORESCENTS OFF OR THE WHOLE THING WILL BLOW AGAIN!

MASON

I gotta finish helping Russ

GARY

I gotta get the music going.

Mason goes back into the dressing room. We can hear her yell "TIME TO BE A BUTTERFLY!" and Russ yell. Gary turns on the music, he runs over to the breaker box and pulls a switch. Fluorescents out. In the dark he hits the other switch. The Christmas lights, the stage lights, and the disco ball turns on.

It's beautiful.

Ayesha now applies eyeliner (surma) to Jaspal as she prays.

DESIREE

Thank you Heavenly Father,
I know you hear the prayers
of two believers praying to you. Amen

AYESHA

Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

Ayesha, Jaspal, and Desiree all rush over and join the huddled mass of Nachetska and the others.

Gary dashes to the stereo and gets music playing (Diana Ross “I’m coming out” perhaps?) just in time as the entrance doors open and the mass of umbrellas and people crowd in.

Now we can see more clearly, the drag queens all look fabulous—and exhausted and harried by the storm.

Jimmy/Claire Buoyant is carrying a laptop bag.

Nachetska and Leigh stop dead center and take it in.

LEIGH

Wow.

GUNNER/BELLA MAPLE

Well okay

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Pull out the cheap rouge and color me surprised

AYESHA

Oh Jaspal!

JASPAL

Yes. It is beautiful.

The paint was a good idea.

DESIREE

Well HAL LAY LU YAH!

NACHETSKA

Are we in the right place? I guess low lighting does a lot for aesthetics.

LEIGH

(Near tears) Aaaaah! It’s SO PRETTY! I’m so sorry no one showed! I mean I know they couldn’t, and they would have, but the rain, and we didn’t even get to have a CEREMONY! We didn’t even get to get officially MARRIED!

Nachetska kisses Leigh and stares into her eyes.

NACHETSKA

Everyone I love is right here. I don’t need a priest to tell me who I’m spending the rest of my life with.

GARY

(On the mic) WEEELLLLLCOOOOOOOOMMEEEE...to the celebration of the wedding of ... the...couple! Leigh and Nachetska!! Refreshments and *hors d'oeuvres* will be making their way, uh....via...the lovely.....

The dressing room door opens, there's some rustling and someone walks out holding up a tarp to hide themselves. They inch over to the hors d'oeuvres table. They duck under the table. There's some more rustling and adjustment. Mason pops up through a hole in the center of the table. She's dressed like a Vegas showgirl. The table cloth on the table clearly looks like a skirt on her.

MASON

Welcome to the illegal wedding of the century!! Have some of these delicious treats! compliments of the former restaurateur Russ Tulane!

Mason starts rolling the table toward the guests awkwardly.

GUNNER/BELLA MAPLE

So it's gonna be one of those productions tonight. Okay.

Jimmy/Claire Buoyant pulls the laptop out and putting it on a table.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

It is 8am in Kabul right now. We need to get this show on the road.

GUNNER/ BELLA MAPLE

We need to get this show on life support. I'm gonna go help Russ.

MASON

(To Leigh and Nachetska) Wanna treat? They're delicious but they go straight to your hips!

NACHETSKA

GARY!!

GARY

(Awkwardly on the mic) Uh...what's up Nachetska?

NACHETSKA

We are doing our first dance before the show!! Who's running this? I thought Russell said he was organizing this! What? No thank you, Joan. Where's Russell?

Lights come up to reveal the dressing room. Russ is standing in the compression thong. The Old Man is staring at him. Russ looks like he's panicking.

MASON

Uhhhhh....he's.....uhhhh...getting...dressed....?

NACHETSKA

Drunk probably. Just like his father at my first wedding. Fine. GARY!! Play our song!

GARY

(Desperately trying to find the song) YES MA'AM!!

LEIGH

Maybe we should

Yes ma'am.

NACHETSKA

Not a chance sailor. You owe me a dance and I intend to take it now.

Gunner/Bella Scoria enters the dressing room. They stop and look at Russ panicking.

GUNNER

Oh.

GARY

And Now THE FIRST DANCE with the happy couple!!

Music (It's Now or Never by Elvis Presley perhaps?) plays. Nachetska and Leigh start slow dancing. Nachetska is still pulling her oxygen tank.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

OKAY. You got the tuck done! Ready to get dressed and get your face on? Butterfly?

RUSS

...I don't....know.... if I...

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

NOPE. Not now honey. Not after all this. You and I are doing this number and that's all there is to it. Get dressed.

He starts getting dressed. It's clumsy and awkward and he's panicking. At the same time in the reception area, Nachetska is struggling to dance with her oxygen tank.

NACHETSKA

STOP!

Gary stops the music.

NACHETSKA

(taking the oxygen tube out of her nose)

I can't dance with this...

LEIGH

Cheska! No!

NACHETSKA

I just wanna dance with you! I'll be fine.

She tries to start dancing with Leigh

NACHETSKA

GARY! Start the song again!

RUSS

I can't uh I gotta

Nachetska is struggling to breathe

LEIGH

NACHETSKA!

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

RUSS! Stop! Focus on me! Let me help you!

Gunner/Bella Scoria pinches Russell

Nachetska stumbles and Leigh catches her

RUSSELL

OW!

LEIGH

What are you doing?!

Leigh puts the oxygen hose back on her.

NACHETSKA

I...just...want...to...DANCE...ON....MY...WEDDING...

LEIGH

You're not killing yourself on our wedding day.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

You're not gonna die Russell. I'm gonna help you.

RUSSELL

NO!...I HAVE TO....I HAVE TO

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Here. Let me help.

Jimmy/Claire Buoyant takes the oxygen tank. He wheels it behind Nachetska so she can dance freely with Leigh. Gary starts the song back up. Nachetska and Leigh dance with Jimmy wheeling the tank.

Gunner/Bella Scoria pinches Russ HARD.

LEIGH

Okay, okay...let's dance...

NACHETSKA

Thank you.

LEIGH

You don't have to kill yourself just to dance with me, Cheska

NACHETSKA

I would though. To dance with you. I like you sailor. *(Hugging Leigh tight)* Makes me happy!

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Me too! The last time I was an accessory, I had to do 3 to 5 with 6 months probation.

In the dressing room, Russ is dressed now.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

I'm just gonna do a simple face for you. Nice and easy. Don't freak out on me. Pinch yourself again if you have to. Focus on the pain.

They get ready to put make up on Russ. Russ takes a deep breath and closes his eyes.

Nachetska takes off the oxygen and walks to the dressing room. Leigh and Jimmy keep dancing as if she were still there as the lights fade on the reception.

RUSS

Time to be a butterfly.

Russ pinches himself hard and opens his eyes.

Nachetska enters the dressing room.

Gunner/Bella Scoria does not see her and continues to put make up on Russ during this scene.

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

(Speaking with a Texas accent) Russell....Did you get your homework done?

RUSS

(Younger somehow) Yes Mom. Chores are done. Trash out. Lawn mowed. Can you drive me to Mase's house?

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

Okay Russell, but first I need you to do something for me. Can you do me a, uh, favor?

RUSS

Now? Mase and I were gonna go fishing
before the pep rally tonight!
But the boys are gonna pick me up from the dock!
Okay Fine!

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

In an hour maybe.
I know
Russell, I need your help!

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

I'm directing a play for the church youth group. I need you to play a part for me.

RUSS

Oh What?! Ugh!

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

For me Russ. For your momma.

RUSS

Ugh. Fine. What part?

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

I need you to be a woman.
It will be so funny Russell! The Big football
star in drag! Wearing make up. Please!
All the girls will think it's...sexy. Confident!
Make up is sexy! Women are sexy!
Ladies like other ladies....
I do. I like ladies. More than I like men, honestly.

RUSS

Mom.
No, mom, no.
No.
Mom.

RUSS

Uh..whoa..

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

For me Russ. Please. I never ask you for anything. Just this.

RUSS

Mom, are you okay? You're acting weird. Where's dad?

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

He's at work. Won't be home for hours. He'll never know. PLEASE. *(She gets very emotional)* I really, really need you to play this part for me okay? Please? PleasePleasePleasePlease??

RUSS

Uh.....okay Mom. But...

Nachetska starts to put make up on him with Gunner/Bella Scoria.

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

He won't know. He's working late tonight.....I love you Russell. You know that right?

RUSS

Yeah mom. Are you...Is everything okay? You're not dying or something are you?

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

Not yet, Russell. I love you. Please remember that always.

RUSS

You're so weird sometimes. *(Beat)* I love you too, Mom.

The Old Man laughs and moves up behind Nachetska/Illya. Russ and Nachetska/Illya both react like they heard a sound outside the door.

RUSS

Oh shit, Dad's home! I thought

NACHETSKA/ILLYA
I'm sorry Russell.

Wait. What?!

The Old Man walks over to the door and opens and closes it as if he just walked in. Russ and Nachetska stare at him.

He stares at them.

He suddenly lunges and grabs Russell by the shoulders.

OLD MAN

GODDAM ABOMINATION. Why? *(He lets go and turns towards Nachetska/Illya)* Why? Why whywhywhy??/

The Old Man suddenly starts towards Nachetska.

OLD MAN
WHY WHY WHY WHY!?

RUSS
WHY WHY WHY WHY!?

The Old Man reaches for Nachetska's throat

RUSS

WHYYYYYYY!!??

*The Old Man stops reaching.
He steps back and calmly watches Russ and Nachetska.*

RUSS

You knew.

*Nachetska turns back to Russ.
She smiles gently and finishes some part of his makeup.*

RUSS

You knew he'd come home. Probably drunk and angry like most days he got off early.

Nachetska stands up and looks at the Old Man.

The Old Man smiles and exits.

NACHETSKA/ILLYA

I love you Russell.

RUSS

Mom? Did you?

Always remember that.
(She changes somehow. The texas accent is gone)
My name is Nachetska.

Nachetska walks out of the dressing room and goes back to dancing with Leigh.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

You okay Russ?

RUSS

...yeah, I guess...I...

GARY

(From the reception area on the mic) Let's hear it for the Amazing Desiree!! Remember! Tip your drag queens! ALL tips go to the charity of the queen's choice!

RUSS

(Pulling out the cashiers check and looking at it) You believe something can be cursed? Like money? Like "ill gotten money?"

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

If you think it's cursed give it to a good cause. Earn some karma. Because, honey, you could use some good juju.

The door bursts open and Desiree comes in.

DESIREE

Allllrrriiight! Never done drag for Muslims AND lesbians! In the same venue. Lord praise! Y'all ready? You're up next.

Pulling out dollar bills that have been stuffed into the top of her dress and putting them in an envelope

8 whole dollars. Let's see if your little duo number can top that!

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

People love a rookie. Can you help me with his boots? Russ they're platforms. HEEL toe, HEEL toe, yeah?

*Desiree and Gunner/Bella help him lace up his boots.
During this, Russ quietly slips the check into Desiree's tip envelope.*

DESIREE

You forget the words just say "watermelon cantaloupe watermelon cantaloupe."

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

Drag is the defiance of the oppressed. Fearless confidence we bring to the stage.

DESIREE

You got this.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

Okay. You look good Butterfly. Ready?

RUSS

...Yes.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

Lets do this.

*Lights out.
In the darkness:*

GARY

(On the mic) AAAAAANNNNNDDDD INTRODUCING THE 5 TIME REIGNING MISS GAY AMERICA CHAMPION.....BELLA SCORIA!!!

Under Pressure by Queen starts to play. A light comes up on Bella Scoria. They're on stage in a pose.

GARY

And introducing....MISS.....uhhhhhh.....RUSSELL!

A light comes up on Russell in full drag on stage. Russ and Bella dive into the number.

At the edge of the light spilling off the stage, we can see that Nachetska has gotten up and walked over to the stage to get a better look. She looks as if a strange spell has come over her. She watches with incredible intensity.

The number goes pretty well. Russ isn't great but he's trying hard and Bella Scoria is fantastic.

Then, right as the song gets to:

*Why can't we give love that one more chance?
Why can't we give love, give love, give love, give love
Give love, give love, give love*

GIANT SOUND OF THUNDER AND LIGHTING!

Suddenly the lights flicker and blackout.

The music cuts off as well.

In the darkness:

RUSS

OH GODDAMMIT! FUCKING MOTHERFUCKER!!

We hear sounds of people bumping into things and trying to figure out what's happening. The lights flicker back on. Everyone looks surprised and confused. Russ looks distraught.

RUSS

NO! SHIT COCK! FUCKING MOTHERFUCKER!!

Gary is frantically trying to get the music back on and to where the song got cut off. It isn't going well. Russ looks like he's losing it and might attack someone or something. Nachetska is seemingly frozen never taking her eyes off of him.

RUSS

FUCKING CUNT CUNT CUNT!!! CUNTCUNTCUNTCUNTCUNTCUNT!!!

Finally Gary turns off the stereo and grabs the microphone. It's not working great either.

Gary turns the mic off.

GARY

LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE!!!

Everyone looks at Gary.

GARY

LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE!!!

Russell stops and looks at Gary.

GARY

uh.....

*(Singing) Turned away from it all like a blind man
Sat on a fence but it don't work*

Gary stops and looks at Gunner/Bella Scoria and Russ expectantly. Gunner/Bella Scoria starts to do the choreography again. They stop and tug at Russ. They motion for Gary to start singing again. Jimmy/Claire Buoyant runs over to Gary.

GARY AND JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

*(Singing) Turned away from it all like a blind man
Sat on a fence but it don't work*

DESIREE

Keep coming up with love but it's so slashed and torn

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Why, why, WHYYYYYYYYYYY???

Russ joins back into the choreography with Gunner/Bella Scoria

Leigh steps up to be with Nachetska, but Nachetska gently pushes Leigh back behind her. Everyone stands and watches Nachetska and Russ. There may be some small individual verbal reactions, but nothing that distract from this confrontation.

NACHETSKA

Answer me. *(Beat)* WHY.

RUSS

I thought....

NACHETSKA

No. Thinking does not seem to have been a part of your decision process here. WHY?

RUSS

I thought....that it would...make you...

NACHETSKA

Excited? Entertained? Make me think you were COOL and HIP with the GAYS??

Nachetska is breathing hard and has to turn up her oxygen flow.

RUSS

No, mom, I THOUGHT it would make you happy and that you would see

NACHETSKA

NO.

No I do not believe that you are mentally disabled and so I cannot accept that you actually THOUGHT that ANYTHING about this would make me happy.

WHY?

Yes?Yeeessss??

RUSS

Because of...I....
what happened...
with....
dad...

NACHETSKA

Ohhhhhh ho ho Ho! Yes. YOUR FATHER. I would very MUCH like to understand what you thought about THAT would make me HAPPY about this? Lay it out for me. Tell me. Tell EVERYONE HERE.

Beat

RUSS

(These words are VERY hard for him to say out loud) I just...when I...when dad....When you asked me to put on uh... make up...and told me...and Dad came home early...

NACHETSKA

annnnndddd?

RUSS

And he...uh...I thought.....we.....uh left...and I never...i guess...i thought...this is what you wanted.

Nachetska is so mad that she has to turn up her oxygen again.

NACHETSKA

Russell. I'm going to fill in some blanks for you since you seem to be *forgetting* some details. Your father came home and saw me putting make up on you. He beat me. In front of you. He strangled me on the floor right next to you. Do you remember that part?

NACHETSKA

RUSS

Do you?

yes.

Do you remember me calling out for you as I laid there bloody and gasping for breath?

yes.

Do you remember leaving me there on the floor? With the man who nearly killed me.

i didn't...yes.

I...

Did you know that I ended up having a series of strokes from that night?

I didn't...

That I will probably die early because of what happened that day?

...yes.

Nachetska gives herself more oxygen for this next outburst.

NACHETSKA

WHY IN GOD'S NAME WOULD YOU THINK I WANTED TO BE REMINDED OF THIS ON MY WEDDING DAY?????

RUSS

NACHETSKA

i thought

That I wanted to think about your father on the day of my blessed nuptials?

No.

That maybe I'd like to be traumatized by reliving it into having another stroke?

No! I...

...I was just

TRYING TO MAKE THIS ALL ABOUT YOU.

Yes, I'm aware of that.

You tucked us away in this little hellhole.

You took over the reception and the drag show.
You made yourself the star attraction.
So that you could apologize and that I would have to accept it.

RUSS
I'm sorry but

NACHETSKA
NOT ACCEPTED.

RUSS
I'm really really sorry but

NACHETSKA
OH. You're sorry. Well. That's nice to hear. TWENTY PLUS YEARS LATER. He's sorry everyone. I'm so glad to know.

RUSS
...he always felt so much bigger than me...

NACHETSKA
Russell. I need you to understand something. I'm NOT mad that you didn't stop your father that day. That's NOT what I'm mad about. The real thing that....KILLS me....EVERYDAY....for the last TWENTY YEARS...was that you saw what he did...and you chose him. I wrote you letters. I called you. I can understand that you were scared that day. It was scary. Your father was scary. BUT YOU CHOSE HIM. THAT DAY AND EVERYDAY AFTER. You ignored me UNTIL he was dead.

NACHETSKA
Did you ever stand up to him?
No? Never?
It's not just that you're a coward Russell.
It's that you want me to thank you for taking
over my wedding after ignoring me for most of your life.

RUSS
that's...that's.....not fair....he
wouldn't ...i....i tried...
....i....i....i....

RUSS
He made me promise. And...I wawawawawas.....uhhhh
He almost says something. But he still can't say the words.

....And I....ran...I got married and there was the restaurant and...and I...

He looks down at his drag attire

I don't think I know what that is maybe.

NACHETSKA

No. You do not know what “this” is. “This” is not yours. “This” is my home. “This” is my community, my family, my place. Drag isn’t just a hobby that’s FUN for me to participate in. This is a part of WHO I AM. You cannot just come HERE and TAKE MY (*she breaks down*)...**wedding**. This was mine.

I lived for SO LONG and was SO SCARED in that sad old house. And I thought, I finally justI thought whatever happened, after that we would at least be in it together. But you chose him.

RUSS
Mom please
That’s not
I didn’t
I...

NACHETSKA

And so Illya Dean DIED. She died alone on that floor, she died again two months later when you hung up on her, and she died everyday you didn’t come back. She died and nobody gave two fucks. But Nachetska. Nachetska could not be ignored.

RUSS

I WAS SIXTEEN!!! SIXTEEN MOM!! Like what the actual fuck did you think I was gonna do? Kill my own fucking father? Or just get fucking killed? Because you can stand here and tell me it’s the last twenty years that are the real crime but you SURE SEEM FOCUSED ON THE NIGHT YOU SET ME UP TO GET BEATEN TO SHIT BY MY OWN FATHER when I was SIXTEEN YEARS OLD. I wasn’t a man. I wasn’t asked or warned. You just threw me a fucking hand grenade like a CRAZY person and then you act surprised that I would be mad or betrayed or just maybe NOT TRUST THE CRAZY WOMAN ACTING FUCKING CRAZY. Who changed her fucking name and SUDDENLY had a CRAZY fucking accent and pretended like she wasn’t fucking Illya Dean from Weatherford Texas walking around in a CRAZY fur fucking coat in fucking TEXAS IN FUCKING AUGUST YOU KNOW, LIKE A CRAZY CRAZY CRAZY CRAZY PERSON!!

Beat

NACHETSKA

There it is. I’m **embarrassing**. WELL. I regret nothing. I like who I am. Who are you? A divorced, broke, sad little man begging for forgiveness he doesn’t deserve? You really are his... Maybe you’re the one who died.

RUSS
no no no
Jesus Christ
no no NO!
You FUCKING

*Fierce crack of thunder and again the lights flicker out.
The entrance door is thrown open and light from a car spills through the door.
Two figures are silhouetted in the light.*

DESIREE

Ooooooh Not today Satan nooooo.....

WOODY

YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST!

The fluorescent lights flicker back on revealing a very drenched Woody and Sheriff Knotts.

Everyone just looks at them.

WOODY

...UNDER ARREST!

Woody nudges Sheriff Knotts

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Uh..look! You're all clearly in violation of the cease and desist order...and uh...geez...
EVERYTHING we talked about yesterday so....yeah. I gotta arrest you. Where's Russ? Russell?

WOODY

I told you they were breaking the laws here!

Everyone looks at Russ.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

....what's the plan? You had a plan?

Russ just sinks down and buries his head in his hands.

There is a moment where everyone looks at each other, except for Russ who won't look at anyone.

LEIGH

HI OFFICER! Um SO..... are you going to arrest ALL of us?

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Yeah. Step back. So. Uh...Dang it. I'm gonna need back up here, Woody. I can't fit more than three of them in my car, I told you... I don't know if anyone else can get here with the roads flooded and...

WOODY

Then you HANDCUFF them and we
take them to jail ONE at a TIME if you have to!!

LEIGH
That seems

SHERIFF KNOTTS
Cheese and rice Woody, that's gonna take all night!

LEIGH
Gentlemen, if I can offer a
simpler solution

WOODY
They broke the law. I want them ARRESTED
and PUNISHED!!

LEIGH
Frankly, I think this party...

SHERIFF KNOTTS
I mean, it's just a wedding
for goodness

WOODY
IT'S
AN ABOMINATION
AND I WANT IT/

Might already be over
And we can all just go

Leigh gently tries to physically reach out to the Woody. Woody, not paying attention to Leigh, turns and bumps into her hand

LEIGH
Oh! I'm SO SORRY sir, I

WOODY
GET OFF ME!!

SHERIFF KNOTTS
Alright. Everybody line up!

Woody pushes Leigh's and she stumbles into the Sheriff. He pushes Leigh away.

SHERIFF KNOTTS
STEP BACK!

She stumbles and falls.

NACHETSKA
NOOOO!!!

Everyone in the wedding party gasps. Leigh sits up and wipes her mouth. There is blood from where she bit her lip during the fall. There is blood on her white navy dress uniform.

LEIGH
You made me bleed on my uniform...

WOODY
You tried to GRAB ME you filthy pervert/

GUNNER/BELLA MAPLE
FUUUUUCKING MOTHERFUUUUUUUUUUKERS!!!! ARRRGGGHHHH!!!

*Gunner/Bella Maple throws some part of their outfit at the Sheriff.
It hits him.
There is a brief pause.*

WOODY
(To Sheriff Knotts) That's assault...That MAN...that THING...just ASSAULTED YOU!! Arrest HIM!! Put HIM in HANDCUFFS and get HIM OUT OF HERE!!

Mason rolls forward.

MASON
THEIR NAME...is GUNNER LAUGHTON and when THEY ARE IN THEIR FACE you will CALL THEM BELLA SCORIA and ZE. HAS. A. RIGHT. TO. BE HEEERRREEE!!!

Gunner/Bella Maple charges the Sheriff and Mason, still in the rolling hors d'oeuvre table, charges right at Woody who shrieks and starts scrambling away from her.

Then there is an eruption as the wedding party rushes Woody and the Sheriff. During all this Russ is seemingly frozen.

SO MUCH SWIRLING CHAOS.

Mason and Jaspal are chasing Woody. Everyone else is yelling at the Sheriff. Sheriff has pulled out his nightstick and is swinging it to keep everyone at bay.

SHERIFF KNOTTS
DON'T TOUCH ME! DON'T TOUCH ME!! OH GEEZ OH NO! WHERE'S RUSS?
RUSS!!??? RUSSEELLL?!! RUSSELLLLLL???!?

*Russ finally decides to take action.
He strides over to the Sheriff and approaches him from behind.*

RUSS
Austin! Austin! It's me! Russell!

Russ grabs the Sheriff's arm and turns him around to face him.

RUSS

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Austin! It's me! Stop it!
No one is going to hurt/

/DON'T FUCKING TOUCH ME YOU
FUCKING FAGGOT ASSFUCKERS!!

Sheriff Knotts hits Russ hard with his nightstick. Repeatedly. Fast. Hard. Russ goes down. It's a shockingly brutal assault. Jimmy/Claire Buoyant jumps on top of Russ to cover him and take the blows.

NACHETSKA

RUSSELLLL!!!

Leigh and Nachetska pull the Sheriff back but Nachetska falls back into Leigh's arms.

Mason is now screaming and charging the Sheriff. The Sheriff is scrambling and he tries to pull his gun out but he drops it and has to flee from Mason.

Even MORE Chaos.

Somehow, Woody gets the Sheriff's gun and stands up. He aims the gun wildly at Jaspal.

WOODY

PLEASE GOD HELP ME!!!

He fires.

*It misses and goes into the butterflies covering the hole in the ceiling.
Water comes out.*

Everyone has stopped.

Jaspal giggles for a moment, shocked that he wasn't shot.

Woody points the gun very deliberately at Jaspal.

JASPAL

Don't! Please!

WOODY

You should be afraid of me! This is MY town! MY Community!!

JASPAL

I.I...I...

Jaspal closes his eyes and begins barely audibly whispering a prayer over and over

JASPAL

a'oodhu bi kaliamaat allaah al-taammaati min sharri maa khalaq

Desiree runs over and stands protectively next to Jaspal.

DESIREE

(Whispering with her eyes closed and repeating these words over and over)
Dear Lord protect me, I shall fear no evil even as I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. For you are with me.

Russ looks at Austin, but Austin just shrinks away and does nothing.

RUSS

Austin??!

WOODY

You godless bunch of savages! I always knew you were a pervert Russell! I knew your momma's poison had infected you!!

RUSS

AUSTIN!!!??

WOODY

(To Jaspal) You attacked me! I don't have to run from you!

Gunner/Bella Scoria joins Desiree and Jaspal.

GUNNER

I will protect you rising phoenix flame

I know you will fight for me the same

Today, today you become my family

Reborn into what you were meant to be

DESIREE

I shall fear no evil

Even as I walk

Through the valley

of the shadow of death

JASPAL

a'oodhu bi kaliamaat allaah

al-taammaati min sharri maa

khalaq

allahu akbar allahu akbar

I'M SORRY!!

RUSS
KILL YOOOOUUUU!!

The Sheriff flees towards the stage. Gary has run over and fires the Glitter Cannon from the stage directly at Sheriff Knotts. The Sheriff falls and hits his head and appears to be unconscious.

GARY

ATTICA!! ATTICA!!

Gary runs and hides.

Russ looks at the Sheriff.

He raises the sword.

MASON

NACHETSKA

Russ. Don't.

No.

Russell strides toward the unconscious Sheriff like he's about to murder him. Just before he gets there...

He steps in a puddle of water on stage and there is a sudden flash and sound of electrocution.

Blackout.

There are some voices shouting but they sound like they are underwater and far away.

Long pause.

Then a cigarette is lit in the dark and the lights slowly come up on the Old Man smoking.

Lights come up a bit more to reveal Russ lying on the stage.

We can't see much else.

The Old Man watches him.

Throughout the following, the Old Man is always smoking.

RUSS

What happened?

OLD MAN

You put an outlet in a water soaked ceiling with a leaky roof in the middle of a non-stop thunderstorm. Without a GFCI component. Didn't really secure the wiring. Sloppy. Doing it right takes time and you rushed it.

RUSS

Didn't have time.

OLD MAN

Lazy. Look, you trying to be Jesus in all this is just fucking stupid. You gonna drown yourself trying to walk on water.

RUSS

I'm just trying to make it up to her.

OLD MAN

To who? Yeah. Well. You pretend cutting your dick off trying to make your momma happy is just about the most amazingly honest thing I ever fucking seen. You gonna pickle it in a jar for her pantry or just bronze the fucking thing and hang it on the mantle?

RUSS

I'm just trying to prove I ain't just one thing. I ain't just you.

OLD MAN

Made your choice a long time ago. Haven't budged much as far I can see.

Nachetska is visible. She is taking off her oxygen hose.

RUSS

You ever think breathing is really about just taking up space? Like allowing yourself to exist in space?

A weird kind of music creeps in.

OLD MAN

I stopped breathing a long time ago, son. You ain't seemed to notice yet. So...You wanna keep dancing?

RUSS

How is it then you're still sucking up all the fucking oxygen? I still gotta make room, make apologies, make amends for all the shit you fucked up and left for me to fix.

OLD MAN

Well I can't change, so I can't be forgiven. Because...I'm fucking GONE. So whose fault is it now? C'mon. You already took all my money. Dance!

Leigh comes up and twirls Nachetska into the space near Russ and the Old Man. They start dancing a circular path around Russ and the Old Man. Nachetska is moving backwards and her dance moves look almost like she's being attacked by an unseen force. Leigh's dance moves almost look like she's trying to grab Nachetska and save her. It's a grotesque looking dance and they seem to almost be trying to offend Russ with their performance.

RUSS

Ugh God. What is this? I didn't fucking ask for any of this. This, this, this, SHIT. Your shit! Their shit! But it's mine now.

OLD MAN

Oooohh...So close that if it were a snake it woulda bit ya...

RUSS

What are you talking around...?

OLD MAN

Oh! You can't hear yourself talking? Good. Listen to me! She don't want you. You ain't the hero of her story. She wants to pretend she's the star of some other life. Oh no! Boohoo!

RUSS

Well, that's her choice.

OLD MAN

Yeah yeah Women's fucking lib! LETS DANCE ALREADY!!

The Old Man walks up and pushes Leigh away from Nachetska. Leigh just stands off to the side and keeps reaching blindly for Nachetska.

The Old Man takes Leigh's place and is now doing a sort of "dance attack" to match Nachetska's moves. Nachetska is looking at RUSS and silently asking for help.

This "attack dance" should be disturbing and representative/symbolic of the actual violent attack that occurred years ago. It should not however feel like a realistic attack. The Old Man stops periodically to speak the following to Russ

who is frozen almost comically in panic now. And yes, the Old Man is still smoking throughout this whole sequence.

RUSS

No! I erased all this!!

OLD MAN

Can't erase what you didn't do. It's already gone.

NACHETSKA

Remember.

OLD MAN

YOU'RE ALWAYS GONNA BE ME!

Russ suddenly rushes over to them and pulls the Old Man away from Nachetska. Leigh finds and holds Nachetska. Russ looks at Nachetska and Leigh.

OLD MAN

Yeah! We gonna keep on dancing!! Haha!!

NACHETSKA

(To Russ) I don't know if I like your make up.

LEIGH

You should have been a part of a VIGILANT family.

Russ roars and turns and attacks the Old Man like he's absolutely going to kill him. Like the attack dance, this violence should echo the original assault that happened years ago, but this version be viscerally realistic and upsetting—except that the Old Man seems to be enjoying it as he gets battered.

RUSS

(Hitting the Old Man repeatedly)

WHY?!

OLD MAN

(laughing and smoking between each hit)

Wooo! Yeah!

WHY!?

Yeah! Keep going!!

WHY!?

Now you're singing MY song!

THIS POISON PAINT YOU PUT
ON MY WHOLE LIFE!

Dancing MY dance! I LOVE IT!

RUSS

(As he attacks the Old Man) YOU KNOW YOU'RE MAKING ME DO THIS! THIS! THIS!
YOU GODDAM ABOMINATION!! WHY CAN'T I JUST ERASE YOU AND BE DONE!!!!???

Russ is choking the Old Man and slamming his head into the ground now.

RUSS
I DID THE THING!

OLD MAN
Yes!

THE THING YOU HATED!

YES!

WHY?!!

OH YEAH!!! JUST LIKE I TAUGHT YOU!

Russ, exhausted, stops beating him for a second.

OLD MAN
Still here.

RUSS
But I did the thing!!

OLD MAN
And yet...

RUSS
You're a homophobic misogynistic old
racist bigot!!

OLD MAN
Oh yeah. But...

RUSS
But WHAT?!

OLD MAN
But why am I here right now? Why are you dragging me around? I'm tired.

RUSS
YOU'RE THE FUCKING PROBLEM!! And I did the thing. I did it. I did DRAG. I put on make
up and a dress at gay wedding with LESBIANS and DRAG QUEENS and MUSLIMS who put
on eyeliner too and GARY ALSO put on eyeliner which is surprising but not surprising and and
and and you're fucking dead now. I PUT ON LIPSICK!!

OLD MAN
In this back alley shitty venue that should probably be condemned....

RUSS
We didn't have any other options!! I tried to

OLD MAN

Welllllll...One other option...But you couldn't do THIS at the downtown community center in the center of your hometown! This dirty little secret just this once for your mama and no one has to know...

RUSS

That's..

OLD MAN

What about THIS will erase WHAT exactly?

RUSS

Why?! Why can't I just kill you!?

He hits the Old Man again. The Old Man just laughs.

RUSS

WHY?

OLD MAN

(Suddenly serious) WHO? Who who who are you fighting now?

RUSS

What do you...?

Russ looks at his hands. He looks around. He moves his hand. The Old Man mirrors this exactly. Russ moves again and the Old Man mirrors him perfectly. He moves and again the Old Man mirrors him. Perfectly.

RUSS

Oh. Oh Fuck. Oh fuck. Me. Me.

Gary comes up and stares at Russ. He pushes Russ in a strange way with both hands on his chest. It's not violent or aggressive. Gary opens his mouth and blows air at Russ.

OLD MAN

Now see Gary here ain't ashamed to wear eyeliner like a woman, cuz Gary here don't think there's anything shameful about being a woman. Or about being queer.

RUSS

But you...

OLD MAN

Am fucking gone. And you're here crying about spilt milk instead of fucking mopping. "You made everything so racist! You made it so mi-so-gyn-ist! You made gay people HIDE! Not FAIR!!" True very true. But. Who's making the world now? Who's running the show now? Who?

RUSS

YouyouyouyouYOU fucking yelled and hit and made me feel like I was gonna die if I wasn't man enough!! My whole fucking life!!

OLD MAN

But I ain't the one yelling now.

Russ half collapses to the floor.

The Old Man walks over and pushes Russ with both hands on the chest three times. It's not violent. Then Old Man takes a long drag on his cigarette and blows the smoke in Russ' face.

RUSS

(Out of breath, coughing, and about to fully collapse) Why are you smoking?!! You never smoked. Hated it.

OLD MAN

(Putting the cigarette out) Once a-fucking-gain. I ain't smoking boy. That's you. You're on fire. And not just in your head.

The Old Man exits.

The lights start to flicker again and Russ collapses and starts to convulse.

Gary runs over and starts doing CPR on Russ.

The fluorescent lights come on.

Everyone is crowded in a half circle near Russ.

Russ suddenly sits up.

Smoke seems to be emanating from his body.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Russ?

Russ slowly sits up. His hair is sticking up a little bit.

RUSS

Am I on fire?

DESIREE

Kind of.

GARY

You alright?

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

You just had enough electricity pass through your body to kill a horse.

MASON

Oh my god I thought you were fucking dead you asshole!

Ayesha runs over to the group with a first aid kit.

AYESHA

I found it! *(She opens it. She looks at Russ.)* I do not know what to do for electrocution.

Russ stands up slowly.

RUSS

Mom?

NACHETSKA

....yes?

RUSS

Mom. I'm *sorry*. I don't know why I was so scared of him. I don't know he always felt so big and immovable to me. I guess maybe I was just scared of things changing, I guess even when I knew things were bad, at least I knew what they were.

NACHETSKA

Oh uh....okay...I...

RUSS

(Ignoring everything in the room except for Nachetska.) I've always felt I was in a terrible game but if I could just find a way to win it all, THEN I could fix things. But...

NACHETSKA

Russ...

RUSS

I dunno. I feel like I've missed out on so much love in my life.

NACHETSKA

You don't have to...

RUSS

(Breaking down) I think I do. Mom, I'm sorry I left. I chose him and I took his money and I chose a life that was easier. Because you weren't in it. I was...embarrassed. I was embarrassed and I was scared of you. And I was embarrassed and scared of the fact that I wasn't brave enough to stand up for you. And I just pretended like you never happened. I'm sorry. He said all these things about you. People said all these things about you. And it felt like they were saying them about me. I wasn't ever brave enough to say anything back, and I wasn't ever brave enough to even just be...yours. I'm sorry I fucked up your whole wedding. I wanted it to be nice. But I didn't want to do it somewhere where everyone would see it. That was really fucking selfish. I'm sorry. *(pause)* But you are my mom. And I am your son. Deep down I always knew that. And even if I didn't always want that back then...Maybe not yesterday even...I do want it now. *(Beat)* I love you...Nachetska. *(He waits for her to say it back. She doesn't.)* It's okay if you're still mad. You didn't even get a ceremony.

Ayesha runs forward and puts her hands on Leigh and Nachetska

AYESHA

In the name of ALLAH, Most Gracious, Most Merciful be to ALLAH, Lord of the universe Most Gracious, Most Merciful. The journey you two are starting today, may never end. May your love for each other always remain as strong as it is today. There. It is official now.

LEIGH

WAIT. Did we just get MUSLIM MARRIED?! Oh Man that is gonna piss off the Baptists even more!

RUSS

I'm sorry to all of you. I wanted to do the right thing. But I didn't want to have to stand up to anyone. I fucked us and they were gonna come after us no matter what. All this is on me. I mean actually on me. I'm gonna....

Jimmy/Grace's laptop starts flashing and making the Skype ring sound.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Shiiiiiiiit! The video call!

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

You are fucking kidding me.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

(Talking to the computer) Danny? I can't...shit. The battery's dying!

Gunner runs over to help. They grab Russ and Gary to help get power to the laptop.

DESIREE

(To Ayesha and Jaspal) Thank you so much for that.

Handing her tip envelope to Jaspal.

Here. This is for Ameen. It's not much but I put a little extra in.

JASPAL

This is for Ameen?

DESIREE

It's not much.

JASPAL

You are giving us money to bring Ameen here???

DESIREE

Yes. It's really not much. But I want to help and maybe later I can do more.

Jaspal shakes her hand vigorously and hands the envelope to Ayesha.

JASPAL

Thank You!! You ARE a QUEEN!! YOU ARE A QUEEN! THANK YOU!! I cannot wait for you, for you all to meet him! You must meet him. We are friends now.

AYESHA

Yes!

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Yeah I can't hear you either?

Ayesha pulls \$48 dollars out of the envelope.

Then she notices the check and pulls it out of the envelope and reads it.

JASPAL

(Bursting with excitement)

DESIREE

Thank you.

When we came to America we had two choices. uh huh
Minnesota or Texas. We chose Texas. wow
Texas was founded by outlaws. yes
We are not refugees. We are outlaws. okay
Listen to this! They said we were COW RUSTLERS!! okay wow
It's was True!
In Kashmir they attack those who smuggle cows! oh okay
YEEHAW!! We...

AYESHA

AAAAAAHHH!!!! ALLAH BE PRAISED!! YES YES YES YES!!!! (Hugging Desiree tightly)

JASPAL

AYESHA!!

AYESHA

No! Jaspal! She is our sister!! Our Queen Sister!!
You are my sister! I have always wanted a sister
and I knew I would find one here!
We had to leave because they said that our way
was outside the law.
I told Jaspal in Texas we can build a new home
with people like us.
They will understand us there.
In Texas, we are all outlaws.

DESIREE

oh okay
sure
yes

wow

JASPAL
SISTER.

I love it!

Yes!

YES ANGEL!

OUTLAWS!!

Desiree, Jaspal, and Ayesha are dancing and celebrating.

LEIGH

(To Nachetska) Do you...?

NACHETSKA

No clue.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Danny? Can you hear me? Can you hear all that?

JASPAL

Also, Texas is warm!

AYESHA

I don't like snow! What does "Hope this makes you happy Lynn Tallybocker" mean?!

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

OKAY!!! I love y'all but I haven't seen my son in like five months! Y'ALL BE QUIET NOW
DON'T RUIN IT!

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

I mean, okay

SKYPE VOICE (DANNY)

Hey Dad!

NACHETSKA

(To Russ) I thought you were dead.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

HI! Good to see you!! Can you see me?

SKYPE VOICE

Yeah we can see you!

Jimmy/Claire Buoyant switches into a full on drag emcee character performance.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Well! Look at all you fine men in uniform! OOH-RAH! DEVIL DOGS!! Hmm...couple of
“wooks” too. Humph. Hello ladies. I prefer to have the boys to myself, but I guess I can share.

SKYPE VOICES

(A group of voices now) HOOAH! YOU FUCKING BOOT!!

RUSS

Well. Time to take my licks I guess. Austin. Time to wake up.

Russ shakes the Sheriff.

Sheriff Knotts suddenly shoots up.

*He stands up quickly but very wobbly on his legs. He backs into a wall and leans
against it—his legs still moving in a way that is concerning.*

Everyone looks at Sheriff Knotts.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

Arrested! You're arrested. Bbbbrbbbb.

Russ clamps his hand over Sheriff Knotts' mouth.

MASON

Never let it be said you don't do everything all out. I can't bail you out till Monday.

RUSS

Don't. I'll do the time. Got some thinking to do.

GARY

You should change. I read this...I don't think you wanna go in to jail dressed like that.

RUSS

I don't see anything wrong with it. Let 'em think and say what they want. And Gary, next time my name is "The Painted Lady."

GARY

Got it!

MASON

Next time??? Okay *Butterfly*.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

This is bad. Bbbrrrrbb. I am a police officer. I am in my uniform. Brrrbbbbb. I am covered in glitter. Bbbrrrrrbbbbb. Bad.

RUSS

Do you want me to carry you?

SHERIFF

Okay. Wait. Brrrbbbbb Are you? Cause I'm not.bbbrrrrbbbbb I never looked...in locker room... bbbrrrbbb.. So don't. Touch. I love my wife. Brrrbbbbb...I looked though...UH OH!!

RUSS

I don't think anyone is just one thing, Austin. C'mere.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Weddings really should be nude, you know? So everyone can just know right away who the best man is! Alright. I promised y'all a song. I just want to thank y'all. For what it means to put on a uniform everyday and stand up for freedom. Alright. Gary, darling? Gary? Gary, the song?

GARY

SHIT!

Gary runs outside. Jimmy/Claire Buoyant watches him run out then turns back to the laptop.

Russ finds a way to carry/help the Sheriff.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Um. Looks like we have some technical difficulties. Why don't y'all introduce yourselves to me while we get the music ready? You there, you look familiar, turn around? Let me see the back of your head....yes. I know that one. Never calls.

SHERIFF KNOTTS

brrrrrrbbbbb...I watched Rocky Horror but I got a boner...brrrrrrbbbbb...didn't know if it was from Susan SURANDON OR TIM CURRY...bbbbbbrrrrrrbbbbb...turned it off.....can't take chances

RUSS

(To the Sheriff) Why are you wet? Never mind. *(To Nachetska)* You got a good woman here. She looks pretty sharp in her uniform. You gonna take care of her? Through thick and thin?

NACHETSKA

I will.

RUSS

(to Leigh) You gonna take care of my momma? Even when she's going crazy and there's rhinestones and feathers all over the house? When she's sick? Even if she's sick a long time? Tell her that she's beautiful even when she thinks she's not?

LEIGH

I absolutely will.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Now I have to tell you this is a very patriotic song. Over the top. I'm usually a bottom so...

SHERIFF

Lets go please. I have to arrest you. Going. Bbbbbbrrrrrrbbbbb Eat'em up! Brrrrrrbb

RUSS

Okay Horsey.

Russ starts to carry him out.

NACHETSKA

I do love you Russ.

He stops.

He looks at her and smiles.

RUSS

I know. I remember.

Russ exits.

NACHETSKA

Don't you let them hurt you! Don't let them hurt my boy!

Gary runs back inside with an extension cord. Mason comes over to help him . She gingerly plugs the extension cord into an outlet. Gary very carefully cues up the song.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Now I don't always feel patriotic. I don't always love what this country is. But I do love what it wants to be.

LEIGH

(Comforting Nachetska) He'll be alright dear heart. Shhhh.....Jimmy's gonna sing.

NACHETSKA

(Slightly out of it) Yes. Yes. And that will be beautiful won't it? It was all very beautiful here wasn't it?

Gary signals Jimmy/Claire that they are ready.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

This is country that loves a good fight and we are all still fighting today, for what it *could be*. And I will sing to that. Okay, soldiers. Looks like we're ready.

MASON

(Whispering to Gary) Hey big man, you wanna go somewhere after and get married or what?

Gary smiles an impossibly big smile and presses play on the stereo.

The music plays.

Mason grabs Gary and kisses him.

Jimmy/Claire holds her hand out.

Gunner/Bella runs and grabs the microphone and hands it to Jimmy/Claire.

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

(whispering) This show needs to CLOSE. Take us home, Claire.

*This medley should be beautiful and not overly bombastic.
Others may join in singing with Jimmy/Claire Buoyant if that makes sense.
During the pauses for dialogue, a soft humming and little riffs can be done so the
medley doesn't feel disjointed but it should not be distracting.*

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

(Singing. Beautifully)
***If tomorrow all the things were gone
I worked for all my life
And I had to start again
With just my children and my wife***

*Russ enters in an isolated pool of light in handcuffs, led by Sheriff Knotts who still
has glitter on his uniform.*

Russ looks at Leigh and Nachetska.

NACHETSKA

Do you remember when we first met?

LEIGH

Of course, dear heart. Most important day of my life.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***Oh say can you see,
By the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed,
At the twilight's last gleaming?***

NACHETSKA

I found that guitar player on the corner and I gave him my last hundred dollars and said "play every blues song you know. I wanna dance!"

LEIGH

That's how I found you.

NACHETSKA

I started a whole street party!

LEIGH

My dancing queen!

NACHETSKA

My sailor!

LEIGH

Always.

Lights shift on Leigh and Nachetska. Nachetska takes off her oxygen. Leigh kisses Nachetska.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***Oh beautiful, for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,***

RUSS

(To us) There is another kind of death. I didn't know about it.

Leigh helps Nachetska up onto a table. Nachetska does a little dance on the table as Desiree, Gunner Bella, Mason, Gary, Jaspal and Ayesha surround her.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***From the lakes of Minnesota
To the hills of Tennessee
Across the plains of Texas
From sea to shining sea***

NACHETSKA

That was the first time I really felt like myself. Like Nachetska. Like I was born again in your arms.

Leigh waves to Nachetska. Then she walks downstage a bit. Nachetska lies down and the wedding party begins to apply make up to her.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***Well there's pride in every American heart
And it's time we stand and say
God bless America, land that I love***

RUSS

See, when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly it doesn't just slough off all the old outer caterpillar parts to reveal a butterfly inside. It liquefies in the cocoon. Turns into soup. Can you imagine? To become a butterfly, it builds a wall around itself, and then rearranges itself at a near molecular

level. Must hurt like hell. To lose everything you are. You're driven to do this thing to yourself, maybe not even sure why, and then you...die...so you can change. You're melted down and...reshaped, regrown... reborn.

As they finish their individual tasks of putting makeup on Nachetska, each of the people around her take a moment to regard Nachetska, who is still hidden or turned away from us. We can't see her, but we can clearly see their reverent approval.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***Stand beside Her and guide Her
From sea to shining sea***

RUSS

I suppose that's all any death is really: Just a change, another chance to be reborn.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***Where at least I know I'm free
And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me***

LEIGH

There's a tradition in my family.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***And I'd gladly stand up next to you and defend Her still today
'Cause there ain't no doubt
I love this land***

RUSS

And what else is there to say at the end? What else to say but "I love you, I love you, I love you!" I'm sorry for all the **time** I didn't stand up and tell you that.

Sheriff Knotts unhand cuffs Russ and Exits.

Gary and Mason cross over to Russ.

Gary hugs Russ hard.

Mason has two to go cups of coffee in her hands. She hands them to Russ.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

And the rocket's red glare,

LEIGH

I'm glad it went this way. I always knew I would stand for her.

Russ walks over near Leigh and stands near her.

RUSS

Mind if I stand with you for the last little bit?

LEIGH

Not at all.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

The bombs bursting in air,

Russ hands her one of the coffees.

They turn upstage to look at Nachetska.

LEIGH

Sun's coming up.

RUSS

Yeah.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

***Gave proof through the night,
That our flag was still there.***

GUNNER/BELLA SCORIA

(To us) I had a dream the night she died. We were gathering all this colored paper, *glitter* and all these sparkly things and I said "what production are we working on Nachetska? What is all this for?" And she turned and looked at me and smiled and said: "Life."

Nachetska stands up on the table with her back to us.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

Oh say does that star spangled banner yet wave,

RUSS

It's beautiful.

LEIGH

Yes it is, son.

JIMMY/CLAIRE BUOYANT

O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

Nachetska turns and is revealed as a dramatic “Hyper Queen” She begins a drag number. (Preferably to “First time I ever saw your face” by Roberta Flak)

Perhaps it is a blues guitar version, and perhaps one of the drag queens is singing it live as she lip syncs it.

As Nachetska does this number, the cast takes their bows. At the end of the number, Nachetska bows.

Blackout.

End of Play.