

# *Footloose* the musical

**Stage Adaptation by  
DEAN PITCHFORD and WALTER BOBBIE**

**Based on the Original Screenplay by Dean Pitchford**

**Music By  
TOM SNOW**

**Lyrics By  
DEAN PITCHFORD**

**Additional Music By  
ERIC CARMEN, SAMMY HAGAR, KENNY LOGGINS and JIM STEINMAN**



**601 West 26th Street • Suite 312 • New York, NY 10001  
Tel 800/400.8160 or 212/564.4000 • Fax 212/268.1245  
[www.rnh.com](http://www.rnh.com)**

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FOOTLOOSE opened on Broadway at the Richard Rodgers Theatre on October 22, 1998. Produced by Dodger Endimol Theatricals; Executive Producers: Dodger Management Group and Tim Hawkins; Associate Producers: The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Joop van den Ende; Developed and Produced in Association with Radio City Entertainment, a Cablevision Company; Presented Through Special Arrangement with The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization; Scenery Designed by John Lee Beatty; Costumes Designed by Toni-Leslie James; Lighting Designed by Ken Billington; Sound Design by Tony Meola; Orchestrations by Danny Troob; Musical Supervision and Vocal Arrangements by Doug Katsaros; Dance Music Arrangements by Joe Baker; Music Coordinator: John Miller; Hair Designed by Ross Ringo; Casting by Julie Hughes and Barry Moss; Production Supervisor: Steven Beckler; Technical Supervisor: Peter Fulbright; Marketing Consultant: Margery Singer; Press Representative: Boneau/Bryan-Brown; Choreographed by A.C. Ciulla; Directed by Walter Bobbie; with the following cast:

Ren McCormack.....	Jeremy Kushnier
Ethel McCormack.....	Catherine Cox
Reverend Shaw Moore.....	Stephen Lee Anderson
Vi Moore.....	Dee Hoty
Ariel Moore.....	Jennifer Laura Thompson
Lulu Warnicker.....	Catherine Campbell
Wes Warnicker.....	Adam LeFevre
Coach Roger Dunbar.....	John Hillner
Eleanor Dunbar.....	Donna Lee Marshall
Rusty.....	Stacy Francis
Urleen.....	Kathy Deitch
Wendy Jo.....	Rosalind Brown
Chuck Cranston.....	Billy Hartung
Lyle.....	Jim Ambler
Travis.....	Bryant Carroll
A Cop/Country Fiddler.....	Nick Sullivan
Betty Blast/Irene.....	Robin Baxter
Willard Hewitt.....	Tom Plotkin
Principal Harry Clark.....	John Deyle
Jeter/Cowboy Bob.....	Artie Harris
Bickle.....	Hunter Foster
Garvin.....	Paul Castree

and Billy Angell, Susan Bigelow, Angela Brydon, Ben Cameron, Rick Crom, Kristen Leigh Gorski, Jamie Gustis, Sean Haythe, Paige Hinton, Lori Holmes, Daniel Karaty, Katherine Leonard, Bradley Madison, Jeanine Meyes, Mark Myars, Orfeh, JoAnna Ross, Serena Soffer, Ron Todorowski

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ren McCormack – a teenage boy from Chicago  
Ethel McCormack – his mother  
Reverend Shaw Moore – the minister of Bomont  
Vi Moore – his wife  
Ariel Moore – their teenage daughter  
Lulu Warnicker – Ren's aunt  
Wes Warnicker – her husband  
Coach Roger Dunbar – the high school gym teacher  
Eleanor Dunbar – his wife  
Rusty – Ariel's best friend  
Urleen – Ariel's friend  
Wendy Jo – Ariel's friend  
Chuck Cranston – Ariel's boyfriend  
Lyle – Chuck's buddy  
Travis – Chuck's buddy  
A Cop  
Betty Blast – owner of The Burger Blast  
Willard Hewitt – Ren's friend, a country boy  
Principal Harry Clark  
Jeter – Ren's friend  
Bickle – Ren's friend  
Garvin – Ren's friend  
Cowboy Bob – lead vocalist at the Bar-B-Que  
Cowboy Bob's Band  
Townpeople and High School Students

## MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

#### Scene 1: The City of Chicago

FOOTLOOSE\* ..... Rusty, Wendy Jo, Urleen and the Company

The Town of Bomont, in Church

ON ANY SUNDAY ..... Rev. Shaw Moore, Ren, Ethel and the Company

#### Scene 2: The Churchyard

#### Scene 3: Behind a Gas Station

THE GIRL GETS AROUND\*\* ..... Chuck, Ariel, Travis and Lyle

#### Scene 4: A High School Hallway

I CAN'T STAND STILL ..... Ren

SOMEBODY'S EYES ..... Rusty, Urleen, Wendy Jo and the Company

#### Scene 5: The Moore Home

LEARNING TO BE SILENT ..... Vi, Ethel and Ariel

#### Scene 6: The Burger Blast

HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO† ..... Ariel, Rusty, Wendy Jo and Urleen

#### Scene 7: The Great Plains of Bomont

SCENE CHANGE ("SOMEBODY'S EYES") ..... Rusty, Wendy Jo and Urleen

#### Scene 8: The Moore Home

SOMEBODY'S EYES (REPRISE) ..... Rusty, Wendy Jo, Urleen,

Chuck, Lyle and Travis

HEAVEN HELP ME ..... Shaw

#### Scene 9: The High School Gym/The Church

I'M FREE\*/ HEAVEN HELP ME ..... Ren, Shaw and the Company

## ACT II

Scene 1: The Bar-B-Que, a Country/Western Dance Hall	
STILL ROCKIN' .....	Cowboy Bob and his Band
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY .....	Rusty and the Company
Scene 2: The Moore Home	
CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART? .....	Vi
Scene 3: The Junk Yard	
DANCING IS NOT A CRIME .....	Ren
MAMA SAYS (YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN) .....	Willard, Bickle, Garvin, Jeter and Ren
MAMA SAYS (ENCORE) .....	Willard and Boys
Scene 4: Under the Train Bridge	
ALMOST PARADISE†† .....	Ren and Ariel
Scene 5: The Town Hall	
Scene 6: The Moore Home	
HEAVEN HELP ME (REPRISE) .....	Shaw
Scene 6a: The Church	
Scene 6b: The Churchyard	
CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART? (REPRISE) .....	Shaw
Scene 7: The Gym	
FOOTLOOSE* (Finale) .....	The Company
MEGAMIX (Optional) .....	The Company

All music by Tom Snow except: \*Kenny Loggins; \*\*Sammy Hagar; †Jim Steinman; ††Eric Carmen

All Lyrics by Dean Pitchford except: FOOTLOOSE – Lyrics by Dean Pitchford and Kenny Loggins

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

### WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

The major characters in FOOTLOOSE have one trait in common: they are all survivors. Their circumstances – no matter how tragic – have not defeated them, and, as a consequence, we, the audience, find them likable, sympathetic...and human.

That having been said, each role is unique and presents an actor or actress with specific challenges; the following thumbnail sketches of the major characters may give you ideas about the qualities to look for and pitfalls to be avoided when casting your production.

**REV. SHAW MOORE** – The secret to the character of Rev. Moore is that he is charismatic. Charming, even. Shaw has a quick mind, a loving heart and a sense of humor, all of which endear him to his congregation. While trying to be strong for so many people, however, he continues to mourn the death of his son – the one person he could not save. Only Ariel and Vi (and eventually Ren) get a glimpse of this private anguish and the flashes of frustration and temper that arise from that.

And age-wise, remember that Shaw is the father of a teenage girl; then, do the math.

**VI MOORE** – Despite the loss of her son and the strained relationship with her husband, Vi fully understands what kind of unflinching good humor she must display in order to keep her household – and her husband's congregation – running smoothly. And with her plucky irreverence, she gives us a glimpse of what life with Shaw was like before the tragedy, when theirs was a marriage both passionate and playful.

**ARIEL MOORE** – Ariel is smart; she understands the rules of the different worlds she moves between and, in each situation, she plays her part brilliantly. When she's in her father's presence, for instance, she is buttoned-up and demure; with Chuck, she burns off all her unexpressed, explosive energy with raucous, thrill-seeking behavior.

Ariel loves to laugh – with Chuck, with her girlfriends and, eventually, with Ren – but her high spirits are, quite often, her attempt to keep a lid on the grief she feels about her brother's death and the loss of her once loving relationship with her father.

**REN McCORMACK** – Any actor playing Ren has not only got to be able to sing and dance and act – he must also be *witty*.

After all, Ren is a cut-up, a joker who enjoys a good time (which is why his Pals are upset to find out he's leaving in the opening number). Lately, though, his fun-loving attitude has taken on a tone of desperation, as he tries *too* hard to convince the world – and himself – that his father's desertion hasn't wounded him as deeply as it has. Ariel is the first character to get Ren to talk about that sticky subject; sharing that intimacy early on becomes the basis for their relationship.

Ren's emotional journey starts with his being feisty and flippant in Act I, continues through his thoughtful argument to the Town Council and ends with his emotional final confrontation with Rev. Moore. It's a journey from boyhood to maturity.

**ETHEL McCORMACK** – Where does Ren get his intelligence, his resilience and his sense of humor? From his mother, of course! It's hard for Ethel to be living in her sister's home and

abiding by her brother-in-law's rules, but she never succumbs to the pathos of her situation; after all, she has to be strong for Ren. Their mutual loss has brought them closer together, and they share a teasing, good-natured relationship.

**WILLARD HEWITT** – Willard is not dumb; he is a gentle soul with quick fists, which are his defense against a world that he often has trouble comprehending. Willard just hasn't had anyone come along to puncture that macho belligerence – until Ren arrives. After that, the humor in the character of Willard derives from his gradual, innocent and giddy discovery of the new worlds that Ren opens up to him.

**RUSTY** – Rusty may come off as sassy and self-assured, but, in many ways, she is the most deeply romantic character in FOOTLOOSE. She truly believes that she and Willard were meant to be together, but they're both so inept about expressing themselves that it takes Ren – and a little time on the dance floor – to ultimately bring that about.

### **FOOTLOOSE BY THE NUMBERS**

In staging your production of FOOTLOOSE, always remember:

**FOOTLOOSE takes place in a town where nobody's allowed to dance.**

This is not to say that characters in Bomont can't move, because they certainly can (they must!), but that movement should be inventive and clever; early on it should be restrained, otherwise the story of FOOTLOOSE stops in its tracks. The payoff will be all the greater if the explosion of dance energy at the end of Act II is not only a catharsis for the characters onstage but for your audience as well.

Here are a few additional suggestions that we hope might enhance your experience of doing our show.

**Musical Overview:** When teaching, rehearsing and performing the songs in FOOTLOOSE keep two things in mind:

1. Our score draws influences from the worlds of rock 'n' roll, R&B, pop, gospel and Broadway music. Despite that diversity, there is one constant: all these styles demand *rhythm*. FOOTLOOSE comes alive when singers feel a song's pulse, when they experience its beat in their bodies and when they dig deep to express its inherent musical muscle. Don't confuse *intensity* with *speed*; performing a song *fast* is never as effective as performing it with *energy* and *clarity of attack*.
2. Notice how the first few lines of each of the character songs in FOOTLOOSE flow from the spoken words that precede them. When these transitions are smooth, the characters can continue at a conversational clip as they slip easily into their numbers.

### **ACT I**

In the opening number (**Footloose**) it's important to stress the distinction between *raucous, energetic Chicago* and the *laid-back, bucolic Bomont* that arrives onstage in **On Any Sunday**.

In **The Girl Gets Around**, the playful banter of the lyric ("Well, she'd like you to think she was born yesterday...." "Yeah, he likes to pretend he's a man among men...") masks a subtext of genuine physical attraction.

**I Can't Stand Still** is *not* a number about Ren dancing; what it *is* about is the beginning of an unlikely friendship between him and Willard.

What happens here is that, in Willard, Ren finds the first person he can talk to in Bomont; and Willard finds himself collared by this tightly-wound "big city" fellow. By the end of the number, Willard has been drawn in by Ren's charm, so much so that he defends his new friend to Principal Clark.

In **Somebody's Eyes**, there's a spirited energy and a mischievous wink in the way that Rusty, Wendy Jo and Urleen explain life in Bomont to Ren.

**Learning To Be Silent** is a song of survival. Vi, Ethel and Ariel are plucky and defiant, drolly cataloguing the many ways in which they preoccupy themselves as they choke back their thoughts: "*Counting little cracks in the tile...*," "*Contemplating taking up smoking,*" etc.

In **Holding Out For A Hero**, Ariel, Rusty, Wendy Jo and Urleen sing: "*Late at night I toss and I turn/And I dream of what I need.*" The song gives them a chance to share that fantasy with us.

Rev. Moore is a smart man who depends on logic to provide him with a compass by which he can steer his life and the lives of his parishioners; but in **Heaven Help Me**, Rev. Moore loses his bearings. He veers between rationalizing arguments ("*I don't enjoy being her jailer!*"; "*I strive to be a good preacher!*") and outright pleas to his Lord ("*Heaven help me shoulder my load!*"). This vigorous agitation propels the number, straight through to Shaw's final snap: "*Who can?!*"

**I'm Free** is one of the potential pitfalls to which I alluded in the opening paragraphs above; just because Ren is talking about *having a dance* in Bomont doesn't give these characters the license to *actually dance*. The scene is set in a gymnasium, where basketballs, jump ropes, trampolines, climbing ropes, gymnastic apparati, etc. and all sorts of sports and exercise moves can provide many opportunities for movement.

## ACT II

**Still Rockin'** is a good-time, rock 'n' roll, two-steppin' bar-band number that introduces us to the world of the Bar-B-Que as well as to the simple pleasure of dance that has been so long denied the residents of Bomont (especially Rusty!).

In **Let's Hear It For The Boy** two separate and distinct stories are being told:

1. Willard is trying to learn to dance from the Cowboys while...
2. Rusty is rationalizing her attraction to Willard by confiding to the Cowgirls.

Eventually these separate stories converge... with humorous results.

**Can You Find It In Your Heart?** is a good example of the point I made above (Musical Overview #2) about creating an uninterrupted transition from speaking dialogue to singing it.

The fun to be had with Ren's terrible speech (**Dancing Is Not A Crime**) comes when Ren gradually discovers that "*Hey! I'm bustin' a rhyme!*" and he gets swept up into his patter, to the dismay of his Pals.

Afraid of failure, Ren wants to quit his campaign for a dance, but Willard and his Buddies have to persuade him not to; **Mama Says** is their "recruitment," song in which they must convince Ren that he "*can't back down!*"

**Almost Paradise** is a tentative, steadily-building courtship in which private thoughts (“*I thought that dreams belonged to other men...*”; “*I feared my heart would beat in secrecy...*”) eventually become shared intimacies (“*I swear that I can see forever in your eyes.*”).

Shaw’s reprises of **Heaven Help Me** and **Can You Find It In Your Heart?** are the unadorned thoughts of a man who has survived a long and painful journey to redemption.

The **Footloose Finale** has been carefully constructed to build, build, build; but be careful that the tempo doesn’t run away.

We have no doubt that with your imagination, talent and inspiration, you and your cast will create a unique and thrilling experience for your audience. And when it comes to opening night for FOOTLOOSE, remember to....

...break a leg.

—Dean Pitchford

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The score of FOOTLOOSE has benefited enormously from the talented input of many fine musicians and musical directors, beginning with our original Broadway team of Doug Katsaros, Joe Baker and Danny Troob.

On its journey around the country and around the world, our show has also had the good fortune to receive the input and contributions of Steve Parsons (Akron); Ryan Nelson & Patti Garwood (Chicago); Darren Cohen (New York); and Chris Hatt, Mike Dixon & Chris Egan (U.K.). We are deeply grateful to all of them.

And finally, a special thank-you must be extended to Wayne Blood for pulling all the many pieces together.

## ACT I

Scene 1: The City of Chicago/The Town of Bomont, in ChurchMUSIC 1: FOOTLOOSE/ON ANY SUNDAY

*(A beat begins as the house lights dim. YOUNG PEOPLE enter, getting ready for a night out. Except for REN and ETHEL, all persons appearing in this opening number should be thought of as "Chicago Ensemble;" the character names used refer to their eventual "Bomont" identities.)*

RUSTY

BEEN WORKING SO HARD  
I'M PUNCHING MY CARD  
EIGHT HOURS, FOR WHAT?  
OH, TELL ME WHAT I GOT

WENDY JO

BEEN WORKING SO HARD  
I'M PUNCHING MY CARD  
EIGHT HOURS, FOR WHAT?

OTHERS

FOR WHAT? FOR WHAT?  
FOR WHAT? FOR WHAT?  
FOR WHAT?

URLEEN

BEEN WORKING TOO DAMN HARD  
I'M PUNCHING THAT SAME CARD  
EIGHT HOURS BUSTIN' MY BUTT  
OH, TELL ME WHAT I GOT

KIDS

I GOT THIS FEELING  
THAT TIME'S JUST HOLDING ME DOWN

RUSTY, URLEEN &amp; WENDY JO

I HATE THIS FEELING  
TIME IS HOLDING ME DOWN

KIDS

I'LL HIT THE CEILING  
OR ELSE I'LL TEAR UP THIS TOWN

TONIGHT I GOTTA CUT LOOSE  
FOOTLOOSE  
KICK OFF YOUR SUNDAY SHOES  
PLEASE, LOUISE,  
PULL ME OFFA MY KNEES  
JACK, GET BACK

COME ON BEFORE WE CRACK  
LOSE YOUR BLUES  
EVERYBODY CUT FOOTLOOSE

*(REN, a charismatic teen, breaks from the pack; he is surrounded by FRIENDS patting his back, shaking his hand, etc; they are in a dance club, shouting to be heard.)*

BOY 1

Ren! Ren, hey, Ren. I heard you're moving away.

BOY 2

*(To BOYS 1 & 3.)*

Ren's leaving Chicago?

*(To REN.)*

You're leaving Chicago?

REN

*(Playful.)*

That's right! I'm leavin' you clowns for the wide open spaces.

BOY 3

*(To BOY 2.)*

What he means is that he's moving to some little hick town that nobody's ever heard of.

REN

*(Defensive, good-humored.)*

Hey! People have heard of it!

BOY 1

Oh, yeah? What's the name of it?

REN

You can find it on any map.

BOY 3

What's the name of it?

REN

Folks are flocking there from all over.

BOYS 1, 2, 3

WHAT'S THE NAME OF IT?

REN

BOMONT!

ALL

*(Turning, shouting.)*

Bomont? Where the hell is Bomont?

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

(To REN.)

YOU'RE PLAYIN' SO COOL  
 OBEYIN' EVERY RULE  
 DIG WAY DOWN IN YOUR HEART  
 YOU'RE BURNIN', YEARNIN' FOR SOME...  
 SOMEBODY TO TELL YOU  
 THAT LIFE AIN'T PASSIN' YOU BY

REN & RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

LIFE AIN'T PASSIN' ME BY

ALL

I'M TRYIN' TO TELL YOU  
 IT WILL IF YOU DON'T EVEN TRY  
 YOU CAN FLY! YOU CAN FLY!  
 YOU CAN FLY!

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

IF YOU'D ONLY CUT LOOSE

ALL

CUT FOOTLOOSE! (WHOA!)  
 CUT FOOTLOOSE! (AAWWW)  
 CUT FOOTLOOSE!

*(The rhythmic pulse continues under as the lights shift. REN spins out from the Disco setting to find his Mom, ETHEL MCCORMACK, at home, packing. She is in her late 30's, still attractive but nervously troubled right now. Their relationship is playful but respectful.)*

REN

Mom! Where're you gonna put that? The back seat of the car is full. I can't close the trunk...

ETHEL

Ren, don't start! I don't want to move any more than you do.

REN

Then let's not go.

ETHEL

Look! I, too, wish your father hadn't left. I, too, wish that things could be the way they were...

REN

Okay, okay...

ETHEL

...and we both wish I could be one of those strong single mothers who suddenly becomes self-sufficient! But I'm not.

*(Tongue-in-cheek:)*

Please feel free to disagree.

REN

Mom, we've got a ten-hour drive ahead of us. We've got a lot of time to disagree.

*(He and OTHERS grab suitcases, etc., and "move" him and ETHEL; as REN and ETHEL "leave Chicago," the lights restore onstage.)*

ALL

FIRST

WE'VE GOT TO TURN YOU AROUND.

SECOND

THEN PUT YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND.

THIRD

NOW TAKE A HOLD OF YOUR SOUL!

AAWWW...

AHH...

EV'RYBODY CUT, EV'RYBODY CUT,

EV'RYBODY CUT, EV'RYBODY CUT,

EV'RYBODY CUT, EV'RYBODY CUT,

AH-AH-AH-AH...

AH-AH-AH-AH...

*(The DANCERS spin off, revealing REVEREND SHAW MOORE – 40's, Vigorous, authoritative; he stands centre stage listening to the sounds of a CHOIR warming up sweetly in the distance.)*

**Scene 1B: In Church**

CHOIR

*(Offstage.)*

AHH...

ON ANY SUNDAY HERE WE'LL BE

RAISING OUR VOICES IN HARMONY

ONE DAY ONCE OUR TRIALS HAVE CEASED

WE WILL BE RELEASED

SHAW

*(Heartfelt, conversational.)*

ON ANY SUNDAY, LORD, I PRAY

TELL ME EXACTLY THE WORDS TO SAY.

GIVE ME STRENGTH AND MAYBE THEN

I CAN REACH MY FELLOW MEN

SO WE ALL MAY RISE AGAIN

THANK YOU, LORD. AMEN

*(The backdrop flies out as the choir loft and pews of the church appear. The CHOIR is seated in the loft.)*

## CHOIR

AH...

*(When the scenery settles, the PARISHIONERS enter church and take seats in the pews.  
REN and ETHEL enter; SHAW greets them.)*

## SHAW

Welcome to Bomont!

*(SHAW mounts to the pulpit.)*

Good morning!

## PARISHIONERS

Good morning, Reverend!

## SHAW

I took the long way to church this morning, down past the old creek. I heard birds chirping and our own choir warming up in the distance. I was reminded of a line from our great poet, Walt Whitman, who wrote, "I hear America singing." And I thought, "Aren't we the song that we sing? Don't we lift our voices to tell the world who we are? And what we believe?" So I ask you this morning – what song are you singing?

## REN

*(Turning in his pew.)*

WE'VE ONLY BEEN HERE TWO DAYS AND ALREADY  
CHICAGO SEEMS A MILLION MILES AWAY  
BUT WE WERE BARELY HANGING ON THERE  
'SPECIALLY WITH MY FATHER GONE THERE'S  
NOT TOO MANY PLACES WE COULD STAY

BUT MAYBE MOM CAN FIND A JOB THAT'S STEADY  
AND MAYBE I CAN STAND IT FOR A YEAR  
AND MAYBE THINGS WON'T BE SO BAD  
AND MAYBE I WON'T MISS MY DAD  
AND MAYBE WE COULD START A NEW LIFE HERE

## PARISHIONERS

OOH, AH... START A NEW LIFE HERE!

OOH OOH OOH OOH

## SHAW

But if Walt Whitman were alive today, what song would he hear America singing? When I turn on television, all I hear is the music of easy sexuality and relaxed morals. I hear rock and roll and the endless chant of pornography. And I ask myself, "Why does our Lord allow this?" We know God has the power to turn all those records and books and videos into one big fiery cinder like...

*(Clapping his hands before a sleeping boy.)*

...that!

*(The BOY startles awake.)*

But He doesn't. And why? Because God is testing us. He's watching to see whether we'll choose his path. And that is why, every day, we must ask ourselves: "Have I done the right thing?"

ETHEL & REN

HAVE I DONE THE RIGHT THING?  
PICKING UP MY LIFE  
PACKING UP THE PAST  
THAT'S ALWAYS FRIGHT'NING  
HAVE I DONE THE RIGHT THING?

ADULT PARISHIONERS

THE RIGHT THING! THE RIGHT THING!  
WE STRIVE TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT!  
THE RIGHT THING! THE RIGHT THING!  
SIN IS A MATTER OF BLACK AND WHITE!

SHAW

This morning we welcome to our parish two new souls just arrived from Chicago. Ethel McCormack and her son... Ron, is it?

REN

*(Mumbles.)*

Ren.

SHAW

Huh? Speak up! Let the Lord hear your voice!

REN

*(Stands. Louder.)*

Ren.

CHUCK

*(Snidely mimicking.)*

"Ren!"

*(Other KIDS laugh.)*

REN

*(Ignoring the jibe.)*

Ren McCormack.

SHAW

"Ren." Interesting name. Is that short for something?

REN

*(Cheeky.)*

Nope!

*(Sits abruptly.)*

KIDS

THERE'S RUMORS GOIN' 'ROUND ABOUT THE NEW KID  
AND EVERYBODY'S TALKIN' 'TIL THEY'RE BLUE  
CUZ YOU KNOW HOW A STRANGER IS -

IF HE'S NOT DUMB HE'S DANGEROUS –  
BUT EITHER WAY AT LEAST IT'S SOMETHING NEW.

SHAW

Now I invite you to join my wife Vi and our daughter Ariel in this morning's convocation.

*(ARIEL and VI ascend to the altar and flank SHAW; they all sing from missals.)*

SHAW, VI & ARIEL

GOD IS LOVE  
FOLLOW HIM AND NEVER ROAM  
HE HAS MADE THE STARS ABOVE  
JUST TO LIGHT YOUR WAY BACK HOME

SHAW

*(To the Congregation.)*

Everybody!

*(REN and ETHEL, the CHOIR, SHAW and the OTHERS sing their respective sections in counterpoint.)*

REN & ETHEL

WE'VE ONLY BEEN HERE TWO DAYS AND ALREADY  
CHICAGO SEEMS A MILLION MILES AWAY  
BUT WE WERE BARELY HANGING ON THERE  
'SPECIALLY WITH MY/HIS FATHER GONE THERE'S  
NOT TOO MANY PLACES WE COULD STAY

BUT MAYBE MOM/I CAN FIND A JOB THAT'S STEADY  
AND MAYBE I/REN CAN STAND IT FOR A YEAR  
AND MAYBE THINGS WON'T BE SO BAD  
AND MAYBE I/REN WON'T MISS MY/HIS DAD  
AND MAYBE WE CAN START A NEW LIFE HERE

SHAW, VI & ARIEL

GOD IS LOVE  
FOLLOW HIM AND NEVER ROAM  
HE HAS MADE THE STARS ABOVE  
JUST TO LIGHT YOUR WAY BACK HOME

ADULT PARISHIONERS

THE RIGHT THING! THE RIGHT THING!  
WE STRIVE TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT!  
THE RIGHT THING! THE RIGHT THING!  
SIN IS A MATTER OF BLACK AND WHITE!

THE RIGHT THING! THE RIGHT THING!  
WE DO THE RIGHT THING!  
WE STRIVE TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

KIDS

THERE'S RUMORS GOIN' 'ROUND ABOUT THE NEW KID  
AND EV'RYBODY'S TALKIN' 'TIL THEY'RE BLUE  
BUT EITHER WAY, IT'S SOMETHING NEW  
EITHER WAY, AT LEAST IT'S SOMETHING NEW

ALL

ON ANY SUNDAY MORNING, HERE WE'LL BE  
RAISING OUR VOICES IN HARMONY  
GATHERING TO JOIN THE FEAST  
ASKING NAUGHT BUT, LORD, AT LEAST  
WE PRAY THAT ONE DAY ONCE OUR TRIALS HAVE CEASED  
WE WILL BE RELEASED!

SHAW

Go in peace!

**Scene 2: The Churchyard**

*(As the service ends, PARISHIONERS gather in small groups outside the church. One group includes SHAW, VI, REN, ETHEL, and her sister and brother-in-law LULU and WES WARNICKER.)*

SHAW

Well, Mrs. McCormack, your sister has certainly been excited about your moving in with them.

ETHEL

Lulu and Wes have been my rock.

LULU

Oh, it's been no trouble. Ethel just moved right into the guest room.

SHAW

And, Ren, where'd your uncle put you?

WES

*(Eagerly jumping in.)*

You remember my old tool-shop over the garage?

VI

Wes, that place is a greasy dump.

LULU

Well, no more.

WES

Picture this: powder-blue wallpaper, chocolate brown carpet.

VI

Oh, no!

REN

*(Aside to VI, gravely.)*

Oh, yes.

*(VI chuckles, sympathetic; then turns to ETHEL.)*

VI

When will Mr. McCormack be joining us?

REN

Mr. McCormack won't be joining us.

ETHEL

My husband and I are separated.

REN

He ran off to find himself.

ETHEL

Ren, please...

*(ELEANOR and COACH ROGER DUNBAR join the group.)*

ELEANOR

Vi, Vi, I made some of my Toll House cookies. Lulu, you taste one and you'll burn every recipe in your kitchen.

*(She hustles LULU offstage; as she goes:)*

VI

Won't you join us, Mrs. McCormack? Eleanor wants to show us what heaven tastes like.

ETHEL

Call me Ethel. Please.

VI

Only if you'll call me Vi.

*(They exit.)*

REN

*(To ETHEL as she goes.)*

Save me a cookie, Ethel.

*(ETHEL'S look back to REN says: "Please, behave!")*

SHAW

So, Ren, all set for school tomorrow?

WES

We took care of that last week. Coach here helped get him registered.

COACH

Reverend, did you hear that new English teacher is planning to introduce some vulgar modern novel into our American Lit course?

SHAW

"Slaughterhouse Five." Yes, Coach, I've received several calls.

REN

"Slaughterhouse Five?"

*(To WES and COACH.)*

Cool book, cover to cover!

*(To SHAW.)*

That's one bitchin' story!

*(He stops, abashed.)*

"Slaughterhouse Five," right? Yeah. It's a classic.

COACH

Do you read much?

WES

Well, Coach, maybe in another town it's a classic.

REN

In any town, Uncle Wes.

COACH

"Tom Sawyer" is a classic.

*(ARIEL and her girlfriend RUSTY rush on.)*

ARIEL

Daddy, excuse me, Rusty and the girls are going out for burgers tonight. Can I?

REVEREND

Tomorrow is a school day.

ARIEL

Aw, Daddy...!

SHAW

Ask your mother.

RUSTY

*(Always speaking a mile-a-minute.)*

We already did, Reverend Moore, and she said it was okay with her if it was okay with you, so is it okay with you?!

SHAW

*(Reacts to RUSTY'S barrage; then, to ARIEL:)*

Ten o'clock.

ARIEL

Ten o'clock.

RUSTY

Great sermon, Reverend.

SHAW

Thank you, Rusty.

RUSTY

And, oh! What you said about Walt Whitman and rock 'n' roll and "listen to the music in your soul," and all that, I mean, I was, like, "Who knew?"

SHAW

High praise, indeed.

*(Turning to COACH and WES.)*

Gentlemen.

*(They exit.)*

ARIEL

I, on the other hand, thought my daddy was never going to shut up.

*(She starts to peel off her Sunday best; she's underdressed with sexier clothes.)*

RUSTY

Well, then, Ariel, why don't you just talk to him?

ARIEL

Why? He never listens to me. And anyway, I...

*(She sees REN watching her and stops talking; beat.)*

Welcome to Bomont.

*(Pause.)*

REN

*(Like a drawling cowboy.)*

Howdy.

*(His attempt at humor is met with blank stares; embarrassed, REN starts to go but is stopped by URLEEN and WENDY JO as they enter.)*

URLEEN

Ooooo! You are cute. Wendy Jo, isn't he cute?

WENDY JO

Uh-huh.

URLEEN

I bet he knows he's cute, doncha think, Wendy Jo?

WENDY JO

Uh-huh.

*(REN leaves.)*

URLEEN & WENDY JO

*(Calling after him, teasing.)*

Ouch! Oh, baby...! You got that sweet stuff...!

*(Etc.)*

RUSTY

*(Stopping them.)*

Hey! Put your tongues back in your mouths, and let's get outta here.

*(The GIRLS start off in one direction, ARIEL in the other.)*

ARIEL

See ya!

URLEEN

And where're you going?

ARIEL

Where do you think?

WENDY JO & URLEEN

*(They know.)*

Oooh.

ARIEL

And if the question ever comes up, I was with you guys all evening, right?

WENDY JO

Are you asking us to lie for you?

ARIEL

Yeah!

*(The GIRLS look to each other, shrug.)*

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

Okay!

*(All exit, GIRLS one way, ARIEL the other.)*

**MUSIC 2: THE GIRL GETS AROUND**

*(The twang of electric guitars brings on CHUCK CRANSTON and his buddies, TRAVIS and LYLE.)*

**Scene 3: Behind a Gas Station**

*(ARIEL enters.)*

CHUCK

Hey, good-lookin'.

*(He and ARIEL kiss.)*

Miss me?

ARIEL

You wish.

*(TRAVIS and LYLE, thuggish and grease-stained, approach.)*

TRAVIS

Hey, there, Ariel.

LYLE

How's it goin'?

ARIEL

*(Regards them.)*

Hey, Travis. Lyle.

*(Gasps, turns to CHUCK.)*

Omigod. Did I interrupt your weekly poetry club meeting?

CHUCK

Very funny.

*(He caresses her.)*

So. Who was that new guy in church?

ARIEL

Who...? Oh, him. He's our new classmate.

*(Playful.)*

A Chicago transplant with all the charm and sophistication that comes from living in a bustling metropolis.

CHUCK

Should I be jealous?

ARIEL

*(Teasing.)*

I'm counting on it.

*(They grab each other and kiss.)*

LYLE

Hey, Cranston. Jus' what're you doin' with the preacher's daughter?

CHUCK

*(Singing.)*

ANYTHING THAT I WANT

TRAVIS

Oh, yeah? What does she get out of it?

CHUCK

EV'RYTHING THAT SHE NEEDS

*(ARIEL is suddenly proper.)*

ARIEL

Like you'd know.

*(CHUCK wags a finger at her and sings to his buddies.)*

CHUCK

WELL, SHE'D LIKE YOU TO THINK SHE WAS BORN YESTERDAY  
WITH HER INNOCENT LOOKS AND HER LITTLE TOWN WAYS  
WHEN SHE'S SMILIN' AT ME SHE'S GOT ANGELS IN HER EYES

BUT I'VE SEEN HOW SHE MOVES AND THIS GIRL REALLY COOKS  
SHE TAUGHT ME SOME TRICKS YOU CAN'T LEARN IN BOOKS  
AND I'M STARTING TO THINK SHE'S THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE

CHUCK, TRAVIS & LYLE

THE GIRL GETS AROUND  
SHE KNOWS WHAT SHE LIKES

TRAVIS & LYLE

HUNH!

CHUCK

I GOT WHAT SHE NEEDS  
JUST WAIT'LL TONIGHT

TRAVIS & LYLE

NEEDS

WE'LL BOTH MAKE OUR MOVES

JUST WAIT!

MAKE OUR MOVES

CHUCK, TRAVIS & LYLE

YEAH, WE'LL COVER SOME GROUND

CHUCK

THE GIRL GETS AROUND  
AROUND AROUND AROUND AROUND AROUND  
GOOD GOD, THIS GIRL GETS AROUND

TRAVIS

Ariel, I swear, God's gonna strike you down with a lightning bolt.

ARIEL

No, she's not!

LYLE

She's not?

TRAVIS

Excellent!

ARIEL

*(To TRAVIS and LYLE.)*

YEAH, HE LIKES TO PRETEND HE'S A MAN AMONG MEN  
 BUT WITH HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS, HE CAN'T COUNT TO TEN  
*(To CHUCK)*

DON'T WORRY, BABY; YOUR SECRET'S SAFE WITH ME

TRAVIS &amp; LYLE

*(Razzing CHUCK.)*

Busted!

ARIEL

AND HE BORES ME TO TEARS WITH HIS BEERS AND HIS BIKES  
 BUT I KEEP HIM AROUND CUZ WHEN TEMPTATION STRIKES  
 I GOT THE MOTOR AND HE'S GOT THE KEY!

CHUCK, TRAVIS &amp; LYLE

THE GIRL GETS AROUND

CHUCK

SHE KNOWS WHAT SHE LIKES

TRAVIS &amp; LYLE

HUNH! KNOWS WHAT SHE LIKES!

CHUCK &amp; ARIEL

GOT WHAT YOU NEED

TRAVIS &amp; LYLE

YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH

CHUCK

JUST WAIT'LL TONIGHT

ARIEL

MAYBE TONIGHT

TRAVIS &amp; LYLE

WAIT'LL TONIGHT

CHUCK, ARIEL, TRAVIS & LYLE

WE'LL BOTH MAKE OUR MOVES  
YEAH, WE'LL COVER SOME GROUND  
THE GIRL GETS AROUND  
AROUND AROUND AROUND AROUND AROUND  
THE GIRL GETS AROUND  
AROUND AROUND AROUND AROUND AROUND  
GOOD GOD, THIS GIRL GETS AROUND!

*(ARIEL jumps into CHUCK'S arms as SHAW enters.)*

SHAW

Ariel?

*(ALL freeze. CHUCK puts ARIEL down.)*

CHUCK

Evening, Reverend.

SHAW

*(To ARIEL.)*

I went to The Burger Blast. Your friends suggested I might find you here.

CHUCK

We were just on our way.

*(Pause. SHAW nods, unconvinced, then offers a sweater to ARIEL.)*

SHAW

Your mother thought you might be cold.

*(A chilly pause. ARIEL takes the sweater. SHAW exits. TRAVIS and LYLE call after him:)*

TRAVIS & LYLE

Evening, Reverend.

*(ARIEL'S good mood evaporates; as she exits, the BOYS tease her with:)*

**MUSIC 2A: AFTER "GIRL"**

CHUCK, TRAVIS & LYLE

THE GIRL GETS AROUND  
AND SHE KNOWS WHAT SHE LIKES  
I GOT WHAT SHE NEEDS  
JUST WAIT'LL TONIGHT  
THE GIRL GETS AROUND, AROUND, AROUND, AROUND  
GOOD GOD, THIS GIRL GETS AROUND!

**Scene 4: A High School Hallway****MUSIC 3: I CAN'T STAND STILL**

*(A row of lockers runs the width of the stage. STUDENTS cross on their ways to class. REN crosses to ARIEL who enters with RUSTY.)*

Hey! Ariel? Right? REN

Yeah. So? ARIEL

I'm Ren. Ren McCormack? We met after church? Is this a small world or what? I'm your new classmate. REN

*(A beat.)*

*(Mimicking him.)* ARIEL  
"Howdy!"

Girl, leave that poor boy alone! RUSTY

*(They leave, joining WENDY JO and URLEEN on their way. REN, in embarrassment, turns and bumps into WILLARD HEWITT, a hayseed in a hat.)*

Hey, mister! You bumped me! WILLARD

Sorry. REN

Don't you ever look where you're goin'? WILLARD

I said I was sorry. REN

Hey! You're that new guy from Chicago, ain'tcha? WILLARD

Perhaps. REN

Smart-ass, huh? Listen, fella, around here you push somebody... they push back. Next thing you know, you got... WILLARD

*(Gets confused; forges ahead.)*

...two people pushing. Get it?

REN

Got it. Lemme ask you something. They sell men's clothes where you got that hat?  
*(Pause.)*

WILLARD

*(Suspiciously.)*  
What is that, some kind of stupid joke?

REN

No. That's a really good joke.

WILLARD

That's it, man. I'm gonna kill you!

*(He raises his dukes to REN, who throws himself at WILLARD's fists.)*

REN

Oh, please! Kill me!

WILLARD

*(Pulls away, startled.)*  
Huh?

REN

Kill me! KILL ME! That's the most exciting thing I've heard since I hit town!  
*(Sticks out his hand.)*  
Ren McCormack. And you are...?

WILLARD

*(Wary.)*  
Willard. Willard Hewitt.

REN

Willard, what do you do around here for a good time?  
*(WILLARD hesitates, then makes a lewd gesture.)*  
Yeah. Besides that. You have any clubs?

WILLARD

Nope.

REN

What about movies?

WILLARD

Nope.

REN

What about malls?

WILLARD

Nope.

REN

What about...

WILLARD

Nope. Nope. And nope.

*(Pause.)*

We do have the Bowl-A-Rama down by the interstate.

REN

Wow. I really admire you. I could never do what you guys do around here.

WILLARD

Yeah? What do we do?

REN

*(Explodes.)*Nothing!*(Sings.)*

I NEVER WALK WHEN I CAN RUN  
 I DON'T BELIEVE I EVER COULD  
 PEOPLE TRY TO SLOW ME DOWN  
 SAYIN, "BOY, YOU REALLY SHOULD  
 KICK BACK AND CHILL"  
 BUT, I CAN'T STAND STILL!

WILLARD

I can see that.

*(WILLARD tries to get away; REN won't let him leave.)*

REN

I CALLED THE DOCTOR, HE SAID, "SON,  
 I CANNOT OFFER YOU A PILL."  
 SO I NEVER FOUND RELIEF  
 AND NOW I'VE GOT TO MOVE UNTIL  
 I'VE HAD MY FILL  
 I CAN'T STAND STILL!

WILLARD

Around here we walk.

REN

BACK WHERE I COME FROM  
 LIFE'S NEVER HUMDRUM  
 I WISH I COULD TAKE YOU THERE  
 OH, WE HAD THE WORLD AT OUR FEET  
 LIFE WAS SWEET  
 AIN'T NO DOUBT

GRAB A SEAT  
CHECK IT OUT!

*(He does a few dance moves.)*

WILLARD

You're gonna last about five minutes in this town.

REN

OH, I THOUGHT IT NEVER WOULD END  
BUT I LOST IT SOMEHOW  
WOULD YOU LOOK AT ME NOW

I'M TRYIN' HARD TO TONE IT DOWN  
GOTTA WATCH MY P'S & Q'S  
MAYBE LOOK BEFORE I LEAP  
AND THEN I THINK, "HEY, WHAT'S THE USE?"

AIN'T DONE IT YET  
AND I CAN'T FORGET HOW IT FEELS WHEN YOU DANCE 'TIL YOU DROP  
SO DON'T EVEN START TO SUGGEST THAT I STOP  
I NEVER WILL

I CAN'T STAND

*(A la James Brown.)*

NO NO NO NO  
NO NO NO NO  
NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO

WILLARD

No, no, no, no...!

REN

Then, somebody kill me cuz -

*(Sings:)*

I CAN'T STAND STILL

No! No! NO!

*(As the number ends, PRINCIPAL HARRY CLARK enters.)*

PRINCIPAL

Young man! Young man! What do you think you're doing?

REN

I was just telling Willard about Chicago.

*(PRINCIPAL is stone-faced.)*

Yeah, Chicago... y'know?... that toddlin' town...?

PRINCIPAL

That's not what it looked like.

*(Other STUDENTS filter in and observe this scene.)*

REN

What? Oh, that! I was just showing him some steps. Stuff we used to do at the clubs.

WILLARD

*(Frantically.)*

Don't... don't...!

REN

What? "Don't" what? You mean this?

*(REN dances a few deliberately goofy steps.)*

PRINCIPAL

Mr. McCormack!

WILLARD

*(Under his breath.)*

Oh, shit.

PRINCIPAL

There's no dancing allowed here!

REN

What?

WILLARD

Listen to the man.

REN

Oh. Sure. Oops. School property. Not supposed to have any fun.

PRINCIPAL

That sort of remark may pass for wit in Chicago, but here we speak simply. Let me make this as clear as I can: there is absolutely no dancing of any kind allowed at any time anywhere within the town limits of Bomont.

*(REN starts to speak.)*

Ever.

*(REN laughs. No one else does.)*

REN

No, seriously.

*(To the KIDS.)*

He's kidding, right?

*(No one reacts.)*

Okay. I get it. The joke's on the new kid. Ha-ha.

I-4-22

PRINCIPAL

*(To WILLARD.)*

Mr. Hewitt! Would you inform your friend?

WILLARD

It's against the law.

REN

Dancing?! Get out!

WILLARD

Shut up.

*(To PRINCIPAL.)*

Mr. Clark, sir, Ren is very sorry. He was ignorant of our local law, and I will inform him of his ignorance.

PRINCIPAL

And I will see both of you in my office after school.

*(The bell rings; no one moves.)*

I'm sure we all have places to be.

*(STUDENTS disperse and PRINCIPAL exits. RUSTY grabs WILLARD.)*

RUSTY

Omigosh, Willard! The way you spoke to Principal Clark! Wow, that's, like, the longest sentence you've ever made!

WILLARD

Pwsht.

*(WILLARD, flustered and embarrassed, exits. ARIEL walks past REN, playfully chucks him under the chin and mimics the Principal.)*

ARIEL

Chin up... Mister McCormack.

*(She chuckles, exits. URLEEN, WENDY JO and RUSTY surround REN.)*

URLEEN

It's such a turn-on, watching a guy fly in the face of authority. Isn't it, Wendy Jo?

WENDY JO

Uh-huh.

REN

Was he serious?

WENDY JO

Serious as a heart attack.

REN

Dancing is against the law?

RUSTY

Has been for five and half years. Ever since the accident.

REN

What accident?

RUSTY, WENDY JO &amp; URLEEN

*(Surprised he doesn't know.)*

The Potawney Bridge Accident!

*(REN shrugs.)*

WENDY JO

You've never heard of the Potawney Bridge Accident?!

REN

If I had, would I be doing this?

*(He shrugs again, more exaggerated this time.)*

RUSTY

Well! Ladies, should I take this one?

WENDY JO

Please.

URLEEN

Be my guest.

RUSTY

There were these four kids we all grew up with. And they were driving back from a big dance over in Baylor County. Now, maybe it was the rain that night, maybe they were being a little wild, but somehow they lost control of the car. It skidded across the bridge, crashed through the railing, and fell thirty-five feet into the Potawney River.

REN

Whoa. Did anybody survive?

*(RUSTY shakes her head "no.")*

Oh, god.

RUSTY

Yeah. And when the sheriff's office published the autopsy report it claimed there was alcohol and marijuana in their blood. Well! Everybody in town went nuts.

URLEEN

And that's when Reverend Moore got so righteous. He started blaming anything and everything – liquor, drugs, rock and roll...

I-4-24

REN

And dancing?

URLEEN

You got it.

RUSTY

He convinced the Town Council that it was all a sin and...

*(Snaps her fingers.)*

...just like that, they passed this law.

REN

Wait. Reverend Moore has that kind of power?

RUSTY

Reverend Moore?

URLEEN

He is the power.

WENDY JO

He is the law.

REN

Man. How can you stand to live like this?

URLEEN

Practice. Years of practice.

RUSTY

It's not like Chicago. It must be so cool to live in a city where you can walk down the street and get mugged by people you don't even know.

REN

Yeah, I miss that. I thought living in a small town was going to be perfect, like one big happy family.

RUSTY

Let me tell you about that family.

*(She checks behind herself to be sure that no one's listening.)*

#### **MUSIC 4: SOMEBODY'S EYES**

RUSTY

There's tongues wagging every time you make a move.

URLEEN

There's fingers pointing every time you turn around.

WENDY JO

There's heads shaking the minute you cross the line.

RUSTY

And there's eyes everywhere.

CAREFUL WHAT YOU DO  
SOMEONE'S ON TO YOU  
CAREFUL WHAT YOU DO

URLEEN

CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY  
CUZ YOU'RE ON DISPLAY  
EV'RY NIGHT AND EV'RY DAY

RUSTY

SOMEBODY'S HIDING IN THE GREAT UNKNOWN

RUSTY, WENDY JO &amp; URLEEN

UH-HUH

RUSTY

AND EV'RY TIME YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE ALONE

URLEEN &amp; WENDY JO

HAH!

RUSTY

SOMEBODY'S EYES ARE WATCHING

URLEEN

SOMEBODY'S EYES ARE SEEING YOU COME AND GO

WENDY JO

SOMEBODY'S OUT THERE, WAITING FOR THE SHOW

RUSTY, WENDY JO &amp; URLEEN

YOU'VE GOT NO DISGUISE  
FROM SOMEBODY'S EYES

REN

Thanks for the advice. But it's not going to get to me.

URLEEN

Gets to everybody.

REN

You don't know me.

RUSTY

You don't know Bomont.

*(As the number continues, TOWNSPEOPLE fill the stage and frame the following vignettes.)*

ALL

SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY'S EYES  
WHOA-OH  
SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY'S EYES  
WHOA-OH

*(A COP steps out of the crowd, writing a ticket for REN.)*

COP

You're gonna have to learn that in Bomont, a stop sign means stop.

REN

I thought I did.

COP

And that radio music of yours was blasting pretty loud.

REN

Oh. So you pulled me over because my music's too loud.

COP

Hey! Watch that attitude, boy.

*(CHUCK, LYLE and TRAVIS enter.)*

CHUCK

Book 'im, Jim!

COP

This a friend of yours, Chuck?

CHUCK

The city kid? I wouldn't let him kiss my ass!

*(CHUCK, LYLE and TRAVIS howl with laughter and exit; REN watches them go.)*

REN

*(To COP, sarcastically cheery.)*

They seem nice.

*(Stone-faced, the COP slaps a ticket into REN'S hand.)*

URLEEN

CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEAK  
TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEAK

WENDY JO

THINK A NAUGHTY THOUGHT  
AND IF YOU GET CAUGHT  
WELL THEN, BOY, YOU'VE BOUGHT A LOT OF TROUBLE

RUSTY

SOMEWHERE THERE'S SOMEONE WITH A PERFECT VIEW

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

YOO-HOO!

RUSTY

AND THEY'RE JUST DYIN' FOR A LITTLE PEEK-A-BOO

URLEEN & WENDY JO

BOO!

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

SOMEBODY'S EYES ARE WATCHING  
SOMEBODY'S EYES WILL NEVER CLOSE, NEVER SLEEP  
SOMEBODY'S AFTER THE SECRETS THAT YOU KEEP  
WHO'S GOT ALIBIS  
FROM SOMEBODY'S EYES?

*(The Principal's Office. COACH DUNBAR drags REN in before the PRINCIPAL. With him are TRAVIS and LYLE in wrestlers' outfits.)*

COACH

Principal Clark, this boy turned my wrestling practice into a brawl!

LYLE

Yeah!

TRAVIS

Yeah!

REN

*(To TRAVIS.)*

Oh, I suppose my nose just slammed into your fist!

LYLE, TRAVIS & REN

That's bull...! You started it...! It was you...! Hey...!

COACH

Hey! That's enough!

*(The BOYS hush; to REN.)*

My boys know the difference between a wrestling match and a street fight.

REN

*(Snide.)*

Oh, really, Coach? A wrestling match is usually one-on-one.

PRINCIPAL

That is enough out of you! This is the third time in as many weeks that you've been dragged into my office. I'm suspending you from the wrestling team. Indefinitely.

ALL

SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY'S EYES

WHOA-OH

SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY'S EYES

WHOA-OH

*(The Warnicker Home. REN is standing before WES, LULU and ETHEL.)*

WES

Do you know how hard it was for me to get you that job at Dillingham's Hardware Store? It's not even a month and you get fired!

LULU

Every day it's more bad news with you. Every day.

ETHEL

Lulu, don't exaggerate.

WES

Ethel, now hush! You're not helping things.

ETHEL

Ren? What did happen?

REN

Nothing I should be fired for! Willard came by the store, and he wanted change of a dollar, so I popped open the register. And when Mr. Dillingham came out and saw my hand in the drawer, he went crazy. He accused me of stealing.

LULU

That's because everything you do makes people suspicious.

WES

Are you on drugs?

REN

No! But why don't you frisk me? I'm sure you've already poked through everything in my room.

ETHEL

Ren, apologize to your uncle.

WES

Look, young man, I know that I'm not your father...

REN  
You can say that again!

*(WES slaps REN. LULU gasps.)*

ETHEL  
Wes!

WES  
Don't say anything, Ethel.

ETHEL  
I can't not say anything! I don't know how to do that, Wes.

LULU  
Pumpkin, hush, please!

ETHEL  
Wes, I realize that we are guests in your home...

WES  
Ethel!

*(That stops her.)*

Right now, just don't say anything!

*(ETHEL bites her lip; the ADULTS disperse.)*

URLEEN  
*(To REN.)*  
NEVER LAUGH TOO LOUD  
NEVER LEAVE A CROWD

WENDY JO  
NEVER DRESS RISQUE  
THERE'LL BE HELL TO PAY

RUSTY  
IF YOU'VE EVER HAD ANYTHING TO HIDE  
THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU STEP OUTSIDE

URLEEN & WENDY JO  
STEP OUTSIDE

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO  
SOMEBODY'S EYES ARE WATCHING  
SOMEBODY'S EYES ARE FOLLOWING EV'RY MOVE  
SOMEBODY'S WAITING TO SHOW THEY DON'T APPROVE

URLEEN  
NOTHING SATISFIES

URLEEN & RUSTY

SOMEBODY'S EYES

WENDY JO

AIN'T NO ALIBIS

WENDY JO & URLEEN

IN SOMEBODY'S EYES

RUSTY

YOU'VE GOT NO DISGUISE

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

FROM SOMEBODY'S EYES

TOWNSPEOPLE

SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY'S EYES

WHOA-OH

SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY, SOMEBODY'S EYES

*(EVERYONE exits, leaving only:)*

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

WHOA-OH

*(The Moore Home appears. ARIEL runs on with CHUCK. He is all over her, as she pushes him away, laughing.)*

ARIEL

Chuck! Stop! I don't want to be late!

CHUCK

What's a few more minutes?

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

WHOA-OH

ARIEL

My Dad is still not crazy about my seeing you.

CHUCK

Well, tell him to get used to it.

ARIEL

You tell him!

CHUCK

*(Teasing.)*

I will!

*(He starts toward the Moore Home.)*

Reverend Moore...

*(Giggling, ARIEL catches his arm and pulls him back.)*

ARIEL

Maybe not right now. I'm not in the mood for one of his sermons.

*(She kisses CHUCK.)*

'Bye, now.

*(ARIEL runs to her front door, turns back and is amused to see that CHUCK hasn't moved; she whispers:)*

Go! Go home!

*(CHUCK struts away.)*

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

WHOA-OH

*(As they exit the music segues into:)*

### **Scene 5: The Moore Home**

*(A piece of classical music plays softly in the background. SHAW is writing; VI prepares dinner. ARIEL pulls herself together, dashes in and kisses SHAW on the cheek.)*

ARIEL

Hi, Daddy. Mom.

VI

Are you hungry?

ARIEL

I'm starving.

*(She listens to the music for a moment.)*

A-ha. What's this? Don't tell me – Haydn. The Second Sonata?

SHAW

The fourth.

ARIEL

Number four, right. I guess that kind of music's okay, huh, Daddy?

SHAW

Meaning...?

VI

She's just making a joke, Shaw.

SHAW

I'm aware of that, Vi.

*(To ARIEL)*

This "kind" of music is uplifting. It doesn't confuse the mind.

*(Not wanting to get drawn into a discussion, ARIEL changes the subject.)*

Are you working on your sermon?  
ARIEL

I am.  
SHAW

Remember when I was a kid? On Saturdays, I would sit in a pew down front and listen to you practice. Over and over.  
ARIEL

I do indeed.  
SHAW

And then I would clap. And you would bow. Remember?  
ARIEL

Well, you seem to have outgrown that.  
SHAW

Shaw!  
VI

What just happened? Did I say something wrong?  
ARIEL

Your father's had a difficult day.  
VI

Vi, I can speak for myself.  
SHAW

*(To ARIEL.)*  
Honey, why don't you set the table.  
VI

I'm not really hungry.  
ARIEL

*(She goes. VI looks to SHAW.)*

Shaw, if you're angry with Ariel, please tell her why.  
VI

I'm not angry. I'm concerned.  
SHAW

Then get to the point. You two speak and nothing gets said.  
VI

SHAW

Have you seen her with this Chuck Cranston? The last time I walked in on the two of them...

VI

You told me.

SHAW

The boy has a record of arrests, Vi.

VI

And the more you object, the more intrigued she's going to be.

SHAW

So I should hold my peace?

VI

I do. And I pray that her infatuation with Chuck Cranston lasts no longer than mine with Elliot Criswell.

SHAW

Elliot Criswell was not an overheated delinquent.

VI

Oh, he most certainly was!

SHAW

This is not funny.

VI

I'm trying to lighten the mood.

SHAW

Well, I can't. I'm frightened about where Ariel is, what she's doing...

VI

You can't expect her to sit home with us.

SHAW

Let's stop this conversation right here.

VI

Conversation?

SHAW

Vi...

VI

I seem to have walked in on one of your sermons.

SHAW

Please! Let's not say anything we might regret.

*(He goes, leaving VI alone.)*

**MUSIC 5: LEARNING TO BE SILENT**

VI

SWALLOWING MY WORDS  
STARING AT THE FLOOR  
COUNTING LITTLE CRACKS IN THE TILE  
STRUGGLING TO SMILE WITHOUT CHOKING  
LEARNING TO BE SILENT

*(ETHEL enters in her own space and sings:)*

ETHEL

WATCHING HOW THE DUST  
DANCES OUT THE DOOR  
NOTICING MY HANDS START TO SHAKE  
CONTEMPLATING TAKING UP SMOKING  
LEARNING TO BE SILENT

VI & ETHEL

ALWAYS HEARING

ETHEL

"HUSH, ETHEL!"

VI

"PLEASE, VI!"

VI & ETHEL

"LET'S NOT HAVE THIS CONVERSATION."

ETHEL

AND SO I STAND BY  
WHILE MY MIND TAKES A SMALL VACATION

VI & ETHEL

LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA

*(ARIEL enters her own space.)*

ARIEL

LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA

VI

MAKING LITTLE SOUNDS  
OTHER FOLKS IGNORE

ARIEL  
 QUIETING THE BEAT OF MY HEART  
 NEVER BEING PART OF THE MOMENT

ALL  
 LEARNING TO BE SILENT

ARIEL  
 LEARNING THERE ARE SOME TOPICS THAT WE DON'T EVEN MENTION

ETHEL  
 AND IF THEY COME UP, THEN WE TRY TO BE VAGUE

VI  
 THERE ARE SUBJECTS FROM WHICH WE DIVERT ALL ATTENTION

ARIEL  
 AND SOME WE AVOID LIKE THE PLAGUE

ALL  
 I'M BECOMING A MIME

ETHEL  
 BITING MY TONGUE

VI & ARIEL  
 BIDDING MY TIME

ETHEL  
 TRYING NOT TO SCREAM

ARIEL  
 TRYING NOT TO SCREAM

VI  
 MANAGED IT BEFORE

ARIEL  
 MANAGED IT BEFORE

ALL  
 KNOWING IF I'M GOING TO SURVIVE  
 THEN, DAMMIT!

ETHEL  
 I'VE GOT TO PRACTICE

VI & ARIEL  
 PRACTICE

ALL

LEARNING ...

*(They "zip" their lips.)*

HM...HM...HM...

*(Lights fade on the WOMEN.)*

**MUSIC 5A: SCENE CHANGE TO BURGER BLAST**

**Scene 6: The Burger Blast**

*(ARIEL, WENDY JO, RUSTY and URLEEN are at a table doing homework)*

RUSTY

Ariel, this book report you wrote is so great! I almost wish I'd read the book.

URLEEN

Hurry up, Rusty. I have to copy it next.

RUSTY

*(Holding up a sheet of paper.)*

How do you pronounce this word?

ARIEL

"Camelot."

URLEEN

Really?

ARIEL

Really.

RUSTY

You know what part sounds great?

WENDY JO

I like the part where King Arthur and Lancelot fight over Guinevere. It's right after Mordred shows up and says, "I'm the king! I'm the king!"

*(She stops, realizing they are staring.)*

What?

URLEEN

You read a book?!

WENDY JO

Cliffs Notes. It took me forever.

ARIEL

It's even better in the book. There's all these knights on horseback jousting and storming the castle.

RUSTY

All we get are guys in overalls riding pickup trucks.

*(WILLARD enters.)*

WENDY JO

Hi, Willard.

WILLARD

Hi. How're y'all doing?

ALL

Oh... You know... Okay... Good...

WILLARD

Hey, Rusty.

RUSTY

Hey, Willard.

*(RUSTY and WILLARD share a long silence; then:)*

WILLARD

Well. See ya.

*(He shambles over to a table by himself. The GIRLS turn on RUSTY.)*

URLEEN

"Hey, Willard?" That's it?

WENDY JO

You two are pathetic.

ARIEL

When are you two going to have a real conversation?

RUSTY

Oh, Willard is not capable of a real conversation.

*(Beat.)*

I kinda like that in a guy.

*(REN skates up in a Burger Blast uniform and hat, silly and outrageous.)*

WENDY JO

Hey, Ren, how's the new job?

REN

Well, I haven't been fired and it's already my second day.

ARIEL

You may have found your future.

REN

I may have. What can I get you?

RUSTY

Diet Coke.

URLEEN

Diet Coke.

WENDY JO

I'll have the Hula Burger Double Patty Cheese Melt with extra mayo and an order of fries. And a diet Coke.

REN

And Ariel? What's your pleasure?

ARIEL

It's not on the menu.

*(The GIRLS scream and slap her five with ad libs of "Ouch!" "Girlfriend!" "You go, girl!" as REN skates over to WILLARD and the lights shift.)*

WILLARD

If Chuck sees you flirting with Ariel, you are a dead man.

REN

She usually doesn't even remember me.

WILLARD

Well, that uniform makes you look like such an asshole, it's easier to pick you out.

REN

You are always looking for a fight, aren't you?

WILLARD

My Mama says it's my nature.

REN

Willard, shut up and tell me what you know about Ariel.

WILLARD

Well, I know she's been kissed a lot.

REN

And...?

WILLARD

And she is onto you like a hog on slop.

REN

Get outta here!

WILLARD

Ariel likes trouble. And you have definitely proved to everybody in this town that you are T-R-U-B-L.

*(The lights shift back to the GIRLS.)*

ARIEL

Come on! I was only teasing him.

RUSTY

That's more than teasing. Ren is from out of town and don't tell me that doesn't curl your toes.

WENDY JO

You want out of Bomont so bad I bet you memorize bus schedules.

URLEEN

You told us that you read just to escape to other worlds.

ARIEL

Exactly! In books, I get to meet guys who amaze me.

WENDY JO

What about Ren?

ARIEL

What about him?

RUSTY

He's sorta smart.

WENDY JO

He's kinda tall.

URLEEN

And I think he's handsome.

ARIEL

*(Shrugs.)*

Cute, maybe.

WENDY JO

But can he really compete with Chuck Cranston, the rugged, dangerous high school dropout-slash-drug dealer who was recently evicted from a trailer park? I don't think so.

*(The lights shift back to REN and WILLARD.)*

REN

What's the deal with you and Rusty?

WILLARD

Beats me. I think she's good-looking and all. But I never know what the hell she's talking about. She talks faster than any girl I ever met.

REN

That's cuz you make her horny.

WILLARD

*(Thrilled.)*

Y'think?!

*(The lights shift back to the GIRLS.)*

**MUSIC 6: HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO**

RUSTY

If I could only find a guy who'd make the first move.

URLEEN

If I could only find a guy who - when he went to kiss me goodnight - he'd take the toothpick out of his mouth.

WENDY JO

If I could only find a guy.

ARIEL

WHERE HAVE ALL THE GOOD MEN GONE  
AND WHERE ARE ALL THE GODS?

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

Yeah.

ARIEL

WHERE'S THE STREET-WISE HERCULES  
TO FIGHT THE RISING ODDS?

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

I'D LIKE TO KNOW

ARIEL

ISN'T THERE A WHITE KNIGHT UPON A FIERY STEED?  
LATE AT NIGHT I TOSS AND I TURN

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

I TOSS AND I TURN  
OH-OH-OH

ARIEL

AND I DREAM OF WHAT I NEED  
I NEED A HERO

*(Microphones in stands roll on; the GIRLS strut to the microphones and join ARIEL in her rock-concert fantasy.)*

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO  
AHH! AHH!

ARIEL

SOMEWHERE AFTER MIDNIGHT IN MY WILDEST FANTASY  
SOMEWHERE JUST BEYOND MY REACH  
THERE'S SOMEONE REACHING BACK FOR ME

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

DOO DOO DOO DOO

ARIEL

RACING ON THE THUNDER  
AND RISING WITH THE HEAT  
IT'S GONNA TAKE A SUPERMAN  
TO SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO  
DOO DOO DOO  
AHH

ALL

I NEED A HERO!

ARIEL

I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TIL THE END OF THE NIGHT

WENDY JO

HE'S GOTTA BE STRONG

URLEEN

AND HE'S GOTTA BE FAST

RUSTY

AND HE'S GOTTA BE FRESH FROM THE FIGHT

ALL

I NEED A HERO!  
I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TIL THE MORNING LIGHT  
HE'S GOTTA BE SURE, AND IT'S GOTTA BE SOON  
AND HE'S GOTTA BE LARGER THAN LIFE

ARIEL

LARGER THAN LIFE!

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO

DOO DOO DOO DOO  
AHH! AHH!

ARIEL

UP WHERE THE MOUNTAINS MEET THE HEAVENS ABOVE

RUSTY

OUT WHERE THE LIGHTNING SPLITS THE SEA

ALL

I COULD SWEAR THERE IS SOMEONE SOMEWHERE WATCHING ME  
THROUGH THE WIND AND THE CHILL AND THE RAIN  
AND THE STORM AND THE FLOOD  
I CAN FEEL HIS APPROACH LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD

LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY...  
AHH! AHH!

I NEED A HERO!  
I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TIL THE END OF THE NIGHT  
HE'S GOTTA BE STRONG AND HE'S GOTTA BE FAST  
AND HE'S GOTTA BE FRESH FROM THE FIGHT

I NEED A HERO!  
I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TIL THE MORNING LIGHT  
HE'S GOTTA BE SURE AND IT'S GOTTA BE SOON  
AND HE'S GOTTA BE LARGER THAN LIFE

LARGER THAN LIFE

*(As the song ends, their fantasy dissolves and they return to The Burger Blast.)*

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO  
AHH! AHH!

ALL

I NEED A HERO!

*(We hear CHUCK'S truck screech up; ARIEL panics, jumps up.)*

ARIEL

Oh, no! What time is it?

RUSTY

Eight-thirty. Why?

ARIEL

Oh, God! I'm late. Chuck's gonna lose it.

*(CHUCK strides in, furious.)*

CHUCK

Ariel, what the hell's going on? We had a date a half an hour ago.

ARIEL

Chuck, I'm sorry.

CHUCK

I don't like you making a fool out of me.

RUSTY

And why would you? You do such a good job of it yourself.

CHUCK

Shut up, Rusty.

*(REN skates over to CHUCK.)*

REN

Will you be joining these ladies for dinner?

*(CHUCK turns to REN, looks him up and down, then contemptuously pushes him backward. REN rolls away slowly. CHUCK grabs ARIEL by the arm and pulls her to one side.)*

CHUCK

When I say "meet me at eight," what am I – talking to myself?

ARIEL

No. You're right. Calm down, honey.

CHUCK

Don't tell me to calm down! Don't – ever – tell me what to do.

*(Glances at RUSTY, et. al.)*

I know what your friends think of me. And that's bullshit. I'm the best party in this town, baby, and those three dogs oughta be tied up under the porch. Let's go.

ARIEL

No.

CHUCK

Get in the truck.

ARIEL

No!

CHUCK

Excuse me?

ARIEL

I said, "No." What part of that don't you understand?

CHUCK

*(Fondles her.)*

Oh, when the preacher's daughter says "no," it just makes me hot. Say it again, baby.

ARIEL

Leave me alone, Chuck. Don't!

*(REN skates over.)*

REN

I believe the lady said, "No."

CHUCK

And I believe this is none of your business.

ARIEL

Ren, don't...

CHUCK

Ariel, who invited this clown?

REN

Oh, I'm sorry! We've never been formally introduced.

*(Extends his hand at CHUCK'S eye-level.)*

Ren McCormack.

CHUCK

Get your hand outta my face. And get your face outta my sight.

*(CHUCK smacks REN'S hand away; WILLARD leaps up.)*

WILLARD

Hey, Chuck! You looking for a fight? Let's party!

REN

Willard! Willard, don't lose me this job...!

WILLARD

Aw, man, let me nail him! I'll nail him...!

*(CHUCK and WILLARD have a shouting match, which REN tries to subdue. OTHERS join in. BETTY BLAST, owner of the diner, rolls on carefully, wearing a Burger Blast uniform. She's too old to skate but too ornery to admit it.)*

BETTY

Hey... hey... HEY!

*(EVERYONE stops.)*

We got a problem here?

REN

Not at all, ma'am. Me and the guys were just discussing the comfort and safety of one of your valued customers.

*(ARIEL & GIRLS chuckle; CHUCK turns on ARIEL.)*

CHUCK

What? You think that's funny?

BETTY

Cranston! Your pick-up truck is in the handicapped parking, which is a space we reserve for people with physical, not emotional, disabilities.

*(CHUCK, humiliated, has no graceful way out.)*

CHUCK

You haven't seen the last of me, McCormack.

*(He bumps REN as he exits.)*

WILLARD

Could I please kick his ass?

BETTY

Willard! What's that your mama says? "Before you make a fist, make sure it's your fight."

WILLARD

Yes, ma'am.

BETTY

Well, this is not your fight. Now, don't the rest of you have a curfew?

*(We hear CHUCK'S truck varoom away as the CROWD disperses. ARIEL lingers.)*

And McCormack?

REN

*(Fearing the worst.)*

I know, ma'am. I'll turn in my skates.

BETTY

Listen to me. I'll see you here after school tomorrow.

REN

Really? So I'm not fired?

BETTY

Not yet. Now, gimme a push, honey.



Whaddya mean?

ARIEL

I mean the whole package. Minister's kid, Chuck Cranston's girlfriend.

REN

Guilty.

ARIEL

Just a church goin' gal with some bad-ass red cowboy boots.

REN

My daddy hates me wearing these boots.

ARIEL

*(REN sits on the ground; ARIEL eventually sits nearby.)*

REN

And you love that, don't you? Getting up in his face?

ARIEL

That way he'll notice when I'm gone.

REN

Where're you gonna go?

ARIEL

College, for starters. I've applied to some places my daddy doesn't even know about. I wanna speak five languages and see the world. He wants me to teach English Lit in Baylor County.

*(Beat.)*

They don't even speak English in Baylor County.

REN

I can't picture you as a teacher.

ARIEL

Thank you. Neither can I. I'll leave that to my daddy.

REN

He's a preacher, not a teacher.

ARIEL

When you're good at it, it's the same thing. And he used to be real good.

REN

What changed?

ARIEL

His mind. He closed it.

REN

I noticed.

ARIEL

He used to be so open, so inspiring. I've seen him give people hope when hope was gone. I've watched him change lives.

REN

If you love him so much, why do you wanna tick him off?

ARIEL

I didn't say I love him.

REN

Boy, do I know what you mean! My dad...

*(He shakes his head.)*

ARIEL

Yeah, what happened there?

REN

He walked out. One day he just walked out the door. No 'good-bye'. Nothing.

ARIEL

Whew. I bet you've got lots to say to him.

REN

Lots.

ARIEL

Like what?

REN

*(Suddenly self-conscious.)*

No, I couldn't...

ARIEL

Tell it to the train. I do.

*(REN considers her suggestion. Then, in imitation of ARIEL'S earlier wail, he throws his head back, chases after an imaginary train and screams.)*

REN

Aah-h-h-h-h-h-h-h...! How can you be so stupid to leave Mom and me? I... hate... you!

*(Spent, he drops to the ground near her; neither speaks.)*

**MUSIC 7: THE PLAINS OF BOMONT**

Feel better?

ARIEL

I'm not sure.

REN

*(Beat; their faces are close.)*

Do you wanna kiss me?

ARIEL

*(Startled, amused.)*

Someday.

REN

“Someday.” What do you mean, “Someday?”

ARIEL

I've got a feeling you've been kissed a lot. I'm afraid I'd suffer by comparison.

REN

You don't think much of me, do you?

ARIEL

Oh. I think of you more than I expected.

REN

*(Beat.)*  
C'mon. I'll walk you home.

**MUSIC 7A: SCENE CHANGE (“SOMEBODY’S EYES”)**

*(CHUCK enters and spies on REN and ARIEL as they walk. RUSTY, WENDY JO and URLEEN enter elsewhere.)*

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN  
SOMEBODY’S EYES ARE WATCHING  
SOMEBODY’S EYES ARE FOLLOWING EV’RY MOVE  
SOMEBODY’S WAITING TO SHOW THEY DON’T APPROVE

*(The GIRLS exit.)*

**Scene 8: The Moore Home**

*(VI, ELEANOR, COACH DUNBAR and PRINCIPAL CLARK sit around the kitchen table playing cards. SHAW peers out a window.)*

Okay, let's see... Harry, you owe Eleanor...

COACH

...seventy five cents.

ELEANOR

I-8-50

*(To SHAW.)*

And, Reverend, you owe me a buck and a quarter.

SHAW

*(Turning from the window.)*

Eleanor, why is it that the only place my prayers seem to fail me is at the bridge table?

*(EVERYONE laughs.)*

*(Just outside, REN resists as ARIEL drags him into the house.)*

ARIEL

No, c'mon! Just say "hello" to everybody.

*(REN and ARIEL enter the room; the ADULTS all stop.)*

Hi! You all know Ren McCormack.

*(Introducing them.)*

Daddy – Ren.

REN

Hey! Reverend Moore! How's it goin'? Principal Clark – Coach Dunbar!

ARIEL

Hi, Mrs. Dunbar.

REN

Mrs. Moore.

VI

Welcome, Ren.

REN

Whoa! Poker night. Cool!

COACH

Ariel! All this time we thought you were upstairs in your room.

PRINCIPAL

Doing your homework.

SHAW

*(Genial, but pointed.)*

It's hard to impose a curfew on the young people of my congregation when I can't seem to enforce one in my own home.

REN

Well, what's that old expression? "It's the shoemaker's children who always go barefoot."

*(No one laughs; suddenly ELEANOR gasps and glances at her wristwatch.)*

ELEANOR

Oh, will you look at the time!

*(The ADULTS abruptly stand and exit. VI walks them out. REN stays behind with ARIEL and SHAW.)*

REN  
Boy, I can sure empty a room.

SHAW  
It's a rare talent.

REN  
I'm gonna take that as a compliment.

SHAW  
*(With a smile.)*  
Oh? I can assure you, it was not meant that way.

*(REN mimes being impaled in the chest by an arrow.)*

REN  
THHHHWUMP!  
*(Mimes pulling out the arrow.)*

Arrggggh!  
*(Offering it to SHAW.)*  
I believe this is yours.

*(SHAW is not amused; ARIEL tries to rescue the moment.)*

ARIEL  
Ren! Thanks for... you know...

REN  
Walking you home?

ARIEL  
Yeah. That, too.

*(As REN starts out, he turns to SHAW one more time.)*

REN  
Well, Reverend. This was fun, doncha think?

*(SHAW stares. After an uncomfortable pause, REN ducks out.)*

**MUSIC 7B: SOMEBODY'S EYES (REPRISE)**

*(RUSTY, WENDY JO and URLEEN enter.)*

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO  
SOMEBODY'S EYES ARE SEEING YOU COME AND GO

*(REN joins VI outside.)*

REN

Boy, I really blew it in there, didn't I?

VI

*(Amused.)*

Yeah. You did.

REN

I get nervous, I go crazy, and I always end up putting my foot in my mouth.

VI

Your mother said you were good at it, but I had no idea.

*(They share a small laugh.)*

REN

G'night, Mrs. Moore.

VI

Goodnight.

*(REN runs off. VI re-enters the house.)*

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO  
SOMEBODY SOMEBODY SOMEBODY SOMEBODY'S EYES

*(TRAVIS, LYLE and CHUCK enter, observing REN'S departure.)*

CHUCK, TRAVIS & LYLE

WHOA-OH!  
I'M GONNA PUNCH OUT  
SOMEBODY SOMEBODY SOMEBODY SOMEBODY'S EYES

*(They pull ski masks over their faces as they race after REN.)*

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

WHOA-OH

*(They exit as VI observes SHAW and ARIEL.)*

SHAW

I don't want you to see him again.

ARIEL

Ren? Why? Just because he hasn't lived in this town his whole life?

SHAW

That's not it. But, clearly, the boy has no respect for authority. And everyone tells me he's a troublemaker.

ARIEL

Who's "everyone?"

*(Refers to the card table.)*

The Bridge Club?! Gimme a break.

SHAW

Ariel! What am I going to do with you?

ARIEL

Me? Daddy, lately all you do is look for the worst in people and then, of course, you find it.

SHAW

My, my, where did that come from?

ARIEL

From you, Daddy! Today's sermon is: the world is evil, and Ariel has to be locked away in a tower.

SHAW

That's a little melodramatic, don't you think?

ARIEL

No, I don't. Daddy, you make me feel like a prisoner. And I hate it! I just hate it!

*(ARIEL exits; SHAW notices that VI has slipped in and observed this fight.)*

SHAW

Someone's got to put a foot down.

VI

*(Blithely.)*

I didn't say anything.

*(She exits. Frustrated and agitated, SHAW sings:)***MUSIC 8: HEAVEN HELP ME**

SHAW

I DON'T ENJOY BEING HER JAILER  
 I DON'T RELISH TELLING HER, "NO!"  
 BUT THEN I THINK - WHAT IF I FAIL HER?  
 HOW CAN I JUST LET HER GO?

I STRIVE TO BE A GOOD PREACHER  
 I TRY NOT TO GO OVERBOARD  
 BUT THEN I THINK - IF I CAN'T REACH HER  
 HOW CAN I FACE MY LORD?

HEAVEN HELP ME SHOULDER MY LOAD.  
 EV'RY DAY'S A STRUGGLE, STILL,

SOMEONE'S GOT TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD  
IF I DON'T, WHO WILL?

I BECAME A MAN OF GOD  
TO DO HIS WORK, TO SPREAD HIS WORD  
TO EASE SOME PAIN AND DRY SOME TEARS.  
THAT WAS THE PLAN.

BUT I MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT TWICE IF ONLY I KNEW THAT  
I'D SPEND ALL OF MY TIME SAYING, "AINH, AINH, AINH, NO, NO!  
DON'T DO THAT!"

SEE, EV'RYONE PRAYS FOR SALVATION  
I'M HAPPY TO GIVE THEM THE TOOLS  
THE PROBLEM IS – HERE'S MY FRUSTRATION –  
NOBODY WANTS TO HAVE RULES

SO HEAVEN HELP ME WITH MY LABORS  
HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ONE MAN  
TO SAVE HIS FAM'LY AND HIS NEIGHBORS?  
HEAVEN HELP ME  
OH, HEAVEN HELP ME  
IF HEAVEN CAN'T, WHO CAN?

*(He exits.)*

**MUSIC 8A: ON ANY SUNDAY – MARCH**

**Scene 9: The High School Gym/The Church**

*(Basketball backboards and climbing ropes descend. KIDS are in the middle of gym class. WILLARD and ARIEL enter with REN; he has a bandage above his blackened eye, and one hand is wrapped.)*

COACH

*(Blowing his whistle.)*

McCormack! You and your friends are late.

ARIEL

Coach, Ren is hurt. Look at his eye!

WILLARD

*(Picks up REN'S hand.)*

And his hand! He's all banged up.

REN

It's nothing. I was just...

COACH

Please! Don't waste your breath or my time with another lame excuse.

ARIEL

It's not an excuse! After Ren walked me home last night, some guys jumped him.

WILLARD

They just started wailing on him! There was, like, six of them!

REN

Willard! Willard, it was three guys.

COACH

Anybody you know?

REN

Well, I didn't take names, if that's what you mean.

COACH

McCormack, it seems that when you're not making trouble, it finds you anyway.

*(Turning to ARIEL.)*

And Ariel, I would encourage you to stay away from this guy. I've been asked to keep my eye on you and...

ARIEL

Oh! My father called you. Surprise, surprise.

COACH

...and if you cooperate, it will make all of our lives much easier.

REN

Gee, if my daddy makes a phone call, will you get offa my back?

COACH

That mouth of yours is probably what made your daddy walk out in the first place.

*(REN starts to lunge at Coach; before he can connect, WILLARD grabs him.)*

WILLARD

Count to ten, man! Mama says just count to ten.

*(REN stops struggling.)*

COACH

You'd be wise to take your friend's advice.

*(Turning.)*

Ariel, get back to practice.

*(To REN.)*

And McCormack. Get down and give me thirty.

REN

*(Holds up his bandaged hand.)*

You're joking!

COACH

You're right. Make it fifty.

*(A few KIDS notice this.)*

WILLARD

He's not faking, Coach. He's really hurting.

COACH

Thank you for your diagnosis, Dr. Willard. You can give me fifty as well.

*(Some of the GUYS laugh; to EVERYONE:)*

As a matter of fact, you can all give me fifty. Courtesy of Mr. McCormack.

*(EVERYONE grumbles.)*

Just do it.

*(They ALL get down into position and do push-ups as COACH counts.)*

And one, two... I can't hear you!

ALL

Three, four...

COACH

Only forty-six more.

*(He exits; EVERYONE continues to do pushups.)*

ALL

Five, six...

BOY 2

Is he gone?

ALL

Seven, eight...

*(BOY 1 checks on the COACH's exit.)*

BOY 1

Yeah.

*(They ALL collapse.)*

Hey, Ren, thanks a lot.

REN

Sorry, guys. It's just that this whole damn town is so wound up.

WILLARD

Amen!

REN

You guys have no place to blow off any steam.

BOY 2

You said it!

REN

At least in Chicago we could go to the clubs.

WILLARD

Hey! Maybe we oughta take the Coach dancing.

REN

*(chuckling.)*

Willard, you are so...

*(His voice trails off as he gets an idea; WILLARD notices REN'S distraction.)*

**MUSIC 9: I'M FREE/HEAVEN HELP ME**

WILLARD

What? What're you thinking?

REN

That's IT!

WILLARD

What?

REN

We're gonna throw a dance! We're gonna throw a kick-ass party that's gonna knock Bomont right off its tractor.

*(General skeptical reaction.)*

WENDY JO

You're just asking for a fight.

REN

Bring it on!

URLEEN

Are you ready to take on Reverend Moore?

REN

I'll take on anybody!

WILLARD

What about the Town Council?

REN

I'll fight City Hall! If there's one thing worth fighting for, it's freedom.

LOOKING INTO YOUR EYES I KNOW I'M RIGHT  
IF THERE'S ANYTHING WORTH A FEAR, IT'S WORTH A FIGHT

NO ONE CAN TIE MY HANDS  
OR MAKE ME CHANGE MY PLANS  
I'M CROSSIN' THE LINE, JUMPIN' THE TRACK  
TAKIN' WHAT'S MINE AND NOT LOOKIN' BACK

HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN WHO FIGHTS HIS FEAR  
EV'RY DAY I FACE A NEW FRONTIER  
I CAN'T WORRY WHAT THE WORLD WILL SAY  
I MAY FLY OR FALL BUT EITHER WAY  
I'M FREE!

WILLARD

Ren, You're not free - you're crazy! You know there's a law!

REN

Well, maybe that law needs changing.

RUSTY

Hello? Bomont is never gonna let us forget the Potawney Bridge Accident.

*(General agreement.)*

REN

How long do you have to live in that shadow? There's gotta be a way out of this.

ARIEL

And the only way out of this is by train!

REN

No! Listen -

RUNNING AWAY WILL NEVER MAKE YOU FREE  
DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU GO, I GUARANTEE

LONG AS WE HOLD OUR GROUND  
WE CANNOT BE BOUND  
WE'RE SHAKIN' THE PAST, MAKIN' OUR BREAKS  
TAKIN' CONTROL IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES

HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN WHO FIGHTS HIS FEAR  
WE CAN FACE IT DOWN RIGHT NOW, RIGHT HERE  
ONCE YOU'RE STANDING ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET  
YOU WILL NOT RETREAT IF YOU REPEAT:

*(Shouting.)*

I'M FREE!

*(Speaking.)*

C'mon! Try it!

KIDS

*(Tentatively.)*

I'M FREE.

REN

*(Imitating SHAW, booming.)*

"Let the Lord hear your voice!"

KIDS

I'M FREE!

REN

Yeah!

KIDS

WE'RE SHAKIN' THE PAST, MAKIN' OUR BREAKS  
 TAKIN' CONTROL IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES  
 I'M FREE!

*(As the number progresses, the KIDS' workout turns rhythmic and, ultimately, exuberant, as REN involves everyone in his campaign.)*

HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN WHO FIGHTS HIS FEAR  
 WE CAN FACE THIS DOWN RIGHT NOW, RIGHT HERE  
 MAYBE WE CAN FIN'LLY RIGHT THIS WRONG  
 ARM IN ARM AND SIDE BY SIDE, WE'RE STRONG  
 AND FREE!

*(The wall of KIDS parts to reveal SHAW, mid-sermon, and the CHOIR in their loft.)*

SHAW

And now word comes to me that some young people in our community want to change our law and throw a dance. This morning let's remind ourselves that this law is not about dancing. This law is a tribute—a tribute to four young people who held the promise of Bomont's brightest future...

KIDS

HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN

CHOIR

OOHH-

SHAW

...And we stand united in honoring their memory.

*(REN, the KIDS, SHAW and the CHOIR sing the following sections simultaneously.)*

KIDS

WE CAN FACE IT DOWN

CHOIR

YOU WILL SEE US  
 RAISING OUR VOICES  
 ALL OF OUR VOICES  
 FOR HEAVEN SAKES  
 WE WILL BE RELEASED

I-9-60

SHAW

HEAVEN HELP ME  
SOMEONE'S GOT TO SAVE HIS NEIGHBOURS  
HEAVEN HELP ME, OH, HEAVEN HELP ME  
IF HEAVEN CAN'T, WHO CAN?

REN & KIDS

RIGHT NOW, RIGHT HERE  
MAKING OUR BREAKS  
FOR HEAVEN SAKES  
HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN  
HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN  
HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN  
I'M FREE!

*(REN and SHAW defiantly face off as the curtain falls.)*

**END ACT I**

## ACT II

**MUSIC 9A: ENTR'ACTE****MUSIC 10: STILL ROCKIN'**

*(ARIEL, WILLARD, REN and RUSTY rush on, excited and curious. A sign overhead announces THE BAR-B-QUE! MUSIC! DANCING!)*

ARIEL

Ren! Where have you brought us?

REN

It's called the Bar-B-Que! The billboards say that it's the finest little dance palace in the tri-county area. Think of it as research.

RUSTY

Then what are we waiting for?

*(They start off; RUSTY drags WILLARD.)*

WILLARD

Oh, my god!

**Scene 1: The Bar-B-Que, a Country-Western Dance Hall**

*(The curtain rises on a sea of cowboy hats. COUPLES two-step to the live BAND, as lead vocalist COWBOY BOB sings.)*

COWBOY BOB

WOKE UP IN THE DAYLIGHT  
DON'T REMEMBER LAST NIGHT  
I JUST KNOW I WASN'T ALONE

I PARTIED IN THE FAST LANE  
I WAS FEELIN' NO PAIN  
SOMEBODY CARRIED ME HOME

NOW I KICK OFF THE SHEETS  
RUN FOR THE STREETS  
I'VE GOTTA PUNCH A CLOCK  
BUT MY KNEES ARE GOIN' ONE WAY - WHOO!  
AND MY FEET WON'T STOP  
GIMME ROOM, CUZ I'M

*(REN, ARIEL, WILLARD and RUSTY enter, winding their way through the dancing CROWD.)*

STILL ROCKIN'  
STILL ROCKIN'  
GOIN' STRONG

STILL GOT THE HEAT  
I'M KEEPIN' THE BEAT  
CUZ IT FEELS SO GOOD

LORD, I SWEAR THAT IT  
BEATS WALKIN'  
I'M STILL ROCKIN'  
ALL DAY LONG  
SHAKIN' MY SHOES  
I'M SPREADIN' THE NEWS  
THAT I'M FEELIN' SO GOOD

*(The number continues as REN et al join together.)*

REN

Look at this! What could Bomont have against dancing? Isn't this worth fighting for?

RUSTY

Wow! Who'd have guessed that a mere hundred miles outside of Bomont you could find this much culture?

ARIEL

And this much fun.

REN

Come on. Let's go break a law.

*(He takes ARIEL'S hand, and they dance into the CROWD.)*

RUSTY

Willard! You wanna dance?

WILLARD

First thing I wanna do is find us a place to sit down!

*(He crosses away; RUSTY sags, frustrated.)*

COWBOY BOB

SOMETHIN' IN THE OZONE  
SHIVERS UP MY BACKBONE  
MAKIN' ME ROCK AND ROLL

I SHIMMY UP THE SIDEWALK  
FASTER THAN A TICK-TOCK  
PEOPLE THINK I'M OUTTA CONTROL

HAH, BUT DON'T WORRY NONE  
I'M JUST HAVIN' FUN  
AIN'T GONNA LOSE MY MIND  
AND IF ANYBODY ASKS YOU

TELL 'EM THAT I'M DOIN' FINE

*(As the band continues, COWBOY BOB jumps off the bandstand, pulls RUSTY onto the dance floor and spins her around, none of which is lost on WILLARD.)*

COWBOY BOB & BAND MEMBERS

TELL THEM ALL THAT I'M  
STILL ROCKIN'  
STILL ROCKIN'  
GOIN' STRONG

STILL GOT THE HEAT  
I'M KEEPIN' THE BEAT  
CUZ IT FEELS SO GOOD

LORD, I SWEAR THAT IT  
BEATS WALKIN'  
I'M STILL ROCKIN'  
ALL DAY LONG  
SHAKIN' MY SHOES  
I'M SPREADIN' THE NEWS  
THAT I'M FEELIN' SO GOOD

COWBOY BOB

*(To RUSTY.)*

Hey, you are good!

*(Looks her up and down.)*

And you are fine!

RUSTY

This is incredible! I haven't been able to dance like this for years.

COWBOY BOB

Where the hell you been living? Bomont?

RUSTY

Yup.

COWBOY BOB

No shit! Well, darling, no wonder you're so eager to do some tail-shaking.

*(Grabs his microphone and two-steps with RUSTY as he sings.)*

BAND MEMBERS

LORD, I SWEAR THAT IT  
BEATS WALKIN'  
I'M STILL ROCKIN'  
ALL DAY LONG  
SHAKIN' MY SHOES  
I'M SPREADIN' THE NEWS  
THAT I'M FEELIN' SO GOOD!

COWBOY BOB

YEAH, I'M STILL ROCKIN'  
ALL DAY LONG  
I'M SPREADIN' THE NEWS  
THAT I'M FEELIN' SO GOOD!

*(The number ends. The CROWD applauds; the BAND strikes up a slow song and COWBOY BOB pulls RUSTY to dance.)*

**MUSIC 10A: UNDERSCORE**

COWBOY BOB

Now, where were we?

*(They slow dance; WILLARD watches for a moment before he angrily steps up.)*

WILLARD

Hey! She came with me, Cowboy.

COWBOY BOB

Yeah? Well, we all make mistakes.

WILLARD

And what is that supposed to mean?

RUSTY

Willard! He was just being friendly!

WILLARD

Oh, yeah?

*(Fists clenched, WILLARD steps up to COWBOY BOB, who gently stops him.)*

COWBOY BOB

Look, son, it's much too early in the evening to get blood on that pretty little shirt of yours.

*(To RUSTY.)*

And ma'am? My condolences.

*(He tips his hat to RUSTY and strides away.)*

WILLARD

*(To RUSTY.)*

What does he mean by that?

*(Calling after COWBOY BOB.)*

Hey!... Hey! You got something to say?

*(REN and ARIEL notice the commotion and rush to WILLARD and RUSTY.)*

RUSTY

Willard. Hey, Willard! I know who I came with. Okay?

WILLARD

Oh. Okay.

RUSTY

Now, c'mon. Let's dance.

Uh-h-h... I think I'm gonna get me a beer.

WILLARD

Oh, god!

RUSTY

Ren, you want a beer?

WILLARD

Hold on! Who's gonna drive?

ARIEL

I'll drive.

RUSTY

Sounds good. Then I'll have a beer.

REN

Okay. That's two beers.

WILLARD

I wanna dance! I wanna dance!

RUSTY

I've only got two hands! Ren, could you help me out here?

WILLARD

REN

*(Aside, to ARIEL.)*

Could you excuse me a minute?

*(REN crosses away with WILLARD. RUSTY growls in exasperation.)*

Arrgh!

RUSTY

Let me guess. Willard's acting weird.

ARIEL

So it's not just me?

RUSTY

Rusty, you and Willard have been weird since kindergarten.

ARIEL

But tonight is different. This is the first time we've ever left Bomont together.

RUSTY

*(Gasps at a sudden realization.)*

Maybe we don't travel well.

ARIEL

Rusty, it's just a car ride!

RUSTY

*(frenetic.)*

But that makes it like a first date, doncha see? Oh, I should've seen the signs. The whole way up here I had to do all the talking. All he said was, "Uh-huh, mmm-hmmm, uh-huh, mmm-hmmm." You know what that means, doncha? My baby's in a panic!

ARIEL

Now, don't make yourself crazy. Come on. I'll dance with you.

*(They join the two-steppin' crowd; lights come up on REN and WILLARD.)*

REN

You okay? You seem jumpy.

WILLARD

That's why I'm having a beer. Mama says I can have one beer or one cigarette, but if I have both I should never come home again.

REN

Willard, c'mon. What's up? You finally go out on a date with Rusty...

WILLARD

Hold on, hold on! Is this a date? You asked me to go for a ride. You told Ariel to invite Rusty. It's more like I'm on a date with you.

REN

And you look so handsome tonight.

WILLARD

Thank you. But you stuck me in the back seat with a crazy woman who won't stop moving and talking!

REN

She's excited to be with you.

WILLARD

Oh, well. Sure. That. But the problem is...

REN

Yes?

WILLARD

Between you and me?

REN

Uh-huh?

WILLARD

*(With difficulty.)*

I can't do it.

REN

Oh. "It?"

*(WILLARD nods.)*

You can't do "it?"

WILLARD

No, sir.

REN

Well, that's okay, Willard. It's only the first date.

WILLARD

Right.

REN

You don't have to do "it" on the first date. Even in Chicago some people don't do it on the first date.

WILLARD

Really?

REN

I swear.

WILLARD

Well, that makes me feel a lot better.

REN

*(Starts back to the dance floor.)*

Great! Then let's dance!

WILLARD

Dance? Dance?! What the hell do you think I'm talking about?

REN

When you said you couldn't do "it," I thought you meant...

WILLARD

What?

*(It dawns on him.)*

Oh, that?! Hell, any idiot can do that!

*(Pointing to the dance floor.)*

I can't do this! I can't dance!

*(EVERYBODY turns to WILLARD and freezes; from across the dance floor RUSTY wails:)*

RUSTY

Whaaaaat?!

*(The COWGIRLS rush to her; the COWBOYS converge on WILLARD.)*

COWBOY BOB

*(To RUSTY.)*

D'ja hear that? Your boyfriend says he can't dance!

*(General reaction; REN tries to calm the mob.)*

REN

Now, c'mon! Give the guy a break.

COWBOY BOB

But that ain't natural!

BAND MEMBER #1

It's like riding a bike.

BAND MEMBER #2

Or falling off a log.

COWBOY BOB

It's as easy as learning to swim.

WILLARD

I can't swim.

COWBOY BOB

Hey, fellas! Whaddya say we push 'im in the pool!

**MUSIC 11: LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY**

*(The COWBOYS and REN pull WILLARD into a huddle; lights down on them, as the focus shifts to the GIRLS. A wisecrackin' COWGIRL questions RUSTY:)*

COWGIRL

Darlin', darlin', your boyfriend has two left feet and you had no idea?

RUSTY

None.

COWGIRL

Didn't he never take you in his arms and sweep you off your feet?

RUSTY

Not yet.

COWGIRL

Didn't he never whisper sweet nothings in your ear?

RUSTY

No! But that's not how it is with me and Willard.

*(The COWGIRLS all scoff.)*

No, really! Willard has a lot of hidden talents. I mean, just look at him.

*(They turn to watch as the COWBOY circle opens to reveal REN showing WILLARD a rudimentary step; WILLARD fails miserably; the music stops. REN pulls WILLARD back into the cowboy huddle. Lights down on them. The GIRLS turn to RUSTY.)*

COWGIRL

Uhhhh... you were saying?

*(RUSTY smiles sheepishly, then suddenly turns front and sings:)*

RUSTY

MY BABY, HE DON'T TALK SWEET  
HE AIN'T GOT MUCH TO SAY  
BUT HE LOVES ME, LOVES ME, LOVES ME  
I KNOW THAT HE LOVES ME ANYWAY

*(Again, focus shifts to REN & WILLARD; REN demos a step, and WILLARD crashes to the floor trying to duplicate it. The COWBOYS pick him up and pull him back to their huddle; RUSTY tries to cover for him.)*

RUSTY

AND MAYBE HE DON'T DRESS FINE  
BUT I DON'T REALLY MIND  
CUZ EV'RY TIME HE PULLS ME NEAR  
I JUST WANNA CHEER

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY!  
LET'S GIVE THE BOY A HAND  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR MY BABY  
YOU KNOW YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND

WHOA, MAYBE HE'S NO ROMEO  
BUT HE'S MY LOVIN' ONE-MAN SHOW  
OH, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY!

*(As the song progresses, WILLARD will get more ambitious and successful in imitating the steps REN and the COWBOYS demonstrate for him. What he lacks in style, he will make up for in enthusiasm. The GIRLS sing back-up vocals for RUSTY.)*

RUSTY &amp; THE GIRLS

MY BABY MAY NOT BE RICH  
HE'S WATCHING EVERY DIME  
BUT HE LOVES ME, LOVES ME, LOVES ME  
AND WE ALWAYS HAVE A REAL GOOD TIME

AND MAYBE HE SINGS OFF KEY

BUT THAT'S ALRIGHT BY ME, YEAH  
CUZ WHAT HE DOES, HE DOES SO WELL  
MAKES ME WANNA YELL

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY!  
LET'S GIVE THE BOY A HAND  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR MY BABY  
YOU KNOW YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND

WHOA, MAYBE HE'S NO ROMEO  
BUT HE'S MY LOVIN' ONE-MAN SHOW  
OH, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY!  
*(WILLARD Dance Break.)*

MAYBE HE'S NO CASANOVA  
STILL HIS KISSES KNOCK ME OV-AH!

HEAR IT FOR THE BOY!  
LET'S GIVE THE BOY A HAND  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR MY BABY  
YOU KNOW YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND

WHOA, MAYBE HE'S NO ROMEO  
BUT HE'S MY LOVIN' ONE-MAN SHOW  
OH WHOA WHOA WHOA

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY  
HEAR IT FOR THE BOY  
HEAR IT FOR THE BOY  
HEAR IT FOR THE BOY  
WHOA! HEAR IT FOR THE  
HEAR IT FOR THE BOY

*(The number ends with WILLARD whipping off a dazzling dance combination, to everyone's amazement. The playoff music begins and EVERYONE dances off.)*

## **Scene 2: The Moore Home**

*(CHUCK is outside, loudly whispering up to ARIEL'S bedroom window.)*

CHUCK

Hsst! Ariel! Ariel!

*(VI, in a robe, exits the house and crosses to him.)*

VI

She's not here, Chuck.

CHUCK

*(Yelps, startled.)*

Oh...! Mrs. Moore.

VI

Did I scare you?

CHUCK

*(Fibbing.)*

Nope. Not at all. Did you tell Ariel that...

VI

Yes, Chuck, I've told her every time you've called.

CHUCK

Thanks. I guess she's busy and all.

VI

Mmmm. She and the girls went over to Wendy Jo's to study.

CHUCK

Really? I was just there. Wendy Jo said she left hours ago. With Rusty.

VI

*(Surprised.)*

Oh.

SHAW

*(As he enters.)*

Who is it, Vi?

*(Seeing CHUCK.)*

Mr. Cranston.

CHUCK

Evening, Reverend. I was just looking for Ariel.

SHAW

Isn't it a bit late, Mr. Cranston?

CHUCK

Yes, sir. That's why I'm surprised she's not at home.

*(SHAW hides his surprise with a quick glance at VI.)*

SHAW

So am I. Goodnight, Mr. Cranston. And next time, please remember, we have a front door for guests.

CHUCK

Yes, sir.

*(CHUCK exits. SHAW and VI cross into the house.)*

SHAW

Where is she?

VI

She told me she was going to Wendy Jo's.

*(As SHAW reaches for the phone.)*

Don't bother calling. She's not there.

SHAW

Did you know this?

VI

No. I did not.

SHAW

So, how does it feel, Vi? Now that she's lying to you?

VI

I'm not saying anything until I hear an explanation from her.

SHAW

It was frightening enough when she was running around with Chuck Cranston. Now, she is out in the middle of the night, with that punk who's campaigning to challenge me and the entire Town Council. How long can you keep defending her?

VI

I'm not defending her. We're not on opposite sides here, are we? Or are we?

*(ARIEL rushes in.)*

SHAW

Where were you?

ARIEL

Oh, Rusty and Wendy Jo and me, we were...

SHAW

Don't even bother.

VI

We know you weren't at Wendy Jo's.

ARIEL

I can't believe you're checking up on me.

VI

Sweetie, how do we know you're not sick? Or hurt?

SHAW

I am concerned for your well-being.

ARIEL

Then how come when I'm at home, you're never interested in what I'm thinking or how I feel?  
But the minute I walk out that door – wham! Suddenly, you're the concerned parent!

VI

Shaw, she doesn't mean that.

SHAW

Stop taking her side! She has to start answering for herself.

ARIEL

I don't know what good that would do. You don't listen to me any more than you listen to her!

*(SHAW lunges, raising his hand to slap ARIEL.)*

VI

Shaw!

*(SHAW catches himself and stops. It is an awful moment. There is stunned silence. Finally, ARIEL turns and runs out. SHAW is shaken.)*

SHAW

I've never hit anyone.

VI

I know.

SHAW

We're losing her, Vi. She has become willful and obstinate.

VI

*(Kindly.)*

Like her father.

SHAW

I am her spiritual guardian.

VI

You used to be her friend.

SHAW

I don't understand what's happening. I don't know what to do anymore.

VI

Yes, you do.

**MUSIC 12: CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART?**

CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO FORGIVE HER?  
CAN YOU STOP AND SEE THERE'S PART OF HER THAT'S TRYING TO OBEY  
WHILE PART OF HER IS DYING TO RUN AWAY?  
CAN'T YOU HEAR WHAT SHE'S TRYING TO SAY?

CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR SOUL TO ACCEPT HER?  
IF SHE STUMBLES ON YOUR HOLY PATH, DO YOU HAVE TO REPRIMAND?  
OR ARE THERE WAYS TO MAKE HER UNDERSTAND  
WITHOUT USING THE BACK OF YOUR HAND?

CAN'T YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE THAT AGE?  
PUMPED UP WITH PROMISE AND WRESTLING WITH RAGE?  
CAN'T YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE A FAMILY BACK WHEN?  
COULD WE BE ONE AGAIN?

*(The music continues under.)*

SHAW

We are a family.

VI

No. The accident changed everything. Ever since Bobby's death, you make impossible demands on Ariel.

SHAW

I have not confused Ariel's behavior with my son's death.

VI

He was my son, too!

*(Pause.)*

Shaw, it's been twenty-one years I've been a minister's wife, and after all that time, I still feel that you're a wonderful preacher. You can lift a congregation up so high, they have to look down to see heaven. It's the one-on-one where you need a little work.

SHAW

I thought at least you believed in me.

*(He exits, leaving VI gazing off after him.)*

VI

*(To herself.)*

I never stopped.

*(Sings.)*

DOES IT EVER CROSS YOUR MIND THAT I MISS YOU?  
IS THERE ANY CHANCE WE'LL FIND THE JOY THAT WE SHARED AT THE  
START?  
CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU FELT  
BEFORE THAT FEELING FELL APART?  
CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART?

HAVE YOU LOST MY LOVE SOMEWHERE FAR BEHIND  
OR CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART?

**MUSIC 12A: TRANSITION**

*(If needed for scenery.)*

**MUSIC 12B: CHUCK ACCOSTS ARIEL**

*(In half-light: from her bedroom window ARIEL drops her shoulder bag to the ground and climbs down; as she picks up her bag and turns, CHUCK steps out of the shadows, startling her; defiant, she tries to move past him, but he grabs her arm. A struggle ensues, and CHUCK drags ARIEL offstage as the scene shifts to:)*

**Scene3: The Junk Yard**

*(REN, WILLARD, BICKLE, JETER and GARVIN have been making campaign posters and flyers; paint cans, brushes and other materials lay about. As the lights come up, they're all heatedly giving REN advice.)*

WILLARD

Hold it! Hold it!

*(They quiet; to REN.)*

Ren. All's we're sayin' is: you're going to be speaking to the Town Council, so don't mumble.

*(The BOYS all mumble.)*

Now do that last part one more time.

*(REN takes a deep breath, begins:)*

REN

Members of the Council: Dancing is not a crime.

**MUSIC 12C: DANCING IS NOT A CRIME**

WILLARD

Yeah.

BICKLE

Yeah.

JETER

Yeah.

GARVIN

Yeah.

*(Feeling his way, REN continues to make his argument; it only slowly dawns on him that he's rhyming, but, once he feels the rhythm of his words, he throws himself into this patter with abandon.)*

REN

YEAH! EVER SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME  
IF ANYTHING, EV'RYBODY HAD THE RIGHT  
TO HOWL AT THE MOON AND TO MOVE ALL NIGHT

WHEN FOLKS WERE TRIBAL –  
BACK BEFORE THE BIBLE –  
THEY WERE LIABLE TO DANCE WHEN THE CROPS CAME IN  
OR THEY'D PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS  
WHEN THE EARTH WOULD SPIN  
OR MAYBE – THEY HAD A BATTLE TO WIN

SO THEY WOULD DANCE!  
EVERY TIME THEY HAD THE CHANCE  
WHATEVER THE SEASON OR CIRCUMSTANCE  
THEY FOUND A REASON TO THROW A PARTY IN THEIR PANTS  
SO LET'S DO LIKE THEY DID AND DANCE, DANCE, DANCE!

*(He finishes – ta da! – ready for their approval. A pregnant pause. TRAVIS points at REN and, like a 7-year-old, announces:)*

TRAVIS

You said "Party in your pants."

*(The OTHERS now explode.)*

BOYS

Are you out of your mind...?/ "Party in their pants?!"/ What are you thinking man!?

WILLARD

Guys! Cool it! Ren, we're not saying the speech is bad. It's just that it's no good.

REN

Then what am I supposed to say? I've re-written it nine times.

WILLARD

Here's the thing: you're gonna be facing Reverend Moore and some of the stubbornest people in town.

BICKLE

You've already got plenty of people boiling mad.

JETER

Yeah! Folks are picking sides.

GARVIN

And they're not picking yours!

REN

Then who am I kidding? This whole thing has gotten way out of hand. Maybe I ought to forget it.

WILLARD

Whoa there, little buddy! We don't mean to discourage you.

BICKLE

After all the posters we've painted?

JETER

All the flyers we've passed out.

GARVIN

Everybody at school is climbing the walls!

WILLARD

So, hang in there! You just gotta re-think your approach. Now, Mama says...

BOYS

Not Mama again...! Who cares what Mama says...?! Oh, man...!

WILLARD

*(Silences them.)*

Now hold on just one minute!

**MUSIC 13: MAMA SAYS (YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN)**

WILLARD

EV'RYTHING I EVER LEARNED THAT GETS ME THROUGH THE WORST  
I LEARNED AT MY MAMA'S KNEE

NOW ANYTIME I'M TURNED AROUND I TURN TO MAMA FIRST  
AND YOU'D BE WISE  
TO MEMORIZE  
WHAT MAMA SAYS TO ME

Mama ain't been wrong yet. And I'm the living proof.

JETER

*(To REN.)*

That's kind of a frightening thought, isn't it?

WILLARD

Now, listen up!

MAMA SAYS  
DON'T USE A TOASTER WHILE STANDING IN THE SHOWER  
NOW WHO CAN ARGUE WITH THAT?  
MAMA SAYS  
DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR LONGER THAN AN HOUR  
THE WOMAN KNOWS WHERE IT'S AT!

AND MAMA SAYS IT DOESN'T MATTER  
IF YOU'RE A KING OR YOU'RE A CLOWN  
ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN

YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN

GARVIN

You can't back down, Ren!

WILLARD

Now, Ren, you've not yet had the pleasure of meeting my Mama, but these boys have. C'mon and help me out here, fellas.

BOYS

MAMA SAYS

WILLARD

DON'T DRINK HOT COFFEE LYING DOWN IN BED  
DON'T EVEN GIVE IT A THOUGHT

BOYS

IT'S A MESS!  
MAMA SAYS

WILLARD

NEVER EAT ANYTHING THAT'S BIGGER THAN YOUR HEAD  
IS SHE A WHIZ OR WHAT?

BOYS

OH, YES!

*(The BOYS sing backup for WILLARD.)*

WILLARD & BOYS

AND MAMA SAYS IT DOESN'T MATTER  
IF YOU'RE A KING OR YOU'RE A CLOWN  
ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN  
YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN  
OH, ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN  
YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN

NOW, MAMA MAKES A LOTTA SENSE  
IF YOU KNOW HOW TO LISTEN  
SHE IS CLEAR AND CONCISE  
DADDY SAYS, "I LOVE HER, SON  
BUT SHE'S GOT MARBLES MISSIN'"  
BUT I SAY, "HEY! IT'S FREE ADVICE  
AND WHAT D'YOU EXPECT AT THAT PRICE?"

REN

Then maybe your Mama oughta give my speech.

WILLARD

Oh, hell no! Everyone thinks Mama's crazy. The point is, though, she's got some really good ideas. Hear me, now -

MAMA SAYS

BOYS

WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN IS ALL YOU REALLY OWN  
AND I BELIEVE THAT SHE'S RIGHT

WILLARD

MAMA SAYS

BOYS

IF YOU'VE GOT DOUBTS, WELL, THEN, BOY, YOU'RE NOT ALONE  
JUST MEANS YOU'RE READY TO FIGHT

WILLARD

AND MAMA SAYS IT DOESN'T MATTER

WILLARD & BOYS

IF YOU DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN OR DRIVE AROUND TOWN

WILLARD

ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN  
YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN  
ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN  
YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN

ALL

WILLARD

Don't make me say it again!

*(The number ends and they ALL exit. WILLARD re-enters with REN.)*

WILLARD

I thought of one more thing.

**MUSIC 13A: MAMA SAYS (ENCORE)**

WILLARD

NOW, MAMA SAYS

*(The BOYS pop in with "Oooohs.")*

DON'T BUY A CHANDELIER UNLESS YOU'VE GOT A CEILING

*(Spoken.)*

I don't know what that's about.

MAMA SAYS

DON'T CHEW ON TIN FOIL, UNLESS YOU LIKE THAT FEELING  
SOMEHOW SHE FIGURED THAT OUT!

WILLARD & BOYS

AND MAMA SAYS  
IT DOESN'T MATTER  
IF YOU'RE A KING OR YOU'RE A CLOWN

ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN

WILLARD

*(To REN.)*

REMEMBER, BOY: EV'RYONE'S COUNTIN' ON YOU

WILLARD & BOYS

ONCE YOU DRIVE UP A MOUNTAIN  
YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN!

WILLARD

That's my Mama!

*(The number ends. URLEEN and WENDY JO rush on.)*

URLEEN

Ren! Ren! Thank God you're here! Chuck and Ariel got into a big fight!

WENDY JO

Chuck beat her up! She might have a black eye.

WILLARD

C'mon, boys. Let's get Chuck. Right now!

*(They start off and encounter RUSTY entering with ARIEL, who is dabbing at her reddened eye; her shoulder bag is slung across her chest.)*

ARIEL

Willard, stop! Please don't. I'm in enough trouble tonight. I don't want to cause any more.

RUSTY

Chuck's been on a tear since he found out about our little field trip to the Bar-B-Que Dance Palace.

ARIEL

*(To REN.)*

He "ordered" me not to see you anymore. I told him I see who I like, and then he just started swinging.

REN

Lemme look at that eye.

ARIEL

I'm just so mad at myself. I don't know why I was with him in the first place.

REN

Maybe you should see a doctor.

ARIEL

*(Pulling away.)*

I am fine.

WILLARD

You want me to call your folks?

ARIEL

No! Please. I just wanna be alone. Okay?

RUSTY

Let's go, guys. C'mon.

*(They ALL exit; REN lingers.)*

REN

You want some company?

ARIEL

No.

*(He starts to go.)*

Yes.

*(He stops.)*

REN

You're sure? I mean, I won't take it personally if...

ARIEL

*(Holding up a hand.)*

Shh!

REN

What?

ARIEL

Listen!

*(SOUND CUE: A WHISTLE and the distant RUMBLING of an approaching train.)*

ARIEL

Come on!

*(She starts to run off and he follows her; the TRAIN SOUNDS get closer, louder.)*

REN

What? Where are we going...?

ARIEL

You'll miss it! Come on!

#### **Scene 4: Under the Train Bridge**

*(REN follows her up a girder under the train bridge and tracks, high above the river. It is covered with graffiti. They brace themselves as a train rumbles overhead; lights strobe across their faces. This time, they both scream with abandon:)*

REN & ARIEL

Aah-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h---...!

*(When the train sound fades, REN realizes how high they are and pulls back from the edge.)*

REN

Whoa!

*(Peering down.)*

It's a free-fall into the river from up here! Are you out of your mind?

ARIEL

You noticed!

REN

What're we, like, forty feet above the water?

ARIEL

But look around: up here I can pretend I'm halfway to heaven... I listen to the river...

*(Indicating the girders.)*

...and look what happens!

REN

*(Inspecting the girders.)*

Whoa! This place is covered with graffiti.

ARIEL

It's not graffiti! It's poetry. I call this place, "My Diary."

REN

You climb all the way up here and write poems?

ARIEL

Uh-huh. They're all dedicated to Bobby.

REN

Bobby? Who's Bobby?

ARIEL

My brother.

REN

You never told me you have a brother.

ARIEL

Had a brother. Bobby was one of the four kids who went off the Potawney Bridge.

Oh, god. I'm sorry.

REN

Yep. One of the...

ARIEL

(*A la SHAW.*)

"...four young people who held the promise of Bomont's brightest future."

Why didn't I know this?

REN

We never talk about it. And once Daddy decided the town needed saving, he never mentioned Bobby again.

ARIEL

You must miss him real bad.

REN

I try not to think about it.

ARIEL

That never works. I'll bet you think about it all the time.

REN

How did you know that?

ARIEL

I study you.

REN

Oh, yeah? What do you see?

ARIEL

Somebody who's smart.

REN

Thank you.

ARIEL

Maybe a little bit angry.

REN

Maybe a lot.

ARIEL

And somebody who's sad.

REN

(*Beat.*)  
I always wondered where that came from.

ARIEL

*(Touched.)*

Now you know.

*(They're both silent. She starts to speak, but stops herself.)*

**MUSIC 14: ALMOST PARADISE**

What? REN

I've never felt like anyone's ever stopped to really look at me. ARIEL

Oh, no... You're in my mind, twenty-four hours a day. REN

*(Pause. They grow self-conscious, look away and sing their private thoughts:)*

REN  
I THOUGHT THAT DREAMS BELONGED TO OTHER MEN  
CUZ EACH TIME I GOT CLOSE, THEY'D FALL APART AGAIN

ARIEL  
I FEARED MY HEART WOULD BEAT IN SECRECY

BOTH  
I FACED THE NIGHTS ALONE  
OH, HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN  
THAT ALL MY LIFE I ONLY NEEDED YOU?

WHOA, ALMOST PARADISE  
WE'RE KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR  
ALMOST PARADISE  
HOW COULD WE ASK FOR MORE?  
I SWEAR THAT I CAN SEE FOREVER IN YOUR EYES.  
PARADISE!

*(The music continues under as ARIEL turns to REN:)*

Y'know, you make me forget everything that's wrong with my life. ARIEL

There are some things I'd like to forget. REN

Like...? ARIEL

This battle I'm causing in Bomont! And I still don't know what I'm gonna say to the Town Council. REN

ARIEL

Oh, that reminds me. You'll need this.

*(From her shoulder bag she pulls a book bristling with paper bookmarks; she hands it to him.)*

REN

*(Reading the title.)*

The Holy Bible?

ARIEL

I marked all the pages.

REN

*(Flipping through, reading.)*

Whoa! This is great. How did you know where to find all these passages?

ARIEL

*(Regards him with disbelief.)*

Are you kidding?

REN

*(Realizing she's the Preacher's daughter!)*

Oh. Thank you.

ARIEL

I THOUGHT THAT PERFECT LOVE WAS HARD TO FIND  
I'D ALMOST GIVEN UP  
YOU MUST'VE READ MY MIND

REN

AND ALL THOSE DREAMS I SAVED FOR A RAINY DAY

BOTH

THEY'RE FINALLY COMING TRUE  
I'LL SHARE THEM ALL WITH YOU  
CUZ NOW WE HOLD THE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS.

WHOA, ALMOST PARADISE  
WE'RE KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR  
ALMOST PARADISE  
HOW COULD WE ASK FOR MORE?  
I SWEAR THAT I CAN SEE FOREVER IN YOUR EYES.  
PARADISE!

REN

AND IN YOUR ARMS, SALVATION'S NOT SO FAR AWAY

ARIEL

IT'S GETTING CLOSER

BOTH

CLOSER EVERY DAY

ALMOST PARADISE  
WE'RE KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR  
ALMOST PARADISE  
HOW COULD WE ASK FOR MORE?  
I SWEAR THAT I CAN SEE FOREVER IN YOUR EYES.  
PARADISE  
PARADISE  
PARADISE

*(They kiss; the lights fade to black.)*

**MUSIC 14A: OUT OF "PARADISE"**

**Scene 5: The Town Hall**

*(The ENTIRE COMPANY is present in a Town Hall meeting room. At a long table sit SHAW and MEMBERS of the COUNCIL w/ELEANOR DUNBAR on gavel. The KIDS and OTHERS face them. LULU, the Secretary, reads from notes.)*

LULU

"And so it was unanimously passed that the price of a dog license will go from three-dollars and fifty cents to four dollars and twenty five cents. A licensed pet is a happy pet." That takes care of old business.

ELEANOR

Thank you, Lulu. Now let's consider new business.

*(The KIDS' enthusiasm grows vocal; she bangs the gavel.)*

Before we begin, I want to remind all our young people who have joined us this evening that this meeting is convened to consider official town business. Disturbances will not be tolerated.

*(The KIDS grumble but settle down.)*

The floor is now open.

*(REN raises his hand.)*

Yes.

REN

My name is Ren McCormack and... uh...

*(He looks to WILLARD and ARIEL who nod back.)*

...on behalf of most of the senior class of Bomont High, I move that local ordinance four-sixteen – the law against public dancing within the Bomont town limits – be abolished.

WILLARD

*(Stands.)*

And I, Willard Hewitt of 385 Cloverdale Road, would like to second that motion. Thank you.

*(He sits. Applause from the KIDS is silenced by the gavel.)*

SHAW

Eleanor, may I have the floor, please?

ELEANOR

Certainly, Reverend.

SHAW

Mr. McCormack, you wish to change the law because you want to throw a dance; that is your right. But it is my duty to challenge any enterprise which, in my experience, fosters the use of liquor, the abuse of drugs and, most importantly, celebrates spiritual corruption. And I think you're going to find that most folks in this community agree with me.

COACH DUNBAR

*(From audience.)*

You got that right.

*(General agreement from COUNCIL.)*

SHAW

Now, if anyone can convince me that there is no danger in your raucous party plans, I might reconsider my stand. But for now? No, I can't condone it.

*(He sits.)*

ELEANOR

I believe that a vote is in order. Will all those in favor...

REN

Excuse me, isn't there any kind of discussion?

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Now just a minute! Discussion is closed. You're out of order, etc.

COACH DUNBAR

*(Points at REN.)*

It's outrageous! If you think that ...

*(VI stands, shouts over the hubbub.)*

VI

Roger!

*(All quiet, turn to regard VI.)*

Roger. Sit down.

*(Stunned, he does.)*

I believe that Mr. McCormack has a right to be heard.

REN

*(Halting.)*

I just wanted to say a few words, cuz I think this idea scares a lot of people. It shouldn't.

*(Unfolds a piece of paper, clears his throat, reads:)*

“From the oldest times, people danced for many reasons. They danced so their crops would be plentiful or so that their hunt would be good. They danced to show their community spirit, and they danced to celebrate. And that’s the dancing we’re talking about.”

SHAW

*(Stands.)*

Mr. McCormack, we don’t need a history lesson –

*(REN pulls the Bible from his jacket and opens it to a bookmark.)*

REN

And aren’t we told – excuse me, Reverend – aren’t we told in Psalm 149 to “praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song. Let them praise his Name in the dance?”

*(He looks to SHAW who, stunned, slowly sits.)*

And it was King David... King David who we read about in Samuel. And what did David do? What did David do?

*(Stalls, trying to find the passage:)*

What did David do?

*(He finds it.)*

Ah! “David danced before the Lord with all his might. Leaping and dancing before the Lord.”

*(Shows the Bible to the Council Members.)*

Leaping and dancing. And Ecclesiastes assures us that, “There is a time to every purpose under heaven – a time to laugh and a time to weep. There is a time to mourn and there is a time to dance.” There was a time for this law, but not anymore. And this is our time. Our time to celebrate life. That’s the way it was in the beginning, the way it’s always been and that’s the way it should be now. Thank you.

*(The KIDS try to stifle their enthusiasm as REN returns to his seat, but they make some noise.)*

ELEANOR

Order! Order!

*(The COUNCIL MEMBERS seem at a loss as to how to proceed. ELEANOR looks to SHAW; he nods.)*

There is a motion on the floor to repeal local ordinance four-sixteen. How does the Council vote?

COUNCIL MEMBERS

*(One after the other.)*

No. No. No.

SHAW

No.

ELEANOR

The motion is defeated. And I believe this meeting is adjourned.

**MUSIC 14B: OUT OF COUNCIL**

*(The meeting breaks up and EVERYONE leaves; the KIDS grumble on their way out. REN is left alone with ETHEL.)*

ETHEL

Ren. Up 'til now, I've been real proud about keeping my opinion to myself. But, honey, if I don't say something I'm gonna bust.

REN

What's there to say? I lost. The Council voted, and I lost.

ETHEL

Sweetie, you never had a prayer.

REN

That's not funny, Mom.

ETHEL

Ren, when you got to the part about leaping and laughing and weeping and dancing – which I loved, don't get me wrong – I was watching the faces of the Town Council. I promise you: Shaw Moore had those votes locked up before he walked in here tonight.

REN

*(Startled.)*

You think he told them how to vote?

ETHEL

You can still sound shocked. I love that about you.

REN

But he's a man of God!

ETHEL

He's a man. And you were railroaded.

REN

Damn, that pisses me off!

ETHEL

Good! Now listen: Reverend Moore said he would reconsider only if someone convinced him there was no danger in your "raucous party plans."

REN

"Raucous party plans" – do you believe these people? I mean –

*(Stops as he notices her stare.)*

What?

ETHEL

Make him reconsider.

REN

Me?

ETHEL

You.

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REN  
(Referring to SHAW:)  
And him?

ETHEL  
Yup.

REN  
When?

ETHEL  
Now.

REN  
But...!

ETHEL  
Ren!

REN  
Mom!

ETHEL  
Stop!  
(They stop their ping-pong exchange.)  
Until you do, you'll never make peace with that man. Or this town.

REN  
I didn't convince him in here.

ETHEL  
He wasn't listening in here. Make him listen.

REN  
What can I say I haven't already said? I read my speech, I thumped my Bible -

ETHEL  
You did everything but speak from your heart.  
(That stops REN.)

REN  
Reverend Moore is a really smart man.

ETHEL  
So are you.

REN  
He's stubborn.

And you're not?  
*(She starts off.)*  
 I'd love to be here to watch, but I've got to get home and hose down your Aunt and Uncle.

ETHEL

I love you, Mom.

REN

You have no choice. Now, go!

ETHEL

*(ETHEL exits. REN runs as the Moore Home enters.)*

**MUSIC 14C: TRANSITION TO MOORE HOME**

**Scene 6: The Moore Home**

*(REN approaches the Moore Home; SHAW – cinching a robe, clasping a prayerbook – crosses and opens the front door.)*

Reverend.

REN

Mr. McCormack.  
 It's late.

SHAW

REN

*(Cheery.)*  
 Really? I'm wide awake.  
*(SHAW gives him a withering look.)*  
 I have a question.

SHAW

*(Wry.)*  
 And it couldn't wait until morning.

REN

One question.  
*(After a pause, SHAW admits him.)*  
 Reverend, before tonight's meeting, did you tell the Council how to vote?

SHAW

*(Caught by surprise.)*  
 We...discussed the issue, of course.

REN

But, did you tell them how to vote?

SHAW

Ren, this is more than a question of a dance...

REN

*(Forceful.)*

Did you?

*(SHAW's silence is his answer.)*

Reverend Moore, I understand what this town has been through...

SHAW

No, I don't think you do. If you did, you wouldn't have provoked your classmates to re-open the wounds we have healed. You -

REN

*(Interrupting.)*

Those wounds are not healed.

*(SHAW reacts.)*

If they were, people wouldn't be glaring at me on the street or snubbing my Mom at the market. They wouldn't be boycotting my Uncle's business. And you wouldn't be fixing the vote on the Town Council -

SHAW

*(Talking over him.)*

I thought it was time to put an end to this nonsense.

REN

"Nonsense?!" All I say is, "Who's up for a little dancing?" And the only thing people here can think about is the Potawney Bridge and four kids -

SHAW

Mr. McCormack - !

REN

- and I know your son was one of them. And I'm sorry for your loss, I truly am, but honoring their memory by shutting out the world isn't working.

SHAW

*(Sardonic, heated.)*

And I'm sure you have all the answers!

REN

No, I don't, but I -

SHAW

And you're going to set me straight!

REN

I didn't say th-

SHAW

How can you presume to know what I've been through? You don't have a clue!

*(Moves to show him the door.)*

Good night, Mr. McCormack.

REN

Please! If I could only –

SHAW

Mr. McCormack, I would like to be alone!

REN

*(Emphatic.)*

Sir, you already are!

*(That stops SHAW in his tracks. Long pause. REN realizes that his words have stung deeply. Now calmly, kindly:)*

REN

We both are. You and me. We've both lost somebody. And even though people say they understand, they don't really. I bet you stop a hundred times a day and wonder "why?" I do. I wonder why'd my Dad leave? Was it something I did? Something I didn't do? Could I have made him stay? Maybe I could bring him back? But I can't.

*(SHAW looks up.)*

But I don't have to tell you. You know what that's like.

SHAW

*(Quietly, defeated.)*

I do.

REN

So, I guess I came to town frustrated and angry, and it felt really good to kick up a fuss. And I know it got people upset, and I'm sorry for that. But I'm just trying to move on. Cuz I'm so tired of looking back.

*(Shrugs.)*

And I can't stand still.

SHAW

I've noticed.

*(BOTH smile; the ice has been broken, but neither knows what to say next.)*

REN

Okay, look, I'm gonna go. I know you're gonna do what you've gotta do – about the dance and all – but thanks for listening.

*(He starts out.)*

SHAW

Ren?

*(REN turns; SHAW tries to find the words.)*

I'm sorry that your father won't ever get to know you.

REN

*(Touched.)*

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Thanks.

*(REN goes.)*

*(SHAW is lost in thought. ARIEL appears and speaks softly.)*

ARIEL

Daddy?

SHAW

Oh. I didn't hear you come down.

ARIEL

I heard voices.

SHAW

That was your friend, Ren. He sure asks a lot of questions.

ARIEL

And what did you tell him?

SHAW

For once, I had very little to say.

*(Smiles ruefully, shakes his head.)*

I think I'm running out of answers.

*(She can see how troubled he is.)*

**MUSIC 15: ARIEL COMFORTS SHAW (UNDERScore)**

ARIEL

Daddy? I know it's hard for you, and I know I don't make it any easier. It's just that I don't know if I believe in all the things you believe in. But I believe in you.

*(He hugs her close. They break.)*

Get some sleep. You have a sermon in the morning.

SHAW

If I can figure out what to say.

ARIEL

You will.

*(She goes. SHAW is alone with his thoughts.)*

**MUSIC 16: HEAVEN HELP ME (REPRISE)**

SHAW

WHEN SOULS COME TO ME FOR PROTECTION  
I GUIDE THEM, WHATEVER THE COST  
BUT WHILE I'VE BEEN GIVING DIRECTION  
MAYBE IT'S ME WHO GOT LOST

HEAVEN HELP ME FIND MY WAY NOW  
 OPEN UP MY HEART AGAIN  
 HELP ME FIND THE WORDS TO SAY NOW  
 HEAVEN HELP ME  
 OH, HEAVEN HELP ME

**MUSIC 16A: AFTER HEAVEN REPRISE**

*(The CHOIR joins with soft "ooohs" of ON ANY SUNDAY as the Church assembles around SHAW, who ascends the pulpit.)*

ALL

OOH...

**Scene 6A: The Church**

SHAW

I'm standing before you this morning with a very troubled heart. You see, my friends, as your minister, I should be helping you to find the joy in your lives; last night I realized that I haven't been doing that. After all, we all remember that terrible night five years ago when the lives of four young people ended on the Potawney Bridge. Everyone in this community lost someone that night – a child, a neighbor, a friend. I – Vi and I – we lost our son.

*(He looks to his family.)*

Ariel lost her brother. Now, somehow I got into my head that my loss was the greatest. That my pain was the deepest. And then, last night, someone much younger than I made me realize how tightly I had been holding onto that memory. A memory that has weighed me down as surely as a great stone. And in that moment, I did something I haven't done for a very long time: I laid down my burden. It was a terrifying moment. And it was exhilarating. This morning I offer you the same opportunity.

*(Beat.)*

The Senior Class of Bomont High School has asked permission to hold a dance. Ren, I think that might be a good idea.

*(The CONGREGATION reacts with muted jubilation.)*

Please join me in asking our Lord to guide and protect our children.

*(He bows his head and the CHOIR finishes with a triumphant "Ah-ah-ah-Amen," punctuated by RUSTY waving a hand overhead and riffing, "Thank you, Lord, Amen!")*

CHOIR  
 AH-AH-AH-MEN

RUSTY  
 THANK YOU, LORD

*(SHAW casts a glance back in her direction – and smiles.)*

*(The CONGREGATION disperses.)*

**Scene 6B: The Churchyard**

*(The KIDS gather to congratulate REN, patting his back, shaking his hand, etc., but they fall silent and step back when CHUCK struts over to REN and ARIEL. After a tense face-off, CHUCK sneers.)*

CHUCK

We're outta here.

*(He turns, snapping his fingers.)*

Travis! Lyle! Let's go!

*(The CROWD parts to reveal TRAVIS and LYLE getting an impromptu dance lesson from TWO GIRLS; when the guys catch CHUCK'S glare, they slow down and stop, self-conscious. After an icky silence:)*

TRAVIS

Uh... could you maybe give us a minute here?

*(A few KIDS stifle snickers. CHUCK tries to save face by sneering:)*

CHUCK

Losers.

*(He flips up the collar on his leather jacket and struts off, friendless.)*

*(As the CROWD disperses, GARVIN and BICKLE push WILLARD toward RUSTY, who is thrust forward by WENDY JO and URLEEN.)*

WILLARD

Rusty, now here's the deal. I could throw a clean sheet over the front seat of the pick-up so we don't end up smelling like the dogs.

RUSTY

Uh-huh.

WILLARD

Daddy's suit kinda fits and I could roll up the pants legs with duct tape.

RUSTY

I love where this is going.

WILLARD

Mama could whip up one of those...

*(Points frantically at his lapel.)*

...croissants?

RUSTY

A corsage?

WILLARD

One of them.

RUSTY

You're painting a picture for me, aren't you? I see a rusty truck that smells bad, a taped-up brown suit, and me, wearing a corsage made out of God-knows-what.

Whaddya think?  
WILLARD

Is there a dance in there someplace?  
RUSTY

Yes, ma'am. You wanna?  
WILLARD

Willard, I would love to!  
RUSTY

*(RUSTY and WILLARD exit leaving URLEEN and WENDY JO alone with GARVIN & BICKLE. The BOYS take a breath to speak to the GIRLS but...)*

URLEEN & WENDY JO  
Don't even think about it.

*(They exit; the BOYS exit separately. Only SHAW and VI are left.)*

VI  
Shaw, you did a good thing this morning.

SHAW  
I'm still not sure it was the right thing.

VI  
I think it comes close.

*(Pause.)*

I've missed you. I've missed us.

**MUSIC 17: CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART? (REPRISE)**

SHAW  
I HOPE YOU NEVER DOUBT THAT I LOVE YOU  
IF THAT'S HARD TO FIGURE OUT SOMETIMES, WELL THEN, I APOLOGIZE  
BUT YOU ARE DEARER TO MY LIFE THAN YOU COULD EVER REALIZE  
IF I TRY TO MAKE AMENDS, CAN YOU TEACH ME HOW TO START?  
CAN YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART?

*(She regards him, then crosses and embraces him. They hold onto each other, swaying, until finally:)*

VI  
Shaw?

SHAW  
Yes?

VI  
We're almost dancing.

*(They laugh and exit, arm in arm.)*

**MUSIC 18: FOOTLOOSE (FINALE)**

*(REN enters the empty stage dressed for the dance.)*

REN

I RENTED MY TUX

GARVIN & BICKLE

*(Entering.)*

BOUGHT FLOWERS -

JETER

*(Entering.)*

TWELVE BUCKS!

WILLARD

*(Entering.)*

AND ON MY TWENTY-THIRD TRY  
I FINALLY TIED MY TIE

BOYS

I GOT THIS FEELING  
THAT TIME'S NO LONGER HOLDING ME DOWN

ARIEL

*(Entering.)*

BEEN FEELING SO STRANGE  
MY LIFE IS ABOUT TO CHANGE

RUSTY

*(Entering.)*

I KNOW JUST HOW SHE FEELS

RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

*(Entering.)*

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE WEARING HEELS

ALL

LET'S HIT THE CEILING  
AND THEN LET'S TEAR UP THIS TOWN

*(They swirl into a tableau in which REN faces ARIEL; he stares.)*

ARIEL

What?

REN

You're beautiful.

ALL

*("Isn't that sweet?")*

Awwww...

*(As their spoken, "Awww" swoops into the sung "Ah-," the Gym assembles around the CAST.)*

**Scene 7: The Gym**

ALL

AH-AH-AH-AH  
 AH-AH-AH-AH-AH  
 TONIGHT WE'RE GONNA CUT LOOSE  
 FOOTLOOSE!  
 KICK OFF YOUR SUNDAY SHOES  
 PLEASE, LOUISE  
 PULL ME OFFA MY KNEES  
 JACK

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

JACK!

ALL

GET BACK

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

BACK!

ALL

COME ON BEFORE WE CRACK  
 LOSE YOUR BLUES  
 EV'RYBODY CUT FOOTLOOSE!  
 I GOT THIS FEELING THAT TIME AIN'T HOLDING ME DOWN

RUSTY, WENDY JO & URLEEN

TIME AIN'T HOLDING ME

WILLARD, JETER, GARVIN & BICKLE

LIFE AIN'T HOLDING ME DOWN

ALL

LET'S HIT THE CEILING  
 AND THEN LET'S TEAR UP THIS TOWN.

ARIEL, RUSTY, URLEEN & WENDY JO

I NEED A HERO  
 I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TIL THE END OF THE NIGHT  
 HE'S GOTTA BE STRONG, AND HE'S GOTTA BE FAST  
 AND HE'S GOTTA BE FRESH FROM THE FIGHT  
 I NEED A HERO!

OO-EE MARIE  
SHAKE IT SHAKE IT FOR ME

BOYS

WHOA! MILO  
COME ON COME ON LET'S GO

GIRLS

CUT FOOTLOOSE  
CUT FOOTLOOSE WHOA!

ALL

*(SHAW and VI enter. Everything stops!)*

Please. Go on!

SHAW

*(EVERYONE cheers. Dance Break.)*

AH-AH-AH-AH  
AH-AH-AH-AH-AH

ALL

*(Dance Break.)*

AH, FIRST, WE'VE GOT TO TURN YOU AROUND  
THEN PUT YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND  
NOW TAKE AHOLD OF YOUR SOUL  
(CUT FOOTLOOSE!)  
NOW TAKE AHOLD OF YOUR SOUL  
(CUT FOOTLOOSE!)

*(Dance Break.)*

EV'RYBODY CUT EV'RYBODY CUT  
EV'RYBODY CUT EV'RYBODY CUT

REN

EV'RYBODY

KIDS

EV'RYBODY

REN

EV'RYBODY

ALL

EV'RYBODY  
EV'RYBODY CUT FOOTLOOSE!  
YEAH!

*(The curtain falls.)*

**END ACT II**

**MUSIC 19: BOWS**

**MUSIC 20: MEGAMIX (OPTIONAL)**

ALL

HEAVEN HELPS THE MAN WHO FIGHTS HIS FEAR  
WE CAN FACE THIS DOWN RIGHT NOW RIGHT HERE  
MAYBE WE CAN FIN'LLY RIGHT THIS WRONG  
ARM IN ARM AND SIDE BY SIDE WE'RE STRONG  
AND FREE

ARIEL, WENDY JO, RUSTY & URLEEN

DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO  
DOO DOO DOO DOO  
AHH! AHH!

ARIEL

I NEED A HERO!  
I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TILL THE END OF THE NIGHT

WENDY JO

HE'S GOTTA BE STRONG,

URLEEN

AND HE'S GOTTA BE FAST

RUSTY

AND HE'S GOTTA BE FRESH FROM THE FIGHT

ARIEL, WENDY JO, URLEEN, RUSTY

I NEED A HERO!  
I'M HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO TIL THE MORNING LIGHT  
HE'S GOTTA BE SURE AND IT'S GOTTA BE SOON  
AND HE'S GOTTA BE LARGER THAN LIFE  
THROUGH THE WIND AND THE CHILL AND THE RAIN  
AND THE STORM AND THE FLOOD,  
I CAN FEEL HIS APPROACH LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD,  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD,  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD,  
LIKE A FIRE IN MY BLOOD,  
AHH! AHH!

*(Instrumental.)*

RUSTY, ARIEL, WENDY JO, URLEEN  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY  
LET'S GIVE THE BOY A HAND  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR MY BABY  
YOU KNOW YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND  
WHOA, MAYBE HE'S NO ROMEO  
BUT HE'S MY LOVING ONE-MAN SHOW  
OH WHOA WHOA WHOA  
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY!

FEMALE DANCERS  
(HEAR IT FOR THE BOY)  
(HAND)  
(HEAR IT FOR MY BABY)  
(UNDERSTAND)  
(ROMEO)  
(ONE-MAN SHOW)  
WHOA WHOA WHOA

*(STILL ROCKIN' dance break.)*

AH-AH-AH-AH-AH  
KIDS

TONIGHT I GOTTA CUT LOOSE  
REN

FOOTLOOSE  
KICK OFF YOUR SUNDAY SHOES  
PLEASE, LOUISE  
PULL ME OFF A MY KNEES  
REN AND KIDS

REN, KIDS, URLEEN, WENDY JO, RUSTY  
JACK (JACK!) GET BACK (BACK!)  
COME ON BEFORE WE CRACK

LOSE YOUR BLUES  
EV'RYBODY CUT EV'RYBODY CUT  
EV'RYBODY CUT EV'RYBODY CUT  
KIDS

EV'RYBODY  
REN & ARIEL

EV'RYBODY  
KIDS

EV'RYBODY  
REN & ARIEL

EV'RYBODY  
KIDS & ADULTS

EV'RYBODY CUT FOOTLOOSE!  
YEAH!  
ALL

**MUSIC 21: EXIT MUSIC**