

ACT I

Backstage

*Curtain rises on...a curtain. There are spotlights on two people on the other side, outlining them against it. The music swells, they kiss, and the song ends. SXF of huge applause. NATHAN and MAURICE appear from offstage. NATHAN is fairly bouncing off of MAURICE.*

NATHAN

Do you hear that? DO YOU HEAR THAT?

MAURICE

Wow...

(Peeks through curtain )

...they're on their feet!

NATHAN

I told you this was a surefire hit!

MAURICE

We did, it, we really did it.

(A huge smile breaks across his face, starts to become just as excited as NATHAN)

This might just be the best night of my life. They're calling for the authors.

(looks through the curtain again, then looks back)

I didn't know people actually did that.

NATHAN

Well, who are we to keep them waiting? Let's go! Oh, wait wait wait, I have something I have to do first, I'm roasting.

*NATHAN starts to take off his jacket and unbuttons his shirt. MAURICE doesn't look shocked, and in fact looks somewhat bored and disbelieving, deflating from his previous excitement.*

MAURICE

I can't believe you. You wore it under your shirt?

NATHAN

(Has taken off his jacket and dress shirt and is wearing a tattered looking flannel, unbuttoned over a black t-shirt.)

Damn straight I did. The Lucky Shirt goes where I do, especially on a night like tonight. Listen to that! You can't say that where we are right now didn't take a little bit of luck.

MAURICE

*(Shrugs, smiles, rolls eyes, shakes head)*  
You may be right at that. Come on, let's go. Our public awaits.

*They walk through curtain. Cheering gets louder. Lights down.*

#### The Afterparty

*Lights come up on a backstage party. Everyone is having a great time, obviously excited about their theatric triumph. A cheer comes up when NATHAN and MAURICE enter the room.*

LOU

Here they are!

*Cheers go up. LOU makes his way over to NATHAN and MAURICE, and grabs one in each arm.*

LOU

Jesus Christ, we knocked 'em dead tonight, knocked 'em fucking dead. I knew we were on to something big from the previews, but the reaction tonight is beyond anything I was expecting.

MAURICE

I'm a little surprised, myself.

NATHAN

Are you kidding me? I knew what we had the moment we started working on it.

(gestures at himself)

And could it be anything else with this kind of talent brought to bear on it?

MAURICE:

Epic modesty, there.

NATHAN

Modesty? Feh, that's honesty. Hey, who do I have to kill to get a drink here? This is a party!

*NATHAN wanders off to find a drink, and is immediately surrounded by admirers. MAURICE hangs back with LOU.*

GROUPIES

(all talking at once. great work, etc)

NATHAN

Thank you, thank you. I'm really pleased how everything worked out.

GROUPIE

Your partnership really seems to be taking off!

NATHAN

Oh, yeah, Maurice is workable as a partner...the results have been pretty good so far.

*NATHAN and the GROUPIES continue to chatter idly amongst themselves.*

LOU

(to MAURICE)

He's doing it again.

MAURICE

I know. It's just...Nathan being Nathan. He doesn't mean anything by it, he just gets carried away.

LOU

I don't know if you really believe that. Why do you put up with that shit?

MAURICE

He's really good, Lou. It's a chance to work with someone who's at the very peak of their game.

LOU

Um, In case you didn't get the memo, so are you.

(small smile from MAURICE)

Tonight was just as much because of you as him. Not like he'd ever mention it. He's just as lucky to be working with you.

*NATHAN continues to whoop it up.*

LOU

(to NATHAN)

Hey, don't get too carried away, we have some business we need to discuss!

NATHAN

(A drink in each hand, arm around a GROUPIE)

NOW? Come on, there isn't anything you can say right now that can't wait until tomorrow.

LOU

Not much business. The Investors are ecstatic, they're just as excited as we are. They're practically lining up to get behind your next project. Enjoy a bit of celebration, but don't rest on your laurels.

*At the line "practically lining up", the vamp for the song starts. THE INVESTORS start to fall into ranks behind THE LOU.*

MAURICE

Don't worry, we've got our next project already in the works.

NATHAN

Don't try and placate the slave driver!

LOU

Slave driver, nothin'. A hit will only get you guys so much time. This town doesn't care much for what you did last year, they want to know what's coming up. But, you know, no pressure.

*SONG PLACEMENT: LOU and THE INVESTORS do a song about pretty much what LOU was saying. Great show! Get to Work! No Pressure.*

Walking Home

*On the street, by the studio.*

MAURICE

Tell me again why we're walking?

NATHAN

There's no way I could be cooped up in a cab right now. Can't you feel the night? It's electric! If it was raining, I'd burst into song.

MAURICE

You're probably going to do that anyway.

NATHAN

(Grins a shit-eating grin and starts to do a little dancing a la Gene Kelly)  
Aw yeah, Me and Gene Kelley!

MAURICE

(is trying to look annoyed, but failing)  
Come on, let's get going.

NATHAN

Exactly!

SONG: GET GOING!

NATHAN

(singing)

THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO  
WE ARE THE ONES TO DO IT  
REALLY NOT MUCH TO IT  
GOING!

AND  
THERE'S  
COME ON, GET

SO MANY DREAMS  
 AND WE'VE GOT A CHANCE TO MAKE THEM  
 ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TAKE THEM  
 COME ON, GET GOING!

MAURICE

You make it sound so easy.

NATHAN

You mean it isn't?

NATHAN

ALL IT'S GONNA TAKE	IS JUST A LITTLE
'MAGINATION	IT'S A PIECE OF
CAKE	TO MAKE THEM ALL COME TRUE
	LET'S GET DOWN TO WORK
	AND MAKE THESE DREAMS
REALITY	SUCCESS WILL BE SO
EASY	BECAUSE IT'S ME AND YOU!

YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE

DO IT

'CAUSE NO ONE ELSE IS GONNA  
 WE'RE THE ONES TO FOLLOW THROUGH  
 SO COME ON, GET GOING!

WE'VE GOT THE SKILLS

DETERMINATION  
 ACROSS THE NATION  
 GOING!

WE'VE GOT THE RAW  
 SO WE'LL SHOUT  
 COME ON, GET

MAURICE

I think you're forgetting a few things.

YES, WE'VE HAD SUCCESS  
 SHOULDN'T GET TOO COCKY  
 NEW SHOW IS A MESS  
 LYRICS FAR TOO SLOPPY

WE  
 THE  
 THE

I KNOW THE LAST SHOW LEFT

MEANS  
 GRANTED

OUR AUDIENCE ENCHANTED  
 BUT I DON'T THINK THAT  
 WE CAN TAKE SUCCESS FOR

NATHAN

COME ON, MAURICE!

THE AIR

THERE'S MAGIC THAT'S IN  
AND TALENT ENOUGH TO SPARE  
SO COME ON, GET GOING!

WHEN WE GET TO WORK,

CAN STOP US  
US

THERE'S NOTHING ON EARTH  
IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE BEFORE  
COME ON, GET GOING!

THE MUSIC WILL BE FLOWING

NO SITTING DOWN OR SLOWING  
I THINK I'M ALMOST GLOWING  
SO COME ON....LET'S GET

GOING!

*Lights down.*

Hard at Work

*At the studio. Scattered papers are all around. Somewhat disorganized. NATHAN is pacing. MAURICE is sitting at the table, leaning over, cradling his forehead.*

MAURICE

This isn't working.

NATHAN

That didn't need to be said.

MAURICE

Just making sure we're both on the same page.

NATHAN

That's a task by itself. There's pages scattered all over the place.

MAURICE

The Muses are fickle.

NATHAN

The Muses are bitches, if you ask me.  
(Pulls out his phone and looks at it)  
How long have we been at it, anyway?

MAURICE

What time is it?

NATHAN:

Half past four.

MAURICE

AM or PM?

NATHAN:

Funny guy.

MAURICE

At least a good five hours.

NATHAN

What say we take a break?

MAURICE

Might as well, there's not much else going on.

*There is a knock at the door.*

NATHAN

Ah, oportunity!  
(Opens the door. It's LOU.)  
Or something like it. Hey, what's up?

LOU

Just stopping by, seeing how things are going.

MAURICE

Well, actually, we're sort of...

NATHAN

Taking a break. We're been at it for a while, at a  
stopping point right now.



LOU

I can see that the creative forces are at work here, I won't interrupt. I'll leave you guys to it.

(Turns towards the door, then turns back)

When do you think you'll have something to preview to the investors? Nothing brings in more backers like solid progress, and nothing makes that cash flow like a great song.

NATHAN

Eh, figure in the next day or so.

*MAURICE looks incredulous*

We'll get back to you.

LOU

OK, we'll talk soon. Is this where I say, "let's do lunch"?

MAURICE

(snorts)

NATHAN

That works. We'll talk soon. This is where I say, "ciao".

*LOU leaves*

MAURICE

"A day or so?" You have a pretty optimistic view of our progress.

NATHAN

Oh, don't worry about that, I just wanted to get rid of him. It worked, didn't it?

MAURICE

Yeah, but it just means he's going to be bugging us in the next day or so, whether we have something or not.

(shakes head)

Dunno what it is, but that guy gives me the creeps.

NATHAN

He's a money guy. A frustrated composer, too, but mainly a money guy. And I don't think we would have gotten as far as we have without him.

MAURICE:

Just so long as you run interference with him. I'm happy to leave that task to you.

NATHAN

Heh, deal.

MAURICE

Now, what are we going to do about this scene?

NATHAN

I dunno. Let's try some brainstorming.

MAURICE

OK, sure, nothing else has been working.

NATHAN

(breaks into song)

For-ty five Red-coats are fighting without  
any...pants!

MAURICE

What?

NATHAN

Or zombies are back from the dead and are learning  
to...dance!

MAURICE

That's a little too "Thriller".

*Vamp on first measure*

NATHAN

That's not how you do it!

MAURICE

What do you mean?

NATHAN

I mean, you can't just say, "no", you've got to change it or add to it somehow!

MAURICE

And exactly what is this supposed to do for us?

NATHAN

Well, we aren't coming up with any expected ideas. So, let's toss around some unexpected ones, and see what happens.

MAURICE

Ooookay...

NATHAN

Try again!

(sings)

FORTY FIVE REDCOATS ARE FIGHTING WITHOUT ANY...PANTS!

MAURICE

THEYRE JUST CONFUSED BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE IN....FRANCE!

NATHAN

MILLITANT CHICKENS ARE STRIKING FOR BETTER...PAY!

MAURICE

THE FARMER WILL HAVE EGG ON HIS FACE BY THE END OF THE...DAY!

NATHAN

That's it!

NATHAN

IDEAS ARE EASY

MAURICE

WHO CARES IF THEY'RE CHEESY!

BOTH

'CAUSE WHO KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS FROM THERE  
WE'LL MAKE UP IDEAS

WORK?  
DON'T CARE!

WHO KNOWS IF THEY'LL  
BUT RIGHT NOW WE REALLY

NATHAN

(finish the song with a rapid back and forth of ideas, becoming a bit more plausible as they go, until they hit an, "aha! moment". At that point, they stop singing abruptly and start conferring over the table, pointing at things.)

NATHAN

That's it!

*Music ends with a stinger. Lights down.*

Miller Time

*Lights back up. NATHAN and MAURICE are back at the table. MAURICE is just finishing up something on a tablet, and hands it to NATHAN.*

MAURICE

(Smiling, looks pleased)  
Here, check this out. This better establishes the lead's major flaw, and foreshadows act two.

NATHAN

(Glances over the page)  
Yeah, that'll do.

*NATHAN jumps up and starts walking around, hand behind his back. He's pretty happy.*

MAURICE

(Suddenly looking a bit miffed)  
"That'll do?"

*Music starts. General song idea: MAURICE starts bitching about how NATHAN never gives compliments...but they work well together. MAURICE's lines are rapid-fire complaints, sung to an oblivious NATHAN.*

Meanwhile, NATHAN will be reading over MAURICE's work, and will sing about how damn good MAURICE's work is.

*(The idea comes from Rodgers and Hammerstein, where Rodgers would do much the same to Hammerstein while writing.)*

MAURICE

THERE HE GOES AGAIN LIKE HE DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE  
 LIKES ALL I CONTRIBUTE, DOESN'T DISAGREE  
 ALWAYS SEEMS QUITE HAPPY WITH THE FINAL SCORE  
 BUT I WONDER IF HE EVER THOUGHT OF TELLING ME

FOR ALL THE YEARS WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER  
 I CAN COUNT ALL OF THE COMPLIMENTS  
 YOU'VE GIVEN WITH ONE HAND BEHIND MY BACK  
 AND I DON'T NEED MANY FINGERS  
 ON THE OTHER HAND EXTENDED  
 YOU ALWAYS SEEM TO MAKE ME FEEL  
 LIKE SUCH A HACK

I SHOULDN'T BE TOO BITTER  
 'CAUSE WE'VE BEEN SO DAMN SUCCESSFUL  
 AND THE ACCOLADES AND HONORS  
 SHOULD BE WORTH SOME MENTAL PAIN  
 BUT NOW AND THEN IT'S NICE TO FEEL APPRECIATED  
 INSTEAD OF JUST A STEP ABOVE DISDAIN

NATHAN

THE WORDS ARE ALWAYS PERFECT  
 I WONDER HOW HE DOES THAT?  
 ALWAYS KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY  
 IN ANY SITUATION, EXCEEDS MY EXPECTATION  
 AND ALWAYS NAILS WHAT WE TRY TO CONVEY.

*Last verse will be both of them singing together:  
 NATHAN expressing appreciation of MAURICE, but  
 only to himself, and MAURICE just wanting some  
 acknowledgement.*

NATHAN

I declare this day to be a success. The chronology points to the consumption of fermented malt beverages.

MAURICE

(still grumpy)

What?

NATHAN

To use the vernacular: "It's Miller Time".

MAURICE

(MAURICE smooths out, understanding that the NATHAN really is happy with what they wrote. Sort of.)

I like that. Good work today.

NATHAN

All hail the lucky shirt!

MAURICE

(shakes head)

Yeah, the shirt.

NATHAN

I'm gonna run out for some celebratory libations. You want anything special?

MAURICE

Nah, whatever you get will be fine. And I'm not even going to ask if you're going to go outside in that wreck of a shirt.

NATHAN

Wouldn't change if you asked me. Not gonna break the luck now!

(pauses)

Waitaminnit...

MAURICE

What?

NATHAN

Just got an idea for a melody for the third number in the first act.

MAURICE

Want to hammer it out right now?

NATHAN

(thinks about it)

No, it'll keep. I'll be back in a few minutes, anyway.

*NATHAN leaves the studio. It's like he's working something out in his head. He starts to LA LA the melody, then starts to add words.*

THE IDEA'S UNFINISHED  
NOT THE WAY IT'S S'POSED TO BE  
THE IDEA'S UNFINISHED  
BUT NOT IF IT'S UP TO ME

IT'S NOT FULLY FORMED  
LIKE A SOFT LUMP OF CLAY  
BUT THIS SCULPTOR WILL MAKE SURE  
IT DOESN'T STAY THAT WAY

MY IDEA'S UNFINISHED  
BUT ONLY FOR TODAY...

*NATHAN continues to wander somewhat distractedly, singing to himself, and exits stage left. We immediately hear SFX of a car accident. Lights down.*

### The Accident

*The same scene we were at before. What, you think that lights mean we're gonna change the set?*

NATHAN

*Tumble/runs/falls onstage, from stage left.  
(points offstage)*

Holy shit! Did you see that? That guy almost hit me!  
FUCKIN' ASSHOLE!

*Stops, and suddenly pats himself all over up and down, like he's checking to see if all the parts are there. At the end of that, he raises his arms up, Rocky style.*

THE SHIRT WORKS!

*PASSERBY on stage left notice the situation offstage left, and move, then run toward stage left. They run right past/around the NATHAN, ignoring him completely.*

NATHAN

*Looks like he's going to try and talk to the passerby, but words fail as the man runs right past him.*

*The PASSERBY runs offstage briefly, then comes back on*

PASSERBY

Someone call 911!

*Runs offstage. More people start to come from stage right, all flowing around the NATHAN, ignoring him completely.*

NATHAN

*(growing more agitated)*

Hey! Didn't you see...just missed me...GOD DAMMIT, LISTEN TO ME!

*A siren sounds off stage right, accompanied by flashing red and blues. A small cluster of people arrive, neighbors to the MAURICE, and see the situation off stage left.*

NEIGHBOR

Oh my god, it's NATHAN...someone go get MAURICE!

*Simultaneously, we see two events unfolding:*

*Slow realization on NATHAN's face that something is horribly, horribly wrong. His agitation stops, and he starts to slowly move towards towards stage left.*

*The neighbor has run to stage right, and is pounding on MAURICE'S door. The door opens, MAURICE is quickly told, and reacts in shock. MAURICE and neighbor run towards stage left (once again, around NATHAN), who meet an EMT...who holds out his arms and shakes his head.*



*All light dims, except for a spot on NATHAN.  
Silence, except for a single high drone note. All  
chatter has stopped. Passerby start to disperse.  
The flashers go out.*

NATHAN

Am I...dead?

*MAURICE slowly walks back to the apartment, with  
the NEIGHBOR. Music starts, slow and stately. It  
isn't a dirge, more like a contemplation.*

NATHAN

ALL AT ONCE, THE CURTAIN'S CLOSING  
I WAS LIVING, NEVER KNOWING  
WHEN IT ALL MIGHT END

DAYS ON EARTH, THEY ALL ARE NUMBERED  
BUT WITH HOW MANY WE AREN'T ENCUMBERED  
THE FUTURE SEEMED AN ENDLESS VIEW

BUT NOW IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE  
MY LIFE HAS FINISHED ITS RUN  
BUT STILL I FEEL AS THOUGH  
I NEVER GOT TO START

SO MANY THINGS RUN THROUGH MY MIND  
SO MUCH LEFT UNWRITTEN  
SO MUCH THAT I'VE LEFT...BEHIND

MAURICE

DON'T THINK I CAN COMPREHEND IT  
MY BROKEN SPIRIT, I CAN'T MEND IT  
THERE WAS SO MUCH LEFT TO DO

WORKING DAY AND NIGHT TO FINISH  
AND NOW YOU'RE GONE, THE LIGHT EXTINGUISHED  
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S TRUE

AND NOW THE FUTURE'S UNKNOWN  
BECAUSE I'M LEFT HERE ALONE  
I'VE GOT TO FINISH BUT  
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO START

SO MANY THINGS RUN THROUGH MY MIND  
SO MUCH LEFT UNWRITTEN  
NOW THAT I'VE BEEN LEFT BEHIND

NATHAN

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?  
STEP ASIDE AND LET IT FALL AWAY?

MAURICE

*I'VE GOT THE WORDS,  
BUT DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY*

NATHAN

*THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE  
AND NO DAMN WAY I'M GONNA START TODAY*

MAURICE

*I'VE GOT TO KEEP ON TRYING ANYWAY*

BOTH

HE WOULDN'T WANT ME GIVING UP  
I'VE GOT TO FIND THE ENDING  
BUT HOW?

NATHAN

GOT TO TRY AND KEEP BELIEVING

MAURICE

KEEP ON GOING, KEEP ON BREATHING

BOTH

I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT A WAY

NATHAN

THIS HAD TO HAPPEN FOR A REASON

MAURICE

EVERYTHING HAS GOT A SEASON

BOTH

BUT I CAN'T THINK OF ONE TODAY

AND NOW I'M SO FAR FROM HOME  
I'VE GOT TO GO IT ALONE  
IT'S TIME TO FACE IT BUT  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START

NEVER THOUGHT I'D TURN AROUND AND FIND  
SO MUCH LEFT UNWRITTEN  
SO MUCH THAT I'VE LEFT BEHIND

(MORE)

BOTH (CONT'D)

SO MUCH LEFT UNWRITTEN  
 SO MUCH THAT I'VE LEFT  
     ...NOW I'VE BEEN  
 LEFT BEHIND

The Guides to Unlife

*Lights come back up. NATHAN is still wandering around the street, occasionally testing that he's really dead, and this isn't some kind of joke. Pacing around the street. People are passing by and pause for a moment. NATHAN stands in front of them.*

NATHAN

BBLLLLLEEEAAAARRGGGGHHH!

*The passerby don't react at all. They linger for a moment more, and slowly walk away.*

NATHAN

Damn. That's the fifth time.

(Starts to pace, getting a bit agitated.)

But I don't get it! I mean, why am I still here? Isn't there supposed to be some kind of white light or something? (brightens) Maybe that's it. I haven't thought about it, or tried to concentrate on that.

*Stands up straight, gets a beatific expression on his face, eyes closed, with his arms slightly uplifted. He waits. Nothing happens.*

NATHAN

Ommmmmmmmmmmm.

*Enter GILBERT and SULLIVAN. They wander over into the NATHANs general direction, but we don't yet know that they can see him.*

*NATHAN slowly gets a look of consternation on his face and stops chanting. He opens his eyes, and peeks side to side. He opens them wider, and then slowly peers down, as if he's expecting to see a*

*chasm yawning under his feet.*

GILBERT

What are you doing?

NATHAN

AUGH!!!!!! Jesus Christ, you can see me?

GILBERT

Quite, but neither I nor my partner are Jesus Christ.  
My name is William Gilbert, and this is my partner,  
Arthur Sullivan.

SULLIVAN

Pleased to meet you.

NATHAN

(Regains his voice.)

WHAT?! Gilbert and Sullivan. The composers. The "I am  
a very model of a modern major general" guys?

GILBERT

(To SULLIVAN)

Oh, he knows our work!

SULLIVAN

Of course he does.

NATHAN

(Points.)

You're dead.

GILBERT

No to put too fine a point on it...but so are you.

SULLIVAN

Quite.

NATHAN

(Looking both relieved and depressed.)

So it really is true...I'm dead. But, why am I still  
here? And...why are you here?

SULLIVAN

Do you mind if I take this, Gilbert?

GILBERT

(mutters)

You might as well, you were going to anyway.

SULLIVAN

(glares at gilbert)

...as I was about to say, that's the question, isn't it? The White Light is the usual path. But sometimes when someone's life gets, shall we say, interrupted, said someone decides that they aren't quite ready to...give up the ghost.

GILBERT

Sullivan! That was vile.

SULLIVAN

(looking thoroughly unrepentant)

Just a bit of graveside humor.

GILBERT

What my partner is so artlessly trying to say is that you've left something unfinished...something so important that death can wait. As far as our presence...

NATHAN

(Realizes where GILBERT is going, gets excited and interrupts)

...I was working on a musical! You mean, I'll get to finish it?

GILBERT

Perhaps. Things are seldom what they seem.

SULLIVAN

(Glares at Gilbert)

Oh, stop quoting yourself.

(Look back at NATHAN)

As I was saying, as far as our presence, we are to be your guides in the...Unlife.

NATHAN

Unlife?

GILBERT

Well, it's not the afterlife, and you're not alive, so for want of a better term, Unlife it is.

NATHAN

So what do I do? What can I do? Do I get some kind of power or can I...

SULLIVAN

Tut tut, my good man. If you give me and my associate a moment, we have a small presentation with which to help explain your situation.

*Pulls out a pitch pipe, and hums for harmony*

SULLIVAN

A HUNDRED-THIRTY YEARS AGO WE WERE THE TOAST OF  
MUSICALS  
AND EARNING RAVE REVIEWS WHILE MAKING MONEY BY THE  
BASKETFUL  
OUR STORIES OFTEN TOLD OF LOVE THAT CROSSED BETWEEN  
THE SOCIAL CLASS  
AND FEATURED ARISTOCRACY THAT ACTED LIKE A HORSE'S  
ASS.

GILBERT

IF WE WERE LIKE OUR CHARACTERS WE'D BE MOSTLY  
INCOMPETENT  
AND RISEN TO OUR LOFTY STATIONS BY A HAPPY ACCIDENT  
BUT WE ARE LEGENDS AND OUR WORK IS ALWAYS AT A PREMIUM  
FOR WE ARE WILLIAM GILBERT AND SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR  
SULLIVAN!

CHORUS

FOR THEY ARE WILLIAM GILBERT AND SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR  
SULLIVAN!  
FOR THEY ARE WILLIAM GILBERT AND SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR  
SULLIVAN!  
FOR THEY ARE WILLIAM GILBERT AND SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR  
SULLIVAN!

*(NATHAN looks increasingly confused, then frustrated)*

GILBERT

THERE'S RUDDIGORE

SULLIVAN

AND PINAFORE!

GILBERT

MIKADO AND THE GONDOLIERS

SULLIVAN

SOME FOURTEEN DIFFERENT OPERETTAS RESONATING THROUGH  
THE YEARS

GILBERT

THE HUMOR IS VICTORIAN AND SOMETIMES HARD TO  
UNDERSTAND

SULLIVAN

BUT THAT IS WILLIAM GILBERT AND SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR  
SULLIVAN!

CHORUS

FOR THAT IS WILLIAM GILBERT AND SIR ARTHUR SEYMOUR  
SULLIVAN!

NATHAN

*(interrupts the music)*

STOP. STOP. STOP. Why are you introducing yourself? We  
just met. And I already know who you are!

SULLIVAN

You of all people should know that there's a certain  
manner in which things must be done!

**GILBERT**

The proper order of exposition dictates that we tell  
you who we are, and then tell you what we're going to  
tell you before we tell you. Which we are now doing.

**WRITER**

But this isn't a...*(swallows what he was going to say,*  
*sighs, and through gritted teeth)* Fine. Go ahead.

**GILBERT**

*(looking pleased)*

Now, as I were saying, we have will now explain your sorry situation with a short composition.

**SULLIVAN**

Written specifically for the occasion.

**NATHAN**

Finally.

A PRIMER FOR THE NEWLY DECEASED

WE ASSUME THAT YOU'RE CONFUSED  
GOING FAR BEYOND BEMUSED  
BECAUSE YOU FIND YOURSELF IN AREAS UNIQUE

SO COME HITHER AND WE'LL SHARE  
EVERYTHING THAT WE CAN SPARE  
SINCE YOUR SPIRIT'S WILLING, BUT YOUR FLESH IS WEAK

**NATHAN**

You told me that already.

**GILBERT**

Excuse me?

**NATHAN**

You told me that already. I know that you're here to help me. When are you going to...explain things?

**SULLIVAN**

Patience, patience.

**GILBERT**

He does have a point. These lyrics could do with some tightening up. Skip to verse three?

**SULLIVAN**

*(peevd)*

Very well, skip to verse three.

WHEN DEATH HAS COME TO CALL,  
MOST ASSUME THAT THAT IS ALL  
BUT WITH CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES WE HAVE FOUND

THAT DEATH NEED NOT BE AN ENDING  
IF YOUR HEART'S DESIRE'S UNBENDING



JUST BECAUSE YOUR BODY'S BEEN PUT UNDERGROUND  
 YOU MUST FIND TOOLS THAT YOU CAN USE  
 TO GET YOUR POINT ACROSS TO MORTALS  
 FOR YOU'LL FIND YOUR SPEAKING SKILLS ARE LARGELY LACKING

THESE ARE ALL FOR YOU TO CHOOSE  
 YOU MUST FIND YOUR SPECIAL PORTAL  
 AND IF YOU DON'T, A SUB-PAR GHOST WILL BE SENT PACKING

FOR IF YOU VENTURE FORTH WITH MALICE...  
 AND YOUR ACTIONS BECOME CALLOUS...  
 IT'S BEST IF WE DON'T SPEAK OF SUCH A CASE!

CHORUS

(gasps)

GILBERT

(Solumly)Yes.

SO GO FORWARD NOW AND HAUNT  
 AND DISCOVER WHAT YOU WANT  
 AND PERHAPS YOU WILL COMPLETE WHAT WAS UNFINISHED

BUT IF YOUR TASK REMAINS UNKNOWN  
 THEN IN ATTICS YOU WILL MOAN  
 AND RATT'LING CHAINS WILL BE YOUR ONLY BUSINESS!

CHORUS

FOR NOW YOU ARE A GHOST/AND A GOOD GHOST TOO!

YOU NEEDN'T START TO BOAST,  
 SO RAISE YOUR GLASS AND MAKE A TOAST,  
 FOR NOW YOU ARE A GHOST!

FOR NOW YOU ARE A GHOST/AND A GOOD GHOST TOO!

FOR NOW YOU ARE A GHOST/AND A GOOD GHOST TOO!

NATHAN

Wait...what? I have to somehow finish my task, but I can't talk to anyone?

SULLIVAN

You're a ghost...that will prove to be...difficult. Honestly, we just told you that!

NATHAN

But, aren't you supposed to be my guides? What am I supposed to do?

SULLIVAN

He still has questions. You've got to revise those lyrics!

GILBERT

It's not my fault he's slow-witted.

NATHAN

(points)

Watch it. I've had a bad day.

GILBERT

(sighs)

Very well, I'll give you some clues until the time at which I've updated my libretto. You may be able to interact with the mortal plane through that which was important to you in life. They maintain some sort of spiritual link in the Unlife.

NATHAN

"Important to me"? Like what? And they "may" work? "Find my special portal?" Aren't you supposed to be my guides? What am I supposed to do?

SULLIVAN

Well, that's the challenge of it all. Every ghost has something that is his spiritual center, something that is his link. You see, it's something that's individual to every ghost, and something you must discover for yourself.

GILBERT

Absolutely. You see, the "wooo, wooo" types of ghosts are just poor hapless fellows...just can't figure out how to get their point across, squandered their opportunities. Honestly, "woo, woooo"? What is anyone supposed to derive from that? But I'm certain that you're up to the challenge.

*GILBERT and SULLIVAN start to walk away, sniping at each other about how to fix the song.*

NATHAN

But where do I start?

SULLIVAN

(from offstage)

Where do you always start when you're stuck?  
Brainstorm an idea!

NATHAN

(facing the audience)

Brainstorm an idea. Riiight.

*Starts to pace. (This section will eventually become a song, so the dialog here is more fuel for eventual lyrics. This will probably start out slowly, then segue into the "How 'Bout" theme. It can then end with a faster version of the initial tune.)*

What do i know about being a ghost? Campfire stories, Halloween, people jumping out of dark places with kitchen knives. I don't think that's the sort of point I'm trying to get across. What kind of ghost am I? No knives or cutlery, I'm more of a thinking man's ghost. What kind of thing would I haunt with? What was important to me? My work, my piano, paper and pen...

(brightens)

Paper and pen are how you can talk...and I can communicate with a piano! Ha! That's it! That's how I can communicate!

*Runs offstage*

An Attempt at Haunting

*At the studio. LOU is with MAURICE. They're having a...discussion. At least, as much of a discussion as you can have when LOU is doing all of the talking. MAURICE seems pretty cowed.*

LOU

I'm not saying you have to make a decision right now. However, the investors are going to demand some results. We need to move forward.

MAURICE

(practically hugging self)

I'm not going to make a decision like that right now. It's been barely a week, and I have a lot of work to go through.

LOU

I understand. I'm here for you. I really want to help you out in any way I can. I miss him too.

MAURICE

Thanks. I'll let you know.

*LOU put his hand on MAURICE's shoulder, then silently turns and leaves. MAURICE sort of shuffles over to the table, then leans over to it and sort of bows his head.*

*This moment is screaming for a song, solo MAURICE.*

Ugh.

*At that moment, NATHAN arrives. (Not sure as to method). NATHAN appears to be rather triumphant looking.*

NATHAN

I'm here! OK, let's skin this cat!

*MAURICE does nothing.*

NATHAN

(blows out a breath)

Ooookay.

*NATHAN moves over to his normal spot and sits down.*

I know this conversation is going to be a bit one-sided, but I should be able to get some kind of point across.

*He looks over the stacks of paper, and tries to locate one. He tries to pick one up, and can't.*  
The hell?

*He tries to pick up a pen, or some paper...or anything. fail.*

This...ISN'T...WORKING.

*Getting frustrated, he pushes back hard from the table, and knocks his chair over. MAURICE looks up, alarmed.*

You saw that...good! Good good good!

*NATHAN is looking a bit maniacal, MAURICE is looking a bit spooked, sort of circling around the chair, peeking at it. MAURICE shrugs and picks up the chair.*

*NATHAN tries once again to pick up a piece of paper. He is unable to do it. He gets frustrated again.*

(I'm not sure I like where this scene is going, but I'll go with it)

DAMMIT!

*NATHAN sweeps his arm against the table. This time, papers fly off the table. MAURICE sighs with exasperation, then goes and closes the window, obviously attributing the motion to a breeze.*

You're kidding me. I can only move things when I'm pissed off..and you're going to think it's a fucking breeze?

*MAURICE walks back past a seething NATHAN. MAURICE visibly shivers. Puts on a sweater?*

I can't believe this shit.

*MAURICE sits back down at the table, and starts considering a legal pad. NATHAN leans over him. You can't hear a damn thing I'm saying. I can't use a pen and paper.*

*(Remembering)*

The piano!

*NATHAN runs over to the piano, sits down, and starts to play. He tries to play, but nothing happens. NATHAN stops, and looks horrified. NATHAN stands there, slack jawed, at a total loss for words. He seems to sputter mentally for a minute, then raises his arms above his head.*

WOO! WOOOOOOOOOO!

*MAURICE sighs and shakes his head, puts on a jacket, turns out the light and leaves. From in the darkened studio:*

DAMMIT!

*We hear a sheaf of paper fall to the floor.*

#### The Debate

*On the street. Occasional passerby. NATHAN is sitting on a curb, with his head in his hands, obviously discouraged about how things worked out. G&S enter, and wander over to NATHAN.*

GILBERT

There's the returning champion! I...oh.

*Sullivan elbows him in the ribs.*

NATHAN

That...didn't work at all. I thought you said that I could communicate through "that which was important to me"?

SULLIVAN

That we did. And the advice holds true. Although, I take it from your demeanor that your first attempt was less than stellar?

NATHAN

Nothing worked. The only time I was able to make anything move was when I was pissed off, and it's not like I can communicate effectively that way. I ended up going "Woo, woo."

GILBERT

Oh dear.

SULLIVAN

I told you the libretto needs work.

GILBERT

Stuff it, you half-baked popover.

*RODGERS and HAMMERSTEIN enter, and wander over to the threesome. We don't know that they can see them yet.*

SULLIVAN

Have you considered that the structure might not best accentuate the prose?

RODGERS

Have you considered that you shouldn't have gotten this job?

NATHAN

AUGH!

(looks closer)

Waitaminnit...you're...

SULLIVAN

(looking incredibly peeved)

Allow me to introduce Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein the Second.

NATHAN

I can't believe this. Not that this isn't an honor and all, but if I'm the ghost, why am I the one getting haunted?

RODGERS

Sorry about dropping in like this, but we got the notice late. Gilbert and Sullivan weren't supposed to be your guides, it was supposed to be us.

HAMMERSTEIN

Someone you could have an easier time relating to, in a professional capacity.

*GILBERT and SULLIVAN are looking positively steamed. Rodgers holds up his hands.*

RODGERS

Not saying that you aren't masters at your craft. Oscar and I learned from you, that's for sure. Just saying that he would have an easier time relating to someone a little closer to his timeline.

GILBERT

*(icily)*

We have things well in hand, thank you very much.

HAMMERSTEIN

We have our own presentation. It may help you out.

*R&H start into "So You're Dead". G&S stop them after a verse or so, and declare that their style is "all wrong".*

*G&S then sing about the proper style for a musical. R&H interrupt, until it becomes a layered debate on style.*

*At some point, the debate shifts, and the two partners start sniping at each other: Hammerstein complains about having an unappreciative partner, and G&S just start insulting each other. NATHAN stands between the two pairs.*

NATHAN

STOP!

*The music stops, and pairs stop and stare at NATHAN, who is absolutely incredulous.*

I cannot BELIEVE this shit. I'm being haunted by two of the greatest partners in the history of musical theater, and all you can do is fucking snipe at each other! You're both responsible for what you achieved! Shouldn't you be appreciating your...

*He suddenly gets a slow look of realization on his face...he understands what was "most*



*important" to him. It wasn't the work, or a thing...it was his partner.  
...partner.*

*NATHAN realizes what he has to deal with, but once again has no idea how. Ends with NATHAN running off.*

RODGERS

Sudden realization of a larger problem. At least he knows how to end an act.

*Lights down.*

A New Partner

*The studio. NATHAN runs in from offstage, out of breath. MAURICE, LOU and INVESTORS are there. They're having what appears to be some kind of presentation, or business meeting. LOU is talking, but we can't hear what it is, yet.*

NATHAN

(panting)

Waitaminnit...I'm dead, how can I be out of breath?

*We can now hear the producer.*

LOU

...and I know that you've been anxiously waiting for news about the new production. It was a terrible blow to us all, the passing of NATHAN...he was a major talent, and will be missed terribly. But, as we all know, the show must go on. MAURICE and I have been discussing the best way to move forward with the new production, and we've decided

(MAURICE shifts around, looks decidedly uncomfortable)

that the best way for that to happen would be if we joined forces. From this day forward, you're looking at the new writing team of LOU and MAURICE!

*LOU throws his arm around collab. MAURICE gives a forced smile. Murmurs from the INVESTORS, some nodding, some shaking their heads. NATHAN looks dumbstruck.*

*The scene should end with a short reprise of a theme that the LOU introduced earlier. MAURICE doesn't look happy. The reprise has the desired effects on the INVESTORS, though, and at the end of the stirring reprise, they jump to their feet and applaud. LOU raises his arms in a victory pose. MAURICE looks sick. NATHAN is dumbfounded. Curtain down as INVESTORS applaud.*

ACT 2The Dream

*At the studio. MAURICE is with LOU. It's clear they've been working on the production, but things aren't going well.*

LOU

Are you kidding? It's a great end to the first act!

MAURICE

I'm not really sure about that. That takes the plot in a completely different direction than NATHAN and I had intended.

*NATHAN enters.*

LOU

(Getting a bit angry)

Look, NATHAN is dead. Nothing's gonna change that. But I think this is what this scene needs to really kick it up a notch!

MAURICE

I don't know.

LOU

You know it, you just don't want to admit it. It's a great idea, just work with it.

MAURICE

(a look of resignation)

It'll mean rewriting all of scene 5...

(flipping through pages)

...and six...and eight...

LOU

(sensing victory)

You can do it. You're the best lyricist working today.

*Looks at his watch.*

Look, I have to meet with someone who's looking to invest in the show. I'll be back in a while. Try and have one of the scenes rewritten, so we can go over it.

*LOU leaves.*

MAURICE

*Sits down and starts working. NATHAN sits behind, and just starts talking.*

NATHAN

Now this is a new situation to find myself in. It's like I know the plot, but i still don't know what to say.

*MAURICE is getting frustrated. He slams down his pen and goes to the couch.*

And can't get through to you without seeming like some two bit haunted house.

MAURICE

Fuck it. I'm gonna take a nap. Not like anything else is working. Fifteen minutes for an alarm.

*MAURICE lays down. At this point, the lights change, and music comes up to show that MAURICE is asleep.*

NATHAN

It's just as well that I can't communicate. I don't know what to say, anyway.

*MAURICE sits up, but the lights and music stay the same. MAURICE is dreaming.*

MAURICE

What?

NATHAN

I said that I don't know what to...(beat) did you hear me?

MAURICE

Well, yeah. Sorta. Wait, am I dreaming?

NATHAN

(not wanting to screw things up)  
Yup, yup, you're dreaming.

MAURICE

OK, I was wondering why I was wearing clown shoes.

NATHAN

(realizing he doesn't have long until  
the alarm goes off)

I'm here to help.

MAURICE

Help? Why'd you have to go and die on me? Big help  
that was.

NATHAN

It wasn't my choice, either. (beat) Listen...remember  
I had an idea for the first act? I still had to tell  
you about that.

*Sings a reprise of one of the musical's themes,  
probably Unfinished. No words, just a hummed  
melody. While the music is playing, MAURICE lays  
back down.*

You may want to write that down when you wake up. You  
know how dreams are, they can just slip away. Sort of  
like life...

*The alarm goes off. The lights immediately come  
up. MAURICE fumbles for the alarm and turns it  
off. He sits up slowly, like he's remembering  
something. He starts towards the piano, slowly,  
and sits down. He starts to play, picking out  
"Unfinished" from his remembered dream.*

*After playing through the melody once, MAURICE  
then plays through it again, this time filling it  
out, and adding lyrics. This develops into  
Unfinished.*

*NATHAN is there the entire time while this is  
unfolding, observing. He nods sadly to himself,  
satisfied that it worked, but still not very  
happy. Lights down.*



NATHAN

You know how you always had me deal with LOU? I think this is one of those times when he needs some checking up on.

*NATHAN leaves. Lights down.*

Producer's Office

*The LOU is in his office with the INVESTORS. He's at the piano, and is playing the end of the song, wrapping it up. The INVESTORS applaud.*

INVESTORS

Splendid!

*NATHAN enters the room*

LOU

As you can see, the partnership is starting to bear fruit. We're back on schedule for production.

INVESTORS

What was your inspiration for that song?

*NATHAN snaps his head up at that question*

LOU

Oh, it's a scrap of melody I've had in my head for a while, just looking for a place to use it.

NATHAN

Why you miserable sack of...

INVESTORS

We're looking forward to hearing more!

LOU

We'll work on it, and set up a preview soon.

*The INVESTORS leave. The NATHAN is seething.*

NATHAN

So that's the game you're going to play, huh?

*I think the NATHAN should try and use his "haunting" powers here, and just try and cause shit.*

*This is a spot for a song. Haunting to a beat!  
Producer is freaked out, ends up running from his  
office.*

NATHAN

*(yelling after him)*

And there's more where that came from!

*The NATHAN suddenly doubles over, as if in great  
pain.*

What...what's happening? I cant'...AUGH!

*GILBERT and SULLIVAN enter the room suddenly.  
They both look at NATHAN, then look at each other  
and shake their heads.*

GILBERT

Come on, let's take him back.

SULLIVAN

I can't believe you didn't warn him about this.

GILBERT

I did, you moldy biscotti. Check page 36 of the  
script.

*They both grab a now incoherent NATHAN, and start  
to drag him towards the door.*

*As they drag him, G&S bicker.*

#### A Short Leash

*Back at the Studio/Apartment. It's dark, MAURICE  
and LOU aren't there. As they come through the  
door and get close to the piano, NATHAN comes to  
and starts to struggle a bit.*

NATHAN

Ugh...will you both please shut up...and let go of me!

*G&S stop suddenly, look at each other, and drop  
NATHAN unceremoniously to the floor.*

Ugh!



*NATHAN sits up and rubs his head, shaking it a bit, like he's trying to clear it.*

What was that?

*G&S take a deep breath like they're going to start singing.*

Please! No, no, no, just tell me. Please.

*G&S hold their breath for a beat longer, then deflate, looking a bit sulky.*

SULLIVAN

Oh, fine. Has anyone ever told you you're not much fun?

NATHAN

Not since I died.

GILBERT

Touché. Very well; what you just experienced was Unlife Burnout. Anger is a very dangerous emotion in life. In the Unlife, doubly so, especially when directed towards someone who is not related to your Task. Anger causes a ghost to burn out from the inside. If you allow yourself many more expressions of such petty revenge, you'll find yourself reduced to a cold spot in someone's basement. As it is, you've probably harmed your ability to travel beyond your studio, or to communicate with the mortal plane for a brief time. You'll need to stay close to your Link and take a brief respite.

NATHAN

(looks a little boggled)

Stay close to my Link?

(still confused)

What, am I under house arrest?

SULLIVAN

Good heavens no, we don't have rules and regulations in the Unlife.

GILBERT

Precisely: they're more akin to laws, like Gravity.

NATHAN

(Looking a little pissed)

You know...it might have been helpful to put something a bit more clear about the FLOWING RIVERS OF PAIN that show up if you try and fuck with someone! YOU MIGHT WANT TO PUT THAT IN YOUR LYRICS.

SULLIVAN

(looks aghast)

Why would I do that? I can't clearly reveal a critical plot point in the first act, I can only allude to it!

NATHAN

(yells)

THIS IS NOT A MUSICAL!

*All three stop, and looks at the audience. NATHAN shakes his head and goes on, rubbing his forehead.*

Look, all I want to know is, is there anything else I should know before plan any more meetings? Anything that might cause limbs to fall off? Sudden bursting into flames? Chronic halitosis?

*G&S look at each other and confer, very seriously, for a few moments. As they confer for a longer period of time, NATHAN gets more agitated. G&S stand up again.*

GILBERT

No, that's it.

NATHAN

You're sure?

SULLIVAN

Not particularly.

NATHAN

(sarcastically)

That's comforting.

GILBERT

We must admit that your case has been somewhat...  
unique.

NATHAN

Always happy to provide a challenge.

*They start to leave. NATHAN follows them for a bit, but winces when he walks to far from the piano. He walks back over to it and leans on it. He feels better when doing so. He looks at it inquisitively, running a hand over it.*

SULLIVAN

We bid you ado, for now.

NATHAN

You'll know where to find me.

*Noises at the door. LOU and MAURICE enter. LOU still appears a little shaken up. MAURICE appears pretty energized and happy. NATHAN stays by the piano, and brightens when MAURICE comes in.*

LOU

...and then my desk tipped over. I tell you, it was the weirdest thing I've ever seen.

MAURICE

You sure it wasn't a liquid lunch?

LOU

No, nothing like that.

MAURICE

Why don't we call it a night, get back to it tomorrow?  
You seem too shaken to work.

LOU

No, no, no, I'm OK.

MAURICE

Really, let's take the night off. Go relax.

LOU

(considers)

On second thought, I'm gonna go back to the office and clean up a bit. What are you going to do?

MAURICE

I....I think I'm going to go to bed.

LOU

Early night for you.

MAURICE

(bouncing in place)

I'm pretty worn out.

PROD

Er...OK. I'll see you tomorrow.

*MAURICE closes the door and sort of considers the room. NATHAN stands up.*

MAURICE

The dream was so real.

(shakes head, starts talking to no one)

Does wanting a dream chase it away? (beat) I guess it depends on what kind of dream you're talking about.

*Sits on the couch.*

Too keyed up to sleep, but...I have to see if I can get back to that dream.

*MAURICE lays down. Lights down. Lights back up a few long moments later, in the "night lighting".*

NATHAN

That took forever.

*Stands up and walks over to the couch.*

Hey...you there?

*MAURICE stirs, and sits up. Bring up "dream" lighting.*

MAURICE

My god..you..you came back. I've never had a dream come back.

*Considers for a moment.*

I don't think I've ever had a dream where I'm aware I'm dreaming.

*Looks at NATHAN*

What IS this?

NATHAN

It's....complicated.

*Starts to pace, trying to figure out what to say.*

What's the first stage production you were ever in?

MAURICE

*(without even pausing)*

Sixth grade, A Christmas Carol.

NATHAN

Yeah, you told me that. What's that about?

MAURICE

Why are you being so cagey? You're a dream, why can't you just tell me?

NATHAN

I'm beginning to think it's an occupational hazard.

MAURICE

What?

NATHAN

Humor me. What was A Christmas Carol about?

MAURICE

About an old man seeing the error of his ways, and redeeming himself.

NATHAN

And how did that happen?

MAURICE

With ghosts....

(starts to realize)

Wait..are you saying..

NATHAN

Yeah. Whatever you're about to say, yeah.

MAURICE

Holy shit.

NATHAN

That too, although I'm not sure if "holy" fits into the equation.

MAURICE

So, why are you here?

NATHAN

I'm still figuring that out, but I think it's because....

MAURICE

Wait. You're a ghost.

NATHAN

Yeah.

MAURICE

How are you talking to me?

NATHAN

I think it's because you're relaxed. I don't think it's actually because I'm in your dreams. That'd be a little too creepy.

MAURICE

(considering)

Can you...haunt and stuff?

NATHAN

What do you mean?

MAURICE

Mess stuff up, knock over furniture?

NATHAN

Yeah, that's about the limit of what I can physically do.

MAURICE

(starting to get angry)

And did you ....did you "haunt" producer this afternoon?

NATHAN

I...um..

MAURICE

Well? DID YOU?

NATHAN

(sheepish/accused/guilty)

Yeah, I did, but it was because...

MAURICE

God dammit.

(angry)

Look. It's nice that you're back. God knows I was a wreck after you died. And I know that we both had our fun with him when you were alive. But LOU is my partner now. We're on the hook for a lot of money with all of the investors, and I don't want you coming back and fucking up my working relationship!

NATHAN

But he was...

MAURICE

I don't care! If this is the kind of "help" you're going to bring me, then I just don't need it. I just...you need to go away.

NATHAN

But...

MAURICE

No. Just...just go.

*NATHAN tries to say something, but stops and visibly droops. He walks towards the piano, looks back one more time.*

NATHAN

I'm...I'm sorry.

*NATHAN walks behind the piano. "Dream" lights change to "night" lights. MAURICE sits up suddenly, gasping, almost like he was holding his breath, takes a moment to regain bearings....and then starts to cry into his hands.*

*Lights down.*

#### Producer's Motivation

*At the LOU's office. It's still a wreck. Producer opens the door and walks inside and sighs. He rights the desk and starts to clean up. After a few moments, he sits at his desk and just considers the room.*

*At this point, the LOU can sing his song, about what his dream has always been...how he's always wanted to write a musical, but his dad was an accountant and his mother was a lawyer...how he wanted to get an MFA, but got an MBA instead.*

*The song will cover how LOU always wanted to write a musical, but he couldn't...so he'll just put his name on one instead.*

*At the end of the song, MAURICE enters. LOU immediately composes himself. The mask is back on.*

MAURICE

Couldn't sleep.



PRODUCER

Just as well, we have a lot of work to do. Come up with any more songs?

COLLAB

Nothing. I think that last one was...a fluke or something.

PRODUCER

I certainly hope not. We need more great songs like that one.

COLLAB

What? You're the musician in this partnership.

PRODUCER

Right. And if you want this production to see the light of day...if you want to make sure that you keep working...you'd better make sure that we keep getting songs.

*At this point, LOU will reprise The Money Song from Act 1, with the same idea. No pressure, keep 'em coming. But this time, there is a more direct threat to the song. (In a way, the mask will come off, to show a different mask underneath.) At song end, lights down.*

### Trying to Write

*Collab is back at the studio, trying to write. NATHAN is not there. MAURICE is at the piano, trying to come up with another melody, and getting frustrated.*

MAURICE

Dammit.

*Tries to play somemore. Pounds the key.*

DAMMIT.

*Stands up, and wanders the room.*

What did he say to try when we were stuck for ideas...some brainstorming. Yeah!

*MAURICE sits down at the piano and starts into the Brainstorming song. MAURICE sings a few half*

*verses, but is unable to finish any ideas.*  
AUGH!

*Stands up again, wanders like a caged animal.*  
I can't do it alone! I have a partner again,  
but...it's not the same.

*Stands behind NATHAN's chair.*  
It'll never be the same again.

*Walks over to a cabinet and gets out a bottle.*  
Fuck it.

*Collab pours a healthy measure and downs it.*  
*Lights down.*

### Drunken Collaboration

*Lights back up. The bottle is half empty. MAURICE  
is slouched back in the chair. NATHAN is there.*

NATHAN

Aw, man.

*Considers trying to talk to MAURICE, but thinks  
better of it. Instead, he sits at the piano and  
starts to play. A new song. This one can be about  
what's truly important...not things or work, but  
people.*

MAURICE

I knew someone like that once.

*NATHAN jumps a bit, not knowing that MAURICE was  
awake/conscious.*

NATHAN

Yeah.

*They both share a silence.*  
I'm sorry about haunting your partner. Even if he is a  
lying schmuck.

MAURICE

S'okay. I found out that he's a lying, two-faced schmuck. But it's sumthin' I gotta deal with myself. Isn't your problem anymore.

NATHAN

Look, I...I do want to help you still. However I can. You were the best thing that ever happened to me, and I...I never told you that when I had the chance.

MAURICE

Seems to me that you just did.

NATHAN

(smiles ruefully)

Yeah, I did, didn't I?

*Both stand and enjoy the moment for a bit.*

MAURICE

Don' take this the wrong way, but I think dying mellowed you out a little bit.

NATHAN

It has a way of changing your perspective.

MAURICE

Now, what say we do a little brainstorming...for old time's sake?

NATHAN

(grins from ear to ear)

Now you're talking.

*They both take up their positions from earlier in the show. Lights down.*

Karma's a Bitch

*The next morning. NATHAN is gone. MAURICE stirs.*

MAURICE

Ugh. I feel like someone upholstered my mouth.

*Looks over the table and finds the work from the previous night. Starts paging through it.*

Wow. Wow! WOW!

*There is a knock at the door. MAURICE winces.*  
Come in.

LOU

Well, well, well. Have a productive night last night?

*Glances at the bottle.*  
Or did you just produce a hangover?

MAURICE

Actually, no. I finished it.

LOU

Or maybe did you...what?

MAURICE

I finished it.

LOU

Yeah, I can see you finished the bottle.

MAURICE

No, I finished act one. One night. Done.

LOU

(Gets a slimy smile on his face)  
Well...well well well!

*The producer wanders over and snatches the sheaf of papers from MAURICE, and starts paging through it. MAURICE doesn't wince, but maintains an air of power. Somehow, this isn't phasing MAURICE.*

*LOU starts flipping pages. Page after page after page. He starts looking a little freaked out. MAURICE just looks pleased, and confident. Producer is realizing that he isn't really necessary.*

*After a moment of this, the mask comes back on. LOU is going to try and work this to his advantage.*

LOU

This is an excellent night's work. I can see that this will go over extremely well when I present it to the Investors!

MAURICE

No.

LOU

Excuse me?

MAURICE

I said no. If anyone is going to present this, it is going to be me.

LOU

And what are you going to do about it?

MAURICE

Me? Nothing. But I have a feeling that things are going to be changing.

*LOU is looking at MAURICE like a second head just sprouted.*

PRODUCER

Yeah..well, seeing as how we're both just standing here, I'm going to take these. I'll be talking to you later.

MAURICE

I'm sure you will.

*LOU turns and hurriedly leaves the studio. After a few moments, we hear SFX of a car crash. MAURICE turns and runs out of the studio.*

*After a few moments, MAURICE returns. He has the papers. MAURICE sits down heavily on the couch, staring straight ahead. NATHAN enters.*

NATHAN

I hope you know i didn't have anything to do with that.

MAURICE

Yeah...I knew you didn't. Wait, how are you talking to me now?

NATHAN

I think everything I needed to do got finished.

MAURICE

But...but the show! It's not finished! I need your help to do that!

NATHAN

No you don't. I guess you don't remember right now, but all of that writing? It's all you. Every good idea last night came from you.

MAURICE

But we're leaving it unfinished.

NATHAN

No, I've finished as much as I could, from where I am.

*Starts to unbutton his shirt, and takes it off.*

*He holds the Lucky Shirt, sort of considering it.*

You know, I finally realized that I don't need this. (chuckles) I never needed it. I had you.

MAURICE

But I need you

NATHAN

I'll always be here for you. Somehow. Take care...and have a great life.

*NATHAN leaves. MAURICE goes to the closet and gets the Lucky Shirt. MAURICE looks at it and smiles. MAURICE hangs it on the chair, and sits down.*

#### EPILOGUE

*NATHAN is walking down the street.*

NATHAN

I'd swear there's supposed to be a White Light around here somewhere...

*Screaming from offstage. LOU runs on.*

LOU

AAAAAUGH! What...who...where...

*Points at NATHAN.*

Waitaminnit...you're dead.

NATHAN

Not to put too fine a point on it, but so are you.

PRODUCER

What? Nooooo!

*Starts to cry*

But there was so much I still wanted to do!

NATHAN

*(looks around)*

Well, you should be expecting some company pretty soon, but I'll give you some advice, in a method that was a little more useful than I received. What did you most want to do when you were still alive?

PRODUCER

*(still crying)*

Write...a...musical!

NATHAN

*(does a double take, ponders)*

You know, I may have just the people for you to talk to.

*Runs offstage, comes back with Rodgers and Hammerstein.*

Allow me to introduce Richard Rodgers, and Oscar Hammerstein II. Would you guys mind giving LOU a few tips on how to write a musical?

HAMMERSTEIN

Of course. We've got nothing but time.

*LOU, RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN walk off, excitedly chatting. LOU is the embodiment of joy. NATHAN smiles and waves. NATHAN is left alone on stage. NATHAN starts singing the theme to Unfinished, with new lyrics for this scene. A white light appears off stage right. NATHAN walks into it, singing. Music swells.*

*Curtain.*

*THE END.*