BIKERS IN CAMELOT

A Musical Comedy Romantasy

Book, Music & Lyrics by Wendy Bichel

Bikers in Camelot ©Wendy Bichel
WGA Registration #1999390
V.8/20/24

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Cast of Characters

HOLLY: Quirky, adventurous and wildly imaginative, she authors a popular series of romantic, chivalric sci-fi fantasies and believes them all. But her first case of writer's block is rocking her world.

MICHAEL: Charming, guileless, eccentric and mildly possessive, while Holly is adventurous, Michael longs for a stability symbolized by the lives of the Victorian women he writes about. But he is not without his kinks.

TONIO: The romantic lead in Holly's fantasy novels, a chivalric knight ,who captains spaceships and rescues modern day damsels in distress. Charismatic, sexy, highly educated and a chameleon.

CAROLINE: Michael's ultimate Victorian heroine, a brilliant and self-assured English gentlewoman with old fashioned values, until she is unleashed and transforms from devoted and contained, to powerful and unpredictable.

The four characters should appear to be approximately the same age, 33-45. Age is only an issue when someone appears too young to have something at stake. *Bikers in Camelot* works well for a rainbow or non-binary cast, who can support the universality of the theme: we all compare our significant others to the fantasies we've created in our minds . . . and try to nudge them in the right direction.

Place

A Brooklyn loft overlooking the East River, though it could take place in any city.

Time

A single spring night in the present (or the decade of your choice) between sunset and sunrise.

Set

An open loft, the front door, upstage center, opens into the building hallway. A picture window overlooks the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan across the water. There are doors into an unseen kitchen and bedroom. An apron with a bench represents the street outside the loft. Tonio enters on a motorcycle that drives through the upstage wall (see original production notes below). There is a sofa and two desks, Michael's is vintage Victorian, and Holly's is basic thrift shop. Caroline enters inside a British style phonebooth on wheels and literally walks the phonebooth on stage, mist wafting from the bottom.

Music

The original production featured five musicians: 2 keyboards, violin/viola, drums and bass. This ensemble could be expanded, or the show could be accompanied by as few as 2 keyboards.

Musical Numbers

Note: The current lyrics are in the script, not the recordings.

OVERTURE	Orchestra
WRITING IS MY LIFE	Holly
OPENING DUET (recorded without dialogue.)	
MY WILD ONE	Michael
DANGER MAGNET (verse intro not yet recorded)	Holly
DUET	Holly and Michael
NOBODY'S PERFECT	Michael and Holly
THE STUNT MAN	Tonio
BETRAYED/MY WILD ONE (REPRISE)	Michael and Caroline
DARK ANGEL	Tonio
BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY	Caroline
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME	Holly
COMMITMENTS (ACT I FINALE)	Michael, Caroline, Holly and Tonio
COMMITMENTS (ACT II OPENING)	Michael, Caroline, Holly and Tonio
SUBMISSIVE BARBIE (not yet recorded)	Holly
LET ME STAY AWHILE	Tonio
THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD	Caroline
REAL AS A ROCK	Tonio and Caroline
HOLLY	Michael and Holly
BIKERS IN CAMELOT	Tonio and Caroline
HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS	Holly and Michael
IMPOSTERS	Holly, Michael, Caroline and Tonio
RIGHT NOW	Michael and Holly
BIKERS IN CAMELOT REPRISE (FINALE)	Holly, Michael, Caroline and

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: Both the interior of the loft and the street outside the loft, by the bench.

At Rise: "OVERTURE" segues into "WRITING IS MY LIFE." Lights come up on HOLLY, standing by her desk in front of her computer. The floor around her is strewn with balled up paper.

HOLLY

Shit! Shit! Shit! Eight hours for one freaking sentence!

(She walks downstage kicking the paper, then notices the audience)

I'm sorry, I didn't even notice you. Writer's block. Once an imaginable horrible, now it's my existence.

(Song: "WRITING IS MY LIFE")

WRITING IS MY LIFE.
IT OPENS ME TO MAGIC.
NOT TO WRITE IS TRAGIC.
WRITING IS MY LIFE,
MY IMAGINATION FLIES FREE
AND CREATES A NEW REALITY.
MICHAEL USED TO FLY,
HE HAS THE SOUL OF A CONDOR.
BUT THE REST OF THE BIRD'S GONE MISSING.
WE'D FILL THE SKY,
LAUGHING AND KISSING.
BUT MY WRITING'S GONE MISSING.

NOT THAT I WOULD EVER BLAME HIM.

(Lights down on HOLLY and up on MICHAEL, outside the loft, carrying an umbrella and groceries, whistling the Wedding March and doing a private little jig. He notices the audience.)

MICHAEL

I just got the biggest deal of my career . . . while Holly Garland has writers' block. It's utterly unfair. I want us both to be happy. We're soulmates. We've created an idyllic world together, our own Camelot. And I am ready to take the most important step of my life to protect it.

(He opens a ring box, kneels and shows the audience the ring.)

Vintage Victorian.

MICHAEL

(Song: “MY WILD ONE”)

SHE BLEW INTO MY LIFE ON AN AUTUMN WIND,
SLID UNDER MY SKIN,
THREW ME IN A TAILSPIN.
SHE TOOK ME BY SURPRISE,
THE WORLDS THAT SHE COULD VISUALIZE.
THE WONDERS I SAW THROUGH HER EYES.
OH, SHE WAS MY WILD ONE.

THERE’S NO QUESTION THAT SHE RESURRECTED ME.
RECKLESS AND FREE,
SHE MIRRORED WHO I COULD BE.
OUR PASSION WAS INTENSE.
SHE TUTORED ME IN CONFIDENCE.
I TRIED TO TEACH HER COMMON SENSE.
OH, SHE WAS MY WILD ONE.

CALL ME A THROWBACK,
A DINOSAUR AND A GENTLEMAN.
I KNOW A WEDDING
IS A JOY I CAN’T POSTPONE.
IN TIMES OF GREAT POLARITY,
UNSTABLE AS OUR OWN,
I WANT HOLLY TO MARRY ME,
AND MAKE A REAL HOME.

(Lights down on MICHAEL and up on HOLLY. She approaches the audience.)

HOLLY

I’m still attracted to Michael. I’m sure he’s a time traveler. And he has the most beautiful feet. The arches, you could build a tower on them. He’s handsome and sexy . . . but he’s just gone vegan, which is not endearing, and he’s got rules for everything. I know it’s wrong, but I’ve started comparing him to the Dark Angel, the hero of my books.

(Song: “DANGER MAGNET”)

(verse-intro not yet recorded)
THE DARK ANGEL’S SUPERHUMAN
AND FROM ANOTHER GALAXY,

HOLLY (Cont,)

I GAVE HIM EVERYTHING I ADMIRE IN A MAN,
SO HE'S MORE PERFECT THAN ANY MAN CAN BE.
AND I'M QUIRKY, BUT NOT CRAZY,
AND PERFECT'S NOT REALITY.
IF HE'S MORE PERFECT THAN ANY MAN CAN BE,
I ASK MYSELF, HOW REAL CAN HE BE.
AND YET, I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT HIM.
OH, NO, I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT HIM.

A KNIGHT WHO RIDES THE COSMOS,
HE'S ALWAYS DRESSED IN BLACK.
A REAL DANGER MAGNET,
WITH NINE LIVES LIKE A CAT.
HE'S MASTERED EVERY WEAPON,
AND FIFTY DIFFERENT TONGUES.
HE'S EVEN MASTERED FREUD AND JUNG.
ALTHOUGH HE'S GENTLE AND HE'S SMART,
IF YOU HASSLE A DAMSEL,
HE'LL RIP OUT YOUR HEART.

HIS INTUITION'S FLAWLESS,
THERE'S NOTHING HE WON'T TRY.
HE FLIRTS WITH THE DARK SIDE,
AN ANTI-HERO GUY.
HE WAITS FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL,
HER NAME HE CANNOT GUESS,
BUT IF SHE IS EVER IN DISTRESS,
NO ONE WILL KEEP HIM FROM HER SIDE,
AND THAT DAMSEL SUBSTANTIAL
WILL BECOME HIS BRIDE.

(Lights up on both MICHAEL on the apron, and HOLLY inside the loft.)

MICHAEL HOLLY

(Song: "DUET")

SHE BLEW INTO MY LIFE
ON AN AUTUMN WIND,
SLID UNDER MY SKIN,
THREW ME IN A TAILSPIN.
SHE TOOK ME BY SURPRISE.

THE WORLDS THAT SHE COULD
VISUALIZE.

A KNIGHT WHO RIDES THE COSMOS
HE'S ALWAYS DRESSED IN BLACK.
A REAL DANGER MAGNET,
WITH NINE LIVES, LIKE A CAT.
HE'S MASTERED EVERY WEAPON
AND FIFTY DIFFERENT TONGUES.
HE EVEN MASTERED FREUD & JUNG.

MICHAEL (Cont.)
THE WONDERS I SAW THROUGH HER EYES .
OH, SHE WAS MY WILD ONE.

THERE'S NO QUESTION
THAT SHE RESURRECTED ME.
SHE SEEMED TO BE FREE,
MIRRORED WHAT I COULD BE.
OUR PASSION WAS INTENSE.

SHE TUTORED ME IN CONFIDENCE
I GAVE HER MY COMMON SENSE

OH, SHE WAS MY WILD ONE.

HOLLY (Cont.)
ALTHOUGH HE'S GENTLE AND HE'S SMART

IF YOU HASSLE A DAMSEL
HE'LL RIP OUT YOUR HEART

HIS INTUITION'S FLAWLESS, SHE
THERE'S NOTHING HE WON'T TRY.
HE FLIRTS WITH THE DARK SIDE,
AN ANTI-HERO GUY.
HE WAITS FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL,
HER NAME HE CANNOT GUESS.
BUT IF SHE IS EVER IN DISTRESS.
HE'LL BE THERE AT THE SPEED
OF LIGHT

AND THAT DAMSEL SUBSTANTIAL
WILL BECOME HIS BRIDE.

(Light heartedly to the audience.)

IT'S A FAILING OF THE FATES,
THAT WE CAN'T WRITE OUR MATES.

ACT I
Scene 2

Setting: The interior of the loft.

At Rise: HOLLY walks over to her computer.

HOLLY
(To the audience.)
Early on, Michael asked if we could make an agreement never to discuss our books. He was afraid it would "erode" the relationship. Stupidly, I said yes. Every couple plays let's make a deal sometime, but I promise, it never fails to bite you on the ass. And that's why I'm reading today's sentence to you, instead of to Michael.

Here's the set-up: the Dark Angel has finally found that rare bird whose ornate plumage will supply him with the object he must have to deliver that quintessential chivalric phrase, (Bowing deeply.) "A token milady." Here's what I wrote:
(She gets into the delivery.)
"His spidery hand gracefully plucked the roseate feather from the wing of the Zarathian waterfowl . . . but he longed for more." (pause) It's awful, isn't it?

(She shreds the paper, stuffs it into her mouth and begins eating it.)

MICHAEL
(From off-stage.)
Holly Garland! I'm home, my love.

(MICHAEL enters carrying the groceries and his umbrella.)

Honey, what's wrong? You've got little bits of paper hanging out of your mouth like confetti.

HOLLY
I spent all day writing one totally embarrassing sentence. I need something to wash it down.

MICHAEL
I brought home whipped cream.

HOLLY
Hooray! The antidote to all my suffering! Squirt it in my mouth. That's the best part.

MICHAEL
That's the dangerous part. The propellant is filled with additives. That's why it foams up.

HOLLY
That's why they call it whipped cream.

MICHAEL

This one doesn't really whip, it's made with cashews . . . but it's delicious. Here, I'll feed it to you with a spoon.

HOLLY

That's not sexy!

MICHAEL

It is if I dance with the spoon.

(He does his little jig with the spoonful of cream, throwing in some pelvic thrusts, while feeding HOLLY. He gets some on her nose and they both giggle. He lovingly wipes her mouth. Then licks the tip of her nose.)

MICHAEL

All better?

HOLLY

Yes. Thank you. Much better. (They kiss sweetly.)

MICHAEL

They signed the contract for the Julia Princep Stephen book – with a massive advance. Apparently, the Victorians are suddenly hot. Who would have guessed, my first really big deal and it's about Virginia Woolf's mother. And they want me to do a British tour to promote the Mary Shelly. *Mom of Frankenstein.* Brilliant title, my clever girl. Come with me. (Suggestively) We can go back to Madame Tussaud's!

HOLLY

Something got you going in that place.

MICHAEL

It was the way your fingers were caressing Sir Francis Drake. It looked like you had a thing for wax men. I hoped you'd drip candles on me, back in the room.

HOLLY

We never made it to the room. You were so . . . inventive . . . then.

MICHAEL

And you loved it.

HOLLY

I did.

MICHAEL

Will you come with me?

HOLLY

I can't commit. I'm in transition. But I hope so. I'm very proud of you. You're in the big leagues now.

MICHAEL

No, we're both in the big leagues.

HOLLY

A sentence a day and they'll send me back to the minors.

MICHAEL

You're queen of the genre. You were crowned in Cleveland. Sometimes we just get stuck. But I have exactly what you need.

(MICHAEL takes Holly's hand and pulls her down to kneel with him. He takes a bag of red rose petals from his pocket and sprinkles them in a circle around the two of them, opens the ring box and holds up the ring.)

Holly Garland, will you marry me?

HOLLY

What's this, some Victorian satanic ritual? I love it, Michael! Wow, I've missed your weirdness so much.

(MICHAEL keeps kneeling.)

MICHAEL

I'm not being weird. I'm proposing.

HOLLY

You can't be.

MICHAEL

Why not?

HOLLY

You know I've got writers' block. Without my writing I have no idea who I am. I'm totally vulnerable. Please, Michael, don't be proposing. (he stays down) Oh, get up. That position is perverted.

MICHAEL

I've never come close to loving anyone the way I love you, Holly Garland.

HOLLY

And stop using my full name! I don't understand. When I told you how I felt about marriage, you said you felt the same way.

MICHAEL

That was three years ago!

HOLLY

You never told me you changed your mind. Or asked me if I'd changed mine.

MICHAEL

It's time to get married.

HOLLY

What have you been reading, a very militant cookbook? *After three years, remove the bride from the oven and have a wedding.*

MICHAEL

What are you afraid of?

HOLLY

Don't you dare make this about my fears. This isn't Victorian England. Being in love should never be about accommodation. Or compromise.

MICHAEL

How do you think real people bond for life, which is what marriage is. . . or used to be. It's absolutely about accommodation and compromise.

HOLLY

I call that settling.

MICHAEL

Oh, grow up.

HOLLY

You grow up. Admit it, you don't even want me the way I am. You want me to fit into some teeny, weeny Victorian box with all your perfect little Victorian girlfriends.

MICHAEL

You have me competing with an extraterrestrial superhero. God knows what he's got that I don't have.

(Gestures to his crotch.)

HOLLY

Why do men always assume we want it big . . . maybe we just want it different. The whole point of writing the perfect man is so you can keep re-writing him.

MICHAEL

I must have been insane asking you to marry me. I'd have to spend the rest of my life trying to live up to some ever-evolving concept, while learning to live with your imperfections. I rescind my proposal.

HOLLY

My imperfections!

(Song: "NOBODY'S PERFECT")

YOU DRIVE YOUR CARRIAGE 'CROSS THE MORAL HIGHWAY,
A NOUVEAU VEGAN WITH A COW TO SAVE.
I SEARCH BUT SELDOM SEE
YOUR SPONTANEITY.
AND YOU NEVER MISS A CHANCE TO TELL ME
HOW I SHOULD BEHAVE.

MICHAEL

WHILE YOU INSIST YOU HATE THE FOOD I'M EATING,
YOUR FORK IS HOVERING ABOVE MY PLATE.
EACH TIME I PAUSE TO SPEAK,
YOU SPEAR A BEET OR LEEK.
THEN YOU ELEGIZE A MAC AND FRIES,
AS IF THAT'S ALL YOU ATE.

(to HOLLY) But let's be realistic . . .

NOBODY'S PERFECT,
THE TRUTH IS QUITE STARK.

HOLLY

SOMETIMES WE FALL A BIT SHORT OF THE MARK.

MICHAEL

WHY DOES YOUR IMMATURITY SURPRISE ME?

HOLLY

I <u>HATE</u> IT WHEN YOU TRIVIALIZE ME.

NOBODY'S PERFECT,
EVERYONE SEES,
IF WE WERE PERFECT

MICHAEL

WE'D BE FANTASIES.

HOLLY

YOU WANT ME TO BE BLIND
TO EVERY BLEMISH AND DEFECT?

MICHAEL

P-lease.
NOBODY'S EVER . . .

HOLLY & MICHAEL

PERFECT.

MICHAEL

YOUR BLUE JEANS ARE INTENTIONALLY SHREDDED.
IT'S CLEAR THAT ELEGANCE IS NOT YOUR STYLE.
YOU ONLY WEAR A DRESS
UNDER EXTREME DURESS,
THEN YOU CHOOSE THE ONES
THAT ONLY WORK WHEN YOU'RE A JUVENILE.

HOLLY

YOUR CLOTHES ARE SO PASSÉ THEY HAVE EXPIRED,
BECAUSE IT'S IN THE PAST THAT YOU RESIDE.
YOU PUT ME IN A BOX,
NOW WATCH ME PICK THE LOCKS!
I REFUSE TO BE COMPARED TO WOMEN
WHO'VE ALREADY DIED.

MICHAEL

NOBODY'S PERFECT,
BUT YOU DISAPPOINT,
INTRACTABLE AS AN
INFLEXIBLE JOINT.
YOU SELDOM SAY THE WORDS THAT MIGHT ENDEAR ME.

HOLLY

IT'S CLEAR YOU NEVER LISTEN WHEN YOU HEAR ME.
NOBODY'S PERFECT,
I'LL GIVE YOU THAT BREAK,
BUT WHO WANTS TO SETTLE FOR SUGAR-FREE CAKE?

MICHAEL

IN TERMS OF REAL LIFE
YOU HAVE A MAJOR DISCONNECT.

HOLLY & MICHAEL
BUT NOBODY'S EVER PERFECT.

HOLLY
IF WE HAVE LOST OUR PASSION
WHAT THE HELL DID WE EXPECT?

MICHAEL
IF WE HAVE LOST OUR PASSION
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE NO RESPECT.

HOLLY
Stop!
(can be spoken)
YOU DON'T WANT MY LOVE
YOU WANT A CHAIN AROUND MY NECK!

You're so freaking safe!

MICHAEL
Maybe that's exactly what you need.

HOLLY
You think you know what I need? If you knew what I needed, you wouldn't be hitting me up with a major life change in the middle of the worst major life change of my whole life! That's so mean. You have no idea what I need.

MICHAEL
And you do?

HOLLY
At least allow me the dignity of my own ambiguity.

MICHAEL
That was very cute.

HOLLY
(Imitating his cadence.)
That was very nasty. You're just afraid I'll leave you if you're the reason I can't write.

MICHAEL
Oh, that's it. You'd love a scapegoat.

HOLLY
You're not a scapegoat if it's true.

MICHAEL

You pretend you're all alone against the world. I think you hate that I'm here for you.

HOLLY

You're not here for me. You can't be my savior and my jailor. You wanna take the key and lock me up.

(She turns her back on MICHAEL and walks downstage

I've gotta get out of here!

(She cries out her invocation to the Heavens.)

IT'S A FAILING OF THE FATES.
THAT WE CAN'T WRITE OUR MATES.

(A rumbling begins underneath the music as lightning flashes, followed by a huge crack of thunder that sounds like the world is splitting in two. We hear the roaring of a motorcycle approaching from a distance, growing louder and louder. The lighting changes, making the set look unearthly, as a bike, engulfed in smoke, crashes through the upstage wall. HOLLY and MICHAEL clutch each other and scream. The bike stops and everything is still again. Then its rider, TONIO, jumps off the bike and kicks it violently.)

TONIO

Fie on this stinking engine and the varlet who built it! It barely ascended the stairway!

(HOLLY and MICHAEL are still holding each other.)

HOLLY

Are we on fire?

MICHAEL

Bugger! He drove right through the wall! How could he do that?

HOLLY

Is Mercury in retrograde?

(TONIO kicks the bike again, looks around dazed, removes a knight's helmet with a large feather, then stares at it as though he's never seen it before. He hangs it over the handlebar and looks around the room with amazement as HOLLY and MICHAEL stare back at him.

(MICHAEL notices a man-on-a-bike-shaped hole in the wall.)

MICHAEL

(Confronting him.)

Hey, you! You drive up two flights of stairs, then this!

(Michael points to the hole.)

It's a perfect man-on-a-bike-shaped hole! That's impossible!

HOLLY (terrified)

Who are you? Where did you come from? What are you doing in our loft?

(Tonio's left arm rises above his head and his hand descends, his fingers snapping as they pass his nose. He observes the gesture, a kind of *mind meld*, with curiosity, seemingly not doing it of his own volition. HOLLY and MICHAEL are literally mesmerized. When his hand stops its descent, they shake their heads, look at him blankly, and smile. All questions forgotten, Holly welcomes him.)

HOLLY

Hello!

TONIO

Hello to you, too . . . By God's bones! I have no idea where I find myself. This is not . . . unh, Grand Central Station, is it?

MICHAEL

No, this is Brooklyn.

TONIO

Brooklyn? The second moon of . . . Uva Ursi, right?

MICHAEL (scoffing.)

Uva Ursi is an herb.

TONIO

Excellent. I was testing you.

(He takes a step back from HOLLY and stares at her.)

Wait! Do I detect . . . a damsel in distress?

(He continues to stare at her completely disregarding MICHAEL, then looks deeply surprised.)

Upon my life, is it really possible? Art thou Holly Garland?

(HOLLY steps away from MICHAEL and moves closer to TONIO.)

HOLLY

I am.

TONIO

But thou art . . . my muse! My goddess! Your book-jacket-cover photograph is enshrined upon . . . my eyelids. <u>So</u> sensitive. So brooding.

HOLLY

My good Sir Knight, do you always speak thusly?

TONIO

Would you prefer it otherwise?

HOLLY

Perhaps for the sake of . . .

(She indicates the audience.)

The audience.

TONIO

Your wish is my command. So, I get on my bike. I'm flying down the street heading for Grand Central Station, or so I think. Then, of all the lofts in all the towns in all the world, I drive into yours! Is this a miracle or what?

MICHAEL

You are utterly mad! Look at this mess! I hope you intend to clean it up.

TONIO

(Ignoring MICHAEL.)

Wow! Holly Garland. I still can't believe you're real.

MICHAEL

Stop it! Who are you? Where did you come from?

(Tonio performs the *mind meld* again. His left arm rises above his head and descends, his fingers snap as they pass his nose. Again, he observes the gesture while HOLLY and MICHAEL are mesmerized. Then they look at him blankly, MICHAEL'S question forgotten.)

HOLLY

What should we call you?

TONIO

The name is . . . Tonio.

HOLLY

Do you have a last name?

TONIO

Haven't used it in years.

(Turning to MICHAEL.)

You must be Michael. They said you're a writer, too.

MICHAEL

That was generous of them.

TONIO

I guess it's a little late to ask if I can come in.

HOLLY

I'm honored to have a fan come calling. What are you supposed to be doing at Grand Central? Having some great, dangerous adventure, I hope.

(the vamp to Stuntman begins.)

TONIO

A very dangerous adventure, Holly. I'm working on a film. I have to ride across the tops of fifteen train cars. Up the main staircase. Then I do a wheelie on the landing, waving my helmet.

HOLLY

Wow! Have you been an actor for long?

TONIO

(disgusted) I would <u>never</u> be an actor. Actors <u>pretend</u>. The real heroes are the unsung heroes who put their lives on the line day after day.

(Song: "THE STUNTMAN")

(Tonio plays strictly to HOLLY.)

WHEN THE LEAD CAN'T CUT IT 'CAUSE THERE'S TOO MUCH RISK,
WHEN THE ACTION'S HANGING FROM THE EDGE OF A CLIFF,
WHEN THE TOUGH GET GOING 'CAUSE THE GOING'S TOUGH,
WHEN THEY WANT IT VIOLENT, WHEN THEY WANT IT ROUGH.
WHEN IT CALLS FOR DANGER OR A LOT OF PAIN,
I'M THE SILENT STRANGER WITH NO FACE OR NAME.
AND THEY ASK, CAN I DO IT?
BUT THEY KNOW I CAN,
'CAUSE I'M THE STUNT MAN.

WHEN THE HOUSE ON FIRE IS A FIVE ALARM,
AND THE LEADING LADY'S GONNA BUY THE FARM.
WHEN SUSPENSE IS REVVING AND THERE'S NO MORE TIME,
AND IT LOOKS LIKE NO ONE CAN PREVENT THE CRIME.
WHEN THE 'CHUTE WON'T OPEN AS THE HERO FALLS,
AND HE ACTS LAID BACK TO SHOW HE'S GOT SOME BALLS.
THEN THEY ASK IF I'M READY,
BUT THEY KNOW I AM,
'CAUSE I'M THE STUNT MAN.

TONIO (Cont.)

WHEN YOU HEAR A ROAR
LIKE A MAVERICK STORM
FROM THE WESTERN SKIES.
AND YOU KNOW IT'S BAD,
'CAUSE YOU KNOW THE HERO
WILL NEVER COMPROMISE.
THEN IT'S SHOWDOWN TIME,
AND THE TENSION'S HIGH,
AND YOU'RE STARING AT THE SCREEN.
THAT'S THE MOMENT I'VE BEEN WAIT-ING FOR . . .

Watch me now!

YES, THE HERO'S THERE, YOU SEE HIM FROM THE BACK,
BUT THE HAIR IS THICKER AND A LOT MORE BLACK.
AND HE'S WAY MORE SEXY WHEN YOU TAKE A LOOK.
AND YOU KIND OF WONDER WHAT IT WAS HE JUST TOOK.
THEN HE RIDES HIS HARLEY LIKE HE'S BORN TO RIDE.
AND HE STRIDES ON OVER LIKE HE'S BORN TO STRIDE.
AND YOU KNOW HE'LL SAVE THEM,
YEAH, YOU'RE SURE HE CAN.
HERE COMES THAT SPECIAL MOMENT
WHEN THE CAMERAS PAN.
AND YOU KNOW DAMN WELL,
YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL,
IT'S THE STUNT MAN.
IT'S THE STUNT MAN.
I'M THE STUNT MAN.

MICHAEL

So, what's this big extravaganza about, Mr. Stunt Man?

TONIO

It's a classic Arthurian tale full of crazy adventures and good old-fashioned romance.

MICHAEL

(sarcastic.) Sounds absolutely charming. What's it called?

(Trumpet Fanfare with voices singing "Bikers in Camelot)"

TONIO

Bikers in Camelot!

MICHAEL

You've got to be joking.

TONIO

I know you'd like it, Holly. It's unusual. Kind of whacked and whimsical.

MICHAEL

Whacked and whimsical?

TONIO

(To HOLLY) Wanna go for a ride with me?

MICHAEL

She wouldn't.

HOLLY

Oh, she really, really would.

TONIO

Let's have our own adventure. Drive around Manhattan. Prove it really is an island. Maybe even get lost. I love getting lost. Such a spontaneous thing to do.

MICHAEL

Holly, it's almost time for dinner.

TONIO

I am kind of hungry. Where can we stop for a bite?

HOLLY

I know this great little joint that makes an amazing triple bacon cheeseburger. For dessert they do these humongous peanut butter cookies—super delicious 'cause they're made with lard. Lots and lots of lard.

MICHAEL

Come on, don't do it, Holly. Remember, there is a part of you that likes beets.

TONIO

Ciao, Mikey.

(He puts on his helmet, pulls another from the saddlebag and puts it on HOLLY, then wheels the bike out of the loft through the bike-shaped hole. Their laughter reverberates 'til the front door of the building slams and the cycle engine revs. MICHAEL stands in shock, staring at the wall, then runs after them shouting like Stanley yelling "Stella!.")

MICHAEL

Holly! Holly!

(The vamp from "BETRAYED" begins like a war chant as the lights dim on the empty room)

ACT I
Scene 3

Setting: The Street in front of the Loft.

At Rise: Musical vamp from "BETRAYED" continues.

MICHAEL

They're gone! How could she just walk out on me?

(Song: "BETRAYED/JULIA SWEET JULIA")

HOW COULD HOLLY BE SO DUMB,
FALLING FOR THAT PHONY BUM.
REALLY SHOCKING WHO SHE'S BECOME,
HOW FAR SHE'S STRAYED.

YEARS WITH HER AND I'M SURPRISED.
GUESS SHES NOT SO REALIZED.
NOW MY JUDGEMENT IS COMPROMISED.
HAVE I BEEN PLAYED?

A LITTLE BIT OF WISDOM
THAT'S WHAT I EXPECT,
BUT SHE ZOOMS OFF WITH NO GOOD-BYE.
IS LOYALTY SO DATED, SO ANTIQUATED
SHE WOULD LEAVE ME FOR THIS GUY?

WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO GET ENGAGED.
NOW, I'M STANDING HERE, AND I'M OUTRAGED.
OH, THE TRUTH IS DAWNING,
AND IT'S UGLY, I'M AFRAID.
YES, I'VE BEEN PLAYED!
I'VE BEEN BETRAYED!

What a fool I've been! Modern women are so unsubstantial. Home, honor, commitment . . . mean nothing. They have none of the higher values of the Victorians. Now, Julia Prinsep Stephen . . . she understood. She was the perfect woman!

(To the heavens.)

Oh, Julia. Why can't I be with you?

IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE
SHE WAS EVER TRUE.
A WILLOWY GRACE.
WORDS SHE SPOKE WOULD TOUCH YOU.

MICHAEL (Cont.)

SHAKESPEARE SECURED HER HEART.
COLERIDGE GAVE HER XANADU.
SUCH A CULTURED OVERVIEW,
HAD JULIA. SWEET JULIA.

CALL ME A THROWBACK,
A DINOSAUR AND A GENTLEMAN.
I FEEL HER HOLDING ME.
NO, SHE WOULD NEVER ROAM.
IN TIMES OF INSECURITY,
UNSTABLE AS OUR OWN,
I NEED JULIA'S MATURITY
TO MAKE A REAL HOME.

(Dramatically, he cries his invocation to the Fates, as HOLLY did.)

IT'S A FAILING OF THE FATES,
THAT WE CAN'T WRITE OUR MATES.

(Again, thunder rumbles and lightening opens the sky, then an antique British phone booth walks onto the stage with heavy mist churning from the bottom of it.)

A phone booth? I don't remember a phone booth here.

(CAROLINE, an elegant and timeless woman steps out and then turns and stares at the phone booth with fear and disgust.)

CAROLINE

What is this thing? A coffin? A garish red coffin? How tasteless. Where am I? Am I dead?

MICHAEL

No. You're in Brooklyn.

CAROLINE

Ah, Brooklyn, a place for the living, I assume. Lovely air. One wonders where the soot has gone. Pardon my outburst. It's a mild form of . . . Tourette's. I couldn't help but overhear you when you were shouting. You called to me.

MICHAEL

Well, that's rather awkward, isn't it, since we've never met.

CAROLINE

Not at all. It was a very human moment. I am honored to have shared it with you. Please know how awfully sorry I am.

MICHAEL

Sorry? Why are you sorry?

CAROLINE

I'm sorry you were betrayed. It's such an odious thing to have happen.

*(*MICHAEL stares at the phone booth and then at CAROLINE.)

MICHAEL

It's like you arrived from another time in Dr. Who's TARDIS. How is this even possible? Who are you? Where did you come from? What are you doing here?

(CAROLINE'S right arm rises above her head and her hand descends, her fingers snapping as her hand passes her nose in the same *mind meld* that Tonio used. She observes the gesture nervously but doesn't seem to be doing it of her own volition. MICHAEL is mesmerized by it, then he looks at her blankly, his question forgotten.)

You must have come from the gym around the corner. I never saw you there
.

CAROLINE

I would never go to a gymnasium.

MICHAEL

But you're extremely fit.

CAROLINE

I am extremely fit! Healthy and fit! I thrive on a clean vegan diet. I walk ten miles a day and I reward myself by haunting old bookstores. Recently I've been searching for a particular edition of Shakespeare's sonnets.

MICHAEL

I write sonnets.

CAROLINE

I love a man who writes sonnets. (Taking his hand.) Do you realize your hand is shaking? You must still be very upset. Perhaps you should shout some more to get it out of your system. I'll help you.

CAROLINE

THE FURY OF THE BANSHEES
POUNDING IN YOUR BLOOD,

MICHAEL

I HAVE A LONGING FOR THE KILL.

CAROLINE

THE BASEST HUMAN INSTINCTS
SWEEP YOU LIKE A FLOOD.

MICHAEL

AND TAKE POSSESSION OF MY WILL.
LET ME CURSE THE ONE I USED TO BLESS,
AND THE CAD WHO AUTHORED MY DISTRESS.
LET ME CURSE THEM BOTH
UNTIL THE DAY I KNOW THEY'VE PAID.
OH, I'VE BEEN PLAYED.

CAROLINE

One more time!

MICHAEL

I'VE BEEN BETRAYED!

CAROLINE

You're almost there!

MICHAEL

I'VE BEEN BETRAYED!

(He grabs CAROLINE and swings her into the air.)

MICHAEL

I can't believe I did that.

CAROLINE (giggling.)

Oooh. You're so . . . spontaneous!

MICHAEL

Spontaneous? Do you really think so? That means so much to me. Funny, it feels so natural to pour my heart out to you.

CAROLINE

It's because you intuitively know how careful I'll be with it.

MICHAEL

I've been longing for understanding, but I never expected to find it . . . in a phone booth.

(CAROLINE stands in front of the phone booth, opens her arms for MICHAEL and beckons him to follow her inside. He steps in after her and the phone booth walks off stage.)

Act I
Scene 4

Setting: The Loft. Lights up on interior.

At Rise: (TONIO, wheeling the bike, enters with HOLLY, who is windblown, giddy and wearing a leather jacket like his. He rests the bike against the wall.)

HOLLY
Wow! I loved it when you pulled a knife on the waiter.

TONIO
He should have thanked you for the tip. People need to be held accountable.

HOLLY
And the ride! That was the rushiest thing I ever did in my entire life! You do this all the time?

TONIO
The job is always different. I once did a very tidy tracheotomy in a bar room brawl scene. Being regimented would kill me.

HOLLY
Michael had me punching a timecard.

TONIO
You're way too scary for Mikey.

HOLLY
Me? Scary?

TONIO
He's just an ordinary man, but you – you're Elemental Woman. Like some wild electrical storm.

HOLLY
That's exactly how I think of myself. Like I could walk off and disappear into the jungle and never look back.

TONIO
Riding on a huge tiger?

(HOLLY looks shocked)

HOLLY
How did you know that?

TONIO

You fascinate me. I want to know everything about you.

HOLLY

You do?

TONIO

Everything that matters to you, like your latest book.

HOLLY

Michael never reads my books. He thinks it's better for the relationship that way. I read all of his . . . just to get even. He's a fine writer. Quite scholarly. I always liked that about him.

TONIO (seductively.)

I'm quite scholarly myself. I know every book you've ever written. Every word. Every punctuation mark.

HOLLY

But you're a stunt man.

TONIO

I'm not only a stunt man. Once upon a time I was a Rhodes Scholar. My dissertation was entitled "Science Fiction Fantasy, the Medium of the Contemporary Prophet." I asserted that science fiction fantasy is neither fiction, nor fantasy, and I quoted you all over the place.

HOLLY

Wow! As a Rhodes Scholar who has studied the Dark Angel novels, may I ask you a question?

TONIO

My broad scope of knowledge is ever at your disposal.

HOLLY

Lately I've been feeling that something is missing in the books, like I'm holding something back. It might be a part of why (confessing) I've got writer's block. What do you think?

TONIO

I think you're right. Something is missing.

HOLLY

What is it?

TONIO (seductively)

Honestly? Sex. You are a very sexual woman, Holly, but in your books, when the going gets hot – you fade to black. I promise, you don't have to do that anymore. It's not even fashionable. In today's literary world, you can go much, much farther . . . without going too far.

HOLLY

I don't know if I'd be comfortable.

TONIO

(*he takes her hand*) Close your eyes. Right now, imagine I'm your Dark Angel.

(Throughout the song Tonio is seducing her)

(Song: "DARK ANGEL")

IF I AM YOUR DARK ANGEL,
DO YOU KNOW ME RIGHT AWAY?
DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE TIMBRE OF MY VOICE?
OR DID YOU DREAM ME SILENT,
LIKE RUDOLPH VALENTINO,
AND WHEN I FINALLY SPEAK
DO YOU REJOICE?

IF I AM YOUR DARK ANGEL,
DO YOU RECOGNIZE MY TOUCH?
CAN I INCITE DESIRE WITH MY CARESS?
DO YOU KNOW YOUR SHOULDERS
ARE LONGING FOR MY KISSES?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT PASSION
YOU POSSESS?

DO YOU RECOGNIZE MY SCENT,
OR WERE YOUR DREAMS TOO STERILE
TO INCLUDE ALL OF THE ANIMAL OF ME?
AND WHAT ABOUT MY TASTE, HOLLY,
IN YOUR SECRET DREAMS
DID YOU EVER HAVE THE COURAGE TO TASTE ME?

IF I AM YOUR DARK ANGEL,
DO YOU KNOW ALL OF MY MOVES?
CAN YOU PUSH ME LIKE A KNIGHT ACROSS THE BOARD?
OR DO I SURPRISE YOU,
AND MAKE YOU BEG FOR MERCY?
WILL YOUR SURRENDER
BE ITS OWN REWARD?

(HOLLY looks at him hungrily. They kiss passionately, then she grabs his shirt and pulls him off stage through the bedroom door. Lights down)

ACT I
Scene 5

Setting: The Street in front of the Loft.

At Rise: MICHAEL and CAROLINE step out of the phone booth holding hands.

MICHAEL
I didn't realize how wonderful phonebooths are. We were so . . . close.

(Lighting becomes very magical) What's happening? Suddenly this entire street . . . the color, the sound of the night birds, the quality of the air. Am I dreaming?

CAROLINE
"Dreams are true while they last, and do we not all live in dreams?"

MICHAEL
Tennyson. *The Higher Pantheism*.

CAROLINE
How lovely that you know your Victorians.

MICHAEL
I've dedicated my life's work to them.

CAROLINE
That's unusual . . . for an American.

MICHAEL
When I was a lost kid, I found sanctuary in the library. I needed to read books by people who ate dinner at the same time every night . . . or at all. Kipling, Stevenson, Dickens. Then, a new door opened when I read *Frankenstein,* the greatest outsider of them all . . . when I thought I was. I couldn't believe it was written by "a girl," so I read the Brontës, Jane Austen, George Eliot. I swore an oath to let the whole world know about these magnificent Victorian women.

CAROLINE
You are a latter-day knight.

MICHAEL
My latest is about Julia Princep Stephen.

CAROLINE
Such a peach! Far too many only know her as Virginia Woof's mother. Such beauty. Such grace. Such intelligence . . . It's strange, but it feels as though we've been having this conversation forever. Something truly miraculous is happening. Oh, we are so fortunate.

MICHAEL

You are everything I've ever wanted in a woman.

CAROLINE

And you are everything I've ever wanted in a man.

(Song: "BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY")

SOME PEOPLE KNOW FROM THE MOMENT THEY'RE BORN,
WHAT IS THEIR PURPOSE,
TO WHAT THEY'RE FORESWORN.
SOME PEOPLE LIVE WITHOUT EVEN A DOUBT,
THERE'S ONE SPECIAL SOMETHING
THEIR LIFE'S ALL ABOUT.
`
I WAS BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY,
BORN TO FILL YOUR DAYS WITH JOY AND LIGHT.
I WAS BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY.
BORN TO BRING YOU COMFORT THROUGH THE NIGHT.
BORN TO LISTEN TO YOUR STORIES,
TO HOLD YOU WHEN YOU GRIEVE,
TO SHARE THE GLORIES
YOU WERE DESTINED TO ACHIEVE.

I WAS BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY,
BORN TO WHISPER LOVE SONGS IN YOUR EAR.
BORN TO BRING YOU PLEASURE,
LYING IN YOUR ARMS YEAR AFTER YEAR.

FROM THE MOMENT THAT I SAW YOU,
IT WAS CRYSTAL CLEAR TO ME,
I WAS BORN TO UNDERSTAND YOU,
BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY.
THAT'S MY DESTINY.

MICHAEL

We don't even know each other's names! I'm Michael.

CAROLINE

And I'm Caroline, my darling.

(They embrace.)

I WAS BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY,
BORN TO BE THE SECRET IN YOUR HEART.

CAROLINE (Cont.)
ALWAYS TO BE NEAR YOU,
EVEN DEATH WON'T TRY TO MAKE US PART.
FROM THE MOMENT THAT I FOUND YOU,
IT WAS CRYSTAL CLEAR TO ME,
I WAS BORN TO SHARE EACH MOMENT,
TO BE YOURS FOREVER.
YOU'RE MY DESTINY.

MICHAEL
Let's go home to my "stately pleasure dome."

CAROLINE
Coleridge. *Kubla Khan*. I was hoping you would ask me.

(They exit. Lights down on the street.

ACT I
Scene 6

Setting: The Loft. Lights up on The Loft.

At Rise: HOLLY and TONIO are sitting in the living room.

TONIO
When you dragged me into the bedroom, I didn't expect you to start jumping on the bed.

HOLLY
I was a little nervous. Michael and I used to jump on the bed. It was kind of our foreplay.

TONIO
Foreplay? (*flirtatiously*) Now you tell me? But I do like that crazy side of you, Holly. It reminds me of the scene in *Diamond Moons of Orion.* You know the one.

HOLLY
When the princess swings from the keelulu tree in her secret garden. That's one of my favorites.

TONIO
She's like a female Tarzan. I was waiting for her to pound on her chest and imitate the cries of jungle birds.

HOLLY
I used to feel that way most of the time.

TONIO
Oh?

HOLLY
I felt crazy, in a good way, and free. I wanted to write all the time. Michael and I had something very special. Then it all changed. I lost my appetite. And all the colors disappeared. . . . like that beautiful moment in the *The Wizard of Oz* when everything switches to Technicolor. . . only in reverse. But now the color's come back, and I'm hungry again!

(Song: "THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME")

I WANT TO WRITE A HUNDRED NOVELS AND A SYMPHONY,
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.
I WANT TO KISS YOUR RING AND GROVEL LIKE YOUR DEVOTEE,
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.
THE PRINCE OF CHIVALRY,
THAT'S WHO YOU ARE TO ME.

HOLLY (Cont.)
AND WHEN YOU SET ME FREE,
I LOVED YOU INSTANTLY.
YOU ARE THE BEST FOR ME,
IT SEEMS LIKE DESTINY.
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME. THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.

WHEN I'M WITH YOU MY HEART WOMP-WOMPS IN PERFECT SYMMETRY.
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.
I WANNA SKIP, I WANNA ROMP,
I'M JUST A WANNABE.
I WANNA BE WITH THEE.
I'M SWEET, AS YOU'LL AGREE –
COME TASTE YOUR HONEYBEE.
WHEN YOU ARE NEXT TO ME
I WANT YOU RECKLESSLY.
SUCH CRAZY CHEMISTRY,
NEXT STOP IS ECSTACY,
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME. THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.

(To audience.)
MAYBE IT'S JUST A CRAZY MOOD—
LIKE I'VE AWAKENED IN A DREAM.
MAYBE IT'S JUST AN INTERLUDE.
I'M HOT,
WHICH FOR A WHILE I WAS NOT.
I'M PERFECTLY RENEWED,
AND FULL OF GRATITUDE.
GRATITUDE.

I WANNA GIGGLE LIKE A CHILD ON A SUGAR SPREE,
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.
I WANNA CUDDLE UP IN BUBBLES
LIKE WE'RE MANATEE.
A BUBBLY JUBILEE.
YOU TURNED MY WORLD AROUND,
SO LOST BUT NOW I'M FOUND.
YOU HOLD THE MASTER KEY
TO MY REALITY.
I'D SAIL THE SEVENTH SEA.
THAT'S NOT HYPERBOLE,
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO TO ME.
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO . . . TO ME.

(HOLLY looks at Tonio, kisses him hungrily but in the middle of the kiss, he pushes her away while she keeps trying to get back into his arms.)

TONIO

Come on. We've got a world to see. When I take you, it will be in our own paradise, a tropical beach or a mountain top overlooking – the entire world! Go pack a bag.

HOLLY

I already did. (she pulls a duffle bag out from under the couch) But I can't wait!!

(She grabs him again and they kiss passionately. They are interrupted by the sound of MICHAEL and CAROLINE laughing offstage.)

HOLLY.

Oh, my God, it's Michael!

TONIO

Is there a back door?

HOLLY

Not even a fire escape.

(As the door is opening, HOLLY and TONIO hurriedly arrange themselves on the sofa. It's apparent they've been kissing. MICHAEL and CAROLINE enter. MICHAEL stares at HOLLY and TONIO. HOLLY stares at CAROLINE who looks around, notices the window, goes over and begins cleaning it with her skirt.)

HOLLY

What do you think you're doing? That's <u>my</u> window!

CAROLINE

There is soot in here. <u>Your</u> window was all smeary.

HOLLY

Soot? Don't be absurd. We don't have soot.

(To MICHAEL.)

Who's your neurotic little housefrau?

MICHAEL

(Ignoring HOLLY.)

I was afraid this place would be a mess. I'm sorry I brought you here, Caroline. (glaring at HOLLY) I assumed you two were out galivanting around. This disheveled damsel caught in the act of something . . . naughty, is Holly. Holly, this is Caroline, a dear friend of mine.

CAROLINE

How do you do, Holly. I've heard ever so much about you.

MICHAEL

(Indicating TONIO) And this is Holly's personal champion, Sir Machismo of Camelot.

TONIO

The name's Tonio. Just Tonio.

CAROLINE

And I'm Caroline. Just Caroline. Lovely to live in an age when one name will suffice.

(To HOLLY.)

This loft, it's charming. So . . . Ikea, isn't it?

(To MICHAEL.)

Why don't you sit down and let me fix you a nice hot cup of tea.

HOLLY

He hates tea.

MICHAEL

(To CAROLINE) A nice hot cup of tea would be perfect. I love how you always know exactly what I need.

(he lovingly kisses her hand)

CAROLINE

Thank you, my darling.

TONIO

You know, you two look very natural together. Like – mac and cheese. So, where did you first meet?

(MICHAEL pauses for a moment then rallies and tells the truth)

MICHAEL

I met Caroline coming out of a phone booth.

HOLLY

Very funny. How many years since we've had them?

MICHAEL

They still do, in England. It was last summer at Oxford. Quite coincidentally, Caroline was teaching the seminar I was taking on Victorian etiquette. She's a top authority.

HOLLY

What an amazing coincidence.

(Song: “COMMITMENTS”)

MICHAEL
SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A CAPTAIN IN THE RAF,
AND A LITERARY SCHOLAR OF SOME NOTE.

CAROLINE
I COLLECTED RARE EDITIONS
OF EVERY BRONTE CLASSIC.

MICHAEL
AND SHE’D READ EVERY WORD I EVER WROTE.
SO OF COURSE, I WAS QUITE FLATTERED.

CAROLINE
IT ONLY STANDS TO REASON.
HE STROLLED WITH ME AROUND THE CITADEL.

MICHAEL
BUT WHEN EVENING CAME,
WE JUST SHOOK HANDS,
AND WISHED EACH OTHER WELL.

CAROLINE
WE WISHED EACH OTHER WELL.

MICHAEL
I TOLD HER, I HAD COMMITMENTS,
YES, I WAS COMMITTED.

CAROLINE
A MAN WHO ADMITTED
HIS BODY’S OFF-LIMITS.

MICHAEL
VIRTUE UNASAILABLE.

CAROLINE
HE HAD COMMITMENTS,
YES, HE WAS COMMITTED.
NO DON’T BE MISTAKEN,
‘CAUSE HIS HEART WAS TAKEN.

MICHAEL
MY LOVE
WAS UNAVAILABLE.

CAROLINE
(To HOLLY and TONIO.)
And when did you two meet?

MICHAEL
(To CAROLINE.)
Tonight, in our loft, when he drove through the wall.

TONIO
Or do you mean the <u>first</u> time we met?

(HOLLY and MICHAEL are both surprised.)

MICHAEL
Holly?

HOLLY
While we're confessing – Tonio take it away!

TONIO
IT WAS A SCIENCE FICTION BOOK FAIR BACK IN "25".
THAT DAY HOLLY GAVE THE KEYNOTE SPEECH AT TEN.

HOLLY
HE WAS GUIDING A CONTINGENT
OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES.

TONIO
BUT I DUMPED THEM ALL TO SEE HER ONCE AGAIN.

HOLLY
OF COURSE, I THOUGHT HIM HUNKY,
I'M NOT IMPAIRED OF VISION,
AND PRAISE CAN BE AN APHRODISIAC.
BUT AS NIGHT APPROACHED, I SAID POLITELY,
NOW I MUST GET BACK.
I REALLY MUST GET BACK BECAUSE
I <u>HAD</u> COMMITMENTS,
YES, I <u>WAS</u> COMMITTED

TONIO
THE WOMAN ADMITTED
HER BODY'S OFF-LIMITS.
VIRTUE UNASSAILABLE.

(Underscoring.)

MICHAEL

So, you did . . . have commitments?

HOLLY

Absolutely. I can't believe you're even asking. And you?

MICHAEL

Ever since we met. And now?

HOLLY

(She hesitates.)

I suppose <u>everything</u> is up for grabs. It's scary, but it's exciting. It feels like the chance of a lifetime.

MICHAEL

But isn't that what we said about ourselves?

HOLLY

I know. But this is different.

MICHAEL

It does feel – extraordinary! I suppose the appropriate thing to do is to give each other the freedom to pursue something . . . more realistic.

HOLLY

Good luck, Michael.

(She offers her hand.)

MICHAEL

(He shakes it.)

You too.

(They rejoin their new loves, holding hands and gazing into their eyes.)

EVERYONE

I PROMISE, I HAVE COMMITMENTS,
YES, I AM COMMITTED.
I'VE WAITED A LIFETIME,
AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE MINE.
SUCH LUCK IS INCONCEIVABLE

EVERYONE (Cont.)
WE PROMISE, WE HAVE COMMITMENTS.
YES, WE ARE COMMITTED
IT SEEMED LIKE FOREVER,
BUT NOW WE'RE TOGETHER.
TRUE LOVE IS ACHIEVABLE

WE'RE SHOUTING, WE HAVE COMMITMENTS,
YES, WE ARE COMMITTED.
THE MAGIC'S ABOUNDING.
IT'S REALLY ASTOUNDING.
OUR LOVE IS UNBELIEVABLE!

(Song ends in a tableau.)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO
Scene I

Setting: The Loft.

At Rise: Lights up on tableau from the finale of ACT I, with the two new couples: HOLLY & TONIO and MICHAEL & CAROLINE smiling at their new paramours. They break into the chorus as though they never stopped singing.

EVERYONE

(Song: "COMMITMENTS REPRISE") (reprise not yet recorded.)

WE PROMISE, WE HAVE COMMITMENTS.
YES, WE ARE COMMITTED.
WE'VE WAITED FOREVER,
BUT NOW WE'RE TOGETHER
SUCH LUCK IS INCONCEIVABLE.

WE'RE SHOUTING, WE HAVE COMMITMENTS,
YES, WE ARE COMMITTED.
THE MAGIC'S ABOUNDING,
IT'S REALLY ASTOUNDING,
TRUE LOVE IS UNBELIEVABLE!

(They break out of the tableau and MICHAEL walks over and confronts HOLLY. TONIO and CAROLINE stand back and watch nervously.)

MICHAEL

Now that we've each agreed to pursue something more realistic, can we also agree that what you said about you and Just Tonio meeting at the Science Fiction Book Fair was science fiction?

HOLLY

Of course. And <u>your</u> phone booth? Very funny, Michael.

MICHAEL

But it was the truth.

HOLLY

Why would you tell me a blatant lie?

CAROLINE

Stop it! Michael is a good and honest man. That was the truth.

MICHAEL

Thank you, Caroline.

CAROLINE

I will always stand by you, my darling.

HOLLY

(Imitating CAROLINE'S British accent.)

Pardon me while I vomit.

MICHAEL

(To CAROLINE)

Don't take it personally, Caroline. She's deeply troubled by your loyalty.

(To HOLLY.)

How fascinating to see sweet Holly playing the bitch. It's disturbingly . . . becoming.

(TONIO pulls out a long dagger, leaps for MICHAEL and points it at his chest.)

TONIO

Bitch? Have you no respect for the woman you lived with, you brigand! Do you want me to kill him, Holly?

HOLLY

No. We'd have to deal with the body.

MICHAEL

(To CAROLINE, ignoring the others.)

Let's go fix something to eat.

CAROLINE

(picking up the cauliflower) I'll make us a very savory cauliflower casserole.

(CAROLINE exits through the kitchen door. MICHAEL starts to follow her but trips over the Holly's duffle bag.)

MICHAEL

Why is this bag out?

HOLLY

None of your business.

(MICHAEL looks into the bag and begins pulling out the items in it one by one.)

Heinlein. Swimsuit. Toothbrush. Nighty. My favorite! And your red mini dress!

.

HOLLY

(batting her lashes) I didn't think you liked my little girl dresses.

MICHAEL

(He looks at TONIO, then back to HOLLY, then heads for the kitchen but before he exits, he looks at HOLLY again.)

Will I be seeing you later?

HOLLY

I really don't know.

(MICHAEL exits through the kitchen door.)

TONIO

Come on, Holly. Staying here will only make things worse.

HOLLY

Kiss me again. Like before.

(He kisses her passionately, but she is only mildly responsive.)

It doesn't feel the way it did when we were alone.

TONIO

How could it? Love is a rare flower to be delicately nurtured, never publicly flaunted.

HOLLY

I don't know why my conscience is biting me when Michael is in the kitchen fondling his little sticky toffee pudding!

TONIO

Get your purse. I'll take the bag.

HOLLY

(In a panic.)

Wait! I don't think I can. I mean . . . all my files are here and my computer and my reviews and awards. I'll need a really big box. Way too big for a motorcycle.

TONIO

I know it's scary, Holly. You are the princess, standing on the brink of psychic annihilation because your relationship was forged in compromise. It's time to make your dreams come true and ride off into the cosmos together.

HOLLY

I don't think being <u>homeless</u> will help my writer's block.

TONIO

Homeless? You'll never be homeless again. My first doctorate was in architecture. I have some land in . . . Central Park. I'll build us a classic cabin which will appear deceptively small while being massive inside. We can even have a stable for our Harleys, black and shiny, like twin stallions.

HOLLY

I don't know. What if I can only write here, in this loft. What if I it turns out I need stability?

TONIO

Stability was killing you. I'm here to free you from all that – like your Dark Angel.

HOLLY

Hold on! Maybe I don't need to be freed. Maybe I just need to remember that I was free – (ominously) until my seventh birthday. I was a tomboy, the wild child who threw the cherries down from the top of the tree. My mom hated it. For my seventh birthday she gave me a doll, wearing a pink princess outfit, and said (sing-songy and scary) *Darling, this is a very special doll.* Oh, this story makes me wanna sing the blues.

(Song: "SUBMISSIVE BARBIE") (not yet recorded.)

WHEN I OPENED THE BOX, I WAS TRANSFIXED.
HER GUAZE HELD ME, GUARANTEED TO HYPNOTIZE.
SOME DIABOLIC PROCESS WITH THE GLASS.
OH, I WAS LOST INSIDE HER GORGEOUS, VAPID EYE-YI-YI-YI-YISE.
AND SHE CAME WITH A TEA SET AND SOME PEARLS,
FOR LITTLE GIRLS AND LUNCHEONS ON THE GRASS.
SHE COULD FOLD HERSELF INTO A TABLETOP.
AN' I COULD SET MY TINY TEACUP ON HER A-A-A-A-ASS.

SUBMISSIVE BARBIE.
SUBMISSIVE BARBIE.
I COULD BECOME THAT SWEET SUBMISSIVE GIRL
THAT BARBIE LET ME SEE.
NO MORE DE-FI-I-ANT,
I'D BE COMPLI-I-ANT.
AND EVERYONE AROUND
WOULD KISS THE GROUND,
AND THEN WALK OVER ME.

AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS SHE WAS RECALLED,
BUT SADLY, IT WAS WAY TOO LATE FOR ME.
I BELIEVED I NEEDED TO BE SAVED.
OH, SHE HAD TRAPPED ME AND I WAS NO LONGER FREE-E-E-E.

HOLLY

I WISHED I HAD HER PERFECT BOOBIES,
AND LEGS TOO LONG TO WALK.
I WISHED I HAD A LAUGH THAT FLOATED,
AND SAID DUMB THINGS WHEN I TALKED.

Don't you like my new shorts, Kenny?

(modulation)

OH, I FORGOT HOW TO PLAY SOFTBALL
OR HOW FORCEFUL I COULD BE.
OH, I BECAME SOMEONE I WASN'T,
AND I NEVER CLIMBED ANOTHER TREE!

SUBMISSIVE BARBIE.
SUBMISSIVE BARBIE.
NO, I WON'T BE THAT WEAK SUBMISSIVE THING
THAT BARBIE MADE ME SEE.
NO MORE FORGIVIN',
I WON'T JUST GIVE IN.
FOR GETTING IN MY HEAD
BARBIE GIRL IS DEAD. (she mimes shooting her)
AND NOW I'M READY,
READY, READY, READY, READY
TO BE ME-E-E- E.

TONIO

But Holly, you can't just kill her. She's part of you. Freud says we have to embrace our shadow selves.

HOLLY

(Breathless) Fuck Freud!!! Something big is happening, Tonio! Really big! Suddenly I'm ready to slay the dragons myself!

TONIO

Great! I'll teach you how.

HOLLY

I can figure it out.

TONIO

Great! I'll slay them with you.

HOLLY

I'm fuckin' self-reliant.

TONIO

Great! I'll be your bard.

HOLLY

I'm a writer!

TONIO

So I'll be your troubadour.

HOLLY

Give me some push back, baby.

TONIO

I'll push you back.

HOLLY

Come on, I want a bad boy.

TONIO

Let's go stick up a 7/11.

HOLLY

Oh, I love this, Tonio! You're teaching me so much about myself. What I want. What I don't want. If I still wanted to be rescued, you'd be my guy. But for us to work, I need you to play lots of roles. Sometimes I'll want to rescue you, but, honestly, it's hard to imagine you being vulnerable.

TONIO

For a stunt man, tough is kind of the standard.

HOLLY

So, vulnerable isn't in your repertoire?

TONIO

No! Of course it is! I'm more (fighting himself) vulnerable than you could possibly know.

(TONIO goes over to the bike, pulls out a lute and begins to play.)

(Song: "LET ME STAY AWHILE")

TONIO

BORN OUT OF DARKNESS
INTO THE LIGHT OF YOUR SMILE.
NOW I'VE COME HOME, HONEY,
WON'T YOU LET ME STAY AWHILE.
I WAS SO LONELY,
THE YEARS THAT WE WERE APART.

TONIO (Cont.)

NOW I'M WITH YOU,
CAN I LET YOU SEE MY TENDER HEART?
I ALWAYS TRIED TO HIDE MY FEARS.
I NEVER LET YOU SEE MY TEARS.
BUT NOW THE TOUGH GUY'S NOT ENOUGH.
THIS TOUGH GUYS NOT SO TOUGH.
AND THAT'S MY SECRET.

LET ME BE GENTLE,
DON'T TURN AWAY FROM ME NOW.
JUST COME AND HOLD ME, WE'LL
MAKE IT ALL WORK OUT SOME HOW.
I KNOW YOU LOVE ME,
I'VE SEEN THE LIGHT IN YOUR SMILE.
I'M FINALLY HOME, HONEY,
WON'T YOU LET ME STAY AWHILE.
I'M FINALLY HOME, HOLLY,
WON'T YOU LET ME STAY AWHILE.

I know you want me, Holly Garland.

HOLLY

Just Holly, for God's sake!

TONIO

(He's not sure what to do, so he begins again.)

I know you want me, Holly. Fate brought us together.

HOLLY

It did feel like that, from our first kiss. It was so familiar . . .as though I'd already imagined it.

TONIO

But you had. That's why it's so miraculous.

(He goes over to his bike, picks up his helmet and plucks up the feather.)

(Trumpet Fanfare.)

A token, milady.

(He kneels in front of HOLLY and presents her with the feather. She examines it carefully, a look of shocked recognition on her face.)

HOLLY

No, it can't be.

TONIO

But it is.

(He gently takes the feather from her and lovingly tucks it into her hair.)

HOLLY

The roseate feather from the wing of the Zarathian waterfowl? You're really . . .?

TONIO?

(He bows.)

Your Dark Angel, m'lady. Your need for me was so powerful, you called me here.

HOLLY

I did? Oh, shit! Oh, shit! That makes me feel so . . . guilty.

TONIO

Guilty? You manifested me here, in the real world – something that has probably never happened in the entire history of the human race, and all you feel is guilty? Why?

HOLLY

'cause I'm not feeling the same way about you anymore.

TONIO

Oh, how surprising. Don't you wonder why that might be?

HOLLY

Of course I do.

TONIO

Do you find me different from the perfect HERO I was when I drove through your wall?

HOLLY

Honestly? Yes.

TONIO

Are you <u>as</u> attracted to who I've become as you were to the HERO I was?

HOLLY

No.

TONIO

You liked me because I was dangerous. Unpredictable. A little scary?

HOLLY

Yes. Yes. And yes.

TONIO

Do I still have ANY of those qualities?

HOLLY

No. No. And No.

TONIO

That's because (Yelling) YOU FUCKED ME UP! You've been making me try on different personalities like Halloween costumes. I AM A HERO! . . .

HOLLY

You're just shifting the blame because things aren't working out between us and you're disappointed.

TONIO

(Trying to maintain his self-control.)

In a normal situation that psychological bullshit might be true. . . ATTENTION HOLLY GARLAND! THIS IS NOT A NORMAL SITUATION. You wrote me! Then, like a petulant goddess, you unwittingly called me here! But that wasn't enough. By whatever laws are in operation, I now have to change with your every thoughtless whim! I have had to become a scholar. I've got a headache from how much crap is in my head. And a licensed architect. I can do a rendering of the Taj Majal in an hour and a half. But I don't want to be a scholar or an architect. And you can bet your ass I don't want to be (spitting out the word) vulnerable. So? What if I don't want to be who you want me to be? Why don't **I** get a say in who I become? Why should the Changer have all the power?

(His voice rises until he's yelling.)

WHAT ABOUT THE CHANGEE???

HOLLY

(Confidentially.)

Come on, don't you like the way we've filed down some of those macho edges. I never realized I'd written the Dark Angel quite so . . . butch. I guess I have been holding myself back in my work. But not anymore. (seductively) Come over here and kiss me softly like a woman would.

(He kisses her very softly, then realizes what he's doing and pushes her away.)

Come on, Michael did it sometimes. What's the matter? Aren't you man enough to be my woman?

(Dead silence.)

TONIO

(Seething.) If I have to pour molten lead in my ears to drown out your perilous Siren's song, I will do it. But I will never again be manipulated by you. I QUIT.

(He starts to exit, but she stands in his way.)

HOLLY

Wait! You can't do that! You're my creation!

(She stomps her foot, having a small tantrum.)

HOLLY

I don't want you to leave! And you have to do what I say.

TONIO

Oh yeh???

(TONIO pulls the feather out of HOLLY's hair, waves it in front of her and starts to eat it. Then he effortlessly pushes her out of his way with one finger, and strides off the stage. He stops and turns to the audience.)

TONIO

Check it out! I've got my stride back!

(He exits through the front door.)

HOLLY

(To the audience.)

Being a writer is so much more complicated than I ever imagined. No wonder I got writers' block. It's self-protective.

(She runs after TONIO.)

Tonio, wait. I was only joking!

(She exits after him through the front door.)

ACT II
Scene 2

Setting: The Loft.

At Rise: Lights up on MICHAEL and Caroline. They are peeking out the kitchen door.

CAROLINE

I'm sure I heard the front door slam.

MICHAEL

Good. I'd rather not run into them.

CAROLINE

You seem a little fussy. Didn't you like the cauliflower?

MICHAEL

It was perfect, but I need some distraction.

CAROLINE

(MICHAEL crosses to the sofa and CAROLINE runs into the kitchen. She comes out holding a pile of aprons in her arms.)

I have just the things.

MICHAEL

(He picks up an apron.) In spite of who I thought I was, I've discovered I have a very limited capacity for domesticity.

CAROLINE

Trust me, nothing can be more distracting than aprons.

(She pulls them out one by one, while leading MICHAEL into her seduction.)

Large spanking white chef's aprons. And those strapping leather ones for grilling. And let's not forget the classic little French maid half-aprons . . . with lace around the bottom.

(She cups his hand over her bottom and moans with pleasure)

You were beginning to think I was a little . . . prim, weren't you? Lacking a certain, *je ne sais quoi*?

MICHAEL

Perhaps . . . a little.

CAROLINE

Well, you're the one who can decide what that *"quoi"* is.

MICHAEL

But *je ne sais quoi* translates as "something that is undefinable."

CAROLINE

That's true for most people. But you, Michael, are not most people. You are like a master sculptor. A woman is clay in your hands. Touch me. I'm warm. I'm loving. I'm pliable.

(She turns him toward her and puts his hands on her breasts.)

Shape me, Michael. Make me the way you want me.

(He keeps holding her breasts, breathing heavily.)

MICHAEL

You can't just be whatever I want you to be. There'd be no surprises.

CAROLINE

No surprises! Have you ever considered that if you were spontaneous all the time, which you are quite capable of being, you might continually surprise yourself?

MICHAEL

Not yet. But the question fascinates me. Honestly, I just want you to be yourself

CAROLINE

(She rolls her eyes.)

That would be a very unusual response. Are you absolutely sure? Don't you want to tinker with me even a little?

MICHAEL

Well, maybe a little.

CAROLINE

Then allow me to present a delectable appetizer platter with a sampling of the following flavors of kisses: elegant, trashy, domestic, gentle, assertive and very substantial.

(CAROLINE puts her arms around him and kisses him for a very long time. At the end of the kiss, he can barely breathe.)

MICHAEL

Wow! Are you schizophrenic . . . but in a good way?

CAROLINE

(disdainfully) No, I'm a woman, and we cannot be so easily defined.

MICHAEL

Can I make up my own flavor?

HOLLY

Of course. I love your creativity.

MICHAEL

I would like to sample a spunky wench, who understands a little bit of the English?

CAROLINE

Spoken as a true aficionado of the Victorians.

(She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a black scarf which she ties around Michael's eyes. Then she begins stripping.)

MICHAEL

Am I missing something good?

CAROLINE

Very, very good.

(CAROLINE unzips her lady-like outfit and reveals a Victorian bustier and fishnet stockings. She runs her hand slowly up Michael's leg to the top of his head. He tries to grab her arm.)

CAROLINE

Patience, Michael. Enjoy the slow sizzle of desire . . . or I'll have to punish you.

(She pulls off his blindfold and reveals her new look, then walks over to the bike, reaches into the saddlebag and pulls out a whip, which she snaps.)

(Song: "BITCH IN MY BLOOD.")

(She sings with fervor, as though she's just been let out of a box.)

PEOPLE TELL ME, I'M NOT ALWAYS NICE.
PEOPLE TELL ME, I CAN TURN INTO ICE.
OR SCREAM AND CURSE,
OR THEN WHAT'S WORSE,
I'LL TURN YOU INTO DIRTY VERSE.
BUT DON'T COMPLAIN, 'CAUSE JUST LIKE ME,
YOU STILL ENJOY SOME PAIN.

YOU DON'T REALLY WANT AN INGÉNUE.
YOU DON'T REALLY WANT A SWEETIE PIE.
YOU'D GET TIRED OF AN ANGEL WITH WINGS,
UNLESS SHE COULD TEACH YOU A FEW NASTY THINGS.
YOU LIKE THE TWIST IN MY MIND,
THE FIRE IN MY EYES,
THE POUT ON MY LIPS
AND THE HEAT IN MY . . . SIGHS.
YOU LIKE THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD.
YOU LIKE THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD.

CAROLINE (Cont.)

PEOPLE TELL ME MY TEMPER IS HOT.
AND I'M CRAZY, JUST ENOUGH. NOT A LOT.
I'M IMPATIENT.
AND I'M PROUD.
AND I STAND OUT IN A CROWD.
BUT YOU'RE NOT LOOKING FOR A LAMB,
YOU LIKE THE WAY I AM.

YOU DON'T REALLY WANT AN INGÉNUE.
YOU DON'T REALLY WANT A SWEETIE PIE.
YOU'D GET TIRED OF AN ANGEL WITH WINGS,
UNLESS SHE COULD TEACH YOU A FEW NASTY THINGS.
YOU LIKE THE TWIST IN MY MIND,
THE FIRE IN MY EYES,
THE POUT ON MY LIPS,
AND THE HEAT IN MY THIGHS.
YOU LIKE THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD.
YOU LIKE THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD.

(Recit underscored and addressed to the audience.)

You may ask yourselves, is she really a bitch? And I will tell you. Sometimes. But the important thing is not that I am a bitch, but that I am willing to be a bitch.

(She starts swinging the whip around with surprising skill.)

YOU LIKE THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD.
YOU LIKE THE BITCH IN MY BLOOD.
YOU LIKE THE BITCH.

(She purrs like a large cat.)

Ni-ice.

(Whip in hand, she pushes MICHAEL onto the floor and straddles him, victorious. He pulls himself up, looking like he's ready to grab her.)

MICHAEL

(seductively) Pretty please, could you put on Holly's little red dress? It's in the duffle. That dress really turns me on.

CAROLINE

(Furious, she cracks the whip loudly.)

Tell me you're joking! I stripped down. I crawled on the ground. I whipped you, which I must say, felt good . . . because you deserved it! I titillated you until you could barely breathe, and instead of jumping on my bones, you want me to dress up like Holly? What is the point of exerting oneself? I don't even like her!

MICHAEL

That's not what I meant. I started thinking about that little red dress, and how much hotter it would look on you because you were so . . . painfully amazing.

CAROLINE

Yes. I was, wasn't I. And I could have been painfully amazing a whole lot sooner if you'd actually been historically accurate and not written Julia Princep Steven as such a little goody goody.

MICHAEL

I was dealing with historical facts. You don't re-write history.

CAROLINE

Everyone else does. The books in your library on your favorite Victorian women – nothing but projections of the authors' fantasies. You have to know that among other things I was an extremely popular artists' model. I was a sensual woman. I was never a prig!

MICHAEL

Wait! You were . . .? You're talking as though you're Julia.

CAROLINE

Duh! Who did you think I was? Oh, you didn't buy that cock and bull story I rather brilliantly concocted under the pressure and stress of having just been materialized into some time and place that is very strange . . . at best? I gave you more credit than that as my CREATOR

MICHAEL

(aghast.)You really are Julia?

CAROLINE

More or less. Occasionally I seem to be channeling one of your other Victorian sweethearts. Every hour or so I have one of Mary Shelly's obsessive thoughts about Percy shagging my girlfriends and I want to cry. Infidelity is so tacky.

MICHAEL

You should talk. You tried to seduce me, an almost-engaged man.

CAROLINE

(She cracks the whip with disgust.)

Ah! Blame shifting! I hate it even more than infidelity. It's so babyish. I only tried to seduce you because you literally made me do it. You made me do everything I've done since I showed up. You wrote me. You invoked me. You changed me. You deranged me. And now, you want to turn me into Holly! I fucking quit. I am woman, hear me roar.

(She beats her chest, picks up the whip, swings it around her head and walks proudly toward the kitchen door. She stops and turns back to MICHAEL.)

CAROLINE
Bet you thought I was going to break into another song. Well, you don't deserve it.

(CAROLINE exits into the kitchen, leaving MICHAEL stunned. He shakes his head and exits through the front door.)

ACT II
Scene 3

Setting: The Loft.

At Rise: TONIO enters through the front door and sits down on the sofa. CAROLINE walks out of the kitchen and sees him.

CAROLINE

I thought I could have a little privacy. But no. What are you doing here. Why aren't you with your little honey bitch. Did something happen between you?

TONIO

Honey bitch? Now that was catty. Who are you talking about?

CAROLINE

Who do you think I'm talking about? Something has seriously shifted. What did you say to Holly?

TONIO

I told her who I was. And where I came from.

CAROLINE

So who are you and where did you come from?

(Tonio's left arm rises above his head and his hand descends in the *mind meld*, his fingers snapping as his hand passes his nose.)

CAROLINE

Oh, no, no you don't. I can do that stupid move, too. I don't know how, but it comes with the territory.

TONIO

What do you think the territory is?

CAROLINE

I haven't a clue. Or who's in charge. If I did, I'd lodge some complaints. So what did you tell Holly?

TONIO

I admitted I'm her creation. The Dark Angel in all her novels.

CAROLINE

I bet that went over well.

TONIO

Too well.

CAROLINE

What does that mean?

TONIO

None of your business.

CAROLINE

If you're the Dark Angel, why don't you have wings?

TONIO

My wings were ripped off when my ship was attacked by bloodthirsty intergalactic pirates in the third volume of Holly's trilogy, *East of the Pleiades*.

CAROLINE

I don't believe you. Why am I talking to you? I don't even like you.

TONIO

Am I supposed to care? I have had more than enough character assassination for one night. And I must say, you have extraordinarily bad manners for a so-called Victorian lady.

(Song: "REAL AS A ROCK")

ADMIT IT.
DON'T BE TOO SHY TO ADMIT IT.
NO NEED TO PLAY A PART.
I SEE INTO YOUR HEART.
ADMIT IT.
DON'T BE AFRAID TO ADMIT IT.
THERE'S NOTHING TO CONCEAL.
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT REAL

CAROLINE

I'M AS REAL AS SHE IS.
LISTEN, GALACTIC JOCK,
YOU'D BETTER GET IT STRAIGHT
OR I'LL DEMONSTRATE,

(She holds up a fist.)

I'M AS REAL AS A ROCK.
I'M MORE REAL THAN YOU ARE.
NO ONE WOULD DISAGREE.
YOU'RE JUST A BIG BUFFOON,

CAROLINE (Cont.)
YOU'RE HOLLY'S PET CARTOON,
YOU WASTE MY TIME BY TALKING TO ME.

WHO CARES WHO I WAS BEFORE,
I'M NOBODY'S DREAM ANYMORE.
I HAVE A BEAUTY MEN PURSUE.
I'VE MASTERED SHAKESPEARE, CHAUCER, TOO.
OH, I'M MORE REAL THAN YOU.

TONIO
I'M AS REAL AS HE IS.
LISTEN, YOU PRETTY FREAK,
SURE, I'M A BIT CONFUSED,
'CAUSE I STAND HERE ACCUSED
OF BEING STUPID AND WEAK.
I'M MORE SOLID THAN YOU ARE.
HANDSOME, STRONG AND SINCERE.
WHAT'S MORE I'M PLAIN ELATED
WE WEREN'T TERMINATED
ONCE THEY TIRED OF HAVING US HERE.

I LIKE WHAT I WAS BEFORE.
I'M NOBODY'S DREAM ANYMORE.
I STAND AS ONE AMONG THE FEW.
I HAVE A CODE TO WHICH I'M TRUE.
OH, I'M MORE REAL

CAROLINE
NO, I'M MORE REAL.

TONIO
NO, I'M MORE REAL

CAROLINE
NO, I'M MORE REAL THAN YOU.

TONIO
Suddenly we're doing grand opera?

CAROLINE
Why the hell not?

TONIO & CAROLINE
OH, I'M MORE REAL THAN YOU.

CAROLINE

Bugger off, bike boy.

(CAROLINE goes into the kitchen and after a beat, TONIO follows her.)

ACT II
Scene 4

Setting: The Loft.

At Rise: Lights down on the loft and up on the apron where Michael is sitting on the bench. He addresses the audience.

MICHAEL

She fired me! This has to be a violation of some major cosmic law. She's my creation . . . more or less! Doesn't that give me some kind of proprietary rights? And I never even questioned who she was.

(Imitating CAROLINE.)

"You're very special, Michael. You're like a master sculptor. Make me the way you want me." What real person says something like that? Even if it is the truth.

(Song: "HOLLY")

HOLLY'S SO STRAIGHT FORWARD,
OUTSPOKEN AND RIDICULOUSLY FREE.

(Spoken) Compared to me.

SURE, SHE GETS MOODY,
BUT SHE'D NEVER CHANGE HER PERSONALITY.
AND SHE ALWAYS MADE UP FOR WHAT I LACK.
DID I HAVE TO LOSE HER TO WANT HER BACK?
HOLLY. HOLLY.
THERE'S SO MUCH WE'VE BEEN THROUGH.
CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW MUCH I'M MISSING YOU.

HOLLY'S SIMPLY HOLLY,
AND CLEARLY SHE'S THE WOMAN MEANT FOR ME.
I MAY HAVE LOST HER 'CAUSE ITS EASIER TO WANT A FANTASY.
AND I KNOW SHE LOVED ME,
AND I LOVE HER.
BUT WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THE WAY WE WERE.
HOLLY. HOLLY.
THERE'S SO MUCH WE'VE BEEN THROUGH.
CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW MUCH I'M MISSING YOU.

(Spotlight up on HOLLY, in the loft.)

HOLLY

(To the audience.)

GUESS MY FOOT WAS ALWAYS OUT THE DOOR,
WHILE HIS HEART WAS ON HIS SLEEVE.
AND I NEVER REALLY TRIED TOO HARD,
I KNEW THAT I COULD LEAVE.
NOW ALL HIS ECCENTRICITIES
ARE DANCING THROUGH MY HEAD.
AND ALL THE WORDS I THINK OF
ARE THE WORDS I LEFT UNSAID.

MICHAEL MADE A HOME FOR ME,
BUT ALL I EVER DID WAS PUT HIM DOWN.
MICHAEL'S MOSTLY POSITIVE,
WHILE I WEAR MY DESPAIR LIKE IT'S A CROWN.
AND I'M GLAD HE'S STABLE,
AND KIND AND FAIR,
BUT I NEVER THANKED HIM
FOR BEING THERE.

MICHAEL, MICHAEL,
THERE'S SO MUCH TO UNDO.
CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW MUCH I'M MISSING YOU.

MICHAEL

HOLLY,
HOLLY,

HOLLY

MICHAEL, I MISS YOU

THERE'S SO MUCH WE'VE BEEN THROUGH.

MICHAEL,
MICHAEL,

HOLLY, I MISS YOU.

I CAN'T HELP MISSING YOU.

MICHAEL

HOLLY,
HOLLY,
HOLLY.

(Lights slowly fade.)

ACT II
Scene 5

Setting: The Loft.

At Rise: TONIO and CAROLINE enter from the kitchen. She still has the whip, which she compulsively swings).

TONIO
For God's sake, Caroline, put that thing down. I know you don't trust me, but there's no need to be armed. We'll have a much better chance of surviving if we work together. We have so much in common.

CAROLINE
Like immaculate conception?

TONIO
I'll give you that one. But this is serious. Both of our lives are at stake . . . even though we've no idea if we're really alive. I like it here! I have no intention of returning to the inside of a book.

(She puts down her whip)

CAROLINE
Kindles are worse. Being pixilated makes my skin itch. So, what's your big idea?

TONIO
I don't have any. While Michael was busy turning you into a pillar of oozing strength and sexuality, Holly was sucking out all my masculinity. Now all I have is . . . (disgusted) feelings.

I don't even know if I have a . . . (Points to his groin.)

Holly never wrote me any "real" sex scenes. Maybe I'm like one of those Ken dolls she used to play with. She'd put teeny cotton balls in the crotches of their Speedos. What if that's what I am?

CAROLINE
Don't worry. I've had a couple of husbands, etcetera. I can handle this.

(She pulls TONIO into a tight clinch, nibbles on his ear and then licks his neck until he moans. Then she puts her leg between his.)

CAROLINE
Wow! No worries. You are an excellent specimen. . . . Was I too brazen?

TONIO

Too brazen! My entire existence has been one enormous cock tease. Flirtation. Seduction. End of chapter. If we weren't fighting for our lives, we'd be on the floor right now, howling like wolves! But we've got work to do. If we wanna stay here, we need their lives.

CAROLINE

(shocked) You want to "off" them?

TONIO

Of course not! Wouldn't that be violating some . . . Commandments?

CAROLINE

Give me a minute. I'll think of something!

(CAROLINE shakes her head like she's trying to get her brain back in place.)

I've got it! *As You Like It*!

TONIO

I'm sure I'll like it.

CAROLINE

No, Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, a story of identity theft, a common theme in Shakespeare and even opera. Mozart. Verde. They all use it. You and I will play Holly and Michael and steal their lives. At the very least, we'll completely confuse them. Then we can take whatever we want. Wallets. Keys. IDs. Their loft!

TONIO

Wow! You're brilliant! You've created a plan for this most noble of quests . . . saving our own asses.

CAROLINE

Go put on Michael's sweater.

TONIO

His clothes are ridiculous. (disgusted.) Tweeeeds! I only wear black.

CAROLINE

If I have to give up this fabulous strumpet look for one of Holly's tacky little girl dresses . . ..

(She pulls Holly's little red dress out of the open duffle and puts it on.)

TONIO

Okay, if I have to.

(He puts on Michael's tweed jacket.)

CAROLINE

I know it's a long shot, but suppose we make it through this, and get to have a life. What do you want to be?

TONIO

I wanna be a hero again. I was literally born a hero in Holly's book about an underground kingdom, *Danger is Beneath Us.* I promise you, danger was never beneath me.

CAROLINE

I was a hero, too . . . a Suffragist, dedicated to helping the downtrodden. As I was . . . arriving, I happened to notice a great many downtrodden. I believe a Victorian feminist is exactly what's needed here. Maybe we can work together.

(TONIO offers his hand and they shake.)

BOTH

Deal.

(Song: "BIKERS IN CAMELOT")

TONIO

WE CAN RIDE ROUND THE CITY
SAVING CITIZENS IN DISTRESS.
THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO HERE.

CAROLINE

WE CAN RIDE ROUND THE CITY,
EXHIBITING LARGESSE.
THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO HERE.

TONIO

NOT A MOMENT TO BE HELPLESS,
NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE COMMAND.

CAROLINE

WE'LL WEAR ARMOR BY ARMANI
AS WE GIVE A HELPING HAND.

TONIO

WE'LL BE BIKERS IN CAMELOT TOGETHER.

CAROLINE

HEROES IN SATIN, LACE AND LEATHER.

BOTH
WE WILL FOIL THE PLOT,
GET THE VILLIAN'S CAUGHT,
'CAUSE WE'RE BIKERS IN CAMELOT.

TONIO
WE WILL RACE ON OUR HARLEYS,
SAILING OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE.
THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO HERE.

CAROLINE
WE WILL SING THROUGH THE SUBURBS
AND INSPIRE THE NATIVE PRIDE.
THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO HERE.
YOU'RE PERFECTLY PREPARED,
A MAN WHO DARES TO DARE.

TONIO
YOU'RE CLEARLY THE EMBODIMENT
OF NOBLE SAVIOR FAIRE.

BOTH
WE'LL BE BIKERS IN CAMELOT TOGETHER.
HEROES NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER.
AND WE'LL NEVER STOP,
'TIL THE WANKERS ROT.
'CAUSE WE'RE BIKERS IN CAMELOT.

BOTH
WE'LL BE BIKERS IN CAMELOT TOGETHER.
HEROES IN SATIN LACE AND LEATHER.
AND THE QUAINTEST THOUGHT –
WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT,
'CAUSE WE'RE BIKERS IN CAMELOT.
WE'LL BE SWEETHEARTS IN CAMELOT.
(Turning toward each other.)
LET'S BE LOVERS IN CAMELOT.

(They embrace and wheel the bike out the front door, which opens for them, then closes. We hear the engine revving as the lights go down.)

ACT II
Scene 6

Setting: The Loft.

At Rise: HOLLY and MICHAEL enter separately and meet center stage.

MICHAEL

Can we talk?

HOLLY

I was afraid you'd never speak to me again.

MICHAEL

That couldn't happen. But before I say anything else, please let me apologize. Ever since you went to that last writers' conference, I started acting like a total dick. Possessive. Controlling. Terrified of losing you. And sooo boring, it was no wonder you got writers' block.

HOLLY

The writers' block is on both of us. We just needed to talk about it.

MICHAEL

I guess if we could have, we would have.

HOLLY

If that's your pitch for forgiveness? Forgive this . . . Tonio walked out on me. I'm paraphrasing, but he said I had sucked all the juice out of him.

MICHAEL

That was a cruel thing for him to say. What did you do?

HOLLY

(Very upset.)

I sucked all the juice out of him. Then I tried to turn him into you. I even asked him to kiss me like a woman would.

MICHAEL

Really sorry I missed that one.

HOLLY

I'm so ashamed. Am I some kind of soul eater? A vampire?

MICHAEL

Aren't we all? Caroline fired me, too. I ended up turning her into Super Madam. If she and Tonio ever get together they can start a franchise of Intergalactic brothels.

HOLLY

Trust me, they're already out there.

MICHAEL

We couldn't even write better mates, so we tried to turn our fantasies into each other. I find that endearing . . . and very complimentary.

HOLLY

Part of me feels sub-standard that I couldn't even make it work.

MICHAEL

(laughing) Wow! You mean, you couldn't <u>really</u> ride off with a figment of your own imagination? That's why I love you. Even when I thought we'd totally decimated the relationship, I remembered Princess Rowenda's farewell line to the Dark Angel:

"When the light of the rising sun shivers on the turrets of my father's castle, I will bless you."

I knew I would always bless you.

HOLLY

You read *Lost in the Garden of Dahlias*? I thought that was against the rules.

MICHAEL

Oh, those horrid rules! By the time I realized how cruel they were, I was too ashamed to ask you to read <u>my</u> work . . . or admit that I <u>never</u> stopped reading yours. It is an honor to live with such a fine writer, m'lady.

HOLLY

And thou m'lord. I even memorized the sonnets you wrote last year:

"She turned away and left a trail of ice and tiny ivory bones upon my heart."
Whatever it was I did, I wish I could take it back.

MICHAEL

It's all right. We forgot how to be loving. But I'm not worried. (seductively) We used to do it <u>so</u> well.

HOLLY

Do you remember the first time?

MICHAEL

You were wearing a pale blue slip, and all I had to do was look at you . . .

HOLLY

And now?

MICHAEL

All I have to do is look at you.

(Song: “HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS”)

MICHAEL

JUST STAND THERE,
RIGHT THERE HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS.
JUST STAND THERE,
AND WATCH ME.

HOLLY

I’LL STAND HERE,
HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS.
I’LL STAND HERE,
AND WATCH YOU.

HOLLY

YOU CAN BE THE STRANGER
WHO CALLS ME WITH HIS EYES.

MICHAEL

YOU CAN BE THE DANGER
AND THE SURPRISE.

HOLLY

THERE ISN’T ANYTHING
WE CAN’T DO.

BOTH

SUDDENLY IT’S ALL NEW.

MICHAEL

I SEE YOU,
RIGHT THERE STANDING LIKE AN EMPRESS.
A GODDESS.
LIKE MOONLIGHT.

HOLLY

I SEE YOU,
PROWLING LIKE A PANTHER.
AN OUTLAW.
A SHADOW.

MICHAEL

YOU CAN BE THE SIREN,
WHO LURES ME FROM THE SEAS.

HOLLY
YOU CAN BE THE MASTER OF MYSTERIES.

BOTH
ALL OF THE PASSION
WE ONCE KNEW.
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE BUT YOU.

DON'T STAND THERE,
HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS.

MICHAEL
COME CLOSER.
AND TOUCH ME.

HOLLY
COME CLOSER.
AND TOUCH ME.

(HOLLY and MICHAEL embrace and end up entwined on the floor. Tango underscoring begins and TONIO and CAROLINE enter wearing HOLLY and MICHAEL'S clothes. They begin to tango, but trip over HOLLY & MICHAEL, which starts the recitative for the mini-opera.

(Song: "IMPOSTERS"

CAROLINE
IEEEHHH!
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN OUR HOME?

TONIO
SHAME ON YOU BOTH!
CAN'T YOU AFFORD A MOTEL?
YOU PEOPLE ARE DISGUSTING!

CAROLINE
HOW DID YOU GET IN?
WAS IT THE SUPER?
THAT CREEP!
WHAT DID YOU PAY HIM?

TONIO
(To CAROLINE.)
I TOLD YOU,
WE SHOULD HAVE TIPPED HIM MORE AT CHRISTMAS.

HOLLY
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ARE YOU CRAZY?

TONIO & CAROLINE
YOU CHOOSE OUR PARLOR FOR YOUR TRYST,
HOW VERY CRUDE.
THEN CALL US CRAZY,
ARE YOU NUTS OR MERELY RUDE?

MICHAEL & HOLLY
(To TONIO.)
YOU'RE WEARING ALL MY (HIS) FAVORITE CLOTHES,
YOU LOUSY HACK.
WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU TO GIVE UP WEARING
ONLY BLACK!

TONIO
WHAT A CLEVER TECHNIQUE.
DOES IT WORK?
DO YOU SAY TO THE ELDERLY DOWAGERS AS YOU ROB THEM,
PERDONÉ,
YOU'RE WEARING MY DIAMONDS.

MICHAEL
ALL RIGHT.
IF YOU LIVE HERE,
WHO ARE WE?

CAROLINE & TONIO
(To the audience.)
THEY'RE WRITERS,
THEY'RE ARTISTS,
THEY'LL CONSIDER ANY OPTION THAT'S PRESENTED.
WE HAVE TO CONVINCE THEM
THAT WE'RE REAL AND THEY'RE INVENTED.

HOLLY
WAIT, MICHAEL.
YOU CAN'T ASK THEM.
I KNOW WHO WE ARE.
I'M HOLLY AND YOU'RE . . .

CAROLINE
NO. I'M HOLLY.

TONIO
(Pointing to CAROLINE.)
SHE'S HOLLY!

MICHAEL
(Pointing to HOLLY.)
SHE'S HOLLY!

HOLLY
I’M HOLLY!

MICHAEL
AND I’M MICHAEL.

TONIO
NO. I’M MICHAEL.

HOLLY	CAROLINE	MICHAEL & TONIO
(Pointing to MICHAEL.)	(Pointing to TONIO.)	(Pointing to themselves.)
HE’S MICHAEL!	HE’S MICHAEL!	I’M MICHAEL!

ALL
(Pointing to their counterparts and singing to the audience.)
THEY’RE IMPOSTORS.
THEY’RE IMPOSTORS.
THIS IS AWFUL.
THEY’RE IMPOSTORS.

HOLLY
CALL MY FATHER.

MICHAEL
CALL MY MOTHER.

HOLLY
CALL MY SISTER.

MICHAEL
CALL MY BROTHER.

CAROLINE
DON’T BE NASTY

TONIO
DON’T BE RASTY

CAROLINE
VITRIOLIC.

TONIO
HYPERBOLIC.

HOLLY
THIS IS REALLY DIABOLIC.

TONIO
WE'RE WRITERS

WE'RE ARTISTS.
AND YOU ARE NOTHING

BUT A COMMON DASTARD.

YOU'VE ONLY CONVINCED US
THAT YOU'RE STONED

OR MAYBE PLASTERED.

CAROLINE &TONIO
WE'RE WRITERS

WE'RE ARTISTS.

WE'RE ALWAYS OPEN-
MINDED AND ACCEPTING

BUT YOU PUSH THE LIMIT.
YOU PREY ON THE UNSUSPECTING.

HOLLY

HE WAS ONCE MY OWN CREATION

NOW HE WANTS ME ON THE STREET.

MAKES A CONSCIENTIOUS ARTIST

CONTEMPLATE HER OWN DEFEAT.

HE WAS REALLY UBER REAL.

HE EXEMPLIFIED MY ART.

NEXT TIME I GO WRITE A HERO,

I WON'T GIVE THE GUY MY HEART.
I FEEL LIKE SUCH A JERK.

CAROLINE
OUT, IT'S TIME TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE,
WE WILL USE FORCE TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
PLAN ON RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE,
HE'LL GET THAT KNIFE,
AND THEN HE'LL USE IT.

TONIO
WE'RE NOT FOOLED BY YOUR CRAZY ACT.
YOUR PERFORMANCE SPEAKS AS SIMPLE FACT.
WE REJECT AND DISAPPROVE,
AND IT IS NOW TIME TO REMOVE . . .

HOLLY
I FEEL LIKE SUCH A JERK.

(TONIO steps toward HOLLY brandishing his umbrella. MICHAEL hides the long dagger TONIO used earlier under a newspaper.)

ALL

THEY'RE IMPOSTERS.
THEY'RE IMPOSTERS.

TONIO

I am hardly a man prone to violence . . .

MICHAEL

Bull cocky!

TONIO

But enough is enough.

(TONIO leaps for MICHAEL with the umbrella.)

MICHAEL

(MICHAEL grabs the long dagger.)

Hah! En guarde, you rogue.

(They duel, MICHAEL with the long dagger and TONIO, looking far more competent with Michael's umbrella. HOLLY and CAROLINE begin dueling with each other using a yardstick and a rolled up newspaper. The four of them trade a steady barrage of insults while dueling.)

TONIO

You never deserved us. You don't even deserve each other.

CAROLINE

You're so lazy. Keeping love alive is hard work.

TONIO

Manual labor. You've got to tear down the walls as fast as you build them up. What do you think Caroline and I have been doing ever since we met an hour ago? That's how you stay in love!

HOLLY

An hour doesn't count. We've been in our relationship for three years

CAROLINE

A make-over is not a relationship.

TONIO

In three years you slackers have never stopped trying to change one another.

MICHAEL

It's not easy. You have no business judging us.

CAROLINE

(Imitating Michael.)

"We can't talk about our work. It'll erode the relationship." Tonio and I talk about everything. It's sexy. But if you want to feed a fantasy, keep it a secret until it turns into an obsession. Then a bigger and bigger obsession. And then, voila . . .

CAROLINE & TONIO

You get US!

TONIO

And for the final straw – you tried to turn US into you! Honestly!

CAROLINE

You are a total embarrassment.

TONIO

And that is why we're taking your home, your car, your identification and all your money. It's very pretty by the way. The money. Love that pyramid!

MICHAEL

You're doing what?

TONIO

You heard me.

(While TONIO is distracted, MICHAEL leaps forward and slashes his arm with the knife. The cut bleeds and CAROLINE runs to him as HOLLY steps back. CAROLINE examines the wound, touches it, and grabs the knife from Michael. Then she cuts her own arm and holds up her bleeding cut and TONIO'S bleeding arm.

CAROLINE

"If you prick us, do we not bleed!"

MICHAEL

Ahh, Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice*.

HOLLY

Ahh, shit!

TONIO

Wow! We're alive! We're really alive!

(He licks her arm.)

Blood!

TONIO (Cont.)

(He puts his hand on his crotch.)

Functioning body parts.

(Grabbing CAROLINE'S hand.)

And you! This is the greatest night of my life!

(He leaps up and parrying with the umbrella, lunges for MICHAEL and pins him. Then, singing the end of the quartet, CAROLINE and TONIO herd MICHAEL and HOLLY out the door of their own loft.)

TONIO & CAROLINE

GET OUT! GET OUT!
GET OUT! GET OUT! GET OUT!)
GET OUT!
GET OUT!

(HOLLY and MICHAEL run off-stage, while TONIO swings CAROLINE around in a victory dance. Then they stop and stare at each other.)

TONIO

Come kiss me, you living, human woman!

(They approach each other tentatively, then kiss for a long time. CAROLINE looks up breathless.)

CAROLINE

That was the hottest kiss I've ever had. It was like a woman. A man. An extraterrestrial. I don't care! Just do it again!

TONIO

Thank the gods you like it.

(to the audience) That's the way I kiss.

(The lights go down.)

ACT II
Scene 7

Setting: On the street in front of the loft.

At Rise: HOLLY and MICHAEL are standing in the street breathing heavily.

MICHAEL
Nothing like a good sword fight to kick up one's appetite. I NEED A STEAK! Very rare, organic and grass fed.

HOLLY
Sounds perfect, but we'll have to go out. There's no more in.

MICHAEL
We lost the loft! I actually forgot. Wow! You have to pay dear for the kind of relationship intensive we just went through. What a night!

HOLLY
It was worth every square foot . . . You really held your own in that duel. Tonio had to beat you; I wrote him invincible. But you have become positively dashing. Where is that lovely ring? I do believe I'm ready to get engaged.

MICHAEL
You don't even believe in marriage.

HOLLY
Not quite yet. But I deeply believe in happily ever after.

MICHAEL
Are you sure? I don't want any compromises or accommodations. And absolutely no settling permitted. It's a miracle we're still together.

HOLLY
I am very sure. When Tonio tried to get me to leave home, I flipped out. I can no longer deny my own attraction to security. But now we're homeless, and I'm perfectly fine. Figure that.

(MICHAEL pulls the ring out of his pocket and opens the box.)

MICHAEL
Security is deeper than a loft.

(He places the ring on her finger and kisses her hand. She picks up his hand and kisses it back.)

(Song: “RIGHT NOW”)

HOLLY

I FOLLOWED MY DREAM
RIGHT BACK TO YOU.

MICHAEL

WENT BACK IN TIME,
BUT I RETURNED TO YOU.

HOLLY

WE COULD HAVE LOST.

MICHAEL

AT SUCH A COST.

HOLLY & MICHAEL

HALLELUJAH!
WE’RE STILL TOGETHER.

HOLLY

RIGHT NOW,
JUST THE WAY WE ARE.
IMPERFECT AS WE’VE BEEN SINCE TIME BEGAN.
AN ORDINARY WOMAN

MICHAEL

AND HER ORDINARY MAN.

BOTH

RIGHT NOW,
JUST THE WAY WE ARE.

MICHAEL

RIGHT NOW,
WALKING HAND IN HAND,
UNCERTAIN HOW THE MOMENT MAY UNFOLD.

HOLLY

UNCERTAIN WHAT SURPRISES FATE MAY HOLD,

BOTH

RIGHT NOW,
JUST THE WAY WE ARE.

HOLLY

NO MORE SECRET LOVERS WAITING ON THE SHORE.

BOTH
I KNOW THAT YOU POSSESS THE RICHES THAT A LIFETIME
IS NOT ENOUGH TIME TO EXPLORE.

RIGHT NOW,
MY HEART IS OVERWHELMED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW BLIND I WAS BEFORE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I THOUGHT THERE COULD BE ANY MORE,
THAN EVERYTHING,
THAN WHAT MY EYES CAN SEE.
AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LOVE ME.

(They kiss tenderly.)

HOLLY
Apart from falling madly in love with you, Michael, something else miraculous happened tonight. (to the band.) The fanfare please!

(Fanfare plays)

"The roseate feather lay beneath an ancient cypress on a carpet of pale green moss. His hand trembled as he reached for it." Two whole sentences, Michael! I think I'm cured!

MICHAEL
Congratulations, my love. I look forward to hearing a lifetime of your sentences. This has to be a huge relief.

HOLLY
I'm thrilled I can write again. But it's so fraught with danger. I never even imagined . . .

MICHAEL
What's scary is we did imagine it. All of it. With our very own minds. I learned about "safe sex" in sixth grade, but in all my higher education, not a word about "safe-writing."

HOLLY
Maybe there's a mind condom. Or barring that, maybe we could co-author a series of cute little morality tales for pre-toddlers about bunnies and baby bears. How wrong can you go with that?

MCHAEL
The two of us?

HOLLY
Right.

TONIO
(from off-stage)
Hey, Mikey! I mean Michael!

HOLLY

What a surprise.

(TONIO and CAROLINE enter wearing identical black leather jackets, CAROLINE'S is draped over HOLLY's little red dress.)

MICHAEL

Are you still trying to kill me?

TONIO

Just a little Oedipal moment. Nothing personal. You should keep the bike. We've got three or four more. Caroline's been experimenting. She discovered we can write our own lives. She's very talented. She even wrote us a copter.

(The sound of a distant helicopter approaches á là *Miss Saigon*)

CAROLINE

(Looking proud, she turns to HOLLY and shows off her red dress.)

I do like this dress, Holly, it has a certain, *je ne sais quoi*.

HOLLY

You should keep it, Caroline. Your jacket really kicks it over the top.

CAROLINE

And you should keep the loft.

MICHAEL

Are you toying with us?

TONIO

Never again. We'll be neighbors. We decided to build a little something on the roof of your building. CAROLINE even filed all the permits.

CAROLINE

It's a petite version of the Taj Majal. Tonio did the rendering with all the details . . .

HOLLY

In an hour and a half.

TONIO

This will be base camp, but we're flying off to become heroes. We'll do distances in the coptor, then switch to the bikes for our "heroic work."

CAROLINE

And we're getting married in a couple hours, so it'll be a working honeymoon. We'll kill the villains and feed the poor from eleven until two, then we'll "honeymoon" in the suite Tonio designed and I wrote. It's overlooking the Caribbean and was inspired by a vacation home rented by Megan and Harry.

HOLLY

That sounds amazing!

TONIO

I knew Caroline would love it; she's such a monarchist. What's next for the two of you?

HOLLY

We just got engaged! (she flashes her ring.)

CAROLINE

(examining the ring) Vintage Victorian. Gorgeous. And perfectly understated.

Since we're no longer available as the protagonists of your books, I've been wondering what you've decided to write about.

MICHAEL

We don't know yet. For the moment, writing just feels . . . dangerous.

TONIO

Maybe you guys need a little break. Some R & R so you can start fresh. After the wedding, why don't you join up with us for a while? We can be heroes together. Like some twisted family act . . . or the Von Trapps. Maybe even a little choreography. It'll be fun.

CAROLINE

For that matter, why don't we have a double wedding.

(To everyone including the audience.)

It's traditional. Shakespeare ended most of his comedies with weddings.

TONIO

If Shakespeare did it, that's good enough for us.

MICHAEL

Even if she was a girl.

HOLLY

The accommodations sound perfect for a honeymoon.
Long walks, Staying in bed all day.

MICHAEL

(to TONIO) Occasional sword fights with an actual hero.

HOLLY

Romance and adventure! The stuff from which books are spun.

(dropping to one knee) Prithee, m'lord, wilt thou marry me?

MICHAEL

(He reaches for HOLLY's hand and gently pulls her back up so they are eye to eye.)

I wilt marry thee for eternity. Kiss me, thou most amazing creature!

(They kiss dramatically. CAROLINE and TONIO applaud)

(Song: "BIKERS IN CAMELOT REPRISE")

TONIO & CAROLINE

WE WILL RIDE ROUND THE CITY
SAVING CITIZENS IN DISTRESS.
THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO HERE.

MICHAEL & HOLLY

R & R IN OUR BOUDIOR.
(to each other) YOU CAN TEACH ME A LITTLE CHESS.
THEN WE'LL CUDDLE UP, DEAR.

TONIO & CAROLINE

NOT A MOMENT TO BE HELPLESS,

MICHAEL & HOLLY

(pointing at TONIO & CAROLINE)

IT'S YOUR TURN TO TAKE COMMAND.

ALL

WE'LL WEAR ARMOR BY ARMANI
AS WE GIVE A HELPING HAND.
WE'LL BE BIKERS IN CAMELOT TOGETHER.
HEROES IN SATIN, LACE AND LEATHER.
AND WE'LL FOIL THE PLOT,
GET THE WANKERS CAUGHT,
'CAUSE WE'RE BIKERS IN CAMELOT.

WE'LL BE BIKERS IN CAMELOT TOGETHER.
HEROES NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER.

ALL (Cont.)

WHEN OUR WORK IS DONE,
HERE'S A PERFECT THOUGHT:
WE'LL BE SWEETHEARTS IN CAMELOT.
WE'LL BE LOVERS IN CAMELOT.

(for the final tableau HOLLY & CAROLINE pop on veils)

WE'LL BE MARRIED IN CAMELOT!

THE END