

Summerhaven

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A musical play

By Michael Johnson

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARCUS DORAN, 52 and 31, an elementary school teacher, practitioner of the Sacred Lotus Flower method for teaching young children.

CHARLOTTE DORAN, 25 and 8, a student and Marcus's daughter

CATHERINE HUBERT, 32, a newly-hired teacher at Summerhaven school

BERNARD FIENNES, 43, the new headmaster of Summerhaven school

ALDEBERT ONFRAY, 64, a retired professor of Education

GEORGES CRIER, 45, a parent, father of Ophélie

OPHÉLIE CRIER, 10, a student and daughter of Georges

DOROTHÉE DEROSIER, 35, a parent, the ex-wife of Marcus

## SETTINGS

A Sacred Lotus Temple on North Andaman Island

Summerhaven School in the suburbs of Paris, France

Marcus's classroom, offices, hallway

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

1. Breathe (*Marcus, Sacred Lotus Flower Trainees*)
2. How It All Began (*Company*)
3. How Many Petals? (*Charlotte, Catherine*)
4. Doran vs Doran (Set the Poor Girl Free) (*Marcus, Dorothee*)
5. One Out of a Million (*Georges, Ophélie*)
6. Teaching from the Heart (*Marcus, Catherine*)
7. Four Little Horses (*Marcus, Children*)
8. Follow the Evidence (*Marcus, Monsieur Onfray*)
9. Thank You, Mister Sun - The Desk Song (*Marcus, Catherine, Ophélie, Charlotte, Children*)
10. The Threefold Human Being and the Animal Kingdom (*Marcus, Catherine, Children*)
11. You'll Never Hear Me Say Goodbye (*Marcus, Charlotte*)

Act II

12. Monsieur Fiennes's Address - You've Got It! (*Monsieur Fiennes, Georges, Board Members, Parents, Monsieur Onfray*)
13. Under "Hero" Webster Listed You (*Charlotte, Marcus*)
14. The Four Kingdoms I: The Dance of Life (*Marcus, Catherine*)
15. Classy Ladies (*Charlotte, Ophélie*)
16. The Four Kingdoms II: The One Life (*Catherine, Children*)
17. The Four Kingdoms III: All The Pieces Fit Together (*Marcus, Children*)
18. Aftermath
  - 18a. One Life (Playoff) (*Catherine, Children*)
  - 18b. You'll Never Hear Me Say Goodbye (Reprise) (*Charlotte, Marcus*)
  - 18c. Andaman Shores, Part 1 (*Marcus*)
  - 18d. One Night Soon (*Marcus*)
19. Andaman Shores, Part 2 (*Catherine, Marcus*)
20. Eye for an Eye - The Way It All Began (Reprise) (*Marcus, Georges, Company*)
21. Separate Ways - Breathe (Reprise) (*Marcus, Charlotte, Catherine, Trainees*)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Bean.

## ACT 1

### PROLOGUE

*[Late afternoon. Present day. A Sacred Lotus training facility in the mountains not far from the town of Diglipur on North Andaman Island.]*

*The stage is dark, but not pitch black. Upstage center stands a small wooden table, on top of which rests a tea set and a small gong. The room is modestly appointed with tapestries, wooden figurines, wicker linen baskets, and furniture. A dim, rectangular shaped shaft of light, broken up by the silhouettes of lush tree branches, falls from the unseen window on the "fourth wall" onto a group of Sacred Lotus trainees, who wear flowing pink robes. In the half light they each hold a different yoga-like pose.*

(A gong sounds. Music begins for "Breathe."  
**[CLICK BELOW DEMO TRACK 1]**)

### TRAINEES

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE.

(Enter MARCUS DORAN, 52, a fit, tan-skinned Caucasian man in a long, flowing, powder-blue gown. His long gray hair dangles around his square jaw. He breathes deeply, striking a series of Thai-chi like poses, which the TRAINEES imitate as they form a semi-circle downstage, facing him. MARCUS settles into a pose upstage center, facing the TRAINEES and the audience. During the following, he strikes a different pose which the TRAINEES imitate.)

### MARCUS

Every living being is but a vessel for Divine Spirits who travel between realms.

TRAINEES

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE.

MARCUS

These Spirits have seeded every human child with the bud of a silently gestating Sacred Lotus Flower.

TRAINEES

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE.

MARCUS

I vow to nurture this fragile bud by unobtrusively guiding the child's natural process of self-construction.

TRAINEES

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE.

(Music stops briefly.)

MARCUS

The child I was made me the man I am.

(inhaling and then exhaling)

That's it, everyone. Let your gratitude flow out on this next current of breath.

(MARCUS rings his gong. Music resumes. Lights up on all.)

ALL

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE. JUST BREATHE.

(MARCUS hands his gong off to an ATTENDANT, then exhales, lowering his arms in one fluid movement. His students do the same. After a beat, the music comes to a close as the TRAINEES spread their arms and improvise chaotic movements, bouncing randomly about the stage, shaking, shouting, and making shrill noises as if in a trance. CHARLOTTE DORAN, a young woman of 25, wearing a large traveler's backpack, enters from backstage right, looking sweaty and disheveled as though coming from a long hike. An ATTENDANT is trying to stop her.)

CHARLOTTE

(calling out to MARCUS)

So this is where you've been hiding.

(The TRAINEES and MARCUS stop. The ATTENDANT sighs. MARCUS looks astonished. EVERYONE stares at CHARLOTTE.)

MARCUS

(beaming at CHARLOTTE)

Cancel all of this evening's sessions.

(after a beat, with his eye on

CHARLOTTE, to the TRAINEES)

Come on, come on. Shoo, shoo. Session's over.

(ATTENDANT and TRAINEES hurry out with bewildered bows. MARCUS and CHARLOTTE stand facing each other for a long beat. After a moment, MARCUS breaks the ice.)

MARCUS

Not hiding; training. It's really you. After all these years. The universe came through.

CHARLOTTE

Skip it, Marcus.

MARCUS

Aha! Marcus. Yes! Good! Fatherhood is a social construct.

CHARLOTTE

In your case.

MARCUS

Here, here, have some tea. It's a detox blend.

CHARLOTTE

(taking out a bottle of water)

I'm not taking any chances with the water.

MARCUS

(offering a cup of tea)

Oh, no, no, the water here flows directly from Saddle Peak. Go on. It's way better than that bottled stuff. It's got healing powers.



CHARLOTTE

(She takes a long, deliberate drink of her bottled water, not taking her eyes off of him. A beat.)

Aren't you going to say something cliché, like how much I've grown, or don't you remember what I looked like?

MARCUS

Remember?! You're all I think about! I wrote you so many letters.

CHARLOTTE

What letters? Who writes letters anymore?

MARCUS

I do. I did. A ton of them. To you. Look.

(MARCUS yanks open a drawer, out of which spills a jumble of letters.)

CHARLOTTE

This is the first I've seen of them.

MARCUS

(hopeful)

But you returned them.

CHARLOTTE

Me? I wouldn't know what to do with those things. Probably just went to the wrong address. We moved around a lot. Anyway, there is a thing called email now.

MARCUS

Yes. Too bad. Handwriting is the window to the soul.

CHARLOTTE

I wouldn't know. I had to teach myself how to read and write.

MARCUS

(feeling misty)

I'm not surprised. You were the most brilliant child in my class. I was so worried about your education after Summerhaven closed.

CHARLOTTE

Mom sent me to a real school.

MARCUS

Ah, yes. Naturally. Your mother the "rationalist." How is she?

CHARLOTTE

Distraught. Heart's been broken a second time.

MARCUS

Your stepdad?

CHARLOTTE

You mean Georges. You could say that. He's dead.

MARCUS

I'm sorry.

(tone darkening)

Did he...hurt you?

CHARLOTTE

(with a derisive laugh)

You wish. He was a pretty ideal father, actually.

(turning to leave)

This was a mistake.

MARCUS

No, wait, wait...look, Charlotte, I get it. Really. Georges was your "father." But I'm the lucky one the Universe chose to manifest you into its Consciousness. Doesn't that count for something?

CHARLOTTE

You ejaculated. Congratulations.

MARCUS

Okay, I get it, I get it. But you came all this way. You've got to have questions.

CHARLOTTE

(after considering it for a beat)

Shoot.

SCENE 1

*[Same. The stage goes black with only a spotlight shining on MARCUS and CHARLOTTE.]*

(Music begins for "How It All Began" [**DEMO TRACK 2**] and continues under the following. MARCUS performs dance-like movements like he did when he was standing in front of his class of children all those years ago.)

CHARLOTTE

But talk fast. I've got someone waiting outside.

MARCUS

You see, Charlotte, when we started Summerhaven School, we were at the forefront of a revolution. Picture it: a "free school" devoted to the Sacred Lotus Flower method, the first of its kind in France. In the world! After only a few years we had a strong community of loyal families. But it wasn't long before the local board of education, the *commission scolaire*, stepped in.

(Continuing his movements, MARCUS steps toward the audience. CHARLOTTE steps back into the darkness.)

MARCUS

(in reverie, gazing out past the audience)

I remember the day everything started to go wrong. I was telling the Story of Creation. Remember it?

(As he says the line above, a crowd of CHILDREN wearing flowing white gowns, including the YOUNGER CHARLOTTE, enter from stage left and stage right, facing MARCUS and forming a group between him and the audience. MARCUS, temporarily hidden by the children, removes his long gray hair, leaving a head of medium-length greasy brown hair. The crowd of children forms into a semi-circle behind MARCUS, who is visible downstage center. They all perform synchronized movements.)

MARCUS

FROM THE BEGINNING  
EVERY SINGLE THING  
HAS BOWED TO THE UNIVERSE'S LAWS.  
WHEN DEWDROPS GLISTEN  
IF YOU LISTEN

YOU CAN HEAR THEM SAY, "I OBEY," AS THEY THAW.  
 WHEN AT SUNRISE,  
 THE SUN IS LOW IN THE SKY,  
 AND ITS WARM RAYS CHATTER WITH THE WAVES ON THE BEACH,  
 YOU CAN HEAR THEM SAY  
 "I OBEY,"  
 IN CHORUS WITH THE SEA BREEZE THAT BRUSHES YOUR CHEEK.  
 BIRDS ON THE WING.  
 CLOUDS IN THE SKY.  
 FALLING LEAVES.  
 HOVERING BUTTERFLIES.  
 THEY ALL COMPLY.  
 AND YOU CAN HEAR THEM  
 IF YOU GO NEAR THEM:  
 EVERY CREATURE, EVERY ROCK, EVERY VEGETABLE, EVERY MAN.  
 THEY WHISPER "I OBEY!"  
 THIS IS AS TRUE TODAY  
 AS IT HAS BEEN SINCE THE UNIVERSE BEGAN.

(The children form a circle around  
 MARCUS, all occupy low space as they  
 move around him. He crouches in the  
 center. The other cast members enter,  
 hidden at the back of the stage. All sing  
 in a soft voice, SOPRANOS and ALTOS  
 double the CHILDREN's parts.)

#### MARCUS AND CHILDREN

IN THE BEGINNING  
 THERE WAS NOTHING:  
 BLACKNESS ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP.  
 AND IN THIS DARKNESS  
 THIS SOUP OF CHAOS,  
 THE TINY BABY UNIVERSE WAS FAST ASLEEP.

(Music brightens as everyone stands and raises their  
 arms, twirling.)

ALL OF A SUDDEN  
 THERE WAS LIGHT!  
 BRIGHT AND FAST  
 IT CAME AT LAST  
 TO CAST  
 AWAY THE ENDLESS NIGHT.

(The CHILDREN break circle formation and start to creep around the stage, as if strands of vapor in a cloud.)

THEN A HUGE CLOUD  
 --NOT HUGE, ENORMOUS--  
 DRIFTED IN THE DARKNESS AT A SNAIL'S PACE.  
 IT WAS SHAPELESS,  
 AMORPHOUS,  
 JUST A TINY DROPLET IN AN OCEAN OF SPACE.

(The CHILDREN begin breaking off into small groups, forming little rotating circles.)

AND AS IT WAFTED, LITTLE DROPLETS  
 OF ROILING, CHURNING CONDENSATION FELL OFF IN BITES.  
 AND SWIMMING,  
 FLOATING, AND SPINNING  
 THEY COLLAPSED UNDER GRAVITY AND STARTED TO IGNITE.

(The CHILDREN scatter, each taking a separate place on the stage and stretching up their arms, faces open in bright smiles.)

ALL OF A SUDDEN THERE WERE STARS!  
 HOT AND BRIGHT THEY CAME TO LIGHT  
 THE NIGHT AND FIGHT  
 THE ENDLESS DARK.  
 MILLIONS OF MILES APART  
 LIKE MASSIVE FLAMING HEARTS  
 THIS HOST OF FIERY FURNACES BEGAN TO BEAT.

(MARCUS fans out his arms and makes broad dance movements in the center.)

OUT OF THOSE BILLIONS, ONE,  
 OUR TINY YELLOW SUN,  
 PROVIDES THE ENERGY THAT GIVES US LIFE, LIGHT AND HEAT.  
 LIFE, LIGHT, AND HEAT! LIFE, LIGHT, AND HEAT! AND HEAT!

(The CHILDREN turn to face outward now, arms raised.)

HOW WOUNDROUS! HOW MARVELOUS IT IS:  
 THE SUN'S ALIVE. IT GIVES US LIFE AND  
 FROM A FORMLESS FIZZ  
 WE GET THE WORLD ON WHICH WE STAND!

(The CHILDREN pantomime weather and then animals as they and MARCUS sing the following simultaneously.)

MARCUS

A WORLD OF BLUE SKIES AND RAINS,  
OF GRASS ON THE PLAINS,  
OF LIFE THAT THRIVES IN DARK OF NIGHT AND IN LIGHT OF DAY.

CHILDREN

BLUE SKIES, RAIN, AND LIFE THAT THRIVES.

(The CHILDREN rush toward MARCUS and huddle in tight around him, forming a semi circle behind him as he dances out to upstage center. They sing the following simultaneously.)

MARCUS

AND WITH THE NEW BIRTH  
OF HER DAUGHTER, THE EARTH,

CHILDREN

BRAND NEW BIRTH AND LIFE.

MARCUS

THE SUN BEAMED AND WRAPPED HER IN

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

A CLOAK OF GOLDEN RAYS.  
A CLOAK OF GOLDEN RAYS.

(Lights up on ALL THE CHARACTERS, each in different places on the stage doing different things. MARCUS and the CHILDREN dance. MONSIEUR FIENNES stands behind his desk, taking out a glass and pouring himself a drink. CATHERINE fumbles with her things, getting herself ready to enter MARCUS's class. GEORGES and a reluctant OPHÉLIE stand on the steps of the school, ready to go inside. OPHÉLIE is smartly dressed in a black dress with a red scarf. She stands firm with a scowl and crossed arms.

DOROTHÉE drops CHARLOTTE off at the school and then sifts through a thick stack of papers. CHARLOTTE throws on her white robe to join the class. MONSIEUR ONFRAY sits in his office in an arm chair with a large book. Everyone sings various phrases in counterpoint before singing the following tutti.)

COMPANY

(after singing various phrases in counterpoint)

IN THE BEGINNING, THE BEGINNING  
LET ME TELL YOU HOW IT ALL BEGAN.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

HERE'S HOW IT ALL BEGAN.

MEN

HERE'S HOW IT ALL BEGAN.

ALL

AT THE BEGINNING!

(Music vamps as lights go out on everyone except MARCUS and the CHILDREN, who freeze as the lights dim. Enter CATHERINE, who steps into the pool of light on MARCUS and the CHILDREN.)

## SCENE 2

*[Morning. Marcus's Classroom at Summerhaven.] The light expands to reveal a large unconventional looking classroom. No chalkboard and no desks. Tall multicolored glass windows made of recycled bottles let in lots of light from outside. The walls are painted in colorful chaotic murals and have various drawings scrawled all over them in chalk, marker, and paint. Plants cover almost every surface. Bean bag chairs, pillows, and other soft objects litter the floor around the edges of the room. A clock on the upstage wall has had its hands removed.*

*Below the clock: a bookshelf piled with props, costumes, and musical instruments. A closed door stands at stage right.*

(CATHERINE finds a spot and stares back and forth between MARCUS and the CHILDREN, shocked but showing composure. As soon as she finds a spot, MARCUS and the CHILDREN resume their movements, paying no attention to CATHERINE. MARCUS continues singing, so wrapped up in his story he doesn't notice her.)

MARCUS

FROM THE BEGINNING, JUST AS IT IS TODAY,  
THE UNIVERSE'S LAWS ARE UNIVERSALLY OBEYED.  
FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, THOSE WHO LISTENED COULD HEAR  
THE VOICES OF CREATION WHISPERING "UNIVERSE, WE..."

(CATHERINE backs into the bookshelf of props and musical instruments and they all come crashing down, stopping the music and interrupting MARCUS and the CHILDREN. The children laugh as CATHERINE tries to put everything back. MARCUS settles the children with a look before approaching CATHERINE.)

MARCUS

(friendly, but miffed)

Excuse me, Miss. Hi, there. *Bonjour*. Thank you, but the children do all of our interior decorating.

CATHERINE

(nonplussed)

I'm sorry about that. Do you usually keep these shelves so...messy?

MARCUS

(conspiratorially)

You mean you're not into "maximalism?"

(a beat)

No? Well, human development is a messy business, Miss...?

CATHERINE

And what are the children doing right now? Don't they have work to do?



MARCUS

Sure. This is the Rest. It's *part* of their work, Miss...?

CATHERINE

Hubert. Catherine.

MARCUS

(with a smile)

Marcus Doran.

(They shake hands. A spark. CATHERINE breaks off and looks on as some children wrestle and goof around in a corner. Some lounge around, others sleep, still others draw on the walls with chalk. It's generally pandemonium.)

CATHERINE

Well, Mister Doran. This doesn't look like work to me.

MARCUS

No? Well, inner processes rarely do look like work to us at the medium level, Madame Hubert.

CATHERINE

The what level?

MARCUS

Inquisitive. Spirited. You must be a Sacred Lotus trainee.

CATHERINE

Well, I haven't actually taken the training, but...er...I'm very interested in your methodology.

MARCUS

(brightening)

Ah! Say no more, say no more.

(taking instruments from her hands)

No, no, here, don't worry. I'll take care of this stuff. Our observer chair is over there, but I'm going to ask you, ah, not to wander around. Got to leave the children to their Rest.

CATHERINE

Oh, I will. I mean I won't. I mean, Thank you.

(MARCUS goes to the shelves and starts replacing the items CATHERINE knocked over. Music begins for "How Many Petals?" **[DEMO TRACK 3]** as CATHERINE sits on a colorfully patterned, velvety cushion and gazes about the room in astonishment at CHILDREN lounging about, wrestling, running around, or writing on the walls. She gets up after a moment and wanders to where CHARLOTTE sits. She watches as CHARLOTTE pulls petals off of a flower and drops them into a shallow bowl of water.)

CATHERINE

WELL, HELLO. I'M MADAME HUBERT.

CHARLOTTE

CHARLOTTE.

CATHERINE

PRETTY FLOWERS, CHARLOTTE. WHATCHA DOING?

CHARLOTTE

SCIENCE.

CATHERINE

(suspicious)

OH! I SEE.

DROPPING PETALS INTO WATER. BREWING...

TEA?

WHAT HYPOTHESIS

CAN YOU TEST DOING THIS?

CHARLOTTE

I DON'T KNOW.

I JUST LIKE THE RIPPLES.

CATHERINE

GO

ON; SHOW ME.

(CHARLOTTE drops another petal into the water during the following.)

VERY PRETTY, INDEED.

CHARLOTTE, I NEED  
TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.  
JUST A DUMB THING.

CHARLOTTE

OKAY.

CATHERINE

HOW MANY PETALS DO YOU HAVE, DEAR,  
IF YOU HAD FIVE HERE  
AND YOU TOOK TWO?

CHARLOTTE

BEATS ME.

CATHERINE

BUT, CHARLOTTE, JUST COUNT THEM ON YOUR HAND.

(CHARLOTTE gives her a blank look.)

YOU UNDERSTAND?  
ONE, TWO, THREE?

CATHERINE

Nothing? Okay.  
TELL ME, CHARLOTTE,  
IN PLACE OF ONE FLOWER LET'S PRETEND,  
THAT I HAVE TEN.  
HOW MANY PETALS WOULD YOU HAVE THEN?

CHARLOTTE

NO CLUE.

CATHERINE

BUT, SURELY, YOU CAN TELL ME TEN TIMES FIVE.

CHARLOTTE

IT'S FIFTY THOUSAND.

CATHERINE

SAKES ALIVE!

CHARLOTTE  
 THIS KIND OF FLOWER HAS FIVE PETALS, I THINK.  
 I JUST LIKE TO WATCH THEM SINK.  
 THEY MAKE TINY SWISHES.  
 LIKE LITTLE FISHES.  
 WHEN I TAKE  
 ONE MAKE  
 A WISH, BUT DON'T TELL ME WHAT YOUR WISH IS.

CHARLOTTE  
 (to herself)  
 THIS MIGHT BE TOO AMBITIOUS...

(CATHERINE takes out a piece of paper and pen  
 from her purse and writes the number 50 on a piece  
 of paper.)  
 RIGHT, THEN, CHARLOTTE,  
 TELL ME, DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS NUMBER?

CHARLOTTE  
 THAT'S A SKI JUMPER.  
 AND A BALL OF SNOW.

CATHERINE  
 WHAT ABOUT THIS DIGIT IN THE TENS PLACE?

CHARLOTTE  
 I SEE A LION FACE.  
 AND THAT'S A HIP "O"

(Getting frustrated, CATHERINE writes the word  
 "five" on the paper.)

CATHERINE  
 CHARLOTTE, CAN YOU READ THIS WORD I'VE WRITTEN?

CHARLOTTE  
 F-FLOWER...

CATHERINE  
 (to herself)  
 SHIT.

(to CHARLOTTE)

INDEED, THE FIRST LETTER WAS SPOT ON.  
SPEAKING OF FLOWERS, HOW ABOUT YOU DRAW ONE?

(The music vamps as CHARLOTTE takes the pencil, but struggles to keep it in her hand. Evidently she has trouble even holding it. With effort, she eventually draws the flower. She then slams down the pencil and the paper. Vamp continues under the following.)

CHARLOTTE

There.

CATHERINE

(Disturbed)

Charlotte. Yes, I...I sort of see a flower there. How about if you give it some color. Try this...

(CATHERINE takes a pink colored pencil from her satchel and hands it to CHARLOTTE, who recoils at the sight of it. MARCUS sees her and hastily approaches, interrupting the music.)

MARCUS

No! She can't have pink!

(Music stops as MARCUS snatches the pink pencil from CATHERINE'S hand and crams it into his pocket.)

CATHERINE

(visibly disturbed)

Mister Doran...

MARCUS

Look. Madame Hubert...your spot is over there.

CATHERINE

Excuse me, Mister Doran, but this poor girl doesn't know how to perform basic mathematical operations, nor can she read numbers, or words. She can't even hold a pencil. What exactly are these children learning?

(A child chimes a singing bowl and the CHILDREN file out of the room. CHARLOTTE stands in between CATHERINE and MARCUS.)

CHARLOTTE

Come on, Daddy, let's go outside. We're building fairy houses.

MARCUS

(with affection)

Marcus, Sweetie. Fatherhood is a box. And we reject boxes.

CHARLOTTE

(to CATHERINE)

Marcus is a fucking genius.

MARCUS

(a little laugh, then a backpedal)

That's enough, Charlotte. Thank you. You head out with the others. I'll see you after school.

(CHARLOTTE gives MARCUS a kiss on the cheek before leaving the classroom.)

CATHERINE

Colorful language. Did you teach her that?

MARCUS

(with a smirk)

Naturally. Cursing is one of our elective courses.

(a beat, seeing she's not amused)

I don't control her.

CATHERINE

Yes, it looks like you have very little control. Where are they going?

MARCUS

Outside.

CATHERINE

To play? Having done nothing all morning?

MARCUS

The Rest is over. It's Rebirth.

CATHERINE

Re-what?

MARCUS

Free play until woodworking and grounds keeping in the afternoon. Main Lesson, Rest, morning Rebirth, afternoon Journey. It's our daily cycle.

CATHERINE

Story time, singing and dancing, free-for-all, then crafts and hard labor? When do they actually learn anything, Mister Doran?

(Music resumes under the following.)

MARCUS

Oo, is it chilly in here to you? You don't sound like a trainee.

CATHERINE

You're right, Mister Doran, I'm not training to be a "Sacred Lotus" person. The truth is, I've been assigned to this classroom. I'm your new co-teacher.

MARCUS

Co-teacher? Can't be. There's only one *Utapaya* in Sacred Lotus classrooms.

CATHERINE

Uta-what?

MARCUS

It's Sanskrit. For "gardener."

CATHERINE

You mean for "teacher?"

MARCUS

(lets out a laugh)

I'm not a "teacher."

CATHERINE

(not amused)

Evidently!

WHY CAN'T THAT POOR GIRL HOLD A PENCIL?

IT'S INDEFENSIBLE.

AND WHAT'S WITH PINK?

MARCUS

EXPOSURE TO PINK POSES A DETRIMENT  
TO HER DEVELOPMENT.

CATHERINE

WHAT HAVE YOU HAD TO DRINK?

MARCUS

(impatient, but maintaining his cool)

MADAME HUBERT, IF MY METHOD PEAKS YOUR INTEREST,  
WELL, I HAVE COUNTLESS  
BOOKS I COULD SEND YOUR WAY.  
IN THE MEANTIME, I REALLY HAVE NO USE FOR  
A CO-TEACHER.  
HAVE A GOOD DAY.

CATHERINE

I BEG YOUR PARDON, THIS IS WHERE I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED.  
IF YOU WANT ME GONE, TAKE IT UP WITH MONSIEUR FIENNES.  
I ASSUME YOU KNOW WHO HE IS.

MARCUS

OH, YES. I SEE.  
SO IT'S FIXED?  
YOU'RE WITH ME?  
THAT'S WHAT HIS  
MAJESTY'S DECREE IS?  
WHY DON'T YOU TELL YOUR PUPPETEER  
EVERYTHING'S FINE HERE.  
NO NEED TO INTERFERE.

CATHERINE

I'LL DO NO SUCH THING. I BEG TO DIFFER.  
THAT GIRL HAS DIFFICULTY. AND IF HER  
LEVEL'S TYPICAL OF ALL THE REST  
I THINK IT'S BEST  
THAT HE KNOW.

MARCUS

SO, WHY DON'T WE GO  
AND SEE HIM NOW.

CATHERINE

(defiant)

Yes. Let's.



MARCUS

(broadly gesturing toward the door)

AFTER YOU, MADAME...

(Music plays out as CATHERINE harumphs and exits the spotlight, MARCUS follows, then hesitates for a moment to mutter under his breath.)

‘OLIER-THAN-THOU.

(MARCUS exits.)

### SCENE 3

*[Midday. MONSIEUR FIENNES'S office.]*  
*Lights go black on the portion of the stage that stood for the classroom. MARCUS and CATHERINE hurry into the light as it simultaneously rises on MONSIEUR FIENNES's office. The office is plain, simple, and fastidiously clean and tidy. Framed degrees hang on the walls. Everything is immaculate. MONSIEUR FIENNES sits behind a large oak desk.*

MARCUS

Monsieur Fiennes. Tell the zookeepers at the *commission scolaire* thanks, but no thanks. You can send *Madame Hubris* home.

CATHERINE

*Hubris!*

MONSIEUR FIENNES

(icy calm)

Easy, you two. Sit, please.

(CATHERINE sits, MARCUS remains standing.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

I am the *commission scolaire* as far as you are concerned, Mr. Doran. Now, your previous headmaster may have allowed you a certain amount of license...

MARCUS

Who? Oh yes, the person whose position you purloined.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Your friend Dr. Sauvageon got himself sacked all on his own, when he was naive enough to think the students of Summerhaven could pass the state tests without any preparation whatsoever.

MARCUS

(with a laugh)

That wasn't a test. It was a *pro-test*.

(a beat)

No? Nothing? Tough crowd.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Do you mean it was some sort of joke? Well, if you ask me your friend and mentor put a little too much faith in this *method* of yours. I gather by your storming into my office just now with your new co-teacher in tow that this cavalier attitude has rubbed off on you.

CATHERINE

I'm not "in tow."

MARCUS

(with a forced smile)

If I may, Monsieur Feinnes: *Utapayas* work alone. Sauvageon and I started this school. What is it they say back in the Old World? Don't teach your granny to suck eggs?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

(also with a forced smile)

I wouldn't dream of it, Mister Doran. It's just that the *commission scolaire* can't help but question the efficacy of your methodology in light of last year's events. In fact, they're insisting that you prove that you're even fit to teach children at all.

MARCUS

Oh, I'm definitely not fit to "teach." "Inspire," "enthuse," perhaps, but not "teach."

MONSIEUR FIENNES

I'm glad you feel so confident, Mister Doran, because in six month's time, you will have to pass a licensure exam in order to continue to teach in France.

MARCUS

(serious for a moment)

Come again?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Standard procedure in the French public schools. You must prepare a lesson in accordance with state approved standards and present it to a group of students in front of a panel of judges, who will, on the merits of your presentation, recommend to the *commission scolaire* whether or not to grant you your teaching license.

MARCUS

Hang on. So you're testing me on a methodology I don't practice in order to keep my license to practice my methodology? Sounds like something the *commission scolaire* would do. And what if I don't pass?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

You won't be able to continue working here at Summerhaven. They'll revoke your work permit. You won't be able to work anywhere in France.

MARCUS

(nonplussed)

They'll kick me out of the country? Can they do that?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

As I said: standard procedure. Look, to demonstrate my good faith, on behalf of the *commission scolaire*, let me give you this.

(He holds out a business card. MARCUS doesn't budge.)

Take it.

MARCUS

(looking at the card)

Onfr...Onf...?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Aldebert Onfray. He's an expert in the French education system. He will help you to prepare for the inspection. Now, cheer up, Mr. Doran. Think of it as an exercise in professional development.

MARCUS

Professional development. So I assume this woman will have to take the Sacred Lotus Flower training.

CATHERINE

Who are you calling "this woman?"

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Of course not. She already has the qualifications the *commission scolaire* requires.

MARCUS

Of course she does. Okay, Fiennes. I'll jump through your little hoop.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

That's the spirit, Mister Doran. Best of luck.

(Lights out on MONSIEUR FIENNES'S office as MARCUS steps onto another part of the stage where the lights come up. He lets out a deep breath, a look of worry screws up his face. DOROTHÉE approaches him hauling a large bag.)

DOROTHÉE

Marcus. I'm glad I caught up with you.

MARCUS

(composing himself)

Dorothée. Whatever it is, I'm running behind. Charlotte...

DOROTHÉE

(friendly, but cold, rifling through her bag)

Yes, yes. I'll be quick. I know Charlotte doesn't have many of her things at your, er...apartment, so I brought you some essentials: sweaters—I assume you still haven't paid your heating bill.

MARCUS

No need. We use the bills to make a fire.

DOROTHÉE

I also brought some real food. Now, she has ballet class on Saturday. She outgrew her old slippers...

MARCUS

...and I got her some new ones...

DOROTHÉE

...which you forgot last time and had to come to my house to pick up—20 minutes before the class, which you also forgot about. Anyway, they were second-hand and they're already worn out. I bought her a new pair. From Repetto. They're top of the line and...

(A beat.)

MARCUS

What?

DOROTHÉE

It's nothing. Just. The whole ballet-shoes thing. It reminds me.

(Music starts for "Doran vs Doran (Set the Poor Girl Free" **[DEMO TRACK 4]**)

I'VE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS  
VIS A VIS CHARLOTTE.  
OUR ARRANGEMENT  
NEEDS TO CHANGE.  
HOW WOULD IT SOUND...?

MARCUS

DON'T SAY YOU WANT HER FULL TIME.

DOROTHÉE

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR HER.  
I CALLED MY LAWYERS.

MARCUS

THERE'S NO WAY.  
NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY.

DOROTHÉE

KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.  
SEE REASON!

MARCUS

IT'S NOT HAPPENING. NOT IN MY LIFETIME.

DOROTHÉE

I CAN PROVIDE FOR HER.

MARCUS

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT.

DOROTHÉE

I HAVE MY HOUSE IN ORDER.  
LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT.

(composing herself)

SHE GETS MORE AT LEAST  
 THAN MASHED YEAST  
 AND TEA  
 WHEN SHE'S WITH ME.

MARCUS

YOU FEED HER PROCESSED  
 TOXIC POISON.

DOROTHÉE

I FEED HER THREE  
 SQUARE MEALS DAILY.  
 WHICH SHE CONSUMES  
 IN HER OWN ROOM.  
 THERE'S EVEN A CHEST  
 TO PUT HER TOYS IN...  
 HOW DO YOU LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR?  
 AT YOUR PLACE  
 SHE SLEEPS ON THE FLOOR.  
 OR WITH YOU IN YOUR BED.  
 ENOUGH SAID.  
 A GIRL HER AGE NEEDS SPACE.

MARCUS

FOR ALL YOUR SPACE  
 SHE SUFFOCATES  
 SHE CAN'T SO MUCH AS FLINCH.  
 WITHOUT YOU HOVERING  
 ALWAYS FLUTTERING  
 SCRUBBING EVERY INCH.  
 I WON'T LET YOU TAKE HER  
 AWAY FROM ME.  
 SIT UP STRAIGHT!  
 CLEAN YOUR PLATE!  
 SHE WANTS TO BE FREE.

DOROTHÉE

Is that what she said? Well,  
 WHAT CHILDREN WANT,  
 AND WHAT CHILDREN NEED  
 ARE DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT THINGS.  
 AS A GROWN-UP MAN  
 I EXPECT YOU CAN  
 UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN.

MARCUS

I DON'T NEED A LECTURE.  
YOU'RE HER MOM, NOT MINE...

(Music vamps under the following.)

DOROTHÉE

I'm going ahead with this.

MARCUS

They will take her feelings into consideration.

DOROTHÉE

She's going to be hitting puberty, Marcus. How long do you intend to make her sleep on the floor? What about when she's a teenager? Will she sleep on the couch? With you in your bed?

MARCUS

I'll have a bigger place by then.

DOROTHÉE

On a teacher's wages? I'm going after full custody, Marcus.

MARCUS

You won't get it.

DOROTHÉE

Watch me.

(The two sing the following simultaneously.)

DOROTHÉE

A YOUNG GIRL NEEDS  
A PLACE TO BE  
A SPOT TO LET OFF STEAM.  
SHE NEEDS A SPACE  
HER OWN PLACE  
TO THINK, TO FEEL, TO DREAM.  
ANY COURT WILL SEE  
SHE'S BETTER OFF WITH ME.  
IT ISN'T HOARDERS  
IT'S LIMITS, ORDER  
THAT MAKES A YOUNG GIRL FREE.  
SET THE POOR GIRL FREE.

MARCUS

IF YOU TRY TO TAKE HER...  
WELL, JUST YOU TRY  
NOTHING COMES BETWEEN  
MY DAUGHTER AND ME.  
CHARLOTTE AND I:  
WE ARE A TEAM.  
WITH ME SHE'S FREE.

MARCUS

What a girl needs is a father, Dorothée.

DOROTHÉE

I agree. So stop acting like her "fun uncle."

(DOROTHÉE leaves the bag and exits. MARCUS  
picks up the bag, making a big show of hefting it  
along. Lights out on that part of the stage.)

SCENE 4

*[Same. The corridor.]*

(MARCUS exits to another part of the stage, where  
the lights come up on CHARLOTTE waiting for  
him. MARCUS plops down the bag.)

CHARLOTTE

Mom?

MARCUS

Mom.

(The two cock a snook at the same time,  
then high five.)

MARCUS

We good?

CHARLOTTE

(rifling through the bag)

Good in the hood. Oo! *Goûter!*



(chewing)

What was up with that mean lady?

MARCUS

Why? What did she say to you?

(LIGHTS out on MARCUS and CHARLOTTE.  
Lights up on MONSIEUR FIENNES's office.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

What do you say, Madame Huber?

CATHERINE

I'm in shock. There's a little girl in there who can't even hold a pencil. She...she...

(Lights out on MONSIEUR FIENNES's office.  
Lights up on MARCUS and CHARLOTTE.)

CHARLOTTE

She kept asking me all these questions and stuff. Did I get you in trouble?

MARCUS

Absolutely not. No, it's Fancypants Fiennes. Sorry, Champ, but that lady's going to be working with me now.

(LIGHTS out on MARCUS and CHARLOTTE.  
Lights up on MONSIEUR FIENNES's office.)

CATHERINE

Now that I've seen what goes on in there. I'll just have to tread carefully, that's all. Mustn't come off like a bull in a China shop. Don't you think?

(Lights out on MONSIEUR FIENNES's office.  
Lights up on MARCUS and CHARLOTTE.)

CHARLOTTE

(finishing her snack, taking out another  
one)

I think that lady's a fucking bitch.

(MARCUS snatches the snack, reaches into the bag,  
and juggles it with the ballet slippers.  
CHARLOTTE grabs for the snack, giggling.)

MARCUS

Too slow!

(juggling the snack back into the bag)

Don't worry, Buddy. She won't last long.

CHARLOTTE

You want me to make life hard for her, Marcus?

MARCUS

(laughing, picking up the bag)

Naw. You just keep being your sweet self. I'll handle her. Come on, Champ, we have to finish your tree fort before it gets dark.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe we should bring it outside, Marcus. Don't you think it's getting a little tall for the apartment? What's the plan?

MARCUS

The universe always laughs at our plans. Let's get a move on.

(MARCUS tosses the ballet slippers away as he and  
CHARLOTTE exit. Lights up on MONSIEUR  
FIENNES's office.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

What's your first move?

CATHERINE

I'll arrange a "team meeting" with him. I'll offer him an olive branch.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Well, good luck. You can see what we're dealing with. Keep me posted.

(GEORGES enters with OPHÉLIE.)

GEORGES

Ah, you must be the headmaster. Finally! We've been looking all over for this office. You've got kids running around everywhere. You've got your hands full, my friend.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

You could say that. But things are changing fast.

GEORGES

Oh, I hope not. Don't you change a thing. All that energy, all that vitality. We love it already. Better than your last school, eh, *Chou-chou*? Stuffy old hospital.

OPHÉLIE

Then why'd you make me go there?

GEORGES

(suddenly ice cold, squeezing her  
shoulder firmly)

Respect, My Pet. Respect.

(smiling broadly)

Speaking of, I'm forgetting my manners. I'm Monsieur Crier, Georges Crier. And this beautiful little treasure is my daughter, Ophélie. Say hello, Darling.

OPHÉLIE

(mocking)

Hello, Darling.

GEORGES

(with a forced laugh, and a warning  
squeeze)

We're hoping you have room to enroll Ophélie.

OPHÉLIE

I'm not.

CATHERINE

Monsieur Crier, what makes you think Summerhaven is a good fit for Ophélie?

GEORGES

Like I said, it's energetic, creative. Why, your Sacred Lotus method is the best thing for a child like her. That good enough for you?

CATHERINE

Well, I appreciate your confidence. What do you mean when you say "a child like her"?

(Music begins for "One Out of a Million." [DEMO  
TRACK 5])

GEORGES

FOR START

TAKE A LOOK.

MY GIRL'S ONE OUT OF A MILLION.

SCRATCH THAT, A BAZILLION!

TALK ABOUT YOUR DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH.

(This time, GEORGES gives OPHÉLIE an affectionate squeeze.)

OPHÉLIE

Ick! Let go!

GEORGES

WILD AT HEART.  
AN OPEN BOOK.  
MULTI-LAYERED LIKE AN ONION.  
ONE SMART APPLE, THIS ONE;  
THOUGH NOT SO GOOD AT MEMORIZING STUFF.

SHE NEEDS A SCHOOL  
THAT CAN KEEP UP.  
SHE SPEAKS UP  
WHEN SHE SEES  
INJUSTICE AT PLAY.

SHE PLAYS BY RULES  
ALL HER OWN.  
SHE'S NO DRONE.  
AND SHE'LL OWN  
THOSE WHO GET IN HER WAY.

DREAM, PLAN, DO.  
THE GIRL CAN DO.  
SHE'S HAD IT HARD, BUT PAIN IS FUEL.  
CHILDREN CAN BE CRUEL.  
THAT WHICH MAKES US TEARFUL MAKES US TOUGH.  
WHEN IT COMES TO MY OPHÉLIE  
I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH.

(Music vamps under the following.)

GEORGES

Well, what do you say, eh? You think your teachers'll be able to handle her?

CATHERINE

That remains to be seen. I take it this is not the first time Ophélie has changed schools.

GEORGES

Christ, no!  
WE'VE BEEN  
SCOUTING ABOUT,

BUT IT'S TOUGH TO FIND A SCHOOL  
THAT SUITS MY LITTLE JEWEL.  
SAME OLD STORY EVERYWHERE WE GO:

THEY TAKE HER IN,  
THEY KICK HER OUT  
ONCE THEY REALIZE HER TALENTS.  
THIS ONE NEEDS A CHALLENGE.  
HER GENIUS DISRUPTS THE STATUS QUO.

AT FIRST THINGS SEEM FINE  
THEY ACT MINDFUL  
AND KIND  
JUST AS LONG AS SHE'S DEMURE, NAIVE.

BUT THEY TURN ON A DIME  
RIGHT WHEN SHE FINDS HER VOICE,  
AND WE HAVE NO CHOICE  
BUT TO LEAVE!

SO HERE WE ARE.  
AND I'VE NO DOUBT  
THAT FATE HAS SMILED UPON HER.  
OF COURSE, IF YOU DON'T WANT HER...

(Music vamps under the following.)

CATHERINE

Well, I didn't say we don't want her, Monsieur Crier. But tell me, what kind of specialist does Ophélie see?

GEORGES

Specialist? Hey, she's got problems, sure, but what kid doesn't?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

(with a significant look to CATHERINE)

I don't think we need to inquire any further. Of course Ophélie is welcome at Summerhaven, Monsieur Crier.

GEORGES

(ecstatic)

Fantastic!  
HEY, MY PET,  
DID YOU HEAR?  
WE'RE FINALLY ON A ROLL.

OPHÉLIE

I'M NOT GOING TO THIS SHIT HOLE.  
FUCK THIS, DADDY, COME ON, TAKE ME HOME.

GEORGES  
(forced laughter)

HER SENSE  
OF HUMOR  
IS QUIRKY! SHE'S PERKY.

OPHÉLIE

You irk me!

GEORGES  
(taking her by the arm, gritted teeth)

I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND.  
SHE MEANS NO OFFENSE.  
IF YOU KNEW HER  
YOU'D SEE.  
SHE'S FEISTY,  
BUT GENTLE AS A LAMB.

OPHÉLIE

Bleah!

GEORGES

THAT'S MY PEARL.

(GEORGES presses OPHÉLIE'S shoulder as she  
tries to protest.)

PAPA'S GIRL.

(to the others)

SHE GETS ORNERY WHEN SHE'S NERVOUS.  
AS FOR ME, I'M AT YOUR SERVICE.  
YOU WON'T REGRET THIS. LOOK AT HER,

(He gestures toward OPHÉLIE, who has her arms  
crossed, scowling.)

SHE'S CHUFFED.  
WHEN IT COMES TO MY OPHÉLIE,  
MY ONLY CHILD, MY OPHÉLIE,  
MY PRECIOUS LITTLE...

OPHÉLIE

THAT'S IT! I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!  
GET STUFFED!

(Music strikes a sour closing chord as OPHÉLIE steps on her father's foot. GEORGES yelps in pain, looks angry, and then forces himself to smile through it. OPHÉLIE crosses her arms and grimaces. GEORGES looks as though he's holding back the urge to haul off and...)

CATHERINE

Listen, Ophélie. I know it can be scary going to a new school. There's nothing to be frightened of. We're your friends.

(CATHERINE reaches her arms out inviting OPHÉLIE into a hug. At first OPHÉLIE sinks into her father, but then, seeing that CATHERINE is sincere, embraces her.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Looks like Madame Huber and Ophélie have already taken a liking to each other. I think Ophélie will find Mr. Doran's class more than satisfactory. It's where Madame Hubert works.

GEORGES

(beaming)

Absolutely.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Fine. Ophélie can start tomorrow morning. If you'll just stay for a bit I have some paperwork for you to fill in. Thank you, Madame Huber, that will be all.

(Lights out on MONSIEUR FIENNES's office as CATHERINE steps out.)

## SCENE 5

*[Late afternoon. The classroom.] Lights up on another part of the stage.*

(CATHERINE steps onto the other part of the stage and begins to putter in the classroom, waiting for MARCUS, who hurries in after a moment carrying a small paper tray with two cups on it.)

CATHERINE

(miffed)

Is it your habit to keep people waiting?

MARCUS

(cold, offering her a cup)

Here. This one's yours. Black.

CATHERINE

(pleasantly surprised)

How did you know?

MARCUS

What kind of teacher would I be if I couldn't read people?

CATHERINE

Go on, then.

MARCUS

On the plus side, you're patient. Efficient.

CATHERINE

And on the negative side?

MARCUS

Bit of a curmudgeon. Set in your ways. Resistant to change.

CATHERINE

(offended)

Am I? Well, I'm not sure about that.

(Awkward silence. They sip. A beat.)

MARCUS

Look. We got off on the wrong foot. I'm sorry about earlier. We just don't quiz and grill the children during the Rest.

CATHERINE

I was caught off guard. We didn't do anything like what you do in my teacher training.

MARCUS

That's because they train teachers like you to break the universe up into little factoids for children to memorize and regurgitate.

CATHERINE

What do you mean, "teachers like me?" How else can you know what they've learned?



MARCUS

It's up to them what they learn. You can't test the spirit bud's growth any more than you can weigh the spirit itself.

CATHERINE

(with effort, maintaining composure)

So you're religious?

MARCUS

I'm spiritual. I believe in children.

CATHERINE

(impressed but hiding it)

I see.

CATHERINE

I know something about what *teachers like you* do, you know. We discussed alternative methods in my training: Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia...

MARCUS

Oh, yes. All false.

CATHERINE

Well, at last we agree on something.

(Music begins for "Teaching from the Heart."

**[DEMO TRACK 6]**)

CATHERINE

But how did you get into this Sacred Lotus stuff? Wait, don't tell me, a pretty girl in your drum circle at Burning Man was into it and the two of you hooked up.

MARCUS

I wish. My ex-wife and I were traveling in India.

THERE WE SAT

AMONG A HODGEPODGE

ON A BUS

TO MUMBAI.

WHEN THIS CAT

WHO RAN A SWEAT LODGE

SPILLED HIS GUTS

TO HER AND I.

IT TURNS OUT

HE WAS A SHAMAN

AT A LOTUS FLOWER SCHOOL,

SO WE CHECKED IT OUT;  
 WE HAD A LOT IN COMMON.  
 HE SEEMED COOL.  
 IN A CLASSROOM, BRIGHT, AND SUNLIT  
 I HEARD TWO GIRLS, NO MORE THAN EIGHT  
 SAY, "IF THE UNIVERSE IS INFINITE  
 THAN I AM ITS CENTER, AND SO'S THIS PLATE."  
 I WAS BLOWN AWAY.  
 BY THEIR KEEN IMAGINATIONS.  
 SUCH A TENDER AGE,  
 SUCH A SENSE OF FASCINATION.  
 I KNEW RIGHT THEN THAT I WANTED TO BE A PART  
 OF THIS PEDAGOGY THAT SEEMED TO ME MORE LIKE AN ART.  
 IT'S NOT ABOUT SMARTS.  
 IT'S TEACHING FROM THE HEART.

(Music continues under the following.)

CATHERINE

Figures you're the center of the universe.

MARCUS

No, she was. Look, the point is, that child had a conception of the cosmos, of infinity, of the oneness..

CATHERINE

I get it, I get it. It's a cute story, but I like my version better.

MARCUS

You would have just thought the child was being a smart ass.

CATHERINE

Hey! I appreciate a child's imagination.

MARCUS

So what about you? You dated a guy who was a teacher.

CATHERINE

I have a mind of my own.  
 FROM THE TIME  
 I WAS A YOUNG GIRL, ALL  
 I WANTED  
 WAS TO TEACH.  
 I WOULD LINE  
 UP ALL MY DOLLS,

PUT ON NICE CLOTHES,  
 AND GIVE A SPEECH.  
 I HAD FEW FRIENDS.  
 I WAS DISCERNING  
 EVEN AS A LITTLE GIRL.  
 I KNEW EVEN THEN  
 HOW LEARNING  
 COULD BETTER THE WORLD.  
 THEN IN COLLEGE  
 I READ THAT NOVEL,  
 WHERE CHILDREN PLAY  
 IN A FIELD OF RYE.  
 NEAR A CLIFF EDGE,  
 STANDS HOLDEN CAULFIELD  
 THERE TO CATCH THEM ALL  
 SHOULD THEY FALL.  
 I THOUGHT, "HEY..."  
 IT OPENED MY EYES.  
 I WAS BLOWN AWAY,  
 AND I CAME TO MY DECISION:  
 I WOULD JOIN THE FRAY.  
 SAVING KIDS BECAME MY MISSION.  
 I KNEW RIGHT THEN THAT I WANTED TO BE A PART  
 OF THIS NOBLE PROFESSION THAT SEEMED TO BE MORE LIKE AN ART.

CATHERINE AND MARCUS

IT'S NOT ABOUT SMARTS.  
 IT'S TEACHING FROM THE HEART.

CATHERINE

I MUST SOUND A BIT DRAMATIC.  
 THEN AGAIN, LOOK WHO I'M TALKING TO.

MARCUS

YOU MUST THINK I'M A REAL FANATIC.  
 TELL THE TRUTH.

CATHERINE

I KIND OF DO.

CATHERINE AND MARCUS

BUT I'M BLOWN AWAY.

CATHERINE  
BY YOUR COMMITMENT.

MARCUS  
BY YOUR PASSION.

CATHERINE  
CAN WE MEET HALFWAY?

(She extends her hand. He shakes it.)

MARCUS  
WE'RE A TEAM NOW. TIME FOR ACTION.

CATHERINE  
I'M SORRY I BARGED IN.

MARCUS  
CAME TEARING MY ROOM APART.

CATHERINE AND MARCUS  
LET'S PUT IT BEHIND US AND FOCUS ON DOING OUR ART.  
LET'S MAKE A NEW START.  
TEACHING FROM THE HEART.  
LET'S BLOWN THEM AWAY.  
GIVE THEM A SENSE OF FASCINATION.  
LET'S SHOW THEM THE WAY.  
LET'S IGNITE THEIR IMAGINATIONS.  
YOU HAVE TO ADMIT, IT'S EXCITING TO BE A PART  
OF THIS NOBLE PROFESSION  
THAT SEEMS TO BE MORE LIKE AN ART.  
IT'S NOT ABOUT SMARTS.  
WE'RE TEACHING FROM THE HEART.

(Music plays out as CATHERINE and MARCUS  
strike a tableau, looking at each other intently.)

## SCENE 6

*[Midday. The Classroom.] Lights go black on  
the part of the stage where MARCUS and  
CATHERINE were sitting and up on another  
part of the stage; the classroom.*

(Music segues into “Four Little Horses” **[DEMO TRACK 7]** as a group of CHILDREN, including CHARLOTTE and OPHÉLIE, all wearing white robes, circle around MARCUS and CATHERINE.)

MARCUS

You asked earlier what they’re learning. Behold: the four times tables. Children learn through movement, through rhythm, much better than from books.

CATHERINE

I’m not all about books. Come on. I’m watching.

(MARCUS gestures to the CHILDREN to form a large ellipse. He then bends over and makes horse jockey movements. He faces left and gestures to CATHERINE and The CHILDREN to follow suit.)

MARCUS

(To CATHERINE)

This is the "rhythmic" part of the Main Lesson.

(EVERYONE imitates MARCUS's movements as he gallops in place for three beats, and on the fourth beat, advances one step.)

MARCUS

FOUR LITTLE HORSES,  
RUNNING IN A RACE.  
ONE'LL CROSS THE FINISH LINE  
AND WIN FIRST PLACE.

(The CHILDREN join MARCUS in singing in counterpoint as EVERYONE, maintaining the ellipse formation, gallops in place for three beats and then advance leftward one step, all while maintaining a steady beat.)

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

FOUR LITTLE HORSES,  
RUNNING IN A RACE.  
ONE'LL CROSS THE FINISH LINE  
AND WIN FIRST PLACE.  
FOUR LITTLE HORSES.

CHILDREN

FOUR LITTLE HORSES. HORSES. OO.

MARCUS

IF EACH HAS FOUR LEGS  
KEEPING PACE,  
HOW MANY LEGS  
WILL FINISH THE RACE?

MARCUS

Count with me!

(Two of the CHILDREN break formation. One stands outside the circle and the other inside as they face each other and raise their arms to form an arch.

The other CHILDREN maintain the circle formation, but gallop through the arch to the steady beat. For each child that passes under the arch, ALL shout a multiple of four and clap.)

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

Four! Eight! Twelve! Sixteen!

(On sixteen everyone throws up their arms and waves their hands in the air as if crossing a finish line. They then continue galloping in a circle and singing.)

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

FOUR LITTLE HORSES RUNNING IN A RACE...ETC.

(OPHÉLIE moves clumsily and has trouble keeping a gallop going and raising her arms up. She bumps other children, eventually stopping and screaming.)

OPHÉLIE

Dammit! Shit, fuck! I can't do it!

(The CHILDREN break their movements, panicking. The circle formation breaks down. The CHILDREN part as OPHÉLIE strides downstage punching the air, screaming and swearing.)

MARCUS

Who's this?

CATHERINE

That's Ophélie. She's our new student.

MARCUS

(stooping to make eye contact)

Are you now? Welcome, Ophélie. Easy, easy. You can do it. Just gallop like this.

OPHÉLIE

Oh, are we playing horsie? Okay. I'll be the front end and you be yourself.

(CHILDREN laugh. MARCUS isn't phased.)

MARCUS

(with a laugh)

Sick burn. Here, follow me.

(MARCUS takes OPHÉLIE by the hand to lead her into the circle but she screams and kicks him. Music stops.)

CHARLOTTE

(coming forward)

Hey, you fucking bitch! That's my daddy!

(MARCUS shushes CHARLOTTE while CATHERINE intervenes. She pulls OPHÉLIE away from MARCUS and cradles her.)

CATHERINE

(straining to stay calm)

Mister Doran. Is it part of your practice to touch the children without their permission?

OPHÉLIE

You're all gonna die! I'll fucking kill you!

MARCUS

Whoah, hang on, hang on, let's all just hold our horses. I was just leading her into the circle.

CATHERINE

You frightened her.

MARCUS

I didn't mean to. I just wanted her to join the lesson.

CATHERINE

(through gritted teeth)

Well, perhaps your "lesson" is a bit esoteric. Can't you make the movements simpler so that every child can follow them?

MARCUS

Tell you what.

(to OPHÉLIE, with a smile)

Watch this!

(flashing a wry smile at CATHERINE)

Both of you.

(MARCUS claps twice. The children pay attention.  
Music resumes under the following.)

MARCUS

Ten of you, circle up. The rest, sit down.

(CATHERINE and OPHÉLIE remain standing to the side. MARCUS begins stepping to a steady rhythm as the circle of children form around him and imitate his movements.)

MARCUS

Now, Everyone step in place in the circle. Those of you outside the circle pat the steady beat. That's it. Now, you in the circle, step and whisper one, two, three, now clap and shout, *four!* Now step and whisper, five, six, seven, and clap and shout, *eight!* Keep going!

(The CHILDREN repeat this all the way to sixteen.)

MARCUS

Now, say the first three numbers in your head as we step, step, step, and clap and shout, *four!* Step, step, step, *eight!* Keep going.

(The CHILDREN continue stepping and chanting.)



MARCUS

That's it, that's it! Step and inner hear, then shout and clap every fourth number. Good!  
(to CATHERINE)

And now, the "doing" part.

(The children continue these movements, chanting and clapping the multiples of four while counting the numbers in between in their heads. While the children move and count, Marcus breaks out of the circle and walks around the inside of the circle, indicating for each child to raise his or her right arm and hold up a number on his or her fingers. The child at the top of the circle holds up his fist, indicating zero. Moving clockwise to his left, the next child holds up one finger, the next child two, and so on around the circle, the second to last child holding up nine fingers. Marcus then produces a ball of red yarn. He motions for CHARLOTTE to join him in the middle of the circle.)

MARCUS

Alright, now, step silently to the beat. Keep your numbers held up. Listen first, then sing with me:

(The CHILDREN step as MARCUS sings the following:)

NIGHTFALL COVERS THIS WORLD OF OURS,  
AND THE FIRST FOUR PLANETS ARE THE BRIGHTEST STARS.  
MERCURY'S FIRST, THEN VENUS, EARTH, AND MARS.  
THE FIRST FOUR PLANETS ARE THE BRIGHTEST STARS.  
NIGHT BRINGS THE DARK.  
THE FIRST FOUR PLANETS ARE THE BRIGHTEST STARS.

(The children step in place, singing the above as an infinite round. While singing they hold up their numbers on their right hands. While the children sing and step, Marcus walks up to the child holding up zero and places the ball of yarn in his left hand.)

MARCUS

Starting at zero, Charlotte, take the ball of yarn, let it unspool, and go where we tell you, like this.

(MARCUS calls out “zero” as he signals to the “zero” child to pinch the loose end of the yarn. The children resume stepping, clapping, and singing. MARCUS unspools the ball of yarn and runs up to the child who’s holding up the number four. He places ball of yarn in the left hand of the “four” child. The “zero” child and the “four” child draw the yarn tight, making a taut line of red yarn between them as MARCUS shouts out “four.” Next, MARCUS hooks the yarn on the fingers of the “four” child, unspools it again as he runs over to the child holding up the number eight and repeats everything he did with child number four. Now there are two taut lines of red yarn in the center of the circle. He hands the ball of yarn to CHARLOTTE and she takes over. CHARLOTTE shouts out “twelve” as she runs over to the “two” child and hands him or her a piece of the yarn. The dance continues in this manner. When CHARLOTTE reaches twenty, the red yarn has made a pentagram shape in the center of the circle.)

MARCUS

Lovely! Look at the beautiful star you've made! Sit down, Charlotte, honey. Hold up the star, children. That's it!

(Marcus signals to everyone to raise up the star shape. When the star shape is raised up, the children walk in a circle. Marcus motions for another child to come into the circle and run under the star, retracing Charlotte’s path through the moving circle, starting his count at 24 and going until forty. At this point MARCUS claps his hands to stop the activity.)

MARCUS

Alright! To the Rest!

(Music plays out as the CHILDREN laugh and excitedly go off to different activities. MARCUS dashes up to OPHÉLIE.)

MARCUS

You see, Ophélie? You don't have to dance, or sing, you can just run around the circle.

OPHÉLIE

(unimpressed)

Bleah!

CATHERINE

(impressed)

Is that one of the lessons from your training?

MARCUS

Nope. I made it up.

(to OPHÉLIE)

With you in mind.

(OPHÉLIE sticks out her tongue.)

CATHERINE

Just now?

MARCUS

Just now.

CATHERINE

(genuinely impressed)

What a clever way to get them to memorize their multiplication tables.

(but...unable to help herself)

May I ask, how do you know if they really know the information?

(MARCUS stays silent.)

CATHERINE

(backpedaling)

I mean, it was a beautiful exercise. They were laughing. They were happy. May I, just...try something?

MARCUS

It's the Rest.

CATHERINE

(proceeding with caution)

Yes, I know. I just wonder if they really learned it. Are the "rhythm" and the "doing" enough? Is there an "assessing", a part where you check their understanding? May I try?

(Without waiting for an answer, CATHERINE heads to the center of the room. Just then, MONSIEUR FIENNES enters the room to observe. He occupies an unobtrusive spot in the classroom. CATHERINE makes eye contact with OPHÉLIE, smiles, then takes OPHÉLIE'S hand and leads her into the center.)

CATHERINE

Children! Gather 'round, please. Make a circle, okay?

(The CHILDREN look up from their activities. A pause. They don't budge.)

MARCUS

(reluctant, but going along with it)

Circle up.

(Some CHILDREN protest, but they all slowly make their way toward CATHERINE, who stands proudly in front. When everyone is in a circle, CATHERINE begins to tell a story, making large but simple gestures in the air, watching to make sure OPHÉLIE can perform the gestures.)

CATHERINE

Uh...There was once a princess who had a giant mirror. It was a magical mirror.

(Silence.)

One day, the princess went up to her mirror and said, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, um, who is the fairest of them all?" And the mirror said, "I will tell thee if you...er, can tell me the four times tables...all..."

(Some CHILDREN snicker. MARCUS claps. They fall silent.)

CATHERINE

And so, the princess sang,

(Music starts.)

CATHERINE

(gesticulating, encouraging the children to imitate her)

"FOUR ONE TIME MAKES..."

(The CHILDREN just stand awkwardly. Some of them mock her.)

CATHERINE

(singing)

“FOUR ONE TIME MAKES...”

(Silence.)

OPHÉLIE

(struggling to follow CATHERINE)

Four!

CATHERINE

(flashing a smile at OPHÉLIE)

Four.

(clearing her throat and singing again)

“FOUR TWO TIMES MAKES...”

(Silence. Giggles.)

OPHÉLIE

Come on, you fuckers! Four two times makes eight!

(Chaos. The CHILDREN laugh and start imitating CATHERINE in a derisive manner, mocking her. Some children take OPHÉLIE by the arm and swing her around like they're square dancing. CATHERINE tries to keep order, but can't.)

MARCUS

(clapping)

That's enough. Alright, alright. Enough horsing around. Everybody out on the playground. Rebirth! Let's go. Let's go.

(The CHILDREN file out, laughing and mocking as they go. CHARLOTTE hangs back to check on MARCUS.)

MARCUS

(to CHARLOTTE)

You too, honey.

(to OPHÉLIE)

You too, Madame Bleah. Out. Let's go.

(OPHÉLIE checks with CATHERINE, who nods.  
OPHÉLIE flips MARCUS the finger as she leaves.)

MARCUS

(teasing)

Well, I'll give you this: they were laughing.

CATHERINE

I was a little out of my comfort zone.

MARCUS

There's too much public school in you. Children aren't on our schedule. They reveal what they absorbed from us on their own time.

(MONSIEUR FIENNES approaches.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

And when will that be, Mr. Doran? I dare say time is something of which you have precious little.

MARCUS

Monsieur Fiennes.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

What Miss Crier did, was that any way for a little girl to act? And toward an adult no less?

MARCUS

(dry)

Indeed. It was a terrible tale of whoa.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

(to CATHERINE)

Madame Hubert. A word.

SCENE 7

*[Afternoon. The corridor.]*

(MONSIEUR FIENNES and CATHERINE step into a part of the stage where a new set of lights come up as the side of the stage where MARCUS is standing goes black.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

(stopping)

What was it I saw you doing back there, Madame Hubert?

CATHERINE

I was singing, Monsieur Fiennes.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Singing. I already have someone to *entertain* the children, Madame Hubert. His name is Marcus Doran.

(Lights up on MARCUS. Lights out on  
MONSIEUR FIENNES and CATHERINE.  
CHARLOTTE enters the light where MARCUS is  
standing.)

CHARLOTTE

Marcus. You're still here.

MARCUS

Still here. I have an appointment soon. What is it, Scout?

CHARLOTTE

Why did you let that crazy new girl swear at you like that? And kick you? Why didn't you kick her out?

MARCUS

Well, honey, you know: difficult road; beautiful destination.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, well. If she kicks you again I'll kick her ass. Just say the word and I'll do it. Got it?

(Lights up on MONSIEUR FIENNES and  
CATHERINE. Lights out on MARCUS and  
CHARLOTTE.)

CATHERINE

I get it, Monsieur Fiennes. But it's all part of the plan.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Very well. But Madame Hubert, the sooner you establish some order and get the children going on real work, the more secure both our jobs will be.

CATHERINE

Understood.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Perhaps you could wait with Ophélie for her father to come and pick her up.

CATHERINE

Will do.

(The two exit to MONSIEUR FIENNES's office.  
Lights up on MARCUS and CHARLOTTE again.)

MARCUS

You will do no such thing, Kiddo.

CHARLOTTE

Well why didn't you stand up to her yourself?

MARCUS

(stooping down to look into her eyes)

Listen, Honey, Ophélie can't help being what she is. She has skills to learn. Her spirit's crying out for something. Belonging, maybe.

CHARLOTTE

Well, she doesn't belong here. Why can't we just get rid of her?

MARCUS

Sweetheart. When life throws you a rainy day...

CHARLOTTE

(unconvinced)

I know. Play in the puddles.

MARCUS

Speaking of rainy days, you'd better wait in Fiennes's office for your mother. She'll be here soon.

CHARLOTTE

I don't want to go to mom's.

MARCUS

I don't want you to go either. But you have to.



CHARLOTTE

Can't you even stand up to mom?

MARCUS

Champ.

(CHARLOTTE reluctantly goes into MONSIEUR FIENNES's office. GEORGES appears.)

GEORGES

There you are, Doran. Where's my daughter?

MARCUS

Monsieur Fiennes's office, Monsieur Crier.

GEORGES

(wary)

What is she doing in the office?

MARCUS

You'll have to ask her.

GEORGES

I'm asking you. Are the other students bullying her? Did you say something to her?

(CATHERINE approaches.)

CATHERINE

Good afternoon, Monsieur Crier. Ophélie was just telling me how much she loves collecting sea shells. I just love her energy.

GEORGES

(softening)

Yes, she's energetic, isn't she? Bless you, Madame Hubert. Thank you. I'll just go and get her.

(GEORGES exits to MONSIEUR FIENNES's office.)

CATHERINE

Marcus, she's got it all: attention deficit, spectrum, emotional problems...

MARCUS

I've never seen anything like it.

CATHERINE

Better roll up your sleeves.

(DOROTHÉE appears in the light holding  
CHARLOTTE's hand. They join him.)

DOROTHÉE

Marcus.

MARCUS

Dorothée.

(to CHARLOTTE)

Hey, Buddy.

CATHERINE

If you'll excuse me.

(CATHERINE exits.)

DOROTHÉE

Have you thought about our conversation?

MARCUS

I've thought about it.

(GEORGES approaches with OPHÉLIE.)

GEORGES

I'm sorry to interrupt.

DOROTHÉE

(brightening)

Oh, it's no problem, Monsieur Crier.

GEORGES

(becoming visibly nervous)

Georges.

DOROTHÉE

(blushing)

Georges.

GEORGES

(with enthusiasm)

Ophélie was wondering if perhaps Charlotte would like to join us. At the park.

OPHÉLIE  
(to CHARLOTTE)

Wanna come?

CHARLOTTE  
(Flashing DOROTHÉE a "save me"  
expression)

Um. Momma?

DOROTHÉE  
Go on. Go with Georges and Ophélie. I'll be along in a moment. Your father and I have something to discuss.

CHARLOTTE  
I'm okay here with you two. Right, Marcus?

DOROTHÉE  
He's your father, Charlotte. For God's sake call him "Dad", or "Father", or even "Daddy".

(CHARLOTTE ignores her. To diffuse the tension, GEORGES comes up to CHARLOTTE and makes a big show of pulling a gold coin out of her ear, to comic effect. CHARLOTTE laughs. DOROTHÉE smiles at GEORGES.)

MARCUS  
(wary)  
Go on, Pal. Make friends.

(OPHÉLIE happy, but clumsy, grabs CHARLOTTE's hand. GEORGES and DOROTHÉE exchange another significant look as he, OPHÉLIE, and CHARLOTTE exit, GEORGES continuing to make CHARLOTTE giggle on the way offstage.)

DOROTHÉE  
And?

MARCUS  
And I've thought about it.

DOROTHÉE  
(after a beat)

Pity.

(DOROTHÉE exits. MARCUS stands in silence for a moment. He takes out the business card MONSIEUR FIENNES gave him, then he steps across the dark portion of the stage into another portion of the stage where the lights have come up on the apartment of MONSIEUR ONFRAY.)

## SCENE 8

*[Late afternoon. The apartment of MONSIEUR ONFRAY.] A small coffee table divides the space between two large, comfortable chairs. A tall, goose-necked reading lamp arches its head over one chair. Books in haphazard stacks clutter the space. Telescopes, gyroscopes, a skeleton, Rubik's cubes and other scientific kink knacks litter the room while reading glasses, crumpled tissues, and more books devour the surface of the coffee table.*

(MARCUS sits. After a moment MONSIEUR ONFRAY emerges from the kitchen carrying a tray with a tea set, a bowl of fruit, and some biscuits. He places them on the coffee table.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

There we are.

(He opens the lid of the tea pot and pours a glass for MARCUS.)

You look like a man who likes his tea a little sweet.

MARCUS

*Merci, Monsieur Onfray.*

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

I would say call me Aldebert, but I'm not sure which is harder to pronounce. I'll let you pick.

MARCUS

Well, you can call me Marcus.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

(picking up the book in front of him)

You know, Marcus, I must tell you, I was excited when you told me over the phone that you were a practitioner of Dr. Gliese's method. Don't meet many "alternative" educators these days, and I daresay his Sacred Lotus Flower pedagogy is one of the more "alternative" out there.

MARCUS

It certainly isn't for the closed minded.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Now, now. Don't misunderstand me. I believe there is more than one way to peel a tomato. I just, well...I have only read a little about your approach, but I wonder if you're familiar with the founder of your method's views about reincarnation and race?

MARCUS

Enlighten me.x

(Music starts for "Follow the Evidence" [**DEMO TRACK 8**])

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Yes, I imagine they left it out of your training. Dr. Gliese was a Christian mystic, as you know. He believed in the Bible and all of that, but he also believed in reincarnation. In fact, he said the more pure a life you led, the paler your skin in your next incarnation. And, Marcus, I'm sure you can work out the skin, hair, and eye color of the people who led the purest past lives.

(MARCUS responds with a sip of his tea and a little squirm in his chair.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

What do you think of that, Marcus?

MARCUS

(a pause)

I don't believe it.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

(with an air of relief)

Glad to hear it.

MARCUS

I just care about Dr. Gliese's ideas about education. I don't have to believe everything he said.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Naturally. I suppose when it comes to "spiritual" matters, we all pick and choose.

ULI BELIEVES IN UNICORNS.

FRANZ BELIEVES IN FAIRIES.

SONYA BELIEVES THE SON OF GOD

WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN CALLED MARY.

WILHELM BELIEVES IN WOTAN.

THEO BELIEVES IN THETANS.

JOEL OSSTEIN WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE

GIVE HIM MONEY AND HE'LL SAVE YOU FROM SATAN.

RELIGION'S A BIG BUFFET.

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER A BELIEF MAKES SENSE,

IT'LL MAKE IT ON YOUR TRAY

IN THE FACE OF THE EVIDENCE.

(Music vamps under the following dialog.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY offers MARCUS the fruit bowl.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Cherry?

(MARCUS takes a cherry and sips his tea again.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

All joking aside, tell me, then, Marcus, in the interest of getting to know each other, what is it that most attracts you to this Sacred Lotus Flower method?

MARCUS

That it's not a method. It's a *way*. We address the whole child: the mental, the physical, and the spiritual.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Sorry, you've lost me.

MARCUS

Inside every child grows a spirit bud, like the bud of a flower.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

An actual spirit bud? Inside the child?

MARCUS

It's more like the child *is* the spirit bud. The bud is the child. It's all one.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Is it? And how can I tell if this spirit bud is real or imaginary? What's it made of? How can we measure it? How can we detect it in some way?

MARCUS

There's more to life than what can be measured scientifically.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Is there? What other method do we have to differentiate between what's imaginary and what's real?

WHEN ISAAC NEWTON SAW THE APPLE FALL

IT WASN'T A MERE OBSERVATION.

USING ONLY ARROWS AND CANNON BALLS

HE EXPLAINED UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION.

THEN ALONG CAME ALBERT EINSTEIN,  
FROM HIS PATENT OFFICE WATCHING STARLINGS FLY,  
HE THOUGHT, "GRAVITY WARPS SPACETIME!"  
TURNS OUT HE HIT THE BULL'S-EYE.

WITH THE HELP OF HUBBLE'S TELESCOPE, WE SAW  
THE CMB RADIATION.

NOW HUMANITY LOOKS TO THE SKIES WITH AWE  
AS WE STARE INTO THE FACE OF CREATION.

Speaking metaphorically, of course.

HOW DO WE FATHOM THE WORLD,  
FROM THE TEENY TINY TO THE TRULY IMMENSE?  
GRADUALLY IT ALL MAKES SENSE  
WHEN YOU FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.

(Music vamps under the following.)

MARCUS

Science can't explain everything. Some things you have to intuit.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Yes, but intuition only gets us so far, doesn't it Marcus? I mean, your intuition tells you you're holding a tea cup, but in reality, there's an infinite amount of space between the tiny particles in that cup. It's really just a cloud of atoms.

MARCUS

Can you observe those atoms?

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Not directly, of course. But with the right instruments...

MARCUS

You can observe the spirit bud directly. It's in the joy on the children's faces. You can feel it when they're absorbed in a song or a story or a dance.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Fascinating. And why don't you teach academics?

MARCUS

Too early. The spirit bud has to be nurtured. Direct teaching, testing. All of your traditional methods. It's like poking around in the soil with a painted stick.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

But children love to learn, Marcus. Surely teaching them the three R's would help their "spirits" grow optimally?

MARCUS

Learn? You mean memorize and regurgitate.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

(laughing)

Do I?

MARCUS

WHY DO YOUR CHILDREN HATE SCHOOL SO MUCH?

WHY DO THEY FORGET YOUR LESSONS?

BECAUSE YOU POKE AND PROD THEM WITH TESTS AND SUCH.

THEY SHOULD BE ASKING, NOT ANSWERING QUESTIONS.

WE MUST WAIT FOR THE SPIRIT BUD TO FLOWER

BRING OUT THE CHILDRENS' PASSIONS.

THAT'S WHEN THE CHILD IS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS POWER.

THAT'S WHEN TRUE LEARNING HAPPENS.

HOW DO I KNOW I'M RIGHT?



THERE'S MORE TO THIS WORLD THAN WE EMPIRICALLY SENSE.  
 MORE THAN MATTER IN MOTION AND CHEMICAL BONDS,  
 SOMETHING BEYOND THE EVIDENCE.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

I admire your passion, Marcus. You remind me of myself as a student in Paris. But tell me, when does the spirit bud...erm...flower, according to your beliefs?

MARCUS

It's different for each child. Generally around age 12 or so.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

That late? You don't start teaching children to read and write until that late?

MARCUS

Education isn't about what children know. It's about who they are.

(looking uncomfortable)

Why are we talking about this? I need to pass that licensure exam to stay in the country. What do I need to do?

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Do? Simple. You have to conduct a mountain of research, design a traditional-style lesson, write up a huge proposal, have the whole thing translated into French, then deliver it to the children in front of a panel of *commission scolaire* inspectors.

MARCUS

(crestfallen)

Piece of piss.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

That's the *spirit*. I think that's all the time we have for today. See you next week?

MARCUS

Next week.

(MONSIEUR ONFRAY rises as MARCUS gets up from the chair and steps out of the spotlight. MONSIEUR ONFRAY stares after MARCUS, then picks up the book he's been reading about Dr. Gliese, the founder of MARCUS'S method.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

Well, Gliese. I don't know how you do it.

IN THIS WORLD WHERE TEACHERS GET THEIR HEADS CUT OFF

FOR SHOWING A PICTURE OF MUHAMMAD.  
 IN THIS WORLD WHERE PEOPLE DRINK POISON  
 TRYING TO HITCH A RIDE ON A COMET.  
 IN THIS WORLD WHERE THE CHURCH LURES LITTLE BOYS IN  
 TO SUNDAY SERVICES WITH MILK AND A COOKIE,  
 SO THAT FATHER O'MALLEY CAN CLEANSE THEIR SINS  
 AND INTO THE BARGAIN GET A LITTLE BIT OF NOOKIE.

(He tosses Dr. Gliese's book into a trash can.)

GIVE US RELIEF FROM BELIEF.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 SAY, "GOODBYE!" TO YOUR RABBI.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 SAY "TOODLE-OO!" TO YOUR GURU.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 SAY "MA SALAM" TO YOUR IMAM.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 GET YOURSELF RELEASED FROM YOUR PRIEST.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 PUT YOUR PASTOR OUT TO PASTURE.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT'S REAL?  
 THERE'S AN EASY METHOD IF YOU'RE ON THE FENCE.  
 IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S REAL  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.  
 FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.

(Lights out on MONSIEUR ONFRAY.)

## SCENE 9

*[MARCUS's classroom. Late afternoon.]*

(Spotlight goes up on the classroom. CATHERINE  
 and the CHILDREN are milling around, when  
 MARCUS bursts in carrying a grocery bag.)

CATHERINE

Where have you...?

MARCUS

Studying.

(to the CHILDREN)

Alright, gather around. Seated, seated. Everyone have a seat.

(The CHILDREN sit perplexed on the floor.)

MARCUS

Okay.

(collecting his thoughts)

The solar system. So, what is the solar system? Who can tell me?

(Silence. CATHERINE looks perplexed.)

MARCUS

(placing the bag down at his side)

Well, our solar system is made up of 8 planets.

(MARCUS pulls two plums out of the bag and juggles them.)

MARCUS

These two plums represent the planets Neptune and Uranus.

(General giggling among the children. MARCUS stops juggling.)

MARCUS

Alright, alright. Very funny. Look:

(He pulls an orange out of the bag and juggles it with the two plums.)

MARCUS

And this orange, this is Saturn.

(pulling a grapefruit out and juggling the four)

And here's Jupiter, this big one.

(He stops juggling and places all four fruits on the floor in order by furthest planet out. He then takes out two peas.)

MARCUS

(placing the two peas in their spots)

Now, these here are Venus, and Earth.

(He pulls out two peppercorns.)

MARCUS

And these little ones...see them? These are Mercury and Mars.

(He places them on the floor. The CHILDREN start to giggle and fidget.)

MARCUS

Quiet now. Check this out: there's also our sun. But our sun isn't a planet. It's a star. The sun doesn't fit in this bag; it's way, way too big.

(He picks up the pea in the Earth position.)

MARCUS

In fact, it's so big that a million earths could fit inside of it.

(MARCUS sighs. It's not going well.)

A CHILD

That's a lot of pee!

(CHARLOTTE elbows the offending CHILD. More giggles. MARCUS takes a deep breath, quiets everyone down. Music starts for "Thank, You, Thank You, Mister Sun" **[DEMO TRACK 9]** and vamps under the following.)

MARCUS

Alright. All these other planets, they revolve around the sun. They *orbit* the sun.

CHARLOTTE

(encouraging)

What do you mean?

MARCUS

What do I mean? Well...

(An awkward pause. MARCUS searches for words.)

MARCUS

(composing himself)

You know what? Forget this. Everybody up. Stand up. Make a circle. Go on. Make a circle with me. Watch the fruits. Come on. Madame Hubert, too. Join us.

(Everyone makes a circle with MARCUS. This feels more familiar. MARCUS claps a four-quarter-note rhythm and the others join him.)

MARCUS

Now the sun is not only very big, it's also very powerful. It holds all the other planets under its influence. It gives them energy. Do what I do.

(MARCUS jumps up and lands five times. The first time he lands with feet apart, then with right foot crossed in front of left, then with feet apart again, then left foot crossed in front of right, and finally with feet together. The CHILDREN do this with MARCUS once.)

MARCUS

Now, we do this jumping motion every time we sing. Like this:  
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN.  
Repeat it one time with me.

CATHERINE AND CHILDREN

(while doing the jumping motions)

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN.

MARCUS

Yes! Now, not only that, but the other planets love the sun so much that they revolve, or *orbit*, around it. Do what I'm doing.

(MARCUS claps the beat and walks the group in a circle counterclockwise.)

MARCUS

Maintain the circle. That's it! Keep clapping. Watch me once then repeat.

(During the next three lines, MARCUS continues walking the group in a circle. On the third line he stops and does the jumping motions.)

MARCUS

AS THEY ORBIT ‘ROUND IT  
THE PLANETS THAT SURROUND IT  
SAY, “THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN.”

CATHERINE AND CHILDREN

AS THEY ORBIT ‘ROUND IT  
THE PLANETS THAT SURROUND IT  
SAY, “THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN.”

(Music vamps under the following.)

MARCUS

(jumping into the middle of the circle)

Great! And for the next part, I’m going to sing something. No matter what I sing, you stop walking and sing the “Mister Sun” part while doing the jumping motion. Right? So here we go:

AS THEY SURROUND IT.

CATHERINE AND CHILDREN

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN.

MARCUS

THEY ORBIT ‘ROUND IT.

CATHERINE AND CHILDREN

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN.

MARCUS

Imitate my motion while we sing!

(making a roping motion above his head.)

LET’S ROPE IT!

CATHERINE AND CHILDREN

(imitating MARCUS)

ROPE IT, ROPE IT, MISTER SUN.

MARCUS

(pantomiming swimming)

LET’S SWIM IT.

CATHERINE AND CHILDREN

SWIM IT, SWIM IT, MISTER SUN.

MARCUS

LET'S END IT!

(MARCUS picks CATHERINE to replace him in the middle of the circle.)

MARCUS

Now we start the song again with the new person in the middle!

ALL

AS THEY ORBIT 'ROUND IT  
THE PLANETS THAT SURROUND IT  
SAY, "THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MISTER SUN."

MARCUS

Except Madame Hubert is a *she*!

CHILDREN AND MARCUS

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN!

CATHERINE

AS THEY SURROUND HER.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.

CATHERINE

THEY ORBIT 'ROUND HER.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.

CATHERINE

(making a hip-bumping motion)

LET'S BUMP IT!

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

(imitating CATHERINE)

BUMP IT, BUMP IT...

(Music transitions into "The Desk Song." A commotion ensues as OPHÉLIE enters the room, lugging an old-school metal school desk with an opening wooden top. The children laugh and point and drop what they're doing to gape at her.)

OPHÉLIE  
(to CHARLOTTE as she forces her way  
into the room)

Get out of my way!

CHARLOTTE

Hey! WATCH IT!  
WHATCHA DOING?

(With effort, OPHÉLIE plunks the desk down on  
the floor in the middle of the room right where  
MARCUS and CATHERINE are standing. The  
other children gather around.)

OPHÉLIE

SUCK IT!  
DADDY'S SUING.  
THIS FUCKING SCHOOL HAS TAUGHT ME BUMPKIS.  
I SAY, "FUCK THIS."

MARCUS

Ophélie! Hang on a minute.

OPHÉLIE

YOU'D THINK THIS WAS A PLAYGROUND  
THE WAY YOU MORONS FLOUNCE AROUND.  
NOW, MADAME, YOU...  
EVEN YOU DO IT TOO!

CHARLOTTE

METAL IS FORBIDDEN.

OPHÉLIE

I NEED A DESK TO SIT IN.

CHARLOTTE

REMOVE THIS THING RIGHT NOW.

OPHÉLIE

COME MAKE ME.

CHARLOTTE

SO HELP ME...



MARCUS  
WHY DON'T WE ALL CALM DOWN.

OPHÉLIE  
(jumping on the desk, gesturing to  
MARCUS)  
SOMEBODY TELL THIS CLOWN.  
THAT I'M NOT LEARNING SHIT.  
THESE SONGS ARE DUMB.  
AND I'M ALL THUMBS.  
I NEED TO SIT.  
YOU FRUITCAKES CAN SHOVE YOUR ARABESQUES.  
I'LL BE AT MY DESK.

(OPHÉLIE stands on the desk and defiantly crosses  
her arms. The music vamps under the following.)

MARCUS  
Alright, Ophélie. Have it your way.  
(to the CHILDREN)  
Circle up. Ophélie's in the middle. Go on.

(The CHILDREN run over and circle around  
OPHÉLIE, who stands on her desk with her arms  
crossed, looking perplexed, tears streaming down  
her face. CATHERINE hangs back. MONSIEUR  
FIENNES enters the classroom to observe and sees  
OPHÉLIE standing on her desk and the others  
surrounding her. He starts to intervene, but  
CATHERINA breaks out of the formation to stop  
him.)

MARCUS  
(not noticing MONSIEUR FIENNES)  
Shh. Wait. Listen. Watch. She's Madame Sun.

(The music stops. A moment of awkward silence.)

OPHÉLIE  
(defiant)  
Bleah!!

CHILDREN  
(imitating her)  
Bleah!!

(OPHÉLIE looks surprised. Another pause as the CHILDREN wait. OPHÉLIE assumes a defiant pose on her desk and aggressively flips the bird on both hands, showing them around the circle.)

OPHÉLIE

(at the top of her voice)

Fuck this and all of you motherfuckers can go straight to fucking Hell!

(To OPHÉLIE'S amazement, and now delight, the CHILDREN imitate her exactly, flipping the bird at her on both hands and screaming at the top of their voices.)

CHILDREN

Fuck this and all of you motherfuckers can go straight to fucking Hell!

(Laughter from EVERYONE but MONSIEUR FIENNES, who continues to look on in shock. Even OPHÉLIE laughs. She recovers. She tries to look serious again before awkwardly placing her hands on her hips and gently swaying them from side to side.)

OPHÉLIE

(hesitant, but singing quietly)

LET'S SWAY IT.

(MARCUS joins the CHILDREN as they imitate OPHÉLIE's movements.)

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

SWAY IT, SWAY IT, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE

(bolder, nodding her head)

LET'S NOD IT.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

(doing likewise)

NOD IT, NOD IT, MADAME SUN.

(The music resumes as OPHÉLIE, now smiling, sings in her best voice.)

OPHÉLIE

AS THEY ORBIT ‘ROUND HER  
THE PLANETS THAT SURROUND HER  
SAY, “THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.”

(The game gets going in earnest.)

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

AS THEY ORBIT ‘ROUND HER  
THE PLANETS THAT SURROUND HER  
SAY, “THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.”

OPHÉLIE

AS THEY SURROUND HER.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE

THEY ORBIT ‘ROUND HER.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE

(punching the air in front of her with both  
fists)

LET’S PUNCH IT.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

(doing the same)

PUNCH IT, PUNCH IT, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE

(now tugging on her scarf, making as if  
she’s hanging herself)

LET’S HANG IT.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

(following suit)

HANG IT, HANG IT, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE

LET’S END IT.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN  
END IT, END IT, MADAME SUN.

(As MARCUS AND CHILDREN repeat the line,  
OPHÉLIE climbs off her desk, takes CHARLOTTE  
by the hand, and brings her up to the top of the  
desk. CHARLOTTE and OPHÉLIE start jumping  
down on top of the desk and dancing wildly as  
MARCUS and CHILDREN clap and cheer.  
CATHERINE gets into it, too, despite a look of  
horror from MONSIEUR FIENNES.)

MARCUS  
(laughing)  
That's fine. Some planetary systems have twin suns!

ALL  
AS THEY ORBIT 'ROUND HER  
THE PLANETS THAT SURROUND HER  
SAY, "THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN."

OPHÉLIE AND CHARLOTTE  
AS THEY SURROUND HER.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN  
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE AND CHARLOTTE  
THEY ORBIT 'ROUND HER.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN  
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, MADAME SUN.

CHARLOTTE  
(bumping hips with OPHÉLIE)  
LET'S BUMP IT.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN  
(doing the same)  
BUMP IT, BUMP IT, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE  
(hugging CHARLOTTE)  
LET'S HUG IT.

MARCUS AND CHILDREN

(hugging each other in pairs)

HUG IT, HUG IT, MADAME SUN.

OPHÉLIE

(shouting, hands raised in triumph)

Let's never end it!

(The music plays out as the game dissolves into laughter and applause. CHILDREN surround the two girls and embrace OPHÉLIE and high-five her. MARCUS claps approval. CATHERINE claps. MONSIEUR FIENNES remains stoic.)

MARCUS

Alright, alright. Get out of here. You're dismissed.

(The CHILDREN file out the door, past MONSIEUR FIENNES, laughing and chattering. When they've gone, MONSIEUR FIENNES gives MARCUS a hard look.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Such language. From children. And you encouraging it.

MARCUS

The look on her face.

(MONSIEUR FIENNES says nothing and exits.)

CATHERINE

(to MARCUS)

Just. Wow.

SCENE 10

*[Same.]*

MARCUS

Well, that was a bust.

CATHERINE

You're joking. What about Ophélie?

MARCUS

Yeah. That was something. Her father must have put her up to it. But I meant the first part. The solar system.

CATHERINE

Oh, that. Well, the test is ages from now. Marcus. I want to learn some of your techniques.

(Music starts for “The Threefold Human Being and the Animal Kingdom.” **[DEMO TRACK 10]**)

MARCUS

What do you mean? You’re on Team Fiennes. You think I’m a crackpot.

CATHERINE

(pointing to her head)

*I know* you are. It’s just that, all this time I’ve been focused on what’s up here.

(pointing to her heart)

But you...you touch them in here.

(MARCUS stands, offering his hand to CATHERINE.)

MARCUS

Well, when you put it that way: fine. Starting now. Main Lesson.

CATHERINE

What do you mean?

(MARCUS takes CATHERINE’s hand and leads her in some dance movements.)

MARCUS

WHEN WE SEE  
THE HUMAN BODY  
WE SEE THREE  
DISTINCT AND SPECIAL PARTS.  
THERE’S A HEAD  
A TORSO, FOUR LIMBS:  
AN INCREDIBLE  
WORK OF ART.

DIFFERENT SPECIES  
 OF THE ANIMALS  
 FIND IN THESE  
 THEIR COSMIC COUNTERPARTS.  
 WE CAN UNDERSTAND  
 THIS KINSHIP:  
 ANIMALS, MAN,  
 ONE BEATING HEART.

WE HAVE ROUNDED  
 HEADS SURROUNDING,  
 SOFT BRAINS, PROTECTED  
 BY HARD SKULLS  
 THAT BRACE OUR FACES'  
 SOFT PARTS  
 THROUGH WHICH OUR SENSES EMBRACE  
 THE WORLD IN FULL.

LIKE THE MOLLUSKS  
 OF THE SEVEN SEAS  
 WHOSE SOFT BODIES  
 HIDE WITHIN HARD SHELLS.  
 YES, THESE CREATURES  
 OF THE SEA BEDS  
 SHARE WITH OUR HEADS  
 SOME PARALLELS.

MARCUS AND CATHERINE  
 (flirting as the song progresses)

WE HAVE LONG  
 AND LIMBER TORSOS.  
 SPINES SO STRONG  
 YET SUPPLE AT THE BASE.  
 AND OUR RIBS PROVE  
 GOOD PROTECTION,  
 YET LET USE MOVE  
 WITH FLUENCY AND GRACE.

LIKE THE EELS AND FISH;  
 OR INVERTEBRATES;  
 OR THE LIZARDS, SNAKES,  
 AND CROCODILES.

WE CAN UNDERSTAND  
THIS KINSHIP  
BETWEEN MAN  
AND THE WILD.

WE HAVE LIMBS  
TO CLIMB AND DANCE WITH,  
RUN AND SWIM,  
DO WHAT WE LIKE TO DO.  
WITH OUR HEADS  
AND GAZE HELD UPRIGHT,  
WE'RE FREE TO CHOOSE  
THE ACTIVITIES OUR HANDS PURSUE.

(Music vamps under the following as MARCUS  
and CATHERINE get closer.)

# SCENE 11

*[Same.]*

(Music stops as DOROTHÉE and GEORGES enter,  
the latter carrying a large bundle of papers and  
looking stern.)

DOROTHÉE

Are we interrupting?

(CATHERINE, flushed, breaks away from  
MARCUS.)

CATHERINE

(hot and bothered, but resisting it.)

No, no, Madame Rosier, Monsieur Crier. Please come in. So, erm. Mister Doran. Are you  
going to show that lesson to the children tomorrow?

MARCUS

(playing along)

No, Madame Hubert. You are.

(to DOROTHÉE)

This is my weekend.

DOROTHÉE

I'm not here to pick up Charlotte.



GEORGES

We're here to pick up Ophélie.

(MARCUS shoots a knowing look at DOROTHÉE,  
who avoids his eye.)

CATHERINE

(eager to escape)

Well, erm, as you know, the children are out at afternoon Journey. It's this way.

(DOROTHÉE follows CATHERINE, who pauses at  
the edge of the light expecting GEORGES to join  
them, but he lingers. DOROTHÉE exchanges an  
awkward look with CATHERINE and the two exit.)

GEORGES

(to MARCUS)

I am to serve you with these.

(He hands MARCUS the bundle of papers.  
MARCUS reads the first page and then leafs  
through them, trying to maintain his composure.)

Insurance for when you fail that test.

MARCUS

I haven't even taken it yet.

GEORGES

(moving in close, threatening)

You think I don't know about that clown show you put on earlier? Oh, you'll fail. You  
even want to fail.

MARCUS

Do I?

GEORGES

Look, Charlotte's an amazing little girl. She's got a great mom. She needs a real father.  
Someone who's not a danger to children.

MARCUS

Someone who makes her haul heavy school desks?

GEORGES

(ignoring the joke, moving closer)

She needs a man who can handle the responsibility.

(OPHÉLIE appears in the doorway.)

OPHÉLIE

Daddy! We're all waiting. Let's go, Old Man.

GEORGES

(looking back at her with daggers in his eyes)

Get back to the others, Angel. I'll deal with you later.

(OPHÉLIE backs out of the doorway.)

MARCUS

Let me guess: a man like you.

GEORGES

Just sign the papers, Doran. Give your daughter a decent life.

(Music begins for "You'll Never Hear Me Say Goodbye" **[DEMO TRACK 11]** as GEORGES exits, leaving MARCUS crestfallen, holding the stack of papers.)

MARCUS

ALL OF THESE YEARS,  
YOU GIVE BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS;  
HALF OF YOUR LIFETIME INVESTED.  
TO BRING YOUR LITTLE GIRL JOY,  
WHICH ALWAYS ANNOYS,  
THE OLD GUARD; SO YOUR PUSHED, AND YOU'RE TESTED.

(CHARLOTTE appears in the doorway. Music vamps under the following.)

CHARLOTTE

Who are you talking to, Marcus? We got a tree fort to finish. Chop, chop.

MARCUS

(looking up from the papers)

Honey. Listen to me for a sec. Your mother and I love you very much.

CHARLOTTE

(taken aback, concerned)

Um. What? Are you feeling okay?

MARCUS

I'll be straight, Champ. Your mom wants you to live with her full time.

CHARLOTTE

Duh. So tell her to shove it up her...

MARCUS

Charlotte! Listen. Just. Whatever happens, you and me: Famleez fo' life.

(They dap.)

CHARLOTTE

(still concerned)

But wait. What do you mean, *whatever happens*?

SHE CAN'T WIN, CAN SHE?

MARCUS

No.

CHARLOTTE

YEAH, BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW?

MARCUS

JUST TRUST ME. IT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION.

CHARLOTTE

WILL YOU VISIT?

MARCUS

Charlotte, don't.

IT HASN'T HAPPENED, AND IT WON'T.

I'M SORRY I GAVE YOU THAT IMPRESSION.

Nothing's changing, Charlotte. Nothing.

YOU'LL NEVER HEAR ME SAY GOODBYE.

NO MATTER WHAT ROOF YOU LIVE UNDER.

DIVORCES, WILD HORSES COULDN'T PRY

ME AWAY FROM MY LITTLE GIRL WONDER.

(Music vamps under the following)

CHARLOTTE

Then why all of this?

MARCUS

(holding his fist in dap position)

Hey. What did I just say?

YOU AND ME, WE'RE

TWO MUSKETEERS.

NOTHING CAN TAKE ME AWAY FROM YOU.

TRY AS SHE MIGHT

I'M NOT LEAVING YOUR SIGHT.

YOU'LL NEVER HEAR ME SAY GOODBYE!

WE'RE PEAS IN A POD, BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

PULL US APART? JUST LET HER TRY.

CHARLOTTE AND MARCUS

LIKE DANCE AND SONG WE BELONG TOGETHER.

LIKE KNIFE AND FORK.

LIKE BUTTER AND BREAD.

LIKE BEANS AND PORK.

LIKE BREAKFAST AND BED.

LIKE SUGAR AND SPICE

AND EVERYTHING NICE!

YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME WAVE GOODBYE.

THERE ISN'T A STORM WE CAN'T WEATHER.

WHEN GRAY CLOUDS COME, WE'VE GOT BLUE SKIES.

WE'LL NEVER LET GO, OUR SOULS ARE TETHERED.

PEOPLE ARRIVE AND DISAPPEAR.

OUR LIVES ARE JAM-PACKED WITH PASSERSBY.

ME, I WILL ALWAYS BE HERE.

AND YOU'LL NEVER HEAR ME SAY GOODBYE.

(MARCUS and CHARLOTTE stand together hand  
in hand, facing the audience, looking through the  
fourth wall out toward the horizon. Black out.)

(End of Act 1)

## ACT 2

### SCENE 1

*[Daytime. MONSIEUR ONFRAY'S apartment.]*

(Music begins for “You’ve Got It! - Monsieur Fiennes’s Address” Spotlight up on MARCUS and MONSIEUR ONFRAY in MONSIEUR ONFRAY’s apartment. MONSIEUR ONFRAY leafs through MARCUS’s licensure exam plan.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

(removing his glasses)

This will never do, Marcus. You need a learning objective. Just follow the format I showed you. “The students will...”

MARCUS

They’re children. Calling them *students* focuses on their brains. I serve the *whole child*.

(Lights dim on a MARCUS and MONSIEUR ONFRAY, who freeze as a spotlight goes up on MONSIEUR FIENNES at a podium in a tableau which mirrors ACT 1, SCENE 1. A small group of adults sit in front of him, silhouetted, with their backs to the audience. GEORGES sits among them. MONSIEUR FIENNES is wrapping up a speech.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

AND SO, DISTINGUISHED PARENTS,  
ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE BOARD,  
I SAY THIS WITH ALL DUE RESPECT.  
I TRUST YOU’LL AGREE,  
NOW THAT YOU SEE,  
WHAT’S COME TO PASS  
IN DORAN’S CLASS  
IS REALLY NOTHING SHORT OF NEGLECT.

PARENT

COME ON, FIENNES, YOU EXAGGERATE.

PARENT

MY CHILD, FOR ONE, ADORES  
HIM!

PARENT

IF I MAY, FIENNES, LET ME BE DIRECT:  
NO ONE ELSE GETS THE FIRE BURNING  
INSPIRES MY BOY  
TO ENJOY  
HIS LEARNING.

PARENT

WITHOUT SOME TEACHER BREATHING DOWN HIS NECK.

PARENTS

YOU CAN'T JUST HIJACK THE CHILDREN'S PROCESS.  
JUST TO STIR UP A HORNET'S NEST.

PARENT

MY CHILD IS FINALLY FINDING SUCCESS!

PARENT

OH, YES!  
ME TOO.  
THIS SCHOOL IS WHERE MY PRECIOUS CHOU-CHOU  
LEARNS BEST!

MONSIEUR FIENNES

WHILE I'M GLAD TO HEAR THEY'RE HAPPY HERE  
THERE'S STILL CAUSE FOR CONCERN.  
IT'S NOT ABOUT HOW THEY FEEL BUT WHAT THEY LEARN.

PARENTS

SURELY IT'S "HOW" THEY LEARN  
NOT "WHAT" THAT'S BEST!

MONSIEUR FIENNES

THEORETICALLY, YES,  
BUT IN PRACTICAL TERMS,  
THE THREE R'S ARE BEING IGNORED.

THE ROOM IS RIFE WITH MISBEHAVIOR  
STUDENTS SLINGING SLURS LIKE SAILORS  
SINGING AND DANCING ON THEIR DESKS.  
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH WILLFULLNESS,

POOR MOTOR SKILLS, FREQUENT STRESS.  
THE STUDENTS RUN AROUND LIKE THEY'RE POSSESSED.

PARENT  
(laughing)  
Come on, Fiennes! YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.

PARENT  
IT'S NOTHING SO MYSTERIOUS.

PARENT  
DORAN'S APPROACH MAY BE UNORTHODOX.

MONSIEUR FIENNES  
"UNORTHODOX" IS NOT THE WORD.  
HE LETS THEM GET AWAY WITH MURDER.  
ACTION IS REQUIRED.

PARENT  
OH, WHAT A CROCK!

PARENT  
WHAT'S THE DEAL?

PARENT  
WHAT IS THIS, SOME KIND OF WANGLE?

MONSIEUR FIENNES  
HE'S NOT MEETING THE STUDENTS' NEEDS.  
WE NEED A NEW PEDAGOGICAL ANGLE.  
YES, IF WE TAKE THE RIGHT BENT,  
I'M CONFIDENT  
OUR STUDENTS CAN SUCCEED.

(HER FEIN and the OTHERS freeze as lights dim  
on them and go up on MONSIEUR ONFRAY and  
MARCUS.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
Marcus, WHATEVER THE "WHOLE CHILD" MEANS  
IT'S JUST A HILL OF BEANS  
TO THE INSPECTORS. THE STUDENTS' "WHOLE CHILD" WILL BE FINE.  
FOR NOW, YOU'LL HAVE TO TOW THE LINE.

MARCUS

BUT I'M...

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

WE SIMPLY HAVE NO TIME!

MARCUS

OKAY, OKAY. YOU WIN. WHAT'S A "LEARNING OBJECTIVE?"  
FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

MONSIEUR ONFRAY

IT'S JUST A PITHY BLURB  
WITH A CLEAR-CUT VERB  
THAT TELLS EXACTLY WHAT THE STUDENTS WILL DO.

MARCUS

THE STUDENTS WILL BE SCREWED.

(MARCUS and MONSIEUR ONFRAY freeze  
again. Lights up on MONSIEUR FIENNES and the  
OTHERS. Music vamps under the following.)

PARENT

Out with it, Fiennes. What do you suggest?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

I FEEL A SENSE OF URGENCY  
GIVEN THE STUDENTS' PLIGHT  
TO SET OUR SCHOOL UPON A DIFFERENT TACK.  
ALTHOUGH I KNOW IT'S A BITTER PILL  
THIS METHOD'S LACK OF ACADEMIC SKILLS  
IS HOLDING EVERY ONE OF OUR STUDENTS BACK.  
AND SINCE THE TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE.  
WE'RE HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE.  
THE INSPECTIONS WILL BE ONE WEEK FROM TODAY.

PARENTS

What? YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

MONSIEUR FIENNES

I'M AFRAID I CAN.  
WE'LL KNOW  
MUCH SOONER THAN WE'D PLANNED  
WHICH TEACHERS WILL GO  
AND WHICH WILL STAY.



PARENT

Hey!

PARENT

YOU CAN'T JUST PINK-SLIP OUR CHILDREN'S TEACHERS!

PARENTS

AND ON A WHIM!

PARENTS

AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR!

PARENTS

YOU'RE AFTER HIM!

MONSIEUR FIENNES

NO, I ASSURE YOU THAT'S ABSURD.

YOU'LL FIND

THE COMMISSION GUIDELINES

ARE CLEAR.

PARENTS

YOU CAN'T JUST HIJACK THE LEARNING PROCESS  
JUST TO STIR UP A HORNET'S NEST.

PARENT

YOU CAN'T UPSET THE CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS.

PARENT

SO THEY CAN BUBBLE CIRCLES IN ON TESTS!

MONSIEUR FIENNES

THE COMMISSION, THEY HEAR YOUR PROTESTS.

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE ADDRESSED.

PARENTS

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?

THE SCHOOL WE KNEW IS

PRACTICALLY THROUGH!

WE OUGHT TO SUE!

SUMMERHAVEN IS WHERE MY SHATZI,

MY LITTLE LOUP,

MY P'TIT CHOU-CHOU,

MY SWEET BABBOO,

LEARNS BEST.

(MONSIEUR FIENNES and the OTHERS freeze as  
lights go back up on MONSIEUR ONFRAY and  
MARCUS.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
HOW WILL YOU KNOW YOU'VE MET THEIR NEEDS?

MARCUS  
(to MONSIEUR ONFRAY)  
I WATCH THEM CLOSELY, TRY TO READ  
THEIR EVERY MOVEMENT.  
WHEN EVERY LINE THEIR BODIES TRACE  
ECHOES THE JOY UPON THEIR FACES,  
THAT'S HOW I GUAGE THEIR IMPROVEMENT.  
OUR STORIES RESONATE, THEY TOUCH THEIR VERY SPIRIT!

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
ARE YOU FINISHED PREACHING? WELL, GOOD.  
NOW BACK TO TEACHING. YOU COULD  
USE A VERB LIKE "DEMONSTRATE," "RECITE," OR "APPLY."

MARCUS  
YOU PICK.

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
WHY SHOULD I?

MARCUS  
(resigned)  
THE STUDENTS WILL "ABSORB."

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
COME, MARCUS, THINK! DON'T ASK THE ORB.  
YOU NEED A VERB THAT GIVES RESULTS YOU CAN TEST.

MARCUS  
THE STUDENTS WILL "MANIFEST!"

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
Keep trying!

MARCUS  
HUSH! I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT.  
THE STUDENTS WILL "REGURGITATE  
SPOON-FED FACTOIDS."

(Music vamps as MONSIEUR ONFRAY and  
MARCUS freeze and lights come up on  
MONSIEUR FIENNES and the OTHERS. The  
PARENTS, grumbling, file out of the spotlight into  
the darkness with the BOARD MEMBERS, who  
seem satisfied. GEORGES approaches MONSIEUR  
FIENNES.)

GEORGES  
I'm with you, Monsieur Fiennes. But if Doran is fired, what will happen to the school?

MONSIEUR FIENNES  
Now, now. No one is getting fired, Monsieur Crier. He will simply fail the *commission  
scolaire* inspection. The situation will resolve itself naturally.

(MONSIEUR FIENNES exits as lights dim on  
GEORGES. Lights up on MARCUS and  
MONSIEUR ONFRAY.)

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
MARCUS, THEY MEAN BUSINESS.

MARCUS  
I KNOW! I KNOW! I JUST  
CAN'T GET INTO THE GROOVE.

(The music slows as something dawns on  
MARCUS.)  
THE CHILDREN WILL "MOVE..."

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
MARCUS, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

MARCUS  
NOT "MOVE," NO, THEY'LL "INTERPRET"...

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
I LIKE THIS YOU. NOW, THIS IS AN IMPROVEMENT!

MARCUS  
THE STUDENTS WILL “INTERPRET  
THE MAIN IDEA OF THE LESSON THROUGH MOVEMENT!”

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
THAT’S IT!

MARCUS AND MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
“THE STUDENTS WILL INTERPRET  
THE MAIN IDEA THROUGH MOVEMENT.”

MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
I’D SAY YOU’VE GOT YOURSELF A LESSON PLAN.  
YOU’VE GOT A PLAN.

MARCUS  
I THINK I UNDERSTAND.

MARCUS AND MONSIEUR ONFRAY  
YOU’VE/I’VE GOT IT!

## SCENE 2

*[Same.]*

(Lights out on MARCUS AND MONSIEUR  
ONFRAY and up on GEORGES as DOROTHÉE  
joins him with OPHÉLIE and CHARLOTTE.  
DOROTHÉE gives GEORGES an affectionate peck  
on the cheek.)

DOROTHÉE  
All ready to go?  
(a beat)  
You look pale.

OPHÉLIE  
Yeah, what the fuck, Daddy. Who died?

GEORGES  
(snapping, exasperated)  
Language!  
(recovering)  
This school isn’t what we thought it was, My Pet. I’m pulling you out.

OPHÉLIE

What? Again?

GEORGES

I'll pull some strings at the International School of Paris. No buts.

OPHÉLIE

(crossing arms in defiance)

Bleah.

(MARCUS steps into the light.)

MARCUS

(with a wink at OPHÉLIE, who recovers  
and gives him an awkward smile.)

Well, look at the happy family.

(to CHARLOTTE)

I'm all done, Champ. Let's skedaddle.

(CHARLOTTE stays still. Looks worried.)

MARCUS

Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Marcus, Is it okay if I stay at mommy's this weekend?

(DOROTHÉE looks proud. MARCUS's face falls.)

MARCUS

(to the others)

Can we have a minute?

(DOROTHÉE, GEORGES , and OPHÉLIE exit.)

MARCUS

But it's our time this weekend.

CHARLOTTE

I know, but I want to ask Ophélie for a playdate.

MARCUS

Oh?

CHARLOTTE

Yes, and, well, mommy has a bigger house. And I have my own room. And all my toys are there. And we want to have a sleepover!

MARCUS

You can bring her to our place.

CHARLOTTE

It's too small. No privacy. And its...messy.

MARCUS

Well, duh! Fort-building is no joke. It's a construction zone.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, I just...I don't think Ophélie would be interested in that.

MARCUS

(serious)

Are you embarrassed?

(Music begins for "Under 'Hero' Webster Listed  
You")

CHARLOTTE

(placing her hand on his arm)

Daddy.

ALL OF MY LIFE

UNDER "HERO" WEBSTER LISTED YOU.

(During the following, OLDER CHARLOTTE  
steps into the light and takes the place of YOUNG  
CHARLOTTE, who steps out of the light. Both  
CHARLOTTES sing the next two lines  
simultaneously before OLDER CHARLOTTE takes  
over.)

BOTH CHARLOTTES

YOU WERE LARGER THAN LIFE.

AND THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULDN'T DO.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

YOU MADE THE MOST DELICIOUS RAINBOW CAKES.

YOU HAD BLANKET FORTS DOWN PAT.

YOU WERE THE BEST AT SECRET HANDSHAKES

AND "PIN THE GRIN ON THE CHESHIRE CAT."

MARCUS

Maybe. But this was when I knew things were changing between us.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

Couldn't you have done something?

MARCUS

I WAS PROUD, I WAS FLOORED.  
UNDER "ANGEL" WEBSTER LISTED YOU.  
IT WAS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD  
I WAS ALMOST PROUD TO BE LOSING YOU.  
GONE WAS THE LITTLE GIRL I ONCE KNEW.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

WHERE WAS THE DADDY SHE RAN TO?  
OO. DADDY, WHERE WERE YOU?

MARCUS

You were making friends. Doing your own thing. I held you back.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

I CAN HARDLY BE BLAMED.  
YOU WERE ALWAYS BARELY SCRAPING BY.  
IT WAS ALL FORTS AND GAMES  
OR IT WAS "CHEER UP, CHAMP. DON'T CRY."

MARCUS

YOU WERE GROWING OUT OF RAINBOW CAKES.  
YOU WOULDN'T HOLD, OR TAKE MY HAND.  
YOU HUNG AROUND WITH ME FOR MY SAKE.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

THE UNIVERSE ALWAYS LAUGHS AT OUR PLANS.

(YOUNG CHARLOTTE comes back in  
to replace OLDER CHARLOTTE, who  
stands just at the edge of the light. The  
two sing the following stanza  
simultaneously.)

BOTH CHARLOTTES

YOU WERE FUNNY AND STRONG.  
WITH A LOOK THAT COULD MEZMERIZE YOU.

BUT SOMETHING WAS WRONG.  
 SOMETHING PREOCCUPIED YOU.  
 GONE WAS THE DADDY I ONCE KNEW.  
 GONE WAS THE DADDY I RAN TO.  
 OO. DADDY, WHERE WERE YOU?  
 DADDY, WHERE WERE YOU?

(Music comes to a close.)

MARCUS

It's the way it is Charlotte. The paradox of parenting. You raise your kids so they'll leave you.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

But it wasn't me who left.

MARCUS

Yeah, well, I'm getting to that.

OLDER CHARLOTTE

(before stepping out of the light)

So. Get to it. What happened next?

(OLDER CHARLOTTE exits.)

MARCUS

(to YOUNG CHARLOTTE)

Yeah, sure, Buddy. Go ahead and get your mother.

(DOROTHEA returns to the light accompanied by  
 GEORGES and OPHÉLIE.)

DOROTHEA

I'm here, Sweetheart.

MARCUS

(to DOROTHÉE)

What did we agree about last minute changes?

DOROTHÉE

It was Charlotte's decision. Oughtn't we to respect her wishes?

MARCUS

Touché.



DOROTHÉE

Well, that's settled. Why don't we all head to the car.

(CHARLOTTE and OPHÉLIE make to leave, but then suddenly, OPHÉLIE runs up to MARCUS and hugs him. GEORGES scowls. DOROTHÉE looks quizzically at MARCUS. As the family leaves, OPHÉLIE looks back at MARCUS and waves to him, but GEORGES takes OPHÉLIE by the scruff of the neck and pushes her forcefully forward.)

### SCENE 3

*[Same.]*

(CATHERINE, in a rush, searching for MARCUS, steps into the light. She sees MARCUS and her face settles into a look of relief.)

CATHERINE

(beaming, handing him a some sheets of paper)

I was up all night.

MARCUS

“The Four Kingdoms?”

CATHERINE

You're welcome. Watch and learn.

(Music starts for “The Four Kingdoms, Part 1: The Dance of Life.” **[DEMO TRACK 14]**

CATHERINE smiles and makes slow movements. MARCUS backs up and watches her intently.)

CATHERINE  
(clumsily, not quite getting it)

ALL LIVING THINGS  
JOIN IN A DANCE  
WE HUMAN BEINGS,  
BIRDS, BEASTS, AND PLANTS,  
MOVE, GROW, AND BREATHE  
TO NATURE'S DRUM.  
WE'RE THREE  
OF HER KINGDOMS.

THIS DANCE OF LIFE  
CONNECTS US ALL.  
WE HEED THE CALL.  
WE HEAR THE FIFE  
PLAY MELODIES  
IN PERPETUUM  
FOR THREE  
OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(At this point, MARCUS approaches CATHERINE,  
waving his hand. She stops, surprised. Music pauses  
under the following dialog.)

MARCUS  
(with a wry expression)

"In perpetuum?"

CATHERINE  
(defensive)

What?

MARCUS  
Try this.

(Music resumes as MARCUS launches into the  
song. He draws and CATHERINE into a lively  
dance as they sing together.)

MARCUS

AS WE BREATHE IN  
WE COMPREHEND  
THE SYNERGY  
OF ALL WE SEE:  
A LIGHT DIVINE,  
A LOVE BENIGN.  
WE'RE THREE  
OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

MARCUS AND CATHERINE

AS WE BREATHE OUT  
OUR FEELINGS FLOW  
SPREADING THROUGHOUT  
EACH HILL AND HOLLOW.  
OUR HEARTSTRINGS THUM  
IN HARMONY.  
WE'RE THREE  
OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

WE'RE NEVER QUITE THE SAME  
BUT WE DON'T CHANGE AS SUCH;  
WE "BECOME"  
THROUGH NATURE'S TOUCH.

THE WARMING SUN  
STREWS OVER THE PLAIN  
IT'S FINE SPUN  
RAYS THROUGH COOLING RAIN.  
THE RAINDROPS STRUM,  
AND WE SUCCUMB  
TO THEIR MYSTIQUE  
AS THEY GENTLY STROKE OUR CHEEK.  
BEAST, MAN, AND TREE:  
WE'RE THREE  
OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(As the music plays out, MARCUS and  
CATHERINE kiss.)

CATHERINE  
(shocked, but pleasantly so)

That good, huh?

(Another kiss.)

CATHERINE

It feels like you've been holding that in for a long time.

MARCUS

Was it obvious?

CATHERINE

(breaking away with excitement)

Well, that settles it, Marcus. I've made a decision. About my future.

MARCUS

(a bit worried)

Your future?

CATHERINE

(kissing him again)

The *commission scolaire* has plans for me at Summerhaven, but I won't even be here next year.

MARCUS

You're leaving?

CATHERINE

I want to go to India. I want to do the Sacred Lotus training.

(MARCUS inadvertently laughs.)

CATHERINE

What was that?

MARCUS

What was what?

CATHERINE

You think it's a joke.

MARCUS

Of course I don't. It's just a lot to take in.

CATHERINE

Oh, I know. A stick-up-her-ass "traditional" teacher like me could never master your precious practice.

MARCUS

I didn't say that.

CATHERINE

You didn't have to. Listen, Swami, I'm every bit as qualified to learn the "Ways of the Master" as anyone else. And I appreciate your support, by the way.

MARCUS

I just don't want to see you disappointed.

CATHERINE

Never mind, Marcus. I'll do the training whether you're behind me or not.

MARCUS

Catherine. Wait.

(MARCUS follows as CATHERINE exits.)

#### SCENE 4

*[The corridor outside the classroom. Another day.]*

(OPHÉLIE and CHARLOTTE walk hand in hand to class after having been dropped at school by GEORGES. OPHÉLIE is despondent.)

CHARLOTTE

Uniforms don't sound so bad. Are they cute?

OPHÉLIE

Ick.

CHARLOTTE

At least you'll be here until the end of the year.

OPHÉLIE

Daddy says end of the week. End of the week! 'Least the other schools gave me a year.

CHARLOTTE

Crap.

OPHÉLIE

Yeah. I finally find a place I like and he yanks me out again. Says this place isn't good for me.

CHARLOTTE

Well, after this week we'll still see each other at home!

OPHÉLIE

If your mom and my dad stay together.

CHARLOTTE

I saw them kissing.

OPHÉLIE AND CHARLOTTE

Bleah!

CHARLOTTE

We're gonna be sisters!

OPHÉLIE

(a little better)

Yeah. Who needs friends when I got a sister?

CHARLOTTE

Plus, maybe when you get to this new school you'll make some friends, you know?

OPHÉLIE

Bleah.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, about that. It would be nice, like, people might like you more, if you didn't say "Bleah" all the time, you know?

OPHÉLIE

*You* said it.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, but kissing gets a total "Bleah." You "Bleah," like, everything.

OPHÉLIE

I call it like I fucking see it.

CHARLOTTE

And that. Like, maybe if you didn't swear. If you acted more like a lady.

OPHÉLIE

*You swear.*

(Music starts for “Classy Ladies” **DEMO TRACK**  
**15)**

CHARLOTTE

Not anymore. I gave it up. Dropped it like bad habit. Like smoking.

OPHÉLIE

(in awe)

Whoah. You smoked?

CHARLOTTE

Naw, dude. I don’t mean it for real. Ladies don’t smoke.

LADIES LIKE US

DON’T CUSS.

WE NEVER MAKE A FUSS.

OH, SO CLEAN-CUT,

OUR CHINS JUT

WHEN WE STRUT.

OO, LA, LA.

COME TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH.

“HA, HA, HA.”

THAT’S HOW WE LADIES LAUGH.

FRIENDS COME EASY.

‘CAUSE EVERY LADY WANTS TO BE A LADY LIKE US,

A LADY LIKE US.

CHARLOTTE AND OPHÉLIE

LADIES LIKE US

DISCUSS

NOTHING SCANDALOUS.

AND WHEN WE SUP

WE SIP CUPS

WITH PINKIES UP.

OO, LA, LA.

WE LADIES NEVER STOP.

HA, HA, HA.

ULTIMATE MIC DROP.

FRIENDS COME EASY  
 ‘CAUSE EVERY LADY LOVES A LADY LIKE US,  
 A LADY LIKE US.

CHARLOTTE AND OPHÉLIE  
 CLASSY LADIES ALWAYS WALK WITH THEIR HEADS HIGH  
 MEET THE PESSIMISTS AND CRY  
 “EAT MY DUST!”  
 CLASSY LADIES ALWAYS SHARE WHEN THEY PLAY WITH TOYS  
 NEVER MAKE A LOT OF NOISE.  
 BEING VERY PRETTY IS A MUST.  
 OO, EVERYBODY LOVES A LADY LIKE US.

(Music continues under the following.)

OPHÉLIE  
 You really think I can make friends?

CHARLOTTE  
 Shit, yeah! Just be classy. Oops. Old habits.

CHARLOTTE AND OPHÉLIE  
 CLASSY LADIES ALWAYS DRESS WITH EXQUISITE TASTE  
 NEVER DO A THING IN HASTE.  
 NO FUSS, NO MUSS.  
 CLASSY LADIES HAVE HEARTS AS PURE AS PEARL  
 NEVER PLAY THE MEAN GIRL.  
 STUNNING BEAUTY’S ALWAYS A PLUS  
 OO, EVERYBODY LOVES A LADY LIKE US.  
 EVERYBODY LOVES A LADY LIKE US.

(Lights out on CHARLOTTE and OPHÉLIE, who  
 giggle and laugh as they step into a new area of the  
 stage where the lights come up to reveal the  
 classroom.)

SCENE 5

*[Same. The classroom.]*



(Music segues into “The Four Kingdoms, Part 2: The Dance of Life” as CHARLOTTE and OPHÉLIE cheerfully join the group of CHILDREN circled around CATHERINE, who she sings, improvising movements that the CHILDREN follow. MARCUS is huddled over his lesson plan in the downstage corner.)

CATHERINE

LIKE THE MAMMALS  
AND OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS,  
WHOSE LIMBS  
GIVE THEM FREEDOM TO MOVE.  
WE CAN UNDERSTAND  
THIS KINSHIP:  
MAMMALS AND BIRDS  
AND ME AND YOU.

CATHERINE & CHILDREN

WHEN WE SEE  
THE HUMAN BODY  
WE SEE THREE  
DISTINCT AND SPECIAL PARTS.  
THERE’S A HEAD  
A TORSO, FOUR LIMBS:  
WHAT AN INCREDIBLE  
WORK OF ART!

DIFFERENT SPECIES  
OF THE ANIMALS  
FIND IN THESE  
THEIR COSMIC COUNTERPARTS.  
WE ARE THREEFOLD  
HUMAN BEINGS  
ANIMALS, MAN:  
ONE BEATING HEART.

CATHERINE

All right, everybody. To the Rest.

(CHARLOTTE approaches MARCUS as the children go about their activities.)

CHARLOTTE

Daddy...Marcus. We're back from Mom's.

(MARCUS says nothing, absorbed in his work.)

CHARLOTTE

(looks at OPHÉLIE, smirks, then, to  
MARCUS)

We burned mom's house down. They're sticking us in juvenile detention.

MARCUS

(absently)

Hm? I'm just working through some last-minute changes, Buddy. Go get ready for the Main Lesson.

CHARLOTTE

Pff.

(The two girls go off giggling as CATHERINE  
approaches MARCUS.)

CATHERINE

Marcus...I need to ask you something.

MARCUS

The inspection's this afternoon.

CATHERINE

I'll be quick.

(a beat.)

I'm sorry about before. I just...well...I'm applying to take the Sacred Lotus training. I need you to write me a recommendation.

(MARCUS hesitates.)

MARCUS

It takes a certain gift to carry off these lessons.

CATHERINE

(incensed)

Is that right? Children! Gather around now. Now!

MARCUS

It's the Rest!

(In spite of MARCUS's protests, the children  
encircle CATHERINE. Music resumes.)

CATHERINE

WITH THE RHYTHM  
OF ASTRAL MOTION  
NATURE BREATHES.  
SEASONS SHIFT.  
THE FOUR KINGDOMS  
OF CREATION  
INTERWEAVE;  
SHARE THEIR GIFTS.

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

CATHERINE & CHILDREN

WHAT DO ROCKS DO?  
THEY'RE JUST CHILLING.  
SOAKING UP SUN.  
THEY CAN'T GROW.  
BUT THEY ALLOW YOU  
TO BUILD YOUR BUILDINGS.  
STACK 'EM ONE BY ONE  
BUILD YOUR WALLS AND ROADS.

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

WHAT DO PLANTS DO?  
THOUGH THEY CAN'T MOVE,  
AND LIKE THE ROCKS  
THEY'RE STUCK IN THE EARTH,  
THEY PROVIDE YOU  
FRAGRANT PERFUME.  
PRIMROSE FLOCKS  
NESTLED IN THEIR BERTH.

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

AND THE ANIMALS?  
THEY'RE AN IMPROVEMENT.  
LIKE THE PLANTS,  
THEY'VE SENSITIVITY.  
BUT THEY'RE MECHANICAL.  
THEY HAVE MOVEMENT.  
THEY PREEN AND PRANCE,  
THEIR SPIRITS FREE.

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

WHAT CAN HUMANS DO  
THAT THE BEASTS CAN'T?  
THEY WALK UPRIGHT;  
THEIR HANDS ARE FREE.  
THEY CAN SPEAK, TOO  
UNLIKE THE ROCKS AND PLANTS  
THEY HAVE INSIGHT,  
CREATIVITY.

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

(Music closes as the CHILDREN rush up to talk  
happily with CATHERINE after the lesson and give  
her hugs and high fives. OPHÉLIE approaches her.)

OPHÉLIE

(seeming sad)

That was fuck...er...really amazing. Did you see what I did? I could do some of it.

CATHERINE

I saw that. I'm not surprised. I wrote it with you in mind.

(OPHÉLIE gives CATHERINE a tearful hug.)

CATHERINE

(triumphant)

Go on, now. Off to Rebirth with you!

(THE CHILDREN file out of the classroom, energized, chattering and carrying on, except for OPHÉLIE, who goes to the window.)

CHARLOTTE

(as the others leave, searching)

Come on, Ophélie!

(OPHÉLIE hastily finishes doing something at the window and then joins CHARLOTTE. The two exit.)

CATHERINE

(to MARCUS)

Gift, you say? More like hard work and practice.

MARCUS

I stand corrected. I'll bring your recommendation tomorrow.

CATHERINE

Oh, thank you. And Marcus?

(MARCUS, having turned to leave, hesitates.)

Good luck.

(MARCUS takes a deep breath and closes his eyes.)

SCENE 6

*[Same.]*

(Music begins for "The Four Kingdoms, Part 3: Mother Nature's Kingdoms" and vamps as MARCUS steps into the spotlight stage left, facing the audience. CATHERINE steps back into the darkness behind him as a class of CHILDREN, without OPHÉLIE, enter and sit downstage of MARCUS in a semicircle, facing him, their backs to the audience. Just then, four COMMISSION SCOLAIRE INSPECTORS step into the spotlight and stand on a raised platform behind MARCUS, also facing the audience. At right in another spotlight enters MONSIEUR FIENNES. A small circle of PARENTS, including GEORGES and DOROTHÉE enter and sit in a semicircle downstage of MONSIEUR FIENNES, mirroring the configuration of MARCUS and the CHILDREN.)

INSPECTOR 1

*Bonjour*, Mister Doran.

MARCUS

(facing the audience)

Good morning.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

*Bonjour*, esteemed members of the *commission scolaire*. Valued parents.

PARENT

Cut the pleasantries, Monsieur Fiennes. What's happening to our teachers?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

I have excellent news for you.

INSPECTOR 2

(to MARCUS)

You have something rather unorthodox for us today.

MARCUS

I think you'll find it refreshing.

INSPECTOR 1

You don't say.

## MONSIEUR FIENNES

I daresay a new era is dawning at Summerhaven. The licensure inspections are underway.

## INSPECTOR 1

You may get underway when you're ready.

(The music stops.)

## MARCUS

(after a deep breath, to the CHILDREN,  
enthusiastically)

Okay. So. Who can tell me what the word *interdependency* means? Anyone?

(The CHILDREN sit in silence. They look back and forth at each other. A beat. MARCUS takes some props out of a bag, a yellow ball, some little human dolls of various ethnic backgrounds, a plastic tree, and a plastic cow. He juggles them.)

## MARCUS

Well, there's the sun. And the sun gives us, what...?

(Awkward silence.)

## MARCUS

Um. It gives us light, heat, and energy. And the trees and plants, they use the sun's gifts to grow and survive. And what do the trees and plants give us, the people, and the animals...? What? Can anyone tell me...?

(Silence. MARCUS lets everything fall to the floor.  
A beat.)

## MARCUS

Alright. Circle up.

(Music resumes as, during the following, the CHILDREN cheerfully move into a circle surrounding MARCUS, all facing the center and pantomiming with their arms raised above their heads.)

LOOK UP AT THE SKY.  
SEE THE BIRDS TAKE FLIGHT.  
SEE THE WAKENING EARTH

BATHED IN WARMTH AND LIGHT.

AT THE TOUCH OF A SUNBEAM.  
 EVERY FLOWER AND PLANT  
 LIGHTS UP WITH COLOR,  
 LIKE A REMBRANDT!

MARCUS & CHILDREN

FROM THE ROOTS OF THE TREES,  
 FEEL THE WATER FLOW.  
 AS THEY STRETCH OUT THEIR LEAVES  
 UNDER THE SUN'S LOVING GLOW.

AS CREATION RECEIVES  
 THIS DAILY REBIRTH  
 A CONNECTION WEAVES  
 BETWEEN THE SUN AND THE EARTH!

(As MARCUS sings the following refrain, the CHILDREN all step clockwise in a circle around him while performing the following gestures: On, "Moon and stars" they lift their arms above their heads, spread their fingers, and twirl their bodies right. On "wind and rain", they stoop over slightly, with straight back, and make swishing gestures back and forth in front of their bodies as they cross step. On "earth and fire", they cross step counter-clockwise, bend over to touch the ground. On "water, air" they lift their arms above their heads again, spreading their fingers. On "everybody plays their part" they join hands above their heads, making arches.)

MARCUS

MOON AND STARS,  
 WIND AND RAIN:  
 ALL THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER.  
 EARTH AND FIRE,  
 WATER, AIR:  
 EVERYBODY PLAYS THEIR PART.

(With raised hands joined, the CHILDREN change direction and walk clockwise around MARCUS.)



MARCUS & CHILDREN  
 NOT ONE SURVIVES WITHOUT THE OTHERS  
 DAUGHTER EARTH, NOR MOTHER SUN.

(The CHILDREN move forward into the circle and bend down, and then back out of the circle and raise their bodies and arms up.)

ROCKS AND PLANTS,  
 ANIMALS, MAN:

(The CHILDREN join raised hands and let their arms fall behind each other, so that each child is cradling another child's back with his or her arm.)

THESE ARE MOTHER NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(Music vamps under the following. The CHILDREN, humming, continue to step around MARCUS.)

PARENT  
 Monsieur Fiennes, are you or are you not firing our teachers?

MONSIEUR FIENNES  
 The ones who pass will stay.

PARENT  
 I heard that none of them are expected to pass!

(The CHILDREN release hands and move to the center of the circle, crouching down as low as possible, with arms wrapped around their knees.)

CHILDREN  
 ROCKS DO NOTHING ON THEIR OWN.

MARCUS  
 THEY HAVE A FORM BUT THEY LAY THERE PRONE.

CHILDREN  
 THEY LIE IN WAIT.

MARCUS  
 THEY MAKE NO SOUND.

(The CHILDREN slowly rise from "rock" position  
and twirl until they're back in place in the circle.)

MARCUS & CHILDREN  
'TIL WIND OR WATER BREAKS THEM DOWN.

(Every other CHILD moves from a standing to a  
lying position on their stomach directly in front of  
their place in the circle as the other children  
pantomime wavelike gestures above them.)

CHILDREN  
SOIL COMES WHEN WIND AND RAIN ERODE

(The CHILDREN on the ground pantomime  
growing plants as they stand upright again.)

MARCUS & CHILDREN  
THE ROCKS TO DIRT SO PLANTS CAN GROW.

(The CHILDREN join hands and step clockwise  
around MARCUS crouches low, pretending to be a  
rock.)

WE GIVE YOU ROCKS  
OUR GRATITUDE  
FOR YOU ARE ONE OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(The CHILDREN repeat the gestures from the  
previous refrain as they sing the following.)

MOON AND STARS,  
WIND AND RAIN:  
ALL THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER.  
EARTH AND FIRE,  
WATER, AIR:  
EVERYBODY PLAYS THEIR PART.  
NOT ONE SURVIVES WITHOUT THE OTHER:  
DAUGHTER EARTH, NOR MOTHER SUN.  
ROCKS AND PLANTS,  
ANIMALS, MAN,  
THESE ARE MOTHER NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(The CHILDREN continue to step around  
MARCUS and hum as the music vamps during the  
following.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

*Madames et Messieurs*, the test is completely objective.

PARENT

If Doran doesn't pass, I will pull my Giulia!

(The CHILDREN pantomime the following lyrics  
with their arms and hands as they step clockwise  
around the circle. MARCUS, in the center,  
pantomimes being a plant.)

MARCUS & THE CHILDREN

PLANTS, LIKE MINERALS HAVE FORM  
BUT THEY DO THINGS ROCKS COULD NEVER DO.

GIRLS

THEY MAKE THEIR FOOD.

BOYS

THEY REPRODUCE.

(CHILDREN raise their arms up and spread their  
fingers, then lower their hands.)

GIRLS

THEY BREATHE AND THRIVE.

CHILDREN

FOR THEY'RE ALIVE.

(The CHILDREN take the hands of the partner to  
their left, turn so that one of the partners stands in  
the center, forming now two concentric circles. The  
CHILDREN on the outside circle pantomime being  
plants, while the CHILDREN in the inside circle  
pretend to take things from them.)

MARCUS & CHILDREN

PLANTS, LIKE ROCKS CANNOT MOVE  
YET THEY SHARE THEIR LEAVES AND SEEDS AND FRUIT.

(The CHILDREN join hands with their partner and half-turn so that all are back in one circle, with hands joined. They step counter-clockwise. MARCUS continues to act like a plant.)

WE THANK YOU, PLANTS  
FOR ALL YOU DO,

(During the line "for you are one of nature's kingdoms" the CHILDREN break off into a circle of groups of four, with partners facing each other. Each represents Earth, Fire, Air, and Water. Earth and Fire face each other, Water and Air face each other.)

FOR YOU ARE ONE OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(Each group performs the following movements during the following refrain. On "moon and stars," they side R touch L, on "wind and rain" side L touch R. Then on "all the pieces fit together", the group extends right hands on top of each other in the centre and forms a wheel; they skip clockwise for 8 steps until they're back in their original places.)

CHILDREN

MOON AND STARS,  
WIND AND RAIN:  
ALL THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER.

(On "earth and fire" the Earth and Fire couple hold hands and make an arch while the Water and Air couple take hands and skip under the arch take position in 4 steps. On "everybody plays their part" they repeat, with Water and Air making arches and Fire and Earth skipping under.)

EARTH AND FIRE,  
WATER, AIR:  
EVERYBODY PLAYS THEIR PART.

(During the following, the groups of CHILDREN spin around MARCUS and unwind, eventually forming a circle with hands joined again on "mother sun.")

## MARCUS &amp; CHILDREN

NOT ONE SURVIVES WITHOUT THE OTHER  
 DAUGHTER EARTH, NOR MOTHER SUN.  
 ROCKS AND PLANTS,  
 ANIMALS, MAN:  
 THESE ARE MOTHER NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(The CHILDREN continue to step around  
 MARCUS and hum as a SOLO BOY and a SOLO  
 GIRL skip into the center of the circle to join him.  
 The others step around in a clockwise direction,  
 pantomiming with their whole bodies various  
 animals and miming the lyrics.)

## SOLO BOY

ANIMALS, LIKE PLANTS ARE ALIVE.

## SOLO GIRL

BUT THEY WALK, RUN, SWING, SING, SWIM, AND FLY.

## SOLO BOY

THEY FEEL HUNGER, FEAR,

## SOLO GIRL

ANGER, LOVE.

## CHILDREN

THEY BELONG TO THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

## SOLO GIRL

THEY CAN SENSE THINGS LIKE DANGER AND FOOD.

## SOLO BOY

THEY MAKE SOUNDS AND SIGNS TO EXPRESS THEIR MOOD.

(The CHILDREN stop pantomiming animals and  
 join hands, facing MARCUS and the SOLO BOY  
 and SOLO GIRL in the center.)

## MARCUS &amp; CHILDREN

ANIMALS,  
 WE THANK YOU, TOO  
 FOR YOU ARE ONE OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(The SOLO BOY and GIRL rejoin the CHILDREN'S circle. The CHILDREN continue to step around MARCUS and hum as the music vamps during the following.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES

That would be unfortunate. The *commision scolaire* feels this is the best way to assess his fitness.

PARENT

If you think we're going to stand by while you break our children's hearts, Monsieur Fiennes...

(The CHILDREN open up the circle and stand in rows in front of MARCUS, pantomiming all together the following lyrics.)

MARCUS & CHILDREN

NOW WE HUMAN BEINGS ARE DIFFERENT ALTOGETHER  
WITH NO CLAWS, NO FUR, NO FANGS, NO FEATHERS.  
WE CAN SPEAK. WE CAN THINK. WE CAN REMEMBER AND ENVISION.  
WE CAN CHOOSE TO REFLECT ON THE EFFECTS OF OUR DECISIONS.

(The CHILDREN break off into groups of various members, depending on the activity they're going to pantomime. Some children are alone. Each group and individual pantomimes some human activity or small scene.)

MARCUS & CHILDREN

HUMANS, WITH OUR SPECIAL GIFTS,  
HAVE A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.  
WE ARE SELF-AWARE. WE LAUGH, WE LOVE.  
OUR HANDS CREATE WHAT OUR BRAINS THINK OF.

(All flowing back into the circle, hands joined)

WE CAN CARE FOR THE WORLD.  
WE'RE THE STEWARDS OF THIS PLANET.  
THIS BEAUTIFUL PEARL  
THAT WE'RE GRATEFUL TO INHABIT.

(The CHILDREN raise their joined hands and form arches.

One child, pretending to be an animal, and another  
child, a human being, step through the arches.)

WE'LL MAKE A PLACE OF PEACE  
FOR MAN AND BEAST

(The two children going around the arches rejoin  
the circle. All sing with hands joined.)

AND EVERY ONE OF NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(The CHILDREN continue to circle around  
MARCUS and hum as the music vamps under the  
following.)

PARENT

Four years my Georges has been with Mister Doran! If he goes, we go!

MONSIEUR FIENNES

I implore you, all of you. No need to be rash. The inspections will separate the wheat  
from the chaff, and, I tell you, the children will be better for it.

MARCUS & CHILDREN

(pantomiming the actions)

MOON AND STARS,  
WIND AND RAIN:  
ALL THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER.  
EARTH AND FIRE,  
WATER, AIR:  
EVERYBODY PLAYS THEIR PART.  
NOT ONE SURVIVES  
WITHOUT THE OTHER  
DAUGHTER EARTH, NOR MOTHER SUN.

(The CHILDREN pantomime being rocks, plants,  
animals, and man, respectively.)

ROCKS AND PLANTS,  
ANIMALS, MAN:  
THESE ARE MOTHER NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(The CHILDREN form a semi-circle behind  
MARCUS, who faces the audience.)

THESE ARE MOTHER NATURE'S KINGDOMS.

(Music plays out as MARCUS and the CHILDREN strike a tableau. A beat of silence.)

INSPECTOR 2  
(clearing throat)

An interesting presentation.

(The CHILDREN hum and chatter quietly amongst themselves as they exit. The music plays out under the following.)

INSPECTOR 1  
Tell me: what did the children learn from this presentation, Mister Doran?

MARCUS  
(beaming, proud of the children)  
How to be in the universe. Their cosmic task. The symbiosis of all things.

(A beat. The INSPECTORS exchange glances.)

INSPECTOR 1  
Well, I believe we've made our decision, Mister Doran. There is no need to waste everyone's time with deliberations.

MARCUS  
And?

INSPECTOR  
We won't be granting you a license, Mister Doran. You have 14 days to clear out your classroom. Good day to you, *Monsieur*.

(The music plays out as everyone disappears from the stage except for MARCUS, who stands looking despondent.)

## SCENE 7

[*Same.*]

(Music begins for "Aftermath" as lights go up stage right, where CATHERINE and only eight CHILDREN are doing a lesson. CHARLOTTE sits off to the side, not participating.)



## CATHERINE &amp; CHILDREN

WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE THE ONE LIFE  
WE'RE ALL ONE.

## CATHERINE

Right! Rebirth.

(Music vamps as the CHILDREN file out of the  
classroom.)

## CATHERINE

(to CHARLOTTE)

Charlotte? Lessons are sacred.

## CHARLOTTE

Are they?

(MARCUS enters with a suitcase and some boxes.)

## MARCUS

(surprised)

Champ! It's Rebirth. Why aren't you out with the others?

## CHARLOTTE

No reason.

## MARCUS

Listen, Honey. Ophélie's probably having a good time at her new school. I know you miss her. But you'll see her at your mother's. She's not out of your life completely.

## CHARLOTTE

(indicating the suitcase)

Speaking of which.

## MARCUS

(to CATHERINE)

Can you give us a minute?

(CATHERINE exits.)

## MARCUS

Look, Champ. I was planning on telling you when you got back from your mom's.

CHARLOTTE

Shoot.

(The music stops.)

MARCUS

I didn't pass the inspection. I can't work in France anymore. I have to leave.

CHARLOTTE

I knew it. Mom told me all along...

(Music starts for "You'll Never Hear Me Say  
Goodbye (Reprise)" as MARCUS stoops low,  
looking into her eyes.)

MARCUS

(getting down low, looking into her eyes)

No, no, listen to me. I've already told you. Famileez fo' Life.

(He makes to dap, but she ignores him.)

MARCUS

I TOLD YOU BEFORE,  
I'LL TELL YOU ONCE MORE:  
NOTHING CAN TAKE ME AWAY FROM YOU.  
NO POINTLESS EXAM  
NO STUFFY OLD MAN,  
COULD MAKE ME DISAPPEAR IN YOUR REAR VIEW.  
YOU'LL NEVER HEAR ME SAY GOODBYE.  
WHAT HAVE I ALWAYS BEEN TELLING YOU?

CHARLOTTE

YOU'VE SAID THAT BEFORE, I GUESS YOU LIED.

MARCUS

No, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

AND I REALLY BOUGHT WHAT YOU WERE SELLING, TOO.

(Music segues into "Andaman Shores, Part 1"  
during the following.)

MARCUS

No, no. Listen, Charlotte. Look, there's this wonderful school. It's far away from here. On an island. In a place called India. Clear turquoise waters. Fresh clean air. You could go there. With me.

CHARLOTTE

I don't want to go to another crummy old school.

MARCUS

Oh, Honey, this isn't just some crummy old school.  
 WHERE A BOUNDLESS WHITE SANDY BEACH  
 CURVES AROUND A CRADLED COBALT REACH.  
 UP UPON THE WINDING TREE-LINED HIGH GROUND  
 THEY FOUNDED A SCHOOL.  
 WHERE CHILDREN ACCOMPLISH THEIR DREAMS  
 THERE AMONG THE WILD BLUE ROILING STREAMS.  
 WHERE "NEVER STOP EXPLORING, FIND YOUR STORY"  
 IS THE ONE AND ONLY RULE.

COME WITH ME, LOVE, TO INDIA,  
 TO ANDAMAN SHORES!  
 THE OUT-OF-DOORS  
 REWARDS THE CURIOUS.  
 LET'S SEE WHAT WE FIND.  
 THAT TEST MUST  
 BE A SIGN:  
 YOU WERE MEANT TO COME WITH ME.

(Music vamps under the following.)

CHARLOTTE

Do you think so? What about mom? Isn't kidnapping illegal?

MARCUS

(laughing)

I'm not talking about kidnapping. You could live with me during the school year, and live with her during holidays and summers. It's perfect. Look, I'll come over for dinner one night. I'll talk to your mother. I'll turn on the charm.

CHARLOTTE

(excited)

Yeah. Yeah! Do you really think mom would...

(The music plays out as DOROTHÉE rushes in.)

DOROTHÉE

Mom would what? Let's go, Sweetie, get your things.

CHARLOTTE

What's the rush?

DOROTHÉE

Don't talk to your mother that way.

(CHARLOTTE goes to gather her things.)

MARCUS

Yes, what's the rush?

DOROTHÉE

(in hushed tones)

The sooner I get Charlotte away from you, the less it will hurt her. When you're gone.

MARCUS

Dorothee.

DOROTHÉE

Oh, don't get all indignant on me. That stunt you pulled at the inspection. Were you *trying* to fail? Why do you always have to do everything the hard way?

MARCUS

They were too narrow minded.

DOROTHÉE

And, there you go. It's never your fault.

(taking a deep breath)

Look, credit where credit is due: I get what you did for Ophélie. She was happy for the first time in her life. You were thinking of someone besides yourself or a change. But as for the rest of the school, it's closing. The parents are pulling out, it's...

(CHARLOTTE approaches. She gives MARCUS a knowing look.)

CHARLOTTE

Mommy?

DOROTHÉE

What is it, Dear? Are you ready to go?

CHARLOTTE

Can Marcus, er, Daddy, come over one night for dinner?

DOROTHÉE

I don't think that's a good idea, Honey.

CHARLOTTE

But, Mommy. He has something he wants to talk to you about.

(DOROTHÉE takes a moment. She looks back and forth between the two.)

MARCUS

(emphatically)

It's true. I have something I want to talk to you about.

DOROTHÉE

(to CHARLOTTE)

Is that what you really want?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

DOROTHÉE

Alright. Your father can come over for dinner some night. I guess that would be alright. Now let's go.

(CHARLOTTE gives MARCUS the thumbs-up as she and DOROTHÉE exit. Music begins for "One Night Soon.")

MARCUS

(calling after CHARLOTTE)

See you soon, Champ!

ONE NIGHT SOON.

ONE SILVERY MOON.

I'LL MAKE YOUR MOTHER SWOON.

THEN DARLING, COME JUNE,

YOU AND I

WILL SAIL THE SUNNY SKIES.

I NEVER LIED

I SAID, YOU'D NEVER HEAR ME SAY GOODBYE.

(CHARLOTTE and DOROTHÉE re-enter sitting at a rolling table. CHARLOTTE wears a light linen sun dress. DOROTHÉE is dressed for a fancy dinner. MARCUS sits down and the three pantomime MARCUS's fantasy dinner party.)

ALL

ONE FINE NIGHT  
THE MOON SHINING BRIGHT,  
YOUR MOM WILL SEE THE LIGHT.

(MARCUS and CHARLOTTE break away from the table, which slides upstage into the dark with DOROTHÉE sitting on it. We see DOROTHÉE's silhouette weeping as MARCUS and CHARLOTTE step hand-in-hand downstage, looking out over the water.)

THEN IT'LL BE  
YOU AND ME  
AND THE ANDAMAN SEA.  
I COULDN'T ASK FOR MORE THAN YOU, ME,  
SUN AND SAND, SEA BREEZE AND SKY.

(DOROTHÉE disappears as MARCUS and CHARLOTTE act out the following downstage.)

MARCUS

ON STORMY NIGHTS  
WHEN GRAY CLOUDS HOVER  
AND THE MONSTER'S JAWS  
THREATEN TO EAT YOU ALIVE.  
OH, HONEY, WITH FLASHLIGHTS  
DRAWN UNDER THE COVERS  
I PROMISE, I'LL READ OLD SAWS  
'TIL THE SANDMAN ARRIVES.

(DOROTHEA at the table slides back into the light. CHARLOTTE and MARCUS sit down at the table again and the three act out the dinner party.)

MARCUS AND CHARLOTTE

ONE NIGHT BEFORE LONG,  
MY DARLING, BE STRONG.

I PROMISE YOUR MOM  
IS GONNA SEE SHE'S WRONG.  
SHE'LL CHANGE HER TUNE.  
AND ONE FINE AFTERNOON  
YOU AND I WILL BEAR  
DOWN ON PORT BLAIR

(MARCUS and CHARLOTTE again break away  
from the table, pretending to be in a hot air balloon,  
looking out at the world, while DOROTHEA, again  
weeping profusely at the table, slides out of view.)

IN A HOT AIR  
BALOON!  
OO, ONE NIGHT SOON.

(Music plays out as lights go black.)

## SCENE 8

*[Early evening. Present day. The Sacred Lotus  
training facility.]*

(After a pause for the audience's reaction, the lights  
back up on MARCUS, in the same spot, but now  
wearing his gray hair. OLDER CHARLOTTE now  
stands in the same place as YOUNG CHARLOTTE  
stood a moment before.)

CHARLOTTE

But you never came. I counted the days. Days became weeks became months became  
years. I lost count. That was the last time I saw you. Until now.

MARCUS

I never lost sight of you. I knew this day would come.

CHARLOTTE

I wasn't so sure. And what happened to the school?

MARCUS

It closed. After you left, Monsieur Fiennes summoned Catherine and me to his office.

(Music begins for “Andaman Shores, Part 2” as lights go up on MONSIEUR FIENNES’s office. MARCUS turns and removes his gray hair in the dark between pools of light as he steps into MONSIEUR FIENNES’S office, where CATHERINE sits watching MONSIEUR FIENNES gather his things.)

MARCUS

What now, Feinnes? You can relax. I’ve been sacked.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Justice was done.

CATHERINE

Victory is yours.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

What you must think of me. Doran isn’t the only redundancy.

CATHERINE

They fired you, too?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Even me. All of us.

CATHERINE

What?

MARCUS

(accusatory)

What have you done, Fiennes?

MONSIEUR FIENNES

Everything I could to save this school. I thought too little of the power of feelings over facts.

CATHERINE

The Sacred Lotus Flower method is on the rise.

MONSIEUR FIENNES

(to CATHERINE)

Yes. It seems France has drunk the Kool-Ade.



CATHERINE  
(to MONSIEUR FIENNES)

So what now?

MONSIEUR FIENNES  
I don't know about you, Madame Hubert, but I'm sure there's a Waldorf school I can pull from the brink. Then again, I wonder if that'd just be another uphill battle.

(Music continues as MONSIEUR FIENNES finishes gathering his things, makes to exit, and stops short.)

MONSIEUR FIENNES  
Well, this is good day. Good luck to you both. *Au revoir.*

(Music continues as MONSIEUR FIENNES exits. A beat passes while MARCUS and CATHERINE share an awkward moment.)

MARCUS  
WHAT NOW?

CATHERINE  
WISH I KNEW.  
WILL FRANCE JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO  
WITHOUT HER CHILDREN'S FAVORITE GURU?  
I'M SURE SHE'LL GET THROUGH.

MARCUS  
SO SHE'LL MISS ME?

CATHERINE  
SHE WHO?  
She certainly won't be the same. So where will you go?

MARCUS  
CLEARLY, I NEED A REFRESHER.  
A PLACE TO PROGRESS WITHOUT PRESSURE.  
TO CONVALESCE,  
TO REASSESS,  
TO GET MYSELF BACK UP TO SPEED.

(Music vamps under the following.)

CATHERINE

I know what you mean. What a year. Anyone would crack.

MARCUS

You didn't.

CATHERINE

Me? That's only because I found a new lease on life. A whole world has opened up for me. I have you to thank for that. You and the head of admissions at Port Blair.

MARCUS

You made it! So we're both going to India.

CATHERINE

Convenient.

MARCUS

WHERE A BOUNDLESS WHITE SANDY BEACH  
STRETCHES TOWARD A SKY-BLUE RIVER REACH.  
HIGH AMONG THE BLUFFS,  
WHERE CLOUD PUFFS TREMBLE  
THERE STANDS A GOLDEN TEMPLE.

MARCUS AND CATHERINE

UP THERE, SNUG IN THE TREES,  
PRAYER FLAGS ALOFT IN THE GENTLE BREEZE,  
A TRAINING GROUND FOR PILGRIMS  
COMMITTED TO CHILDREN:  
THE SACRED LOTUS DEVOTEES.  
I'M HEADED BACK/OFF TO INDIA  
TO ANDAMAN SHORES,  
TO CRAWL ON ALL FOURS  
BENEATH THE PLEIADES.

CATHERINE

TO LEARN MY TRADE.

MARCUS

TO SERVE THE CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

MARCUS AND CATHERINE

TO USHER IN WORLD PEACE.  
ONE CLASS OF CHILDREN AT A TIME.

(Music vamps under the following.)

CATHERINE

But Marcus? What about Charlotte?

MARCUS

(a confident smile, a wink)

Oh, we're working all that out.

(Lights out on CATHERINE and halfway up on the portion of the stage that stands for MARCUS's classroom. MARCUS, whistling, heads back to his classroom. The eerie introductory music begins for "Eye for an Eye" as MARCUS enters the dim pool of light. He feels a chill. He discovers the open window. He closes it. He notices the toppled desk. He walks toward it. He looks up toward the fourth wall, out over the audience's heads. A look of horror darkens his face. A dark chord sounds. Blackout. A spotlight strikes the back of the wall, framing the silhouette of the swaying, lifeless body of OPHÉLIE, wearing her school uniform, hanging by her scarf, her body gently swaying and turning. We hear MARCUS's astonished sobbing as a shrill, dissonant chord breaks out. Screams, cries, shrill sounds, sirens, commotion. Blackout. Silence.)

## SCENE 9

*[Afternoon. Weeks later. The classroom is empty, save for MARCUS's desk and some painting supplies.]*

(Music resumes. Lights up on MARCUS as he finishes painting over a wall. He goes to his desk. He pulls the custody papers out of a drawer. He leafs through them. GEORGES appears in the doorway, seething. He stares daggers at MARCUS.)

MARCUS

(after a moment, sensing the stare)

Oh. Monsieur Crier. *Bonjour*. What can I do for you?

GEORGES

(maintaining a glacial calm, shutting and  
locking the door)

Mister Doran. I would ask you to grant me five minutes of your time. Would you do that?  
Yes or no?

MARCUS

Actually, Monsieur, I...

GEORGES

(a cold, coiled spring)

Would you give me *one* minute?

MARCUS

It's just that I'm on my way out the door.

(Throughout the following GEORGES , laser  
focused, inches closer to MARCUS.)

GEORGES

I just visited my daughter, Mister Doran.

MARCUS

Yes. I'm so sorry. A terrible loss. She was such a, er, sweet little girl.

GEORGES

She *was*. Do you know I never heard my daughter utter a foul word until she came to  
your class, Mister Doran?

MARCUS

(biting back a retort)

Is that so?

GEORGES

Dancing on desks. Hitting teachers. Carrying on like a lunatic. That wasn't my Ophélie.  
That was something new.

MARCUS

We had nothing but love for her, Monsieur. The children all thought she...

GEORGES

Where do you think she learned to do those things, Mister Doran?

MARCUS

Look. Monsieur Crier, you've been through a lot. Can I get you a tea or something?

GEORGES

Those papers in your hand. Are those your custody papers?

MARCUS

Yes. Yes they are.

GEORGES

(the spring trembling)

I want you to sign them.

MARCUS

Sign them?

GEORGES

(ready to pounce)

Right now.

MARCUS

I can't do that.

GEORGES

You will do that.

MARCUS

I can't.

(GEORGES springs into action, pouncing on MARCUS and pinning him against the wall with his forearm pressed against MARCUS's neck. After a tense moment, trembling, through gritted teeth, he tries again.)

GEORGES

(all steel hand, no velvet glove,  
trembling)

Do I need to spell it out for you, Doran? Sign the papers.

MARCUS

No.

GEORGES

Sign them! I'm going to take your daughter from you. Just like you took mine.

MARCUS  
(choking, hardly able to breathe)

I'm not signing them.

GEORGES

Sign them!

(Music intensifies as GEORGES growls and punches MARCUS in the stomach, then hurls him to the ground. As soon as MARCUS hits the ground the lights strobe. MARCUS crawls away, then hits and kicks, defending himself, but GEORGES overpowers him, kicking him in the ribs, then, in a fit of bloodlust, GEORGES jumps on MARCUS and proceeds to thrash him. Throughout the following, GEORGES beats the ever loving crap out of MARCUS. All the while, MARCUS cries out for him to stop. Music changes as GEORGES pauses to catch his breath.)

AS GOD IS MY WITNESS  
I'LL CARE FOR YOUR DAUGHTER  
AS IF SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER THAT I ONCE KNEW.  
THIS I PROMISE.  
I'LL BE HER FATHER.  
I'LL PROTECT HER EVEN FROM YOU.  
I'LL RAISE HER HOW SHE OUGHT TO BE.  
I'LL RAISE HER AS THOUGH SHE CAME FROM ME.  
THIS MUCH I GUARANTEE.  
NOW, SIGN THEM, WILL YOU?

MARCUS

No!

GEORGES

DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU.

MARCUS  
(through sobs)

I'm not signing them!

GEORGES  
(at the top of his lungs)

SIGN THEM!

(The music climaxes and then suddenly grows soft and sinister as the lights stop strobing and GEORGES steps off of MARCUS, who is by now a bloody heap, whimpering, barely able to move.)

GEORGES

(horrificed, as if waking up)

LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO.  
SEE HOW YOU BRING OUT THE WORST  
IN THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU?  
I'M NOT THIS PERSON.  
I'M NOT THIS GUY.  
THIS IS JUST AN EYE FOR AN EYE.

(While MARCUS writhes in pain, lying on his stomach, whimpering. GEORGES goes to the desk. He gets the custody papers and a pen. He uncaps the pen. He takes a rag from the painting supplies. He wipes MARCUS's hand with the rag. He the papers with MARCUS's practically lifeless hand. He verifies the signature against one of MARCUS's checks that he brought with him. Satisfied, he leans in close.)

GEORGES

(in a harsh whisper)

I'm going now. But I'm warning you. If you tell a single soul about this. If you try to contact my family. If you dare come around. One way or another—assuming you survive the experience—you will never see your daughter again.

(GEORGES stands up, pockets the papers, and exits. From backstage in the darkness, the cast sings as MARCUS lies on the ground.)

COMPANY

OO.  
IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS NOTHING.  
DARKNESS ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP.

(Blackout.)

## EPILOGUE

*[Present day. The Sacred Lotus Flower training facility.]*

(Lights up as MARCUS, in his grey hair, and CHARLOTTE face off upstage.)

CHARLOTTE

I had no idea.

MARCUS

He didn't tell you?

CHARLOTTE

About Ophélie, of course. About the other bit. No. I'm so sorry.

MARCUS

Just tell me he made good on his promise.

(Music starts for "Separate Ways.")

CHARLOTTE

Hard to believe after all that, but he did. I mean, there were scrapes here and there, but,  
BALLET CLASSES,  
BRAND NEW GLASSES,  
BAND-AIDS ON MY KNEE,  
GETTING TOYS,  
VETTING BOYS,  
HE WAS ALWAYS THERE FOR ME.  
HE FAWNED ON MY MOM LIKE SHE WAS A QUEEN.  
HE TOOK MY HAND  
FOR THE FATHER-DAUGHTER DANCE  
AT MY SWEET SIXTEEN.  
Look, I'M NOT HERE  
TO GIVE YOU AN EARFUL,  
SO SET YOUR MIND AT EASE.  
I SUPPOSE  
I JUST NEEDED CLOSURE.

MARCUS

JUST TELL ME YOU'RE NOT ANGRY.



CHARLOTTE  
 I NEEDED TO SEE YOU TO FIND SOME PEACE.  
 YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED,  
 I SEE YOU'RE STILL DERANGED,  
 BUT YOU'RE HAPPY NOW, AT LEAST.

MARCUS  
 And you...  
 YOU HAD A DAD.  
 FOR THAT I'M GLAD,  
 IT SOUNDS LIKE LIFE WAS GOOD.  
 YOUR MERE EXISTENCE  
 WAS MY SUBSISTENCE.  
 I HOPED AND PRAYED HE WOULD  
 CARE FOR YOU LIKE ONLY THE BEST FATHER COULD.  
 SO THIS IS WHERE WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS?

(Music pauses as CHARLOTTE embraces  
 MARCUS tightly. Music resumes again as she  
 backs away from him and makes her way to the  
 door. Thinking she's leaving, MARCUS turns  
 away.)

CHARLOTTE  
 (toward the doorway)  
 Marcus.

(A small boy steps out onto the stage, rubbing his  
 eyes and looking sleepy, just as MARCUS turns  
 around again.)

BOTH MARCUSES  
 Yes?

(A beat as MARCUS takes it in.)

CHARLOTTE  
 (to MARCUS)  
 Meet your grandson.

(MARCUS's hands cup his mouth.)

CHARLOTTE  
 I want him to have a relationship with his grandfather.

(MARCUS looks dumbfounded. He stands stunned for a moment. He goes to CATHERINE, who sighs.)

CATHERINE

What are you looking at me for?

(cupping his head in her hands, looking into his eyes, kissing him)

Don't lose her again.

(MARCUS gazes into her eyes. Music starts for "Breathe (Reprise)" as a group of white-robed TRAINEES walk in slowly and stand at the back under a dim light. MARCUS joins CHARLOTTE, who takes YOUNG MARCUS by the hand. The three exit.)

TRAINEES

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE.

CATHERINE

That's right. Just like that. In through your mouth, out through your nose. Let your gratitude flow out on this next current of breath.

(Music comes to a close. Lights out except for one spotlight on the stack of letters. Black out.)

(Curtain.)

(End of Act 2.)