

DRAGON SLAYER

A musical comedy in two acts

by

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*Dramatis Personae*

- Lenny: 20s. A writer who is making a living waiting tables while working on his masterpiece, a Broadway show. Lenny is committed to his project to the exclusion of being a human being. Tenor range with falsetto forays. 20s.
- Lenore: 20s. A dancer who waits tables in the same diner. She is in love with Lenny in spite of being ignored by him. Soprano range.
- The Boss: 40s or 50s with a big belly. The villain of the show who hounds his employees at the diner. The Boss transparently disguises himself as the crook Sparafucile and as Max Bialystock, characters who cheat and torment Lenny. Baritone range.
- Genevieve: 20s. The female lead in the show Lenny is writing, and therefore a product of his imagination. This imaginary character won't behave like one and is firmly in command by the end of the show. Mezzo soprano range.
- Chorus: 20s & 30s. New Yorkers and other imaginary characters. Chorus parts written in 3 and 4-part harmony.

Act 1

Scene 1. Times Square

Scene. Times square, morning. A CHORUS of diverse New York types going about their business. Cue *Writer in New York*.

CHORUS

NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
CENTER OF CULTURE, CENTER OF ART.  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
WHERE YOU MUST GO TO GET A GOOD START.  
WHERE YOU WILL BE A HIT OR A FLOP,  
SINK TO THE BOTTOM OR RISE TO THE TOP.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
WHERE THERE IS DRAMA, WHERE THERE IS SONG,  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
IF YOU'RE AN ARTIST, WHERE YOU BELONG.  
WHERE YOU WILL BE A HIT OR A FLOP,  
RISE TO THE BOTTOM OR SINK TO THE TOP.

(Enter LENNY, a bohemian type with a beret, a notebook, and a pen)

LENNY

I AM A WRITER IN NEW YORK  
BECAUSE IT IS MY DESTINY,  
I AM THE MAGIC OF THE CITY,  
I AM AN ARTIST, LOOK AT ME!

I WRITE MY DRAMAS WITH A FLAIR,  
OF AWESOME STAGECRAFT I'M THE KING,  
I WRITE THE MUSIC TO GO WITH THEM,  
MINE ARE THE SONGS YOU LOVE TO SING!

LENNY and CHORUS

AH, AH, AH, AH, AH,  
SONGS YOU LOVE TO SING

(LENORE enters dressed as a waitress, carrying a tray.)

LENORE

I AM A DANCER IN NEW YORK,  
AND THOUGH I THINK I'M PRETTY GOOD  
I'VE TAKEN ON THIS CRAP EMPLOYMENT

JUST TO EARN MY LIVELIHOOD.

(LENORE tosses away her tray; COMPANY dance break)

LENNY  
WHEN YOU'RE A WRITER IN NEW YORK,  
YOU'RE AN EXTR'ORDINARY GUY,  
YOU HOLD THE KEY, YOU HAVE THE POWER  
TO MAKE THE PEOPLE LAUGH OR CRY.

CHORUS  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
CENTER OF CULTURE, CENTER OF ART.

LENNY  
I AM A WRITER IN NEW YORK.

CHORUS  
WHERE YOU HAVE COME TO GET A GOOD START.

LENNY  
I FEEL THE MAGIC OF THE CITY.

LENNY and CHORUS  
WHERE YOU WILL BE A HIT OR A FLOP,  
SINK TO THE BOTTOM OR RISE TO THE TOP.

(A storefront in the set opens to reveal a seedy diner, tables, chairs, a counter. Over the counter is a sign, Mel's Diner. The BOSS comes out from behind the counter. HE has a dirty apron over his pot belly and chews a cigar. HE looks LENNY up and down with disgust, motions for him to take off that stupid beret, and hands him a dirty apron of his own.)

BOSS  
(Spoken over bridge)  
What a load of crap!

(HE sings)

YOU ARE A WAITER IN NEW YORK,  
NO MATTER WHAT YOU TRY TO DO,  
YOU'LL NEVER BE MORE THAN A SERVANT,  
YOU ARE A BUM! JUST LOOK AT YOU!

(LENNY puts on the apron and takes up a broom.)

LENNY  
I AM STILL A WRITER IN NEW YORK.

CHORUS  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK.

LENNY  
I AM AN ARTIST.

CHORUS  
CENTER OF CULTURE, CENTER OF ART!

LENNY  
LOOK AT ME!

CHORUS  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

(Button. LENORE exits.)

BOSS  
Lenny, you are an extremely confused young man. You've mixed up your alphabet, now haven't you? You're confusing the letter "a" and the letter "r." You're a waiter,  
(HE goes to a blackboard with the day's specials on it and writes)  
w-a-i-t-e-r, not writer, waiter. See the difference?  
(HE repeatedly writes over the second letter in the word):  
A, R, A, R.

LENNY  
Come on, boss, everyone knows that great writers always make a living waiting tables in nasty little diners while they're waiting for their big break. I'm going to be the greatest writer of them all, so why shouldn't I wait tables in the nastiest diner of them all—yours?

BOSS  
(*Mocking*) New York, New York. Not very original is it? I like the other song better...  
(HE sings the Kander-Ebb tune.)  
START SPREADING THE NEWS,  
I'M LEAVIN' TODAY  
LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK.

VOICE OFF  
Wrong show!

BOSS  
Whatever.

LENNY

That wasn't original either. Before that one, there was...

(singing the Bernstein tune from On the Town)

NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
IT'S A WONDERFUL TOWN.

VOICE OFF

Wrong show!

LENNY

Whatever.

BOSS

Why do you always have to correct me? Why don't you ever just say, "Yes, Boss," and shut up and sweep the floor?

(The BOSS goes upstage to a kitchen area where he is visible flipping burgers.)

LENNY

Yes, boss.

(HE sweeps.)

A real patron of the arts, that one.

(LENORE enters. SHE is still dressed for work as a waitress. SHE has a thing for LENNY, but he doesn't know it. SHE is insecure and self-conscious but is doing her best to break into the theater as a dancer.)

BOSS

(from the kitchen area)

Lenore, you're late!

LENORE

Sorry I'm late. I had an audition.

(to LENNY)

Lenny, I had an audition!

LENNY

(not caring)

That's nice, Lenore.

(THEY work as they speak. The diner gradually fills with CUSTOMERS.)

LENORE

Don't you want to know how it went?

LENNY

So how did it go?

LENORE

They said they would let me know.

(Her cell phone beeps. SHE looks at her text message.)

That was quick. My dancing was good, but my singing was not so good. I guess they got too many dancers-not-singers and singers-not-dancers in this town. They're looking for dancer who can sing and singers who can dance. That sucks.

CUSTOMER 1

Dancers-and-singers-and-acrobats-and-ticket takers all in one.

CUSTOMER 2

And now the actors are all playing instruments onstage. I hope we don't have to play instruments.

CUSTOMER 1

I ain't getting paid enough to play no instrument.

CUSTOMER 2

If they tell you to play an instrument, you'll play an instrument. It's a tough town.

LENNY

It may be a tough town, but it's the only town for me. I love it. And I'm going to own this town some day. I'm writing the best damn show this city has ever seen. Have I told you how it goes?

CUSTOMER 3

(HE/SHE rolls his/her eyes, against a backdrop of general muttering from other customers.)

Yes, Lenny, you've told us how it goes.

LENORE

I'd love to hear how it goes, Lenny.

CUSTOMER 1

Lenore, you've heard it a million times.

LENORE

That's okay. It's such a wonderful story, I'd love to hear it again.

LENNY

You would? Great, Lenore. It is a wonderful show, isn't it? Now, picture this: we're in the middle ages. Knights and ladies and all that. Real King Arthur stuff.

CUSTOMER 1

It's been done, kid. They called the show, *Camelot*.

(CUSTOMER 1 starts singing the title song from Camelot.)  
IN SHORT, THERE'S SIMPLY NOT  
A MORE CONGENIAL SPOT  
FOR HAPPILY-EVER-AFTERING THAN HERE  
IN CAMELOT.

VOICE OFF

Wrong show!

CUSTOMERS

(THEY take up the song from Camelot, hamming it up).  
CAMELOT!

TOURIST

(wanders in, Hawaiian shirt & camera, in time to hear the singing)  
I just love the old Broadway revivals. Sure beats the lousy new stuff they try to push these days. Just the other day, I saw a show where the actors were playing the instruments onstage!

(LENORE shows him to a seat.)

CUSTOMER 1

Hey, Lenny, how about getting Alec Guinness to play Merlin?

CUSTOMER 2

Alec Guinness? From the old *Star Wars*? Can he sing? Can he dance?

CUSTOMER 3

He can't sing and he can't dance, because he's dead. But he sure was good with a light saber. That's what those round table guys needed, some light sabers. They coulda kicked some serious butt.

LENORE

Don't listen to them, Lenny, they're just jealous.

BOSS

(from the kitchen area).  
Is anyone working around here besides me?

LENNY and LENORE

Yes, boss, we're working.

(Cue *Dragon Slayer*)

LENNY

(HE speaks over the introduction.)  
All right, you jokers. Get ready for a real musical extravaganza. The stage is set. Knights, ladies, wizards, and...dragons!



(During this song, LENNY, LENORE, and CUSTOMERS act out the story, using diner items as props. Of course, LENNY plays the hero.)

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A DRAGON ON THE LOOSE  
WHEN HE ROARED HE BURNED UP HERDS OF CATTLE WITH HIS  
BREATH,  
THE WORD WENT OUT FOR BRAVE YOUNG MEN TO END THE  
BEAST'S ABUSE,  
THE WORD WENT OUT AND KNIGHTS CAME FORTH TO BATTLE TO  
THE DEATH.

LENORE

IN THE TOWN LIVED FLORESTAN, THE HERO OF THE SHOW,  
FLORESTAN WAS FAINT OF HEART, NOT WANTING TO GET KILLED,  
THE CHILDREN LAUGHED, THEY CALLED HIM NAMES BE-CAUSE HE  
WOULD NOT GO  
TO FACE THE DRAGON ONE ON ONE; HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE  
GRILLED.

LENNY and LENORE (in *canon*)

HE WANTED TO BE A DRAGON SLAYER,  
BUT HE WANTED TO AVOID BECOMING ARMORED TOAST.  
BUT HE WANTED TO AVOID  
BUT HE WANTED TO AVOID BECOMING ARMORED TOAST.

LENNY

ENTER PRETTY GENEVIEVE, WHO LOVES OUR FRIGHTENED KNIGHT,  
SHE WANTS HIM TO KILL THE DRAGON SO HE CAN BECOME A MAN,  
SHE GIVES HIM HER LACE PETTICOAT TO CARRY IN THE FIGHT  
AND SHE HIRES A MAGICIAN TO GIVE FLORESTAN A PLAN.

CUSTOMER 3

(HE/SHE speaks over the bridge.)

Can I get some service here?

LENORE

Not yet.

LENORE

(SHE recites over the bridge.)

The magician took the maiden's money like a crook,  
Telling Florestan that he would arm him with a charm  
Taken from the pages of a mammoth magic book and  
Guaranteed to make him safe from dragonary harm.

LENNY

Pay attention. Here's where Rumplesnitz comes in.

LENORE and LENNY (*in canon*)  
HE NEEDED BUT TO UTTER "RUMPLESNITZ," AND  
EV'RY DRAGON WITHIN EARSHOT WOULD BECOME A LAMB.

LENORE and LENNY  
WHAT A GREAT SUCCESS WAS HAD BY OUR GOOD FLORESTAN,  
DRAGON CORPSES AT HIS FEET LAY PILED BY AND BY,  
IF A DRAGON DARED TO SHOW HIS SNOUT IN THAT FAIR LAND  
RUMPLESNITZ WOULD BE THE LAST SOUND HEARD BEFORE HE  
DIED!

CUSTOMER 1

A happy ending! It will never sell. It's too linear. How many shows go just like that: Girl meets boy, boy meets dragon, boy kills dragon, boy wins girl. It's been done before.

LENORE

Wait. Lenny, tell them the rest.

LENNY

Yeah, listen, guys. This part is where the psychological drama comes in. It's a cut above all those other, simple shows, because it shows how important your state of mind is.

BOSS

(HE calls from the kitchen area.)

Lenny, Lenore, pick up! Who ordered the house special?

LENNY

Unless, of course, your state of mind is a barren Lilliputian wasteland.

(HE recites.)

Fifty pairs of dragon ears were pinned to his shield when  
He learned that the magician had been sentenced as a fake,  
Genevieve assured him that his skills were not pretend,  
He was scared but still he went to battle for her sake.

LENORE

(SHE recites.)

Dragon number fifty one was kind of small and thin,  
All the same, poor Florestan was terrified, he lacked  
Confidence in Rumplesnitz and confidence to win,  
And without his confidence, he never would come back.

LENNY AND LENORE

(THEY sing the refrain.)

HE HAD BECOME A DRAGON SLAYER  
BUT IN THE END, HE WAS STILL JUST ARMORED TOAST!

(Button.)

CUSTOMER 1

I gotta admit, it's a good story. Did you make it up, Lenny?

LENNY

No, I got the idea from *The Fifty-first Dragon*, a story by a guy named Heywood Broun. A local boy from Brooklyn, it turns out.

CUSTOMER 2

I get it. The fifty-first dragon, that's the one that got the knight in the end. But, the story ain't original. You can't use it.

CUSTOMER 3

You gotta pay to use someone else's story. It ain't original.

LENNY

Who cares about original? Look at my life. I'm a wanna-be writer working as a waiter. Right?

CUSTOMERS

Right.

LENNY

You know the guy who wrote *Rent*?

CUSTOMER 1

Jonathan Larson, rest his soul. Famous guy and *very* original.

LENNY

That's him. He wrote a show called *Tick, Tick...Boom!* The hero is a waiter who's trying to write the next great musical. Larson stole that show from my life.

LENORE

From the life of half the waiters in New York.

LENNY

So, nothing is original.

(He declaims dramatically.)

"There is nothing new under the sun."

CUSTOMER 2

Now *that's* original.

CUSTOMER 3

My brother-in-law is a lawyer. He could represent you in negotiations with Heywood Broun's estate.

LENNY

You expect me to pay money to write a show I haven't even sold yet?

CUSTOMER 3

That's how it works.

LENNY

No way, clown!

CUSTOMER dressed as a clown.

Excuse me, young man. I believe you have just made an unlicensed literary reference to my intellectual property.

LENNY

Get lost, bozo.

CLOWN CUSTOMER

But I'd like a refill on my coffee.

LENORE

I can help you.

(SHE refills his coffee and shows him to the door.)

LENNY

You're a pal, Lenore. Let me know if I can ever do you a favor.

LENORE

Well, there was one little thing, Lenny.

LENNY

What's that?

LENORE

When you sell your show, can I play Genevieve?

LENNY

Well, um, I'm not sure I can promise you that, Lenore.

LENORE

(SHE pouts.)

Why not?

LENNY

Well, for Genevieve, I'll need an actress who's really good. Someone who can dance *and* sing.

LENORE

Oh...I see...well, I suppose you can't make any promises, then.

(LENORE exits, sniffing.)

CUSTOMER 1

Nice going, dude.

LENNY

What did I do?

CUSTOMER 1

That girl likes you and you just shot her down.

LENNY

Likes me? Nah...that's just Lenore. We work together.

BOSS

(HE comes downstage from the kitchen area.)

Work? Coulda fooled me!

CUSTOMER 3

Lenny, why are you so cold?

LENNY

I'm not cold, I'm committed. I want my show to be perfect. This show is my Mona Lisa, my Sistine Chapel ceiling.

CUSTOMER 3

Leonardo da Vinci woulda been nicer to poor Lenore.

LENNY

How would you know? Look, I'm an artist. I promised my granddad that I would fulfill my responsibility to my art.

BOSS

(sarcastically)

That's so sweet, Lenny. Now what did your granddad say about shuttin' yer yap once in a while and doing some work? Take out the trash.

(BOSS calls off)

Lenore! Where are you?

LENORE

(SHE enters; she has pulled herself together).

Yes, boss?

BOSS

You two close up. I'm going out. I have a date.

LENORE

A date? That's wonderful. Have a great time.

(BOSS exits. CUSTOMERS exit one by one as LENNY and LENORE close up, talking as they work.)

LENNY

Some poor woman must be dating outside her species.

LENORE

I think it's sweet, a man his age dating.

LENNY

You mean a man his weight.

LENORE

Now, Lenny, not everyone can have a flat stomach and big chest like you.

(She tentatively touches his stomach and chest, while he continues to work, looking at her like she's from another planet. She pulls away.)

Lenny, I wasn't going to hurt you.

LENNY

Whatever.

(They work in silence for a minute.)

LENORE

You live uptown, don't you?

LENNY

Yeah. Way uptown.

LENORE

I'm going that way.

LENNY

I thought you live in Bushwick.

LENORE

Uh...well, uptown Bushwick. Do you want to stop for a beer on the way to the subway?

LENNY

I dunno. It's late. I really need to get going and work on my show.

(HE exits.)

LENORE

(To no-one, LENNY is already gone.)

Okay. Have a nice night. See you tomorrow.

(SHE addresses the audience.)

It's an old story, isn't it? The girl is in love. The guy is a lost cause. Happens all the time. Why you paid good money to see it on stage is anybody's guess. Just look around. There are lots of good women being ignored by insensitive men. I'll bet there are plenty of good women being ignored by insensitive men right here. Let me hear it: all the good women being ignored by insensitive men, Good. Okay, now all the insensitive men who are ignoring a good woman. Come on, you know who you are. Sad isn't it?

Why do we love these men who are so full of themselves? Where is our self-respect? Where is our autonomy? Is it because they're hot? Hot will cover a lot of sins, won't it? Is it because they're fun? Fun is good, but warm and human would be better. Is it because they make us laugh? I'm not sure Lenny has ever made me laugh. Is it because they make us cry? That must be it; if a man can make you cry, he's your guy.

(Cue *I Love a Jerk*; she sings.)

THEY SAY THAT LOVE IS BLIND,  
WITHOUT A SENSE OF SMELL,  
THEY SAY THAT LOVE'S UNKIND,  
I ONLY KNOW TOO WELL...

I LOVE A JERK, THAT'S HOW IT WORKS,  
FOR EVEN THOUGH HE TREATS ME CRUMMY,  
MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I'M A DUMMY,  
HE'S A FIND.

I LOVE THAT SCHMUCK, THAT'S MY BAD LUCK,  
AND EVEN THOUGH HE LOOKS RIGHT THROUGH ME,  
AND HIS WORDS ARE INSULTS TO ME,  
HE'S ALL MINE.

I'VE NEVER LOVED SUCH AN ASS BEFORE,  
IF I HAD MORE SENSE, I'D WALK OUT THAT DOOR.

I LOVE A DOPE, THERE IS NO HOPE,  
AND THOUGH HE GIVES ME LOTS OF PAIN,  
HE'S GONNA MAKE ME GO INSANE,  
HE'S STILL MY GUY.

I LOVE A CREEP, I'M IN TOO DEEP,  
I KNOW TO LOVE HIM IS A CRIME  
BECAUSE HE ISN'T WORTH MY TIME,  
I CAN'T DENY.

I'VE NEVER LOVED SUCH A SHIT BEFORE,  
IF I HAD MORE SENSE, I'D RUN OUT THAT DOOR.

I'VE NEVER LOVED SUCH A WORTHLESS MAN BEFORE,  
IF I HAD MORE SENSE, I'D THROW HIS SORRY BUTT RIGHT OUT THAT  
DOOR.

I LOVE A JERK, THAT'S HOW IT WORKS,  
FOR EVEN THOUGH HE TREATS ME CRUMMY,  
MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I'M A DUMMY,  
HE'S A FIND.

I LOVE A SCHMUCK, THAT'S MY BAD LUCK,  
AND EVEN THOUGH HE LOOKS RIGHT THROUGH ME,  
AND HIS WORDS ARE INSULTS TO ME,  
HE'S ALL MINE.

(Button. Blackout.)



Scene 2. LENNY's Imagination

(The lights come up on LENNY, who is sitting on a stool, writing. Most of the stage is dark or shrouded in fog, kind of like LENNY's mind. In fact, it *is* LENNY's mind.)

LENNY

Every show needs a love song but love songs are very tough to write. You have to have just the right amount of schmaltz, just the right melody, the right tempo, the right rhymes. Everything just right.

(HE sings to himself as he writes, from *Oliver!*)

AS LONG AS HE NEEDS ME  
I KNOW WHERE I MUST BE...

(HE speaks.)

That's just brilliant!

VOICE OFF.

Wrong show!

LENNY

Damn!

(HE erases furiously, then writes on his pad, putting on some finishing touches with a flourish.)

There, I've done it, I've got it just right! It's got perfect lyrics with musical metaphors, which audiences are nuts for. Plus, the music is very catchy. It's in 7/4 time, you know, very advanced. How did the musical stage get on without me for so long?

(HE narrates.)

The scene: Genevieve sits alone on the castle wall.

(GENEVIEVE comes sliding in on a castle wall.)

It's nighttime. The moon is shining from upstage left.

(A PERSON holding a flashlight enters left, shining the light on GENEVIEVE from behind.)

...no stage right!

(the PERSON with the light moves right.)

She gazes wistfully into the near distance. She is thinking of him, her Florestan. Where is he now? Is he thinking of her? Does he know how she feels?

GENEVIEVE

A little sappy, don't you think?

LENNY

Wait a second. I didn't write that. You're supposed to say what I write.

GENEVIEVE

I don't much care for what you write.

LENNY

You don't care for it?

GENEVIEVE

You're not very good, are you?

LENNY

Of course I'm very good. I'm the best.

(Getting increasingly anxious)

I'm the best, I'm the best. I have to keep telling myself I'm the best. If I'm not the best, I wouldn't know what to do. You only exist because I wrote you into existence. Now sing the song.

(Almost to himself)

I'm the best, I'm the best.

(Cue *Love Song*; GENEVIEVE shrugs and sings.)

GENEVIEVE

EV'RY SHOW NEEDS A SAPPY LOVE SONG.  
THIS ONE'S MINE, IT WON'T LAST VERY LONG.

LENNY

(HE speaks over the music.)

Hey, that's not what I wrote! Sing what I wrote.

GENEVIEVE

(SHE shrugs and sings.)

YOU ARE MY LOVE SONG,  
I AM A POEM TO YOU,  
YOU'RE WHERE I 'SPOSE I BELONG, BELONG,  
I KNOW THAT YOU NEED ME, TOO.

WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER  
UNDER A BLUE SUNNY SKY,

(The PERSON with the flashlight puts a cardboard corona on it,  
making it a sun.)

NO ONE ASKS WHETHER OR NOT TO LOVE,  
NOBODY EVER ASKS WHY.

LOVE NEEDS A SONG,  
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY,  
LOVE IS A CONCERT THAT TWO HEARTS CAN PLAY  
Oh, yuck.  
WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE,  
WHAT CAN YOU DO?  
SINGING TOGETHER A KEY THAT IS NEW

LENNY

SINGING IN TIME,  
SINGING ON KEY,  
THAT'S HOW IT IS WHEN YOU'RE SINGING FOR ME.

(THEY speak over the bridge.)

GENEVIEVE

It's such a dippy song.

LENNY

Genevieve, it's a wonderful song, and you sing it beautifully. Let's sing it together.

GENEVIEVE and LENNY

(THEY sing.)

YOU ARE MY LOVE SONG,  
I AM A POEM TO YOU,  
YOU'RE WHERE I BELONG, BELONG,  
I KNOW THAT YOU NEED ME, TOO.

WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER  
UNDER A BLUE SUNNY SKY,  
NO ONE ASKS WHETHER OR NOT TO LOVE,  
NOBODY EVER ASKS WHY.

(Button.)

LENNY

I think I'm in love with you.

GENEVIEVE

In love with me? Nonsense.

LENNY

What do you mean, nonsense?

GENEVIEVE

You can't be in love with me. I'm an imaginary character. I'm not real.

LENNY

Well, maybe I'm in love with what you stand for.

GENEVIEVE

Stand for? I don't stand for anything. All I stand for is some fantasy world you cooked up in your brain. You have this storybook idea of love that you're making me push in this song of yours, all neat with lots of rhyming words. But, love doesn't rhyme...that's just theatre.

LENNY

I'm sorry you don't see it my way; we'd make a lovely couple.

GENEVIEVE

They have special facilities for men who make lovely couples with imaginary girlfriends.

LENNY

You don't understand, Genevieve. You're a concept. I love you as a concept.

GENEVIEVE

(More kindly)

You seem like a nice fella, so I'm going to give you some advice. Find a real girl.

LENNY

I don't know any real girls like you, Genevieve. Real girls are all so...besmirched.

(Cue *Somebody Likes You*. LENNY and GENEVIEVE talk over the introduction.)

GENEVIEVE

Besmirched? Where did you come from, *Pride and Prejudice*? How about online dating? There must be a site for you: "Lonely, marginally talented writer seeks female to be an unrealistic representation of womanhood." Or better, what about that Lenore? I'm not sure why, but she seems to like you.

LENNY

I'm not interested in Lenore.

GENEVIEVE

Why not?

LENNY

She's just a waitress. She's so...ordinary.

GENEVIEVE

Lenny, she's a person. And she likes you, almost as much as you like yourself.

(SHE sings.)

WHEN SOMEBODY LIKES YOU,  
YOU'D BETTER TAKE ADVANTAGE,  
IT ISN'T GONNA, GONNA HAPPEN EV'RY DAY, NO.  
WHEN SOMEBODY LIKES YOU,  
SAY, YES, BEFORE SHE WAKES UP,  
BEFORE THE NUT HOUSE COMES TO CARRY HER AWAY, YEAH.

WHEN SOMEBODY WANTS YOU,  
AND, YES, THIS SOMEONE WANTS YOU,

YOU'D BETTER WANT HER,  
WANT HER BEFORE SHE FLIES, YEAH.

(LENORE enters in a costume that shows she is a vision or a dream—we are in LENNY's imagination after all. SHE dances during the musical interlude, and LENNY is increasingly intrigued by HER. HE has never seen her like this. SHE exits with the start of the vocal part.)

YOU'RE SO FOCUSED ON FINDING THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS,  
YOU'VE GOT A VISION OF HALOES AND WINGS,  
IF YOU CAN'T TELL THE REAL THING FROM SOMETHING IN YOUR  
HEAD,  
YOU'LL ONLY LOVE IMAGINARY THINGS.

(LENORE enters again, dancing during the bridge.)

LENNY

(Looking often at LENORE)

YOU SAY SOMEONE LIKES ME,  
I'M VERY GLAD TO HEAR IT,  
BUT IF THAT SOMEONE WERE A GIRL, A GIRL LIKE YOU, YEAH.  
I'D BE ENTHUSIASTIC,  
I'D SAY IT WAS FANTASTIC  
BUT MAYBE I NEED TO CURB MY EXPECTATIONS.

GENEVIEVE

(SHE speaks, chiding him.)

Curb your expectations? Nice, Lenny.

(SHE sings.)

WHEN SOMEBODY WANTS YOU,  
AND, YES, THIS SOMEONE WANTS YOU,  
YOU'D BETTER WANT HER,  
WANT HER BEFORE SHE FLIES, YEAH

FLIES, FLIES, WHEN SHE GOES, SHE FLIES, FLIES,  
WHEN SOMEBODY WANTS YOU  
LORD KNOWS SHE MUST BE CRAZY,  
AND ANY MINUTE SHE MIGHT SAY GOOD-BYE

(GENEVIEVE and LENORE wave)

GOOD-BYE, GOOD-BYE.

(Button. Blackout.)

Scene 3. Next day in the diner  
LENNY is onstage, setting up for the day. CUSTOMERS wander  
in. LENORE runs on, in a hurry.)

LENORE

Hi, everybody, hi, Lenny.

LENNY

(He is friendly to her for the first time.)

Good morning, Lenore. You look nice today.

BOSS

(From offstage)

Late again, Lenore.

LENORE

Sorry, boss. I had another audition.

LENNY

So, how did it go this time? Did you get the part?

LENORE

I don't think so. The producer kept scowling at me, like I had something hanging out of my nose. It was creepy.

LENNY

I'm sure you were terrific. Don't worry, Lenore, you're a talented dancer. I'm sure you'll get something.

LENORE

Well, thanks, Lenny, that's nice of you to say. But you've never seen me dance.

LENNY

I imagine you're a good dancer. And I'd like to see you dance.

LENORE

(Flustered at the sudden change)

I don't know what to say. That's very nice.

LENNY

Say, remember last night, you wanted to go out for a beer? Let's go out tonight after work. And we go fancier than just beer. Let's make it beer and a pizza!

LENORE

Pizza?! I love pizza.

LENORE and LENNY  
(SHE starts singing, and HE joins in. From *HMS Pinafore*)  
OH JOY, OH RAPTURE UNFORESEEN,  
THE CLOUDED SKY IS NOW SERENE!  
(THEY stop awkwardly.)

Oh!  
LENORE

Wrong show!  
VOICE OFF

Oops.  
LENORE

LENNY  
(HE laughs and takes her hand.)  
No big deal. So it's a date?

It's a date!  
LENORE

(THEY stare into one another's eyes holding hands. BOSS enters.)

BOSS  
C'mon you two lovebirds, get back to work.

(Blackout.)

Scene 4. The pizza joint  
(Same set as the diner, but the sign over the counter now says, "Sparafucile Apizza." Some CUSTOMERS are already seated. LENNY and LENORE enter and seat themselves at a table. A server gives them menus and water.)

LENNY

I've never been here before. I don't get out much. But it looks pretty good.

LENORE

It does. And it's so nice to be sitting down instead of serving.

(While they are looking at the menus and ordering, the BOSS sneaks in and observes LENNY and LENORE secretly. He puts on a big moustache and wraps a black cloak around himself. He steps downstage into the light and explains to the audience.)

BOSS

It's time to break up this little party, and I'm just the guy to do it. I'm an all-purpose villain, you see. It saves a lot of money on actors, even if it's more wear and tear on me. Watch how good I am at being bad.

(He sneaks up to LENNY, concealing himself from LENORE.)

Pssst!

LENNY

Who's there?

BOSS

Your humble servant. Come out here a minute, my boy, we need to talk. It's about your show.

LENNY

My show?

(to LENORE)

Give me a second, Lenore, this guy needs to talk to me.

LENORE

Guy? What guy?

LENNY

I'll be right back.

(BOSS leads LENNY downstage. During their dialog, LENORE gets impatient, looking at her watch, playing games on her cell phone, becoming increasingly irritated.)

Who are you? Are you a thief?



BOSS

A thief? No, no, my dear boy, I am not a thief.  
(HE pats his fat stomach.)  
Although I have been known to steal a few hearts in my day.

LENNY

What are you, then?

BOSS

(HE speaks grandiosely.)  
I am a...a solicitor, a counselor, a (*beat*) facilitator.

LENNY

Sounds like a fancy name for a thief to me.

BOSS

Not at all, my dear boy. I'm here to help you.

LENNY

What's your name?

BOSS

(HE thinks hard, then notices the name of the pizza joint.)  
Ummm...  
(with a flourish)  
Sparafucile!

LENNY

Sparrow foo chili? Sounds like a character out of the *Godfather* or some other Spanish story.

BOSS

Actually, *Rigoletto*, and it's Italian.

LENNY

Italian, Spanish, what's the difference? They're right next to each other.

BOSS

(HE rolls his eyes.)  
Oh, the artistic mind. Always joking. Always imitating stupidity.

LENNY

Well, Mr. Sparrow...Sparrowful...

BOSS

(With a flourish)  
Sparafucile!

LENNY  
Mr. Sparrow Full Chili, what do you want with me?

BOSS  
Much!

LENNY  
Much?

BOSS  
Much. I see in you all the possibilities of your generation, the genius of youth, the promise of the Muses fulfilled in our time!

LENNY  
Yes, that sounds like me.

BOSS  
My boy, rumor has it that you've written a Broadway show.

LENNY  
Well, yes, I have.

BOSS  
Good, good. Now the question is, is it a good show?

LENNY  
Why, yes, it is.

BOSS  
Of course it is! Why, I've heard that it's the best show since *West Side Story*!\*

LENNY  
(HE happily joins in the hyperbole.)  
Since *Fiddler on the Roof*!

BOSS  
*Hello, Dolly*!

LENNY  
*Les Misérables*!

BOSS  
*Les Misérables*? I never heard of it.

---

\* Substitute any show names in this exchange.

LENNY

You know, Victor Hugo.

BOSS

Okay, *Les Misérables*.

(HE speaks aside to the audience.)

*Les Misérables*? Has anybody heard of *Les Misérables*? Yes? Was it any good? Okay, if you say so.

(HE addresses LENNY.)

So this (*English pronunciation*) *Miserables* of yours, we've got to see that it gets mounted.

LENNY

Mounted? It's not a horse.

BOSS

That's how we theatre people refer to getting a show produced.

LENNY

You're a theatre person? Why didn't you tell me? Let's get it mounted! Giddyup!

BOSS

We've got to see that it gets the hearing it deserves. What's it called?

LENNY

*Dragon Slayer*.

BOSS

Catchy title, *Dragon Slayer*. Though maybe not as catchy as, say, *Avenue Q*. I don't suppose we could call it, *Avenue Q*?

LENNY

No, *Dragon Slayer*.

BOSS

Yes, quite, *Dragon Slayer*.

(HE speaks side to audience.)

What a dumb title. Who would pay good money to see a show called, *Dragon Slayer*? Still, it doesn't matter to me. He can call it *Phantom of the Opera* for all I care.

LENNY

So how do you propose to get it mounted?

BOSS

Well, I think the first step would be to have it read by my good friend and brother-in-law, Max Bialystock, the famous producer.

(HE speaks side to the audience.)

I know, wrong show, but he's such a hick, he won't know the difference.

LENNY

Max Bialystock, the producer? I've heard of him. He's famous, isn't he?

BOSS

The best known producer in all of Broadway

LENNY

And you know him?

BOSS

Why, yes. He married my sister, poor sod, and lived to tell the tale.

LENNY

Well, this is my lucky day, isn't it?

BOSS

Yes it is.

(HE speaks aside, to the audience.)

And now to make it my lucky day.

(HE addresses LENNY.)

Of course, Maestro Bialystock is very busy, even for me, his dear brother-in-law. I shall have to find a pretext to take him to dinner, to get him alone and undistracted.

LENNY

That sounds like a good plan.

BOSS

Yes, except he is so busy that I shall have to invite him to the very finest restaurant in New York. You see, he is a gourmand and cannot resist the promise of a meal, but only the best food and wine will do.

LENNY

Right, well, that sounds fine.

BOSS

Unhappily, I am a man of modest means, and could not undertake such a project without an infusion of capital.

LENNY

Capital?

BOSS

A checkie.

LENNY

Huh?

BOSS

Money.

LENNY

Oh, money. You need money. How much money would you need?

BOSS

Approximately...

(HE pulls out a calculator, punches the buttons, and mutters.)

Let's see, bribing the maître d' to get a table without a reservation, caviar, foie gras, bacon cheeseburger, artichoke, Dom Perignon, *mousse chocolat*...approximately...

(He shows LENNY the calculator.)

LENNY

Holy cow!

BOSS

Yes, the typical cost of a meal in a fine New York restaurant. You might have to hit up your girlfriend for a donation.

LENNY

My girlfriend? I don't have a girlfriend.

BOSS

Well, perhaps you can find one. It will take her money, too.

LENNY

I'm afraid that's not possible.

BOSS

Pity. You know, I had so been looking forward to hearing your work on stage. Imagine, the house lights are down, the audience is hushed. A single spot, a pale blue light on the leading lady. She's a dream, dressed in gossamer. The music swells from the pit. She sings.

(HE sings, sweetly.)

YOU ARE MY LOVE SONG,  
I AM A POEM TO YOU,  
YOU'RE WHERE SPOSE I BELONG, BELONG,  
I KNOW THAT YOU NEED ME, TOO.

Not a dry eye in the house.

LENNY

All right. I'll do it. I'll get you some money. Maybe I could get some crowdfunding!  
(HE gestures with his beret to the audience, looking for donations.  
Getting none, HE shrugs).

Okay, I'll hit the Internet.

(LENNY returns to LENORE, calling back)

Thank you, Mr. Sparrowful, you won't be sorry.

BOSS

What an ass. Thank goodness for schmucks like that, or the villain business would be a lot harder than it is.

(The BOSS exits.)

LENORE

Lenny, that was just rude.

LENNY

Lenore! Fabulous news. The great producer Max Bialystock is going to look at my show. This is it! I'm going to be famous!

LENORE

Max Bialystock? This is a joke, right?

LENNY

No, really. The luckiest thing happened. That was Maestro Bialytock's brother-in-law, a Mr. Sparrow-Full-of-Chili, and he wants to represent me to the Great Man himself!

LENORE

(SHE is suspicious.)

Why would this brother-in-law want to represent you?

LENNY

He thinks I'm a great artist. He wants to help our modern culture recognize its brightest new stars.

LENORE

Lenny, you may be a great artist, but it sounds kind of fishy to me. How much does this guy want you to pay him to represent you?

LENNY

Nothing at all! He's in it for art's sake.

LENORE

Nothing at all?

LENNY

Nothing for himself. He needs a little bit of capital up front, though, just to grease the skids.

LENORE

Capital?

LENNY

Yeah. Money.

LENORE

How much?

LENNY

My life savings.

LENORE

Your life savings?!

LENNY

Yes. And, uh, yours.

LENORE

My life savings?

LENNY

Yes. Please, Lenore, can I have it?

LENORE

You abandon me in this joint and then come back to ask me for money? That's pretty weak, Lenny, and besides, you're being robbed.

LENNY

Lenore, how can you say that? Here's a fellow who recognizes my talent, who believes in me. He wants the public to see my work. Why do you have to make out like this guy is a villain just because he needs a little investment capital? Don't you want to see me succeed?

LENORE

Of course I do, Lenny.

LENNY

Then, you'll give me the money?

LENORE

I don't have any money.

LENNY

It's an investment, Lenore, you'll get it back. Don't be such a tightwad.

LENORE

(SHE is hurt.)

Lenny, I said I don't have any money. I'm a struggling artist, remember?

LENNY

Why are you being so difficult?

LENORE

You're not listening to me. I don't have any money. If I had money, I might invest in your show, but not by giving it to some guy named Sparrow-Full-of-Beans.

LENNY

Sparrow-Full-of-Chili. Don't be so ignorant.

VOICE OFF.

Sparafucile!

LENNY

Sparafucile!

LENORE

(SHE is horrified.)

Sparafucile?! Lenny, he's the villain in *Rigoletto*.

LENNY

I knew that.

LENORE

He'll take your money and leave you with nothing.

LENNY

After my show is a hit, I'll have plenty of money. You just don't have enough faith in me. You want me to keep on being a nobody like you.

LENORE

A nobody?

(Cue *Shabbily*)

LENNY

You heard me. No talent, no future, nobody. I am fulfilling my destiny. I guess your destiny is just to be cute.



LENORE

(SHE sings, sad and resigned. Her dream of a relationship with LENNY doesn't look very promising, even to her.)

PEOPLE ARE NICE TO BE WITH  
WHEN THEY ARE KIND TO ME,  
YOU WERE NOT KIND AT ALL TO ME,  
YOU TREATED ME SO SHABBILY.

I THOUGHT WE MIGHT MAKE A PAIR,  
BUT YOU HADN'T GOTTEN THERE,  
YOU MUST HAVE THOUGHT THAT I WOULDN'T CARE  
IF YOU TREATED ME SHABBILY.

MAYBE GOOD MANNERS WERE NOT  
TAUGHT BY YOUR MUM,  
WHEN YOU WRECKED THE HOPE I HAD  
THE ANGELS ALL WERE SAD  
AT YOUR NASTY CRITICISM.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW,  
WHY SHOULD I TAKE YOUR ABUSE?  
I GET THE POINT THAT IT'S NO USE,  
WHEN YOU TREAT, YOU TREAT ME

(Spoken) like sh...shabbily.

(Button.)

I see I'm not the girl for you. I hope your damned show is enough.

(LENORE exits. Cue *It's Enough*)

LENNY

(HE calls after her, over song intro.)

Having a little trouble with our emotions, are we? And yes, thank you, being the golden boy of Broadway will be quite enough for me.

(The pizza joint opens to Times Square.)

Scene 5

(Times Square at night. The CUSTOMERS become PASSERS-BY. The BOSS is standing outside watching LENNY with a scowl.)

LENNY.

(HE calls after LENORE)

I don't really need you, do I?

(HE sings.)

IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE WORLD FAMOUS,  
TO BE ON THE COVER OF A MAGAZINE,  
AND IF YOU CAN'T HELP ME GET TO WHERE I WANT TO BE,  
I HAVE TO WONDER WHY YOU HANG AROUND.

CHORUS

IT'S ENOUGH FOR HIM TO BE WORLD FAMOUS,  
TO BE ON THE COVER OF A MAGAZINE,  
AND IF YOU CAN'T HELP HIM GET TO WHERE HE WANTS TO BE,  
WE HAVE TO WONDER WHY YOU HANG AROUND.

LENNY

IT'S ENOUGH TO HAVE FAME AND FORTUNE,  
FOR FANS TO WAIT ON LINE TO GET MY AUTOGRAPH,  
AND IF YOU'RE NOT WAITING TO GET A SOUVENIR OF ME,  
PERHAPS YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR PRIORITIES.

BOSS

(HE enters.)

IT'S ENOUGH TO BE THE VILLAIN IN THE PLAY  
TO BE THE ROTTEN SCOUNDREL THAT YOU BOO AND HISS,  
FOR IF I WERE NOT AROUND, YOU COULD LEAVE AT INTERMISSION,  
WITH NOTHING IN THE SECOND ACT TO MISS.

LENNY

IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE THE TOAST OF BROADWAY,  
TO BE ANOTHER ROGERS OR A HAMMERSTEIN,  
BUT IF YOU'RE NOT HUMMING THE HITS THAT I HAVE WRITTEN,  
YOU MIGHT NOT BE, NOT BE THE GIRL FOR ME.

LENORE and GENEVIEVE

(THEY enter.)

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BE THE WOMAN IN THE SHOW,  
BEING CUTE IS NOT MY VISION OF MY DESTINY,

GENEVIEVE

BUT IF YOU CAN WAIT A WHILE YOU WILL SEE US TAKING OVER,

LENORE and GENEVIEVE  
ABUSE IS NOT THE KIND OF LIFE FOR ME.

LENNY  
IT'S ENOUGH TO BE A MOVER ON THE TOWN  
WHEN THE LIGHTS ON THE MARQUEE ARE FLASHING  
DON'T ASK ME TO STAY AT HOME WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE CALLING,  
LENNY,  
I WASN'T MEANT TO LEAD THAT BORING LIFE.

CHORUS  
IT'S ENOUGH TO BE A MOVER ON THE TOWN  
WHEN THE LIGHTS ON THE MARQUEE ARE FLASHING  
DON'T ASK HIM TO STAY AT HOME WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE  
CALLING, LENNY,  
HE WASN'T MEANT TO LEAD THAT BORING LIFE.

LENNY  
IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE WORLD FAMOUS,  
TO BE ON THE COVER OF A MAGAZINE,  
AND IF YOU CAN'T HELP ME GET TO WHERE I WANT TO BE,  
I HAVE TO WONDER WHY YOU HANG AROUND.

CHORUS.  
HAVE TO WONDER WHY YOU HANG AROUND.

ALL EXCEPT LENNY  
HAVE TO WONDER WHY I HANG AROUND.

(Button. Blackout.)

Scene 6. The Diner

(After hours, LENORE is closing up, wiping the counter. GENEVIEVE enters.)

GENEVIEVE

So this is the famous diner.

LENORE

We're closing now, can I help you?

GENEVIEVE

Do you serve imaginary people?

LENORE

(SHE pours a cup of coffee for Genevieve.)

I don't see why not. Real people aren't so wonderful.

GENEVIEVE

I see you're still mooning over that loser.

LENORE

Yes, I'm afraid I've got it pretty badly.

GENEVIEVE

There are some guys who make loneliness a welcome state of affairs. But you don't see it that way with this guy, do you? It must be a terrible burden.

LENORE

Probably no more of a burden than being the product of his imagination.

GENEVIEVE

Don't rub it in. Plenty of imaginary characters get to be in the minds of good creative artists, but I have to exist in the mind of an

(SHE grimaces in disgust.)

unpleasant and untalented musical theater writer. I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to be Ophelia in the mind of William Shakespeare.

LENORE

She killed herself, didn't she?

GENEVIEVE

But she died reciting such great lines. "O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown." Though I'm not sure why she loved Hamlet. He was a real nut case.

LENORE

She just loved him, that's all. It's charming that she would make such a sacrifice to follow her heart.

GENEVIEVE

You're such a push-over for screwy men.

LENORE

You think Hamlet was screwy?

GENEVIEVE

Sure. What did he have going for him, after all? He was good looking, a prince, so what?  
(Pointing to her head.)

His elevator didn't go all the way to the top floor.

LENORE

Maybe it was love at first sight.

GENEVIEVE

Love at first sight. Don't make me barf. Love at first sight is just a device used by bad writers who can't come up with a better reason for their heroines to fall for their heroes. Take, for example, that sorry little play of your boyfriend's. I'm supposed to be in love with this cowardly knight who is so dumb that he believes a magic word is going to protect him from being eaten by dragons. Why would I be in love with that kind of a loser? I don't even approve of dragon-killing, a silly macho sport if there ever was one.

LENORE

So, love at first sight is the only way to explain the attraction?

GENEVIEVE

Right.

LENORE

I suppose love at first sight is the explanation for why I've fallen for Lenny. He's a good-looking guy, and very clever, very literate. He's so sure of himself, something I could never be. I know he isn't very nice to me, but maybe he could learn. I keep waiting for him to friend me on Facebook.

GENEVIEVE

When you're starving, even the kitchen trash looks like a meal. Honey, you're a woman who doesn't think enough of herself, and he's a man who thinks too much of himself. A bad combination, something only a bad writer would try to pass off as love at first sight. Maybe you should try an imaginary guy. You could invent a man with no propensity for being a cockroach. That would be imagination!

LENORE

It seems hard to imagine a man with no propensity for being a cockroach.

GENEVIEVE

Well, let's give it a try. I'll help you.

LENORE

You're such a nice person. You care about me.

GENEVIEVE

Well, of course I care about you, you're a sweet kid. Now close your eyes and concentrate. What kind of guy would you like.

LENORE

(SHE closes her eyes, trying to imagine.)

Let's see. Someone just like you. I'd like someone kind, considerate.

(SHE waits. Nothing happens. SHE opens her eyes.)

Nothing!

GENEVIEVE

You're reaching too high. Try again.

LENORE

(SHE closes her eyes again.)

I'd like a...dancer!

GENEVIEVE

Now you're talking! Let's get some dancers out here and see if they do anything for you.

(DANCING MAN appears in leotards, doing stunts around the stage.)

LENORE

Something of a show-off, isn't he?

(*Cue Dance with Me.* GENEVIEVE dismisses the DANCING MAN with a wave of her hand, and HE exits. During this sequence, Genevieve calls out different kinds of men, who enter, dance with Lenore, and are then dismissed.)

GENEVIEVE

You're right. Let's try a different type of guy. How about an athlete?

(ATHLETE enters, dances with Lenore.)

LENORE

It's not going to work. I would be too jealous of his body,

(ATHLETE exists.)

GENEVIEVE

A chef?

(CHEF enters, dances with LENORE.)

LENORE

Not bad, but I'd probably have to do the dishes, and I don't want to put on weight.

(CHEF exits.)

GENEVIEVE

Maybe a construction worker.

(CONSTRUCTION WORKER enters, dances with LENORE.)

LENORE

No, they're too noisy early in the morning.

(CONSTRUCTION WORKER exits.)

GENEVIEVE

I know, a doctor.

(DOCTOR enters, dances with LENORE.)

LENORE

I don't want anyone who knows my anatomy better than I do.

(DOCTOR exits.)

GENEVIEVE

An accountant?

(ACCOUNTANT enters, dances with LENORE.)

LENORE

He could do my taxes for me but not much else.

(ACCOUNTANT exits.)

GENEVIEVE

A banker!

(BANKER enters, dances with LENORE.)

LENORE

Too stiff. And not in the right places.

(BANKER exits.)

GENEVIEVE

I've got it! A lawyer!

LENORE

(LENORE throws up her hands to GENEVIEVE and the orchestra.)

Stop the music! We're not even going there. I don't think I need an imaginary man. Maybe I need an imaginary woman.

(The music restarts slowly as LENORE approaches GENEVIEVE, takes her by the hands, and begins to dance with her. At the end of the dance, LENORE kisses Genevieve on the lips. GENEVIEVE does not respond.)

LENORE

Lenny who?

(SHE sings.)

I THOUGHT THAT MY CHANCES AT LOVE HAD BEEN BLOWN,  
NOW YOU SHOW ME SOMETHING I'VE NEVER BEEN SHOWN,  
I MIGHT WANT TO STAY FOREVER.  
IF YOU'RE GONNA BE SO SWEET TO ME.

IF YOU'RE GONNA STAND THERE AND BE CUTE ALL DAY,  
DON'T BE TOO SURPRISED IF I GET CARRIED AWAY,  
YOU CAN BE MY LOVE FOREVER,  
IF YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO BE.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVE WILL APPEAR,  
SO DON'T LIVE IN FEAR  
WHEN SHE'S NEAR,  
KEEP YOUR ENGINE IN HIGH GEAR.

I WAS NOT AWARE OF WHAT WAS POSSIBLE HERE,  
I HAVE A NEW NOTION OF ACCEPTABLE, DEAR,  
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE IMAGINARY,  
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHERE I'D RATHER BE,  
CAN'T IMAGINE WHERE I'D RATHER BE.

GENEVIEVE

What is it with you real people? You've all got the hots for me.

YOU ARE SWEET AND I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU A HAND,  
BUT HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WAS NOT WHAT I PLANNED,  
I CAN BE YOUR FRIEND AND ALLY  
IF MY HELP WILL HELP TO SET YOU FREE.

Let's work on getting you into a real relationship. With a real person.



LENORE

Do you think Lenny is a real person?

GENEVIEVE

Hard to say. Maybe not yet, but give me a little time with him.

LENORE

I'm just so angry with him right now. I don't want to talk to him.

GENEVIEVE

Honey, you can't talk to men, anyway. Men don't know how to talk, except maybe about sports. If you want to talk, you need a girlfriend. May be we can find you a man with a strong feminine side to talk to. But for now, you can talk to me.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU FIND THE RIGHT KIND OF MAN,  
THOUGH IT WON'T BE EASY, I WILL DO WHAT I CAN,  
KEEP YOUR HEAD UP, KEEP ON SMILING,  
AND WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE.

LENORE and GENEVIEVE

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVE WILL APPEAR,  
SO DON'T LIVE IN FEAR  
WHEN HE'S NEAR,  
KEEP YOUR ENGINES IN HIGH GEAR.

(Button.)

Scene 7. The diner.  
(Daytime, the place is full. LENNY is serving.)

LENNY

Good news, everyone. I found some money to get my show started.

CUSTOMER 1

Good job, Lenny. What'd ya do, rob a bank?

CUSTOMER 2

Did you have a bake sale?

CUSTOMER 3

Or maybe the Gates Foundation mistook your show for a tropical disease and threw some money at it.

LENNY

No, I got the money the old fashioned way.

CUSTOMER 2

You worked for it?

LENNY

No, I got it from my parents. I told them I might have to come home to live if I couldn't get this show off the ground. I had the money the next day.

(LENORE enters, sullen.)

LENNY

Hey, Lenore. I thought you'd like to know, I found some money for my show.

LENORE

(She is hostile.)

That's nice.

(Under her breath)

Cretin.

LENNY

Aren't you happy for me?

LENORE

Frankly, I don't care. Why would I care if a  
(beat, then derisively)  
waiter like you found some money?

LENNY

Give me a break, Lenore. I've had a rough day. You're irritable just like my leading lady Genevieve. My real girlfriend and my imaginary girlfriend are both nuts. There must be some major hormone storm coming in.

LENORE

Why don't you just stop with the inane comments? I'm not your real girlfriend, and she's not your imaginary girlfriend. She's my imaginary girlfriend. Someone who cares about me and is kind to me. I like her a lot, I don't even care that she's not real.

LENNY

What in the world are you talking about?

BOSS

(HE calls from offstage.)

What are you both talking about? All I hear anymore is talking. How about less chatter and more clatter?

(LENORE and LENNY clatter some dishes while they talk.)

LENORE

I guess I'm just a sucker for someone who treats me nicely. Which so far has not been you. You wouldn't understand. You're impaired.

LENNY

You're still sore because I asked you for money?

LENORE

You think this is about the money?

LENNY

Yeah. Why else would you be so worked up? Why are you so hostile?

LENORE

You have no respect for me, as an artist or as a person. Did it ever enter your mind that I might have been in love with you?

LENNY

I never thought about it. Why would you be in love with me?

LENORE

(SHE takes off her apron and throws it down.)

That's a good question.

(Motioning to the audience)

All these people have been wondering about that exact same question for 35 minutes. And we still just don't know.

(SHE exits.)

BOSS

What the hell is going on out here? Could you try serving the customers instead of annoying the workers? I know work is an alien concept to you, but humor me. Give it a shot.

LENNY

Now, boss, don't get on me. Everyone is getting on me today.

BOSS

Why shouldn't I get on you? I was under the impression I was paying you to serve the customers. Did I get the wrong idea? Was I perhaps paying you to be the floor show?

LENNY

I don't appreciate the sarcasm. I'm a sensitive artist, and my feelings are easily hurt.

BOSS

A sensitive artist! Thousands of waiters in the city of New York, and I get a sensitive artist!

LENNY

You know, when my show is a hit and my name is in lights, those double-decker tour buses will be stopping in front of your diner to show people where I started. You'll be grateful I was here. If you're nice to me, I'll even give you a signed photograph to hang on the wall.

BOSS

Yeah, that would be swell. I could use something to cover that nasty stain where I whacked the biggest cockroach I ever saw. That is, until you showed up.

LENNY

What a place! No-one appreciates me here.

(cue *Appreciation*; LENNY sings.)

I WANT A LITTLE APPRECIATION,  
PEOPLE CAN SIMPLY GET OFF MY BACK,  
I'M SO TIRED OF HEARING HOW POORLY I'M DOING MY JOB,  
WHY DON'T YOU FOCUS ON WHAT A GOOD GUY I AM  
INSTEAD OF HOW I'M A SLOB?

I CRAVE THE SAME APPRECIATION  
THAT YOU WOULD GIVE TO A FAITHFUL MUTT,  
I DON'T GET A KIND WORD,  
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY,  
IF YOU DO NOT HAVE NICE THINGS TO SAY TO ME,  
WHY DON'T YOU KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT?

CHORUS

HE CRAVES THE SAME APPRECIATION  
THAT YOU WOULD GIVE TO YOUR LITTLE MUTT,  
HE DON'T HEAR NO KIND WORDS,  
NO MATTER IF HARDLY HE TRIES,  
IF YOU DO NOT HAVE NICE THINGS TO SAY TO HIM,  
YOU OUGHT TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

LENNY AND CHORUS

WITHOUT A SHRED OF APPRECIATION,  
LIFE'S JUST A ROYAL PAIN IN THE TAIL,  
I DON'T KNOW WHY I KEEP TRYING  
TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF MY WORTH,  
IF YOU WOULD WAKE UP AND SEE WHAT A STAR I AM,  
YOU WOULDN'T BE SUCH A JERK.

LENNY

YOU DON'T RESPECT ME  
NO HOW, NOWHERE,  
I AM AN ARTIST,  
I NEED BETTER CARE.

BOSS AND CHORUS

I'D LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION  
FOR BEING ALLOWED TO PAY YOU A WAGE  
EVEN THOUGH YOU DO LITTLE WORK, AN ARTIST SHOULD GET  
BETTER CARE,  
CUSTOMERS DINING WHILE LENNY IS WHINING,  
NOW HOW COULD I THINK THAT WAS FAIR?

BOSS

I NEEDED A WAITER WHEN YOU WERE HIRED,  
BUT YOU'RE JUST AN ARTIST SO NOW YOU'RE FIRED.

LENNY

Huh? Fired? How? Why?  
Oh, screw it.

LENNY AND CHORUS

I CRAVE THE SAME APPRECIATION  
THAT YOU WOULD GIVE TO A FAITHFUL MUTT,  
I DON'T GET A KIND WORD,  
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY,  
IF YOU DO NOT HAVE NICE THINGS TO SAY TO ME,  
WHY DON'T YOU KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT?  
YOU OUGHT TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH,  
YOU OUGHT TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

(Button. Curtain. End of Act 1.)

Act 2.

Scene 1. The Diner

(The curtain rises on the BOSS serving the CUSTOMERS.)

(Cue *Every Story*.)

BOSS

Now for a little quality time with the star of the show, me.

I AM THE BAD BOY OF THE SHOW,  
A NASTY SHIT DOWN TO MY SHORTS,

(He drops his pants to show nasty shorts.)

I'M A SATANIC DYNAMO,  
I'LL CLUB A BABY SEAL FOR SPORT.



CHORUS

OH AH AH OW

OH YOU SHOULD BE GLAD THAT I'M ON THE STAGE,  
I'LL KEEP THE PLOT FROM GETTING SLOW,

CUSTOMER

Too late.

BOSS

THOUGH I DON'T GET A LIVING WAGE,  
THIS HERO BUS'NESS I'LL STEAL THE SHOW.  
BECAUSE

CHORUS

BECAUSE

BOSS

BECAUSE

CHORUS

BECAUSE BECAUSE BECAUSE OF THE HORRIBLE THINGS HE DOES.

BOSS

When I'm done with Lenny you may even like him. In the end, this story will be just like every story ever written.

YES, YES, YES, OH

BOSS

EVERY STORY WRITTEN  
SINCE OUR TIME ON EARTH BEGAN  
HAS A SIMPLE GOOD GUY  
AND ALL THE BAD GUYS RAN,

EVEN THOUGH THE HERO IS THE  
FAV'RITE OF THE FANS

ONLY WITH A VILLAIN DOES THE  
STORY HAVE A CHANCE.

IF YOU THOUGHT BRUTUS WAS A RAT,  
AND ALMAVIVA WAS A BUM,  
JUST TAKE THOSE BAD BOYS FROM  
THE PLOT,

YOU'LL GET A SHOW THAT LEAVES  
YOU NUMB

OH YOU SHOULD HOORAY FOR  
FAGAN, SCAR, JAVERT  
FOR PALPATINE AND VOLDEMORT  
FOR IF THE VILLAIN WERE NOT THERE  
THE HERO'D BE OF NO IMPORT  
BECAUSE

BECAUSE OF THE HORRIBLE THINGS I  
DOES,

VIRTUE IN A HERO  
MAKES HIM NOTHING BUT A PEST

HEROES HAVE THE GOOD IDEALS  
THEY THINK THEY'RE BETTER THAN  
THE REST

TAKE AWAY THE VILLAIN  
AND YOU HAVEN'T GOT A SHOW

BUM BA CHICKITAH BAH BA NOW,

BOP BOP BOP BOP BAH DOO BAH DOO  
BAH

CHORUS.

AH AH AH AH  
AH OW SO BAD SO LONG AGO,  
GOOD 'N BAD 'N GOOD 'N BAD  
GOOD 'N BAD 'N GOOD 'N BAD  
GOOD 'N BAD 'N GOOD 'N BAD  
GOOD 'N BAD 'N GOOD 'N BAD  
GOOD 'N BAD 'N GOOD 'N BAD  
SO BAD THAT'S GOOD FOR BAD,  
WHY O WHY O WHY O WHY O  
WHY O WHY O WHY  
I REALLY HATE THAT GUY  
AH AH AH AH AH AH  
WE REALLY WANT A CHANCE.

ET TU  
BRUTE  
SHIT SHORTS

OH NO OH NO OH OH

HOORAY

AVADA KEDAVRA  
RIGHT

BECAUSE

VADER, BAD HORSE, DOCTOR NO,  
RUMPELSTILTSKIN  
JUST LIKE A LITTLE BUG  
SAURON, KHAN, AND MORIARTY  
SWEENEY TODD

IT'S LIKE THEY JUST DON'T KNOW  
JEAN BAPTISTE EMANNUEL ZORG,  
AZRIEL,

WE REALLY WANT A SHOW  
VADER, BAD HORSE, DOCTOR NO,  
RUMPELSTILTSKIN, YEAH!

BUM BA CHICKITAH BAH BA NOW,  
AURON, KHAN, AND MORIARTY,  
SWEENEY TODD

BOP BOP BOP BOP BAH DOO BAH  
DOO BAH

BOSS

BUM BA CHICKITAH BAH BA NOW!

EV'RY TWIST OF FATE OR PLOT  
DEPENDS ON LITTLE ME.

(Button.)

CHORUS.

JEAN BAPTISTE EMANNUEL ZORG,  
AZRIEL,  
BUM BA CHICKITAH BAH BA NOW!  
WE REALLY WANT A SHOW AH  
AH AH AH  
AH AH AH OW.



Scene 2. The Producer's Office

(The lights come up on a fancy desk and chair. There are piles of manuscripts on the desk. Max Bialystock's costume is draped over the chair. The BOSS enters hurriedly, dressed as at the end of the previous scene.)

BOSS

(HE pulls off his clothes as he runs on.)

Damn scene change is too fast. No time to change costumes.

(HE reaches the chair and begins dressing.)

Three parts in this lousy show, but only one salary. Of course, only one salary. Cheap bastards will work you half to death if you give them a chance. There. Ready.

(HE sits at the desk.)

Maestro Bialystock, c'est moi, the Holy Ghost of the villain trinity. We are here to watch Lenny fail. There really is no other way. After all, he's a dreamer.

(HE sings.)

TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM..."

VOICE OFF.

Wrong show!

BOSS

(HE calls offstage.)

Buzz off, jerkface.

(HE addresses the audience.)

That song's from *Man of LaMancha*, in case you don't know anything. It's a cute story. You ought to go see it. It's the story of an old man who dreams that he's a gallant knight. The best part is near the end, when he realizes that he's just an old man with fungus growing on his toenails. Ha! What an idiot.

Well, Lenny is like that, except he has fungus growing on his personality. I mean, really, the kid is too ridiculous for a happy ending.

(There is a knock on the door. The BOSS calls out.)

Just a minute!

(HE talks to himself.)

I need a prop.

(HE locates a very large cigar and puts it in his mouth.)

A big cigar sticking out of his face is the sign of a really big clown; Groucho Marx, George Burns, Sigmund Freud.

(HE calls out.)

*Entrez!*

(LENNY enters)

LENNY

Uh...Maestro Bialystock?

BOSS

That's me, my boy.

LENNY

I'm Lenny.

BOSS

That's too bad, young man, I am truly sorry to hear it.

LENNY

Uh, I believe you've taken a look at my show...

BOSS

Show? Hmmm...yes, maybe I have.

(HE shovels around in the pile on his desk.)

It must be here somewhere. Now where did I put it? Oh, yeah...

(HE disappears offstage. There is the sound of a toilet flushing. HE returns holding a rather crumpled manuscript. He looks suspiciously at a spot on one of the pages, sniffs it, wrinkles his nose, then crumples that page carefully and throws it in the trash).

Here we are. *Dragon Slayer!* Catchy title, I must say.

LENNY

Thank you, sir. It's a classic story, sir. This knight, Florestan is supposed to fight dragons. But, you see, he's afraid of dragons. Isn't that a riot?

BOSS

Yes, catchy title. Catchy as hell.

LENNY

So, Florestan gets a magic word. He's told that with this magic word, he will be invincible! Of course, the magic word is just made up, but because Florestan believes in it, it works. He's invincible. The great American story!

(Strains of the *Star Spangled Banner* are heard.)

BOSS

(HE listens for the offstage voice, then after a few beats, he calls off.)

What's the matter with you, asleep on the job? That's from *Madame Butterfly*, you know, wrong show. Can't get good help anymore.

Where were we? Oh yeah, the magic word. Rumble strips.

LENNY

Not Rumble strips.

(HE announced with a flourish.)

Rumplesnitz!

BOSS

Rumble strips, Rumplesnitz, Kiss-my-grits, what's the difference? It's silly nonsense. Listen, kid, don't give up the day job.

LENNY

I already have.

BOSS

Well, that's too bad, isn't it?

LENNY

You didn't like the show.

BOSS

Frankly, no. I hated it.

LENNY

But I put my heart into that show. I put my whole life into it.

BOSS

Well, at least you didn't put your parent's money into it.

(HE speaks aside to the audience.)

I'm such a bastard.

LENNY

I don't understand. How could you have hated my show?

BOSS

Listen, kid.

(Cue *Your Work is Junk.*)

YOUR WORK IS JUNK, IT SMELLS OF SKUNK,  
AND THOUGH YOU THINK THAT I'M ONLY JOKING,  
THIS DISASTER

(HE indicates the manuscript.)

SHOULD BE SMOKING

IN THE FIRE.

YOUR SHOW'S A WRECK, IT'S GRADE A DREK,  
AND IF YOU WANT TO MAKE LIFE BRIGHTER  
YOU'D BE PLANNING AS A WRITER  
TO RETIRE.

HOW COULD YOU ASK ME TO READ THIS CRAP?  
BETWEEN THIS SCRIPT AND ART, THERE'S A MONSTROUS GAP.

YOUR WORK IS BAD, IT'S REALLY SAD  
TO SEE HOW THOROUGHLY YOU'VE BLOWN IT  
WHEN YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE THROWN IT  
IN THE TRASH.

YOU'RE SUCH A HICK, IT MAKES ME SICK  
THAT YOU'RE ALLOWED TO WRITE A PLAY  
ALTHOUGH YOU HAVEN'T MUCH TO SAY,  
YOU GIVE ME GAS.

HOW COULD ONE MAN HAVE SO LITTLE SKILL,  
IF I GOT OFF ON SLOP, I'D HAVE HAD MY FILL.

YOUR WORK IS JUNK, IT SMELLS OF SKUNK,  
AND THOUGH YOU THINK THAT I'M ONLY JOKING,  
THIS DISASTER SHOULD BE SMOKING  
IN THE FIRE.

YOUR SHOW'S A WRECK, IT'S GRADE A DREK,  
AND IF YOU WANT TO MAKE LIFE BRIGHTER  
YOU'D BE PLANNING AS A WRITER  
TO RETIRE.

(Button.)

LENNY

What didn't you like about it? I could change some things, I could work on it and fix the parts you didn't like.

BOSS

Actually, I hated the whole thing.

LENNY

The whole thing?

BOSS

Yes, every word. Every note. The whole thing. But there was *one* particularly annoying bit...

LENNY

(HE is hopeful.)

Yes?

BOSS

You have a character, Genevieve...

LENNY

Yes?

BOSS

She's in love with your hero, Lancelot.

LENNY

Florestan.

BOSS

Florestan, Lancelot, whatever. Well, this Florestan isn't much to talk about. After all, he's afraid of dragons, and he believes in magic words. So he's a moron.

LENNY

Why is that a problem?

BOSS

Listen, kid. In this day and age, you can't write a show in which a woman falls for that kind of guy. Women have more sense. They don't fall for losers any more.

(HE reflects.)

Of course, you're a loser and you have a perfectly nice woman in love with you...

LENNY

Not anymore. She blew me off.

BOSS

Well, thank goodness. You see, I told you. The smart women don't stay with the dopes. You can't ask an audience to watch a show where a woman is supposed to be in love with some brain-dead hero who can't tell his ass from an anthill.

Women today know better. A woman who falls in love with any man is making a major compromise. She's has to accept that the price of heterosexuality is hanging out with someone who is not as smart, cultured, or sensitive as she is. Now, when you ask an audience to believe that this woman would fall in love with someone like your Lancelot...

LENNY

Florestan.

BOSS

Whatever...It just doesn't work. It's painful to watch. You need to make intermission earlier in the show so people can escape. Now go away and find something else to do. You're not a writer. Why even try?

LENNY

I write because I love the theatre.

BOSS

You write because you love yourself.

LENNY

I do?

BOSS

Yes. Now go.

(BOSS gives LENNY a thumbs down and makes gagging motions.  
LENNY exits).

I am so good at what I do. Don't you like him better already? He's about as low as he can be. I've knocked down that edifice of pride and conceit that he built up over his whole life. We'll see if he can rebuild on a more solid foundation now that he's hit rock bottom. Oh what a public servant I am!

(Blackout.)

Scene 3. Lenny's imagination  
(The stage is bare except for one chair in which LENNY is sitting  
as the lights come up.)

LENNY

So this is what the end of the world looks like.

GENEVIEVE

(from offstage)

You're being a little melodramatic, aren't you?

LENNY

My show is dead. There's nothing left. My dream is gone.

(Cue *Granddad*)

GENEVIEVE

(still offstage)

So get another dream.

LENNY

It's not that easy. I made a promise. I promised my granddad.

WHEN I WAS A KID IN THE SCHOOL PLAY,  
I PLAYED THE BUNNY SO WELL,  
MY GRANDDAD WAS THERE AND HE TOLD ME,  
YOU PLAYED THE BUNNY VERY WELL.

GENEVIEVE

(SHE enters dressed as GRANDDAD.)

LENNY, MY BOY, YOU'VE A GIFT YOU MUST SHARE  
DON'T PAY ANY MIND IF YOUR PEERS DO NOT CARE,  
IF THEY REJECT YOU, REMEMBER THAT THEY'RE  
ONLY JEALOUS BECAUSE THEY AIN'T GOING NOWHERE.

You will win the fame to which you're entitled by your talent! Just keep telling yourself  
you're better than everyone else.

LENNY

Okay, granddad, I will.

NOW I HAVE MEANING BECAUSE OF GRANDDAD,  
I KNOW WHAT I WAS MEANT FOR,  
AND THOUGH HE'S LEFT ME, I STILL CAN HEAR HIM,  
AS HE TOLD ME ON HIS DEATHBED,

GENEVIEVE

PEERS ARE A PAIN, LET THEM FEAST ON YOUR DUST  
WHEN YOU LEAVE THEM BEHIND AS YOU CERTAINLY MUST,

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE TARGET AND MAINTAIN YOUR TRUST  
IN YOUR TALENT, NOW PROMISE ME BROADWAY OR BUST.  
And when things get tough for you, repeat these magic words. "I'm the best." If you tell  
yourself you're the best, you will be the best.

LENNY

I'm the best. I'm the best. So why don't I feel the best?

(Blackout.)



Scene 4. The street  
(LENNY enters, dejected, kicking a can down the street. STREET PEOPLE are sitting and lying around. LENNY addresses a young MAN.)

LENNY  
Some days, life just sucks.

MAN  
I dunno. Today is about the same as any other.

LENNY  
I just got fired.

MAN  
Hey, congratulations, dude.

LENNY  
It was a crummy job, but I needed the work.

MAN  
Oh, bummer, dude.

LENNY  
And this real important guy just shattered all my dreams.

MAN  
Bummer and a half.

LENNY  
Yeah, and this girl who used to like me doesn't like me anymore.

MAN  
Congratulations. Or bummer. Which is it?

LENNY  
Well, it was kinda nice to have a friend. Now I'm just alone.  
ALONE IN NEW YORK, I'M FLYING SOLO,  
NO JOB, NO FRIENDS, NO DREAM, HOW CAN THAT BE?  
PERHAPS I MADE MYSELF TOO SELF RELIANT,  
NOW LONELINESS IS MY REALITY.

(Lights up on one side of the stage, revealing LENORE, who is standing on a different part of the street.)

LENORE

ALONE IN THE WORLD, I'M JUST A DANCER,  
I'D LIKE TO HAVE SOMEONE IN LOVE WITH ME,  
BY MYSELF I HAVEN'T GOT AN ANSWER,  
BY MYSELF I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE ME.

LENNY

I LOADED ALL MY EGGS INTO ONE BASKET,  
A BASKET MADE OF PRIDE AND HAUGHTINESS,  
AND THEN THAT BASKET FELL AND BROKE MY EGGSHELLS,  
MY PSYCHE HAS BEEN LEFT A ROTTEN MESS.

LENORE

I'M HAPPY TO BE WORKING AS A DANCER,  
TO PIROUETTE, TO LEAP, TO POSE, TO TWIRL,  
BUT LONELINESS WILL EAT YOU LIKE A CANCER,  
AND TURN YOU INTO ONE UNHAPPY GIRL.

LENORE and LENNY

I WANT TO BE WITH SOMEONE,  
ENHANCED BY SOMEONE WHO LOVES ME,  
I DON'T WANT TO WAIT FOREVER  
AND I NEVER  
NEVER WANT TO BE ALONE,  
BE ALONE,  
TO BE ALONE.

LENNY

IT SORTA SUCKS TO BE WITHOUT AN ALLY,

LENORE

SOMEONE WHO CARES IF I'M ALIVE OR DEAD,

LENNY

I THOUGH THAT FAME WOULD EASE THE PAIN OF LONELY,  
BUT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO HAVE A FRIEND INSTEAD,

LENORE and LENNY

IT MIGHT BE NICE TO HAVE A FRIEND INSTEAD.

(Button. Fade LENORE.)

MAN

Say, dude, you sing pretty good. Are you in the theater?

LENNY

I'm a musical theatre writer.

MAN

No kidding? Me, too! Say, you got any change?

(Blackout.)

Scene 5. LENNY's imagination  
(Lights come up on an empty area downstage. LENNY enters slowly, depressed.)

LENNY

My imagination. I spent so many happy hours here, but it's all gone now. Not much point in an imagination anymore.

(GENEVIEVE enters.)

You're still here? I guess you heard that my show is dead.

GENEVIEVE

Yup.

LENNY

Well, I'm sure you're very happy.

GENEVIEVE

Ecstatic.

LENNY

But I'm miserable.

GENEVIEVE

Why?

LENNY

Everything I wanted in life is gone.

GENEVIEVE

What was it you wanted?

LENNY

Fame. Fortune. Immortality.

GENEVIEVE

Those are kind of magic words for you, aren't they?

LENNY

Yes. I wanted a magical life.

GENEVIEVE

You wanted a magical life, but you pushed away the one person who could give it to you.

LENNY

Who did I push away? Maestro Bialystock? I was very nice to him.

GENEVIEVE

No, dummy. Lenore.

LENNY

(He sighs.)

Lenore.

GENEVIEVE

She got sore at you because you had no room for her in your life. Because you were self-absorbed. Because you didn't need her.

LENNY

(Repeating woodenly)

I didn't need her. I didn't need anyone.

GENEVIEVE

Not since your sainted granddad told you that you were special and led you to avoid touching other people and being touched by them. But I'm going to help you.

LENNY

Why would you help me?

GENEVIEVE

I have a soft spot for you. I live in your imagination, after all. And I'm going to help Lenore. I like Lenore, and so do you. Have you thought about why you like Lenore?

LENNY

She's cute.

GENEVIEVE

Is that all? Puppy dogs are cute.

LENNY

She was nice to me. But I wasn't nice to her. And now, Lenore is gone.

GENEVIEVE

Maybe, maybe not. Let's see if we can get her back with a little magic. This will be like the old movie. Click your heels together and repeat after me. My life's become a major mess.

LENNY

My life's become a major mess.

GENEVIEVE

(*Cue Magic Word.*)

I've nothing left to call success.

LENNY

MY LIFE'S BECOME A MAJOR MESS,  
I'VE NOTHING LEFT TO CALL  
SUCCESS

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT LOVE WAS  
FOR,  
BUT MY MAGIC WORDS DIDN'T  
WORK ANYMORE.

MY DRAGONS ALL WERE IN MY  
HEAD,  
I FOUGHT THEM IN MY BRAIN  
INSTEAD  
OF COMING OUT INTO THE WORLD

TO MAKE A LIFE IN WHICH SHE FIT,  
TO GIVE UP HOLLERING,  
RUMPLESNITZ.

I WONDERED WHY I JUST COULDN'T  
WIN

SHE LOVED ME, BUT I GUESS I  
HADN'T HEARD  
IT DOESN'T TAKE A SECRET MAGIC  
WORD.

MY MAGIC WORDS HAD FAILED  
COMPLETELY

GENEVIEVE

IF YOU ARE LUCKY,  
THERE'LL BE SOMEONE  
WHO CARES WHAT BECOMES OF YOU.

THE SOMEONE WHOM I'M SPEAKING  
OF  
BRINGS SOMETHING NICE,  
WE CALL IT LOVE,

OF COMING OUT TO MEET A GIRL.

THE GIRL WANTED TO BE YOUR LADY,  
BUT YOU, SIR LENNY WEREN'T READY

YOU WERE WAITING FOR YOUR SAD  
LIFE TO BEGIN.

IT DOESN'T TAKE A SECRET MAGIC  
WORD.  
HER LOVE WAS GIVEN OH SO SWEETLY

NO-ONE CAN BE SYMPATHETIC

LENNY

GENEVIEVE  
WITH A HERO SO PATHETIC.

ONLY TO HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH,  
TO BE IN TOUCH WITHOUT  
PRETENDING  
WOULD HAVE MADE A HAPPY  
ENDING.

SUCCESS WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN  
MUCH,

YOU WONDER WHY YOU CAN'T SEEM  
TO WIN,  
YOU'RE WAITING FOR YOUR SAD LIFE  
TO BEGIN.

I WAS SEARCHING BUT, IN FACT, I  
HADN'T HEARD.  
I HADN'T HEARD THAT LOVE'S THE  
MAGIC WORD.

YOU HADN'T HEARD THAT LOVE'S THE  
MAGIC WORD.

(Button.)

GENEVIEVE

Let's get to work. You've got some writing to do. What does Lenore do?

LENNY

She's a waitress.

GENEVIEVE

Try again.

LENNY

She's a dancer?

GENEVIEVE

There you go. And what do dancers need?

LENNY

(A lightbulb comes on in HIS brain.)

Dance music! I'll write her some dance music, a ballet.

GENEVIEVE

What a good idea.

LENNY

(He pulls out his pad and starts writing.)

Let's see. We'll start it off loud.

(As LENNY writes the ballet music is played. Dancers enter and perform the ballet, which replays the story of *Dragon Slayer*, the show LENNY wrote, mixed with a story of LENNY and LENORE. The ballet begins with a celebratory group scene to introduce LENORE, playing herself in LENNY's imagination. A DRAGON, played by the BOSS in LENNY's imagination, threatens LENORE, and the group recruits a HERO. The HERO cowers before the DRAGON. GRANDDAD appears to give the HERO a magic word. The HERO takes up a pen as a sword, and brandishes it at the DRAGON. LENORE admires the HERO and is rejected by him. The HERO runs the DRAGON through with his pen, but the DRAGON just laughs at him, whacks him in the head, and kicks him in the butt. LENORE ministers to the HERO, raises him up, kisses him, and takes him by the hand. They approach the DRAGON together and together vanquish the DRAGON. There is a celebratory group scene to end the ballet. Blackout)



Scene 6. Outside the diner.  
(LENNY is waiting for LENORE. SHE enters from the diner after work.)

LENNY

Lenore!

LENORE

I see you got yourself fired. Nice going. What are you doing now, besides stalking me?

LENNY

Looking for work. The usual occupation of would-be artists in this sucky city. If I don't find something soon, I'm going back to Passaic to work in my parents' dry-cleaning shop.

*(Cue Shabbily Reprise.)*

LENORE

Well, good luck with that. What happened to your musical?

LENNY

Don't ask. It seems I'm not much of a musical theatre writer after all. But, Lenore, I didn't come here to talk about me, I came to talk about you.

LENORE

Trying something new, not talking about yourself?

LENNY

*(HE sings.)*

I WAS NOT NICE TO BE WITH  
WHEN I WAS FULL OF ME,  
I WAS NOT KIND AT ALL TO YOU,  
I TREATED YOU SO SHABBILY.

YOU THOUGHT WE MIGHT MAKE A PAIR,  
BUT I HADN'T GOTTEN THERE,  
I GUESS I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULDN'T CARE  
IF I TREATED YOU SHABBILY.

IT SEEMED LIKE GOOD MANNERS WERE NOT  
TAUGHT BY MY MUM,  
WHEN I WRECKED THE HOPE WE HAD  
THE ANGELS ALL WERE SAD  
AT MY NASTY CRITICISM.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW,

YOU CAN'T EXCUSE MY ABUSE,  
I GET THE POINT THAT IT'S NO USE,  
WHEN I TREATED YOU, I TREATED YOU

(Spoken)

So damn bad.

(Button.)

LENORE

Thanks for that Lenny. I'll take it as an apology.

LENNY

I don't suppose...

LENORE

That we could get together? No. Too many tears, too many bruises.

LENNY

I understand. Well, before I go, I wanted to give you something. A gift.

(LENNY produces a gift-wrapped package.)

My last creative work before my new career removing pizza stains in suburbia. It's a ballet, Lenore. I wrote it for you. Maybe you could dance in it.

(LENORE is stupefied. LENNY tries to explain more clearly.)

It's a ballet for you, because you're a dancer.

(LENORE takes it tentatively, bursts into tears, and runs offstage.)

LENNY

What did I say? Did I screw up again?

(*Cue Writer in New York Reprise* during the scene transition. Light fade to black then come up, then fade again, then come up again. Each time, LENNY is in a different place on the street, in different positions, sitting or lying down, or holding a cup, begging.)

Scene 7

(The same street, morning some days later. Lights come up on STREET PEOPLE in various poses.)

STREET PEOPLE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
CENTER OF CULTURE, CENTER OF ART.  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
WHERE YOU MUST GO TO GET A GOOD START.  
WHERE YOU WILL BE A HIT OR A FLOP,  
SINK TO THE BOTTOM OR RISE TO THE TOP.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
WHERE THERE IS DRAMA, WHERE THERE IS SONG,  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK,  
IF YOU'RE AN ARTIST, WHERE YOU BELONG.  
WHERE YOU WILL BE A HIT OR A FLOP,  
RISE TO THE BOTTOM OR SINK TO THE TOP.

(LENNY enters, with an old blanket around him. HE has been living on the street.)

I AM A VAGRANT IN NEW YORK,  
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T GOT A JOB,  
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T GOT A PURPOSE,  
BECAUSE I AM A MISÉRABLE.

I WROTE MY DRAMA WITH CONCEIT,  
OF AWESOME STAGECRAFT I'M NO KING,  
I WROTE SOME MUSIC THAT WENT NOWHERE,  
MINE ARE THE SONGS YOU'LL NEVER SING.

LENNY and CHORUS

AH, AH, AH, AH, AH,  
SONGS YOU'LL NEVER SING

(While STREET PEOPLE dance, LENORE enters, sees LENNY, and stops. She approaches him and extends a hand, as if to comfort him. The next bit is a knock-off of the duet near the end of *Fidelio*.)

LENNY

LEONORE!

LENORE

FLORESTAN!

O LEONORE! LENNY

FLORESTAN! LENORE

(cue *It's Enough Reprise*.)

LENNY  
(THEY speaks over the intro. There is continuous music to the end of the show with all dialog over bridges between the reprises,)

You came back!

I came back. LENORE

Can you still love me? LENNY

LENORE  
I'm not sure. You called me a nobody. You treated me poorly. But, you wrote a ballet for me. A good start. Maybe I'll let you try to win me back. And Lenny, I have some exciting news.

Yes? LENNY

LENORE  
I used your ballet for an audition, choreographed it myself. They loved it! I got the job,

LENNY  
(He is genuinely happy for her.)  
That's wonderful!

LENORE  
Wait, there's more. The producer thought the music was very inventive. He wants to meet you to talk about you getting involved in the production.

LENNY  
Me? I can't believe it.  
(He clicks his heels together three times.)  
It's like magic.  
(GENEVIEVE enters.)

GENEVIEVE

You called, master?

LENNY

Lenore said she might give me another chance.

LENORE

I'm not real sure, but maybe Lenny can be a real person.

GENEVIEVE

Sure, give it a try. Remember, when you're with him, you're with me, too.

LENNY

Well, that's kind of creepy. She's supposed to be with me to be with the woman in me?

LENORE

Be grateful I can appreciate the woman in you.

LENNY

Uh, okay.

(HE sings to LENORE.)

IT'S ENOUGH TO BE WITH YOU,  
EVEN THOUGH I'M HARDLY A STAR,  
BUT IF YOU'LL HAVE ME I'LL COME WITH YOU,  
AND I'LL MAKE MY NAME WHERE YOU ARE.

IT'S ENOUGH TO STAY AT HOME  
THOUGH THE LIGHTS ON THE MARQUEE ARE FLASHING,  
IF YOU STAY AT HOME WITH SOMEONE WHO,  
WHO CAN MAKE YOUR SIMPLE LIFE SMASHING.

IT'S ENOUGH THAT YOU'LL TRY ME,  
IT'S ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT YOU'LL STICK AROUND  
WITH A GUY WHO TREATED YOU SO BADLY  
AND RAN YOUR LOVE AGROUND.

LENNY and LENORE

IT'S ENOUGH TO STAY AT HOME,  
THOUGH THE LIGHTS ON THE MARQUEE ARE FLASHING,  
IF YOU STAY HOME WITH SOMEBODY  
WHO CAN MAKE YOUR SIMPLE LIFE LESS BORING.

LENNY

WHEN I WAS A JERK  
YOU SAW IN ME A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH,  
I'M SO GRATEFUL NOW THAT YOU'RE STILL HERE,

FOR ME YOU ARE ENOUGH.

LENORE

WHEN YOU WERE A NASTY JERK  
I SAW IN YOU A SELF-INDULGENT PUTZ,  
YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL NOW THAT I HUNG AROUND,  
I'D JUST ABOUT HAD ENOUGH.

LENNY and LENORE

ENOUGH, ENOUGH, ENOUGH, ENOUGH.  
ENOUGH, ENOUGH.

LENNY

IT'S ENOUGH TO SAY I'M SORRY  
FOR NOT LETTING YOU IN MY LIFE,  
WHEN YOU TRIED, YOU TRIED TO GIVE ME CARE AND LOVING,  
AND IN RETURN YOU WERE STIFLED, STIFLED.

LENNY AND LENORE

IT'S ENOUGH TO STAY AT HOME,  
THOUGH THE LIGHTS ON THE MARQUEE ARE FLASHING,  
IF YOU STAY HOME WITH SOMEBODY  
WHO CAN MAKE YOUR SIMPLE LIFE,  
MAKE YOUR LIFE A LIFE.

LENORE

YOU WERE A JERK, A MAJOR JERK,  
SUCH A NASTY LITTLE JERK,  
YOU WEREN'T PLEASANT TO BE AROUND.  
BUT I LOVED YOU, I LOVED YOU,  
THOUGH I MUST HAVE BEEN A MORON,  
I WAS DUMB ENOUGH.

LENNY

WHEN I WAS A JERK  
YOU SAW IN ME A  
DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH,  
I'M SO GRATEFUL NOW  
THAT YOU'RE STILL HERE,  
FOR ME YOU ARE ENOUGH.

LENORE

YOU WERE A JERK, A MAJOR  
JERK,  
SUCH A NASTY LITTLE JERK,  
YOU WEREN'T PLEASANT TO BE  
AROUND.  
BUT I LOVED YOU, I LOVED YOU,  
THOUGH I MUST HAVE BEEN A  
MORON,  
I WAS DUMB ENOUGH.

LENNY and LENORE  
ENOUGH, ENOUGH, ENOUGH, ENOUGH.  
ENOUGH, ENOUGH.

LENNY  
IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME,  
  
TO FIND LOVE ON THIS CRAZY  
PLANET,  
AND WITH YOU BESIDE ME  
  
LOVE WILL BE ENOUGH.

LENORE  
  
FOR US,  
THIS PLANET  
  
YOU BESIDE ME  
LOVE WILL BE ENOUGH

(THEY embrace tentatively. The COMPANY enters. Cue *Love Song Reprise*)

COMPANY MEMBER  
(HE/SHE speaks over the intro; this bit is from the *Fantasticks*.)  
They've come back. It's a miracle. Let's take down the wall.

BOSS  
No. Leave the wall. Remember—you must always leave the wall.

LENNY  
Uh, Boss. Wrong show.  
Say, can I have my job back? I've given up writing.

LENORE  
No, Lenny. You haven't given up writing. You can write and romance me at the same time.

LENNY  
I can?

LENORE  
You can.

LENNY  
(HE speaks hopefully to the BOSS.)  
And I can be a waiter, too?

BOSS  
If this were a decent show with a sweet, happy ending, I'd say yes and we'd fall into each other's arms sobbing. But, no. You're still fired.

COMPANY.

LOVE NEEDS A SONG,  
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY,  
LOVE IS A CONCERT THAT TWO HEARTS CAN PLAY.

WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE,  
WHAT CAN YOU DO?  
SINGING TOGETHER A KEY THAT IS NEW,

BOSS

SINGING IN TUNE,  
SINGING ON KEY,  
THAT'S HOW IT IS WHEN YOU'RE SINGING WITH ME.

LENNY, LENORE and THE COMPANY  
YOU ARE MY LOVE SONG,  
I AM A POEM TO YOU,  
YOU'RE WHERE I 'SPOSE I BELONG, BELONG,  
I HOPE THAT YOU NEED ME, TOO.

WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER  
UNDER A BLUE SUNNY SKY,  
NO ONE ASKS WHETHER OR NOT TO LOVE,  
NOBODY EVER ASKS WHY.  
AH, NO ONE ASKS WHY.

(LENNY and LENORE kiss tentatively at first and then with  
more enthusiasm as the COMPANY sings the last line.)

COMPANY

AH, NO ONE ASKS WHY.

CURTAIN

(Button. Not a dry eye in the house.)  
End of Act 2