

MOTHERS AND SONS
A New Musical

Book by Kevin Connors and Joe Landry
Music and Lyrics by Kevin Connors

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

DR. SARAH MASTERS, a conservative radio psychologist
MARK MASTERS, Sarah's shy, attractive son of 18
ABBY BURKE, very warm and beautiful in a natural, unpretentious way
BOBBY BURKE, Abby's son of 35, a surgeon
DANIEL MILLING, an attractive math teacher of 40-ish

DR. RYAN, the principal of Fairlawn High School
BRIAN SPARKS, a slick, right-wing CEO
JEFF SMITH, a newscaster
DOCTOR, at the hospital

VOICEOVERS

BRAD, The announcer on Dr. Sarah's radio show
TODD NOBLE, president of a teen political action group
Voice on the PA system in school

Note: *DR. RYAN, BRIAN SPARKS, JEFF SMITH, and DOCTOR can be played by the same actor.*

THE SCENE

TIME:

The Last 12 months.

PLACE:

Fairlawn, Connecticut

An affluent bedroom community just outside New York City

SCENES AND MUSICAL NUMBERS

MOTHERS & SONS is performed without intermission

Prologue. A Meeting. The present.

Scene 1. Fairlawn, Connecticut. One year earlier.

"Fairlawn"

Abby, Bobby, Sarah, Mark, Dr. Ryan, Daniel

Scene 2. A Restaurant

"You've Got Mail"

Mark, Sarah

Scene 3. Bobby and Daniel's Home

"You've Got Mail" (reprise)

Daniel

"What Have You Got to Lose?"

Bobby, Daniel

Scene 4. A New York Radio Studio

"Sarah"

Brian Sparks, Sarah, Off-Stage Voices

Scene 5. Fairlawn Junior League

"Whatever It Takes"

Abby, Sarah

Scene 6. A New York Radio Studio

Scene 7. Bobby & Daniel's Home

Scene 8. The Masters Home

"I'm Fine"

Sarah

"Have You Ever Loved?"

Mark

Scene 9. Daniel's Office – Fairlawn High School

"Kitchen Table"

Daniel

Scene 10. The Library – Fairlawn High School

"Is Anybody Listening?"

Mark

Scene 11. The Waiting Room at Westfield Hospital.

Scene 12. Daniel's Room

"Mothers and Sons"

Doctor, Daniel, Abby

Scene 13. The Corridor Outside Mark's Room

"Growing Old Alone"

Sarah

Scene 14. Abby's House. Eleven Months Later.

Scene 15. A New York TV Studio/A Church

"Have You Ever Loved?" (reprise)

Sarah

"I'll Always Be There"

Bobby, Daniel, Abby, Sarah, Mark

Epilogue. Limbo/Meeting from the Prologue. The Present.

"I'll Always Be There" (Reprise)

Mark, Sarah

PROLOGUE. A Small Group Meeting. Now.

(Prologue Music begins – a music box version of I’LL ALWAYS BE THERE. SARAH enters, looks around and sits. A moment, then she crosses DSC)

SARAH

Excuse me, is...is this where the meeting is tonight? Yes...OK, great, thank you. It’s my first one - I’m afraid I’m a little early. *(Sits. A beat. Then to audience)* If you had told me a year ago that I would be attending a meeting like this I would have laughed in your face. Or worse. Back then I knew where I stood on things, or so I thought. I had survived an ugly divorce, forged a successful career and had a beautiful son. My life was all arranged and I was going places – completely in control. Set for life, right? Little did I know that a year ago, my real journey was just beginning...

(Lights crossfade to a projection reading “One Year Earlier.”. After a moment, lights crossfade again to suggestion of a ABBY’s garden DR. Music transitions to “FAIRLAWN”.)

Scene 1. Fairlawn, Connecticut. 18 Months Earlier.

(There is a radio playing as ABBY enters in a jogging suit.)

V-O (JEFF SMITH)

(fading up)...and will be mostly sunny through the rest of week. The time is 7:55 and traffic on I-95 is a nightmare as usual, so drivers, you’ll need your patience again this morning. Thanks again for tuning in to W.E.L.E. I’m Jeff Smith on Drive time. On the local front, Fairfield County real estate remains volatile, where...

(ABBY turns the radio off)

"FAIRLAWN"

ABBY

ONCE UPON A LONG AGO WAS FAIRLAWN;
A QUIANT, ONE-HORSE, TWO-TRAIN-A-DAY “VILL-AGE”.
BUT SURE AS THERE’S A BIBLE I COULD SWEAR ON.
THAT TOWN HAS BECOME A DISTANT DREAM, A FAINT MIRAGE.

I STILL LIVE IN THE HOUSE THAT I WAS BORN IN.
KNEW MY OWN BANKER AND HIS FAMILY.
I MISS THE MILKMAN, GARDEN CLUBS AND DRIVE-INS ...
THOSE BYGONE DAYS OF SWEET GENTILITY.

IT USED TO BE THE TOWN MADE THE PEOPLE.
NOW IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE TOWN.
WHETHER IT'S ON MAIN STREET, OR UNDER EVERY STEEPLE,
THE URBAN SPRAWL HAS DROWNED US ALL
AND TREAD ACROSS THE HEART OF OUR OLD STOMPING GROUND.

(BOBBY enters, sneaks up and kisses her.)

BOBBY
SO, HOW'S MY FAV'RITE YOUNG BEAUTY TODAY?

ABBY
Oh! You scared the daylights out of me! How would that look: a mother in remission as her son gives her a heart attack!

(They embrace and laugh.)

BOBBY
O.K., so how do you feel?

ABBY
Are you asking as a doctor or as a son?

BOBBY
BOTH. THE REPORTS FROM THE LAB ARE GLOWING!

ABBY
WELL, I WALKED TWO MILES THIS MORNING
AND I'M GOING TO THE LEAGUE AT ONE.
THEN HAVING DINNER WITH MY FAVORITE COUPLE...

BOBBY
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE UP TO DINNER TONIGHT?

ABBY
ARE YOU KIDDING? I'M ALWAYS UP TO DINNER WITH YOU TWO.

Oh, God, the time, I've got to get ready for the League meeting.

(She Exits)

BOBBY
ALL RIGHT THEN – SEE YOU AT SEVEN.

*(Lights crossfade to SARAH in a Manhattan radio studio, seated in front of a mic.
An "On the Air" sign is lit.)*

ANNOUNCER (V-O)

And we're back with "Advice for Living" with Dr. Sarah Masters.

SARAH

OUR LAST E-MAIL IS FROM DEBORAH IN METUCHEN.
HER MARRIAGE IS ON THE ROCKS, HER HUSBAND'S A ROMEO!
WELL, DEBORAH IT'S TIME TO GROW UP, GIRL,
AND SHOW THAT ASS THE DOOR.

STOP BEING A DOORMAT AND YOU'LL GET THROUGH.
TAKE THE KIDS, THE HOUSE, THE MERCEDES TOO!
THE BEST REVENGE IS SUCCESS FOR YOU!
GOOD RIDDANCE – OUT HE GOES!

That's all for today, but tune in tomorrow when I'll be discussing the plague of gay marriage.
Have a great day, America.

ANNOUNCER (V-O)

And we're out. OK, Sarah, couple of quick things - Abby called to remind you the luncheon at 1,
Joe Klein at The Times wants a call back, and your son is still holding on line two.

SARAH

Jesus.

(Music up as "On the Air" sign goes out. MARK on a cellphone in another area.)

SARAH

(Picking up the phone) MARK?...

MARK

Hi Mom.

SARAH

I JUST GOT OFF THE AIR, DEAR, WHAT DO YOU NEED?

MARK

I'M SORRY, BUT CAN I GO INTO TOWN TONIGHT?

SARAH

(being a Mom) HANG ON...THINK...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR DINNER?

MARK

(realizing) OH...YOU AND I HAD PLANNED TO GO OUT FOR DINNER –

SARAH *(cheery, he got it!)*

EXACTLY, DARLING!

MARK

O.K.

SARAH

MARTINO'S AT FIVE. BYE.

(She hangs up. The Music changes back to the "Sarah Theme".)

SARAH

DAYS LIKE THIS CAN BE EXHAUSTING;
IT REALLY IS TOUGH.
EXPERT, CELEBRITY AND SINGLE PARENT -
HAVING IT ALL CAN BE ROUGH.

TEN MORE MINUTES AND I LEAVE THE CITY -
THIS PRESSURE WEARS ME OUT.
BACK TO WHERE IT'S A WELL-KNOWN FACT
I GO TO ESCAPE FROM THIS BALANCING ACT,
THE TOWN THAT KEEPS MY LIFE INTACT...FAIRLAWN.

(Lights crossfade to graduation rehearsal. MARK joined by DANIEL, a math teacher - both seated - and DR. RYAN, the principal.)

DR. RYAN

SING OF FAIRLAWN, SING IT OUT LOUD.
BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

(Underscore continues)

Then, Mr. Milling's faculty address... Just the last line, Dan, if you will.

DANIEL

(Rehearsing graduation address) And so to all our graduates I say remain steadfast in the face of political incorrectness, and above all know thyself.

(To MARK) IT'S NOT EXACTLY BYRON, IS IT.

MARK

MR. MILLING, YOU'RE TEACHER OF THE YEAR.
THEY'LL LOVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY.

DANIEL

GEE THANKS, MARK...I THINK.

DR. RYAN

Now, let's walk through the presentation of the diplomas and call it a morning, shall we?

*(Lights up on ABBY in front of a doorway that reads "Fairlawn Junior League."
SARAH enters and greets her as music swells)*

SARAH

So sorry I'm late. Thanks for holding.

ABBY *(affectionately)*

What are best friends for, my dear. Come on – they're so excited to hear you!

DR. RYAN

One last time through the alma mater...

BOBBY

That woman is amazing...

(Lights up on all areas)

BOBBY	SARAH/ABBY	DR. RYAN/ DANIEL/MARK
ONCE UPON A WONDROUS DAY IN FAIRLAWN, A MOTHER AND SON SET OFF ON A VOYAGE.	HERE! HERE! LET US CELEBRATE THE WOMEN OF FAIRLAWN CHEERS! CHEERS TO THE	SING OF FAIRLAWN SING IT OUT LOUD THE PRAISES OF OUR ALMA MATER PROUD. MAKE A SOLEMN PROMISE
TOGETHER, THEY'LL SURVIVE THE	CONTRIBUTIONS WE MAKE. AND WE WILL	AND SWEAR ON
JOURNEY THEY'RE ON TOMORROW WILL	CARRY ON, DEAR FAIRLAWN. WE PLEDGE	
NOT BE A MIRAGE.	TO CONTINUE THE VITAL WORK THAT WE MUST DO.	OUR HEARTS EVER TO BETRUE.

ALL
 IT USED TO BE JUST QUIANT... ORDINARY,
 NOW WE'VE GOT OUR OWN TIFFANY.
 THIS LITTLE UPSCALE JEWEL HAS EMERGED A SANCTUARY
 FOR THOSE WELL-HEELED WHO'VE COME TO FEEL
 MANHATTAN'S NOT THE SPOT TO RAISE A FAMILY.

I'VE SEEN WHERE WINDS OF CHANGE AND PROGRESS BOTH CAN LEAD.
 AND NOW ON "FORTUNE'S" LIST WE'RE NUMBER THREE

DANIEL/DR. RYAN
 BUT PRETENSE, POLLS AND POLITICS ASIDE...

ALL (EXCEPT MARK)
 I'M CONTENTED TO RESIDE...

ABBY
 IN THE HAMLET OF MY BIRTH...

SARAH
 ON OUR BUCOLIC EARTH...

MARK
 THE TOWN I CANNOT WAIT TO FLEE...

DR. RYAN
 OK, everyone, last time with feeling!

ALL
 TO THEE OUR HEARTS ARE EVER TRUE,
 DEAR FAIRLAWN, WE LOVE YOU.

(Blackout)

Scene 2: Martino's Restaurant, Fairlawn. The same evening.

(Lights up on MARK who is texting on his cellphone)

"YOU'VE GOT MAIL"

MARK
 ONLY A WEEK 'TILL GRADUATION,
 COULDN'T I TAKE IT THAT LONG?
 THIS COULD BE A COMPLICATION –

IT SEEMS RIGHT, BUT COULD BE DEAD WRONG.
 CLICK - OPEN SERVER
 CLICK – OPENING ADDRESS
 CLICK – OPENING EMAIL,
 READY TO GO - 'YOU'VE GOT MAIL.'

WHAT AM NUTS? TRUE, THIS IS CHANCY.
 WHAT IF MY INSTINCTS ARE BAD?
 IS HIS TRUST A SONG-AND-DANCE? HE
 MIGHT FREAK OUT - GO STARK RAVING MAD.
 CLICK - ONTO FAVORITES
 CLICK - ONTO THE ADDRESS
 CLICK - OPEN WEBSITE
 READY TO GO - CLICK - WRITE MAIL...

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY IS, "HEY MAN, I'M IN TROUBLE.
 NO ONE KNOWS THE PAIN THAT I FEEL..."
 A SICK DISAPPOINTMENT TO MY UPTIGHT MOTHER.
 SOMETHING ABOUT ME I CAN'T REVEAL.

I'M IN MAJOR SHIT HERE, I HAVE TO TELL SOMEONE;
 NOT A FRICKIN' E-MAIL ADDRESS.
 I HAVE TO TELL SOMEONE; I FELT I COULD TRUST YOU,
 PLEASE, WILL YOU LISTEN AS I CONFESS?"

THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY...
 BUT WHAT I SAY IS...

UNDER SOME STRESS WITH EXAM STUFF.
 COULD I SEE YOU AFTER SCHOOL?
 NOT TOO LONG...JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES.
 THREE -THIRTY TUESDAY IS COOL.
 CLICK - IS THERE THE SLIGHTEST HINT

THAT WOULD TIP OFF MY DESPERATE TALE?
 NO...AM I READY?...CLICK...SEND MAIL.

(SARAH enters. Underscoring continues)

SARAH

(startling Mark) Mark, really, must you text constantly? Honestly...

MARK

(quickly stopping) Oh! Sorry, Mom. Just finishing part of my Senior project.

SARAH

I am famished. What a day!

MARK

I know. We had graduation rehearsal today and -

SARAH

(plowing right through him) Graduation – yes. *(back to her own agenda)* Mark, I want to talk to you about something. There's this big deal brewing and, boy if this actually happens, it could change our lives forever.

MARK

Change? What do you –

SARAH

I mean, the exposure, the clout...not to mention the money. I'm meeting with this big outfit from Colorado and if they really bring their money to my table, well...I don't know what I'll say...*(making a joke)*...yes I do!!!!

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY IS, "WHEN DO WE START GUYS?"
NO ONE KNOWS HOW FAR WE CAN GO.
WITH MY SENSE OF HUTZPAH, AND YOUR DEEP GREEN POCKETS
DON'T FUCK AROUND, BOYS, LET'S DO A SHOW!...Sorry...*(to Mark about the 'fuck')*

OF COURSE I'M NOT CERTAIN PRECISELY THE OFFER
BUT I'M THINKIN' TOPS IN THE GAME.
ALTHOUGH PREMATURE, MARK, I WANTED TO TELL YOU
THIS GIG COULD MAKE ME A MAJOR NAME.

If this thing really takes off, darling, we could be set for life.

MARK

That's amazing Mom. Really. Who exactly are these "money" people?

SARAH

The American Family Council. Major political yahoos with big money and bigger Washington connections. They've never been directly involved in the media before, but I guess now they want to be, and they are VERY interested in me being a part of that. Isn't that great?

MARK

(having a revelation) Great, Mom, great. Isn't the American Family Council...I mean... don't they do wacky things like picket funerals and stuff?

SARAH

(dismissing it) Oh, I don't know Mark. There are kooks all over the place out there. But I did my research, and the money and influence is real. Isn't it wonderful?

MARK

Wonderful.

SARAH

I've got to run to the ladies' room. Order me a Grey Goose martini will you darling – you know how I like it.

(She leaves)

MARK

(opening his phone, typing) ...American Family Council....shit – I knew it. "AFC Pickets Funeral of Marine". *(searching again)* "AFC Members Protest at Massachusetts Capitol". These guys are a bunch of fucking Nazis... *(closing phone)*

THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY...
BUT WHAT I SAY IS...

WOW, IT'S ALL GREAT, MOM – ALL THAT YOU'VE DREAMED OF,
SOUNDS COOL - A MOVE TO TV.
OUT DOCTOR PHIL...IN SARAH MASTERS,
(laughing, but suddenly a little paranoid) THINK THEY'LL INVESTIGATE ME?
SHIT - IS THERE THE SLIGHTEST HINT
THAT WOULD TIP OFF MY DESPERATE TALE?
CHRIST, AM I READY?...

(to waiter) Excuse me...she'd like a Grey goose martini, straight up with olives...thanks...*(back to himself)*...and you can bring me a double shot of Jager.

(Blackout on music button)

Scene 3. Bobby and Daniel's Home

(Lights up on DANIEL on the computer)

DANIEL

HAVING SOME TROUBLE WITH FINAL EXAM STUFF.
COULD I SET UP A TIME?
NOT VERY LONG, JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES. THREE-THIRTY TUESDAY IS FINE.
CLICK - IS THERE THE SLIGHTEST HINT IN THIS NOTE
THAT WOULD TIP OFF A DESPERATE TALE?

Hmm...Reply....Tuesday 3:30... My Office...See You Then...Send.

(BOBBY enters)

BOBBY

Hey, sorry I'm late. *(Kisses DANIEL.)* The resident staff meeting went late, I had to stop by Mom's for a minute, and traffic on 95 was ridiculous.

DANIEL

(Still distracted by his reading) How is Abby today?

BOBBY

Well, she's coming to dinner.

DANIEL

Excellent.

BOBBY

I talked to the oncologist at the hospital. He says she's still clean. How was graduation rehearsal?

DANIEL

(Distracted) Fine.

BOBBY

What's the matter?

DANIEL

(Innocently) Nothing.

BOBBY

Come on, Dan, I know when there's something up.

DANIEL

Just something at school.

BOBBY

They aren't trying to fix you up with that "Radcliffe dish" in the English department again, are they?

DANIEL

If only it were that simple. *(Pause)* I'm considering coming out.

BOBBY
Again?

DANIEL
At school.

BOBBY
Do you really think a gay high school teacher raises eyebrows anymore?

DANIEL
You never know. And I've always kept my work and our private life separate. I mean why complicate things...unnecessarily.

BOBBY
You don't think anybody already knows?

DANIEL
(shrugs) I don't know.

BOBBY
OK, so why now?

DANIEL
A student of mine. I think he might be in trouble. Emotionally. He's in my AP honors class. Very bright, overachiever, but really quiet. He e-mailed me today and asked to meet. He was vague -- but I'm sure it's not about math. I don't know, just a hunch.

BOBBY
And...

DANIEL
And...His mother is Sarah Masters.

BOBBY
Doctor Sarah Masters?!

DANIEL
Yup.

BOBBY
Yikes! You know she's one of Mom's best friends. I still don't get that. And you think her own son might be gay?

DANIEL

I suppose it could be some other crisis, but if it is that, how can I look at him and say, "Oh, yes, Mark I have a **friend** who's gay?" Come on...

(Music begins for "WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?")

"WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?"

BOBBY

YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING THIS ISSUE FOR YEARS.
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO STOP LIVING IN FEAR.
CERTAIN THAT HONESTY
CARRIES A SENTENCE
OF OSTRICIZATION,
NO CHANCE OF REPENTANCE!

THE TORCH I'VE CARRIED IS ONLY FOR YOU;
YOUR PEACE OF MIND AND HAPPINESS.
SCREW THE REST.
SCREW THEM ALL.
OR AT LEAST THOSE WHO'D DARE CRITICIZE
THE WARMTH AND COMPASSION THAT SHINES IN YOUR EYES...

Now let's think about this, Danny...

DANIEL

What is there to think about?

BOBBY

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO BE AFRAID OF?
GO ON AN' TELL 'EM WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF,
THEN THEY CAN CHOOSE.
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?

DANIEL

I can think of a lot of things, Bobby...

BOBBY

WHAT ARE THEY GONNA SAY?
YOU ARE THE TOPS IN YOUR PROFESSION,
THAT WOULDN'T CHANGE WITH THIS CONFESSION
OUT OF THE WAY...
WHAT ARE THEY GONNA SAY?

DANIEL

Oh, I don't know..."Here comes the faggot math teacher?"

BOBBY

WE COULD REMAIN IN SEP'RATE SADDLES,
JUST LIVING AS WE DO.
NO MAKING WAVES OR PICKING BATTLES,
NEVER DROPPING THE OTHER SHOE.

I COULD GO ON QUITE CONTENTED
WITH ANY CHOICE YOU MAKE.
OUR PARTNERSHIP IS WELL- CEMENTED,
BUT YOU SHOULD GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK.

WHAT IS IT GONNA CHANGE?
THEY'LL MAKE YOU WEAR A SCARLET 'G' NOW?
IT ISN'T ALL THAT STRANGE!
WHAT IS IT GONNA CHANGE?

Come on...

(The song becomes a duet and they both start to have fun with it)

DANIEL

I CAN SEE IT NOW ON MONDAY IN THE FACULTY LOUNGE
EVERYONE'S HEAD A POLITICAL MESS...

BOBBY

OH, GOD!

DANIEL

ALL AVOIDING ME BY MAKING EACH EXCUSE THEY CAN SCROUNGE

BOBBY

SCARED THEY'LL LOOK UP AND SEE YOU IN A DRESS!

DANIEL

Eek...

THE OFFICE PHONE INCESSANTLY RINGS OFF OF THE HOOK,

BOBBY

Right...

DANIEL
REPORTERS AND PRESS GALORE.

BOBBY
MAJOR SUBURBAN DRAMA!

DANIEL
PAPARAZZI SWARMING TO GET THE FIRST LOOK

BOBBY/DANIEL
AT THE SUBURBAN EDUCATOR

DANIEL
Here comes the scoop!

WHOSE CO-HABITATOR

BOBBY
Call up "Live At Five!"

DANIEL
IS A GUY EVERY GAL WOULD DIE FOR!

BOBBY
YOU ARE THE SWEETEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

(BOBBY kisses DANIEL on the forehead. DANIEL has a "coolness Epiphany". Music changes to a cool swing)

DANIEL
You know, I think I can really do this. "Why, yes, Mrs. Smith. I really am ...gay."

(He takes off his glasses "Clark Kent" style. Unbuttons the top button of his shirt. And starts to move about in a new cool, hip and relaxed way)

"...and now Teacher of the Year Daniel Milling escorted by his partner, Dr. Robert Burke."

BOBBY
Holy shit! Danny!

DANIEL
WHAT HAVE I GOT TO LOSE?

BOBBY
I AM SO PROUD OF YOU, DANNY...

DANIEL
WHAT HAVE I GOT TO BE AFRAID OF?

BOBBY
NOTHING AT ALL...

DANIEL
NOT SCARED TO...

BOBBY/DANIEL
...SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU'RE/I'M MADE OF

DANIEL
A GUY WITH THE NERVE

BOBBY
HOLY CRAP!

DANIEL
TO GRAB WHAT I DESERVE.

BOBBY
THERE'S NO MORE DOUBLE PLAY,

DANIEL
WHAT CAN THEY REALLY SAY?

DANIEL/BOBBY
"YOU'RE REALLY GAY?!"

DANIEL
"NO WAY!"

BOBBY
YES, WAY!

DANIEL
NO MORE LIFE UNDERCOVER,

BOBBY
NO MORE CLANDESTINE LOVER,

DANIEL
EVE'RYTHING FREE AND OPEN,

BOBBY
WHAT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HOPING.

DANIEL
YOU KNOW, ROSIE...

BOBBY
OR ELLEN...

BOBBY/DANIEL
THEY'D BOTH BE TELLING YOU/ME
"DO IT!"
WE'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!

*(After applause, music begins again. The doorbell rings. ABBY enters.
Underscoring continues)*

ABBY
Hello!

BOBBY
(Kisses her) Hey, mom!

DANIEL
(Kisses her) Abby!

ABBY
How are my boys?

DANIEL
Great!

BOBBY
And how are you?

ABBY
Couldn't be better. Sorry I'm late. I didn't hold up dinner, did I?

DANIEL
You're just in time. *(To BOBBY)* The dining room, five minutes, be there.

BOBBY

(Coy right back at him) Yes, sir!

DANIEL

(To ABBY) You too, mom.

(DANIEL exits.)

ABBY

(To BOBBY re Daniel) Did he call me “mom?”

BOBBY

You asked him to.

ABBY

Yes, but... he called me mom! *(Choked up)*

BOBBY

What’s the matter?

ABBY

Nothing.

BOBBY

What is it?

ABBY

The doctor wants to see me again.

BOBBY

It’s routine.

ABBY

That’s what I’ve been telling myself since he called.

BOBBY

It’ll be fine.

ABBY

I know it will. *(Looking for a Kleenex)* Look at me...

BOBBY

Come here.

(They embrace. DANIEL re-enters)

DANIEL

Dinner!

ABBY

(Big smile) I am starving!

(BOBBY and ABBY go off to dinner. DANIEL lets the picture settle and makes one last "cool guy" circle of the room as lights crossfade to the Radio Station down in one.)

Scene 4: A New York Radio Studio.

(Lights up on Sarah at her desk)

SARAH

(Signing off into mic) This is Dr. Sarah Masters - have a great day America.

V-O

And we're out....Dr. Masters, Mr. Sparks from American Family Council is here.

SARAH

Send him in Brad.

(BRIAN SPARKS enters. He's about 40, blue suit, very slick in a Republican way)

SARAH

Mr. Sparks, what a pleasure to meet you.

BRIAN

Dr. Masters, the pleasure is all mine. My wife and I are major fans of yours.

SARAH

That's great to hear, thank you. And thanks for trekking all the way to New York. It must be difficult for AFC to spare their president much time away from Colorado.

BRIAN

Yes, with all our current initiatives it's quite a handful. But we are determined to pull this country back on track and derail this wave of liberalism that seems to be poisoning the values America was built on. You know what I'm talkin' about, don't you Dr. Masters?

SARAH

(knowing how to play this) Of course, Mr. Sparks, of course. And “Sarah”, please.

BRIAN

Sarah...yes. I’ll come right to the point. The conservative base has lost its voice again, Sarah, and this country is on the road to hell. Good, hard-working Americans are frustrated and apathetic, and looking to organizations like us to hear their concerns, lead the way and put us all back on the “right” track. *(He amuses himself)* We want to create a network of media folks who share our ideals and can get our message out there. And when we polled our core members as to who they liked, trusted, and shared their values on the direction this country should be going in; you, Sarah, were the top of the list!

SARAH

Well that’s very flattering Mr. Sparks.

BRIAN

It’s not flattery...we want to produce your show. Not some small potatoes syndicated AM radio thing, but a brand new Sarah Masters Show. You join us at AFC, and we’ll have you in every home in America in 6 months, and I’m not talkin’ radio, Sarah – afternoon tv! None of that cable crap – network!

SARAH

Wow, that’s impressive, Mr. Sparks. And, what exactly do you want ME to do?

(Music for “SARAH” Begins)

BRIAN

See, that’s the beauty. You do exactly what you’ve been doing, only with AFC’s name above the title, and on network television in every home in America. It’s the chance of a lifetime, Sarah....

“SARAH”

(He sings.)

I CAN SEE IT, THE OPENING SHOT
OF PURPLE MOUNTAINS MAJESTY.
THEN A CROSS-FADE TO THE ACTUAL SPOT
WHERE SUN-WASHED BEACH MEETS SHINING SEA.

CREDITS ROLL, THE MUSIC CRESCENDOS,
IT’S HONOR AND PRIDE FROM THE START!
ON CUE, THE CAMERA PANS INTO
THE FACE OF AMERICA’S HEART!

That would be you! Roll title please!

“SARAH - THE MASTERS TOUCH”
THE SHOW THAT TELLS YOU HOW TO LIVE!
“SARAH – THE MASTERS TOUCH”
NO WIMPY “FORGET AND FORGIVE”.

STRAIGHT SHOTS, MORALS, POLITICS,
NOT JUST STUPID TALK.
SARAH TELLS IT JUST LIKE IT IS,
AMERICA’S FAMILY DOC!

I CAN SEE IT, CELEBRITIES RUN
TO BE THE FIRST GUEST OF THE DAY.
YOU WILL BE “IT”! DAYTIME’S NEW NUMBER ONE -
THEY’LL HANG ON EVERY WORD YOU SAY!

SIGN WITH US! THERE’LL BE A STAMPEDE OF
CONSERVATIVE SPONSORS GALORE.
KEEP THEM CONTENT AND WE’LL SUCCEED –
A LIMITLESS SERIES AND MORE!

You’ll run forever!

(Off-Stage Back-Up Voices join in)

BRIAN
“SARAH - THE MASTERS TOUCH”
TOGETHER, WE’LL PUT YOU ON TOP!
“SARAH – THE MASTERS TOUCH”
ONCE WE’RE ON A ROLL, WE WON’T STOP.

BACK-UPS
SARAH – MASTERS TOUCH
TUNE IN FOR
SARAH – MASTERS TOUCH
OOH....

TEE SHIRTS, BOOK CLUBS, ENDLESS PRESS.
PRIMETIME SPECIALS TOO.
SARAH, COME ON, JUST SAY, “YES!”
IT’S ALL THERE JUST WAITING FOR YOU!

SARAH...

(Music Segues to “The Sarah Theme Music”)

SARAH
NETWORK – WOW – THAT’S SUCH TEMPTATION!

BRIAN
YOU READY TO SIGN?

SARAH
Not so fast.

PROGRAMMING, DAILY GUESTS AND SHOW CREATION
TOTAL CONTROL WOULD BE MINE?

BRIAN
Well...almost...

SARAH
I'VE BEEN SITTING ON SOME GREAT IDEAS -
AND RADIO IS DEAD.

BRIAN
Great!

SARAH
IT'S NOT "YES" YET, BUT I'M LEANING TOWARD
JUST PACKING MY SHINGLE AND JUMPING ABOARD...

BRIAN
I SMELL A DAYTIME EMMY AWARD!!!!

SARAH
(a beat) OK. You're on – when do we start!

BRIAN
We're shooting for November!

SARAH
O.K....*(suddenly excited)* O.K.!!!!

BRIAN
Excellent! This is the best decision of your life!

FORGET DOCTOR PHIL, HE'S MOUTHY AND BRASH
AND THAT LESBO ELLEN IS OUT WITH THE TRASH!
NO MORE JUDGE JUDY OR OPRAH OR SPRINGER
WE'VE FOUND OUR CRUSADER – OUR G.O.P. RINGER!
MAKE! WAY! FOR!

BRIAN
 "SARAH - THE MASTERS TOUCH"
 THE LADY WHO'S LEADING THE FIGHT!
 SARAH – YOUR MIDAS TOUCH
 WILL SWING THIS LAND BACK TO THE
 RIGHT.

LIB'RAL BULLSHIT OUT THE DOOR,
 NEO-CON WALKS IN.
 A.F.C.'S NEW MEGA STAR
 WAITING TO BEGIN!

BACK-UPS
 SARAH – MASTERS TOUCH
 TUNE IN FOR
 SARAH – MIDAS TOUCH

OOH...

AH!

SARAH! SARAH!

SARAH

It's a deal!

(They shake hands on musical button. Transition Music as lights crossfade into Daniel and Bobby's home.)

Scene 5: Fairlawn Junior League.

(Lights up on SARAH, behind a podium, addressing the Fairlawn Junior League again including ABBY, who sits at a table. Underscore begins.)

SARAH

...And if I can do it, you can do it! I cultivated my dreams, and in just ten short years, I've battled and won! This is not the era of our mothers, but family can still be important. Don't compromise, dare to dream, have the courage to battle, and enjoy the victory! I'm Dr. Sarah Masters. Thank you.

(SFX applause and low crowd chatter as SARAH crosses from the podium to ABBY'S table.)

ABBY

Oh, that was wonderful, dear.

SARAH

You think it went well?

ABBY

Vintage Dr. Masters!

SARAH

It's only the League, for God's sake – so I didn't want to come on too strong. You would tell me, wouldn't you?

ABBY

(rhetorically) Sarah, how long have we been friends? I've told you worse. As my teenaged neighbor would say – D.N.S.

SARAH

D.N.S.?

ABBY

Did not suck. *(They laugh)* And this is the third time they've had you back, so you must be doing something right.

SARAH

Oh...Abby, you are hands-down my best friend in the world. Isn't that amazing? I mean, we have such different views politically, socially – why do you think this works?

ABBY

Because under that "Sarah Masters in your face" thing is a true heart of gold. You feel passionately about what you believe in. I may not agree with some of it, but I respect it.

SARAH

That means the world to me.

(Music Begins for "WHATEVER IT TAKES")

ABBY

(Music starts) You helped me through the worst time in my life when John died. I certainly am not the first woman in the world to lose a husband, but without you, I never would have made it.

"WHATEVER IT TAKES"

ABBY

YOU KNOW, YOU'RE QUITE A WOMAN

SARAH

Quite. *(jokingly tossing it off)*

ABBY

TOPS IN YOUR LINE OF WORK.

SARAH

You think so?

ABBY

SUBURBAN WIFE TO HOMETOWN HERO...
YESTERDAY, MCDONALDS – TODAY, LA CIRQUE!

ISN'T IT JUST LIKE MAGIC,
THE DIFFERENCE TEN YEARS MAKES.
SURVIVING SEAS BOTH CALM AND TRAGIC
YOU'VE DONE WHATEVER IT TAKES.

SARAH/ABBY

WE'VE BEEN TRUE BLUE AMIGOS
SINCE THE EARLY DAYS.
NEVER THE SLIGHTEST CLASH OF EGOS

ABBY(*ribbing her*)

AS LONG AS YOU SEE THINGS MY WAY!

YOUR SHOW IS SUCH A WINNER

SARAH

Shhh...

LOOKS LIKE NETWORK IN THE FALL!

ABBY

Really!

SARAH

I'LL TRY TO SPLIT THE SAINT FROM SINNER –

ABBY

YOU AND JUDGE JUDY WILL HAVE A BALL!

SARAH

I CAN BE STRONG, I GRANT YOU –

ABBY

(feigning astonishment) No...

SARAH

SOMETIMES A BIT EXTREME.

You? ABBY

SARAH
DESPITE THE EDGE, THERE'S AN HONEST PLEDGE TO
HELP YOU REACH YOUR DREAM.

ABBY
YOU'RE A PRIME EXAMPLE
HOW FIGHTING LIKE A CHAMP'LL
BRING YOU THE LUCKY BREAKS!

SARAH
IF I CAN MAKE IT – WE ALL CAN MAKE IT,

SARAH/ABBY
IF WE'RE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!

ABBY
So what's all this network business?

SARAH
It's totally hush-hush right now, but a major corporation has offered to bankroll an afternoon
talk show for me! On network!

ABBY
Holy cow! What's the corporation?

SARAH
The American Family Council.

ABBY
Wow. (*sinking in*) I thought they were more of a political action group.

SARAH
Well, they're expanding to the media, and they're loaded!

ABBY
Are you...I mean do you have to promote them on your show?

SARAH

(tossing it off) Oh, maybe a little from time to time. We're not really THAT far apart. But don't worry, I'm maintaining creative control.

ABBY

Did they tell you that?

SARAH

Well, not in so many words, but come on, they don't know anything about daytime television.

ABBY

OK...if you say so.

SARAH

It's all very exciting! I'm appearing at one of their rallies in Washington at the end of this month just to get my feet wet. It's their Student Group!

ABBY

Rally?

SARAH

Sure.

IT'S A MAJOR EVENT FOR THIS SUPPORT GROUP!

ABBY

WHAT?

SARAH

TEENS FOR FAMILY VALUES!

ABBY

SO, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

SARAH

AND ITS PRESIDENT IS ONLY SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD,
SO BRILLIANT AND CHARISMATIC TOO.
I'M INTERVIEWING HIM ON THE SHOW NEXT WEEK
DURING WHICH HE'LL EXPLAIN ALL ABOUT THEIR CAUSE...
AND WHAT THEY DO.

ABBY

DID YOU DO RESEARCH ON THIS GROUP AT ALL?

SURE... SARAH

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TOO LATE FOR THE FALL? ABBY

NOT REALLY... SARAH

RALLIES? ABBY

YES... SARAH

AGENDAS? ABBY

NAW... SARAH

TEENS? ABBY

YEAH! SARAH

YOU'RE SURE? ABBY

YES!!!! SARAH

Oh, Sarah, I'm sorry...it's really none of my business. ABBY

NO, NO IT'S QUITE ALRIGHT. SARAH

O. K.. ABBY

SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE RAISED THE STAKES.

SARAH

I know.

HERE IN NIRVANA, WE NEVER WANNA
MAKE ANY BIG MISTAKES.

YOU KNOW I'LL TAKE THE REINS, DEAR.
GRAB THE BULL; STEP UP TO THE PLATE!
FIGHT THE BATTLE, ENJOY THE VICT'RY
AND DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.

SARAH

Dear friend, I so appreciate your concern for me, but I know what I'm doing.

ABBY

I know you do.

SARAH

And, whatever it is, I'll handle it. Thanks so much for your support. *(They embrace.)* Call you later.

(Sarah goes.)

ABBY

(endearingly) What a piece of work!

SCENE 6. The Radio Station. The following week.

(Lights Up on SARAH)

SARAH

Welcome back to "Advice for Living", where today we've been talking with Todd Noble, the young president of "Families Against Gay Society". Todd, I meant to ask you – where exactly did the name of your organization come from?

TODD

Well, Dr. Masters, our sponsors, the American Family Council, encouraged us to find a name that was direct, to the point. Our mission is to re-establish a universal traditional family structure as the core of every American town, pretty much eliminating the alternative lifestyle format – eventually making non-traditional families, well... extinct. We figure that if we start with kids from 16 – 22, the cycle would take about 6 – 10 years.

SARAH

I see. And the acronym, F-A-G-S, that's no accident either I presume.

TODD

Not at all. It's something you're bound to remember, and it reminds you what your focus is.

SARAH

And all this strategy from a 17-year-old president. You're pretty impressive, young man.

TODD

Kids my age trust me, and understand the crucial nature of our mission. They know what's at stake.

SARAH

And I understand that you've chosen next Tuesday, May 1st, a "Day Of Action" for your group?

TODD

Yes. On May 1st, we're calling on all our members to perform one significant act that either promotes traditional family values or discourages alternative lifestyles – especially homosexuality.

SARAH

That's very pro-active, isn't it?

TODD

We go right into the communities, Dr. Masters – rallies, protests, marches, prayer meetings. It takes more than strong language to bring about change – whatever it takes, we have to do.

SARAH

Yes, whatever it takes. Well, you certainly sound like a president, Todd. I'm afraid we're out of time, but it was good to talk to you. And if our listeners are interested in finding out more, visit our website – wchr.com – and we'll link you right up. Thanks again, Todd.

TODD

Thank you, Dr. Masters. FAGS.com everyone!

SARAH

Yes...And we'll be right back after these words from our sponsor...(she's off the air) Jesus, there's something really scary about that kid!

(Crossfade back to BOBBY and DANIEL'S home)

Scene 7: Bobby and Daniel's Home.

(Lights Up on BOBBY, ABBY and DANIEL following dinner.)

ABBY

Daniel, you've outdone yourself again. That was just amazing.

DANIEL

So glad you liked it. You know the timing on the sauce is critical – we're just lucky it worked!

ABBY

Well, I can manage alright in the "meat-and-potatoes" department, but you certainly win the prize for master of the nouvelle cuisine, dear.

DANIEL

Thanks. Mom. Again – it's all timing.

BOBBY

Speaking of timing, I think we've finally set a date for our wedding.

ABBY

(very excited) A date? Oh, boys, how wonderful!

DANIEL

Yeah. It's kind of far away, but we thought a year from tomorrow - May 1st – May Day! You know, all that spring re-birth stuff, it's before vacation season, and we really want to do it up right, so it gives us all year to plan. It was actually Danny's idea.

ABBY

Dan, really? I'm mean you're OK with all that.

DANIEL

I'm so much more than OK.

ABBY

Well..OK!!!! *(turning a little bittersweet)* May seems to make a lot of sense. This time of year is so beautiful.

BOBBY

What's wrong, Mom? Is the date bad - we're you planning some "Golden Girls" cruise or something?

ABBY

Oh, no...no. It's just...oh, crap, I don't want to be the wet blanket – this wedding is such wonderful news and -

BOBBY

Mom???? What is it?

ABBY

Bobby, there's something I haven't told you. The doctor found a couple of hot spots after my checkup. He says it's nothing to be alarmed about, but he doesn't want to take any chances, so I'm starting another short chemo regimen next week.

DANIEL

Mom – why didn't you tell us?

ABBY

I was going to tell you tonight anyway – but now, oh...I'm such a downer.

BOBBY

Don't be ridiculous. We'll move the ceremony up. *(To DANIEL)* What about the fall?

ABBY

No, no, no. Bobby, really, Dr. Briggs says this is just a precaution, nothing to get upset about, and May sounds so perfect. It'll be fine, I know it will.

BOBBY

OK. But if anything changes, we'll just move everything ahead and –

ABBY

Bobby, it's OK. Besides, finally being able to legalize the two of you has been such a long time in coming, I want everything to be just the way you guys want it.

DANIEL

Alright, but we'll stay flexible. *(changing gears)* Isn't it great to live in a state where this is really possible! Although, even today there was some right-wing youth group protesting in Hartford.

ABBY

Oh, sweetie, almost everything in life pisses off somebody. People should just mind their own damn business. But enough of that, where's the champagne? Tonight has just become an engagement party!

BOBBY

Mom, are you sure? You're about to start chemo and Dr. Briggs –

ABBY

Oh screw Dr. Briggs.

BOBBY/DANIEL

Mom!

ABBY

Well, not really. *(a beat)* He's not even that cute. Besides, one glass of champagne isn't going to kill me. And, my boys are finally getting married!

(They all cheer. Transition music begins. Lights crossfade)

Scene 8: Sarah and Mark's Home. The Same Evening.

(Lights crossfade as SARAH walks directly into her living room on the other side of the stage. She is on the phone with BRIAN SPARKS and begins pouring herself a drink.)

SARAH

Yes, Brian, I thought the interview went very well. Yes, he's very...passionate. *(changing the subject)* Your PR folks tell me the focus groups are going very well – I'm very excited about the response to the new show...*(a little taken aback)* Vetting me? I thought that was only for politics... Well, I've told you everything I can think of....No, no, I know how brutal they can be, but really, they'll have to start making things up, and there's not much we can do about that, is there? *(laughs)* Yes, I'll try and stay off the beach in my thong! Sure I'll hold for a sec...

(On "hold", she notices Mark's laptop open on the bar. She starts to close it and notices an email still up on the screen.)

(reading)...Hey Mark....gay teens...local lambda youth...great to see you at last week's support group...love, Seth?

(She slams the laptop as Brian comes back on the phone. She is stunned and distracted.)

Yes...Brian...No, no, take your other call. We'll catch up later.

(She hangs up and downs the whole vodka. Music for I'M FINE begins.)

"I'M FINE"

SARAH

THAT'S GREAT! TERRIFIC!
NO...LET'S BE MORE SPECIFIC -

AGAIN, I'LL HAVE TO TURN THE WATER INTO WINE!
SURE, NO BIG DEAL...I'M FINE.

IT'S SWEET! ALL'S WELL, DEAR!
A FRESH-CUT PIECE OF HELL HERE!
ONCE MORE, IT'S "STOP THE MUSIC", LAY IT ON THE LINE!
YOU THINK YOU'RE GAY!!!!!!...I'M FINE!

THE RIGHT WING'LL PAINT ME AS A LIB'RAL MODEL,
I'LL DROWN MY SORROWS IN A GREY GOOSE BOTTLE.
AS RATINGS START TO SLIP RIGHT DOWN THE DRAIN.

YOU THINK YOU CAN NAVIGATE THE FROZEN WATER
BUT ICE BREAKS THROUGH JUST WHERE IT SHOULDN'T AUGHTA.
YOUR LIFE IS ON THE BRINK,
YOU'RE SLIPPING IN THE DRINK...

YOU KNOW GOOD SENSE HAS ABANDONED YOU
WHEN THE FIRST THOUGHT THAT POPS INTO VIEW
IS..."WHAT WOULD SARAH PALIN DO?"

STILL I'M ALLRIGHT...JUST PEACHY!
LAID BACK LIKE MARX AN' NIETSCHE!
(steeling herself) BUT I CAN'T LET THEM SEE A CRACK IN MY VENEER!

(The anger building)

WITH A SON WHO'S A SHIT,
I MUST PLAY THE HYPOCRITE.
KEEP MY RIGHT-WING FAÇADE;
HIDE THE HOMOSEXUAL FRAUD!
THE STRESS, THE STRAIN, THE MESS, MY BRAIN!
I'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE!

(MARK enters, kicking his shoes off.)

MARK

Hey, Mom... I'm home.

SARAH

(Faux cheery) How was your day, dear?

(Underscoring continues.)

MARK

My day was great! Guess what?

SARAH

(ironically) You really want me to guess?

MARK

I, Mark Masters, am valedictorian of the Fairlawn Senior class!!!!!!

SARAH

(cynically) Well, whaddya know. Timing is everything.

MARK

(confused) What? I thought you'd be ecstatic.

SARAH

(meaning it) I am, I am, darling. *(a beat)* Oh, by the way, you left your laptop open here and I happened to see an email you left up.

(He stops)

MARK

Oh, really?

SARAH

It was from Seth.

MARK

"Seth?" Who's Seth?

SARAH

He said he was from some support group.

MARK

Must've been spam.

SARAH

A gay support group.

MARK

Oh...

SARAH

Why would you be getting emails from a gay support group?

MARK

I'm not.

SARAH

You think you're gay?!

MARK

(Knee-jerk reaction) Yes!

SARAH

Do you know what this will do to me?

MARK

This isn't about you! Everything is not about you. And, besides, not everybody thinks being gay is such a horrible thing. *(Beat)* Dad didn't seem to have a problem with it.

SARAH

What?! You talked to him about this?

MARK

No. He talked to me... He came to me and asked when I was thirteen. He said it was okay if I was. And then, he listened. Listened to what I had to say. Listened and didn't judge. Unlike you he accepted me and loved me – whoever I am.

SARAH

Mark, your father is an idiot liberal.

MARK

You are such a bitch!

(She slaps his face. He recoils. She looks down at her stinging hand, unable to believe she's come to this. Music stops momentarily.)

SARAH

...No son of mine is going to be a fag!

(MARK turns back to her)

MARK

Shut up!

(She is stunned. Music starts for "HAVE YOU EVER LOVED")

SHUT UP!!!

"HAVE YOU EVER LOVED?"

MARK

DO YOU EVER THINK OF ANYONE BUT YOURSELF?
 YOU CLAIM TO BE THE PROPHET OF RIGHTEOUSNESS -
 SOLVING ALL FAMILY STRIFE.
 BUT YOU'VE NEVER FACED AN HONEST FEELING
 IN YOUR WHOLE GODDAM LIFE!

YOU'VE CREATED WEBSITES, TALK SHOWS AND BOOKS
 TO ENFORCE YOUR LIFE'S RULES OF ORDER.
 AND, TO YOU, EVERY PERSON YOU'VE EVER MET
 HAD SOME PSYCHO-BABBLE DISORDER.
 YOUR MIND MAY BE FULL OF BRILLIANT CONCEPTIONS,
 BUT YOUR HEART IS STONE - THAT'S THE DECEPTION
 FOR ANYONE LOOKING TO FIND FROM YOU
 COMPASSION OR PEACE OF MIND FROM YOU.

FROM YOUR COLD PERSPECTIVE, I MAY BE DEVIANT - THAT MUCH IS TRUE.
 BUT I ALREADY KNOW AND ACCEPT MYSELF FAR, FAR BETTER THAN YOU...

HAVE YOU EVER LOVED?
 HAVE YOU EVER CHERISHED A PERSON WITHOUT A CONDITION?
 ACCEPTED A SOUL WITHOUT INHIBITION?
 AND SKIPPED 'THE WHITE GLOVE'?
 HAVE YOU EVER LOVED? HAVE YOU EVER LOVED?

HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED?
 HAVE YOU EVER DROWNED IN A FANCY WITH NO RHYME OR REASON?
 A BEAUTIFUL DREAM? A WISH OUT OF SEASON?
 OR DESTINY'S SCHEME?
 HAVE YOU EVER LOVED? HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED?

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD A SONG FROM DEEP IN YOUR HEART,
 A TUNE THAT YOU COULD NOT IGNORE?
 DID YOU WONDER WHERE IT CAME FROM? HOW DID IT START?
 ITS LYRICS LEAD TO YOUR HEART'S DOOR...

DO YOU EVER HURT?
 DO YOU EVER DROP THE FILTER OF YOUR JUDGMENT AND EGO;
 STAND BACK AND WITNESS YOUR PATIENT'S ESPRIT GO
 DOWN INTO THE DIRT?

DO YOU EVER HURT?
 HAVE YOU EVER WISHED?
 HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED?
 HAVE YOU EVER LOVED?

EVERY DAY A SONG CRIES OUT FROM DEEP IN MY HEART,
 ITS MELODY RINGS IN MY HEAD.
 AND THOUGH I CAN FEEL THE LYRICS TEAR ME APART,
 I HEAR THE TRUTH IN WHAT THEY'VE SAID...

WILL YOU EVER KNOW
 THAT, WHILE YOU WERE CELEBRATING HOW YOUR RATINGS WERE SOARING,
 YOUR SON'S BEEN CONSUMED BY PAIN YOU'RE IGNORING?
 YES, I WILL LOVE;
 YES, I WILL DREAM;
 YES, I KNOW MY JOURNEY'S JUST BEGUN...
 AND IF YOU CAN'T KNOW ME,
 ACCEPT ME, LOVE ME FOR ALL THAT I AM...
 I AM NOT YOUR SON.

(MARK exits, slamming the door. SARAH stands in stunned silence. A moment. Blackout. Transition Music continues.)

Scene 9. Daniel's Office at Fairlawn High School. The Next Day.

(DANIEL is on his laptop as MARK enters.)

MARK

(Still shaken from the earlier argument) Uh, Mr. Milling?

DANIEL

Mark, c'mon in. Sit down.

MARK

I appreciate your seeing me after school and all.

DANIEL

Not a problem. What's on your mind? *(A long pause)* I'm here to listen, whatever it is...

(MARK sits.)

MARK

(After a long pause) I don't know how to start... It's, um... You know my mom -- I mean, who she is...

DANIEL

Yes...

MARK

Well, last night she found an email of mine and... well, everything came to a head. *(Rises, crossing away from DANIEL)* I thought she wouldn't have to find out -- that I would go off to college, have my own life and then...later on... Look, I mean, I feel... I mean I think - I know...I'm gay.

DANIEL

It's okay.

MARK

Okay? No, it is definitely not "okay!"

DANIEL

Listen, Mark, there are thousands -- hundreds-of-thousands -- of very successful gay men and women.

MARK

You don't understand. The problem isn't that I'm gay. The problem is my mother cannot have a gay son.

DANIEL

But she does.

MARK

But she can't.

DANIEL

Why not? It's your life, Mark. Your sexuality isn't a choice - it's part of who you are. There are plenty of other kids your age who feel just like you -

MARK

Yeah, with very loving and understanding families who help them, support them...

DANIEL

For some that's totally true. But not for all of us.

MARK

Us?

DANIEL

Yes...us. You may think you're alone.

(Music for "KITCHEN TABLE" begins.)

That you're the only person who's ever had a family struggle with this. Believe me, you're not...

"KITCHEN TABLE"

DANIEL

IN A MIDWESTERN FARMHOUSE ON FORTY ACRES
IN THE SUMMER OF SIXTY-FIVE,
ON A HOT AUGUST SUNDAY WE MOVED IN
TO THE HOUSE WHERE I'D BEGIN MY LIFE.

NOT MUCH MONEY, NOT MUCH STUFF
FOR OUR FAMILY OF THREE.
BUT MY MOTHER KNEW AS HER MOTHER KNEW
WHAT THE HOUSE'S CENTERPIECE SHOULD BE.

THERE IT SAT – THAT OLD OAK TABLE
WITH A SET OF LADDER CHAIRS.
IN THE CENTER OF A THIRTIES KITCHEN
WARM AND COZY BUT IN DISREPAIR.

LITTLE DID I KNOW THEN
THAT THIS SETTING WOULD COME TO BE
WHERE SO MANY CROSSROADS, BITTER AND SWEET,
WOULD BE HAPPENING TO ME.

YES, THEY ALL HAPPENED RIGHT THERE
AT THE KITCHEN TABLE.
CHILDHOOD WISHES AND ADOLESCENT FIGHTS.
YES, IT ALL HAPPENED RIGHT THERE
AT THAT KITCHEN TABLE.
SOLVING ALL OUR PROBLEMS THEN TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS.
MEM'RIES MADE AND TRUST BETRAYED
AT THAT KITCHEN TABLE.

EVERY CHRISTMAS EVE THAT I REMEMBER
THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH JOY.

ALL MOM'S FAMILY FILLED UP THAT KITCHEN
AND THE TABLE WAS HEAPED WITH TOYS.

IT'S WHERE I GOT MY FIRST SET OF CAR KEYS
ON GRADUATION DAY.
IT'S WHERE MY FRIENDS AND I SWORE WE'D BE TRUE EVERMORE
AS WE SCATTERED TO CAMPUSES FAR AWAY.

COMING OF AGE CAN BE CONFUSING
IN THOSE TENDER, LATE-TEEN YEARS.
COMING TO TERMS WITH HOW YOU'RE DIFFERENT,
AND HOW 'DIFFERENT' HAS ITS OWN FEARS.

ONE RAINY SPRING, JUST A SHORT VISIT;
"MOM, I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY...
I WON'T BE BRINGING HOME A GIRLFRIEND,
BUT THERE'S A GUY I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET
IF THAT'S OK..."

AND A TEAR MOISTENED HER CHEEK
AS SHE SAT DOWN AT THAT TABLE.
MY FATHER SAID, "WE'LL MOVE AWAY,
FORGET WE HAVE A SON."
I WALKED OUT THE DOOR, IT WAS SIX MONTHS BEFORE
I SAT DOWN AT THAT TABLE.
THE DIRT WAS ALL SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG,
AND EVEN THOUGH I ALWAYS GOT A HUG,
IT WAS NEVER THE SAME AGAIN
AT THAT KITCHEN TABLE.

THE YEARS PASS QUICKLY, AND HARSH FEELINGS FADE.
WE ALL SEE WHAT WE CHOOSE AND LEAVE THE REST BEHIND.
MOM GOT SICK, I CAUGHT THE FIRST PLANE HOME,
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE TO SAY GOODBYE.

DAD STAYED IN THAT FARMHOUSE THREE MORE YEARS ALONE,
'TILL HE SOLD IT AND MOVED EAST WITH ME.
AS THEY AUCTIONED THE THINGS HE NO LONGER CHERISHED,
THAT OLD KITCHEN TABLE I THOUGHT SINCE HAD PERISHED
SAT THERE GLOWING WITH PRIDE.
AS I WATCHED IT LEAVE THE HOUSE, I CRIED.

DAD ONLY LASTED A FEW MORE YEARS;
AFTER MOM, NEVER THE SAME.

AS FOR ME, MANY YEARS WITH THE SAME SWEET PARTNER;
MY OWN SUCCESS AND FAME.

I'D TELL EVERY SON AND DAUGHTER
WITH CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN...
TONIGHT AS YOU TURN OFF THE KITCHEN LIGHT,
TRY TO SEE THE ROOM IN A WAY YOU'VE NEVER KNOWN...

'CAUSE IT ALL HAPPENS RIGHT THERE
AT THE KITCHEN TABLE.
MEM'RIES SWEET AND STORIES YET TO TELL.
YES, IT ALL HAPPENS RIGHT THERE
AT THAT KITCHEN TABLE.

LIKE AN OLD FRIEND ONCE SAID TO ME,
ALL IMPORTANT THINGS ARE DESTINED, YOU SEE,
TO HAPPEN RIGHT THERE
AT THAT KITCHEN TABLE.

MARK

Wow. Mr. Milling...I had no idea...

DANIEL

You're the first person at school I've told. I never really thought it was relevant till now.

V-O

Mr. Milling, please report to the field house.

DANIEL

Oh, jeez, I'm supposed to meet Dr. Ryan to go over some graduation stuff. It's should only take fifteen minutes or so. Would you like to continue our talk after that?

MARK

Sure. I'm going to the library and work on my Senior project.

DANIEL

The library's a ghost town this time of day.

MARK

I know. That's why I like it.

DANIEL

I could meet you there in a little while.

MARK

That'd be great. *(a beat)* And Mr. Milling.....thanks.

DANIEL

That's why I'm here...

(DANIEL extends his hand for a "fist bump". MARK bumps back playfully. DANIEL exits as lights crossfade to the Library)

Scene 10: The FHS Library. Immediately after.

(MARK sits. His cellphone rings.)

MARK

Hello...

(Underscoring begins leading into "IS ANYBODY LISTENING?".)

Who?...do I know you?...yeah, I'm still at school...what?...hello?...hello? *(MARK looks at caller ID) Blocked call? (He closes phone)*

(SFX of Fire Door slamming. MARK reacts, then back to his own world hearing students' voice in his head)

V-O BOY STUDENT

That Mark kid is so freaky.

V-O GIRL STUDENT

Totally.

V-O BOY STUDENT

Lindsay said he was a fag. Is he a fag?

V-O GIRL STUDENT

I don't know. Probably.

V-O BOY STUDENT

Figures. That's probably right – fuckin' faggot.

"IS ANYBODY LISTENING?"

MARK

EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD, THE PRIDE OF MY HIGH SCHOOL,

GREAT S.A.T.'S, YOU'D THINK ALL IS WELL.
MOM THINKS LIFE'S GREAT, SHE DOESN'T KNOW THAT
MY LAST FOUR YEARS HAVE BEEN LIVING HELL.

DAY AFTER DAY, FRESH HUMILIATION
MY SO-CALLED FRIENDS RUN FROM THE ASSAULT
SPRAY-PAINTED "FAG" NOW COVERS MY LOCKER
WHY DO I THINK SOMEHOW IT'S MY FAULT?

OH, IS ANYBODY LISTENING?
OH, DOES ANYBODY CARE?
AM I ALONE ON THIS DESOLATE ISLAND,
OR ARE THERE OTHER PEOPLE ON THEIR OWN ISLANDS
TRAPPED BY THEIR OWN HURT, CAGED BY THEIR OWN PAIN,
AND NOBODY ELSE IS REALLY AWARE.

(Another SFX of a fire door slamming. MARK reacts again)

PARKING LOTS SWARM WITH BEEMERS AND PRADA -
ALL SELF-ABSORBED WITH SNOTTY DISDAIN.
JUST TWO MORE WEEKS I START MY LIFE OVER
WITHOUT THE FEAR, THE TAUNTING AND PAIN.

OH, IS ANYBODY LISTENING?
OH, DOES ANYBODY CARE?
AM I ALONE ON THIS DESOLATE ISLAND,
OR ARE THERE OTHER PEOPLE ON THEIR OWN ISLANDS
TRAPPED BY THEIR OWN HURT, CAGED BY THEIR OWN PAIN,
AND NOBODY ELSE IS REALLY AWARE.

(Down special to SARAH on the phone in another area.)

SARAH

(Impatiently leaving a message on MARK's cellphone) Mark, I hope you get this soon. The deal with AFC is breaking in the media and I just wanted to give you a heads-up that there may be some reporters, I mean you may be approached by the press even at school or wherever. Just be happy, pleasant, and don't tell them anything...major. You know what I mean. See you later dear.

(Special out on SARAH as lights crossfade back to MARK. His phone rings again.)

MARK *(On phone)*

Hello!...Look, I don't know who you are or how you got this number but...

V-O of TODD NOBLE

(coming from UR) Mark Masters?

MARK *(turning US)*

Yes?

(Three Gunshot Sounds. MARK collapses on the first, the audience is flooded red on the second, fast blackout on the third. A moment. Then, as underscoring begins a special comes up on JEFF SMITH, a local newscaster, who is covering the scene.)

JEFF SMITH

This is Jeff Smith with special report. At approximately 3:45 this afternoon gunshots rang out at Fairlawn High School. At least 2 people have been injured and have been taken to Westfield Hospital. Those injured have not been identified as of yet. Our sources also tell us that the Fairlawn Police do have a suspect in custody. We will remain here on the scene as this tragedy unfolds and hope to have a report in the next hour from the Westfield Hospital as well. Jeff Smith reporting live from Fairlawn High School. Back to you in the studio.

(Lights fade on him. Transition Music to next scene)

This Play is Not Over!

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we cannot currently present a full electronic script.

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