

ACT I

SCENE 1

AN ORNATE CONCERT HALL.

The setting of the show should be the location of the performance. This show takes place in the mind of a Soprano who puts on a concert in her mind to cope with the stresses of modern life, particularly as a wanna-be musical theatre performer.

Just about every song can stand alone, but together they form a character arc for THE SOPRANO from despair to acceptance.

THE SOPRANO enters, acknowledges the audience, and begins to sing.

THE SOPRANO

(1. Prelude in C Major: What's Going On in the World Today)

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD TODAY?
THERE'S TOO MUCH NOISE IN THE AIR.
ELMOS FIGHT IN TIMES SQUARE.
HOW MANY DAYS DO I SPEND ON HOLD?
THE BUS IS ALWAYS DELAYED
EVEN CHILDREN THROW SHADE.

AH, BUT I HAVE A SOLUTION HERE.
STRAIGHT-FORWARD, EASY, AND NOT A JOKE.
ONE SHOULD LOOK BACK ON A SIMPLER TIME:
THE ERA OF BAROQUE.

WHY WAS I BORN IN THESE MODERN TIMES?
IN THIS CATASTROPHE AGE,
I SET THE STAGE
HERE.
WHERE LIFE IS MORE REFINED.
A CONCERT IN MY MIND.

(2. ENTREE IN A MINOR: WHEN I'M DEPRESSED (WHICH I USUALLY AM))

WHEN I'M DEPRESSED (WHICH I USUALLY AM)
I RETREAT TO A PLACE INSIDE MY HEAD.
IT IS NOT HERE-AND-NOW, WHICH IS MODERN DAY NEW YORK,
BUT AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SALON INSTEAD.
HERE I CAN SING ALL THE THINGS I TRULY FEEL
WHILE A FICTIONAL AUDIENCE APPLAUDS.
IN MY FAVORITE STYLE, THE BAROQUE MUSIC I LOVE,
THIS IMAGINARY SHOW KEEPS ME AFLOAT.

WHAT, YOU MAY ASK, SHOULD I BE SO STRESSED ABOUT?
MUST I STATE WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY KNOWN?
THE WORLD IS A MESS AND WE'VE ALL BEEN TRAUMATIZED,
PLUS MY LACK OF A CAREER HAS MADE ME MOAN.
SEE, I LONG TO BE SINGING ON THE BROADWAY STAGE
IN A SHOW THAT IS MAKING ITS PREMIER.
BUT ALL THE PARTS ARE FOR BELTERS' VOICES NOW,
AND IT'S SELDOM THAT SOPRANO PARTS APPEAR.

BAROQUE IS MY REFUGE IN THIS WORLD
AND MY SAVING GRACE.
BEAUTY THROUGH STRUCTURE AND THROUGH FORM.
EACH NOTE HAS ITS PLACE.
DOMINANTS WILL ALL RESOLVE
JUST AS SARABANDE MUST LEAD TO GIGUE.
BEAUTY FOLLOWS RULES
AND IF I'M STRICT, I CAN COMBAT MY FATIGUE.

I WISH I KNEW MY PLACE
LIKE THE NOTES IN A COUNTERPOINT.
I'LL WORK TO BLOCK OUT ALL THE NOISE
SO MY LIFE CAN NEVER DISAPPOINT.
SO MY LIFE CAN NEVER DISAPPOINT.

I HAVE NO WEALTH AND MY TIME IS VERY TIGHT
PLUS MY HEALTH ISN'T VERY GOOD AT ALL.
THERE ARE DAYS I SURVIVE BY MY WILLPOWER ALONE,
AND IT ISN'T NOON BEFORE I HIT A WALL.
I CAN'T WATCH THE NEWS AND THE WEATHER ISN'T RIGHT.
MY PROFESSION DOESN'T CARE IF I DROP DEAD.
BUT I DON'T CARE. IN THE END I WILL PREVAIL!
IF I'M FOCUSED AND I KEEP MOVING AHEAD.

I MUST HAVE FAITH IT WILL BE PERFECT IN THE END.

**(3. ALLEMANDE IN F MAJOR: MY LIFE'S A
MESS)**

MY LIFE'S A MESS! I'VE SIMPLY HAD ENOUGH.
I BOUGHT A BOOK AND PUT IT ON MY NOOK.
THIS BOOK WILL TEACH ME HOW TO TIDY UP.
I'M SO EXCITED! I CAN'T WAIT TO TAKE A LOOK.

IT SAYS THAT MESS DEFINES A PERSON'S FATE,
AND CLEANING MORE SHOULD NOT FEEL LIKE A CHORE.
IF I ADOPT THESE TIPS TO CLEAN THE SLATE,
THIS MIGHT BE THE SOLUTION THAT I'M LOOKING FOR.

STEP ONE. TAKE A SHIRT. DOES IT MAKE YOU GLAD?
OR WHEN YOU PICK IT UP AND HOLD IT DOES IT MAKE YOU SAD?
THE SHIRT THAT BRINGS JOY SHOULD BE KEPT AROUND,
BUT IF THAT SHIRT ANNOYS YOU THEN JUST
THROW THAT GARBAGE ON THE GROUND.

OH THIS IS GOOD! IT ALL MAKES PERFECT SENSE!
I'LL START AT ONCE. NOW LET THE CLEANING SPREE COMMENCE!

RIGHT HERE IS A SHIRT THAT I SOMETIMES WEAR.

AH.

I CAN'T TELL IF IT HAS BROUGHT ME JOY!
I'LL REPLY IS BUT WILL I FEEL ANYTHING?

AH.

I STILL CAN'T TELL IF THIS HAS BROUGHT ME JOY!
HOW CAN I EVER HOPE TO BE DONE
IF I CAN'T EVEN FOLLOW STEP ONE.
I FAIL AND BECOME A HOARDER, WITH RATS,
A CRAZY LADY WITH A DOZEN CATS!

AH.

MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW.
PURRRRRRRR...

I HATE THIS BOOK. ONE STAR, IT MADE ME MAD.
BUT IN ONE WAY I FOLLOW WHAT THEY SAY;
DELETE THIS BOOK. IT DOESN'T 'MAKE ME GLAD'.
MY LIFE IS SO MUCH NICER NOW, I FEEL OKAY.

AH.

NOW WHERE DID I PUT MY NOOK?

AH!

IT WON'T LET ME DELETE THE BOOK!

AH!

(4. POLONAISE IN D MINOR)

In this instrumental, THE SOPRANO
cleans up the mess she made during
the previous number and gets ready
to go out on auditions.

**(5. COURANTE IN Bb MAJOR: MY LIFE IS SO
SWEET)**

MY LIFE IS SO SWEET

(HA! HA! HA!)

SINCE MY BOOK IS COMPLETE

(HA! HA! HA!)

I HAVE ALL THE BEST AUDITION SONGS SOPRANOS PERFORM.

EACH GENRE, EACH STYLE

(HA! HA! HA!)

GUARANTEED, THEY WILL SMILE

(HA! HA! HA!)

WHEN THE SONG THEY WANT IS JUST THE CUT I HAPPEN TO BRING.

WE START WITH "TOYLAND" AND "OH, PROMISE ME."

THEN "BY STRAUSS" IF THEY WANT COMEDY.

"MANY A NEW DAY" WILL DO ALL RIGHT.

BETTER STILL "I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT."

SONDHEIM IS "GREEN FINCH AND LINNET BIRD"

WILDHORN IS "A NEW LIFE" (UP A THIRD)

POPERETTA IS "I DREAMED A DREAM"

FOR THE REST, "VANILLA ICE CREAM."

MY LIFE IS SO SWEET

(HA! HA! HA!)

SINCE MY BOOK IS COMPLETE

(HA! HA!

HA!)

I HAVE ALL THE BEST AUDITION SONGS SOPRANOS PERFORM.

WHAT, THEN, OF POP?

YOU MAY THINK MY AUDITION'S A FLOP,

BUT THEN I SING MARIAH

AND ARIANA AND X-TINA.

AND MODERN SHOWS?

"NO ONE ELSE" IS WHAT GOES.

"PIAZZA" SEALS THE DEAL.

EVEN JRB WOULD LIKE MY "ALMOST REAL."

MY LIFE IS SO SWEET

(HA! HA! HA!)

SINCE MY BOOK IS COMPLETE

(HA! HA! HA!)

I HAVE ALL THE BEST AUDITION SONGS SOPRANOS PERFORM.

BUT I HAVE A PROBLEM WHEN I SING:

SOMEONE ALWAYS SINGS THE SONG I BRING!

EVERY OTHER SINGER THERE

KNOWS EACH SONG THAT I PREPARE.

(6. BOUREE IN G MINOR: I ARRIVE RIGHT AT
EIGHT)

I ARRIVE RIGHT AT EIGHT.

THEY'RE ALREADY RUNNING LATE.

BUT THEY SAY THEY'LL SEE EVERYONE AUDITION.

SO I SIT ON THE FLOOR

BY THE FICUS AND THE DOOR

AS THE LOBBY FILLS WITH ALL MY COMPETITION.

IT IS NOW NEARLY ONE.

MORNING SESSION'S ALMOST DONE.

BUT THEY SAY TO COME BACK WHEN THEY'RE THROUGH WITH LUNCH
BREAK.

SO I LIMP 'CROSS THE STREET,

TO A DELI, WHERE I EAT;

I'VE BEEN SITTING ON THE FLOOR ALL DAY AND NOW I ACHE.

I DON'T MIND COMING IN TO AUDITION FOR A SHOW.

I'M PREPARED, GOT MY CUTS, 32 BAR OR 16.

BUT THIS HANGING AROUND IS INSANITY TO ME.

IT'S EXHAUSTING AND DEMORALIZING WAITING TO BE SEEN.

I COME BACK, LOST IN THOUGHT.

SOMEONE'S SITTING IN MY SPOT.

SO I HUNKER DOWN BESIDE A DRAFTY DOORWAY.

IT IS NOW NEARLY SIX,

AND MY LEGS ARE MADE OF BRICKS.

FINALLY IT'S MY TURN, I SHUFFLE IN A SORE WAY.

IN THE ROOM THEY ALL SMILE AND APOLOGIZE TO ME.

THEN THEY SAY THEY'RE RUNNING SO BEHIND, THEY'RE HEARING 8
BAR CUTS.

I'M SO FRAYED AND ON EDGE THAT I CRACK THE HIGHEST NOTE.

IT WAS TWENTY SECONDS FROM 'HELLO' TO WHEN THE DOOR SHUTS.

I AM SITTING ALONE IN THE BATHROOM, ON MY PHONE.
AND I CRY A BIT, WHICH HELPS TO EASE MY SORROW.
WHAT A HORRIBLE DAY, BUT IT'S OVER ANYWAY.
AND I'VE GOT ANOTHER ONE OF THESE TOMORROW.

(7. SARABANDE IN Eb MAJOR: SITTING ON A BENCH IN UNION SQUARE)

OH, SITTING ON A BENCH IN UNION SQUARE,
I TAKE A BREATH AND TRY TO DO SELF-CARE
BY WATCHING ALL THE PEOPLE PASSING THERE.

SOME PERFORMANCE ARTISTS GATHER,
BANGING GONGS,
PASSING OUT SOME PAMPHLETS
WHILE THEY'RE SINGING SOME SONGS.
WHILE THEY BOTHER EVERY PIGEON,
I CAN'T HELP SEE
HOW SELF-ASSURED THEY ARE
AND NOT LOST LIKE ME.

NOW SOME PROTESTORS ARE YELLING,
HOLDING SIGNS.
BLOCKING ALL THE TRAFFIC WHILE THE NYPD ISSUES FINES.
ALL THE CHAOS OVERWHELMS ME,
YET I YEARN
TO KNOW I'M DOING SOMETHING, AND TO KNOW THAT IT'S MY TURN.

ALL OF THESE PEOPLE BELONG
I ONLY FEEL SET APART.
THEY'RE RACING FORWARD, SO STRONG,
WHEN I CAN'T SEEM TO START.

NOW A COUPLE SITS ON TOP OF ME
MAKING OUT.
THEY ARE UNAWARE THAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE ABOUT.
THOUGH I ELBOW HARD AND YELL OUT,
NO PDA!
I WISH I HAD SOMEONE TO MAKE ME FEEL THAT WAY.

OH, SITTING ON A BENCH IN UNION SQUARE
I TOOK A BREATH AND TRIED TO DO SELF CARE.
BUT NOTHING WORKS, I FAIL EVERYWHERE.

(8. TOCCATA IN C MINOR)

In this instrumental, THE SOPRANO
is so overwhelmed that she leaves
the stage. She's trying to get it
together enough to continue the
concert.

(9. FUGUE IN F MINOR: I THOUGHT MY BAROQUE STATE OF MIND WOULD HELP ME COPE...)

THE SOPRANO reenters.

I THOUGHT MY BAROQUE STATE OF MIND
WOULD HELP ME COPE, BUT SOMEHOW I FIND
THAT EVERYTHING IS HARD, AND I FAIL
AT EVERY DETAIL.

WHEN I START TO RAISE MY DEFENSES,
INSTANTLY MY TENSION COMMENCES.
NOW I'M BACK WHERE I WAS BEFORE,
STILL ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

SO WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THIS MESS?
HOW CAN I MANAGE ALL MY STRESS?
WHERE CAN I LOOK TO
MAKE MY LIFE A GREAT SUCCESS?

'CAUSE MEANWHILE I'M STILL GRASPING AT STRAWS
WITH MAKING MY ANXIETY PAUSE.
I WONDER CAN THIS MEDICINE TAKE,
OR DID MY BAROQUE PLAN BREAK.

SHOULD I STOP RIGHT NOW?
LET GO OF MY ART?
TAKE AN OFFICE JOB
AND FIND A WAY NOT TO FEEL THE PASSION IN MY HEART.
OR SHOULD I CARRY ON, (AND ON, AND ON, AND ON)
PAINFUL THOUGH IT IS.
I CAN'T LIVE LIKE THIS...

NO, I MUST CONTINUE SHUTTING OUT
THE AWFULNESS THAT'S ALL ABOUT.
I KNOW THAT PERFECT THINGS CAN SOAR;
IT'S IN THE MUSIC I ADORE.
AND SINCE THIS PERFECT ART IS REAL,
I KNOW MY LIFE CAN BE IDEAL.
I CAN BE PERFECT IF I TRY,
SO I'LL KEEP FALLING 'TIL I FLY.

I'LL KEEP MY BAROQUE STATE OF MIND
AND HOPE AT LAST THAT SOMEHOW I'LL FIND
A WAY THAT I CAN MAKE THIS WORK OUT
AND BANISH MY DOUBT.

I MUST CARRY ON AND MUDDLE THROUGH,
AND IF I'M FEELING REALLY BLUE,
I MUST REMEMBER
WHAT I HAD SET OUT TO DO.

ALTHOUGH I'M BACK WHERE I WAS BEFORE,
I'M READY FOR WHATEVER'S IN STORE.
THIS FUGUE STATE THAT MY BRAIN HAS BEGUN
IS FINALLY DONE.

**(10. MINUET IN Db MAJOR: PAIN IN MY
STOMACH)**

PAIN IN MY STOMACH, BAD HEADACHE.
ALL NIGHT I'M STAYING WIDE AWAKE.
SKIN IS ITCHY, RED, AND PEELING.

WHAT IS THIS THAT I'M FEELING?

NAUSEOUS AND ALWAYS GASSY.
NOT REALLY FEELING CLASSY.
THERE'S ONE FIX, I CAN'T DENY IT.
TIME TO ANALYZE MY DIET.

MAYBE I'LL TRY TO PALEO,
LIVE LIKE A CAVEMAN DAILY-OH.
GIVE UP GRAINS AND EAT MORE FAT AND MEAT AND VEG,
BUT SHOULD I GO LES CUTTING EDGE?

SOME SAY TO TRY LOW RESIDUE.
GIVE UP THE FOODS THAT PASS RIGHT THROUGH.
ADD TO THAT WHOLE THIRTY, RAW, VEGAN, ORGANIC,
FODMAP FREE, I'M IN A PANIC!

STARVING AND HANGRY, MORE HEADACHE.
ALL NIGHT I DREAM OF EATING STEAK.
ALL I'VE HAD TO EAT'S A BROWN RICE CAKE.
MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE A BREAK.
A BREAK.
A SHAKE.
A SHAKE.

One extra large salted caramel shake, please.

(11. **BOUREE IN Bb MINOR: I WENT IN WEEKS
AGO**)

I WENT IN WEEKS AGO AND AUDITIONED FOR A SHOW.
THE DIRECTOR WAS SOMEONE THAT I LONGED TO SEE.
BUT I KNEW GOING IN THAT MY ODDS WERE VERY THIN;
IT'S A SHOW THAT DOESN'T REALLY HAVE A ROLE FOR ME.

SO I FELT QUITE PERPLEXED WHEN I LATER SAW THE TEXT
AND I READ THAT I WAS CALLED BACK FOR A LEADING PART.
I HAD FIVE SIDES TO LEARN, WHICH I MEMORIZED IN TURN.
I WAS ALL GEARED UP TO SHOW THEM I WAS SKILLED AND SMART.

WHEN I WALKED IN THE ROOM, THE DIRECTOR GLANCED AT ME
AND THE WEIRDEST LOOK PASSED QUICKLY ON HIS FACE.
THEN HE TURNED TO HIS ASSISTANT AND THEY WHISPERED SOMETHING
QUICK.
THEN THEY SAID THAT I COULD START MY PIECE FROM ANY PLACE.

I DID GREAT ON THE SONG. NOT A SINGLE THING WENT WRONG.
ALL THE TIME THAT I SPENT MEMORIZING WAS WORTH WHILE.
STUNNING SOUND, FOCUSED WANTS, ALL SO EFFORTLESS AND CLEAR.
THE DIRECTOR ASKED IF I COULD WAIT OUTSIDE. HE HAD A SMILE.

I WAS STILL ON A HIGH WHEN THE MONITOR WALKED BY.
HE SAID THANK YOU AND I'M SORRY THAT IT WENT THIS WAY.
I SAID WHAT DO YOU MEAN? HE SAID YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN
SEEN.

THEY MISTOOK YOU FOR A SINGER FROM A DIFFERENT DAY.
THEY MISTOOK ME FOR A SINGER FROM A DIFFERENT DAY!

(12.
(MORE)

THE SOPRANO (CONT'D)
**GAVOTTE IN Gb MAJOR: I DON'T NEED TO TELL
YOU THAT IT'S HARD TO MAKE A LIFE IN
PERFORMING ARTS)**

I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT IT'S HARD TO MAKE A LIFE IN
PERFORMING ARTS.
THOUGH I'M HIGHLY TRAINED, I HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY REALLY
PRESTIGIOUS PARTS.
THE WORLD'S DENYING ME
THE ROLES I'M DYING TO BE,
THOUGH I'M TRYING EACH AND EVERY WAY.
THERE'S MUCH TO DO
TO MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE
AND STAY ALIVE FROM DAY TO DAY.
THESE ARE ALL THE THINGS THAT I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT I SHOULD DO
TO ADVANCE MY CAREER.
YOU'LL SEE HOW I MANAGE ALL THESE TASKS WHEN I DESCRIBE A
NORMAL DAY OF THE YEAR.

I GET UP AT SIX, THEN GO EXERCISE SOMEWHERE.
GET MY YOGA FIX, TAKE A SHOWER, DO MY HAIR.
I ANNIHILATE A BREAKFAST BAR,
BARELY CATCH A SUBWAY CAR,
GET TO MY AUDITION WITH TIME TO SPARE.
I AM TENTH IN LINE WHEN I ENTER RIPLEY GRIER.
THEY SEE ONLY NINE OF THE ACTORS WHO ARE HERE.
SO I ASK TO LEAVE MY RESUME,
HOPE THEY KINDLY LOOK MY WAY.
STILL, MY HEADSHOT MIGHT JUST DISAPPEAR.

WHEN I DON'T HAVE AN AUDITION, THEN I DO MY DAY JOB; I
BABYSIT.
THERE'S A COUPLE DOWN IN CHELSEA WHO WILL SOMETIMES NEED
MORNING HELP FOR A BIT.
I WAKE UP THEIR SON,
MAKE SURE HIS HOMEWORK'S DONE,
AND THEN WE HAVE TO RUN
OR GET TO SCHOOL TOO LATE.
THEN BACK TO THEIR CO-OP
WHERE I COOK AND GO MOP
FOR A MINIMUM WAGE RATE.
THEN IT'S OFF TO JAZZ CLASS WITH THE CHOREOGRAPHER FROM "THE
BAND'S VISIT."
I'M EXHAUSTED, BUT I SOMEHOW MAKE IT THROUGH THE END, THOUGH
MY BODY WANTS TO QUIT.

IF I HAVE THE MEANS, FIND AN IMPROV CLASS TO DO.
OR I HEAD TO QUEENS FOR A SINGING CLASS OR TWO.
AND I CAN'T FORGET TO TAKE BALLET,
"DICTION BACK IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAY,"
OR WHATEVER ACTING STYLE IS NEW.
BUT IT COSTS A LOT TO MAINTAIN PERFORMANCE SKILL
AND MY GIGS DO NOT EARN ENOUGH TO PAY A BILL.
SO I HOSTESS LATE INTO THE NIGHT.
GETTING HOME I SEE DAYLIGHT.
CLEARLY EVERY DAY'S A TEST OF WILL.

I COLLAPSE AND SLEEP THREE HOURS BEFORE I START TO GO THROUGH MY DAY AGAIN.

She falls asleep standing up.

(13. SONATA IN Eb MINOR: I WAS INVITED TO A GALA)

I WAS INVITED TO A GALA OF MY FAVORITE THEATRE COLLECTIVE. WORKING WITH THEM WOULD BE A DREAM JOB AND A HUGE PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE.

A FRIEND OF A FRIEND WAS ON THE BOARD AND HE HEARD I LIKED HIS SHOW.

SO HE COMPED ME MY TICKET, I SUBBED OUT OF WORK, AND I GOT ALL DOLLED UP TO GO.

THE NIGHT WOULD START WITH A CONCERT;
NEW WORKS BY NEW COMPOSERS.

THEN AT AN OPEN BAR,
CHAMPAGNE AND CAVIER.

AND ME INSIDE THAT ROOM I FEEL MY DREAMS ARE GETTING CLOSER.

I WAS INVITED TO A GALA BY SOME PEOPLE I HAVE ADMIRERD.

THEY'RE GOING TO SEE AND GET TO KNOW ME. WE WOULD CLICK, AND THEN I WOULD BE HIRED.

THIS COULD BE MY HOME.

MY PEOPLE ARE HERE.

IT'S TIME TO JOIN MY COMMUNITY,

REALLY START MY CAREER.

DIRECTORS ARE THERE

WHO'D WANT SOMETHING NEW.

AND WRITERS WHO MAKE AMAZING THINGS

FOR SOPRANOS LIKE YOU-KNOW-WHO!

I PICTURED JUST HOW THE NIGHT WAS GOING TO BE:

A FANTASTIC SUCCESS!

I'D WALTZ RIGHT IN TO THE THEATRE, READY TO SEE THE SHOW.

EVERY SONG WOULD IMPRESS.

THEN I WOULD ENTER THE GALA. I'D GRAB A DRINK AND STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION.

WE'D TALK ONLY OF THE FINEST THINGS. WE'D CONNECT ON THE BEAUTY OF CREATION.

THEN TWO WEEKS LATER WE WOULD FIND A TIME TO MEET.

WE'D GRAB A COFFEE AND I'D GET A BITE TO EAT.

WE'D TALK ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD BRING ME ON THEIR CREW,

AND I WOULD HELP DEVELOP SOMETHING NEW.

HOW GRATEFUL I WAS TO BE INVITED TO THIS REALLY PRESTIGIOUS GALA TEND-

ING TO MY ANXIETY, I WROTE THEM AND I SAID THAT, HAPPILY, I SHALL ATTEND.

I TRIED NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT MUCH

AS THE DAY CAME EVER NEAR.

I WENT ON AUDITIONS, I TOOK A BALLET CLASS, BUT MY MIND WAS NEVER 'HERE.'

THE THEATRE WAS FULL FOR THE CONCERT.

I TOOK MY SEAT, THE LIGHTS GREAT DIM.

ONE BY ONE, THE WRITERS SPOKE ABOUT THEIR WORK.

AND THEN THEY PLAYED.

OH DEAREST AUDIENCE I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH VARIETY.
TRULY THE FUTURE OF MUSICALS WAS IN THAT ROOM.

A MURDER MYSTERY WITH MINGLING PLOT LINES.
A COZY APOCALYPSE IN FLORIDA.
A CHRISTMAS COMEDY IN EASTERN EUROPE.
A PUNK ROCK SHOW ABOUT KING ARTHUR.

AND THEN MY FAVORITE SOPRANO ENTERED,
A BROADWAY STAR I IDOLIZE.
SHE WROTE A SHOW! IT'S A PERFECT SHOW!
A BACKSTAGE COMEDY WITH CLASSICAL MUSIC!

OH! SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING PERFECT FOR ME.
AND IT'S MOMENTS LIKE THIS THAT GIVE ME HOPE THAT THERE'S A
PLACE FOR ME.

THE LOBBY WAS BEAUTIFUL. TWINKLING LIGHTS, PANORAMIC VIEWS,
WITH THE CATERERS SETTING AN ELEGANT TONE.
AND WHERE, IN THIS OPULENCE, DO YOU THINK THAT YOU'D FIND ME?
THAT'S ME IN THE CORNER ALL ALONE.

MY IDOLS ARE CHATTING, SIPPING DRINKS, LOUDLY LAUGHING.
THEY'RE SO CLOSE, BUT I'M TIMID AND STAY ON THE SHELF.
I'M A GUEST BUT IDENTIFY SO MUCH MORE WITH THE CATERERS.
STILL I'M STANDING STIFFLY BY MYSELF.

OH, STOP IT! I SCREAMED INSIDE.
I HAD A JOB TO DO.
I DRAINED A GLASS, THEN FOUND THE SOPRANO.
I WALKED RIGHT ON UP AND SAID, 'HI.'
SHE SAID 'HI' BACK.
SHE ASKED MY NAME.
I TOLD HER.
I TOLD HER...

I'M A SINGER LIKE YOU ARE.
I'M INSPIRED BY YOUR WORK.
IT'S JUST SO HARD SOMETIMES,
I'M STRUGGLING EVERY DAY.
HOW DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

IT'S EASY FOR ME TO LOSE FAITH IN MYSELF
WHEN ALL THE WORLD SAYS STOP.
BEING ALIVE IS A CHALLENGE FOR ME,
A CHALLENGE WHERE I'M ALL ALONE.

I WAS SHOCKED BY WHAT WAS COMING FROM MY MOUTH.
DEEPEST FEARS CONFESSED,
BUT THEN SHE TOOK MY HAND.
SHE SAID...

YES, I FEEL THAT WAY OFTEN.
EVEN WITH MY SUCCESSES.

SO, YOU ARE NOT ALONE
WHEN YOU FEEL DOUBT AND FEAR.
WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE, WE ALL UNDERSTAND.

THEN SHE GAVE ME HER EMAIL!
AND ASKED TO SEND HER MY REEL!
SHE WANTS TO GRAB A COFFEE SOON!
THEN SHE HUGGED ME AND LEFT.

THE GALA WAS GLORIOUS, PEOPLE SMILING AND WELCOMING,
TRADING NUMBERS AND PLANNING A BUSINESS PHONE CALL.
AND WHO'S THAT YOUNG WOMAN WHO ALL THE PEOPLE ARE TALKING TO?
THAT'S ME IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL.
ME IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL.

She waits for a message that
doesn't arrive.

IT'S BEEN THREE WEEKS SINCE THE GALA.
THREE WEEKS.
THREE LONG WEEKS.

I SENT THE EMAILS.
I CALLED THE NUMBERS.
NO ONE RESPONDED.
I SEARCHED MY JUNK MAIL.
I CHECKED MY VOICE MAIL.
NO ONE RESPONDED.

I ASKED MYSELF, SHOULD I WRITE TO THEM AGAIN?
HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD I BOTHER THEM?
WILL THEY HATE ME IF I WRITE TO THEM AGAIN?

THEY TOLD ME TO GET IN TOUCH.
THEY SAID THAT THEY LIKED ME.
WERE THEY JUST TRYING TO BE KIND?
AM I THAT ANNOYING?

AND THEN THIS MORNING WHEN I CHECKED PLAYBILL DOT COM,
I SAW A HEADLINE WITH THE THEATRE COMPANY.
THERE WAS A MERGER, ALL THE BOARD HAD GOTTEN FIRED.
EVERYONE I'D MET WAS GONE!

I THOUGHT THE GALA WAS AN OPENING TO THE LIFE I DREAMED THAT
I'D GET.
BUT NOW IT SEEMS THAT I'M MISTAKEN. WHEN I SAW A SUNRISE IT
WAS A SUNSET.
HOW CAN I GO ON WITH ALL OF THIS? BEING CLOSE, THEN BACK TO
NIL.
THE TERRIBLE HEARTBREAK, THE HOPES THAT ALL GET DASHED.
THE DAILY BITTER PILL.

AND EVERYONE FROM THE OLD BOARD,
THE ONES I MET AT THE GALA,
THAT WHOLE DELIGHTFUL CREW,
THEY'RE BACK TO NOTHING TOO.
IT'S JUST IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO MAKE THIS WORK.

MY GENERATION'S SMART AND DRIVEN AND WE'RE DOING NOTHING
WRONG.

WHY, THEN, IS LIVING SO MUCH HARDER? IT'S UNLIKELY THAT
ANYONE IS THAT STRONG.

AND STILL THE BIGGEST QUESTION HAUNTS ME MORE AND MORE;
WHAT DO I DO NOW?

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE II

THE SOPRANO enters, refreshed from intermission.

(14. ENTR'ACTE IN G# MINOR: EVERY VOICE LESSON STARTS THE SAME)

EVERY VOICE LESSON STARTS THE SAME.
DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU ARE.
A BROADWAY BELTER, AN OPERA DIVA,
A YODELER, OR ROCK STAR.
I NEVER GOT IT, SEEMS SILLY TO ME.
MY VOICE WOULD NEVER TRANSFORM UP.
BUT INTERMISSION IS ENDING NOW.
'GUESS IT CAN'T HURT TO WARM UP.

She coughs, clears her throat, yawns, and makes over bizarre noises from her voice.

I GUESS I'M WARMED UP.
NOW BACK TO THE SHOW.

(15. PASSEPIED IN B MAJOR: I HOP IN A SUBWAY)

I HOP IN A SUBWAY TO MEET WITH SOME BUDDIES
WE'LL GO TO A DINER, THEN MAYBE WE'LL SHOP.
AS SOON AS THE SUBWAY IS UNDER THE RIVER,
WE START SLOWING DOWN AND WE CRAWL TO A STOP.
I'VE GOT NO RECEPTION, THERE'S NO TRAIN ANNOUNCEMENT.
WE'RE ALL STANDING AWKWARDLY WAITING TO MOVE.
AN OLD LADY GLARES AT ME, EYEING MY TANK TOP,
WHILE MAKING IT CLEAR THAT SHE DOESN'T APPROVE.
THEN ONE DAZZLING HERO GETS UP AND TAKES ACTION.
HE LOOKS ALL AROUND HIMSELF CONFIDENTLY.
HE MAKES A TIGHT FIST AND STARTS PUNCHING THE EXIT
AND ALL THE WHILE LAUGHING MANIACALLY.

I SWEAR THAT THIS CITY IS TRYING TO KILL ME
AND LAUGHS AT UNIQUE WAYS OF CAUSING ME PAIN.
OH, IT'S ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR TROUBLE TO THROW MY WAY.
FINDING A WEAKNESS IN ORDER TO GRILL ME.
THE TRAIN REEKS OF URINE AS EVERYONE PANICS
AND CROWDS TO THE OPPOSITE END OF THE TRAIN CAR.
WE'RE STUCK IN THIS HELL FOR AN HOUR
BEFORE WE START MOVING AGAIN WITH NO WORD FROM THE DRIVER.

I RUN TO THE EXIT THE VERY NEXT STATION.
IT'S NOT YET MY STOP BUT I REALLY DON'T CARE.
IT'S ALMOST TOO LATE TO HANG OUT AT THE DINER
WHEN, WONDER OF WONDERS, A BUS IS RIGHT THERE!
I SHOVE MYSELF IN THOUGH IT'S AWFULLY CROWDED.
I MIGHT BE OKAY, I KEEP WATCHING THE CLOCK.
OF COURSE, THAT'S BEFORE WE HIT ROAD BLOCKS AND TRAFFIC.
MY APP SAYS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FASTER TO WALK!

I LEAP OFF THE BUS AND I RUN 'CROSS THE STREET
BUT I'M SLAMMED BY A TAXI THAT'S RUNNING A RED.
IT DOESN'T HIT HARD BUT IT KNOCKS ME OFF-BALANCE.
I FALL IN SOME TRASH AND I LAND ON MY HEAD.

I SWEAR THAT THIS CITY IS TRYING TO KILL ME
AND LAUGHS AT UNIQUE WAYS OF CAUSING ME PAIN.
OH, IT'S ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR TROUBLE TO THROW MY WAY.
FINDING A WEAKNESS IN ORDER TO GRILL ME.
I'M PICKING SOME CAT LITTER OUT OF MY HAIR
WHILE THE CAB DRIVER STOPS AND PULLS OVER TO YELL AT ME.
ALL THAT WHILE TOURISTS ARE PULLING THEIR PHONES OUT
TO TAKE PICTURES OF A NEW YORKER WHO'S CRAZY.

I'M EATING A BURGER ALONE AT THE DINER.
I CAN'T REACH MY FRIENDS, THEY ALL LEFT LONG AGO.
I SIT AND I STARE AT THE PEOPLE AROUND ME.
I TRY NOT TO CRY, TRY TO GO WITH THE FLOW.
THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN THE MAN FROM THE SUBWAY
WALKS UP TO MY TABLE WHILE STARING AT ME.
HE NOTICES HOW I AM COVERED IN GARBAGE AND,
STEALING MY PICKLE, STARTS LAUGHING WITH GLEE.

I SWEAR THAT THIS CITY IS TRYING TO KILL ME
AND LAUGHS AT UNIQUE WAYS OF CAUSING ME PAIN.
OH, IT'S ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR SHIT IT THROW MY WAY.
FINDING A WEAKNESS IN ORDER TO GRILL ME.
I GAG WHEN I THINK ABOUT PLACES HIS HANDS HAVE BEEN,
PAWING MY FOOD LIKE SOME KIND OF A TRASH PANDA.
I'VE LOST MY APPETITE AND I'M A LITTLE SICK,
I SWEAR THIS CITY IS TRYING TO KILL ME.

**(16. SICILIANA IN E MAJOR: THERE'S NO SIGN
OF THE BUS)**

THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE BUS, WHICH IS LATE,
AND NOTHING I CAN DO BUT JUST WAIT.
I AM DEMORALIZED AND EXHAUSTED FROM WORKING FOR HOURS
STRAIGHT.
I'M NOT SLEEPY 'CAUSE I'M TOO TIRED.
I'VE GOT NO FOCUS 'CAUSE I'M TOO WIRED.
I'M LEFT ALONE WITH MY SELF, MY THINKING IS SLUGGISH AND
UNINSPIRED.

SOMETIMES WHEN I'M BURNT OUT, I'LL HAVE SOME THOUGHTS WITHOUT
KNOWING THEY'RE THERE.
MY BRAIN SCREAMS A MONOLOGUE, BUT I AM TOTALLY UNAWARE.
IF YOU MEET ME WHEN I'M IN THIS PLACE,
YOU'D SEE ME STARING IN OUTER SPACE.
MAYBE I WON'T EVEN KNOW YOU'RE THERE,
I'M JUST NOWHERE...

SUDDENLY A FEELING OF DREAD ENVELOPS ME, TAKES OVER MY HEAD.
SOMETHING IS VERY WRONG, THE BUS ISN'T HERE, I AM NOT IN MY
BED.
MAYBE SOMEONE HATES ME A LOT.

OR SOMETHING IMPORTANT I FORGOT.
SOMEONE MUST BE DISAPPOINTED IN ME.
THAT'S EASY WHEN I'M SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT.
DID I OFFEND?
WAS I TOO LOUD?
DID I INSIST?
WHAT DID I DO?!

I LET MY MIND GET AWAY FROM ME. I THOUGHT OF EARLIER, I
BOUGHT A TEA.
I DIDN'T HAVE EXACT CHANGE. IT WAS AWKWARD. THEY GAVE ME A
DIME FOR FREE.
THIS UNKNOWN THOUGHT, IT STRUNG ME ALONG. AND MY REACTION WAS
OVERLY STRONG.
I'M DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT, SO WHY DOES IT FEEL LIKE I'M
ALWAYS WRONG?

UGH, MY BUS IS DRIVING AWAY. I'VE MISSED MY BUS! I'VE SAT
HERE ALL DAY!
WHY CAN'T I GET IT TOGETHER! WHY CAN'T EVERYTHING JUST BE
OKAY?

(17. INTERMEZZO IN C# MINOR)

During this instrumental, THE
SOPRANO, completely spent,
retreats to the back of the stage
and browses on her phone.

**(18. CHACONNE IN A MAJOR: IT'S AFTER THREE
A.M.)**

IT'S AFTER THREE A.M.
I'M HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING.
SHOULD GO TO BED,
TURN ON THE SCREEN LOCK.
INSTEAD OF DOING THAT,
I'M PLAYING WITH SOME FILTERS.
TWITTER DOT COME,
FACEBOOK, AND TIKTOK.

IF YOU TAP ON A KITTEN, IT WILL SAY
WHAT CRUISE SHIP YOU SHOULD TAKE TO SAIL AWAY.
I DON'T HAVE THE TIME OR CASH.
THERE'S NO ROOM IN MY LIFE TO CRASH.

BUT MAYBE I'LL DREAM A LUXURY CRUISE
EVEN IF MY WALLS ARE THE ONLY VIEWS.
NOW THAT I FEEL A BIT LESS DISTRESSED,
I'LL START TO WRAP UP SO I CAN GET ME SOME REST.

IT'S AFTER FOUR A.M.
I'M IN A WIKI WORMHOLE.
WHY AM I HERE?
WHERE AM I GOING?
I THINK BACK ON THE CRUISE
AS I WATCH FISH ON YOUTUBE.
SOME FISH FLOAT BY,
SOME FISH ARE GLOWING.

NOW AQUARIUMS ARE SENDING ADS TO ME.
I SEE THAT THEY HAVE SOME EVENTS FOR FREE.
I CAN PET JELLY FISH.
FEEL THE WAY THAT IT'S SKIN CAN SQUISH.

SO MAYBE I NEED A DAY TO MYSELF
AND SEE THE FISH TAHT LIVE ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.
BUT THERE IS SO MUCH WORK TO BE DONE.
I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANY TIME FOR FUN.

NOW I AM LOOKING UP 'FUN THINGS TO DO.'
WHICH LEADS ME TO 'HOW LEISURE BENEFITS YOU.'
A COMMENT DESCRIBES SOMEONE'S SELF-CARE REGIME,
AND SLOWLY BUT SURELY I'M SENSING A THEME.

I TEXT MY EMPLOYERS, CO-WORKERS, AND FRIENDS.
AND TRUTHFULLY TELL THEM I'M SICK.
I PLUG IN THE CELL PHONE, TURN OFF THE ALARM,
AND FINALLY GET INTO BED.

'CAUSE I'M GONNA TAKE A DAY TO UNWIND.
I'LL GO SEE THE FISH AND I'LL TREAT MYSELF KIND.
CLEARLY I CAN'T KEEP UP THIS PACE.
I'LL TREAT MYSELF WELL.
TREAT MYSELF RIGHT.
FIND MY HAPPY PLACE
AND GIVE MYSELF SPACE.

**(19. ARIETTA IN F# MINOR: ON MY WAY TO
WORK TODAY...)**

ON MY WAY TO WORK TODAY
I SAW A CAT.
IT WALKED UP AND PURRED AT ME,
THEN IT RUBBED AGAINST MY LEG
BEFORE IT TURNED AND WALKED AWAY.

SOMETIMES IT'S JUST NICE TO TAKE DELIGHT IN SMALL THINGS.
CUPS OF COFFEE, LOVELY SKIES, COOL BREEZE.

ON MY WAY TO WORK TODAY
I SAW A CAT.
AND THAT WAS THAT.

**(20. BOUREE IN D MAJOR: THERE'S A COLD IN
MY EAR)**

THERE'S A COLD IN MY EAR,
SO I COULDN'T REALLY HEAR
EVERY NOTE THE AUDITION PIANIST HIT.
BUT I SANG ALL THE SONG.
MAYBE EVERY PITCH WAS WRONG!
BUT I TOLD MYSELF RELAX, CALM DOWN, GET THROUGH IT.

ALL MY JOKES LANDED FLAT
ON THE FLOOR AND WITH A SPLAT.
SHOULD HAVE STOPPED, CALLED A CAB, OR, BETTER YET, QUIT.
IN THE END, IT'S OKAY.
THEY TALKED THROUGH IT ANYWAY!

SO I TOLD MYSELF RELAX, CALM DOWN, GET THROUGH IT.

IN THE PAST I'D COLLAPSE WHEN AUDITIONS WENT THIS BAD.
THERE'D BE TEARS, THERE'D BE SCREAMS, I'D BE SO MAD.
BUT RIGHT NOW, I WILL TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT INSTEAD.
I WON'T TEAR MYSELF APART AND WISH THAT I WERE DEAD.

I WON'T FEEL ANY HORROR
THAT I TUMBLED ON THE FLOOR
WHEN I FELL AND THE SEAM ALONG MY CROTCH SPLIT.
I HAD LEFT. I WAS THROUGHT!
JUST THE DOORMAN HAD A VIEW.
SO I TOLD MYSELF RELAX, CALM DOWN, GET THROUGHT IT.

Her phone rings. It's the theme of
the song.

Oh, sorry, that's my cell phone. Hang on a
sec... Hello? Yeah. Uh-huh. Yes. Yes. Oh!

It's good news! She celebrates for
a moment before realizing she's
still on the phone.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

OH. MY. GOD! WHAT A DAY!
THE DIRECTOR OF THE PLAY
CALLED TO SAY THAT I WOULD BE AN IDEAL FIT.
HOLY CRAP! I GOT CAST!
AND MY DREAMS CAME TRUE AT LAST!
'CAUSE I TOLD MYSELF RELAX, CALM DOWN, GET THROUGH IT.
SIX MONTH RUN, NATIONAL TOUR,
BEING PAID TO SING? WELL SURE!
AND I CAN NOT WAIT TO START AND JUST GET TO IT!

**(21. GIGUE IN G MAJOR: I'VE BEEN INSIDE
THE LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY FOR SEVERAL
HOURS...)**

I'VE BEEN INSIDE THE LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY FOR SEVERAL
HOURS,
WATCHING EVERY "CINDERELLA" SHOW THAT I CAN VIEW.
I'VE SEEN A FEW OF THEM SO FAR, BUT MANY MORE TO GO.
YOU SEE, I MAY BE JUST AN UNDERSTUDY IN THE CAST,
AND THOUGH OUR TOURING CONTRACTS ARE NON-EQUITY,
I'VE GOT SOME WORK TO DO.
I WANT TO BE PREPARED FOR WHEN I'M AT THE FIRST REHEARSAL.

I'VE SEEN SO MANY PRODUCTIONS THAT MY EYES ARE
BLURRY AND BUGGY, BUT STILL I'VE GOT THREE MORE TO GO,
THOUGH THEY MAY BE BALLET AND NOT MUSICAL,
I NEED TO CHECK OUT THE VIDEOS, EVEN SO.
BUT I STAND UP AND I TAKE OUT MY WALLET,
I'M AT THE CAFE, WHERE I BUY MYSELF COFFEE, RELEASE!
I WANDER THROUGH THE STACKS AT RANDOM,
LOOKING FOR SOME PEACE.

I'M WALKING THROUGH THE ROWS OF MUSIC IN THE ARCHIVES,
FINDING MYSELF IN THE MUSIC THEATRE SCORES,
I TAKE A LOOK AROUND.

FROM "A... MY NAME IS ALICE" DOWN TO "ZORBA" THEIR
SELECTION'S HUGE!
I STEP AWAY TO SEE THE WHOLE COLLECTION,
THEN I CRANE MY NECK TO CHECK THE UPPER SHELVES
BEFORE I GET DOWN ON THE GROUND.
I SEE FAMILIAR MUSICALS, BUT MANY I JUST DON'T KNOW.

SEEING THE SHOWS THAT I DID BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL,
I STARTED REMEMBERING WHY I HAD CHOSEN TO
BE A PERFORMER INSTEAD OF A DOCTOR, OR
SOMETHING RELIABLE, SOMETHING MY PARENTS LIKE.
SOON I'VE BECOME OVERWHELMED BY THE QUANTITY,
TOO MANY MUSICALS, TOO MANY SHOWS, AND I CHOKE!
I TURN AROUND AND SEE A BOOK,
"A STUDY ON BAROQUE."

IT SAYS, "THE TIMES WERE REFLECTED IN THE ARTS.
BAROQUE SHEET MUSIC HAD COMPLICATED CHARTS.
MUSICIANS OFTEN IMPROVISED THEIR PARTS."
OH! AND NOW I SEE,
THIS CONCERT, JUST FOR ME,
IS NOT AS HELPFUL AS I'D WANT IT TO BE.
MY OUTLOOK STARTED STRONG
BUT CLEARLY I WAS WRONG.
I COULDN'T SHUT OUT LIFE VERY LONG.

I THINK I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF STUDYING TODAY.
I GRAB MY THINGS AND WALK INTO THE LINCOLN CENTER
PLAZA FOR SOME AIR.
I TAKE A SEAT BESIDE THE FOUNTAIN, WATCHING LITTLE KIDS AT
PLAY.
THE CARS ON BROADWAY HONK THEIR HORNS AND SQUEAL THEIR TIRES.
JACKHAMMERS ARE POUNDING SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY,
AND TOURISTS EVERYWHERE!
I TAKE A BREATH AND DON'T FREAK OUT,
I THINK THIS MIGHT BE WORKING.

I THOUGHT THAT MENTALLY I COULD ESCAPE FROM THE
PANIC THAT'S FROM ALL THE CHAOS OF MODERN LIFE
WHEN I WOULD PUT MYSELF BACK IN SOME OLDER TIMES.
OLDER, FOR ME, BEING SIMPLER AND PURER TIMES.
BUT THE BAROQUE ERA'S JUST AS CHAOTIC.
IT WASN'T SO SIMPLE, IT MADE ME NEUROTIC.
AND TRYING TO LIVE THAT WAY MADE ME ROBOTIC.
IT WASN'T THAT CLEVER, JUST PLAIN IDIOTIC.
AND OH!
IT'S TIME TO GO HOME AND RELAX!

**(22. POSTLUDE IN C MAJOR: I QUIT MY JOBS
AND MY BAGS ARE PACKED)**

I QUIT MY JOBS AND MY BAGS ARE PACKED.
I JOIN MY CASTMATES TONIGHT,
CHECKED IN PRE-FLIGHT.

I'M GRATIFIED WITH THE GAINS I'VE MADE;
LIFE'S CLEARER NOW AND I'M LESS AFRAID.

NO LONGER FEELING SO FAR DELAYED,
I'M RIGHT WHERE I SHOULD BE.

ONCE I ASKED WHY I WAS BORN IN THESE MODERN TIMES,
BUT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT
IS LOVING JUST WHERE I'M AT.
AH.

AND SO GOODBYE FOR NOW.
I'M OFF TO LIVE MY LIFE.

She exits the stage, satisfied.

END OF ACT II